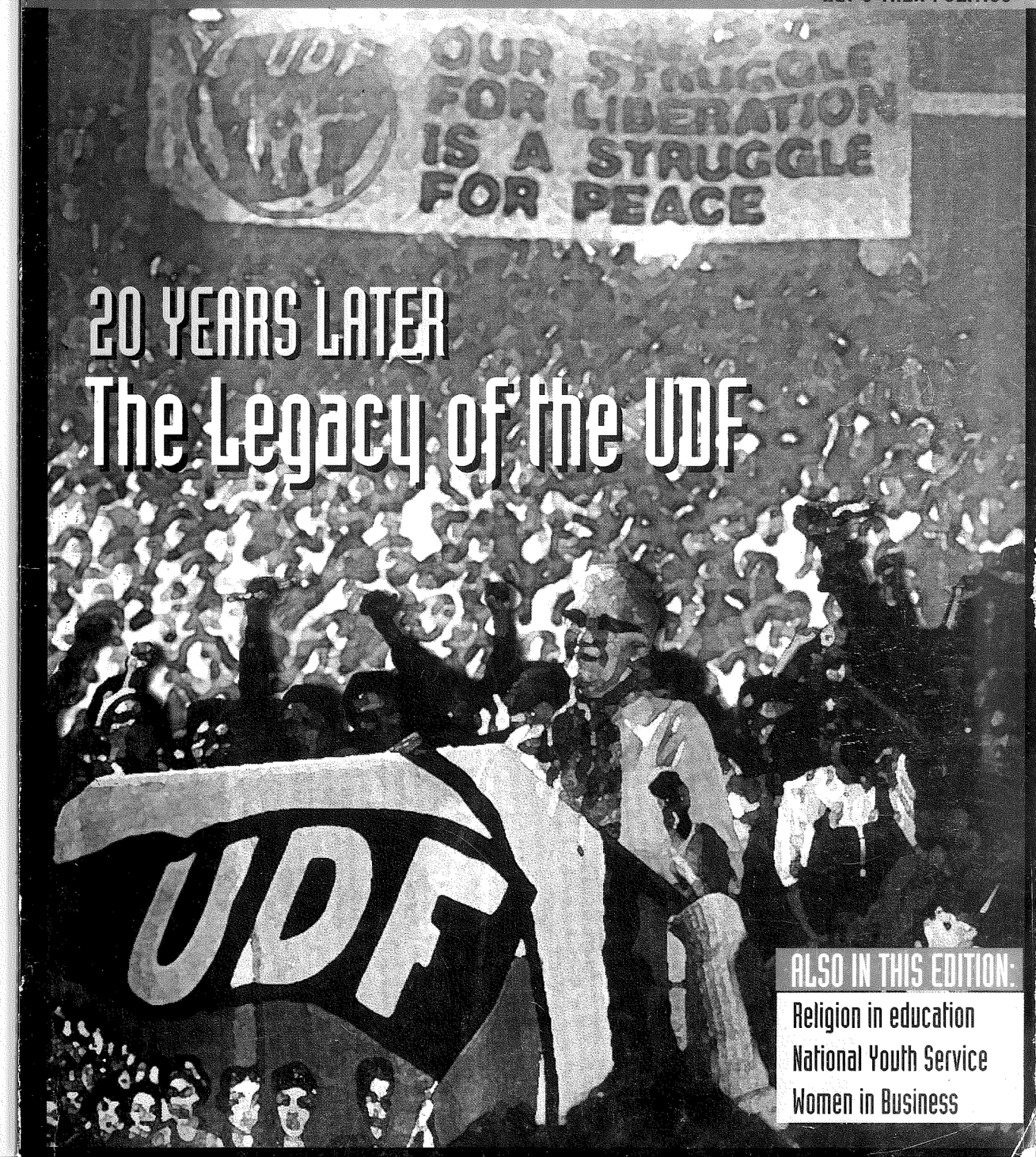
August 2003 19

UMRABULO

LET'S TALK POLITICS



20 YEARS LATER
The Legacy of the UDF

ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

Religion in education
National Youth Service
Women in Business

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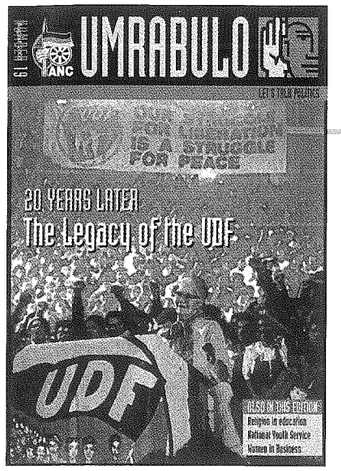
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Introduction

An unbroken thread

On 20 August 1983, thousands of activists and community leaders from across the country gathered at Rocklands Civic Centre in Mitchell's Plain to launch the United Democratic Front. They represented civics, youth, students, women, unions, religious, professional and a range of other organisations – united by a common opposition to apartheid. In the eight years of its existence (1983–1991), the UDF gave form and coherence to struggles ranging from the most local of issues, to broad national political demands for the unbanning of the ANC, release of political prisoners and an end to apartheid.

The front character enabled it to unite the broadest range of forces, and in the process strengthened the pillar of internal mass mobilisation. This tactic of broadening the front of struggle whilst at the same time deepening struggle has been used consistently throughout the history of our movement. The late cde Steve Tshwete recalls examples of this tactic – referring to the 1936 convention in Bloemfontein to resist the Hertzog Bills, the Alexandra Bus Boycott and the Congress Alliance of the 1950's.

Key to the success of any broad front is the identification of issues that can unite in action the broadest spectrum of forces from amongst the people. Another factor is ongoing political work by the most conscious elements within the various organisations and sectors that make up the front. The conditions for the formation of a front were ripe in 1983. Valli Moosa, a then executive member of the UDF, quoted in SUNSET AT MIDNIGHT by Govan Mbeki asserted: *"if you were opposed to the Tricameral parliament, to Black Local Authorities and the Bantustan system, if you thought apartheid was bad and it needed to go, then you could join the UDF."*

More importantly, following the 1976 uprising and its subsequent repression by the apartheid regime, the ANC had an important strategic review in 1978/79 where it resolved to help organise and give guidance to mass organisations amongst all sections of the people.

"Given that the apartheid regime sought to divide and narrow the support base of the national liberation movement", argued Govan Mbeki (op. cit.), *"a wide ranging popular front had to be created. Each and every expression of opposition to the regime had, therefore, to be embraced as part of the movement's common purpose."*

This was reflected in the more than 700 organisa-

tions that affiliated to the UDF during its first year. And as the struggle on all fronts intensified, more and more local and sectoral organisations were formed and joined the UDF. Local organisations united to form national sectoral organisations – most importantly the South African Youth Congress (launched in 1987), various national professional organisations, the civic movement and less successfully the UDF Women's Congress (UDFWCO). Although many trade unions did not affiliate to the UDF, after the formation of COSATU in 1985, a strong working relationship in action developed between the UDF and the trade union movement.

Amongst the most important lessons from the short existence of the UDF, is therefore the need to at all times build the unity of our people – whether it is to defeat apartheid, or to transform our country and create a better life for all.

As we salute the millions of our people who united behind the UDF, especially those who paid the ultimate price, we should as we enter the Second Decade of Freedom, unite our people to act decisively to eradicate the legacy of colonialism, racism, sexism and apartheid.

UDF National Executive Committee and Patrons

Elected on 20 August 1983

National Presidents: Archie Gumede, Albertina Sisulu, Oscar Mpetha.

Vice Presidents: Christmas Tinto, Joseph Marks, Virgil Bonhomee, George Sewpersadh, George Du Plessis, Rev. Frank Chikane.

National Secretary: Popo Molefe.

Publicity Secretary: Patrick 'Terror' Lekota

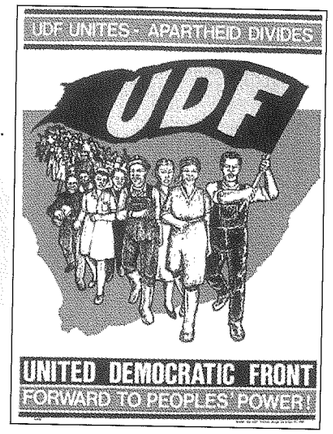
National Treasurers: Cassiem Saloojee and Mewa Ramgobin

Regional Secretaries: Trevor Manuel, Cheryl Carolus, Joe Phaahla, Yunus Mohammed, Mohamed Valli and Popo Molefe.

Additional Members: Andrew Borraine, Mildred Lesia, Jerry Coovadia, Rev. Mcebisi Xundu, Dr. Ram Saloojee and Aubrey Mokoena.

National Patrons, elected as symbols of unity and struggle:

Nelson Mandela
Walter Sisulu
Ahmed Kathrada
Raymond Mhlaba
Govan Mbeki
Andrew Mlangeni
Elias Motsoaledi
Helen Joseph
Sheikh Nazeem Mohammed
Florence Mkhize
Dennis Goldberg
Dr. Allan Boesak
Rev. Beyers Naude
Mrs. Naicker
Francis Baard
Dorothy Nyembe
Hassan Howa
Martha Mahlangu
Johnny Issel
Father Smangaliso Mkhatshwa

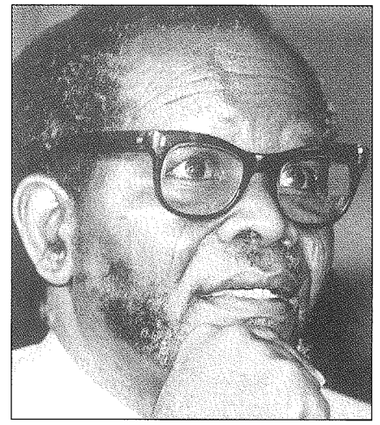


A great victory!

Interview with President O.R. Tambo on the current situation in South Africa and Southern Africa in General

Mayibuye Number 10 & 11, 1984

Question: *At the end of August the apartheid regime conducted its elections to the Coloured and Indian parliaments. The whole exercise turned out to be a farce, rejected by the majority of these communities and by the rest of the oppressed and democratic forces. How do you view the role of the ANC in bringing about this victory?*



Tambo: The vanguard movement is on alert all the time, watching and following the manoeuvre of the enemy. We lost no time in alerting our people on what was happening with the President's Council and all those schemes. We called for action to resist all this. We called for mobilisation of our entire forces. We called for united action, 1982 and 1983. It was necessary that we should meet this new offensive by the enemy as a united democratic force. Nothing else would help.

I think our people responded remarkably to this call. The emergence of the UDF was exactly what we were talking about during the year of Unity in Action, 1982. It was what we envisaged in our call in 1983 for United Action. We had called for confrontation with the enemy on all fronts, by all our people in their various organisational formations. The response to this call was the emergence of the UDF.

Early this year, facing the prospect of 'elections' in August, we called on our people to boycott those polling booths, to stand firmly united as an opposition to the oppressive system of apartheid. We called on the youth, the women, the workers, our young armed cadres to rise and face this bold attempt by the enemy to dig in. And there was a response, a remarkable response to this.

In response, the regime has not only unleashed its police but has also called in the army in an attempt to suppress the mounting township revolt. It has also taken a number of measurers to paralyse the UDF and the rest of the legal democratic movement. The regime says one of the reasons why it is taking action against the UDF leadership is that the UDF is a front of the ANC. Now if we say that the emergence of the UDF and present day mass upsurge is a result of organisation and mobilisation by the ANC, does it follow that the UDF is a creation of the ANC?

Tambo: NO! NO! It does not follow, because the ANC has for a long time now, even since it was banned, actually called on the people to organise themselves: any organisation, even where it differed with the ANC, provided only it was oriented against the apartheid system, we supported it. So we have encouraged the formation of organisations. These 700 organisations that belong to the UDF were not created by the ANC. But the ANC has called on the people to organise themselves, whether they organise themselves into ping-pong clubs or whatever it is, but we said, organise and direct your attention and activity to freeing yourselves so that you become human beings and citizens of your own country, which you are not!

