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A STATEMENT BY ALFRED NZO, SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Comrades,

To-day we are marking the sixty fifth anniversary of the African National Congress, the vanguard leader of the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed and dehumanised black people of our country.

No one can deny that the planting of the militant banner of struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation by the African people of our country on the 8th January of 1912 the day on which the African National Congress was founded, was an event of tremendous significance not only for our people but for those on the rest of the African continent as well.

The African National Congress not only taught our people to fight the oppressor using all the weapons necessary for a particular period of the historical development of our revolutionary movement, but more important is taught them the art of clearly identifying the enemy and its supporters.

From this understanding of their tasks grew progressive theoretical elaboration of the correct paths to be followed which in the middle 50's found expression in the adoption of FREEDOM CHARTER - the revolutionary programme of the entire progressive movement in our country. There can be no doubt that any other approach to the revolutionary solutions of the problems before our country to-day which run counter to the Freedom Charter can only lead to a blind alley. The history of our struggle has clearly borne out this fact. All the reactionary elements who have attempted in the past to confuse and detract our people from this course have in the end found themselves isolated and rejected by the masses of our people. So shall it be in the future as well.

In the course of its historical development the African National Congress succeeded to build and consolidate the unity of all genuinely progressive forces in the country, irrespective of racial or class origin. By the middle 50's a powerful Congress movement was forged bringing within its fold progressive forces of the African, Indian coloured and white people including the representative movement of the revolutionary working class. It is not necessary to emphasise the importance of this step for our revolutionary struggle. It is self evident. It posed much a threat to the reactionary regime that 156 of the leadership of the democratic movement were arrested and charged for High Treason in 1956 with the Freedom Charter forming the main platform of the charge.

Comrades, the African National Congress not only mobilised the oppressed people and taught them the art of revolutionary struggle against their enemy, it also taught them the virtues of revolutionary internationalism thus it was that one of the early slogans adopted by the founding fathers of our organisation made a clarion call for "MAYIBUYE i AFRIKA". This slogan was to inspire in latter years the birth of many political parties on the African continent, some of whom even went to the extent of adopting our National Anthem "MOSI SEKELELA i AFRIKA" and adapting it to the conditions of struggle in their respective countries. We cannot be charged of immodesty for mentioning these facts.

To-day our organisation is leading the armed phase of our struggle inside our country and its impact and influence is cause for serious concern within the ranks of the fascist-regime.

Comrades, the birth anniversaries of our organisation always afford us - appropriate opportunities to look into the past 12 months preceeding the anniversary.

There is no doubt that the year 1976 witnessed the tremendous growth of the revolutionary movement of the African peoples and its impact of the international political scene.

an event of far-reaching importance at the beginning of 1976 was the defeat of fascist South African aggressiveness by the revolutionary MPLA and the people of Angola. It is not possible to overestimate the significance of this victory. The people of the Africa continent were shown how possible it was to defeat imperialist inspired aggression given the unity and revolutionary determination of the people confronting that aggression and the ability of the revolutionary vanguard to mobilise solidarity and support of the international progressive forces especially the socialist countries. It is known that throughout the period of their revolutionary struggle against South African aggression, in defence of their young People's Republic of Angola,, MPLA was a subject of reactionary attacks and vilification by international imperialism and its supporters whose only concern was the severance of the ties binding MPLA and its revolutionary allies, mainly the Soviet Union and Cuba.

The victory of the Angolan people brought about the deepening of the political crisis of imperialism on the African continent and threw its supporters into desarray and confusion. US imperialism quickly adopted manoeuvres of re-adjustment to the new situation and hence the counter-revolutionary "shuttle diplomacy" accompanied by the drum-beats of a so-called New American policy for Africa demagogically proclaiming US imperialist support for African majority rule in Zimbabwe. It is important for us to understand the strategy and tactical objectives of the so-called Kissinger shuttle diplomacy. This we must do because even the new Carter administration in the United States will be pursuing the old policies with possible slight variations.

How do we summarise the activities of imperialism in Africa in this period.

