



**PEN PALS WANTED**



**STATEMENT OF  
THE NATIONAL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE ANC ON  
SOME QUESTIONS  
OF THE UNITY OF  
THE PATRIOTIC FORCES  
OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ANC ON SOME QUESTIONS OF THE UNITY OF THE PATRIOTIC FORCES OF SOUTH AFRICA

After its Second Session in 1973, the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress issued a Statement dealing with the situation inside South Africa. The statement was printed in the June 1973 issue of the "Sechaba", the Official Organ of the ANC.

Among other things that Statement said:

"The present historical moment in our struggle for the forcible seizure of power by the black majority in our country is characterised by an accelerated revolutionary upsurge of mass-based activity which has given a new impetus to the process of polarisation of forces.

"This popular upsurge, which is drawing in all the oppressed nationalities and virtually all sections among them — the workers, the peasants, the middle strata and the youth and the students — is expressing itself in more or less permanent organisational forms. In the last few years, for example, there has come into being a number of black organisations whose programmes, by espousing the democratic anti-racist positions that the ANC fights for, identify them as part of the genuine forces of the revolution". ...

"The political situation inside the country, the mood of the people and revolutionary acts of violence by the people show that the people are seeking to break through the limits which legal

struggle necessarily imposes on them.

“Our movement as the vanguard of the national liberation revolution must step up its activities inside the country, teaching the oppressed masses new and revolutionary methods of struggle. Guerrilla warfare skills must systematically be made available to our underground operatives” . . .

“In a struggle as ours which pursues the strategic objective of seizure of power and not reforms of a negotiated transfer of power, the conscious and purposive participation of the masses in the struggle, on their own behalf and relying on their own strength, is of decisive importance.

“It is therefore essential that at all times the liberation movement as a whole should continuously pay attention to the question of instilling into the masses confidence in their own strength and the conviction that they themselves will bring about their own liberation.

“Despite the repression and the divisive manoeuvres of the enemy through its separate development policies, this revolutionising spiritual force has again broken through into the open.

“The African majority in South Africa, and the black people in general, have for too long borne the burden of extreme national oppression. Consistently the enemy has sought to destroy their independent national will, first by making them landless vagrants in their own country, by destroying the best in their historical and cultural traditions, and perverting the rest to

serve the purpose of continued white domination, and by seeking to dehumanize them into a spiritually barren nation of slaves, thieves, murderers, dope-addicts and rapists.

“To be effective, a break with the cultural and spiritual mode that the enemy has imposed on us cannot but be sharp and violent. This is so because in the activity, the material act of a revolutionary break with white supremacy will of necessity itself be sharp and violent.

“The assertion of the revolutionary identity of the oppressed black peoples is therefore not an end in itself. It can be a vital force of the revolutionary action involving the masses of the people, for it is in struggle, in the actual physical confrontation with the enemy that the people gain a lasting confidence in their own strength and in the inevitability of final victory – it is through action that the people acquire true psychological emancipation.

“The recent inspiring actions of the black students have taken the struggle for liberation as a whole some considerable distance forward, not only in their heroism and discipline, but also in their demonstration of the importance and the necessity of securing and maintaining the unity of the main motive forces of the revolution – the oppressed peoples – their unity in mass action”. ...

“In the legal struggle, the idea which all the forces of the revolution must pursue with consistency is mass action – mass action as the main tactic, mass action to involve the people in struggle.

“The unity of the people in struggle is a fundamental prerequisite of victory. That unity can only be built up in mass action. The process of the formation and consolidation of that unity cannot proceed in a straight line, but will follow a zigzag pattern. In all these zigzags we must consistently fight for the united action of all democratic and anti-racist forces.

“It is important to realise the fact in practice that liberation cannot come about through the actions of only one or a few sections of the oppressed population, however militant these actions may be. The whole population has to be committed and engaged in struggle.

“The speed of a column on the march is determined by the pace of the slowest and weakest soldier and not the fittest and fastest. The most advanced sections should, therefore, at all times seek to advance the least developed ones, keeping in the forefront the principle of the greatest and highest unity of the people and at all times fighting against all tendencies of seeking to “go it alone”, through impatience and contempt for the less developed forces of the revolution.

“The enemy consistently seeks to disrupt this unity, aiming, in the first instance, at destroying the organisational unity of the liberation movement. He realises that so long as we are politically and organisationally united we represent a formidable force.

“He uses all means and methods within his powers to overthrow doubts on the honesty of the organisation’s leadership and revolutionary will of its most militant cadres. Lies, calumny and distortions are his stock-in-trade.

He seeks to split and demoralise us and render us impotent as a revolutionary force, remaining only a cadaver over which the remnants of our organisation will wage a self-destructive, fratricidal fight." ...

"On all these questions and others of a strategic and tactical nature, the voice of our organisation is still relatively weak. Yet every day it becomes more urgent that we bring to bear on the situation all the weight of the political experience and maturity of the ANC and profoundly popular revolutionary objectives contained in its political programme, all of which are, in any case, a summation of the collective experience of the people in struggle and therefore belong to the people themselves." ...

