

OTP/034/0288/5

Jan 8
File with statements
A

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN
NATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 76TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ANC. PRESENTED BY PRESIDENT OLIVER TAMBO. JANUARY 8, 1988

Compatriots:

Once more it is January 8th, the Anniversary of your movement, the African National Congress. Today we observe its 76th year of active struggle as the leader of the oppressed in our country and the representative of the democratic future towards which the overwhelming majority of our people aspire.

We marked this past year as our Jubilee Year because our movement had attained 75 years. To observe that Jubilee in an appropriate manner consonant with our tasks and our possibilities as the broad movement for national liberation, we decided to celebrate it as the Year of Advance to People's Power. Of necessity we have to assess whether we have in fact made the advance which we thought necessary to bring us nearer the realisation of our cherished goal.

Before we do this, we would like to pay homage to all those who have laid down their lives during our Jubilee Year in the struggle for our emancipation. I refer here not only to our own compatriots but to all others throughout our region who have perished at the hands of the apartheid regime of terror. As a result of the murderous activities of this regime, every country in our region has tasted the bitter tears of grief. Throughout our region, there are today more apartheid widows, widowers and orphans than there were a year ago. There are more graves of children which stand as a monument to the limitless barbarity of the apartheid system.

The killers came to Homoine in Mozambique and butchered all in sight with chilling savagery. They arrived in Zimbabwe to massacre a peaceful religious community. The apartheid death machine rolled into Angola to kill and destroy. Pietermaritzburg is awash with the blood of black people all of whom, whatever side they have fought on, are together victims of the criminal system of apartheid.

Maputo and Livingstone, Harare, Lusaka, Gaborone, Mbabane and countless towns and cities in South Africa and Namibia have each had their share of funerals to bid farewell to those on whom the apartheid monster had fed, to satisfy its thirst for human blood. As the innocent perished, the captain of the murderers sneaked into Angola to urge his minions to more bloodshed, for the preservation of the system of white minority domination. And thus stands bared the true terrorist and criminal nature of the Botha regime.

This continued campaign of terror has been carried out by the apartheid regime precisely because we, together with the peoples of our region, have indeed been able to advance towards victory. It is true that we have not advanced on all fronts in our general offensive towards people's power with the same speed and success. There has been an uneven development of our struggle precisely because the enemy, as we had expected, has continued to fight for its life. But we have advanced because we have dared to struggle despite the enemy's desperate reign of terror.

As our Jubilee Year came to a close, it was clear that our country has polarised into two opposing camps, one representing liberation, democracy and peace and the other, oppression, racism and war. Throughout this past year, our enemy has tried to defeat and suppress the forces of national liberation and democratic change. At the same time, the racists have sought to increase their own strength by working to consolidate their own ranks and luring to their side as many people as possible. All this has been without success.

The failure of the enemy to achieve these objectives constitutes for us a strategic advance and is central to our assessment of the continuing shift in the balance of forces in our favour and therefore our advance towards people's power.

To appreciate the decisive importance of this advance, it is necessary to understand in its fulness, the degree and scope of the counter-offensive launched by the Pretoria regime in its efforts to recover ground that it had lost in the previous two years in particular. At the heart of the response of the enemy has been its attempt to liquidate the ANC and the mass democratic movement through a sustained campaign of extreme repression and open terror.

This has been coupled with an aggressive political offensive both inside and outside the country designed to give the white minority regime a cloak of legitimacy and to turn the masses of our people and the world community against our broad movement for national liberation. As we have said, the rest of the peoples of our region have themselves, more than ever before, been victims of the integrated counter-offensive of the forces of racism and fascism.

In 75 years of struggle under the banner of the ANC, we have never known a campaign of repression as coldly calculated and systematic as we have experienced this past year. The emergence into the open of the so-called National Security Management System as the central instrument of government, its core composed of the racist army and police, is indication enough of the decisive importance of the use of force as the principal means of government. Accordingly, we have seen the network of the so-called Joint Management Centres, operating under the direction

of the State Security Council, envelop our people under a blanket of institutionalised state terrorism which we have never had to endure before.

We are all aware of the practical meaning of these developments. The issue is not just the imposition of the dastardly state of emergency. The effort to maintain the so-called security of the apartheid system has meant a determined attempt to break the will of the people and to destroy our organisations through sustained terror carried out by soldiers, the police, kitskonstabels and secret assassination squads.

Together with all these activities, which it is hard to believe are carried out by people who still expect to be called human beings, have been the mass arrests and detentions. The torture, physical and psychological persecution and abuse of our people, among them children, goes on unabated. So determined has the regime of the oppressors been to use force that it has employed tear-gas against detainees inside the prisons themselves. To break the youth in particular, the enemy has, as we know, even set up special indoctrination camps designed to train the young to serve as pliant tools of the regime of murderers.