- (a) International imperialism, desperately worried over the emergence of the new progressive states following the break-up of Portuguese colonialism and the declared intentions of these new states to pursue home and foreign policies dramatically opposed to the over-all imperialist interest, is now doing everything possible to salvage the situation in the remaining colonially dominated area by

seeking to ensure that the end-result of the revolutionary struggles of the peoples in Southern Africa produce neo-colonial regimes which will pander to the interests of imperialism by protecting its vast economic, political and strategic interests in this region.

- (b) In order to achieve this, imperialism is intensifying its counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of dividing the African countries by opposing what it chooses to call moderate states what it calls militant African states. By devious manoeuvres it is not only strengthening its hold on its old allies in Africa but it is at the same time seeking out new allies for the sole purpose of encircling and isolating genuinely progressive forces on the African Continent which include the African National Congress.

- (c) At the same time it is taking steps to buttress and strengthen its bulwark and aggressive task force, the fascist regime of South Africa through increased diplomatic and military support. This accounts for the following actions by the various contingents of the imperialist system -

- (i) Imperialism, mainly US and Britain continues with its efforts to put fresh paint on the face of the fascist regime in our country by putting forward the strange notion that the Vorster aggressive regime is an important element for the peaceful solution of the problems of the colonially oppressed peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia. This is in spite of the united unequivocal condemnation of this regime by the overwhelming majority of mankind precisely because of its continuing crimes against our people and mankind as a whole.
- (ii) In addition to this diplomatic support, France and West Germany in particular, have assigned themselves the task of fitting nuclear teeth to the aggressive military machine of the South African fascist regime. There is to-day general agreement that the Vorster regime is successfully developing its nuclear potential.

- (iii) The fascist Vorster regime is being closely intergrated into the plans of the aggressive NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO). At the same time plans for the creation of the SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (SATO) are advanced and an important place in this aggressive alliance is reserved for the fascist regime in our country.

All this comrades, is taking place behind a thickening smoke-screen of intensified imperialist propaganda directed at drawing attention to the "increased Soviet activity" in the Indian ocean. The aim is to mobilise the African people against the so-called menace whilst at the same time projecting the importance of the strategic position of the fascist regime in this situation.

- (d) Henry Kissinger, the foremost representative of American monopoly capital is interested in feathering the nest of the all-powerful American multi-national corporations on the African continent. This was therefore part of the aim of his heightened activity on our continent even at the expense of intensifying inter-imperialist rivalries.
- (e) Above all comrades, one of the most important imperialist objectives is the severance of the umollical cord linking the national liberation movement of the newly independent and non-independent African peoples to the socialist countries and other progressive forces of the world.

Such were the strategic aims of imperialism on the African continent highlighted by its intensified activity through the Kissinger "shuttle diplomacy" in 1976.

Comrades, also of tremendous importance and significance in 1976 was the growth of the revolutionary movement for National Liberation in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa - a process that undoubtedly was closely allied to the progressive political changes in Southern Africa.

In Zimbabwe, the revolutionary armed struggle of the people grew in scope and intensity and this made a direct contribution to the situation where the aggressive regime of Ian Smith condescended to sit at a conference table to discuss the future of the country with the authentic representative of the people.

It should also be underlined that the progress of the armed revolutionary struggle of the people of Zimbabwe was almost complicated by manoeuvres which sought to weaken the political leadership by emphasising the prominence of the armed wing as a possible "third force". It was only thanks to the maturity and vigilance of the political leadership of the people of Zimbabwe that these manoeuvres were defeated.

A process of polarisation within the Zimbabwe movement took place. This was crystalised by the setting of the patriotic Front which has had a positive impact during the Geneva conference. At the same time this ensured the shedding of the political dead-wood which consisted of a confused mess of so-called liberation movements some of whom had long discredited themselves before the eyes of the Zimbabwe people.

In Namibia, the revolutionary armed struggle under the leadership of SWAPO has intensified, thanks to the existence of a reliable rear base - the People's Republic of Angola. Alarmed at these developments, the South African fascist regime has turned Namibia literally into its armed camp through the constant introduction of reinforcements to ward off the onslaught of the revolutionary forces.

