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interviews statements debates

educated people who can't even speak English language. All the speakers there spoke in English and nothing was translated into the un-educated people's languages. The UDF, like other intellectuals organisations, had forgotten us. I am a worker, and the kind of work I do's the lowest kind. I've been to school but I just went to school up to standard five. But in the trade union movement, I and all other workers, even the workers who never been to school, feel at home.

We are not degraded or forgotten as if we don't exist. We don't measure people by education, by the kind of work a man does, neither by collar or by colour, we are all equal in the trade union, and we believe and practise democracy.

Because of these circumstances, including those ones already stated by the unions in the Cape Times, it is not wise for the unions to join any other organisation which is not a worker's organisation. Therefore the trade unions have decided to form a workers federation, even before the UDF idea. But up to this day they are still very busy with it, because they have to make sure that it is not built in the air, and is also controlled by its members.(the workers). Building up a good thing is not an easy thing, and a foundation is a very, very important thing because the whole structure has to balance on the foundation. So it needs to be a firm foundation.

This does not mean that the unions don't support the UDF and many other organisations which are also fighting for human rights. It does not even mean that the trade union members can't join those organisations, that is encourage by the unions, although those organisations are not controlled or fully-controlled by un-educated people although most of the money in those organisations may be coming from them (the un-educated people).

Yours in the struggle for a better day.

M Mbothwe, 'The Dustman'.

THE UDF ON THE UNIONS

The SALB interviewed Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, publicity secretary of the United Democratic Front, at Khotso House, Johannesburg on the 13th October 1983.

What is a united democratic front?

It is an alliance of a wide spectrum of organisations: workers', youth, church, sporting organisations and so on. The UDF is an alliance specifically in opposition to the constitutional proposals and the Koornhof Bills. It is an umbrella body seeking to co-ordinate organisations previously acting independently.

Does this involve an alliance of different classes?

An alliance of classes is built into the United Democratic Front. For example workers' organisations and professional organisations contain different classes. But the United Democratic Front is essentially an alliance of organisations.

How was the UDF formed?

At the time when the President's Council proposals and the Koornhof Bills were put forward opposition to them was coming from small, unco-ordinated organisations. At the anti-SAIOC (Anti-South African Indian Council) meeting in Johannesburg in January Dr Boesak suggested that a united democratic front should be formed.

The call was well received and organisations represented at the meeting such as the Natal Indian Congress, the Joint Rent Action Committee and individuals who were members of the Cape Housing Action Committee contacted their members in other regions. The idea was passed on and mobilisation took place especially in Natal, the Transvaal and

interviews statements debates

the Western Cape. In these areas UDF regions were being formed at meetings in April, May and June.

Further consultation led to the decision to launch the UDF nationally, even though not all the regions had been formed, because of the urgency of the situation. At the time of the national launch, on the 20th of August, the only fully structured regions were the Transvaal, Natal and the Cape. The other regions did their best but were not properly constituted.

Now we are organising in the North Western Cape, the Eastern Cape and Border region and the Free State. Apart from meetings being banned we are continuing to make strides in gaining support.

The UDF took nine months to form itself whereas the union movement has taken ten years to reach its present position. How do you account for this difference?

The UDF has organised organisations, it has not had to organise individuals in the same way as a trade union, which is more difficult and takes much longer. The strength of the UDF depends of the strength of the organisations which constitute it.

rate
of
growth
U.D.F.
unions.

To what extent have you gained support amongst workers?

We are not satisfied that we have achieved as much trade union support as we had hoped for. But we see the participation of workers in the UDF as important. The more workers come in the closer we are to gaining a truly national character. South Africa is still under colonial conditions and the struggle against imperialism is a struggle against capitalism. For this reason the working class must provide the backbone of the struggle.

The question of sizes of organisations must be considered. For example professional organisations tend to be smaller than trade unions. In this regard organisations must receive representation.

interviews statements debates

proportionate to their strength in numbers.

What do you mean by "a truly national character"?

We mean by this that we are non-racial, which means we embrace all races, and that we bring together all classes. The presence of workers and the middle classes in the UDF is well discernable, but a significant section of the working class in some major independent unions still remains outside our fold.

Do you feel, then, that whites have a contribution to make in the struggle?

Yes, for example students who were members of Nusas (the National Union of South African Students) became stalwarts of the union movement.

Does your term "national" also include all regions in South Africa?

Yes, by "national" we mean all classes, all regions and all races.

To what extent does the UDF have a presence in the Bantustans?

We need a presence in these areas, but there the repression is worst. We have a strong presence in the Ciskei, but support for the UDF there is heavily suppressed.