Some among us the fascist regime decides to imprison or to hang. Even now, countless show trials are taking place with some reported and others not. As we speak, scores of our people are facing execution while others are doomed to serve long terms of imprisonment. By the end of the year more will be confronted with the same grim prospect of legalised murder, some of which will be carried out in secret, as is happening already.

The fascist tyrants are determined to ensure that none of this truth should be known or told. For them the darkness of the night and the terrible void of ignorance are elements which guarantee the success of their nefarious schemes. Nothing should be known except that which the killers decide should be known. Lies and disinformation are among the tools that must be used to guarantee the survival of the apartheid system. To ensure this, the racists have imposed press restrictions which are without precedent in our entire history.

Many of our townships remain under the occupation of the murder squads of the army and the police which we have been talking about. To camouflage their true purpose and to bribe us to accept the tyrannical rule of the apartheid regime, these same killers come to us bearing gifts. Such is the fool's paradise which derives from the arrogance of racism, making the slave master believe that he can quell the rebellion of the slaves by increasing their rations.

What we have spoken of is not a system of random acts. The incidents, the acts and the measures are all part of a systematised and integrated process of rule by terror. The plan of the enemy is that those who dispose of this tyrannical force

should occupy all vantage points in society and coopt as many people and social forces as possible into the organised system of repression. Hence we see that some municipal councils, elements among the white business community, some teachers and others have already been drawn into the Joint Management Centres as partners in state terrorism. None of those who continue to accept to cooperate with the apartheid regime can expect that they will escape this fate of having to serve within the military structures of terrorist domination that this regime is putting in place.

At the same time, we are aware that the racists have themselves recognised the fact that their campaign of repression has not succeeded as they thought it would. Therefore they continue to devise new measures further to tighten the noose around the people. The new conditions which the Pretoria regime seeks to impose on the universities, to transform their administrations into instruments of repression, are part of this process. So also is the Bill which the racist parliament is considering designed to paralyse the trade union movement by effectively abolishing the right of the workers to strike. In an effort to break the widespread rent boycott and to deprive us of this weapon in future, the apartheid regime also continues to work towards passing legislation which will compel employers to deduct rents from the pay packets of their employees. These are but some of the ways and means that the racist regime is and will be devising and implementing to ensure the survival of the criminal system of apartheid.

Compatriots:

The enemy's campaign of intense repression has tested the strength of our commitment to liberation, our determination and ability to fight on, and the firmness of our adherence to the strategic objective of the seizure of power by the people through struggle. It is with pride that we can say, on this historic occasion, that one of the outstanding and indelible achievements of our Year of Advance to People's Power is that we have come through that test as tempered steel.

The attempt of the apartheid regime to destroy the will and determination of the people to liberate themselves has failed completely and utterly. How beautiful it has been to see and feel the spirit of freedom aflame among the masses of our people. How inspiring the message that has come from every corner of our land that victory is certain. We have confronted death and unimaginable suffering in our millions and in action declared that all these pale into insignificance in the face of the historic mission we have to carry out - the destruction of the apartheid crime against humanity.

Contrary to the plans of the enemy, the mass political army on whose shoulders rests the task of dislodging the

apartheid regime, has remained firmly in the trenches of struggle, determined to remain on the offensive. Among the workers and the youth, the rural masses, the women and other sections of our people, the level of commitment to the task of liberation has never been higher than it is today. We defeated the efforts of the enemy to reverse our gains. We shattered its hopes that after three years of the most intense struggle, we will be suffering from battle fatigue.

We have also both maintained and enhanced our level of unity at this mass level. The criminal vigilante groups which serve the interests of our oppressors, remain a small fraction of the people. As the racists have continued to trumpet their determination to proceed with their so-called reform programme, we have further strengthened our unity around the demands contained in the Freedom Charter, around the perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Organisationally, that enhanced level of unity has found expression in the growth of that mighty arm of the workers of our country, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and its affiliates. The gains made in translating the vision of one industry one union into reality, attracting ever more workers into the COSATU unions and adopting the Freedom Charter as the common perspective of our working class are all important victories cementing and raising the level of unity among the workers.

These achievements which are of great importance to the entire liberation movement, contributed to the success of the historic struggles which the workers and the masses of our country fought during this past year. These include the May 6th and June 16th stays-at-home, the epoch-making mine workers' strike and those of the railway and postal workers. In action the working class continued to take its place as the leading social force in our struggle.

