



**STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
ON THE CURRENT SITUATION
Lusaka, Zambia – 22nd September, 1989**

The message conveyed to our country and to the world by the militant nationwide actions against the Tri-Cameral Elections, the Labour Relations Amendment Act, the State of Emergency and the entire system of racist domination is:

Apartheid must be destroyed, not amended.

The 1989 Tri-Cameral Elections will be remembered not for the reverses suffered by the National Party at the polls, but for the strikes, the boycotts and the barricades of September 5th and 6th. Whatever else may have occurred on September 6th, the overwhelming majority of South Africans voted with their feet for freedom, democracy and non-racialism!

The national work stoppage by over three million workers, the Mass Defiance Campaign that preceded it, the impressive street demonstrations which saw thousands of our people united behind ANC banners, the demonstrations on the beaches and at the hospitals, the classroom boycotts by millions of students — all registered our people's determination to end the apartheid regime.

The ANC salutes the people for the tremendous advances we have scored during this period. The momentum generated during this *Spring Offensive* must be carried forward into the summer and the new year. The unity in action demonstrated by the broad array of anti-apartheid forces in the streets of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Oudtshoorn and Durban must be built on.

We wish to address a special word of tribute to the Church, Church leaders and other members of the religious fraternity for the sterling role they have played in the current struggles.

All these actions have already laid a solid base for the success of the forthcoming National Women's March on Pretoria.

THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY IS FIRMLY IN OUR HANDS!

The rhetoric mouthed by De Klerk at his inauguration once more bears out our firm conviction that no white minority regime possesses either the will or the capacity to bring about a fundamental change of South Africa. The promises to execute his mandate for change over five years are as empty as they are insolent. Even before De Klerk's swearing-in, the regime's spokesman had repeatedly made it clear that all they intend doing is to prettify apartheid, which will carry over the essential content under the guise of group rights. The racist President's speech is directed primarily at the international community and allies of apartheid from whom he hopes to buy time with the plea that he needs a chance to deliver on his promises.

The massacres with which De Klerk inaugurated his administration and his undisguised threat to persist in a policy of repression against the people, testifies to the violence intrinsic to the system over which he presides. He has clearly stated that he will follow the well-trodden path of his predecessors — talk, and ever more talk of change, accompanied by massive repression at home and aggression against South Africa's neighbours.

We reiterate that this intransigent attitude leaves us no option but to continuously escalate our multi-pronged offensive, including its armed component, to overthrow the regime of racist tyranny.

Though De Klerk speaks of a 'message of hope', his is in fact a message of despair, reflecting the deep and insurmountable crisis of the apartheid regime. The undemocratic elections of 6th September did not and could not do anything to change that.

The battleground on which we have to engage the enemy must encompass every facet of the system of minority domination — be it in the area of housing, recreation, health, schooling, social welfare or services. The State of Emergency and the restrictions imposed on our mass organisations are being continuously and consistently defied until they are rendered unworkable.

The massive rejection of the undemocratic dummy parliaments by the Coloured and Indian communities shows conclusively that no section of the oppressed is any longer prepared to tolerate this insult to our humanity. Those collaborators who insist on manning these racist institutions should know that they will soon be engulfed by the rising tide of popular struggle.

Central to the successes we have scored is the strengthening of our organisations. The democratic trade unions, the constituent bodies of the United Democratic Front, the Women's Organisations, the Youth and Student Congresses, the civics and community organisations have begun to recover from the dislocations caused by the State of Emergency. Ultimate success depends on our ability to create and build viable organisational structures that will pool the collective strength of our people and thus enhance our striking power.

Every activist must in the first instance be an organiser, whose principal task is to bring organisation to the unorganised.

Every constituency within the oppressed communities must be drawn into an organised democratic structure through which it can participate in the formulation of the strategies of struggle and make its own distinctive contribution to the national democratic struggle.

FORWARD WITH GREATER MASS ACTIONS!

Even as the racists inaugurate their new President, the apartheid regime is on the retreat. This is the time to press home the attack. Let us give De Klerk no breathing space. Our organised strength must be such as to overwhelm the defences of the regime.

