

STATEMENT OF DEPUTY PRESIDENT THABO MBEKI AT THE FUNERAL OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER LEONARD RADU OF THE SAPS

22 MARCH 1997

Sisi Mandisa and the Radu Family;
Relatives of the Radu Family;
Ministers, Premiers and MEC's;
Commissioner Fivaz and leaders of the Police Service;
Leaders and Members of the other Protection Services;
Fellow mourners and Comrades;

Nceba - a militant combatant for the total liberation of our people, has left us before his time.

Nceba - a strategist for the defence of our democratic gains, is no longer with us.

Nceba - an activist for the safety and security of all our citizens has been removed from our midst.

Nceba - a true South African; a principled patriot; a dedicated professional; a freedom fighter without equivocation; an unsung hero; a quiet, humble, dignified and compassionate comrade and friend to many of us, has moved on to a world beyond the comprehension of the living.

A motorcar accident occurred on a road not very far from here, and one of the most disciplined defenders and architects of our democratic order ceased to exist.

All of us who knew and worked with Nceba continue to battle with many questions about what happened on that terrible day.

Answers will be given. We may, in the end, be satisfied that we know the truth. But the sense of loss and the distress at how it happened will never leave our hearts and minds.

But perhaps our grief might turn to envy if we knew that where he lives in his new world he communes with Chief Albert Luthuli, Moses Kotane and JB Marks;

with Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and Florence Mophosho;

with Wilson Khayingo, Wellington Bongco, Vuyisile Mini and Flag Boshielo;

with Braam Fischer, Yusuf Dadoo, Duma Nokwe, George Mbele and King Sabata Dalindyebo;

with Ashley Kriel, Ahmed Timol, Solomon Mahlangu, Cassius Make and Dulcie September;

with Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo, Chris Hani and MP Naicker;

with the galaxy of heroes and heroines, about whose fate in the hands of their torturers and murderers, we are, at last, able to learn from the testimonies given at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

But, in the end, the question we will all have to answer is - what is it that all of us have to do to sustain and perpetuate the memory of Comrade Nceba and Assistant Commissioner Leonard Radu.

Our country is in transition from apartheid to a non-racial democracy.

A beautiful child is in the process of its birth. The moment when we shall all say it has now been born is difficult to determine.

Those who were responsible for the institution and perpetuation of the criminal system of apartheid are quick to say that this system is no more.

They, together with some black faces they have attracted to their ignoble cause, draw particular comfort from the assertion they make, that the new democratic order should not blame its failings on an apartheid system which they claim no longer exists.

Thus they work hard to close their eyes to the terrible reality that the crime of apartheid continues to impact on the present, with the cold, persistent and deathly presence of the skinny hand of the ancient mariner.

By denying this reality, the defenders of apartheid seek to subvert the democratic system by ascribing to the terrible problems our country faces, such as the erosion of public and personal morality, crime and the socio-economic crisis.

More than this, some among them use all means within their power to ensure that the democratic system is unable to overcome the problems which constitute our apartheid legacy.

Where, as a nation, we have to deal with the problem of corruption, they are quick to say - blame Mandela!

Where, as a nation, we have to contend with the challenge of unemployment and homelessness, they do not hesitate to shout - blame Mandela!

Where, as a nation, we have to remind ourselves of the disparity in wealth and income between black and white, they rush to scream - blame Mandela!

Where, as a nation, we must build a united and non-racial nation, they do not hesitate to demand - reconciliation must protect white privilege!

Where our country moves forward as a result of the constructive activity of the millions who constitute the motive force for the democratic, non-racial and non-sexist transformation of our country, the forces of the past do not hesitate to use the means in their hands loudly to proclaim - nothing has changed, except for the worse!

Dishonesty and an immoral refusal to admit that a crime was committed, to admit that the challenge remains still to deal with the legacy of that crime, places the architects of the system of apartheid where they have been during the last few years of transition from apartheid to democracy - in the position of unrepentant representatives of the past, who think the forgiveness and the search for national reconciliation of those who were oppressed and brutalised, constitutes a licence for them to protect and entrench the positions of privilege they obtained through the brutal practice of racism and white minority domination.

To honour the memory of Comrade Nceba and Assistant Commissioner Leonard Radu, we must recover our capacity to tell the truth, keeping in mind the fact that some among the most powerful in our country do not share our enthusiasm that the truth should be told.

We must, once again, understand and tell it as it is, about who - and what - stands in our way towards the creation of the kind of South Africa for which millions of our people sacrificed everything, including their lives.

We must regain the strategic perspective of engaging in struggle against the forces that stand opposed to fundamental social transformation, away from the strange position, correct to the opponents of non-racial democracy, that to be an independent part of civil society, is to be a vocal opponent of the democratic government.

Assistant Commissioner Leonard Radu needed no educating about these matters.

He needed no one to remind him about the fundamental challenge of the democratic order to struggle for the safety and security of each and everyone of our citizens.

He required no urging about his own personal responsibility to ensure that this objective was achieved, as quickly as possible and on a continuous and sustainable basis.

Coming from the forces of national liberation which fought for the freedom of all our people without expectation of individual material reward, he understood that among those against whom he fought as a combatant of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and with whom he subsequently served in the new South African Police Service, are men and women who are committed to discharge their responsibilities as part of our country's premier law enforcement agency.

These police officers are the new South Africans - black, white, male and female, drawn from both rural and urban areas - who understand what President Mandela meant when he spoke of a new patriotism. These policemen and women are with us today, as we bid farewell to their colleague, Leonard Radu, and convey our heartfelt sympathies to his wife, his children, the rest of his family and his friends.

We, together with them, know too, that many things need to be done to improve their salaries, better their working conditions, enhance their competence as professionals, modernise their police organisation and transform their relations with the communities they serve.

But we know this too that among these thousands of honest and dedicated fighters for the protection of the people, are some members of the Police Service who, among other things;

- continue to entertain dreams of a return to a racist South Africa and a system of white minority domination; and therefore,
- engage in activities which undermine the stability of our country;
- abuse their positions, by themselves engaging in criminal activity, including facilitating the activities of criminal gangs and individuals;
- generally spread corruption within the overall criminal justice system; and
- have no commitment, as individuals, to do an honest day's work.

What this means is that a new struggle is joined, that the struggle continues, that the objective of securing a better life for all requires of all of us who share this vision that we apply ourselves to the task at hand with great dedication and commitment.

The new will not be born without a determined effort. The old will not vanish without a strong hand to help it along. There will be no easy victories.

This historic moment in the life of our nation cries out for a new patriotism. But the new patriotism itself calls for new patriots, such as was Leonard Radu - men and women who can proudly and truthfully proclaim - we serve the people of South Africa! - men and women who hold the notion in contempt that their principal purpose in life is to be alive so that they can accumulate wealth by means both fair and foul.

By his example while he lived, Leonard Radu has shown us what we have to do to merit the accolade - the new patriot!

His departure from among the living and the tragic manner in which it occurred must surely tell us that to honour his memory, we must create a regiment of new patriots to take his place.

At such moments no words should be lightly spoken, and no commitments made in jest or for purpose of evoking a passing ovation.

As we say a fond farewell to you dear brother and comrade, inspired by your living example, we rededicate ourselves never to dishonour your memory by abandoning the battle standards of that great army of new patriots who must continue to engage the battle for the all-round emancipation of all our people.

To Pumla, the bereaved families and relatives, we would like to say - let not your hearts be troubled, for by giving us Leonard you strengthened the forces of freedom and by that act ensured that his memory will never pass away.

Farewell Comrade Nceba