Is your support in the Ciskei mainly through Saawu (South African Allied Workers' Union)?

Yes, mainly through Saawu but we have other support, as was shown by the numbers at the launching of the UDF in that region.

The Transkei is very different. Our supporters there can't express their support because they fear the consequences. In Zululand Gatcha (Buthelezi)

interviews statements debates

claims that everyone belongs to Inkatha. It is difficult for anyone to show support for the UDF. But as support grows for the UDF in the urban areas amongst contract workers our message will be carried back to these areas.

What are the structures of the UDF?

The Transvaal region, for example, has a president, two secretaries, a treasurer and other executive members. Each region is affiliated to the national executive. The three regional presidents are also national presidents, but this is not a requirement, they just happen to have been elected to both positions. If an issue arises one of the two regional secretaries will call a regional general council. This is made up of delegates from the organisations affiliated to the UDF. The regional executive committee is elected by the regional general council. It does not include representatives from each affiliated organisation as this would make it too unwieldy. The executive committee runs the day-to-day affairs of the UDF.

In a few cases there are organisations which are national. Clause 5 of the UDF Working Principles provides for these organisations to affiliate nationally. The terms of their membership is decided by the national executive in consultation with the regional councils.

When an organisation has affiliated to the UDF it retains its independence. It cedes its independence only in regard to opposition to the constitutional proposals and the Koornhof Bills.

Could you briefly explain the UDF's programme of action?

We have set broad objectives, some activities may be possible in the Western Cape and others in the Transvaal. In the Transvaal, area committees are being established. There are to be workshops, door-to-door campaigns and mass meetings. The mass

interviews statements debates

meetings give people a feeling of belonging together, but the door-to-door visits are the most important because people can ask questions. We are planning a peoples' weekend at the end of October at which there will be vigils focusing on the legislation. This will be part of the build up to regional or provincial rallies on the eve of November the 2nd.

How do you see the role of the UDF differing from that of other organisations, particularly the unions?

* | The unions mainly handle the problems of working class people at the factory floor level. Some people have criticised unions for not taking up political issues, but the unions are not well equipt to handle political issues.

The members of trade unions can also participate in other organisations which take up other issues, for example the pass laws, bus fares, rents. Such issues require a different type of organisation.

Some unions, such as Saawu the Food and Canning Workers' Union, GWU (General Workers' Union) and others have taken up such issues in the past. With the emergence of the UDF do you see the role of these unions changing?

These unions were in the past expected to take the lead. Workers turned to the unions, but this could have jeopardised the unions. Now they can encourage workers to join other organisations which take up these issues. Some unions have done this. To link to the community organisations is not to sell out. The UDF can be used to fight issues that unions cannot directly fight.

The criticism has been made by some of the independent unions that the UDF is dominated by middle class people and that workers find it difficult to participate. The language used is

interviews statements debates

English and workers can't compete with the debating skills of the middle classes.

It is true that the middle class tends to take over leadership and dominate community based organisations. The question is whether the working class can win genuine allies from the middle classes, for example intellectuals. Workers must join not only to give the UDF numbers but also direction; to make their voice heard. Where possible workers must also assume positions of leadership. The challenge for the UDF is whether it can evolve effective democratic processes to enable every constituent organisation to participate in the running of all the affairs of the front. *

The criticism is also made that decisions are taken and then put to meetings for ratification, not for discussion.

Whilst it is true that we are not without shortcomings, some of the criticisms come out of ignorance. People who do not take part in the UDF cannot know who took the decisions because they were not at the meetings. If workers are not there the decisions will be taken by those who are present. But once they join they will decide. Where the democratic processes are not followed the workers will ask, "Who took that decision?"

If the unions came into the UDF they could take up the programme of action and participate in the way they want to, but for the time being those in the UDF will decide issues. *

At the national launching of the UDF some unions affiliated and others decided not to affiliate but nevertheless gave their support. This suggests that the support for the UDF is very wide amongst the independent unions, but that there are differences over the best way of giving support. Why do you feel that the unions should formally affiliate to the UDF?

Resistance to the constitutional proposals and the Koornhof Bills should not be restricted to one class. It is not merely workers who are affected but a combination of people; of classes. If the UDF creates a wider unity then the unions should join.

Some unions have said that joining the UDF may have divisive effects within their organisations because their members have differing political affiliations. It is also argued that the fact that some unions have joined and others have not is making union unity more difficult.

We have not made any union join. Every union will consider whether or not to join and the democratic processes within the unions will take their course.