SWAPO has constantly rejected the counter-revolutionary, TURNHALL conference of South African stooges as a manoeuvre designed to perpetuate the oppression of the people of Namibia by the Vorster regime. SWAPO has instead called for a meeting with the occupying regime of Vorster to negotiate only the transfer of power to the people of Namibia which presupposes withdrawal of the fascist SA regime from Namibia. The only other body to participate in these talks is the United Nations. We fully support SWAPO's positions in these matters.

Comrades, in our country which represents the pivotal centre of all the contradictions in Southern Africa, the revolutionary onslaught of our people on the fascist regime intensified during 1976. We shall not deal with the gruesome details of the open fascist repression that has been unleashed on our people and the democratic movement since the uprising which erupted on the 16th June.

Suffice to remind our movement and supporters that from that time hundreds of our people have already been killed in cold blood by the fascist regime either during the course of the heroic but unequal battles the revolutionary masses have fought against the enemy on the streets of the Black ghettos all over South Africa or in various police stations and jails. There is a growing list of those who have been murdered during the course of interrogation.

Thousands of our people have been detained and special courts have been set up to hand down arbitrary sentences, such as flogging on those children who have escaped being secretly killed and buried by night. In an attempt to hide this gruesome picture reaching the outside world, the regime conducted wholesale arrests of journalists some of whom were detained without trial for long period.

This is a brief and incomplete picture of what is happening in our country.

But comrades let us look at the depth of the crisis that is now confronting the regime of terror in our country.

At the beginning of the current uprising on June 16th, the fascist enemy reacted with unparalleled brutality against the demonstrating school children in SOUETO. Specially trained anti-urban guerrilla warfare squads armed to the teeth were mobilised against the children. As the world now knows they had gone to SOUETO to disperse the peaceful demonstration of school-children in protest against the imposition of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in African schools in the most brutal fashion imaginable. The initial armed blow of the enemy left on the first day more than 300 children dead and many others injured. Even this figure, according to eye witness accounts, is a conservative estimate of the bloody carnage of that day.

It is clear therefore that the enemy read in the situation of June 16th an open declaration of war against the fascist regime. The initial brutal blow against our children was intended to achieve a dual objective.

- (a) After the debacle of its defeat by MPLA and the resultant moral and psychological crisis or confidence it suffered especially within the ranks of the white minority population the enemy sought to demonstrate to this section of our population that it still had the capacity to maintain so-called "law and order". What is more, it wanted to prove that it was still capable to defend the interests and privileges of this section against any future onslaught by the revolutionary forces.
- (b) The fascist regime has been aware that despite its unbridled terror campaign against the revolutionary liberation movement, there has over the years been increasing evidence of its growing strength. The student demonstrations in virtually all the Black campuses in early 70's; the growing restiveness of the people in the Bantustan areas and above all the resurgence of the strike movement by the revolutionary Black working class especially from 1973 onwards were all evidence of the militant re-grouping of vast sections of the oppressed population against the fascist regime.

Thus one of the objectives of the brutal blow against our children in June was an attempt at mass intimidation of the oppressed people of our country against any further acts of resistance.

The question we may well ask ourselves is - did the enemy succeed to achieve any of these objectives. Obviously the answer is "NO". Why do we say this?

- (i) The bloody massacre of our children on 16th June in Soweto and subsequently in other areas as the uprising spread outraged the conscience of certain actions of the white minority population. It is known that already during the early days of the uprising white students from the Witwatersrand university took to the streets demonstrating against the brutality of the regimes.
- (ii) Since then and especially as it became clear that the revolutionary upsurge of the masses could not been put down even by the most brutal methods of the enemy, there is a growing number of white people that are leaving the country for fear of being swallowed up by the revolutionary avalanche.

(iii) The revolutionary masses of our people have refused to be intimidated. From SOMATO the uprising quickly spread to many parts of the country in actions that have been marked by unparalleled mass heroism which has even defied death. The organisational capacity of the peoples offensive has been growing and the attacks against the enemy are becoming more sophisticated. Police stations in the Johannesburg areas have been destroyed by what the enemy himself admitted were professional methods of sabotage; railway lines have been cut; at the beginning of December; a unit of Umkonto we Sizwe defended itself from arrest by launching a grenade attack on the police who had intercepted them. Both police were seriously injured and our comrades safely got away and are now carrying out more revolutionary assignment of our movement.

