

# ANC SPEAKS ON 82<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**E**xcerpts from the statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the ANC delivered by President Nelson Mandela

Today, we mark the 82nd anniversary of the ANC. We do so in very special circumstances. We have arrived at an historic watershed. 1994 is the year in which our country will hold its ever democratic elections.

What a cruel turn of history it has been that, during the very year that we took these important strides forward, we lost such outstanding leaders of our people and important architects of the democratic victory, as Oliver Tambo and Chris Hani.

To them and others who have lost their lives during this past year, especially those who have been cut down as a result of the continuing political violence, we reiterate our homage. We pledge to them that we shall forever remain loyal to the cause for which they laid down their lives.

This year, as a country and a people, we must discharge the common responsibility we share of ensuring that each and everyone of our people freely exercises his or her hard won right to elect a government of his or her choice. Acting together, we must ensure that the people continue, in practice, to be their own liberators by participating in elections that are truly free and fair. All the necessary conditions must therefore be created to ensure that all voters, in the towns and the countryside, participate in the elections and participate without spoiling their ballot papers.

The forthcoming elections are not just about the demise of the old order. They begin a process by which the old must yield to the new. They constitute the first step of our entry into the modern political world with its concepts and practices of democracy, fundamental human rights and equality among the people without discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour or belief. The elections will move our country into a new epoch, enabling all of humanity to

take the last step to close the chapter of colonialism which was first imposed on Africa with the establishment of the Portuguese colonial empire, five hundred years ago.

In this year of liberation, the people of South Africa must insist that the new government will only earn their trust and respect if it engages in a serious and determined programme to end this general crisis by returning our country to all its people, so that we can truly say that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, both black and white.

Many things will therefore have to be done to rebuild the economy.

true land of hope. This we will achieve if, as we must, we begin to build new houses, give better education to the youth, raise the standard of living of especially the poor, attend to the pressing environmental questions, strengthen the spirit of solidarity among all our people, ensure peace and security for the people and enable the people to govern. Faced as are with the terrible inheritance of massive unemployment, top priority must be given to the creation of jobs. The land

with regard to the objective of building a prosperous economy which would end unemployment, provide a living wage for all, raise levels of productivity and international competitiveness and ensure proper participation by workers in decision making at their places of work. There are some among our working people who benefited from job reservation and racial discrimination in the past. Some of these continue to cling to a misguided hope that the old order can be



ANC President, Nelson Mandela addresses the mineworkers at Two North Hostel in Randfontein

These measures must ensure that this economy serves the interest of all our people, enabling us to raise the living standards of the poor. At the same time, it must attain high and sustainable rates of growth. Furthermore, steps will have to be taken so that our country's resources are allocated and distributed in such a way that we can begin to end the racial disparities in terms of the distribution of wealth, income and opportunity.

Whatever the details of these programmes, we must ensure that within a relatively short period of time, our country emerges out of the crisis imposed upon it and becomes a



ANC PWV Region Chairperson, Tokyo Sexwale and former NUMSA General Secretary, Moses Mayekiso with ANC leadership lead a march to John Vorster Square to protest against notorious ISU

restored. It remains the responsibility of the progressive trade union movement to join in the effort to persuade these that their fundamental interests can only be served by their full participation in the process of democratic change.

As we approach our day of liberation, we extend special word of gratitude to the millions of people throughout the world, the anti-apartheid movement, other popular organisations, governments and inter-governmental organisations all of whom have been an important motive force in moving our country forward to the modern age.

Their work, like ours, is also not yet done. We appeal to them to continue to contribute what they can to ensure a smooth transition to a democratic order and the rebuilding of South Africa into a country which they will be proud to describe as a friend and a reliable partner. Compatriots, now is the time for this noble objective to be fulfilled. Now is the time that we make a decisive break with the past. Now is the time that we join forces as South Africans to make our country free at last. As this historic year begins, let all our thoughts and actions celebrate this as the Year of Liberation for all South Africans. ■