The origin and significance of the UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF)

by Reverend Frank Chikane

THE LAUNCH of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983 came as a direct result of a strategic decision by the liberation movement to intensify the levels of mass resistance inside the country. This was one pillar of a four-prong strategy to finally bring the apartheid regime to its knees, the other pillars being the armed struggle, sanctions and the mobilization of the international community against the apartheid regime, and the development of the internal political underground.


NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
grassroots
THE PAPER ABOUT YOU
UDF UNITES APARTHEID DIVIDES
Pull-out poster inside
Ons praat saam
GO WELL UDF
Amandla !UDF

A special edition of the community newspaper GRASSROOTS welcoming the launch of the United Democratic Front.

As the armed struggle escalated and the international campaign to isolate the regime gathered steam, the need for greater internal resistance became more and more urgent, although any link between the UDF and the ANC had to be publicly denied for security reasons.

The immediate objectives of the UDF were to pressurize the apartheid regime to release the leadership of the people from prison, to unban liberation movements and people's organizations, allow South African exiles to return home, and to start meaningful negotiations to establish a free, non-racial, non-sexist democratic society.

The genesis of the UDF was a call by ANC President O.R. Tambo for all South Africans to form a united front to resist the regime that was becoming more repressive and brutal by the day in the run-up to the implementation of a new bogus Tri-cameral Parliament under a new South African constitution. In 1982, cadres of the movement within the country held quiet discussions and made secret preparations. In January 1983 the internal movement made the public call for the formation of a united democratic front to resist the 1983 apartheid constitution.

Yet the story goes back a little further. While the second wave of bannings of people's organizations in 1977 forced many activists to go underground, it also created new conditions for the development and growth of many grassroots organizations and community groups. The early 1980's also saw the growth of the labour movement, which together with community groups ultimately formed the base of the UDF when it was formed. While women, youth and students organizations formed the larger part of the front, the UDF was positioned so that many professional, religious and business organizations would also feel comfortable within a 'broad family' united around specific aims.

The strategy of the "broad united front" was adopted because of its potential to unite the overwhelming majority of South Africans around the common objective of eliminating the apartheid system, whilst the membership of professional organizations, business associations and religious groupings, afforded the Front a certain degree of security for activists to carry out their responsibilities.

After the launch, the UDF grew by leaps and bounds, with community and developmental organizations from far and near heeding the call to unite against the repressive machinery of the apartheid system. Many braved arrests, torture and even death as they joined together to advance the course of liberation. To this day I am amazed

Reverend Chikane addressing a UDF meeting...

Chikane is a former Vice President of the United Democratic Front (UDF), former General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and currently a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress.



at how groups just appeared in UDF T-Shirts to claim membership of the UDF. When questioned, they simply replied that they were responding to the call by OR Tambo or the leadership in the country. Of course this posed a security risk, but this risk was unavoidable in a mass-based organization under the conditions of the day.

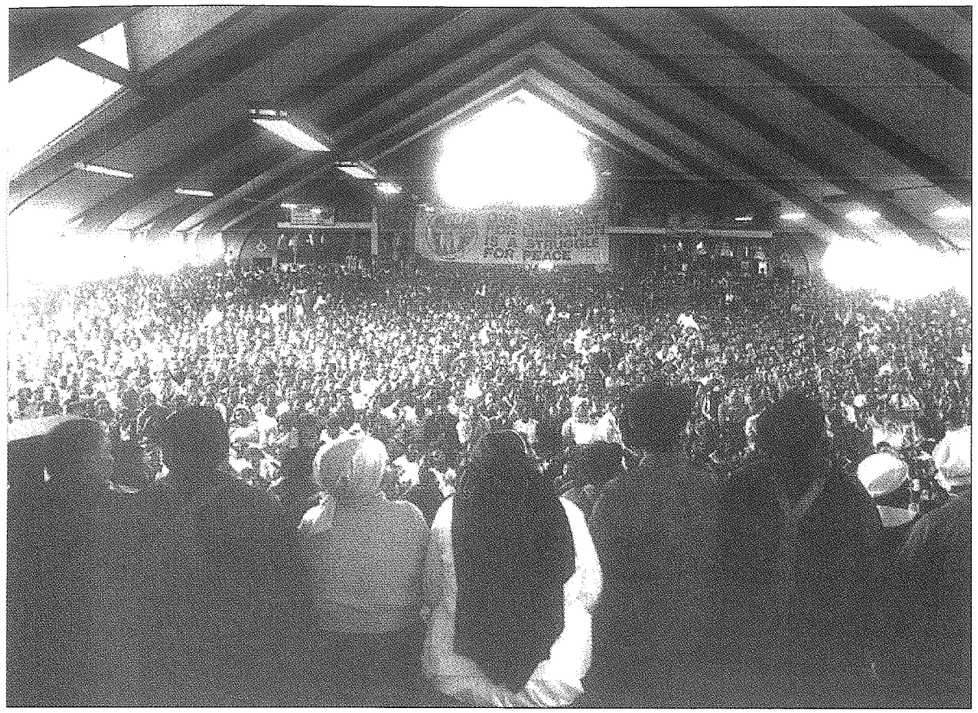
At the same time, the exponential growth of the UDF meant that by 1984 the seemingly invincible security police could not effectively monitor activities of the UDF any longer. At its height the vast membership of the UDF meant that meetings were being held every hour of every day throughout the country. Monitoring all these meetings was simply impossible for the security apparatus. This much was pathetically evident in our Treason Trial in Pietermaritzburg in 1985 where the prosecution relied solely on video and tape recordings of meetings rather than intelligence for their evidence. Thus their accusation that twelve of the sixteen UDF trialists were part of the ANC underground could not be substantiated. In the end, the State could simply not make the charges stick and the case collapsed, with all of us walking free!

Brutal repression gave impetus to the establishment of proper operational mechanisms for the organization. The so-called "M Plan" – originally devised by Mandela in the 1940s – took on a new meaning with the creation of street and block committees in townships and suburbs across the country. In many ways this system represents the best expression of participatory democracy and served as the most effective communications mechanism at the time when the repressive machinery of the regime was at its worst.

As the state became more repressive, the churches became a place of refuge for the movement, offering facilities for meetings, places for hiding and care services for the displaced. At other times the church made available secret locations for those who were being hunted by the security police. When the publication of detentions and the naming of detainees were criminalized, the churches used moments of prayer to announce the names of detainees and those who had disappeared. And when calling protest marches was criminalized, the religious sector organized marches at which the leadership of the people was protected by the multitudes surrounding them.

The implementation of the 1983 constitution, designed to consolidate the apartheid system, and imposed against the will of the people in 1984, forced the UDF to move beyond just protest. The masses were mobilized to resist being governed by a regime based on a constitution they had rejected. The black townships terminated their relationship with the local government administrations and all institutions of the state, including police stations. They stopped paying rentals and service charges (water, refuse removal and electricity) to the local administrations. Those who had housing bonds with the Black Administration Boards stopped paying their monthly installments. This action spilled over to bonds held with private banks. To some extent, people also stopped paying other national taxes. A rousing slogan at the time was: "no cooperation with the oppressor" reflecting a determination to refuse to be governed by an illegitimate regime.

As the notion of 'ungovernability' took root and the regime lost control of the townships, cadres of the movement worked hard at creating alternative centres of power which further undermined the authority of the regime. Street and block committees and other people's structures like defence committees and 'people's courts' began to assume the roles of an alternative authority to the regime. To a large extent it was these actions which



13000 strong crowd of people attended the launch of the UDF at the Rocklands Civic Centre in Mitchell's Plain

finally proved to the regime the futility of defending apartheid and forced it to the negotiating table.

Looking back, the UDF taught all of us very profound lessons in leadership. In the first instance, the leadership of the UDF always saw themselves as the interim leaders of the movement in the context of the banning of the peoples' organizations and the imprisonment of our leaders. We saw ourselves very much as "holding the fort" for the leadership in jail or in exile. Within the UDF, leaders were collectively deployed to serve in leadership capacities. At the same time, UDF leadership was a consultative process. Extensive consultative meetings were held with those who were not in formal structures before formal leadership meetings were held and decisions were taken on the basis of consensus of the leadership both in and outside the formal structures of the UDF.

When we finally did get an opportunity to interact with the leadership of the movement outside the country, we discovered that the leadership also operated on the basis that it was an interim leadership waiting for the release of our imprisoned leaders. Yet when I finally met Utata UMadiba at Victor Verster Prison on the eve of his release, he in turn talked of the leadership as those outside prison and those in exile!

It is to our credit that the quality of our leaders was such that they deferred to other sectors of leadership of the movement as a whole rather than pursue sectarian or sectionalist interests.

After the unbanning of the liberation movements and the release of our leaders from prison in 1990 there was therefore no question about the need to re-align our mass organizations and its leadership: the UDF was dissolved and we reverted once again to consolidated leadership under the banner of one revolutionary movement banned in 1960.

The United Democratic Front was indeed a holding operation, albeit a very important one!

The UDF and the struggle for NATIONAL DEMOCRACY

(Abridged)

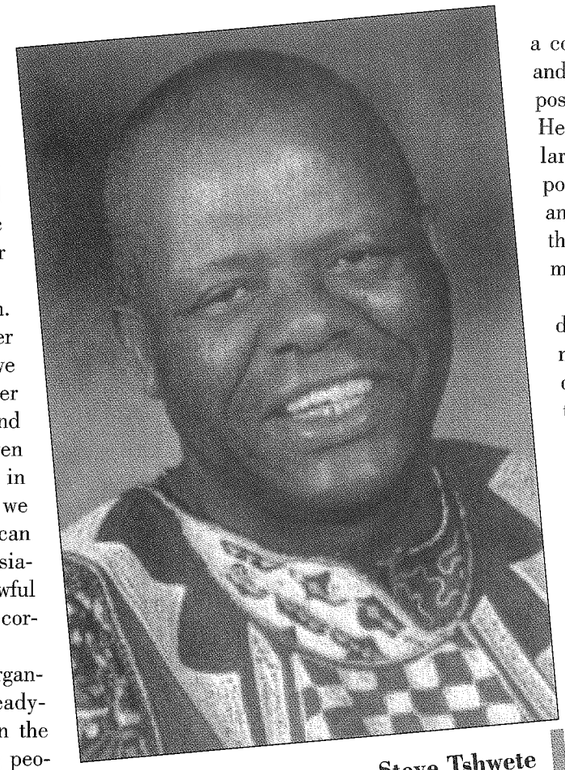
by Steve Tshwete

Elected as Border UDF President in 1983; the paper was presented in 1984.

The UDF as a Front

From the outset, I want to dispel some silly notions in the heads of leading members of the ruling clique and their henchmen on the nature and role of the United Democratic Front in the struggle for national liberation.

We are a front organisation. No apologies. Like any other front elsewhere in the world, we are a mouth-piece of a number of organisations whose short and long term aspirations are given expression and authenticated in the unity in action which we alone, at this point in time, can effectively forge. The organsiations we represent are all lawful and operate within the four corners of this country.



Steve Tshwete

Not a single one of those organisations has descended, ready-made, from outer space upon the democratic and peace-loving people of South Africa. On the contrary, these organisations are the direct product of the objective reality in a country that has gone strange to democracy.

Though we cannot boast of any ideological homogeneity as a front, the organisations at our command are nonetheless committed to the ideal of a united, free, democratic and non-racial South Africa, in which the will of the people, not the will of a clique, shall bear sway. That is the primary thrust of the UDF.

It is not the first time that resistance to the apartheid regime has brought together different organisations of diverse political persuasions to take a common stand against it. In 1936, for instance, the then South African National Native Congress extended an invitation to all organisations and individuals of the oppressed to attend a convention in Bloemfontein, and there to adopt a common position against the notorious Hertzog Bills. It was a popular indaba, comprising of political, cultural, religious and sports organisations of the oppressed and exploited masses.