This year we shall be observing the 5th Anniversary of that great formation of the democratic movement, the United Democratic Front. In the brief period of its existence, the UDF has earned the love, devotion and allegiance of the millions of our people. This is because it has stood in the forefront of struggle and remained firm in its objectives and determination despite a bloody effort by the racists to liquidate it. It is the task of the entire democratic movement to ensure that the UDF is strengthened and defended by all available means against the enemy's counter-offensive. It is also of vital importance that we work to strengthen the links between this mass organisation of the people and other formations of the democratic movement.

Central to the process of the strengthening of the organised base of the mass democratic movement has also been the emergence of such organisations as the South African Youth Congress, the UDF Women's Congress, the Congress of Traditional

Leaders of South Africa and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers. As we know, the further development of this unity has correctly taken place not only at the national but also at local and regional levels as well.

During the past year, all the mass organisations of the people came under intense pressure from the forces of repression. We are all aware that many of these did in fact suffer seriously. In certain areas, street and area committees have been crippled, local organisations severely disrupted and regional and national leadership collectives depleted through arrests. Offices such as those of COSATU and the UDF have been bombed and set on fire by agents of the Pretoria regime. In some townships, the regime has tried to replace the organs of people's power which the people had created themselves, with an army and police administration through the system of the so-called Joint Management Centres. All of this was intended to strangle the organised formations of the mass democratic movement so as to leave the people leaderless and therefore incapable of united and concerted action.

It is again with pride that we can say that in the strategic sense, the enemy has been defeated in its intentions. Whatever the reverses we have suffered, we have, in the main, successfully defended our organisational formations. In certain instances, as we have said, we have actually expanded the organised formations of the mass democratic movement. Given the fact that they have sunk their roots deep among the masses, to destroy the mass democratic organisations, the enemy would have to carry out the impossible task of annihilating the people themselves.

As part of its all-round counter-offensive, the apartheid regime had also hoped that it would break the links between the people and their movement and army, the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe, weaken and destroy our capacity to act and transform us into irrelevant historical remnants. Once more the enemy has failed dismally. There is no doubt that we enter this new year with the prestige and authority of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe higher than they have ever been before and correspondingly with an even heavier responsibility to discharge the tasks which history has assigned to them.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our warm welcome to that outstanding people's leader, Isithwalandwe Comrade Govan Mbeki, released after 24 years as a captive of the common enemy of all our people.

To you, dear comrade, we say, the example you have given to us all, both while you were in prison and since you were released, has served as enormous encouragement and inspiration for all our people and the entire movement for national liberation. We are strengthened by the fact that you have rejoined us albeit in the larger prison that is apartheid South Africa, to continue

the struggle with us as a comrade, a colleague and a leader. Your release during our Year of Advance to People's Power was one of the historic victories of that Year and of the national and international forces fighting against the apartheid system.

We salute all these forces which have, for decades, sustained the struggle for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners. Govan Mbeki's release should serve as further encouragement to us all to campaign with even greater vigour until this common and urgent objective is achieved. Let us also all join forces to demand of the Pretoria regime to - LET GOVAN MBEKI SPEAK! The restrictions by which the enemy continues to imprison our leader must go.

During this past year, the racists also carried out a concerted campaign in a vain attempt to paralyse the armed struggle. It is true that your army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, has suffered a number of casualties in terms of combatants and commanders killed or captured. Among those killed were Comrade Job Tabane, popularly known as Cassius Make, member of our National Executive Committee and the Military Headquarters of Umkhonto we Sizwe, as well as other outstanding members of the people's army such as Sello Motau, Ashley Kriel, Phillip Matabane, Sechaba Mokutu and Shadrack Maphumulo. On this important national day, we pay tribute to them all and all their comrades-in-arms whom we have not mentioned some of whom have perished as well and some of whom are in enemy handswaiting or on trial and others who have already been been illegally sentenced. By their activities, all these, together with the the masses of our people who joined with them to prosecute the armed struggle, nullified the schemes of the enemy to thwart our armed resistance and further strengthened the basis for us to succeed in our objective of transforming our armed offensive into a people's war.

Indeed the enemy has been forced to admit that despite its efforts, we escalated our armed offensive throughout the Year of Advance to People's Power. Having failed to hide the actions we carried out in many parts of the country, including those executed in support of the striking railway workers and the rent boycott, the enemy had no choice but to make this admission. The mass base of the armed struggle has continued to expand and the people's commitment to wage this struggle to its successful conclusion further deepened.

Yet another element in the reverses suffered by the apartheid regime during our Jubilee Year has been its failure to realise the goal of arresting the process of the splintering of its social base into many political factions. The white elections of May 6th were called to achieve this objective. But what is the position today!

