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## 1976 AND AFTER

Mr Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, fellow compatriots and countrymen. Our presence here this afternoon should not be viewed as merely a gathering of remembrance. This meeting should be regarded as a token of resistance against an inhuman system of a government guilty of the most callous and barbaric atrocities ever levelled against a people. People often talk of nazism and fascism as if they are mere memories in the shameful pages of history, hopeful that humankind will forever be vigilant NEVER to relive those moments. But for us who live in South Africa today, fascism and nazism are well and alive in Pretoria. Their fervour brought June 16 1976. Their consistent weight weighs heavily in the lives of the oppressed and exploited masses of our people. In this regard, it becomes imperative that today, eight years from that fateful day of June 16 1976, we must not be content with mere remembrances. We must take full stock not only of the causes of such brutal killings, but also command a fundamental understanding of the social forces, the national and international interconnections that characterises the social fabric of the day.

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Bantu education as a sham system of education was not conjured up by its architects simply because the people who were to become its victims were black by colour. It found its basis in the very economic structure that held the social fabric then. After the military conquest of our forefathers, the oppressor realized that until he could inculcate a pseudo culture that would finally obliterate any sense of self respect and dignity, even his military might was not enough to consistently keep the vanquished in a position of perpetual servitude. With the "discovery" of more arable land, diamonds and later gold, there was a perpetual hunger for more labour, vast unskilled labour resources that required no high education necessitated a system of an inferior education. To complete the picture, this inferior education was to be dished out at tribal and racially segregated institutions. With residential areas separated on the basis of ethnicity, and economic power in the hands of few, while political power was the domain of a white minority, the picture of racial capitalism was complete. The architects of this diabolic system thought that the future

was secure in their hands. It was until June 1976 when the youth in the country exploded with a resounding note that the falacies of Apartheid and racial capitalism shook to the core.

### LESSONS OF THE PAST

In our plans for the future, we are often compelled to look back at the past & without emotions subject ourselves to criticism, so that we may eliminate chance and error. Often people look at the campaign against Bantu Education as if its history started in 1976. Little do we recall that the campaign has a tradition that dates back even to the early 50's. Often when we look at student political activity, our point of departure is 1968, forgetting the earlier student organizations whose members <sup>politically</sup> graduated into youth leagues and Robben Islanders. Barely a decade from now, we shall also have forgotten that today's victims of the Pretoria hangman are the same school uniformed youngmen <sup>of '76</sup>. Those youngmen were missed by the notorious 'stray bullets' in '76, only to go down as stalwarts and heroes of their people in 1984. So that what we see is the same continuity of the changing phase of struggle.

One of the lessons to learn from the bitter experiences of June '76 are that, Students cannot go it alone to emancipation. When the students appealed to their working parents to stay at home in '76, '77 and '80. It was an early recognition of an important fact, that the student movement must seek links with other permanent classes and organization in the community.

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The historic nature of this day lies in the fact that to-day, a wide range of organizations from the church, community, student, cultural, labour and political fields have converged around the neck of a new-look reformed Apartheid. The very presence of organization from so broad a spectrum spells the death knell of this abhorrible system of Apartheid, because, it is a proof to the architects of this system, and to the international world that no amount of intimidation, no amount of arrests and indiscriminate killings, indeed, no amount of political subterfuge and cheating can remove the burning desire of a united people on the march to freedom and human dignity.

An attempt to understand the logic of the racist rulers of this country is a land mine of perplexing surprises... When they came to power in 1948, they did so under the banner of racism. From then on our people have had to live under the most harrowing system ever known in this continent, law after law was passed in parliament the consequence of which was to make our people a voiceless people almost non-existent in the eyes of the rulers. Black people, except in the kitchen became lepers who must be banished to forlorn backyards of this land where they were to become "nations" in their own bush republics. Black people were supposed to understand when they are racially classified and group apart. We were expected to say "ja baas" to separate unequal education, when our citizenship is stripped off and we

are made into a non-people in the country of our origin, we were expected to say Dankie Baas! We are expected to remain content to eke out a life of poverty, when the glossy palaces of the ruler and his economic might are built on the blood, sweat and tears of our people. We are expected not to resist this shameful and humiliating existence, when we raise our voices in rejection we are banned, when a sense of manhood and self-respect in us prompt us to resist this unacceptable and inhuman state of affairs, we are jailed, exiled, called agitators and terrorists. All this we are expected to simply throw into the oblivion of submission and despair, because as the word goes "Mr P.W. Botha is a pragmatic leader who sees the need to scrap unacceptable Apartheid". Thus the so-called 'new constitution'.