We have, by our actions, compelled De Klerk and the racist ruling circles to concede the political space to conduct mass political processions. Having reclaimed the streets of our cities and towns and our inalienable right to demonstrate and publicly manifest our opposition to apartheid, we should not permit the regime to reverse these gains. Our acts of struggle must be consciously directed towards the total eradication of the system of apartheid, root and branch.

The first milestones along this road will be to make the system itself unworkable by refusing to obey its laws and to observe its provisions. The times demand decisive and clear-sighted leadership at every level — in the factories and other workplaces, at the local, regional and national levels. Only thus can we reap the fruits of the new possibilities created through struggle. To be effective, such leadership must be firmly rooted in organisations of the people, accountable to the people, and committed to the cause of the people.

The re-emergence of the Mass Democratic Movement, after the lull imposed by the regime of martial law, and the consolidation of its relations with other organised formations has demonstrated that the racist Tri-Cameral Parliament is irrelevant to the resolution of our country's problems. The agenda for a new South Africa is being written by the disenfranchised millions, under the leadership of the national liberation movement, the ANC.

Our strategic objective remains the seizure of power by the people. The immediate prospect for our country is hard-fought and unrelenting struggles, both military and political, which will demand ever greater sacrifices.

The ANC leadership and the entire membership of our movement extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the patriots who were murdered during the demonstrations of the 5th and 6th September. The blame for these brutal killings lies squarely at the feet of De Klerk and his colleagues.

We take this opportunity to commend the stand taken by Lieutenant Gregory Rockman as an example to be followed by all Black soldiers and police throughout the country. The violence that Lieutenant Rockman so boldly denounced should not be regarded as a temporary lapse into unprofessional behaviour by a handful of policemen. It is of the essence of apartheid. Let those in the regime's military, police and other security services, who are repelled by such violence, seize the opportunity to break ranks with the enemy and join the national struggle for democracy and social justice.

The thousands of white youth who demonstrated their rejection of the South African Death Force by declaring their refusal to be conscripted should be applauded by all democrats. We are confident that these represent a growing tide of opposition to racist repression among our white compatriots.

FORWARD WITH THE ARMED STRUGGLE!

A crucial aspect of our people's offensive is the restoration of peace in the Natal region. It is clear to all who hold the interests of our people dear, that the continuing bloodletting serves no one other than our common enemy. It is also plain that the matters that unite us are more profound and enduring than those that temporarily divide us. To this end the ANC has lent its unstinting support to every effort made by the leadership of the Mass Democratic Movement to bring about peace amongst our people in Natal.

We repeat our appeal to those who have as yet not committed themselves to the achievement of peace to set aside petty considerations and focus on this issue of national magnitude.

Mobilisation of our people in the rural areas and bantustans remains a high priority task. To be effective such mobilisation must proceed hand-in-hand with the co-ordination between urban and rural struggles. The Mass Democratic Movement, in all its formations, must build local and regional bodies of the peasants and rural poor to draw these into the mainstream of the national struggle.

The planned reburial of that great African patriot, *King Sabata Dalindyebo*, should be an occasion to demonstrate the lasting ties of solidarity that should bind traditional leaders to the people. Those traditional leaders who have rejected the bantustan policy should regard him as an example to be followed. By his own participation in and support of the struggle, King Sabata showed that chiefs will not be judged by the heroism of their ancestors but by their own actions in the present. Let us make this a truly national occasion by attending the memorial services and reburial ceremony in our thousands from all regions of our land.

Our triumphant march to freedom has already thrown the apartheid state into disarray. A powerful united front of all anti-apartheid forces, that brings together all those committed to one person, one vote in a united, democratic South Africa, is all the more imperative at this time. Such a front should rally around a common immediate programme demanding, amongst others:

- **The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners!**
- **The end of the State of Emergency!**
- **The removal of all troops from the townships!**
- **Lifting the ban on the ANC, the SACP and all other people's organisations!**
- **The repeal of all politically repressive legislation!**
- **The unconditional cessation of all political trials and executions!**
- **The unconditional release of all political detainees!**

and which will fight to:

- **Save the lives of the patriots presently on death row!**
- **Smash the Labour Relations Amendment Act!**

At the core of such a united front should be the United Democratic Front, Cosatu and the other democratic trade union and community organisations of the oppressed. All those committed to the principles and aims of the United Front, irrespective of their former affiliations, should also find a place in its ranks.

FORWARD TO THE SEIZURE OF POWER!