

CAM/046/0103/3

AFRICAN

NATIONAL

CONGRESS

P.O. BOX 31791

LUSAKA - ZAMBIA

Telephone: 211169 Telex: 45390.

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 71ST ANNIVERSARY - JAN. 8TH 1983.

Fellow South Africans,

Today, January 8th, we mark the 71st anniversary of our organisation, the African National Congress. We are beginning a new political year. We must therefore set ourselves new tasks which we should strive to achieve in the coming year.

We are marking this important occasion in the history of our protracted struggle at a time when the revolutionary ferment amongst all sections of the black oppressed majority has reached unprecedented heights and has plunged the ruling racist clique into deeper and deeper levels of political and economic crises. A distinctive feature of this all-round crisis facing the oppressor class is that the initiative is shifting into the hands of the people and continues so to shift. We are on the offensive to put an end to the cruel system of national oppression and economic exploitation. It is a process that the Pretoria rulers can neither defuse nor halt. Within the confines of the apartheid system there is no way out of this crisis situation. The 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. Each year, as our forces advance on the enemy, this, our cherished goal, becomes clearer and nearer.

This time, last year, we proclaimed the year of the 70th anniversary of the ANC as the "Year of Unity in Action". Drawing on the historic lessons contained in seven decades of struggle under the leadership of the ANC, we have sought to ensure, during this past year, that all those at home and abroad, who are opposed to the apartheid system and stand for a democratic South Africa, should unite in action and act in unity, thereby to expedite the process of our liberation.

In the coming period, we shall need to defend and consolidate all the gains that we have made in the struggle to ensure the widest possible

united action of the forces of progressive change in our country. We have to struggle continuously to overcome all obstacles and differences amongst ourselves that are blocking the realisation of unity and united action. We shall furthermore need to build on these gains, continuously to strive for the situation in which the millions of our people can move as one, behind a united leadership and in pursuit of commonly-agreed goals.

Last year, operating under difficult conditions of illegality and police surveillance and risking arrest and persecution by the security forces, the ANC and its allies in struggle, together with other patriotic and revolutionary forces drawn from all social classes and strata, drawn from all population groups of our people, organised and carried out successful political confrontations and economic strikes throughout the country. Important battles took place around such questions as wages, rents, removals, sporting and cultural boycotts, ceding of Ingwavuma and KaNgwane and the assassination of patriots like Dr. Neil Aggett.

Our underground organised forces are striking deeper roots and multiplying among the masses who are the bedrock of our revolution. Gostapo repression and persecution has failed to break the will of the masses or to deter them from the pursuit of the revolutionary cause. Instead, they have further provoked the wrath of the people and increased their determination and drive to win freedom.

Combined with these mass political actions, has been the succession of stunning blows by the people's army, Umkhonto We Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation) against the enemy throughout the country, in such far-flung places as Cape Town, East London, Paulpietersburg, Mkhuze, Komatipoort, Pretoria, Johannesburg and Koeberg; to cite but a few. We take this opportunity once more to salute the commanders and combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe and to express our confidence that they, the army of the people of South Africa, will discharge their mission with the same dedication and discipline that they have so far displayed. As our struggle unfolds and reaches higher levels of intensity, our armed offensive will occupy a correspondingly more important role in our overall strategy to seize power from the racist tyrants.

Last year, we stated that our Movement is not only an opponent of the apartheid regime, but has actually emerged as an alternative power which

has won over the conscious and active support of the majority of our people. The validity of this assessment has been fully vindicated by events. Bent on entrenching racial domination and reaping super-profits from sweated black labour, the racist rulers continue misreading the lessons of the historical development of mankind. For that reason they are determined to plunge our society into the worst of human catastrophes.

In sharp contrast to the enemy's strategy of racial and ethnic segmentation, the ANC and its allies continue to uphold and fight for the ideal of a unitary, non-racial and democratic society for all our people, black and white. Our policy document, the Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955, has not only stood the test of time, but is winning the hearts and minds of growing numbers of our people - including honest patriots and democrats in the white community as well. For this reason, the Botha-Malan regime has launched a counter-offensive to blot out the ANC politically, liquidate its leaders, exterminate its activists and supporters, and if possible, destroy the very spirit for freedom, and to inflict the greatest possible damage on our broad movement for national liberation.