It has proved necessary to refer to these positions 6 years after they were stated, because the embattled people of South Africa are once more confronted by efforts which, however well-intentioned, objectively aim to divide the revolutionary forces of our country and to mislead some of our people.

In the recent past attempts have been made to form new organisations outside South Africa, detached from the masses of our people and from the realities of practical struggle that continues to rage behind the fortifications of fascist South Africa. These organisations have, in the main, sought to attract the youth which left South Africa after the heroic uprising that began in Soweto on June 16th, 1976, claiming to be a continuation, in one form or another, of the black organisations to which our Statement of 1973 referred.

As early as we have indicated, the ANC characterised

the "black consciousness" organisations as belonging among the genuine forces of revolution in our country by virtue of their activities and the democratic, anti-racist positions they espoused, positions which the ANC itself had fought for already 60 years by then.

Certain practical conclusions and initiatives had to follow from this political assessment. One of these was that the ANC had to establish formal contact with these organisations in the first instance through their representatives based outside the country. Regrettably, we found these representatives unresponsive to our efforts to forge a common approach and to build up common action in the struggle against the apartheid regime. For a whole full year we pursued our efforts to persuade these external representatives to see reason, to no avail.

Yet the imperatives of our struggle demanded that the ANC and these organisations should in fact establish the links that we sought. Consequently the National Executive Committee of the ANC decided to establish direct links with these organisations inside the country. This was done. As we expected, we found that these organisations themselves desired to establish relations of the kind that the ANC sought. What we did not expect was that their external representatives would have involved themselves in a campaign of lies, calumny and distortion against the ANC when reporting to their organisations inside the country aimed at defeating the unification of the fighting forces of our country and people. And yet this is exactly what these representatives had been doing for a full year.

We find today that some of these representatives are deeply involved in the attempts to set up the new



individuals continue to pose as genuine revolutionaries when their own personal histories shout out very loudly that these are outstanding examples of careerists who are motivated by personal interest that every revolutionary struggle throws up.

There are other patriots who were members of both these "black consciousness" organisations and the ANC who continue to contribute their share to the intensification of our struggle both inside and outside South Africa. These members of the ANC worked within the "black consciousness" organisations on the directions of the ANC.

These directions were very clear. All ANC activists were instructed that at all times they must protect the legality of the organisations within which they worked. They were instructed not to try to transform these organisations into appendages of the ANC but to work to expand and strengthen them as independent entities drawing in all forces that sought to struggle for a democratic South Africa. The ANC activists were directed to ensure that these organisations should pay attention to the principal task for which they existed, the task of mobilising the oppressed people into mass action. The Statement of our National Executive Committee of 1973 provided the basis and was a reflection of these directives.

It is a fact admitted by even the worst of our enemies that the overwhelming majority of the young people who left South Africa after June 16th, 1976 including members of the "black consciousness" organisations found their way into the ANC. To us this was not surprising. As a result of the revolutionary prestige that ANC activists had won within these organisations through their commit-

ment to struggle and their honesty, the youth turned to them for guidance when confronted with the question in 1976 and 1977, what next!

As we indicated in our Statement of 1973, already at that time the people were seeking to break through the limits which legal struggle necessarily imposes. To break through those limits meant in part to continue the struggle underground; in part it meant the taking up of arms.

The first patriots from the "black consciousness" organisations to reach out to the ANC as part of this process of breaking through the limits of legal struggle, entered the ANC as soon after the SASO-led strike of 1972. They came to the ANC on their own, convinced that since they sought to continue the struggle as underground operatives and as armed combatants, the ANC provided the logical base for them to fulfil these objectives. The ANC received them as patriots, regardless of the fact that on certain issues they did not see eye to eye with us.

The murderous police offensive that began on June 16th, 1976 also compelled the masses of our people to break through the limits which legal struggle necessarily imposes. Once more the youth of our country came to the ANC convinced that since they sought to continue the struggle as underground operatives and as armed combatants, the ANC provided the logical base for them to fulfil these objectives.

Once again the ANC received these people as patriots, regardless of the fact that on certain issues some of them did not see eye to eye with us. Today the generation that confronted the fascist police assassins in 1976 and 1977 has joined the ANC and our people's army Umkhonto We Sizwe in force and

is playing its role at all levels of our struggle as full members of our movement without let or hindrance.

All attempts to detach this generation from other generations of our fighting people and hence weaken the revolutionary movement as a whole, have failed. The same fate befell the schemes devised to detach the generation that set up the first "black consciousness" organisations in the late 1960's and the early '70's.

Efforts that are being made now to give organisational expression to the idea of the youth as an independent social force are doomed to fail. They will fail because the very youth at whom these efforts are directed are patriots who are motivated by a desire to continue the struggle. In the time this patriotic youth will find out the falsehoods that they have been fed concerning their own people's organisation, the ANC, and will inevitably come over to join their compatriots and their peers to intensify the offensive against the fascist apartheid regime. As before, the doors of ANC are open to receive every South African who is a patriot and is willing to commit his or her life to the liberation of our suffering people.