It might have not been destined to take on a permanent form, but it certainly did prove one point of particular significance to the UDF: that there is always room for the oppressed and fighting democrats to pool their individual efforts. Points of difference are not overriding. We can always submerge these and project those aspects which bring us together. Over the passage of time, with persuasion and discussion, the edges may become blunted, suspicions dissipated and unity achieved.

And the best workshop where such unity can be hammered is in the field of action. As long as we agree to resist and work together to attain certain immediate goals, so long will the possibility of ultimate unity be ascertained.

I want to single out the Alexandra bus boycott – one of the longest and bitterest in living memory. Without clogging you with much detail, the outstanding achievement in so far as this campaign was concerned is the fact that, perhaps for the first time in the history of the liberation struggle, we witnessed spontaneous expression of solidarity, in particular by the Indian community in Johannesburg, with the people of Alexandra. We are told



ANC Women's League veteran and activist Helen Joseph addressing delegates at the historic launch of the UDF

that some members of the Indian community would wake up early in the morning, walk the long distance from Fordsburg to Alexandra to catch up with the throng of marching commuters. The process would be repeated in the evenings.

What is of relevance to us in this example is the fact that this expression of solidarity was not as a result of a resolution by the South African Indian Congress. On the contrary, the response must be seen as a product of the objective reality in South Africa at a time when popular slogans of Afrikanerdom were: *"Kaffir op sy plek"* and *"Koelie uit die land."* In the circumstances *"Kaffir"* and *"Koelie"* had enough cause to come together against the common enemy in spite of whatever other differences might have been between the two.

And of importance again is the fact that the unity of the two was not wrenched in a conference room, but it was forged in the theatre of a practical struggle. When the doctors Xuma and Dadoo came together in 1946 as leaders respectively of the ANC and the Indian Congress to inaugurate the Congress Alliance in the name of the Dadoo-Xuma Pact, they were merely giving formal endorsement of an idea already clinched at mass level.

This Pact was in a very realistic sense a front. It was designed to coordinate and direct campaigns. The two communities (African and Indian) could speak with one voice and march forward in one step. In due course, and again as a result of the fascist bent in South Africa after the seizure of power by the Malan clique, the 1946 front was enlarged immediately after the 1952 Defiance campaign to comprise such organisations as the Congress of Democrats, and the Coloured Peoples Congress. Thus was formed the Congress Alliance. In 1954 the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was to be the fifth member.

The most significant difference between this front and the UDF is the fact that all affiliate organisations, SACTU excepted, were political organisations with one ideological persuasion. That is not the case with the UDF. That, of course, does not mean that the Congress Alliance did not have problems. They were there and some of them had an ethnic tinge. But these problems could and were surmounted – and not by confrontation and abuse. Consultation and constant consultation, discussion and persuasion formed the open sesame.

For it is important, comrades, to understand that differences between the people cannot and should not be solved in any other way. Of course we need to distinguish here between healthy and unhealthy differences. The former are genuine and struggle-orientated, while the latter are a product of self-centeredness, reaction and mischief-making and carry all the attributes of a clique. As a matter of principle we do not waste our time and sacrifice progress once this reactionary trend has been identified. It is precisely on that score that the Leballo clique had to be dealt with the contempt they deserved at the Congress of the People in 1956.

One other difference between the UDF and the Congress Alliance consisted of the fact that the latter had a spearhead in the name of the ANC, whereas the UDF cannot boast of such a fact. This is a glaring omission.

We should briefly look at other front organisations elsewhere in the world to follow the argument of a spearhead! Lets take the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. It was a tremendously huge alliance of all political, cultural and religious persuasions. Normally it would be difficult to bring these groupings together for a sustained period of time in the absence of a common enemy – the French and later American imperialism. But the Lao Dong party not only brought them together, but also served as spearhead – the pace setter of long term objectives. In that position it understood that the Buddhist, for instance, would not go beyond the expulsion of imperialism and the establishment of a people's democracy.

Similarly with the Patriotic/Partisan Fronts in Eastern Europe during Hitler's occupation of the continent. The various communist parties in these countries served as spearheads of extremely broad fronts; some affiliates of which had no sympathies at all with issues like the dictatorship of the proletariat! And significantly for all for us, the Marxist parties in all these fronts did not project their own programmes over and above those of affiliates.

Whilst the working class position had to be strengthened, it was observed that in a compromise position like a front, tact and skill must take precedence. You don't denounce that other wing as bourgeoisie and retrograde. You don't not call that one a lackey of so and so and dub that one as a centre-piece of progress and beauty of the front. You must just understand his weaknesses and shortcomings. Once you discover the distance he is prepared to travel in the long march to a People's Day of South Africa, it becomes your responsibility to persuade him to take another short mile with you. It is persuasion all the way. The successes of the Congress Alliance and other similar front organisations the world over can be attributed to this essential understanding of the compromise nature of a front.

Democracy within the Front

I have designated a front organisation as a compromise organisation. That implies a give and take situation. Don't be over-exerting and over-demanding. Allow a certain measure of flexibility within the broad framework of our policy.

As an executive committee we should be able to take decision and formulate policy. At no single point in time should we ever address ourselves to affiliates without a particular bias on any given issue. This is important and allows you the privilege of influencing the course of events. It is a privileged position, because the perspective of any executive will always be wider than that of affiliates who necessarily must be able to see only as far as their limited affiliates horizon.

Once you have communicated your view to your affiliates, you must not entertain ideas that it is gospel. The affiliates must discuss your viewpoint, criticise it, reject it or endorse it. In turn their own standpoint is transmitted to the executive, which in turn, after determining the most popular viewpoint must go back to the affiliates and acquaint them with the latest detail.

No matter how strongly one feels about one's particular point of view, once a popular decision has been struck it becomes binding on all affiliates. No dissent will be allowed. Otherwise if one continues to cling to one's standpoint against the majority view and continues to canvas the defeated position, then one is operating as a clique and obstructing action and progress. This tendency must be exposed to all affiliates in a political analysis which must underline the destructive elements in a people's front, and within the affiliate organisations' themselves.

At the same time no organisation must use its popularity and unilaterally decide on a campaign without consultation with the most relevant organisation in relation to the campaign. To illustrate: COSAS cannot unilaterally decide on a stay-away without prior consultations with the sister labour unions, nor can any trade union unilaterally call upon students to boycott classes. Mistakes of this nature are bound to rock the front and cause disunity. We must not undermine the leadership of the diverse organisations at our command if we seek to advance revolutionary work.

Transformation of the UDF

Recently, ideas have been flung about that the UDF in the post-Koornhof and tricameral situation must be transformed into a political party. My own persuasion in this regard is that if necessity is forced upon us by the dictates of objective conditions then we have no alternative but to do so. But, I want to believe that at the moment such a move could only spell danger for the good work that has been done and the lot that remains to be accomplished in the foreseeable future.

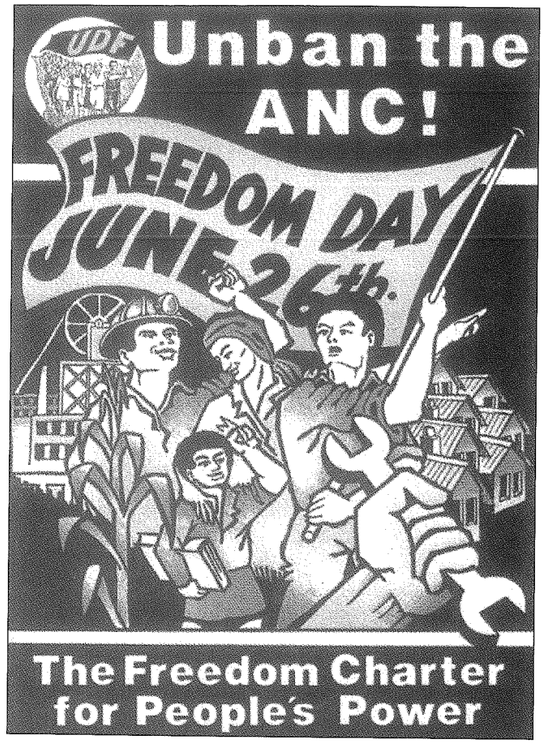
The advantage of the present poise is that we are in a

One of the many campaigns taken on by the UDF was to mobilise communities against puppet councils



position to command vast influence among the broad masses of our people by reason of organisational membership. In the current year, thanks to the Million Signature Campaign and the anti-election campaign, we have traversed even those areas where politics was a strange concept. We have been able to temper our people in the urban and platteland areas in a manner that has no parallel in history. Through affiliate organisations the UDF became a household word. In that manner we had taken our struggle to almost every home and thereby projected the mass nature of our cause. It would have been difficult to score these resounding victories had we been constituted otherwise.

The task that lies ahead is quite momentous: we have to reach those thousands of our people wherever they are, appeal to them not as individuals but as organisations.



The Freedom Charter became the rallying point of mobilising for People's Power in the 1980s

In the Karoo, Northern Transvaal and the OFS an effective UDF presence can only be made when the popular organisations that were set up during the anti-election campaign are consolidated and given direction, the rallying point at all material times being the conditions under which the people find themselves on a day to day basis. So that insofar as the future of the Front is concerned, my feeling is that we maintain the front nature and broaden our scope of activity.

The anti-elections campaign has enhanced the prestige of the UDF. The (apartheid) government and its puppets were on the run, as they always must as long as they remain strange to the truth. The clampdown on the UDF leadership and the brutal shooting of our people on the Rand and Vaal Triangle are an expression of frustration and impotence. At the same time it has been amply demonstrated that no force on earth can conquer the combined mass action of the oppressed and fighting people of South Africa. Even on the international plain our position has been tremendously enhanced by the success of the campaign, whilst the racist government has become more of a skunk.

But this does not mean we should be victory drunk. It means more work, more mobilisation and more vigilance against opportunists who may seek to climb on the crest of the present wave of anger.

The UDF and the Freedom Charter

Comrades, I cannot see how any organisation can be in a position to come up with a better set of demands than those enshrined in this ever-green document. At the same time, any attempt to formulate a watered-down version of those demands is certainly a sell-out position in the context of the present struggle.

The people of South Africa had gone a long way to reach the Kliptown. For us to shun these demands would be outright reconciliation with the status quo and imperialism. I agree that Le Grange linkage cause would be strengthened, but we know and everybody in his right sense knows that the Freedom Charter is and was never an ANC document. The ANC had its own documents like the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and African Claims.

The Freedom Charter belongs to the people of South Africa and at this point in our struggle there is no reason why we should not adopt it as an alternative to the racist constitution. Each one of those ten points can be used to rally our people anywhere in South Africa. It has been haled throughout Africa as a realistic document. The progressive international mankind applauded it at various forums as an ideal alternative. Nelson Mandela and others remained fascinated with it right up to now.

The masses have coined moving songs out of every one of the ten points in the Freedom Charter. The masses of our people love it and need to know it deeper. Those of our affiliates who still entertain aversion against it, need to be educated about it in a persuasive and tactical manner.

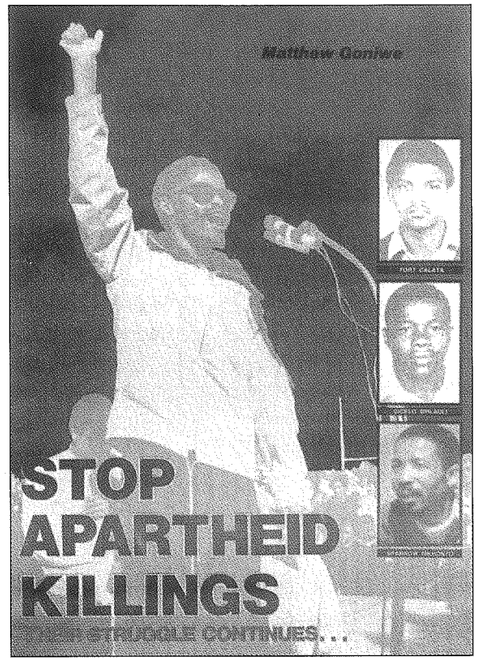
To sum up: Long live UDF. Long live our Presidents. A Thousand years Mandela. Amandla!

