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**I am the First Accused Speech by Nelson Mandela**

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that*” (King). Nelson Mandela is a universally acknowledged political leader who always propagated love, compassion, peace, and respect for each other albeit he was met with circumstances where he had to behave like a radical activist against the White hegemony in South Africa. His speech *I am the First Accused* is a comprehensive account comprising justification of his acts, a propagation of National Integrity, and the description of the contemporary state of his people. He delivered the speech when he was facing a trial in 1964. Mandela stayed truthful and spoke as an eloquent advocate while presenting his case being an African leader. He informed the audience about his recent actions with clarity and explained the causes behind those actions. He talked about all the concerns of the Whites and explained all the apprehensions of the Blacks. He told the audience that he took some radical steps to stress the government, but neither he nor his party the African National Congress attempted to start a guerilla war ever. Aristotle has proposed three modes of persuasion: *Ethos, Pathos,* and *Logos* (Bernanke). Nelson Mandela being a law graduate and a shrewd political leader used all three modes in this speech to persuade his audience.

**Ethos Appeal**

Mandela starts his speech by introducing his eligibility to speak. He introduces himself and informs the audience about his academic background to persuade them to listen to him. He has wisely chosen the words of his introduction according to the audience. He might have introduced him with his peer titles (he was the son of a Tribal Chieftain) had he addressed to the Black Africans. Since his audience is the educated Whites, Mandela says: “*I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Arts and practiced as an attorney in Johannesburg for a number of years in partnership with Oliver Tambo*” (Mandela). After persuading them about his authority to speak, he categorically rejects the popular claim of the government that his movement is foreign-funded. He uses the first-person pronoun "I" to alienate him from any influencer, and then he explains the cause of the movement. He says: “*I have done whatever I did, both as an individual and as a leader of my people, because of my experience in South Africa*” (Mandela), to legitimize his action.

**Pathos Appeal**

This mode of persuasion appeals to the emotions of the audience that is also used brilliantly by Mandela. He appeals to the attention of his audience to the miseries of his people and persuades them that his movement was the definite outcome of the circumstances in the country. He mentions the shooting of Sharpeville (1960) where hundreds of Black Africans were massacred. He stresses upon his audience to consider Apartheid which can be justified in no civilized society. He mentions the restrictions that the Blacks faced by the police. He draws attention to the pathetic state of the Black women. Malnourished Blacks and extreme poverty in the Black’s towns are described. He says that all these circumstances are the result of the discriminatory policies by the Whites i.e. Apartheid. Then he asks his audience: *“What were we, the leaders of our people, to do?”* (Mandela)*.* He does not ignore the psyche of the Whites. He appeals to their emotions by praising parliamentary system of government and discrediting the communist mode of government. Moreover, he says that he demands democracy in the country, but it should not make them apprehensive because of a Black majority because he and his party believe in equality of all and no racism will be tolerated after his party comes to power.

**Logos Appeal**

Logos appeals to the mind of the audience with logic. Mandela’s speech is dominated by this mode of persuasion the most. He carries out his argument with logic. He tells that neither he nor his party likes anarchy or violence. He gives historical pieces of evidence where his party stayed peaceful for half a century, but they were disappointed by the ill response from the White rulers. He quotes the words of his Nobel Peace Prize winner leader Chief Lutuli: *“Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately, and modestly at a closed and barred door?”* (Mandela)*.* These words come as a shred of evidence that they always promoted peace, but this peaceful attitude was not credited by the Whites who pursued their oppressive policies. He clarifies his relations with the communists that were misperceived by the government. He proves by quoting the manifestos of the ANC and Umkhonto that there is no indication of any anarchic intention or the desire to shun the Whites out of the country. He proves his movement solely for the Black Civil Rights without any other ill intention. He compares his struggle with the civil rights movements throughout the world. By giving a chronological account of the White suppression and the Black miseries he proves that his movement evolved eventually, but he never let his movement turn into a racial movement. He says in the last paragraph that he is against the White domination and the Black domination. He calls his movement a pure National movement for the prosperity and betterment of all the South African citizens. He appeals to the Whites to join hands with the Blacks to lead the country in the right direction. He is in full agreement with Luther King Junior's quote that the hate should be checked with love, not hate. This speech shows that Nelson Mandela was a credible National leader of South Africa and he had a full grip on all the three modes of persuasion proposed by Aristotle.

**Works Cited**

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