The forces of white minority domination are more divided than they have ever been in all the four decades of apartheid rule. Never again will the racists regain the unity which they so

frantically seek. Of importance in this regard is the continuing defection of some Afrikaners from the camp of racism and apartheid. Regardless of the distance these new democrats have travelled towards genuinely democratic positions, the fact of their break with the perspective of white minority domination constitutes an important contribution to the common future we seek to build - of a South Africa that will belong to all South Africans regardless of race or colour. The meeting held in Dakar will always remain one of the benchmarks in the efforts of our people to unite against the apartheid system.

Of major importance also is the fact that the more the racists have relied on their armed forces to ensure the survival of the apartheid system, the sharper the contradictions and conflicts within its armed and para-military forces have become. The police and army mutinies in South Africa and Namibia with which the Pretoria regime had to contend during our Jubilee Year are vital indicators of the impact that our continuing struggle and the deepening crisis of the apartheid system is having on these decisive elements of the apartheid state machinery. The campaign to resist conscription into the army of oppression and aggression remains one of the outstanding tributes to the humanity of the white youth of our country who, despite the prospect of severe penalties, refuse to be turned into the murder machine of the apartheid regime. We would like these brave and noble young compatriots to know after the apartheid regime has become a thing of the past, the people of our country will honour them for their courage and principled opposition to racial tyranny.

The ongoing process of the collapse of the apartheid created institutions has resulted in a further worsening of the crisis of the Bantustan system. The fact that the enemy has let loose against the people both its puppet armed forces within these Bantustans as well as the equally murderous vigilante groups, is a sign not of strength but of the reality that these enemy organs of apartheid power are themselves fighting a rearguard battle which is doomed to fail. The apartheid tri-cameral parliament, so overwhelmingly rejected by the overwhelming majority of our people, as was reconfirmed on May 6th, is itself subject to the same crisis that the apartheid system as a whole is experiencing as a result of our struggle. That parliament too will disappear in the face of our continuing offensive to create one that is truly representative of all the people of our country.

Once more, we call on our Indian and Coloured compatriots who serve within this apartheid institution to abandon the path of treachery by withdrawing from this institution. For too long already they have stretched the patience of the people which is not endless. Those among the whites who are opposed to apartheid must themselves consider what purpose their continued membership of the white parliament serves, recognising that no democratic transformation can be

brought about by an apartheid institution.

During the year of our 75th Anniversary, the positions of the Pretoria regime externally also continued to weaken at an accelerated pace. We on the other hand, have ended our Year of Advance to People's Power in a stronger position than ever before. Even those who do not accept our policy and perspectives have recognised the fact that there can be no solution of the South African question without the participation of the ANC and the mass democratic movement as the central force. Furthermore, the issue of the recognition by the nations of the world of the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime is today firmly on the agenda. The historic Arusha Conference which met under the theme - The World United Against Apartheid, for a Democratic South Africa - played an important part in bringing about this result which is of central importance in our struggle to liberate ourselves.

Similarly, the hopes of the racists that they could defuse the campaign for sanctions have come to nought. Despite the efforts of the major Western powers to shield the apartheid regime from effective international action, the peoples of the world have taken the struggle for the international isolation of apartheid South Africa yet another step forward. Many areas of the world including the socialist countries and the overwhelming majority of member states of the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement and the OAU have continued their total isolation of apartheid South Africa. Others, such as the Nordic countries have, in the past year, adopted important measures in this regard. With the sole exception of the United Kingdom, the countries of the Commonwealth also resolved in favour of further sanctions against racist South Africa as did the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The US Congress also remains seized with this question. We are convinced that despite the stubborn resistance of the Reagan Administration the legislators of the United States will act to impose further sanctions against the racists.

Nearer home, the independent countries of Southern Africa have valiantly continued to resist the campaign of aggression and destabilisation which the Pretoria regime took to new heights this past year. Despite the high price they have had to pay, they have refused to be intimidated into accepting the status of client states of apartheid South Africa. As the year came towards its close, the Pretoria regime had to pay dearly for its racist arrogance on the battlefields of Angola. When the white youth it had sent forward as cannon fodder began to die in this undeclared war, their mothers and fathers began openly to question why it was that they had to be in Angola at all. In the end the Botha regime will have to answer to the millions of mothers and fathers throughout Southern Africa as to why their children had to perish when they had not even so much as set one foot on South African soil.

We would like to take this opportunity once more to extend our warm congratulations to that outstanding African

statesman, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, on his recent election as the first Executive President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The process of the consolidation of people's power in this neighbouring country strengthens the revolutionary process in our country as well.

The struggle of the sister people of Namibia, under the leadership of SWAPO has continued to deliver powerful blows against the apartheid forces of occupation and colonialism. These achievements of the Namibian people, for which they have been prepared to make the necessary sacrifices, have been an important factor in the furtherance of our own struggle against the common apartheid enemy. We are certain that the continuing political, military and diplomatic struggle of the Namibian people will bring that country ever closer to its long-overdue independence.