Participatory democracy:

THE LEGACY OF THE UDF IN THE EASTERN CAPE

by Mkhuseli Jack and Janet Cherry

IT IS TEMPTING to idealize the days of struggle, and to remember uncritically our heroes and our organizations; to present MK, for example, as the 'glorious peoples' army' and to forget the frustrations endured and the mistakes made. Similarly, it is tempting to remember the UDF as a militant, mass-based front of organizations which made a decisive contribution to the ending of apartheid and the creation of a democratic society. The moments of terror and intolerance are easily forgotten. And yet, perhaps it is time for us to reflect critically – on this twentieth anniversary of the founding of the UDF – on the lessons we learnt through our experience of organization in the 1980s.



Key leaders of the UDF – notably Matthew Goniwe – were assassinated by the security forces

The African townships of the Eastern Cape had already built something of a tradition of close-knit, mass-based structures by the time the UDF was formed in 1983. Some argue that this tradition went back to the late 1950's, early 1960 period, when the 'M-Plan' was implemented in New Brighton to ensure that the ANC survived the banning of public meetings. Others point to the importance of such street-level structures in enabling the ANC to survive after its banning in 1960, and during the time of the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the first sabotage campaigns, in the 1961–3 period.

However, as with most other parts of the country, by the mid-1970s the apartheid state had succeeded in crushing effective organization and resistance to its rule. The 1976-7 uprising, which involved extensive rebellion and repression in the Eastern Cape, did not leave much of a legacy of tight-knit organization or of democratic participation. It was the late 1970s which saw the emergence of a new style of civic organization in the form of PEBCO, followed in the early 1980s by the emergence of militant and strongly organized youth and student organizations. It was these organizations that were to make up the core of the UDF in the region; and as the UDF grew, so the organizational network expanded until nearly every African community in every small rural town in the Eastern Cape was brought into the resistance movement.

While the UDF was formed as a broad front against the Tricameral Parliament, it really achieved resonance in the Eastern Cape and in African townships in Gauteng when its affiliates took up the campaign against the Black Local Authorities. These powerless institutions were meant to share the burden of administering the black townships, financing themselves through collecting rents, and struggling to deliver services to communities which had been systematically deprived of facilities for decades. Not surprisingly, the councilors who took up positions in these BLAs became the targets of intense anger from local residents; campaigns against rent hikes or poor housing spilled over into anger against those individuals who were perceived

as assisting in the administration of apartheid. As the Black Local Authorities came under pressure, they began to employ increasingly brutal municipal police to maintain their position; even so, community pressure led to the resignation of many councils and the de facto collapse of this system of local government. The employment of the consumer boycott strategy placed enormous pressure on local white-owned businessmen, and led in the case of Port Elizabeth to the head of the Chamber of Commerce taking a remarkably progressive stand in intervening to obtain the release of the leadership so that negotiations could proceed. The situation in the townships deteriorated as thousands of militant youth vented their anger against councilors, policemen, municipal infrastructure, bottlestores, schools and almost all symbols of authority. The ANC astutely assessed the situation and incorporated this collapse into its overall revolutionary strategy of 'protracted peoples war': calling on the militant youth to 'render the country ungovernable and apartheid unworkable', they began to offer military training to select groups of youth.

Where was the UDF while all this was going on? Accused by the security forces of being the 'internal wing of the ANC', the leadership of the UDF and its affiliates became targets of extreme repression. The better organized the UDF was, the more dangerous it was, and the worse the repression. Thus in mid-1985, when the first, partial State of Emergency was declared, the key leaders of UDF affiliates in the Eastern Cape were detained and brutally tortured until the 'Wendy Orr interdict' posed – for a while – some limitations on security police activity. Key leaders of the UDF – notably Matthew Goniwe, the regional organiser – and its affiliates were assassinated by the security forces.

The UDF really did have a 'double agenda' – on the one hand it was, of course, part of a broader ANC-led strategy of national liberation, with key leadership being closely linked to the ANC underground. On the other hand, it was concerned with a genuinely democratic project of building popular organisations, giving ordinary people a voice, and enabling participation by hundreds of thousands of people in townships around the country in political action. Sometimes this action was around very local issues and grievances; sometimes it was linked to national programmes of action. Very often, it involved the establishment of 'grassroots' structures such as street and area committees, which enabled ordinary people to exercise at least some measure of control over decision-making that affected their lives.

This process was particularly successful in many of the townships of the Eastern Cape, where despite the high levels of violence and repression, many residents – including middle-aged and elderly residents – saw these structures as playing a positive role in their lives, in regulating petty crime and anti-social behaviour, facilitating development initiatives (such as the electrification of Kwazakele), and allowing participation in decisions over events such as consumer boycotts.

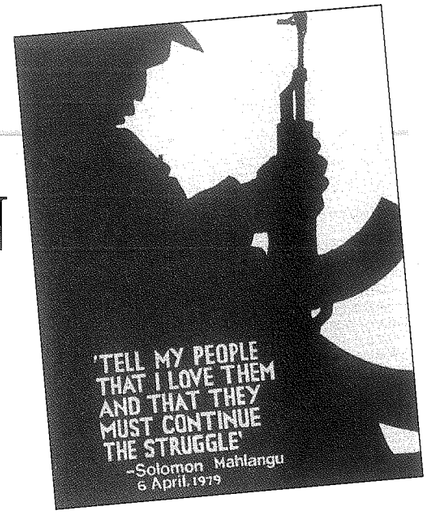
In addition to this experiment in popular democracy, there is no doubt that the UDF made a significant contribution to the creation of a culture of non-racialism, and the building of a national democratic project. Even though few white democrats participated in the liberation struggle in the Eastern Cape, the UDF created a broad front which welcomed contributions from all sectors – thus sportspeople, church leaders, war resisters and human rights activists were all welcomed into the fold, and the language of tolerance, inclusivity and unity came to predominate over narrow sectarian interests or groups defined by race or ethnicity.

Research conducted some years after the decline of the UDF revealed that many township residents in the Eastern Cape saw this period as one which empowered them and gave them a positive experience of democratic participation. In some cases, efforts were made to transform this experience into participation in the transition and post-transition phases of the 1990s.

However, by the time of the 1999 elections it became clear that there was a real sense of disillusionment with the 'normalisation' of politics: people 'on the ground' feel that the government – whether at local, provincial or national level – had become increasingly remote, inaccessible, and unresponsive to their needs. The decline of local civic organisations has gone hand-in-hand with the decline in participation in ANC branches.

A real challenge faces the ANC now in trying to recapture something of this culture of democratic participation – not only to hold public officials and political office-bearers to account, but also to ensure that people do not relate to government simply as a delivery-mechanism. This involves, of course, a notion of 'strong democracy' – in which a strong state relates in a positive way to a strong civil society; and in which citizens are able to relate to government as active participants, rather than just as passive recipients of policy.

The rise of the young lions: SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH CONGRESS LAUNCHED



Extract from: ***STATE OF THE NATION****, A SASPU National publication Vol. 5 No. 1 April 1987*

THE TOP-SECRET launch of the mammoth South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) in Cape Town has widely been heralded as a victory not only for the youth, but for the entire progressive movement. It marked the welding together of the youth into what is likely to be one of the democratic movement's most powerful organisations.

The launch proved that attempts to crush the militancy, determination and organisations of the youth are failing. They have advanced to meet the challenge of the state of emergency and advanced despite the most repressive conditions in years.

The youth have been one of the main targets of repression. About 80% of the 30 000 emergency detainees and many victims of vigilante attacks and assassinations are youth. Even before its formal launch there were strong indications that SAYCO would be a prime target for repression.

Despite this, in a remarkable organisational feat about 200 delegates from nine regions, and the national interim coordinating committee, arrived safely at the launch from all over the country. There were those that symbolised the newly forged layers of youth leadership. Others are tried and tested youth leaders, former political prisoners and a few more who were at the COSAS Congress some eight years ago when the youth organisation idea first surfaced. Some had only recently been released from detention. Most are permanently on the run while continuing to operate underground in their areas, so the tight security was not entirely new.

> In 1982 the COSAS National Congress resolved to build youth congresses nationally. Between 1984 and 1986 three national consultative conferences of organised youth were held. Each time more and more local local youth congresses came together to discuss building a national youth organisation (NYO). In May 1986 a National Youth Coordinating Committee was formed with two delegates from each of the ten regions in South Africa. This committee coordinated bringing regions together to finalise discussions on SAYCO's constitution and resolutions before the launch in April 1987.

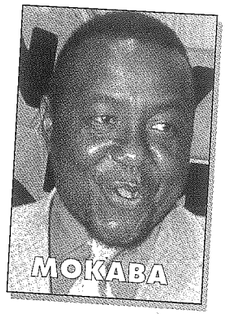
While there were no illusions about the seriousness of the threats and challenges facing organisations, the launch itself gave an overwhelming sense of history in the making and that their slogan "Freedom or Death, Victory is Certain' is a serious one. It reflected the militancy and determination, confidence, courage and impatience characteristic of the youth.

SAYCO's colours are black, green, gold and red, and its logo shows a hammer, a spear and a book emerging from a crowd of youth marching under a SAYCO flag. Their allegiances were clear not only in their slogans and freedom songs, but in their hard-hitting resolutions and programme of action. SAYCO has a firm and united political stand and an emphasis on discipline that goes a lot deeper than slogans and emotionalism. There was a clarity about tasks and direction, about the future they are striving towards, and what role they, as the youth must play in achieving this.

With an estimated membership of over half a million and active support of over two million South African Youth, SAYCO is the UDF's largest affiliate.

It has committed itself to forging principled working relationships with COSATU and progressive workers, women's, community and student organisations which share its principles. Alliances will also be build with progressive sports, cultural and religious bodies.

There is no doubt that SAYCO will take South Africa's people closer to freedom.



The youth must learn

Extracts from interviews with SAYCO President Peter Mokaba and Education Secretary Ephraim Nkwe, **COSATU NEWS**, *1987*

Role of the Youth

We as the youth see it as our duty and our right to change this society. SAYCO is part of the whole liberation movement, but it has a specific target – the young people of SA.

The youth are the future. We have to forge a new non-racial and democratic culture to forge a new person for a new SA as a whole. This means one task of the youth is to learn. For example: how to ensure the implementation of the Freedom Charter in SA, how to live for the future, how to defend the future. They must go out to the human archives. They must be guided by struggle nationally and internationally.

Youth militancy

The youth are at a particular point where they are receptive to ideas. They have nothing to lose and a future to gain. They go out consciously to seek progressive ideas. This makes them a more conscious sector of the community.

From the seventies onwards the student youth in particular spearheaded the struggle of the youth. It was from their ranks that the idea of a national youth organisation first developed. The youth are militant and often more conscious. So they are often at the forefront initiating campaigns and struggles.

But this is not to say that the youth is the vanguard. The workers are the vanguard because of history. The youth and the workers are not in competition as far as the future goes. We have a common interest in the future, we must build it together. And we see it as one of our task to build the working class.

Worker-youth alliance

Organisations are formed around groups of people with particular demands and needs. This determines their methods. There are strategies and tactics for each organisation to exploit.

As an organisation, after defining your principles and methods, you look to organisations with similar principles to form alliances with – this would be a principled alliance. We have stated in our analysis that workers represent the future, so the alliance with workers is a principled one, in current and future struggles.

Then there are organisations which don't necessarily have the same principles. Take for example, the youth structure support the Freedom Charter, but the church structure doesn't. But there are burning issues for all, irrespective of ideological outlook. So organisations decide whether to form links from time to time in a tactical alliance. And in the linkage they identify certain things to promote within a certain discipline. Then there are parallel alliances, where there are no formal links, but where the one encourages the other to take a particular action.

The workers and youth realise the enemy doesn't differentiate between COSATU and the UDF. They give the same treatment to both. So we need to unite with other organisations in the community. The youth have a historical link with workers – many joint campaigns, stay-aways, consumer boycotts, etc. Many have been implemented by the youth and observed by the workers. In different local areas the youth have come together with workers in workshops, looking at how to work together.