Surely as we gather here this afternoon, we need to stop and ponder on the full meaning and significance of these highly peddled wares of Apartheid, namely the present P.C. proposals and the Koorhof bills. We need to find their basis and in so doing relate them to the actual situation as regards the lives and conditions of the oppressed and toiling masses. In doing so, we cannot obviate the crisis in which the South African regime finds itself, which crisis is by and large the main contributory factor to these latest gimmicks of white racial domination.

The South African apartheid regime is faced with a severe economic and political crisis. The link that the local economy has with international capital has bequeathed it with such problems as the rising rate of inflation, the steady centralisation of the various sectors of the economy into fewer hands, a discernible monopoly, the steady drop in profit margins thus the reluctance of certain sections of the private sector to expand, with the result that there is a high rate of unemployment (<sup>37000 in July 82</sup> <sup>70000 in March 83</sup>). Also its corollary, the rising worker militancy.

From 1970 to 1976 there were 1485 work stoppages involving thousands of workers; there has simultaneously emerged a number of trade unions in recent years. The development of the system of capitalism in South Africa has been inextricably linked with racial domination. One political scientist describes it as having:

"developed according to a primarily racial formulae for the growth of capital and the control of labour. The policies of the apartheid state have ensured that capital accumulation is largely a white prerogative, sponsored by a plentiful, cheap and repressively controlled workforce which is predominantly african, coloured and Asian"

The consequential political relations have also been racially defined, with the central state being based on the incorporation of all whites as political equals irrespective of their class position. The flip side

This coin has been that black people whether worker, student, lawyer, peasant or trader are excluded from the main political representation, thus experiencing equal political oppression.

The crisis of the Apartheid regime also emanates from the fact that, whereas in the yesteryears, the economy was based on that vast unskilled labour force, when the small white skilled labour force could get support from immigrants to maintain acceptable growth and profit margins, especially after the recessions of the early 60's. It can no longer do so due to its own transition to an economy based on more sophisticated machinery, production methods, skilled and professional labour. This development has led to the many summits between the regime and the leading figures in the private sector. At this point in time, racial politics must "adapt or die". Pressures for a "political solution" emanate from <sup>both</sup> the military and the heads of capital. The "adapt or die" manœuvre has given rise to various commissions of enquiry into the labour, education and political spheres. It has exacerbated the crisis and the crisis has given birth to "total strategy". The counter to this is a feeble political rigmorole called reforms. This very weak response on the part of the racist oligarchy has led to stifes within itself. The flag of nazism is once again emerging within the white minority. The basis of "racist capitalism" has never recovered from the shocking fall of the colonial empires in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It is precisely this shock that



is at the bottom of S. Africa's intransigence in Namibia. It is that shock coupled with fear that sends the SADF into adventurist strategies of destabilization of other sovereign states in our northern borders.

The picture would be incomplete if we were to leave unmentioned the pressures of the popular masses. The student movement has exposed the falacy of Bantu education, various community organizations & community newspapers have brought into disgrace the govt's policies of co-optation notwithstanding the Liberation movement.

Perhaps we should go on to look at the so-called reform policies of the Apartheid regime. In the first place, the present govt cannot claim any legitimacy because it was not democratically elected by all the people in S.A. It therefore goes without saying that all the laws that flow out of such an illegitimate govt can only hold for those it represents. The first line of the present new constitution for the white Republic of South Africa reads thus:

"In humble submission to Almighty God, who controls the destinies of nations and the histories of peoples; who gathered our forebears together from many lands and gave them this their own"

As for us the toiling masses, we know that our destinies and history is presently controlled by a white minority govt, and we know for certain that it is not God who gave this land to those who oppress us, but the might of their gun, and it is through that gun that they are able to maintain it to the extent that they can even sell us off-beat proposals fraught with political insincerity and hypocrisy.

Those who deliberately mislead themselves into believing that the govt is reforming may choose to do so. We know that the Bolha regime strengthens apartheid even more by co-opting sections of the oppressed yet at the same time maintaining white dominance. We are not prone to be hoodwinked into this trap when all evidence stands contrary to any pretence towards reform. Only in the last session the following laws were introduced:

The Intimidation Act;

The protection of Information Act;

The Demonstration in or near Court building Act;

The prohibition Act;

The internal security Act and many others.

It must be remembered that the emergency measure which was introduced in 1976 banning all outdoor gatherings is still in force. Magistrates virtually plan and control funerals. The rigid enforcement of the group Areas Act has recently affected in excess of 30,000 people. Influx control has affected over 2 million. Even now in the light of a bitter winter, the demolition of shacks continues unabated.

The Orderly Movement and settlement of Black Persons Bill is a crude piece of Law meant to make us aliens in our country. Trade union leaders are faced with daily harassment and detention, the number of people who either die in detention or are simply shot by state agents is increasing. Presently, there are indications to the fact that the responsibility for enforcing influx control is now to be removed from the Minister of Co-operation and development and its local structures - the community councils, and is to become the responsibility of the Dept of Interior. The full meaning of this is that Black people from the so-called Homelands are to be dealt with under the Aliens Act of 1937 together with <sup>the</sup> Admission of Persons to the Republic Act of 1972. This of course is the climax of apartheid and puts the crown on the grand reform policies of MR Botha.