In our statement of 1973 we warned that the assertion of the revolutionary identity of the black oppressed peoples is not an end in itself. We said then that it is in struggle, in the actual physical confrontation with the enemy, it is through action that the people acquire true psychological emancipation. The uprising that began in Soweto in 1976 amply demonstrated the correctness of that thesis.

The fact of the matter is that today the masses of our people are demanding action. Anybody who has even the weakest of links with these masses knows this is to be so. In the mass rallies that took place throughout our country in observance of the 3rd anniversary of the Soweto uprising this message came through clearly and sharply.

Action is therefore what is required of any South African who calls himself or herself a patriot. The members of the ANC and Umkhonto We Sizwe are involved in this action. Even the enemy has felt obliged to admit this fact publicly. Yet at this moment when dedicated cadres of our movement, both young and old, are responding to the demand of our people for action, some individuals outside our country are issuing calls to demobilise these cadres in the name of the "black consciousness movement".

These individuals are busy convening conferences not to plan or to execute action against fascist tyranny in our country. Rather they are calling conferences ostensibly to consider what should happen to members of the "black consciousness movement" outside South Africa, a question which was settled inside and outside South Africa a long time ago. The conclusion therefore becomes inescapable that what these individuals seek to achieve is the avoidance of action against the apartheid regime while continuing to pose as people who are interested in the liberation struggle.

The vast majority of the membership of the "black consciousness" organisations knew as we did that such consciousness is not an end in itself, but was a vital force to organise the people in revolutionary

action. It remains for the minority who did not understand this to strive to do so: certainly the attempt to pull back the majority to the retrogressive positions of the minority is bound to fail.

In our Statement of 1973 we called on the advanced contingents among our people to fight against all tendencies of seeking to "go it alone" through impatience and contempt for the less developed forces of the revolution. In keeping with that strategic outlook the ANC has exercised considerable patience in the face of a campaign of calumny some of which originated from individuals who are involved in the current attempts to set up the new organisations we have spoken of.

Some of these individuals took it upon themselves to concoct all manner of stories about the ANC aimed at discrediting our organisation, its policy, strategy and tactics and its leadership. For years charges were made which sought to impugn the moral integrity of the leaders of our movement and deliberately to misrepresent the nature and purposes of our offensive against the enemy.

Over the years we have followed a line of action which sought to educate these individuals, believing that public denunciation of their actions would in fact be evidence of impatience on our part and the abdication of our task of bringing up the less developed forces of our revolution. Though its patience is not inexhaustible, the ANC is still determined to pursue this line in the interests of the maximum unity of our people.

We therefore renew our call to all those who might feel that the present leadership of our movement might have erred in the conduct of the struggle or in

any way compromised its progress, to approach the ANC directly and lay whatever charges they might have against us. For, as we said, the experience and maturity, the political programme of the ANC and the ANC itself are a summation of the collective experience of the people in struggle and therefore belong to the people themselves. The ANC in all its ranks therefore holds itself accountable to the people and has never avoided giving account of itself to the people. Some of the individuals who are engaged in the efforts to set up new organisations have direct, personal experience of this and will themselves sooner or later have to give an account of their own activities over the last few years to the masses of our people.

This statement is addressed to our own people in a deliberate effort to rescue those of our compatriots who are unwittingly drifting out of the mainstream of revolutionary struggle into peripheral organisations in which they will end up by engaging in self-destructive fratricidal fights, as has happened with such peripheral organisations before.

However, we cannot fail to mention that our enemy as well as some international forces which wish us to consider them as friends and allies of our struggling people also entertain the vain hope that there is still a chance to divide our people and defeat their efforts by setting up a so-called "third force" to oppose the ANC. To those who would be our allies we can only appeal that they should desist from actions which can only serve the interests of our common enemy. The enemy will, is always, pursue the hopeless job of fishing in muddy waters. To survive he must do that. Our own uninterrupted offensive demands that we defeat him in these efforts.

Speaking in the name of the thousands upon thousands of young people who demonstrated in South Africa against the criminal execution of Solomon Mahlangu, member of the ANC and combatant of Umkhonto We Sizwe and who identify themselves with the cause for which he stood: speaking in the name of the thousands of the young people, members of the ANC in all its sections and members of Umkhonto We Sizwe, former members of the entire spectrum of the now-banned "black consciousness" organisations inside and outside South Africa: speaking in the name of our whole membership at home and abroad, in and out of jail, both young and old, our National Executive Committee pledges that the African National Congress will remain true to its character as the vanguard of our national liberation revolution, united within itself politically and organisationally, drawing into its ranks all the patriotic forces of our country, uniting all our people into mass political and military action for the seizure of power by the people themselves and the reconstruction of South Africa as a democratic, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and peace-loving African country.

Alfred Nzo  
Secretary General  
for the National Executive Committee.