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UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

UDF UNITES! APARTHEID DIVIDES!



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13 September 1984

CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONAL SECRETARIES

Dear Comrades

During its meeting in Bloemfontein on July 21, 1984, the N.E.C could not take binding decisions relating to the most concrete question of the future of the UDF. It was noted that Regional mandates were required before such serious decisions could be taken.

The N.E.C consequently resolved to refer the matter to the Regions for thorough discussion, and that its views be seen as mere guidelines for such discussion.

We would like to ask you to ensure that serious discussions go into the above question. This must preferably be handled in workshops. Our workshops must be broadly representative of our affiliates. We must guard against a few activists deciding for organisations whilst organisations themselves are left in the dark.

Please make sure that the views of the Regions are made known to the N.E.C. meeting on 29-30 September, 1984.

I enclose some guidelines arising out of the said N.E.C. meeting.

Yours in struggle.

S. Molefe

POPO MOLEFE
GENERAL SECRETARY

THE DEMANDS OF THE UDF AND THE ANTI-ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

At the National Executive of the United Democratic Front, held in Bloemfontein on 21.07.84, discussion took place as to what sort of demands the UDF should put forward during the course of the anti-election campaign. This discussion had risen out of a need felt by all regions of the UDF to put forward a clear alternative to the new constitution and to provide direction and leadership to the broad masses of our people whom we are asking not to vote on August 22 and 29.

The NEC stated firmly that because any demands put forward by the UDF relate directly to the overall policy of the UDF, decisions could only be taken after thorough discussion in all regions and at all levels. The NEC has however submitted a suggested outline for discussion in all regions:

a) Our view of the future. It was generally agreed that the broad demands of the UDF, as written in our Declaration, should be emphasised. This would include our vision of a non-racial democratic South Africa in a unified country, based on the right of all adults to vote. In addition, our vision includes the participation in, and the democratic control of all institutions by the people, as well as the democratic control of resources.

b) Our method of struggle. It was also felt that while projecting our long-term demands, it is also necessary to emphasise the method of struggle that we have adopted, in order to emphasise the differences between us and those elements who have adopted the path of collaboration. In this regard, the UDF has chosen to base itself on the organisations of the people, that our organisations are in themselves non racial and democratic with the leadership directly responsible to the membership. In addition, our

organisations work outside of the constitutional system as defined by the apartheid regime.

c) Our immediate demands. There was common agreement that the projection of demands such as democracy, freedom and non-racialism were in themselves too abstract, and that during the anti election campaign, more specific demands need to be made. A number of suggestions were put forward:

- 1) Release of all political prisoners
- 2) Unbanning of organisations and individuals
- 3) Return of exiles.
- 4) Repeal of pass laws/ stop pass arrests
- 5) Repeal of security legislation
- 6) Stop forced removals
- 7) Repeal of Coloured Labour Preference Area policy
- 8) The demand for all South Africans to take part in the drawing up of a new constitution. This demand would include the demand for a National Convention/ Constituent Assembly or People's Assembly, with the necessary pre-conditions emphasised.

THE FUTURE OF THE UDF - SOME N.E.C. VIEWS

1. On the Future

It is generally accepted that the conference resolutions and the UDF Declaration indicate continuity beyond the elections. Above all, the constitution is viewed as a process whose implementation will carry contradictions which will make the demands enshrined in the UDF all the more relevant. The N.E.C. notes however, that with the implementation of the new constitution the emphasis and focus of the Front may shift but this would be determined by changing conditions as assessed by the UDF through its structures.

2. Structure and Form

2.1 The N.E.C. notes that the structure and form that the UDF assumed at its inception were determined by conditions present at the time. The method of a tactical front was because of the need for the broadest possible unity. The N.E.C. believes that it is still necessary to retain the UDF as a tactical front for it provides enough scope for the drawing of more organisations particularly the unions. Nevertheless the N.E.C. notes that, not wishes but conditions will finally tell if the UDF should transform into another type of Front.

2.2 Although some affiliates may feel that the UDF is not militant enough and that its Declaration is too moderate, the considered view of the N.E.C. is that whatever tactics we apply and whatever programme we develop, we must win support rather than push organisations and backward sections of our society into the hands of those forces working against us.

3. Policy

The N.E.C. believes that the policies of the UDF must be such that they do not depart from the spirit of a broad front. For example, the UDF in its current form cannot be pushed to pronounce on a definite economic policy for a new South Africa. It can generalise in this respect.

4. Operational Areas

It is generally accepted that in the post election period (as we indicated earlier) the Front must explore new operational areas. Removals, pass arrests, food prices, legitimacy of Black Local Authorities, Bantustans, events such as International Youth Year and the UN 'End of Women's Decade' must be concretely addressed.

Regions must pull together Youth Organisations to discuss the kind of youth activities that could be engaged in so as to build the International Youth Year. Maybe we could think of UDF Youth Publications of all UDF affiliates, non-affiliates and all youth activities, e.g. anti-conscription campaign. Another possibility is regional youth conferences culminating in a national conference which will ensure attendance by thousands of young people and representation from a very broad spectrum of youth groups.

These views are not intended to pre-empt any serious discussion. They must not be seen as a ceiling to any meaningful discussion. New ideas extending beyond the points given are welcome.

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