To achieve this goal, the Pretoria rulers, their army and security forces, collaborators from among the black people and mercenary agents recruited from all over the globe, are working out and actually implementing this plan, at home and abroad.

At the centre of this counter-offensive, typical of all colonising and oppressor classes, there lies the dirty political and ideological propaganda to discredit our strategy and policies inside and outside the country, using the state propaganda machinery.

Of course, accompanying all this ideological offensive, arrests, detentions, physical and mental torture of anti-apartheid activists and democrats, as well as their murder, continue unabated. Some of the most recent cases of patriots being killed by the fascist police in detention are those of Moabi Dipale, Neil Aggett and others.

Also prominent in this enemy strategy is the use of the weapon of assassination. Some of the victims include our dear comrade Joe Gqabi in Harare, Griffiths Mxenge in Durban, Petrus and Jabu Mnyase in Swaziland, and Ruth First in Mozambique.

-4-

The countries of Southern Africa are embroiled, at the present time, in an undeclared war launched by the Pretoria regime. Whether it be in Mozambique and Angola, Lesotho or Zimbabwe, Botswana or Zambia, Seychelles, Mauritius or Madagascar, the apartheid monster is involved in a deliberate campaign of aggression and destabilisation.

During these campaigns of murder and pillage, our people have been slaughtered in cold blood and have even had their bodies desecrated.

The enemy has stated the purposes of this aggression quite clearly, when it has repeatedly proclaimed its intention to act against these countries so long as they allow the ANC to be present within their territories. Clearly, therefore, the peoples of Southern Africa are having to pay the supreme sacrifice, as they have done and are doing in Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the region, because they are refusing to bow down to the demands of the enemy to have the ANC and SWAPO of Namibia uprooted and expelled from this region.

The offer made a few days back by the racist Prime Minister Botha to the independent states of Southern Africa, for these states to sign non-aggression pacts with apartheid South Africa, constitutes part of this offensive designed to impose Pretoria's will on these states. Botha is the persistent aggressor. No African country has fired a single bullet across its borders into South Africa. And yet Botha is inviting the targets to sign a non-aggression pact with the aggressor. If he believes in non-aggression, why does he not stop aggression? If he believes in aggression, how will a non-aggression pact stop him?

During the past year, this regime has been encouraged in its counter-offensive by the criminal activities of Zionist Israel against the people of Lebanon and Palestinian refugees in that country and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the PLO. After repeated raids, aggression into Lebanon during the course of which the Zionist Israeli troops mercilessly butchered both the Lebanese and Palestinians and sought to destroy whole cities, the Zionist ultimately occupied virtually the whole of Beirut and other parts of Lebanon.

Apart from anything else, the Pretoria regime used this experience to prepare the white South African population for similar campaigns of terror against the peoples of Southern Africa, as happened and is

happening in Southern Angola, as happened in South-Western Zambia and in Maseru. Significantly, both Zionist Israel and fascist South Africa enjoy the full, active, political and material support of the Reagan Administration. It is this support that has strengthened the striking capability of these two regimes.

We need to say here that tragically the white population and certainly all its political parties openly acclaimed this campaign of terror and allowed themselves to be used to legitimise the commission of these crimes.

The racists have proudly proclaimed that up to 86 per cent of the white population of our country supports the policy of aggression against independent Africa and it has specifically approved the brutal Maseru Massacre. We would like to urge our white compatriots seriously to weigh the disastrous implications and the dire consequences of their being accomplices in the commission of these heinous crimes against the people of Africa.