The disunity amongst the unions is disappointing. We sent a letter to the feasibility committee giving our solidarity to the unions in their search for unity. We also stated that workers must be organised beyond the factory and need to form an alliance with other classes and that the UDF is the best forum for this.

It seems then that there are a number of possible ways in which workers could join the UDF: they could join as individuals or through their unions joining or through a federation of unions joining. Why in fact does the UDF see it as necessary for unions to become members?

The problem with a loose affiliation is that it is not easy to co-ordinate and to mobilise people. The situation would be greatly improved if unity on the factory floor and unity in the communities could be achieved. Combining unity at both these levels would greatly enhance the struggle. It would be easier to take decisions and to take action if the trade

unions had already formed themselves into a single federation.

interviews statements debates

CCAWUSA ON POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

The Commercial, Catering and Allied Worker's Union of South Africa was to discuss the question of affiliation to political organisations at its National Conference on the 5-7th of November, but failed to complete the agenda. The following resolution was submitted by one of the union's branches to the conference.

- a) Because CCAWUSA's membership consists of people who support different political organisations, conference resolves that the union should not affiliate to any particular one.
- b) However, conference expresses its support for all organisations fighting for a free, equal and democratic South Africa. CCAWUSA should encourage its individual members to take part in the activities of such organisations in their personal capacities.
- c) When such organisations hold meetings or have projects whose objects are in line with the principles and policies of CCAWUSA, the union or individuals mandated by the union may participate in these as CCAWUSA or representatives of CCAWUSA.

CUSA ON POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

The General Secretary of The Council of Unions of South Africa sent this resolution to the SALB in response to a request for a statement on its position in relation to political organisations.

During March and August this year the CUSA office had received a request from the National Forum Committee (NFC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) and one other agency for its views and commitment on the Constitutional Proposals.

The three requests were put to the National Executive Committee during April. It was agreed that the matter be discussed at the Joint Executive Council (JEC) of CUSA on the 30 April 1983.

The requests together with a draft resolution was prepared for the JEC meeting. A lengthy debate took place on various aspects. Amongst other issues discussed were the following:

- 1) the nature and philosophy of the organisations requesting the commitment
- 2) the content of the CUSA response in the resolution
- 3) the commitment CUSA was able to provide and
- 4) the nature and content of the Constitutional Proposals

The following resolution was then unanimously adopted:

"Having examined the proposals of the regime on the constitution,

Having further examined the basis of the call by various organisations regarding the constitutional proposals,

Noting that the Nationalist Party is presently in disarray and that these proposals may therefore be changed to impose White rule under different

interviews statements debates

guise even through a referendum,

Knowing that the White opposition forces and parties are themselves divided and without any effect.

The Council of Unions of South Africa now therefore:

- * wishes to place on record its complete and total rejection to the proposal
- * pledges itself to participate in every forum to work towards the achievement of a just and democratic society
- * calls upon its members to lend their individual support to all efforts of community organisations to end this foolish plan
- * pledges itself to all forces and all efforts to work towards a common citizenship in an undivided democratic and just society."

Following the response of various unions and the nature of press reports together with intransigent positions adopted by some sections of the community CUSA is involved currently on an ongoing examination of its attitude and role in the UDF and the NFC.

BUREAUCRACY IS KILLING TUCSA

Introduction

For those in the labour movement who doubt that the most important problem facing workers can be the bankruptcy of their own leadership, the experience of the Trade Union Council of South Africa is worth examining. In TUCSA, more perhaps than in any other union body in the country, the voice of workers has been reduced to a whisper in the grip of bureaucracy.

Here I will examine the leadership crisis in TUCSA and suggest remedies to the problems. The history of TUCSA is well documented and will not be repeated here. However it is important to note that the current leadership of TUCSA, which includes ex-Sactu (South African Congress of Trade Unions) stalwarts like Lucy Mvubelo and Norman Daniels, for the most part have been around for a long time. It is this almost entirely white "old guard", (1) which completely dominates the leading bodies in TUCSA and, together with its allies, many of whom occupy the leading positions in the most powerful TUCSA Unions, comprises the heart of TUCSA's bureaucratic machine. (2)

The performance of this bureaucracy at TUCSA's 29th Annual Conference in Port Elizabeth (P.E.) last month (where they completely monopolised proceedings) was, despite the fact that S.A. is in the midst of one of the most turbulent periods in her history, not substantially different to previous years. Except in one crucial aspect.

As they bowed more deeply in the direction of big business and "verligte" government, they attacked the emerging union movement and in particular the unregistered unions. The climax of this attack was their overwhelming support for a resolution calling on the government to ban all unregistered trade unions. (3)

Collection Number: AK2117

DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: **Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location: **Johannesburg**

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