We are calling all youth to give all the support to the workers, and we are assuring the workers of youth support, now and in future struggles. We want to approach COSATU unions to encourage working youth to join and strengthen local youth congresses and SAYCO.

Political education of the youth

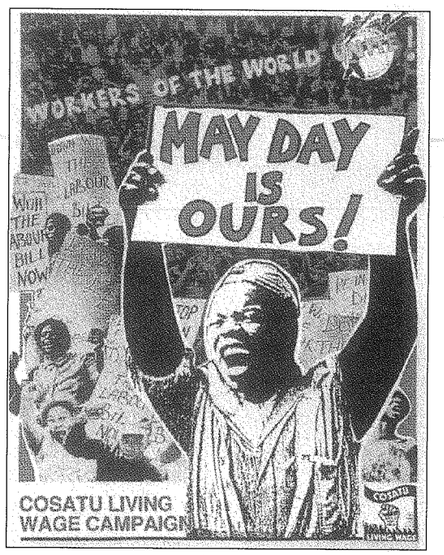
We encourage the youth congresses to be rooted among the masses. This is the pool from which we get people and train them. As organisation expands they must be training people at all levels.

The principles of collective leadership and criticism and self-criticism must be applied. These liberate the youth from the idea that they won't become leaders, or that leaders can't make mistakes, that they can't be replaced. People must be armed with theory and politics.

But this must happen against the background of them being prepared to be able to carry on the struggle even under the worst conditions. And we are expecting worse than the emergency before we get freedom. Political education should also take into account the present political climate and the needs of the youth in the youth organisation.

Unions and the UDF

The early years of the UDF was characterised by much debate about the affiliation of unions to the UDF and working class leadership of the front. These debates took place in the context of talks within the union movement on the formation of a united federation, and in preparation for the federation, the formation of one industry one union. This process culminated in the launch of COSATU in 1985.



Sydney Mufamadi GENERAL SECRETARY OF GENERAL AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION (GAWU)

Extract from interview in **WORK IN PROGRESS**, *5 MAY 1984*

WIP: *Some unions argue that at this moment in South Africa's history, it is important for the working class to organise distinctly and separately from other class influences. At a particular stage, according to this view, the political and organisational confidence of the working class becomes such that it is able to move into alliance with other classes. This ensures that real and meaningful working class leadership emerges. How do you respond to this approach?*

Mufamadi: We see things differently. Some want to perceive the working class as only found on the factory floor. Our view is that even those people who are not behind the machines on the factory floor can be said to be waging a working class struggle, if the issues which they take up in their various sites of struggle, and the way in which they take those issues up, serve to undermine the class relations upon which the present society is built.

If we go, for instance, to the community where we find our people living in squalid conditions, these questions can be addressed in class terms. The workers cannot say that they have nothing to say about that kind of situation. Because that is the situation they are faced with. People can wage a working class political struggle around those issues that affect them, and trade unions can play a role in instilling working class consciousness.

There are people in the rural areas, and we as trade unionists have limitations that we have to contend with. Our sphere of operation is the factory floor, but we need to address ourselves to those rural areas. We don't have the necessary infrastructure as trade unions. Even if we come up with one union one federation, we still do not have the infrastructure to reach people in those areas. We think, and this has been proven in practice, that the UDF does offer that kind of infrastructure. And we think that working class consciousness can be instilled into the masses of our people through this available infrastructure.

GAWU has joined the UDF. What do you see as the best form of an alliance between working class organisations and popular or community organisations?

Mufamadi: All the organisations that have affiliated to the UDF have done so because they are in full agreement with the UDF Declaration. We want to see those organisations as equal partners in this united front. Ideologically speaking, we are saying that we are

involved in a national democratic struggle wherein we put special emphasis on the leadership role of the working class. If you look at the UDF declaration, there is nothing there that negates the interests of the working class. We feel that we as a trade union have got room in the UDF as much as any other progressive form of organisation, be it operating in the community, at a student level or in the women's front.

What would satisfy you that working class leadership was a fact in the struggle you spoke about, and what form should this leadership take?

Mufamadi: It is not important whether the majority of the people on the UDF executive are from a trade union or not. That would be a wrong understanding of what working class politics or struggle entails. If the programme of action, which is guiding the UDF, ensures that the interests of the working class are safeguarded; and if whenever there are UDF meetings where important policy decisions are taken there is participation of representatives of worker organisations, that ensures that workers are represented in that sort of a front.

But we are not envisaging in an alliance of this nature that one section of the alliance will dictate to the other sections what is to be done in the front. We believe that this involves some kind of common perspective of issues that has to be developed in the process of common struggles. These common struggles can only be waged if people are willing to fight together in an alliance like the UDF. Working class leadership has got to emerge in that kind of process.

David Lewis GENERAL SECRETARY OF GENERAL WORKERS UNION (GWU)

Extracts from interview in ***Work in Progress, 10 October 1983***

WIP: *Why has the General Workers' Union (GWU) decided not to affiliate to the United Democratic Front (UDF)?*

Lewis: The first point to make, which we've stated repeatedly, is that we are committed to supporting any organisation that opposes the constitutional proposals and the Koornhof Bills, and the UDF is obviously primary amongst those organisations. But we don't see our way clear to affiliate to the UDF.

Our difficulties there relate to two broad areas and issues. The first concerns the structure of many of the organisations that are affiliated to the UDF, relative to the structure of a trade union. These structures are very distinct and critically different. Our second major area of difficulty relates to the essentially single-class nature, the working class nature, of trade unions, relative to the multi-class nature of the UDF and many organisations affiliated to it.

What are these essential differences in structures between the GWU and other trade unions and many of the organisations affiliated to the UDF?

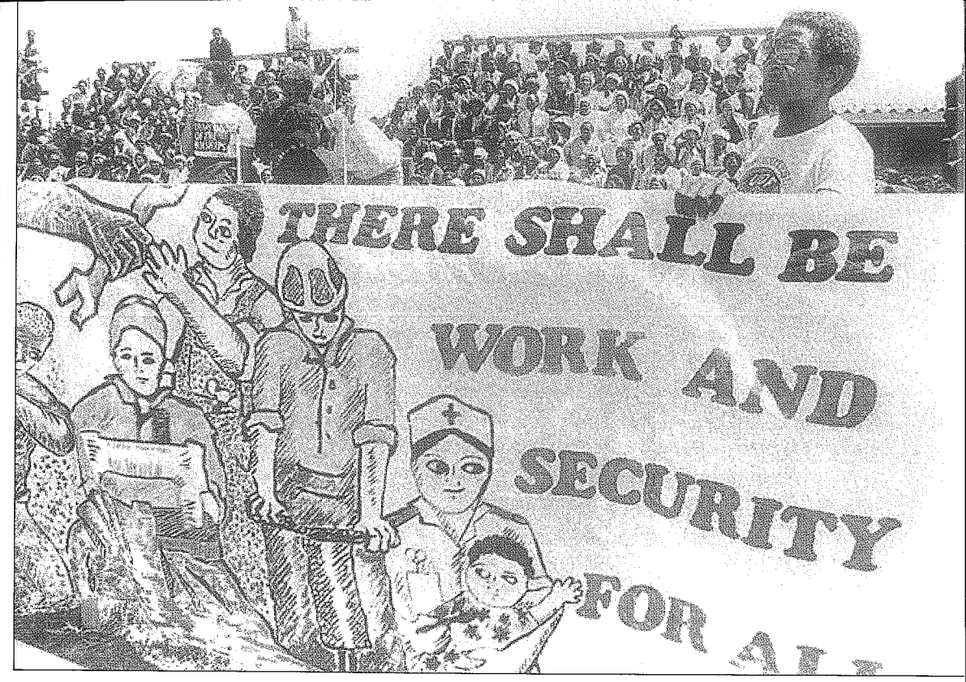
Lewis: It is relatively simple, difficult as that has proven to be, for one union to affiliate to another, because trade unions to all intents and purposes have identical structures. They all have factory structures, branch structures, and national structures, so that one union can fairly easily look into another union at all levels of both organisations. This is simply not the case with a great many of the organisations united under the banner of the UDF.

To take two concrete, if extreme examples from the Western Cape – the ecumenical action group called TEAM and the Detainees Parents Support Committee. The former is a grouping of progressive priests, and the latter is a grouping of individuals dedicated to opposing detention, and providing support for those in detention. Both these are laudable and necessary ventures, but neither bear any similarity whatsoever to the structure of a trade union. The same can be said in varying degrees of a great number of other organisations affiliated to the UDF, all the youth and student bodies, for example.

The critical feature that all these organisations have in common, as far as we can see, is that they are primarily organisations of activists. This is not a slight in any way, and we believe that there is a great need for this type of organisation. But, we still insist that they bear no similarity in their structure or organisational practice to a trade union.

This problem has been recognised by the UDF in the Western Cape where some organisations, referred to as mass-based organisations, have been given a certain number of delegates (to the UDF general council). Other organisations, those that we would primarily refer to as activist organisations, have been given a smaller number of delegates. While this recognises the differences that exist, we believe it is an inadequate recognition.

Stating the demand for workers rights... 1986 UDF Rally



You referred earlier to problems in the relationship between the union as a single-class organisation, and other organisations affiliated to the UDF that are multi-class organisations. Could you elaborate on this?

Lewis: It is not even primarily a question that the union is a single-class organisation, but that it's a working class organisation. A union by definition is open to workers only. There are a group of people in a trade union who are not workers, namely all the full-time officials, and their interests have always to be subordinated to the interests of members. There are also divisions within a union on the basis of the skill categorization of workers in a factory. In South Africa there are also the inevitable racial differences and potential divisions between section 10 people and contract people. It is these divisions which the (Tricameral) constitution and the Koornhof Bills have been set up to widen.

These are divisions that we always have to work on, we always have to work at overcoming. But notwithstanding these divisions, all our members are working class. They are all factory members, and they are all members of the broader society. This means that they identify, quite correctly, their source of oppression as the bosses and the state. That has bearing on the question of our affiliation to the UDF. For one thing, unions will inevitably be organisations that incorporate a great diversity of political views and affiliations. We'll have in our ranks members with militant political views, and we'll have in our ranks members with fairly conservative political views. We'll also have within our ranks a great many members who have few political views, people who have joined the organisation purely to fight their bosses. With a certain degree of tension now and again, these diverse views can all be contained within an organisation, because they are all held by workers.

To a certain extent this could also be true of any other mass-based organisation, it could be said of student or women's organisations. Such organisations should be able to contain within them a fair diversity of general political views as well.

But there are two key differences. The first is that student and community organisations, and, although not correctly, women's organisations, tend to identify the state as their source of oppression. This means that that they are inevitably more clearly politically defined, and their membership is a more clearly politically based membership (than a union). They don't have the bosses to intercede in the struggle in the same way that workers in a trade union do. Secondly, the fact of the matter is that most non-trade union progressive organisations tend to identify themselves quite strongly with one or another political tendency.

I'm aware that this opens us up to what has become a currently fashionable charge, of being economistic. I take this to mean that we concentrate our activities exclusively on wages and working conditions, that we are not concerned with political struggle, and that the only basis of our unity is the struggle in the factory, thereby making little positive contribution to the national democratic struggle.

There are two answers to this: the first is that a union must inevitably carry within it the tendency towards economism. A factory based organisation by definition sets itself certain limits. The second answer to the question is that the accusation reflects a narrow, formalistic notion of what politics is.

Sisa Njikelana SOUTH AFRICAN ALLIED WORKERS UNION (SAAWU)

Extracts from article in **WORK IN PROGRESS**, *NUMBER 29 7 JULY 1984*

On class alliances

Certain points need to be made with regard to the issue of class alliance, which seem to underlie much of this debate. From our experience in struggle we know that individual or group political actions, in terms of what class positions they adopt, do not mechanically correspond at every instance to the ultimate interests of their class. Rather, they assume positions that at any given moment, to some degree, depend on political, ideological and historical factors.

