

Bert "9"

A. PREAMBLE

This is the second NEC session this year. It is also the first since the official launch of the Million Signature Campaign four months ago. At that stage many of our regions were still paralysed by the tensions generated by the debates of the December conference and the issue of the referendums for the Indian and Coloured communities. To a large extent these tensions have now dissipated especially as much of our attention has been focussed on the M.S.C. lately. It will be a major task of this N.E.C. to make an assessment of the M.S.C. and on the basis of regional reports which will be tabled during this session, give definite guidelines to our anti-election campaign and lay some general basis for work in the post-election period. Additional to matters of daily activities of the Front, this session must evaluate such issues as the education crisis, the implications of P.W. Botha's trip, Nkomati accord and the secret land deal between South Africa and Swaziland.

B. MILLION SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN

To date, four months after its launch, this campaign has yielded only an approximate two hundred thousand signatures leaving us with a staggering figure of eight hundred thousand signatures still to be collected within the next two months. Going by our performance so far it may be said that if in four months we collected two hundred thousand signatures in the remaining two months we shall add another one hundred thousand only. If this is indeed so we are deep in a crisis. In these circumstances we must take a fresh look at ourselves.

C. ANTI-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

When we started the Million Signature Campaign we said that in part it would lay the foundation for a vigorous anti-election campaign. Now, ten weeks away from the election date, and given our level of performance in the M.S.C. we ^{have to} decide on the best course to take. In this regard this session must find ways of and commit itself to active forms of generating a lively campaign to boycott these elections. Room must also be found to tie in the activities of other extra-parliamentary groupings that are without the Front. In some areas where the Front has not yet consolidated itself, and where there are groupings that are willing to take up the campaign but would not like to be identified with the Front, it may be necessary for us to consider some anti-elections ad hoc structures in the interest of unity in action.

Perhaps M.S.C. and the anti-election campaign are matters of a do or die nature for the Front. The Front was formed specifically to oppose the so-called New Deal. If we fail to score success at the level of these campaigns what reason do we have to justify our continued presence on the S.A. political scene?

D. THE STATE OF THE FRONT

It is nine months since we launched the Front and whilst we have boasted of six hundred organisations and approximately 1.5 million membership the practical question of keeping these affiliates together and properly co-ordinated proved to be more complex. And yet this is the test of the strength of the Front. Much of the insight into every region will be revealed by regional reports. All we do here is to give brief glimpses of the head office.

1. NATAL

- 1.1 - all affiliates fairly active within area committees. Greater Durban and Pietermaritzburg are ahead of other Natal areas.
- 1.2 - Inkatha is major obstacle in this region, but Front is able to hold its own in all communities and is gaining ground.
- 1.3 - Relations with unions ^{are} not satisfactory.

2. WESTERN CAPE

- 2.1 - Lively participation by affiliates is reflected in the M.S.C. figures. Head office has however observed periodic lapses between some of the areas and some affiliates.
- 2.2 - This region has penetrated deep into rural and platteland areas.
- 2.3 - Relations with unions ^{are} fair.

3. TRANSVAAL

- 3.1 - Minimal co-ordination between affiliates and R.E.C. and, among affiliates themselves. All this is reflected by performance in the M.S.C.
- 3.2 - Administration of this region is very disturbing.
- 3.3 - Some measure of contact with rural areas particularly Northern and Eastern Transvaal has been made.
- 3.4 - Lapses of contact between areas are observable and at times racial overtones are detectable.
- 3.5 - Relations with union periodically good and, largely due to lack of participation by our affiliates, often poor.

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4. EASTERN CAPE

- 4.1 - Affiliates in some areas are strong and active in the M.S.C. but in other areas we are very weak.
- 4.2 - R.E.C. has very irregular meetings and this leaves the region without guidance and also affects the efficiency of the R.G.C.
- 4.3 - Affiliated unions in this region fairly weak and stronger unions still distant from reach.
- 4.4 - This region lacks resources but has potential *to grow*.