The so-called minister of police Jimmy Kruger, has been screaming in the press heaping all manner of abuse on the African National Congress which through the enemy's admission is the driving force behind increasing actions against the regime.

(iv) Solidarity within the black community grew even stronger during the current uprising. African, Indian and coloured youth and workers have been acting together against the common enemy and all attempts to divide the people by appealing to backward racial and even tribal sentiments have failed.

(v) Of special significance have been the successful political general strikes involving thousands upon thousands of black workers during which militant political demands were put forward calling for the release of those who have been arrested and detained during the current uprising. Thus this current situation has had its impact on the multi-national co-operations plundering our country. A state of alarm has been raised in the boardrooms of these co-operations many thousands of miles away from our country.

- (vi) The South African economy has suffered further setbacks as a result of the current situation. The artificial political calm which the regime was forcing on the country through sheer brute force and crippling legal and administrative measures has been shattered resulting in a great deal of unease within the ranks of International and domestic capitalist monopolies. The increasing difficulties of the South African economy have "inter-alia" found expression in growing unemployment especially within the Black community. This development is not likely to improve the already explosive situation within our country. It will instead add more fuel to the already raging conflagration.
- (vii) The revolutionary onslaught of our people during the current uprising has bared the fangs of South African fascism. No honest observer of developments in our country can still entertain illusions of a peaceful transfer of power to our people. Those who still continue to espouse such fallacies will surely expose themselves as the most dangerous enemies of the freedom and human dignity of the oppressed Black majority of our country.
- (viii) The regime of terror in our country has never been as isolated as it is now after its brutal repressions of the uprising of our people. All important international forums have expressed anger and disgust at the crimes of the apartheid regime in strongly worded resolutions which have received wide popular support of the broad masses of the people everywhere. Soweto, Guguletu and other hitherto unknown areas in our country have now become household names all over the world.

Whilst the regime has suffered these serious setbacks, the international prestige of the revolutionary movement of our people, led by the African National Congress has been consolidated. For the first time ever the African National Congress jointly sponsored with the APO a successful international conference in support of the struggle of our people, in Addis Ababa in October last year.

This conference which was attended by revolutionary forces from Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and Western Europe adopted a militant programme of action whose successful implementation will mobilise yet broader sections of the world's people on our side.

From the foregoing, it is clear comrades that 1976 was a year of victorious advance of our revolutionary struggle. Although the enemy enjoyed military superiority over our people, we soundly defeated them in the field of psychological, moral and political warfare and this is indeed a great achievement. The strength and effectiveness of our underground revolutionary movement has grown; mass heroism and readiness to sacrifice all is on the order of the day as the militant upsurge that is gripping the oppressed on a scale never before witnessed in our country is gaining momentum. The revolutionary working also has taken its place in the front ranks of the fighting masses. What more do we need? 1976 also witnessed a development in another direction which, in the wake of the events that were taking place all over the country, was intended to divert the attention of the world away from the mounting crimes of the regime to its so-called attempts at solving the very problems that are at the root of the crisis in South Africa. Undeterred by earlier condemnation and rejection of itsbantustan policies, the Vorster regime went through all the motions of declaring the Transkei bantustan an "independent" state. This step has only formalised the creation of a colonial client state for the direct benefit of South Africa and international capitalist monopolies.

Since then of course, the world community has re-emphasised its total rejection of this fraudulent form of independence for our people. This should not make us rest on our laurels. Certainly rejection of the independence of the Transkei does not have the same meaning for the representatives of imperialist powers as it has for the genuine friends and supporters of our revolutionary struggle.

There is information available that the American military brass is already studying the possibility of building a naval base at Port St Johns. The rationale for this move is the so-called Soviet menace in the Indian Ocean which is supposed to pose a threat to the strategic interests of imperialism. Should this move succeed, it will certainly create serious complications for the struggle of our people.

What then are the urgent tasks facing our movement to-day?