It is therefore important to note that continuing national oppression and its resultant limitations, insecurity and deprivation are continually felt by every class and group within the black community.

While the (apartheid) state is attempting, through various concessions, to co-opt groups and individuals within the black community, we must be careful in our endeavours to unite people for liberation, not to allow positions to be adopted which might push them unwittingly into the state's camp.

We also have to recognise that there are those whose experience or awareness of national oppression and economic exploitation will prevent them from going all the way in accepting co-option and/or collaboration with the apartheid state.

The people must continually be encouraged to play their part in the struggle for national liberation. With this firmly in mind it becomes all the more important that the black working class, as the most determined and consistent force in the struggle for national liberation, must lead the way forward.

On trade unionism: a particular organisational form

Much has been made of the *'critical'* difference between a trade union as an organisational form and other forms of organisation. Trade unions, it is said, *'to all intent and purposes have identical structures.'* This may be the case, but to follow it by asserting that *'this is, as far as we see it, what mass-based organisations means'*, raises a number of questions.

It must be noted that the organisational form within which any mass based organisation operates is related to the specific conditions in which such an organisation develops. Likewise, the form of democracy adopted by such organisations is determined by those conditions within which the organisation operates. Any organisation that upholds the principles of democracy has to ensure that maximum participation of its members in decision-making takes place.

The concentration of workers within a single factory concern or industry creates the conditions under which unionists organise. All factories have a limited and fixed number of workers (normally), and the workers are concentrated within that environment for the period of each working day. As such this environment allows the establishment of formal structures, and established membership and regular contact among members of the organisation through the form of shop stewards. This particular form of mass based organisation, made possible by the conditions within which it operates, cannot simply be transposed onto all other historical and environmental conditions.

Union organisation has historically been a tremendous step forward for the working class. The emergence of union organisation has created and solidified workers unity, and by spreading organisational experience has advanced the cause of working class organisation. The experience gained through economic struggles serves to raise workers' consciousness, develop organisational ability, and teach the value of unity and united action.

It is here that the question of the relationship between trade unions and the working class needs to be considered. It seems that there is a tendency to conflate the definition of the working class as a class with that of trade union membership, and hence to see trade unions as the only true form of working class organisation. This tendency emphasizes the distinction between trade unions, which are characterised as single-class organisations, and other organisations, which are characterised as multi-class organisations and thus not working class organisations.

> "It seems that there is a tendency to conflate the definition of the working class as a class with that of trade union membership, and hence to see trade unions as the only true form of working class organisation."

Although it is recognised that unions do have other elements within them that can *'influence the mandate that is given'*, it is asserted that they will always *'represent the view of their members.'* Again it is accepted that *'unions will inevitably be organisations that incorporate a great diversity of political views, and ... members with fairly conservative political views.'* And yet it is asserted that *'workers'* and by inference the trade unions themselves *'must have a special status in multi class organisations.'*

Trade unions and the broad democratic front

What is the role of the trade unions in relation to the UDF and its affiliate organisations? The starting point of any programme aimed at securing fundamental change in society, must be an understanding of who the main enemy is, and which is the principal social grouping and its allies on the side of the struggle for such fundamental social change.

Looking to other revolutionary experiences, such as Nicaragua and Vietnam, shows us that the progressive forces, unlike the *'left'* sectarians, drew the broad strata of the population into the revolutionary struggle; and had to struggle for leadership of the democratic organisations of the peasants, small shop owners, professionals, artisans, students and other petty bourgeoisie strata. In these experiences, the working class did not become the leading force of the broad democratic front spontaneously, nor by demanding that *'workers must have the opportunity to lead the pace and style and tone and language – in fact the whole discourse – of the organisation.'*

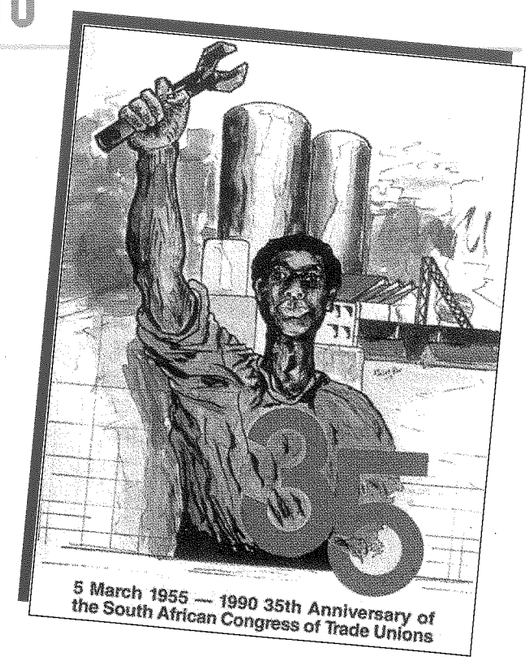
The mere presence of the union, or of individual members of the unions who are *'encouraged'* to take part in the broad democratic front, is not going to guarantee that the front expresses the view of the working class or has working class leadership. Unions, by the very nature of their organisational forms and activity are not, and cannot be, political parties of the working class. As such, they cannot demand to lead the broad democratic front, for as it is argued above, the working class is not reducible to trade unions, and trade unions do not necessarily express the views of the working class.

The only way the working class can lead the broad democratic front as learnt in the experiences of other struggles, is through active participation within the organisations and structures of the broad democratic front.

The responsibility of the union leadership in this situation, if it has the interests of the working class at heart, demands of them that they lead the union's membership into the broad democratic front and into active participation within all its structures (regardless of their imperfections); to struggle for and ensure maximum working class participation; and finally working class (not just union) leadership of the broad democratic front.

SACTU welcomes COSATU

Editorial, **SECHABA**, *1 JANUARY 1986*



THE LAUNCH OF THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), during the last days of November (1985), was historic in many respects. Durban – the scene of the 1973–74 strikes that ushered in the new trade union and working class militancy – was chosen as a venue.

Nine hundred and thirty (930) delegates representing 37 progressive trade unions formed a trade union federation – the Congress of South African Unions (COSATU). This federation represents nearly half a million black workers. Surely it's the biggest and most representative workers movement in the history of South Africa.

The new federation represents a merger between factory-based unions and community-centred unions, including unions affiliated to the UDF. This was a product of hard work – four years of 'unity talks' and much more; hard slogging, day-to-day explanations, and mobilisation of people on bread and butter (or, to be more precise, mielies and sour milk) issues.

This also means that a powerful new voice has been added to the politics of South Africa. This new extension of trade union cooperation is a new source of strength, not only to the new worker body, but to the democratic trade union and working class movement in South Africa in general.

At a mass rally at the Durban King's Park Stadium, Elijah Barayi, vice president of the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) and the newly elected President of COSATU, addressed an audience of 10 000 chanting and cheering people. He told them that COSATU is fighting for better wages and working conditions; it is also fighting against apartheid. The new organisation wants to ensure that its worker-orientated policies *"are eventually made the politics of the oppressed people of this country."* He demanded the nationalisation of the mines and industries, and supported the call for disinvestment, and went on to say that unless the regime scrapped apartheid in six months, the new federation would organise a campaign of pass burning.

This is not an empty threat if one remembers that at the mass funeral in Queenstown on 7 December 1985, African youths wearing khaki uniforms, decorated with ANC colours and carrying wooden AKs and revolvers, sang revolutionary songs of Umkhonto we Sizwe and acted out battles. The people at home mean business.

The principles on which this new federation is formed are:

- non-racialism
- one-industry-one-union
- worker control of the union
- representation in COSATU on the basis of paid-up membership
- co-operation amongst the unions at a national level in the new federation.

There are many problems to be resolved and lots more to be solved. The Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) and the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) stayed away because they subscribe to a policy of 'black leadership' rather than non-racialism. There are 560 000 workers organised in white-dominated, racist trade unions, and only 14% of the total work force is organised in any union.

In welcoming the formation of COSATU, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) stated:

"Our revolution requires a united and strong trade union movement, determined to satisfy demands for higher wages, good working conditions, removal of the colour bar, equal opportunities to work and the achievement of complete emancipation. The new federation, COSATU, can and will fulfill these aims. It must become a truly democratic centre of organised activity for all workers who are determined to liberate our country from its existing oppressive and exploitative social system... The Federation, in unison with the national liberation movement and its allies, is called upon to perform an historic task by calling on its members and the organised workers to participate fully in the struggle for liberation, social justice and equality."

COSATU on the united front



***Cosatu News**, Number 2 November 1986*

EVERY WORKER WANTS UNITY. That is why they join trade unions. That is why our trade unions formed COSATU, so that we can unite the strengths of hundreds of thousands of workers. We know that we are going to need the maximum unity and strength if we are to win what we need. Today – with the bosses and the government attacking our movement so hard under their Emergency – we feel this more than ever.

Other organisations that have the support of workers and youth are feeling this too. This great need for unity and for united mass action against the apartheid system, which is causing us so much poverty and suffering. So the UDF and the NECC approached COSATU and said: 'We need to all stand together. We need national unity against the racist Botha government. We need united mass action to end the Emergency and bury apartheid."

The COSATU CEC discussed this and agreed that national unity of the oppressed is very important. The question was: how do we build this unity? Some unions were saying that what we need is a united front of all organisations supported by workers. These unions said that COSATU must take the lead to build the long-term unity of the oppressed under the leadership of the working class. They said this unity must be organised around common demands. The unity should be organised through the united front, at local, regional and national level.

They said that all organisations must be independent in the united front, but there must be discipline. Nobody should decide on action without consultation. Joint action on common demands should be the basis of unity. Many unions agreed that this was important. But others said that it would take time to discuss exactly how this long-term unity would be build. They said there should immediately be a short, specific campaign around common demands.

In the short term the CEC felt COSATU must build the call for a united mass action and national unity against the Botha regime. And that long-term unity must continue to be discussed within COSATU and with other organisations. COSATU said there must be more demands for national unity and united mass action. The other organisations agreed with this. This is a great step forward for unity. Our organisations have the power in our hands to unite millions who want what we want:-

- An end to the state of emergency
- The release of Mandela and all political prisoners
- The unbanning of the ANC and other banned organisations
- An end to controls over students and a system of people's education
- An end to rent evictions and rent we can afford
- A living wage for all workers
- Freedom of expression and association
- An end to retrenchments and jobs for all
- Decent social security
- The right to strike
- Abolition of the migrant labour system.

COSATU members, these are the demands we have agreed to unite around. These are the things that we are preparing mass action and unity for.



COSATU leaders addressing members at a meeting

AZASO and COSAS INSPIRE

EDUCATION CHARTER CAMPAIGN

SASPU NATIONAL, 9 September 1983

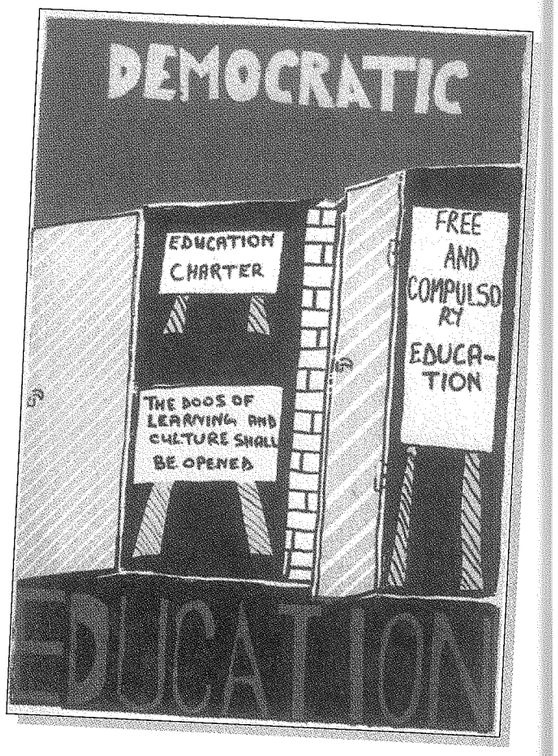
THE RECENT AZASO Congress once again saw students focusing on the campaign for an Education Charter. This campaign had been initiated by AZASO and COSAS during 1982. A special commission was set up to review the progress made in this important project.