Compatriots:

What then are the lessons that we should draw from all that I have said and from here, where do we go? What is the way forward? One of the outstanding features of this past year is that the apartheid regime organised itself and acted in a manner designed specifically to stop our advance to people's power and to reverse our gains. At the centre of its programme for counter-insurgency was the idea that the enemy could recapture the initiative and thus force us onto the defensive, if we still had any capacity to carry on with the struggle.

The second outstanding feature of our Jubilee Year is that, through heroism, we succeeded to make a strategic advance. Steadfastly maintaining our perspective of advance to people's power, we fought on to accomplish the tasks that go to make up that advance. In struggle we have answered the question - what is the way forward! The answer is that we must remain on the attack, maintain our offensive posture and, in struggle, win new ground in our advance towards people's power. To wrest that new ground from the enemy requires that we plan for action, organise ourselves for action and on the basis of those plans and relying on our organised strength, attack the enemy on all fronts as a united force. To achieve a further advance to people's power, these must be our watchwords - plan, organise, attack!

In this context, our operational aim must remain that of weakening the enemy all-round and strengthening all our forces in struggle. At all times we must focus our attention on the decisive question of further altering the balance of strength in our favour - to weaken the apartheid regime through struggle and to strengthen our forces in struggle. As part of that process, we must ensure that we attack the enemy in all areas so that we disperse its forces so that it is unable to concentrate these in a few areas at a time, to its advantage. What then are some of the issues to which we must attend?

Our central task is to organise and mobilise our people

in their millions to deliver mighty blows against our common enemy, the white minority regime, for the realisation of the objective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. This means that we must continue to build the broadest possible united front against apartheid, for a democratic South Africa. All organisations to which the people belong, whether cultural, sporting, professional, religious or of other types, should understand that they too have an obligation to engage in struggle in pursuit of the common cause. Let the fact of the united opposition of millions of our people to the apartheid system find expression both in united action and action within a united front.

That unity must also characterise our concerted action to defeat the attack on COSATU, the trade union movement in general and the workers as a whole represented by the amendment to the Labour Relations Act currently before the racist parliament. All formations of the democratic movement must join this fight as their own because it is indeed our own. We know that the enemy has identified as one of the principal tasks of its campaign of repression to break the strike movement. Through united national action, let us stop the enemy in its tracks and by our victory, further consolidate the trade union movement and strengthen the bonds of common struggle among all formations that make up the democratic movement.

Much work remains to be done to accomplish our continuing tasks organising the unorganised and the unemployed workers both in the towns and the countryside and to engage them in struggle. The fact that the apartheid regime and the employers take advantage of the unorganised and the unemployed to recruit for the organs of state repression, to break our strikes and to guarantee themselves super profits emphasises the importance and urgency of these tasks for the entire democratic movement. The same urgency to carry out further organisational work among the youth and students obtains, despite the great strides that we have made in this regard. The women's movement has the potential, already proven in struggle, to become one of the strongest components of the mass political army of revolutionary change. For this to be realised, the tasks we have set ourselves in the past to organise a broad women's movement have to be accomplished. Similarly, the religious community is of vital importance to the success of the common struggle to end racism and racial domination. Further to enhance the contribution that this community is making, we must adopt new measures to ensure that it plays its role to the full. The decisions originally adopted at the Conference of the World Council of Churches in Lusaka last year and since endorsed by the churches within our country, provide an important vantage point from which to engage the religious community in struggle at an even higher level.

The workers in the field of culture have clearly recognised the vital importance of their own participation in the struggle. We have to work consistently in this field to ensure

that these workers also see themselves as frontline fighters and not merely a reserve to be called upon by somebody else as need arises. This applies similarly to the sportspeople, both amateur and professional, who should themselves, together with the rest of the democratic movement, elaborate ways and means by which to harness the energies of all sports enthusiasts, players and spectators, to help end the apartheid system so that in a normal society we can all have normal sport with all the benefits that will accrue to the people and the sportspersons themselves as a result of this change.

The area of education remains one of our crucial fronts of struggle. The victory of the democratic and non-racial perspective in this theatre of action requires, among other things, that the educators themselves, the teachers at schools, universities and other institutions of higher learning should be organised into democratic formations that consciously and systematically pursue the objective of a people's education in the full meaning of those words.

The masses of our people within the Bantustans must be activated to transform these into strong and reliable mass bases of the revolution. New possibilities exist for the people to act decisively to turn these enemy-created institutions against their creator, the Pretoria regime.