Comrades, the central and urgent task facing our organisation and its military wing, UMKONTO WE SIZWE, is the stepping up of armed revolutionary struggle for seizure of power by the people. We must co-ordinate everything else to the prosecution of this task. It means that our whole movement from the National Executive Committee down to its organs more particularly the Revolutionary Council, must give priority to the creation of the conditions necessary for the intensification and sustaining this form of struggle and for the participation of the broad masses. At the same time all other political and economic forms of struggle must also be developed alongside the principal form of confrontation.

Mass mobilisation of the oppressed population must proceed on a scale never before attained. No problem confronting our people be it on local or national level must be left unattended. Effort to arm the people and prepare them morally and psychologically for the new phase of our struggle must intensify through an all-out propaganda offensive which will include certain physical actions for raising the morale of our people and steeling their confidence in their ability to confront the enemy. This has already started. It must be intensified with due regard to security for the protection of our machinery.

The African National Congress, the leader and organiser of our revolutionary struggle should urgently pay attention to the following:-

- (a) We must strengthen and consolidate the unity of all the progressive forces of our country under the heroic and consistently revolutionary banner of the African National Congress,

This means that we should resolutely flush out and expose all the remnants of the counter-revolutionary "gang of eight" from within our ranks; equally resolutely defeat any tendencies which as the "Gang of 8" did, will seek to divide and weaken our movement on reactionary ideological and racial and even on tribal grounds.

- (b) The African National Congress, the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle of our people, must make serious efforts to overcome organisational short-comings and weaknesses. Whilst it is true that we have never in the past had to cope with types of complicated problems that are now confronting us since the 16th June 1976 and therefore have no past experience to rely on, it should not be an excuse for the organisational chaos and confusion which invariably paralyses the smooth functioning of our entire organisational structure.
- (c) Strict observance of discipline and adherence to the political line of our organisation are essential ingredients for organisational cohesion and efficiency. This means that our organisational assignments must be carried out with promptness and exactness and at the same time we must be ready to defend the political stand of our organisation against any and all detractors.
- (d) Our underground organisational machinery must be strengthened, expanded and protected from the prying eyes and ears of the enemy.
- (e) Current developments in our country have shown that it is possible to forge the unity of all democratic forces genuinely involved in the struggle for the freedom of our people. This has expanded the base for launching a generalised offensive against the enemy. The African National Congress must not only make efforts to consolidate this development but it must strain every nerve to expand this base by drawing in even those forces that have hitherto shown a certain amount of scepticism and hesitancy to join the revolutionary front.
- (f) The international solidarity movement with the struggle of our people led by African National Congress must be broadened in 1977. It will therefore be the task of the International Department of the National Executive Committee to work out a concrete programme of work in this field which will have to lay special emphasis inter-alia on the broadening and sharpening of the campaign for the release of all political prisoners in our country;

direct the attention of the world community to the increasing spate of murder of detained prisoners by the fascist regime. In this respect the special attention of bodies such as the International Red Cross must be directed to the urgency of a thorough investigation of these crimes with a view to making the information public.

- (g) The African National Congress must constantly expose the growing nuclear potential of the fascist regime so as to heighten the vigilance of the independent African continent and other international progressive forces against this new danger to world peace and security.
- (h) The African National Congress must take steps to further strengthen its fraternal political relations with other revolutionary liberation movements in Southern Africa and in other part of the world. We must pay particular attention to our relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as counter-weight to the growing collaboration between the fascist South African regime and Israel.
- (i) We must strengthen our relations with the member-states of the organisation of African Unity, especially with the countries that are bordering on South Africa; we must further consolidate our excellent relations with the Soviet Union, Cuba and other member-states of the socialist community and all other progressive forces of the world. We must also fully participate in the United Nations system and use all the possibilities it offers to advance our revolutionary struggle.

Comrades, the 65th anniversary of our organisation finds us a few steps ahead on the sure road to freedom and independence. The road already traversed has been a hard one and harder still is the one that still lies ahead. Our people however have clearly demonstrated that they do not lack the courage determination to forge ahead. They see their way forward very clearly and they know that the whole of progressive mankind is marching resolutely in step with them. They have full confidence in the ability of the African National Congress to lead them into further victories.

There is no doubt that we shall win.

Forward to Victory!

Amandla Ngawethu !

Matla kea rona !

Power to the People!!!