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5. BORDER

- 5.1 - There are a number of strong area units which show growth potential.
- 5.2 - Affiliates are faced with heavy repression. Strong trade union links have been forged.
- 5.3 - There are very strong links with rural communities.
- 5.4 - Poor resources and media are its urgent problems.

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6. ORANGE FREE STATE

- 6.1 - There are no affiliated organisations except COSAS but support for UDF is abundant. Youth Congresses supportive of the Front on the increase. In Bloemfontein, Manyanya? Youth Congress and Thaboy Youth Congress in Welkom.
- 6.2 - Region lacks resources and there is little publicity.
- 6.3 - Such unions as NUM, (Cawusa and Naawu are moving into this region. Labour Party is moving in too.
- 6.4 - Heavy repression takes the form of confiscation of publications, T-shirts, assault on activists and raids on homes of suspected sympathisers and supporters.

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7. NORTHERN CAPE

- 7.1 - We have about nine or ten affiliates in this region based mainly in rural and semi-rural reas.
- 7.2 - Interim structure of UDF in existence.
- 7.3 - Church playing progressive role.
- 7.4 - Full-time regional organiser??
- 7.5 - Region in dire need of resources.

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Over and above all this there are areas such as Northern Transvaal and Northern Natal where rudimentary work has begun and must be intensified. Then, there are also areas such as Transkei, Gazankula, -Venda, large parts of Bophutatswana and Qwaqwa which still remain virgin territories to the United Democratic Front. We must remind N.E.C. that with the intensification of the forced removals programme these areas will increasingly demand our attention.

John N. Rood off

E. REMOVALS

The system of forced removals and violent uprooting of families all over the country is intensifying. To date over 3,½ million people have been resettled (according to the Surplus Peoples Project (S.P.P.)). Dr. Koornhof announced in parliament recently that the programme of removals shall have been completed by 1988. This announcement indicates clearly that the S.A. government will stop at nothing in its pursuit of the policy of uprooting families.

The following are some of the areas facing the threat of being removed:-

Cross Roads in Cape Town, Huhudi in the Northern Cape, Leandra and Kwa-Ngema in the Transvaal, Mgwali in the Border and Warwick and Inanda in Natal. The people of Mogopa have already been moved. They are now in a place called Pachsdraai. In Natal St. Wendolin's Mission and Lamontville are facing the threat of being incorporated into the Kwa-Zulu Bantustan.

Although the Front has a limited presence in these areas, we have not done enough. We must begin to intervene in a more systematic way.

F. EDUCATION

There is a deepening crisis in the country today. Conditions similar to those which preceeded the 1976 uprisings are unfolding very rapidly. To date 29 000 students have been affected by the crisis in schools and universities.

The University of Transkei has been closed down. Six schools in Pretoria affecting 6 000 students have been closed down until the end of the year. In Bloemfontein one student was shot. He later escaped assassination by people suspected to be security police. In Vryburg 18 students were convicted and given 10 cuts each. 20 students have been arrested in Pretoria. In Cradock about 22 people were arrested. Six of them have been charged with intimidation and public violence. Amongst those detained is the leadership of the Cradock Residents Association - an affiliate of the UDF.

On Tuesday 29th May 1984, students in almost all universities boycotted classes in response to the call by the Azaso to observe a National Day of Solidarity with students affected by the closure of schools.

This N.E.C. meeting must develop an approach to this question.

F. GENERAL SALES TAX AND FOOD PRICES

This year the S.A. government has unleashed a heavy attack on the standard of living of the people with the increase to ten percent of G.S.T. and, the increase on maize prices and other basic foodstuffs. Some consumer organisations have already emerged around the price increases. Unions - Fosatu in particular had already called for the scrapping of G.S.T. on certain basic foodstuffs. Whilst the government seems to have responded positively to this call, it has ensured however, that it recovers this loss through its massive 66,6% G.S.T. increase in one year.