The accomplishment of this task requires that the fighting masses of our people should join hands with those elements within the Bantustan administrative system that are prepared to break with the apartheid regime and join the people in the struggle for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. Contrary to the wishes and designs of the enemy, there are many of these, politicians, chiefs, soldiers, police and civil servants who have no stake in the corrupt and venal system created by Pretoria to perpetuate its rule and who are willing to act in the national interest against those who employ them. Let us act together with these healthy forces to transform what the enemy conceived as its rear-bases of counter revolution into forward trenches of militant struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution. Of central importance to the success of this process is the need to ensure that the masses of the people are organised into their own mass formations as well as into underground units of our movement.

The carnage in Pietermaritzburg must stop. We fully support the honest efforts that many people have made and are making to end this disastrous fratricidal strife. These must continue with a new urgency so that the conflict should end immediately. The apartheid regime has no wish that we should achieve this result. In this it has been joined by Gatsha Buthelezi who does everything in his power to fan and promote this conflict which diverts many oppressed people away from the task of confronting the racist regime and directs world attention away from the heinous crimes that the apartheid regime is

carrying out throughout Southern Africa. All of us have a responsibility to defeat elements such as these by ending the fighting and uniting our forces against the oppressors. We must achieve this as a matter of urgency and in the interests of all our people.

Compatriots:

The workers on the farms have begun to stir. These black South Africans, among the most exploited, degraded and despised in our country, must also be mobilised into struggle. The entire democratic movement has a responsibility to extend all necessary assistance to the trade union movement to accomplish its task of organising these workers. We have to spread the spirit of rebellion among these workers in struggle and, in action, show them that they too are entitled to a living wage and that they too have a right to be treated as human beings. It is when we win victories on those demands that it will be possible to advance further to engage these workers whose labours feed the nation, in the struggle for the transfer of the land to those who work it.

As you know, this year the oppressor regime and its supporters will be observing a number of anniversaries. In their celebrations, the racists will seek once more to assert the permanence and legitimacy of white minority domination, further propagate the apartheid notions of group rights, work to unite the whites around their anti-democratic programme and sharpen their counter-offensive against the forces and the perspective of the democratic transformation of our country.

Against all this we must project our own implacable opposition to the colonial, racist and fascist legacy which all these anniversaries represent. From all of them there is only one lesson to be drawn. It is that our country and people have lived too long under the iron heel of white supremacy. That system has brought untold suffering to the millions of our people, transformed itself into a crime against humanity and must be destroyed totally and without delay.

As our struggle intensifies and the crisis of the apartheid system deepens, so does the responsibility on our white compatriots increase to act together with the majority of the people of our country to end the apartheid system. To our white compatriots we say, as the Botha regime prepares to celebrate, in your name, the ignoble history of a system that has been categorised as a crime against humanity, what are you going to do?

You have the possibility to contribute decisively to redress an historical injustice which has persisted for over three centuries. The decision is yours to make and you need to make it now. The hour of the day demands of you that you break with racism and apartheid unreservedly and recognise the fact that the apartheid regime is an illegitimate creature of an

immoral and criminal system which no decent human being can support or tolerate. Your children are being used to kill for this regime. Your intellects are used to create options for the survival of the same regime. The wealth we both create is expropriated by this regime to keep itself in power. Why do you allow all these indecencies to occur and continue! The time for you to act against the apartheid system is now.

Compatriots:

In the world today all people of reason and conscience are seeking political solutions to all the problems that confront humanity, however intractable they might seem. Your movement, the African National Congress, supports and upholds this perspective. Given the will, a political settlement of the South African question, that would be in keeping with the aspirations of the people, can also be found. The only obstacle to that outcome is the Botha regime which has every intention to perpetuate its illegitimate rule by brute force.

To the most elementary and widely-accepted demands that would create a climate conducive to negotiations, it responds with disdain and contempt. These demands include the release of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni and all other political prisoners, the lifting of the ban on the ANC and other organisations, the lifting of the state of emergency, the repeal of all repressive legislation, the withdrawal of all troops from the townships and so on. To all that the Botha regime says no! Its response is to confront our people and the rest of the international community with guns and the mailed fist of unbridled repression and open terror. It pretends to speak of peace when it actually prosecutes war and prepares for more bitter conflict. In addition it offers as a bogus negotiating mechanism an insulting National Council. It is our common responsibility to see to it that this Council never sees the light of day by campaigning to ensure that nobody serves on it. This is one of the major challenges we face this year. We must respond to it with the same vigour with which we rejected the illegitimate 1983 constitution which established the apartheid tri-cameral parliament.