The Reagan Administration has placed itself firmly and unequivocally among the bandit forces that are conducting a reign of terror throughout Southern Africa. Its support for the apartheid regime consists precisely in encouraging these fascists to intensify their counter-offensive and in guaranteeing them immunity from punitive international action. Every crime that the Pretoria regime commits, be it in South Africa, Namibia or elsewhere, bears Washington's stamp of approval. This regime goes into action backed by the logistic, financial and political support of the United States. The apartheid regime, acting in its own right and in furtherance of the global strategy of the United States, constitutes a strike force for the accomplishment of the counter-revolutionary objectives of defeating the progressive forces of Southern Africa, including SWAPO and the ANC, and transforming our region into an exclusive economic, political and military preserve of the imperialist world.

In the face of this determined enemy counter-offensive, we must hit back with all our strength, ensuring that the millions of our people are engaged in struggle. To increase our offensive power:

- we must organise the people into strong mass democratic organisation;
- we must organise all revolutionaries into underground units of the ANC;
- we must organise all combatants into units of Umkhonto We Sizwe;

- we must organise all democratic forces into one front for national liberation.

Large sections of our people remain unorganised. We should not allow this situation to continue any longer. For us to achieve victory, it is essential that the masses of our people engage in struggle as a conscious and united force. That requires that these masses must have their own democratic organisations to mobilise and guide them and through which they can themselves make their own point of view heard.

So far, only a small minority of the black workers is organised into trade unions. It is the task of the existing democratic trade union movement to ensure that the unorganised workers are in fact organised. This organisational drive must encompass also the workers in the mines and in agriculture. We do have to bend all efforts to ensure that every worker belongs to a democratic trade union.

Therefore, with all the power at our command, we make a special appeal to the democratic trade union movement to come together again and actually succeed to draw up and adopt a plan for the united action of the democratic, non-racial trade union movement. There is no obstacle too formidable to stop us from achieving this goal.

The situation in the countryside also calls for bold and urgent measures to establish or strengthen the popular organisations among the rural masses who are suffering in a manner and on a scale that is indescribable.

Whether as landless peasants, unemployed or agricultural workers, or as deportees who have been dumped in the so-called resettlement areas or as victims of the criminal Bantustan system, our people in the countryside are living in a veritable hell. To them, as to the rest of us, the issue of liberation has become a matter of life and death.

These masses need also to be organised and mobilised into action where they are and wherever they are. They must be mobilised to confront the oppressor and the exploiter now. Hence the need for mass democratic organisations that will lead them.

Similarly, all patriots and revolutionaries must work tirelessly to strengthen and expand the mass democratic organisations among the youth and students,

among the women, among the cultural and sports workers, the religious community and at the civic level.

While the task of building the mass democratic movement must fall on the shoulders of the patriotic forces of our country and in their entirety, a special responsibility for the accomplishment of this task rests with the membership of the African National Congress.

On this day, we salute you, dear comrades, and express our profound admiration for the manner in which you have contributed to raise the struggle to the level at which it is today. Yet that very achievement imposes on the ANC new, more complex and urgent tasks.

The people expect us to lead them to victory. They expect us to answer the question, together with them, in struggle and in action - the question: What is to be done?

We must, therefore, pose the question to ourselves. Are we organised enough, strong enough, disciplined and dedicated enough to meet our obligations to the people? Let all of us, on this day, the 71st anniversary of our organisation, seek to answer those questions frankly and honestly in order to correct all previous mistakes and to learn from our experience with a view to building the ANC itself inside the country into a more formidably organised force than it is today.

The African National Congress is a movement of patriots. It leads the masses in struggle for the destruction of the fascist regime, the transfer of power to the people and the realisation of the objectives contained in the Freedom Charter. It upholds a strategy which combines revolutionary mass political action with revolutionary armed struggle.

As members of the ANC we must, together with the people, in fact, help to solve all problems that serve to slow down the progress of the struggle, provide a clear perspective of where we go from here and translate that perspective into a practical programme of action.

This year, we shall be observing the 20th anniversary of the Rivonia arrests. By decision of the United Nations General Assembly, the international community will observe this anniversary by further intensifying the campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of all South African political prisoners. We, the people of South Africa, must be in the forefront of

this campaign - in our millions. 1

But we must also observe this anniversary by seeking to emulate the example set for us by these outstanding revolutionary patriots who have remained in captivity for two long decades. To emulate them means that for every Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathrada, Goldberg; for every Motsaedi, Gwala, Nyembe or Hogan that the enemy has captured, we must produce a thousand others to take their places.