It was initially proposed at the second AZASO congress held in July 1982 that the Education Charter campaign should collect the demands of the oppressed in the sphere of education. The second congress felt that AZASO and COSAS should take the initiative in launching a nation-wide campaign for the drawing up of an Education Charter. Students agreed that the Education Charter that will eventually be drawn up should contain the short-term, medium-term and long-term demands of the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa.

The Charter should take its inspiration from the Clause of the Freedom Charter, which states, "*The doors of learning and culture shall be opened*", it could serve as a beacon to students struggling for a single non-racial and democratic education system within a united and democratic South Africa. 'Rather than being the product of a handful of intellectuals, it should bring forward the demands of all student struggles past and present. It would thus include the demands of the 1953 campaign against Bantu Education, 1976 student revolt, 1980 schools boycott as well as demonstrations against Quota Bill and age limits, said an AZASO spokesperson. The 1982 Congress defined education in the broadest sense to include pre-school education and adult education.

The Education Charter will not be the product of students alone. Workers, women, youth and church organizations will be involved in the process of drawing up the Charter. Using these guidelines, the National Executive Committees of AZASO and COSAS came up with a more concrete direction for the campaign. It was divided into 5 spheres:

- The initiation phase would involve consultation with other progressive organizations about the Education Charter.
- Local committees would be formed to co-ordinate the campaign and to hold workshops, seminars and conferences on education.
- Regional committees would be formed to co-ordinate and popularize the Charter campaign.
- A National Conference would then be called to be attended by delegates and observers from the regional committees. A National Education Charter Committee would be elected at this conference to collect the demands for the Education Charter and to supervise the drafting of the document.
- A National Adoption conference attended by progressive organizations from all fronts will adopt the Education Charter.



This format was accepted and ratified by a joint council meeting of AZASO and COSAS held in December 1982.

The scale of the campaign is vast. Large areas of South Africa, especially rural areas are unorganized and thus require special attention. Furthermore, 1983 is likely to be a difficult year. Workers are facing unemployment, retrenchment and severe attacks from the state in the forms of the Koornhof bills. Trade unions and other progressive organizations are involved in the struggle against the President's Council proposals and the Bills.

Therefore, in the near future, the campaign will be limited to students. AZASO and COSAS branches are being encouraged to form Education Charter committees and to hold seminars and workshops on education. Despite slow progress during early 1983, AZASO and COSAS agreed to a National Focus Week on Bantu Education. The focus week ended with nationwide mass meetings on June 16 where the idea of an Education Charter was introduced to students.

- Thousands of pamphlets, stickers and posters ensured the focus week was a success.
- In Durban over a thousand students attended a June 16 meeting held at Howard College.
- In Cape Town some 100 people attended a meeting held in Bonteheuwel, and another 800 attended a memorial meeting in Gugulethu.
- June 16 was also commemorated at Mangosuthu Technikon and Turfloop, Wits and Ngoye universities.

The 1983 AZASO Congress, held in July this year, passed a resolution on the Education Charter stating:

- That regional councils of AZASO assume responsibility for the creation of Education Charter committees within all branches.
- That an intensive national campaign be launched later in the year to popularize the concept of the Education Charter of the people.
- That there be a portfolio for a national projects officer on the National Executive whose responsibility would be to co-ordinate all national projects and make resources available.

Unity of democratic forces:

THE TRANSVAAL STAYAWAY

by Jean Middleton

SECHABA, 2 February 1984

THE MEETING OF 10 October 1984, where the Transvaal stay-away of the 5th and 6th of November was first discussed, marked a new stage in intense political activity and bitter resistance. It was convened by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), which called on student, community and worker's organisations to get together to discuss civic and labour problems and the educational crisis; so though it was called by the students it was not intended to plan student action alone. The trade unions joined in and took a significant part, but the stay away, when it took place, was not a trade union action alone.

The organising committee was later described by the Solidarity News Service, based in Botswana as: "*...the greatest unity of democratic and anti-apartheid forces in South Africa in recent years.*" And its chairman, Thami Mali of FOSATU said of the action that it was: "*...the first time in South African history that trade unions and militant organisations have acted in such dramatic concert.*"

After the first meeting, the delegates went back to their communities to assess their strength there.

During the course of that year, black residential areas in South Africa had become battlefields. The township of Sebokeng had, according to press reports, been left in ruins in September, after protest against an increase in rents and subsequent police repression.

Then, on the 23 October 1984, 7000 troops and police moved into Sebokeng, the township was sealed off, and people were arrested on an average of one a minute, during a house-to-house search for (according to the official statements of the apartheid regime) "*revolutionary and criminal elements*".

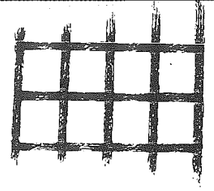
Three hundred (300) people were charged as a result of this raid, but all except six of these with petty offenses. There was an outcry over the use of the army for police duties, and the Progressive Federal Party called for the army to be withdrawn from the townships; police spokesmen claimed that the army was used outside the townships to cordon them off while the police went in.

Operation Palmiet — the final straw

The police gave the name Operation Palmiet to this brutal and threatening piece of work in Sebokeng, and 'official sources' hinted to the press that there might be more such raids on other townships. Operation Palmiet was probably an important factor when, at the second meeting, a decision was taken to call a stay away.

The second meeting took place on 27 October. At it

– constituting the Transvaal Regional Stay-away Committee – were representatives of 37 community and trade union organisations, formed and strengthened in protest campaigns over the past months; among them the Release Mandela Committee, the Federation of Transvaal Women, the Vaal Civic Association, the East Rand People's Organisation, the Federation of South African Unions (FOSATU), the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA), the United Mining and Metal Workers Union (UMMWUSA), the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU) and the General Workers Union (GWU). The UDF as a collective organisation was not involved, though a number of its affiliates took part, and it later issued a statement in support of the stay away.





The apartheid regime responded to the mass stayaway with detentions, bannings and various other repressive means at its disposal.

In the previous two months there had been three stay aways in the Transvaal, all of them locally based: one in the towns of the Vaal Triangle, one in Soweto and one in KwaThema near Springs. This time, the call went out to all areas in the Transvaal, and the political scope of the protest was wide, so that demands which had grown up in specific campaigns over the year came together in what was to become a massive protest.

The demands were:

- The army and police should be withdrawn from the townships
- The community councilors should resign
- The increases in rent and in bus fairs should be withdrawn
- Detainees and political prisoners should be released
- Dismissed workers should be reinstated
- General Sales Tax and other unfair taxes should be abolished; and
- Democratically elected SRCs should be established in schools.

There was a recommendation for people to stay indoors; shops and businesses were asked to close. Health workers were exempt from the call.

Between 27 October and 5 November there was an intensive organising campaign, with pamphlets and leaflets. Counter-leaflets opposing the stay away were also distributed, and these were popularly attributed to the police (one of them said, *"Why don't these people spend the money they are spending on pamphlets on something worthy, like food and clothing for the poor?"*)

In an attempt to diffuse the situation, the Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange, claimed that the *"unrest"* was dying out, and that it was *"calming progressively";* and at the beginning of November the police reported that it was *"waning"* on the East Rand and in the Eastern Cape. These statements, however, were not borne out by events, for throughout the country tension remained high and repression continued.

Some attempt had been made to placate the students. Strict guidelines on the use of corporal punishment had been issued, schools had been given permission to elect SRCs, the age limit – much resented – had been abolished. There was still no suggestion that the quality of black education should be improved, and no talk of extra money being allocated to it, so these changes were clearly cosmetic, and the students were not deceived. Le Grange suggested that the *"unrest"* might die once the schools closed, implying that the students had been entirely responsible for it. He was proved wrong.

An Historic Action

The response to the stay away call was tremendous, and the action an historic one. Radio Freedom, the voice of the ANC, broadcasting on 9 November 1984 called it a: *"...resounding success... a victory scored in the face of a massive police and army presence in the townships."*

FOSATU and the UDF claimed a stay away rate of between 65% to 95% in different areas. About ten days later, the Association of Chambers of Commerce estimated that the response to the call had been between 75% to 100% in the main industrial areas of the Witwatersrand. The stoppage in Atteridgeville – a centre of protest since the beginning of the year – was said to be almost total. The huge parastatals, SASOL and ISCOR, stopped working. Solidarity News Service estimated that over half a million workers took part. Estimates of the number of students who stayed at home ranged from 250 000 to 400 000.

Observers later made comparisons with the great stay aways of the fifties. It is worth recalling that in the days of the Congress Alliance, SACTU and the other Congresses worked hand in hand, so that then, as today, organisation at the factory gates complemented and reinforced organisation in the communities.

The police moved in with Casspir armoured vehicles,

Khotso House under siege by the security forces



and by Tuesday the army had been deployed on the East Rand, while residents set up road blocks of rocks, burned-out buses, burning tyres, old cars and dust bins. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) claimed that at SASOL two Hippo personnel carriers filled with police had driven into a union meeting of about 6 000 workers on Tuesday morning. THE SOWETAN of 8 November 1984 reported seven dead in Tembisa, six in Ratanda, four in Kathlehong, one in Duduza, and one in Alexandra.

At this time, the people also showed their anger against the local community councillors, those detested symbols of the apartheid regime, and two councillors' homes in Tembisa were set alight. In an article in the SUNDAY TIMES of 18 November 1984, Allister Sparks reported that by that time seven community councillors were dead, and others had resigned or had fled, so that only four out of 22 councillors were still functioning.

Sackings at SASOL

Most employers seem to have treated the two days as leave – paid or unpaid – but there was some victimisation, and both CCAWUSA and the Food and Beverage Workers Union threatened legal action on behalf of those members who had been sacked. By far the worst victimisation was that at SASOL II and III, branches of the parastatal, where, on the Tuesday morning, the entire morning shift (the bulk of the workforce) was dismissed, and the rest of the workers given an ultimatum to return to work during the course of the day, while police in armoured vehicles surrounded makeshift pay points. In all, 6000 SASOL workers were sacked, and for some, at least, who were interviewed by the press, it was their first job after a long period of unemployment. The general secretary of the CWIU said that the union had informed the SASOL workers that they were exempt from the call to strike, but they had nevertheless insisted on observing it.

He spoke of the *"pent-up anger and frustration"* of the black SASOL workers, and said that to them the plant meant *"...danger, arduous working conditions, barracks-like hostels, racial oppression, rumours of men killed in accidents during the night and whisked away, and generally a very oppressive environment."*

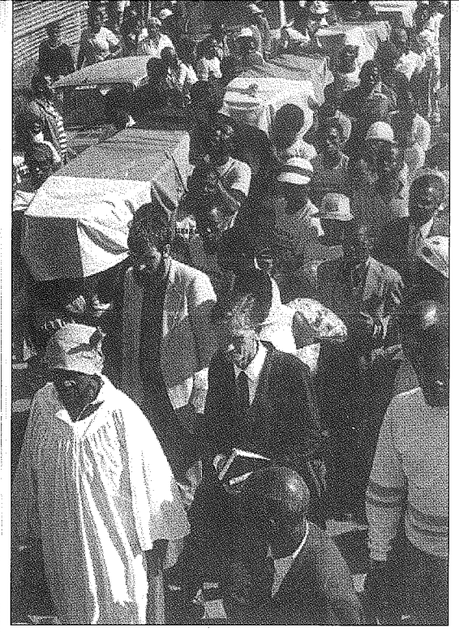
The action SASOL took against the workers seriously disrupted production at the plant. 1000 new workers were employed almost at once, but that was only a sixth of the number of workers needed; and untrained as the new workers were (it took eight months to train a SASOL worker) it was clear that it must have been an ineffective work force. The CWIU claimed that security functions at the plant had been taken over by the police so that security staff could be freed to take part in production, but the management denied this. At all events, before two weeks passed, the management had invited the sacked workers to re-apply for their jobs, saying that such applications would be sympathetically considered if the workers could satisfy the company that they were 'victims of intimidation.'