The Front, in order to increase its relevance, must begin to seek ways of addressing itself to some of these concrete problems affecting thousands of its supporters. We must in this N.E.C. meeting look critically into the extent to which our affiliates are taking up the price increases. We must take the initiative in terms of opposing the G.S.T. and examine the possibility of developing consumer structures or strengthening the existing ones.

G. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. *letter written to Morgan Blair*

1.1 PUBLICITY

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Since the last N.E.C. meeting at least four people have been abroad to do work for the Front. Support for the Front is growing abroad. Extensive amount of publicity work has been done during the last six weeks.

The "Let Live" Prize awarded to the Front on May 27, 1984 has given a boost to our publicity work at that level.

English Rugby Tour

1.2 REBEL BRITISH LIONS TOUR

The position of the Front was presented to support groups on the matter.

A letter was written to the SANROC expressing UDF's opposition to the tour.

1.3 NEW ZEALAND REBEL TOUR

A letter was sent to Halt All Rugby Tours (HART) stating the view of the UDF on the impending tour by the New Zealand rugby team. *and also to New Zealand Rugby Board* *Mulholland*

2. ACCORDS

The Nkomati Accord has been concluded and secret negotiations for the excision to Swaziland of part of the South African land are going on between P.W. Botha and the Swazi government. Resistance on the part of the people of ka Ngwane is building up.

3. BOTHA'S "CRUSADE"

P.W. Botha has gone abroad to sell his so-called reform and his illusory peace initiatives for Southern Africa. Efforts have been made by the national office to present the position of the Front on the trip. The message has been telexed to organisations and major newspapers.

The Nkomati and the Swaziland Accords and, P.W. Botha's trip abroad are burning political questions with possible implications for the Democratic Movement in our country. For this reason we would like, even at this late hour, to impress upon this N.E.C. the need to address itself to these questions and to emerge out of this meeting with a clear UDF position. The N.E.C. must for instance consider a national campaign against the land deal between Swaziland and the South African Government. This is a national question which the Front must not leave to the Ka Ngwane Bantustan to handle alone. A definite recommendation in this regard must be made.

H. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Front must through its National and Regional offices intensify its efforts to establish and to strengthen links with organisations still not part of it. Every region must begin to actualise its commitment to the broadening of the Front. Faced with the mammoth task of collecting a million signatures and engaging in an effective boycott of the tri-cameral elections within the next 10 months, to win the support of these organisations is very crucial.

Over the last seven months several meetings have been held between the UDF and unions that are not affiliated yet. Most of the unions approached (by the UDF) indicated their willingness to co-operate in some campaigns of the UDF, including the M.S.C.

However, no vigorous follow-up has been made by the Front. Fresh efforts need to be made with regard to strengthening relationships between the Front and the unions and, other organisations.

I. CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE FRONT

The S.A. Government has effectively applied military, economic and political pressure on its neighbours. It has forced them to sign sham peace pacts. The focus is now shifting to the internal opposition. The UDF seems to be its prime target in this regard.

The nine (9) pamphlets distributed throughout the country during the last 2 weeks alleging that the UDF is an ANC Front, and also urging people not to support the M.S.C., the harassment and detention of UDF activists throughout the country (particularly in Bloemfontein), the refusal of passports to the leadership of the Front, the threats of a banning order to the president of the Border Region, the banning of the UDF publications and those of institutions supporting its programmes, and the intimidation of churches and other bodies showing willingness to provide venues for the UDF public meetings, indicate clearly the growing intolerance on the part of the state towards the Front and its preparedness to undermine the work and success of the UDF.

On the other hand the allies of the state who are frustrated by the work of the UDF, such as Sebe and his green beretts, Mangope and Buthelezi are now becoming more vicious and ruthless in dealing with the leadership and the supporters of the Front. The banning of our affiliates in Kwa-Zulu, the attack on one of our presidents Cde. A. Gumede by the Inkatha supporters, the dismissal of our activists from their teaching posts by Mangope and continued harassment of the workers of the Front by Sebe are glaring examples of growing intolerance and assault on the Front from these quarters.

This N.E.C. meeting must begin to think seriously on how to respond in this connection.

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