

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

The
dream
of
total
liberation
of
Africa
is in
sight

President's message for 1984

Dear Compatriots,
Brothers and Sisters in the Struggle,
Comrades,

Today, the 8th January, your organisation, the African National Congress, is 72 years old. In keeping with established practice, we ask you to share with us today some thoughts on the tasks that confront us during 1984. Allow me to begin by extending to you all, the wishes of the National Executive Committee and the general leadership of the ANC for great successes in the New Year.

This time last year, when we marked the 71st anniversary of the founding of our organisation, we pointed out that our long struggle had come to a point where the revolutionary ferment had reached unprecedented heights and had plunged the ruling racist clique into deeper and deeper levels of crisis. We went on to state that within the confines of the apartheid system there was no way out of this crisis situation. Apartheid cannot be reformed. The only real solution lies in the victory of the revolutionary forces, the dismantling of the apartheid machinery and the transfer of political and economic power to the democratic majority.

Events of the past year have fully borne out the correctness of this assessment. The momentous struggles of the past year have taken us further upon the road to our cherished goal and have driven the racist rulers into further acts of desperation. For us, the future is brightening daily whilst for the Pretoria racist clique, the future is getting darker each passing day.

We commend you on the sacrifices and dedication by which, during 1983, you took our country significantly forward towards liberation. The past year can have left our enemies in no doubt that we have the determination to struggle, the ability to organise for victory and the will to take power into our hands. The only question that confronts us all, singly and collectively, is how we should respond to the Order of the Day, "Mobilise and march forward to people's power!"

Bechaba - ^{Justis} ~~March~~ 1984

We Must Hit the Enemy Where It is Weakest

You are aware that the apartheid regime maintains an extensive administrative system through which it directs our lives. This system includes organs of central and provincial government, the army and the police, the judiciary, the bantustans administrations, the community councils, the local management and local affairs committees. It is these institutions of apartheid power that we must attack and demolish, as part of the struggle to put an end to racist minority rule in our country. Needless to say, as strategists, we must select for attack those parts of the enemy administrative system which we have the power to destroy, as a result of our united and determined offensive. We must hit the enemy where it is weakest.

The goal we are setting ourselves today is dictated by the logic of our revolution. Its realisation is made possible by the fact that in our millions, we have already laid the basis for its accomplishment. Thus, through our efforts, the co-called Coloured Persons Representative Council ceased to exist; as a result of extensive mobilisation, the puppet South African Indian Council was brought in by a laughably insignificant minority; the entire Bantustan system faces overwhelming rejection and continuous resistance; and similarly, towards the end of 1983, we united in a massive rejection of the local management committees and community councils.

In certain areas and at different times, we have gone beyond rejection of this oppressive system of government, beyond a challenge to its legitimacy. In 1960, our people in Pondoland destroyed the regime's administration, and set up their own administration and people's courts. Likewise in 1976, we caused the collapse of the Urban Bantu Councils. In the recent past, in Sobantu Village in Pietermaritzburg, we destroyed the newly installed community council and frustrated the plans of the Drakensberg Administration Board.

Our determined resistance at Crossroads and at KTC in the Western Cape has made it

schemes. He has been unable to govern at will. In Mdantsane our heroic struggle has shaken the puppet Sebe Administration to its core. Commenting on this situation, one South African political observer stated:

"The stakes are high because the issues have moved beyond those of a (bus) fare increase. The boycott has become a conflict of will between the Ciskei (puppet administration) and its many opponents in Mdantsane, the second largest black township in South Africa."

In the course of our struggles against rent increases and other facets of apartheid, such as the proposed incorporation of some townships into the KwaZulu bantustan, we have gone further to destroy part of the administrative infrastructure of the Pretoria regime.

From these examples, it is clear that we have the ability to raise the struggle to greater heights. Having rejected the community councils by boycotting the elections, we should not allow them to be imposed on us. We do not want them. We must ensure that they cease to exist. Where administration boards take over their functions, then these must be destroyed too.

In the Ciskei, as with the other so-called independent bantustans, we must take the battle further. In the conflict of will between ourselves and the murderous Sebe administration, our will must prevail. And it will, if we transform what began in Mdantsane as resistance to bus-fare increases into a nationwide offensive against the Pretoria regime's Bantustan system. In Mdantsane the people have said — "Sebe must go! Power to the people!" That call should spread throughout the Ciskei to galvanise the people into united action for the destruction of the instrument of oppression — the Ciskei bantustan.