With all sincerity we want to ask, is this reform? It is therefore with actual daily experience that we today in this historical gathering must take a stand that we reject those proposals in their entirety and see in them fraudulent measures enforced by an undemocratic white minority govt whose aim is to rule a divided and broken people.

We reject these proposals because in them we see a democracy supplanted by a racial oligarchy. They still enhance minority rule and exude racial superiority and ethnicity. We believe that Democracy must reject racial and political inequality. It must, if it is not to contradict itself, equally reject economic inequality. The basic injustice of this unequal

system does not arise from the fact that the ownership of the economic resources happen to be white in colour, although the racial dimension certainly aggravates it but rather from the fact that in a country endowed with vast resources, the majority remain deprived and impoverished by the minority.

At this hour in the story of an unfolding struggle for Democracy in our country, there is a definite, almost urgent need for unity. All organisations of the oppressed and democratic forces must bring their heads and efforts together around a broad front that will bring to nought these latest stunts by our oppressors. An oppressed people must resist oppression because oppression begets tension, strife, suspicion and hatred. They must use various methods of removing it. In our circumstances we have a mass based broad front which will effectively frustrate and bring to failure all of the govt's mouldy proposals. In an oppressive situation like ours, various issues arise from time to time around which organs launch their programmes for the achievement of their long term objectives, in certain of these circumstances fronts are formed around specific issues in order to enhance the gains of the oppressed.

It is evident that Apartheid is still a very formidable force affecting our lives painfully. It has created differences within the oppressed and so has racist capitalism, racial discrimination and exploitation have created the P.C. proposals, the Koorhof bills etc. These must be the basis of our united efforts. That

United effort has already taken root in the UDF. The UDF involves a diversity of organizations of various stratas and aspects of social life, with workers organizations playing a dominant role. The unity of organizations in the UDF finds ground in the actual campaigns involving the masses. We in the UDF believe that unity is not a slogan. Unity is borne out of practice. We believe that unity must not end as a catchword of intellectuals and newspapers, but it must be forged on the crucible of work, struggle and sacrifice. Unity must be nurtured by total commitment and action. This then is what makes the UDF different from other fronts or intended fronts. We move along with the masses, we learn from them while we also teach them. Our aim is to become a true vehicle of change and not a "paper tiger" that hands down instructions to the masses from an elite position of condescension. This is a tradition of struggle that has seen decades of resistance in this country.

In conclusion, I wish to say, let us not look back for our journey has been long but our goal is at hand. No amount of arms will halt our people in their path towards liberation. We have no doubt that the Inkomati Accord is a shadowy attempt to delay our liberation. That accord failed whilst still in the minds of its schemers because it fails to address itself to the basic problems of our day inside S.A. We are confident that we

shall soon look back at that fraudulent  
trick as a worthless delay tactic. Today, freedom  
is no longer a dream that we only enjoy in  
speeches and poems at funerals, freedom is a  
certainty that blossoms in our bosoms daily  
because we see its attempts every day. Freedom  
is in court, detention and Robben Island to-day.  
But freedom is already victorious because it lies  
in the hearts of the oppressed multitudes. Let  
us therefore pledge ourselves to support the  
front-line states at their hour of agony and  
intimidation. Let us pledge ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> unflinching support  
to the Freedom Charter, and lastly, let us  
always respect and remember the fallen heroes.  
Those young stalwarts who have laid down  
their lives so that you and I should walk  
with our heads high in enjoyment of the  
fruits of freedom and human dignity.

LONG LIVE THE FREEDOM CHARTER!

LONG LIVE THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT!

Thank you all.

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Bantu education as a sham system of education was not conjured up by its architects simply because the people who were to become its victims were Black by colour. It found its basis in the very economic structure that held the social fabric then. After the military conquest of our forefathers the oppressor realized that until he could inculcate a pseudo culture that would finally obliterate any sense of self respect and dignity, even his military might was not enough to consistently keep them vanquished in a position of perpetual servitude. With the "discovery" of more arable land, diamonds and later gold there was a perpetual hunger for more labour, vast unskilled labour resources that require no high education necessitated a system of an inferior education was to be dished out at tribal and racially segregated institutions. With residential areas separated on the basis of ethnicity, and economic power in the hands of few while political power was the domain of a White minority, the picture of racial capitalism was complete. The architects of this diabolic system thought that the future was secure in their hands. It was until June 1976 when the youth in the country exploded with a resounding note that the fallacies of Apartheid and racial capitalism shook to the core.

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