We have a duty to make our own sacrifices in the struggle to which they dedicated their lives. We must follow in their footsteps, learning from their experiences, inspired by their courage and fired with the same love for the people and the same dedication to the cause of freedom which have made theirs to be household names not only in South Africa but throughout the world.

The enemy relies decisively on the use of force to entrench himself in power. We have to meet his murderous onslaught by intensifying the armed struggle. Our task, therefore, is to further strengthen the combat capacity of Umkhonto We Sizwe within South Africa for the immediate purpose of escalating our offensive. The masses of our people must become and be part of this great revolutionary army, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

We would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to those combatants, those members of our people's army who have fallen heroically in battle. Our revolutionary masses, least of all the ANC, will never let it be said of them that they fell in vain.

Even as we speak here, there are six (6) young militants, members of Umkhonto We Sizwe, who are sitting under the shadow of the gallows in Pretoria's death cells. These prisoners of war are the responsibility of the international community and, especially, of our own people. The lives of comrades Shabangu, Moise, Tsotsobe, Motaung, Mosolodi and Mogerane must be saved.

Among the key elements in the enemy's strategy of survival and the entrenchment of the apartheid system are the proposals put forward by the so-called President's Council. Central to this plan is the co-optation of the so-called Coloured and Indian communities of our population as tools to be used for the perpetuation of white minority domination. It has dawned

on the white minority that alone, unaided, it is unable to prolong the lifespan of apartheid.

The recent decision of the South African Labour Party to support and participate in the implementation of the President's Council's schemes must, therefore, be condemned without reservation. The African National Congress calls upon all our people in the so-called Coloured community to reject this decision and rebuff all attempts to draw them into the camp of the oppressor; to set them against the majority of the people of South Africa, to set them against the peoples of Southern Africa and the entire continent, to set them against the international, progressive community. The campaign for the rejection and defeat of the enemy's counter-revolutionary constitutional plans is the task of all patriotic South Africans: Africans, Indians and democratic whites - in addition to our people in the Coloured community. There can be no solution to the South African problem without the transfer of power into the hands of the majority.

During this year, the Botha regime will seek to enact and implement its so-called Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill. This Bill is intended to legalise genocide on a new and unprecedented scale. It aims to enslave the African workers as never before and will result in the deportation of millions of our people into the Bantustans in pursuit of the obnoxious plan of turning South Africa white. We must launch the most concerted campaign to defeat this Nazi Bill with its intentions. It must be resisted with every possible means on a national scale.

Despite its restoration of the control of the KaNgwane and Ingwavuma areas to the respective Bantustan administrations, the Botha regime has clearly not abandoned its plans of depriving more than a million of our people of their birthright as South African citizens. It has not abandoned its plan in regard to Kosi Bay which would serve its military strategic objectives. The appointment of the Rumpff Commission confirms this fact. The regime is looking for new ways and means of realising these intentions. We call on all the people to oppose any attempt to barter away even a single square inch of South African soil, to oppose any attempt to deprive a single South African of his citizenship.

The apartheid system is in a deep crisis not only politically, but also economically. At the same time, the Pretoria regime is spending astronomical sums of money on its military machine and on the rest of its repressive apparatus. The burden of this economic crisis and military build-up is

shouldered by the ordinary working people in the form of higher prices, rents, fares, taxes, reduced wages and salaries, and higher unemployment,

We must fight for a system in our country, a system whose wealth shall be used for the benefit of all our people.

When we observed the 70th anniversary of the ANC, we were joined literally by millions of people on all the continents. This event proved to be a universal and moving demonstration of the commitment of the world's peoples to the destruction of the apartheid system and a reaffirmation by the international community of its pledge of solidarity with the ANC and the people of South Africa in their struggle for national and social emancipation.

From Southern Africa to North Africa, from South America to North America, from Eastern Europe to its Western part, from the Middle East to the Far East, the same message of solidarity came back. The message was repeated by Christians and communists alike, by Bhuddists and Moslems, workers and intellectuals, anti-apartheid groups, political parties, artists, women's and youth organisations.