Now is the Time to Choose

The intolerable hardships and sufferings; the persecutions, detentions and murders of patriots and democrats in other bantustans call for the establishment of fighting organis-

The Four Pillars of our Revolution

Our revolutionary struggle rests on four pillars. These are, first, the all-round vanguard activity of the underground structures of the ANC; second, the united mass action of the peoples; third, our armed offensive, spear-headed by Umkhonto We Sizwe; and fourth, the international drive to isolate the apartheid regime and win world-wide moral, political and material support for the struggle.

Over the last few years, the guardians of reaction in our country have devised a programme of action centred on the twin notions of so-called national security and total strategy. This programme is based on the recognition that the apartheid system is immersed in a deep and permanent general crisis. The ruling group in Pretoria has therefore been addressing itself to the question of how to manage this crisis to ensure that it does not get out of hand.

The bantustan scheme, the militarisation of society, the offensive against the ANC, the new apartheid constitution and other recent pieces of legislation, notably, those covering industrial relations, the so-called community councils, the press and the economy, all are elements in this programme of crisis management. Coupled with the criminal war against the Namibian and Angolan people, and increased aggression against the rest of Southern Africa, these measures point to the desperation of the regime as it battles for its survival.

The racists have decided, under mounting pressure from the revolutionary masses and the international community, to tinker with the apartheid system, but in such a way as to further entrench racism and consolidate this illegitimate and criminal system. Despite all these manoeuvres, apartheid has no future.

In other words, the fascists recognise that they can no longer rule in the old way. We recall how, at the height of the Soweto uprising, J B Vorster made bold to declare, "there is no crisis" — no crisis for minority rule. But a few years later, P W Botha called on the whites to adapt to reality or perish with apartheid.

This was a public admission that there is a crisis threatening the destruction of the apartheid system. It is an imperative task of the revolutionary and democratic forces of our country to compound and further deepen this crisis by ever-intensifying the struggle for national and social emancipation.

Revolutions Are About State Power

The black people of our country have challenged the legitimacy of the South African racist state from its formation in 1910 and throughout the ensuing decades. As we fight the apartheid system today, we should all speak with one voice in declaring that the present regime, like all others before it, has no legitimate authority to rule our country. Indeed, its central purpose is to perpetuate the illegal rule of the white usurpers of power in our country.

All revolutions are about state power. Ours is no exception. The slogan, "Power to the People," means one thing and one thing only. It means we seek to destroy the power of apartheid tyranny and replace it with popular power with a government whose authority derives from the will of all our people, both black and white.

The issue we have to settle together is what steps to take to attain that ultimate goal, what intermediate objectives we should set ourselves building on what we have achieved, and in preparation for the next stage in our forward march to victory. The answer to these questions relates directly to what we have already referred to as the illegality of the apartheid state.

We must begin to use our accumulated strength to destroy the organs of government of the apartheid regime. We have to undermine and weaken its control over us, exactly by frustrating its attempts to control us. We should direct our collective might to rendering the enemy's instruments of authority unworkable. To march forward must mean that we advance against the regime's organs of state-power, creating conditions in which the country becomes increasingly ungovernable.

ations to organise and lead the struggle for the destruction of these racist institutions of oppression.

This year, Botha and Malan will be busy implementing the provisions of their apartheid constitution. In this regard, our democratic movement must mobilise to ensure that the so-called Coloured and Indian sections of the black population refuse to be recruited to play the role of partners in apartheid tyranny. White South Africa alone should man the apartheid constitutional posts, which it alone has created, for its exclusive benefit. Those who elect to serve in these apartheid institutions must expect to face the wrath of the people.

We must go further to say that our white compatriots, with even a modicum of anti-apartheid feeling, have to abandon the delusion that they can use Botha's constitutional institutions to bring about any change. The forces struggling for a new order in our country are outside of these structures. It is within the ranks of these extra-parliamentary forces that the anti-apartheid whites can make a significant contribution to democratic change in our country. Now is the time to choose.

It is essential that we continue to shift our posture from the defensive to the offensive. The enemy has failed to destroy us and never will. But invincibility is not enough. It is in the attack that we shall find victory. Nor should we wait for the enemy to take the initiative and then react to its plans and schemes. We have a purpose, a goal, an objective, a historic mission to accomplish for our country and for humanity. Our historic duty is to pursue it with relentless determination and persistence, whatever the enemy does or omits to do.