The reasons which compelled us to take up arms have not changed. Rather, by its actions, the Pretoria regime leaves us no choice but further to escalate our military offensive, for the victory of the democratic cause. The armed struggle constitutes the spearhead of our general offensive, a crucial element in our response to the violence of the racist regime. We must raise the level of this struggle in a decisive manner, draw the masses of our people into actual combat and realise our objective of transforming our armed actions into a people's war. The call we made in the past - every patriot a combatant, every combatant a patriot - continues to be of central relevance in all our work. The suffering of the people and their organisations under the

system of martial law implemented through the so-called Joint Management Centres requires that our armed offensive should in fact assume a level of intensity that is consonant with the general task of advancing towards people's power in a decisive manner. Accordingly, we charge the heroic people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, with the responsibility to ensure that we realise this perspective. From all our commanders and combatants and from the people themselves acting as the mass combat army of the revolution, we expect a level of boldness, daring, courage and effectiveness in our actions against the enemy, that will create a qualitatively new stage in our struggle.

To advance further also requires that we confront the problems posed by the operations of the Joint Management Centres seriously and consistently. These represent the spearhead of the enemy's counter-offensive and have to be defeated as a necessary condition for our movement forward. We have to study and monitor their activities closely, ensure that the masses of the people are informed of these so that they can conduct a sustained struggle against all elements of the programmes of the JMC's including their attempts to reestablish the black puppet local authorities, create the murderous vigilante groups, re-introduce a comprehensive network of informers and so on. We also call on the business community to stop cooperating with the regime's repressive machinery or face the consequences of intentionally participating in the vicious campaign of apartheid state terrorism.

Our common resolve to establish self-defence units has proved its correctness and timeliness during this past year. In the face of Pretoria's campaign of terror, the need for the people to defend themselves has become all too obvious. Both the underground units of the ANC and those of Umkhonto we Sizwe have a responsibility to ensure that all our communities create these units as disciplined formations that will act against the apartheid enemy and its agents.

We must further step up our work to ensure that the youth of our country, both black and white, refuses to serve in the enemy's death forces. The SADF, the SAP and the other armed elements of the Pretoria regime have one task only and that is to defend a system which is a crime against humanity. Those who serve on the enemy's side must know that they are serving a lost cause. They will not only die in vain but will also carry with them to their graves the mark of infamy which belongs to the apartheid crime against humanity.

We reiterate our call to those black people who find themselves in the ranks of the enemy's forces of repression, including those in the Bantustans, to join the struggle against the oppressors of our people, their own mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. You must turn your guns against the common enemy. It is the task of all the democratic forces of our country to take this message into the ranks of these forces and

to inspire our own brothers who bear arms in defence of the enemy's cause to regain their honour by using their knowledge and skills for the emancipation of our country and people from the yoke of racist tyranny.

Many of our leaders remain prisoners of the Pretoria regime. Others are held in captivity as detainees. Yet others, activists of the mass movement, are in condemned cells awaiting execution. Among these are Theresa Ramashamola, Robert McBride, Desmond Majola, Daniel Maleke, Lennox Wonci, Solomon Nogwati, Mzwandile Gqeba, Philip Ngidi, Vuyisile Goni, Daisy Modise, Mxolisi Malgas, Thembisile Beneti and many others. A heavy responsibility rests on all of us to act in defence of all these patriots and leaders, to secure their immediate and unconditional release and to save their lives from the bloody hand of the apartheid hangman. This task must, at all times, remain among our topmost priorities. This year, our beloved leader, Comrade Nelson Mandela will be 70 years old. Let us observe this birthday by further intensifying the campaign for the release of this outstanding sone of our people and all the other leaders and activists imprisoned by the Botha regime.

It is clear that in the coming period many tasks of decisive importance will fall on the shoulders of the mass democratic movement. This necessitates that this movement should itself be strong, well organised and clear about its tasks. Serious efforts have therefore to be made to ensure that we recover from the reverses that we have suffered as a result of extreme repression. We have to rebuild all affected structures from the local up to the national level and further expand our entire organisational strength.

The situation of extreme repression requires that we strive even harder to ensure the democratic participation of the people in our decision-making processes. Our leadership collectives should remain close to the people and be accountable to them. At the same time, we have to fight against all factionalism, against all tendencies to develop contempt for the masses of the people and therefore to think that decisions must be taken on their behalf. We must build up unity within our own organisations on the basis of a common commitment to an agreed programme of action, democratic participation and the accountability of the leadership.