An issue that is of grave importance for us in South Africa is the fact that the Pretoria racist regime is committing daily acts of aggression against the people and against independent African states in Southern Africa. In the course of this, through its agents and directly, it kills people, including children, and it carries out political and economic destabilisation of these states on a wide scale.

We cannot remain aloof in the face of this criminal activity. We must denounce and actively oppose this campaign of terror that the Pretoria regime has unleashed against independent Africa. The most effective deterrent to the campaign of terror across our borders is a massive assault upon the regime on all fronts within our borders, and by the people as a whole.

In doing so, we shall be reinforcing the decision of the summit of the heads of state and government of the Frontline countries which was held in March of last year in Maputo; when they resolved to strengthen their co-ordinated defence actions in order to "defeat Pretoria's acts of aggression and economic sabotage against free and independent Africa, and to force the regime to withdraw its occupying forces from the People's Republic of Angola".

The decisions of the Maputo Summit are by their very nature a reflection of the positions of the O.A.U. and its member states. In this connection, it is important to emphasise that the people, especially of South Africa and Namibia, are, as never before, in need of the effective support of the OAU.

It is of course common knowledge that during the past year the O.A.U. has experienced serious internal problems.

As part of the African Continent, as part of Africa's progressive forces we must work for a solution to the problems that have plagued the O.A.U. We cannot stand aloof from this effort either, for, as the founding fathers of the OAU declared, no African country can be truly free until all of Africa is liberated. That truism is being demonstrated on our continent today. African countries need solidarity one with another. And no single one of them, all of them collectively, can claim full independence unless and until the whole continent has been liberated. And at the present time, until Namibia and South Africa have been freed. That is why the current concern of the people's of Africa, in regard to the state of this great African Organisation are particularly acute when they relate to the aggressions to which the people of South Africa are being subjected by the fascist regime, assisted by its imperialist allies.

We are confident, however, that the OAU will observe its 20th Anniversary as a united force, capable of leading the people of our continent, capable of playing its proper role as a member of the non-aligned movement, capable of contributing in the struggle for world peace.

In your name, dear compatriots, we salute our comrades in arms, the heroic people of Namibia, their valiant vanguard SWAPO, and the mighty People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), all under the dynamic leadership of President Sam Nujoma. We pledge our solidarity with them. We condemn the Reagan Administration and the Pretoria fascists for their crimes against Namibia and the People's Republic of Angola. In spite of them, in spite of the Reagan Administration and the Pretoria racists, even because of them Namibia will be liberated by SWAPO and the people of Namibia. We extend our greetings to all the peoples of Southern Africa, as well as to those of Western Sahara, Palestine, El Salvador, East Timor and their vanguard organisations: Polisario Front, PLO, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and Fretilin.

We greet the Non-Aligned Movement, especially the participants in the forthcoming New Delhi Summit.

We salute the fighters for peace throughout the world, and pledge that we will do all in our power to remove the violator of international peace and security in our midst - the apartheid regime.

We greet our friends and allies throughout the world and call on them to persist together with us, on the side of the forces of national and social liberation, peace and stability in Southern Africa.

We are most deeply appreciative of the political support and substantial material assistance they have given us during the past year and which we know they will continue to give in greater measure.

Fellow South Africans, the apartheid regime is preparing for the crisis ahead. That is why it is bringing its armed forces into decisive positions of authority within the apartheid power structure. That is why it is carrying out constitutional changes designed to centralise power in the hands of the racist president. The captains of the apartheid system are re-organising themselves in the vain hope that they can deal us a crushing blow.

But we shall never be crushed. No people determined to free themselves have ever been crushed. And we are not about to be an exception. But we must organise ourselves for the capacity to attack effectively, as well as defend ourselves effectively. We must organise ourselves into a conquering force. The level of our political and armed offensive must reach new heights during the year 1983. This will be our Year of United Action!

Amandla Ngawethu!

Maatla kea rona!

Power to the People!

O . R . T A M B O
PRESIDENT