We must apply ourselves with more vigour in our efforts to organise the unorganised, to consolidate, defend and expand existing people's action on all fronts. It is absolutely necessary to raise the standard of our organisational and educational work, as well as our

major and complex tasks facing our revolution today.

At this juncture allow me to single out the creation of the UDF as a historic achievement in our people's efforts to unite in the broadest possible front for the struggle against the inhuman apartheid system. The formation of the United Democratic Front was a product of our people's determination to be their own liberators.

The Spirit of Rebellion and Politics of Revolutionary Change

The growth of the democratic trade union movement and its power to wrest recognition from both the regime and the employers, together with the determined efforts to form one national trade union federation, constitute one of the most significant advances of our struggle in recent years.

Everywhere in the country, our people and youth have courageously confronted the regime in numerous encounters, whether against rent-increases, forced removals or in military actions among them, the attack on the Air Force Headquarters at Pretoria by Umkhonto We Sizwe.

This is the spirit that must guide and inspire the leaders, organisers and activists of our democratic movement. We are talking of a spirit of rebellion and frame of mind which puts to the fore the politics of revolutionary change.

A special responsibility rests on the shoulders of the ANC and the most advanced members of our broad, democratic movement to act as revolutionaries — as such, to wage revolutionary struggle; and, basing themselves on the conscious and organised involvement of the masses of the people, to build a strong and disciplined revolutionary movement. In this context, the further mobilisation and organisation of the masses of our country assumes special importance.

Quite clearly, we have made great strides in these areas of work. This is evident in the strength of the UDF and the pace at which it continues to grow. It is evident also from the struggles we have conducted, in some areas

for months on end. We can see it in the organisational growth of the trade union movement. There have been commendable advances in the development of the youth and students' as well as civic and women's movements.

We refer here in particular to the organisation of the working class into a revolutionary trade union movement; the organisation of the rural masses, inside and outside the bantustans; the organisation of the women-folk of our country and the religious community into struggle.

Let us now take a brief look at each of these areas of work.

The Working Class Must Lead

Millions of workers in our country, including the unemployed and those engaged in the agricultural sector, remain unorganised. We have to make determined efforts to reach these unorganised workers, bearing in mind that it is the historic responsibility of the working class to take the lead in our struggle for people's power.

The task of forming one federation to unite the democratic trade union movement has not yet been accomplished. We should pursue this goal with even more determination and speed because, apart from anything else, a united democratic workers' movement would give us greater possibilities to advance our struggle.

We do not believe, dear comrades, that there are insurmountable or even very serious obstacles on the way to the creation of such a federation. We do not agree with the school of thought which creates artificial barriers between the fight for trade union rights and the national liberation struggle under the racist conditions obtaining in South Africa. In our situation, the victory of the trade union struggle is unattainable except as an integral part of the victory of the political, ideological and military struggle. The struggle of the working class is, therefore, and must be, an integral part of the national liberation struggle.

The Rural Masses Say, "Seize the Land!"

The organisation and mobilisation of the rural population is clearly lagging behind those of our people in the towns and cities. And yet it is in these rural areas that the apartheid system has its most disastrous impact on our people. We have the organisational capacity to begin to tackle the rural areas seriously and continuously.

In the Freedom Charter we say that "the land shall be shared among those who work it." As you will know, the situation today is that our people in the bantustans have been reduced to landless and jobless outcasts. Many are condemned to a slow and painful death in the so-called resettlement camps. On the commercial farms, the most merciless brutalisation of our people, especially women and children, takes place, every day and every hour of the day at the hands of the landowners.

One of the fundamental elements for the solution of the problems facing our people in the countryside is the resolution of the land question in favour of the tillers. Our immediate task, therefore, is to mobilise the rural masses around the question of land. It is only when the countryside is organised that the rural masses will be able to respond resolutely to the call: "Seize the land!"

Apartheid Threatens Peace

In the past period we have seen the increased involvement of the religious community in our struggle for liberation. In this context, you are aware that at the National Conference of the Council of Churches last year, a proposal was made to convene a conference in 1986 to decide on the issue of the contribution of the Christian church to change in our country. It was then said:

"When peace is broken or threatened by injustice, the Christian has a responsibility to work for peace, to work for righteousness, by striving to rectify what is unrighteous, unjust."

Those words constitute a serious chal- 9