If we attend to these issues, as we should, as well as others that we have mentioned already, then it will be possible for us to score new successes in the campaigns we have to continue to conduct including those for a living wage and national united action. As we know there are other issues that we have to take up in addition to those we have already dealt with. These include the rent boycott, the observance of May Day on a day we ourselves decide, the education campaign, and the observance of March 21, June 16, June 26, August 9 and December 16. We also have to increase our activities in solidarity with

the peoples of Namibia and the Frontline States. We have a duty in action to demand the independence of Namibia, that Pretoria withdraws its troops from Angola and end its aggression against independent Africa. Furthermore, this year the OAU will be marking its 25th Anniversary on May 25. We too must observe this anniversary and in future join the rest of our continent in observing May 25 as Africa Day.

The situation of extreme repression has once more brought to the fore the importance of the underground structures of our vanguard movement, the ANC, as a central component of our struggle. We have to redouble our efforts further to expand these structures to ensure that they are in contact with the people everywhere and at all times. Indeed as we all realise the fact that no revolution is possible without a revolutionary vanguard, we all have a task to build this vanguard, the ANC, in the interests of our revolution. The progress we have achieved in this regard has given us the basis to proceed even faster in pursuit of this goal.

Our struggle takes place in an international context characterised by major efforts to solve some of the outstanding issues of world concern. These include the decisive question of world peace during our nuclear age, the resolution of regional conflicts and the restructuring of the world economy so that the material and spiritual needs of millions upon millions of people who still go hungry can be attended to. We support all these initiatives and take this opportunity to reiterate our welcome for the recent agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States to abolish and destroy certain classes of nuclear weapons. We look forward to further progress in this area until all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction are destroyed.

On the other hand and by its very nature, the apartheid regime is opposed to peace, to the independence of peoples and to their development. Truly a pariah among the nations of the world, apartheid South Africa constitutes a permanent obstacle to progress throughout the region of Southern Africa. This situation calls for concerted and unrelenting action by all the world progressive and democratic forces to help us end the crime of apartheid now and thus increase the possibilities for the reduction of international tension in general and enhance the world process for peace and human progress.

The international community is still faced with the urgent task to impose comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against apartheid South Africa. We call on the peoples of the major Western countries themselves to take action to impose people's sanctions. It is also of vital importance that the international struggle for the independence of Namibia is stepped up radically. Both we of the ANC and our comrades-in-arms of SWAPO require the all-round assistance of all those who are opposed to apartheid to assist us to carry out our historic missions of leading our respective peoples to liberation.

Similarly, the Frontline States require maximum economic and military support to strengthen and defend themselves so that they too can meet their responsibilities both to their peoples and to the world community which has striven for so many years to end the apartheid system.

The possibility of concerted international action on these issues was amply demonstrated at the historic Arusha Conference held at the end of our Year of Advance to People's Power. We must use the advances recorded in Arusha to build up an even mightier and more active international united front against apartheid, for a democratic South Africa so that the racists are indeed denied all international intercourse everywhere. We also believe that the United Nations Security Council has special responsibilities with regard to the situation in our region. We are convinced that it should therefore convene a special session, preferably in our region, to discuss the grave situation that our peoples face and arrive at decisions that reflect that gravity.

Compatriots:

Once more and in your name, we take this opportunity to extend our greetings to all our friends, allies and fellow-combatants for liberation in other parts of the world. This past year has seen a further strengthening of the bonds of friendship and solidarity among us as we all have striven to create a just and peaceful world. In the coming period those ties will assume an even greater importance as we intensify our common offensive against the apartheid crime against humanity. To you all we give the assurance that your noble efforts have not been in vain. The sanctions you have imposed are hurting the apartheid system. The assistance you have given to our struggling people has served to increase our striking power. Victory is indeed approaching, whatever the obstacles the doomed apartheid regime may try to place on our path.

We would also like to take this opportunity to salute all who joined us to observe the historic 75th Anniversary of our movement. This became an occasion for millions of people on all continents, including governments and popular organisations to reaffirm their solidarity with our struggling people, strengthen their links with our movement and affirm the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime. That international mass coalition for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa which came together to mark our Jubilee Year as theirs is the rear base on which we shall depend as we make further advances in the new year in the interests of all humanity.

The rapidity with which we advance towards peoples power depends on what we do. Despite its apparent reactionary strength, the enemy cannot stop us if we act decisively in all areas of struggle, including the organisational, political, military, economic and propaganda. With every blow we deliver, we must expect that the enemy will strike back. But every blow we

deliver must in fact weaken the regime of terror and every strike it makes against us must strengthen our resolve to end the tyranny sooner rather than later. To meet the historic challenges ahead of us, on behalf of the National Executive Committee of your movement, the African National Congress, I declare this the Year of United Action for People's Power. Together let us carry out all the tasks ahead of us with vigour, determination and courage. Our common victory is certain.

FORWARD TO UNITED ACTION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER!
AMANDLA NGAWETHU! MATLA KE A RONA!