Power in our hands

In an interview with the FINANCIAL MAIL of 16 November 1984, Thami Mali said of the stay away: *"It has...shown that we have power in our hands. It showed that we can bring the machinery of the country to a standstill."*

Spokesmen of the regime had been making threatening statements around this time. Louis Le Grange had issued a warning to political activists not to cry if they got hurt. The Minister of Home Affairs, FW De Klerk, had said the government would not allow 'destabilising actions' in any area, and told an employers union meeting in Cape Town: *"South Africa cannot afford to allow its labour and economic spheres to become a political battlefield... strong action will be taken against instigators, arsonists and radicals... order shall be maintained."*

On November 8 came the arrest of leaders of six organisations that had been involved. On 12 November, THE CITIZEN newspaper, in its usual role as mouthpiece of the regime, reported that the police were *"working around the clock"* to establish who had been 'responsible'



Reports of resistence and repression continued

for the action. Before another week was up, the number of those arrested had risen to 20; all-leading members of organisations that had openly endorsed the stay away.

Reports of resistance and repression continued – a raid on Tembisa in the middle of November, which the police described as an 'anti-crime swoop', a boy of eight injured with a stray bullet, a baby almost killed by tear gas, more than 20 people injured by police birdshot in Port Alfred, a man killed in Graaff-Reinett, thousands arrested in rent raids in Sebokeng and so on.

The regime and big business disagree

The regime had not been able to conceal its dismay at the arrival of the new stage of struggle. South African employers organisations and the spokesmen of big business also showed their perturbation, for what they called 'industrial peace' as a safeguard for their super profits. There was some disagreement though, over what methods should be used to preserve the situation in which black workers were exploited to produce these profits. The Association of Chambers of Commerce, the Federated Chamber of Industries and the Afrikaanse Handels Instituut all condemned the detentions of leaders of the stay away as harmful to 'harmonious and productive' labour relations.

While Pretoria seemed likely to adopt a tactic of harassing the trade unions, others were recommending strategies for capturing them. The Centre for Investigation of Revolutionary Activities at the Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit held a conference at the beginning of October 1984, entitled "South African Trade Unions: Revolution or Peace?' The labour advisor to the Anglo-American Corporation told this conference that trade unions could act as powerful agents for reform. Professor Nic Wiehan, director of the School of Business at UNISA, said that South African trade unions had become 'politicised' in 'socialism and communism'. He went on to say: *"It is thus necessary that we politicise our own trade unions in the anti-socialist and anti-communist ideologies."*

English language press comments

It is interesting to look at some of the editorial comment in the South African English press about that time. THE CITIZEN of 9 November 1984, predictably, defended the policies and actions of the regime: *"...the radicals...pose a challenge to the government, which will force it to respond with drastic action to prevent the situation from getting out of hand...It cannot allow the economy of the country to be disrupted."*

Other papers took a different line. THE CAPE ARGUS of 14 November called for an investigation into the causes of the unrest. THE SUNDAY TIMES of 11 November went further: *"...the times...demand from government bold moves to redress genuine black grievances."* THE SUNDAY TRIBUNE of the same date was most forthright of all. It said: *"The answer is simple: Blacks want a meaningful say in the future of the country. White decisions imposed on Blacks still continue, but should have stopped years ago when even the densest of politician realised the homelands policy was a disaster."*

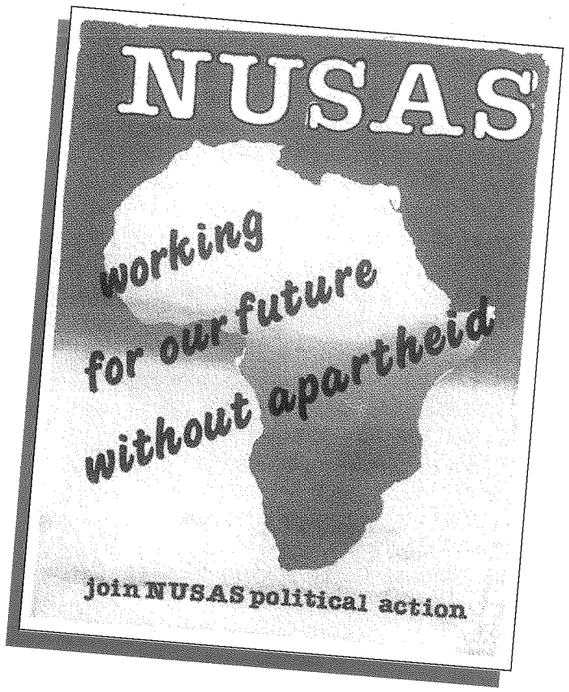
In spite of all these calls upon it, the answer the regime made to the situation was to intensify repression, and to do this it recklessly spent money it did not have, gambling all it can borrow on a desperate throw. Gold prices fell, drought once again caused a failure of the maize crop and the motor industry was in recession. South Africa (according to a report in the RAND DAILY MAIL of 19 November 1984) was heavily in both long-term and short-term debt overseas and found it more and more difficult to raise foreign loans, because of *"...a combination of a deteriorating economy and recurring reports of unrest in the black townships."*

There was another possibility that was closer than ever before: that of having power in South Africa pass into the hands of the people themselves. Thirty years ago, the Freedom Charter first proclaimed that: *"South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people."*

We quote again Thami Mali: *"We cannot go back now. Our duty is to step up resistance and create an ungovernable situation."* When asked the day before he was arrested, 'What will you call for?' he replied: *"The minimum demands of the people are contained in the Freedom Charter. Of course, the people will have to come forward and lay these out. But even if such a call is made, it cannot be to the Transvaal Regional Stay Away Committee. There are leaders of the people of South Africa and there are leaders of the workers of this country...The leaders of the people have been jailed for life: Nelson Mandela and others, and there are leaders of the people in exile. Those are the people the government should talk to, not us."*

Nusas and the UDF

***by Kate Philip** (NUSAS President 1983/84) and **Brendan Barry** (NUSAS President 1985/86)*



THE FORMATION of the United Democratic Front in 1983 had a profound impact on NUSAS and students on its university campuses at the time. From the late 1970's, the Freedom Charter had become a key mobilising document for NUSAS, providing a compelling vision of a non-racial, democratic South Africa for white students. But it was with the formation of the UDF that it became possible for NUSAS to turn the non-racialism of the Freedom Charter from a matter of principle, to a matter of practice for large numbers of students. The UDF forged an alliance that united and strengthened the struggles of its political, community, youth, trade union, women and student affiliates and rapidly generated an unprecedented and nation-wide mobilization against apartheid.

Mobilising against Apartheid

When NUSAS joined with hundreds of other organizations throughout the country to form the UDF, it faced the key challenge of ensuring that it retained the support of the majority of students on the white campuses for this decision, in the face of state-funded and organized right wing and liberal opposition.

While most mass organisations build their membership by organising directly around the interests of their members, the historical challenge for NUSAS was to organise white students to take a stand that appeared contrary to their interests: to recognise that the white minority privileges they enjoyed as a result of apartheid were unjust and unjustifiable, and to ally themselves with the forces for democracy in South Africa.

For NUSAS, winning this ideological battle on the campuses was a prerequisite for survival. As a federation of SRCs, NUSAS had to maintain student support for its policies and campaigns on every affiliated campus, or risk losing SRC elections, or facing campus-wide referendums to disaffiliate from NUSAS.

Year after year, and despite concerted State opposition, NUSAS managed to win support from the majority of white students for the anti-apartheid cause. But it could never take its constituency for granted: it had to win the battle of ideas: in mass meetings, campaigns, concerts and lecture halls; through pamphlets, posters, publications and campus radio stations, NUSAS sought to expose white students to South Africa's bitter realities, to overcome the comfortable separations and silences that apartheid worked so hard to create, and to find ways in which to support the wider struggle for a non-racial, democratic South Africa.

The complicated set of reforms with which PW Botha aimed to 're-engineer' apartheid created the basis for the widest ever mobilization against apartheid, under the banner of the UDF; and NUSAS was able to rally broad support from white students for the UDF, and to participate actively in the campaigns and protests that erupted against first the tri-cameral elections, then the black local authority elections, and the township uprisings that started in the Vaal and spread across the country in protest at the imposition of those local authorities.

For NUSAS, the decision to be part of the UDF enabled us to link white students with these struggles in ways that were meaningful and material; that allowed these students to be participants in South Africa's democratic movement, side by side with the many constituencies within the UDF, and in support of their struggles.

Opening the Doors of Learning and Culture

Student and youth struggles were a critical feature of the UDF period. NUSAS, COSAS and AZASO (subsequently SANSCO) had formed a non-racial student alliance from early in the 1980's, and formed the student wing of the UDF.

The 1980 school boycotts, led by COSAS, were an early skirmish in what was to be an intensifying struggle in the schools, with demands that included an end to Bantu Education, the right to elect Student Representative Councils, and an end to corporal punishment and sexual harassment in the schools.

In 1984, a new dimension was brought to student struggles, in the Transvaal stay away, in which trade unions organized a mass strike in support of student demands: identifying themselves as parents of students, and making the link between student demands for representative structures in the schools, and trade union struggles for recognition in the factories. The Transvaal was brought to a standstill. It was the first of many such stay aways to come, as increasingly organized workers asserted their power on the factory floor in relation to wider political issues.

The realities of conditions under Bantu education, and the huge discrepancies in state spending on white and black education highlighted all the more starkly for white students that their own education had been one of privilege: based not just on who had textbooks and who went without, but in terms also of the role of ideology in the very different content of the educations received.

The infamous quote from Verwoerd emphasized the goals of Bantu Education and bears reminding:

"What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics which it cannot use in practise? There is no place for him above the level of certain forms of labour... We should not give the native an academic education....we should so conduct school that the native will know that he must be a labourer in this country."

COSAS turned Verwoerd's dream into PW Botha's nightmare. Throughout the country, COSAS generated a leadership cadre characterized by its political maturity and insight and above all its courage. Together with other township youth formations, it provided a militant backbone to the entire democratic movement, not only through its own struggles but through its former students as they reached tertiary education institutions, joined trade unions, community organizations and MK. The struggles of COSAS students inspired NUSAS and it campaigns for many years and its banning in 1985 precipitated major protests on NUSAS campuses.

Challenging the Role of Universities

While much NUSAS activity was focused on solidarit with COSAS in opposing Bantu Education, the struggle in the schools also cast into sharp relief the role our ow education was designed to have us play in our society and the question of what we should be doing to challeng that education, and to find different ways to use ou skills than those planned for us.

As a NUSAS publication of the time explained:

"Our universities are designed to prepare us for specific roles in the apartheid system. We are taught variou skills in such a way that they will be useful to the privileged minority in South Africa, yet be inaccessible to th vast majority. A changed South Africa will need professionals whose skills are oriented towards serving the interests of the community as a whole."

NUSAS highlighted that a democratic South Africa needed architects and town-planners who understood the housing crisis in South Africa; doctors trained in preventive health care rather than plastic surgery; and teachers who can teach the history of resistance to colonialism and apartheid, not how Jan Van Riebeeck brought civilization to the Cape.

In practice, NUSAS worked with representative student structures in faculty councils and with progressive academics, to challenge the content of education in the universities across every discipline; and challenged students to use their skills in support of the transformation of society.

Many students who were part of NUSAS tried to do precisely this on leaving the campuses, and continue to do so in the new South Africa, as part of building and sustaining the spirit of non-racialism in the era of transformation.

The challenge posed to students, of finding ways to use their skills in support of democratic struggles, was a factor contributing to the proliferation of what in the 1980s became known as 'service organisations'. These NGOs included legal support services which challenged human rights abuses; para-legal support to communities contesting forced removals; community health services, refugee support structures in Natal, responding to the displacement of people during the Inkatha violence against UDF and COSATU in the region; labour research services, urban planning NGOs working with civic structures; media support agencies, and many more: staffed by activists, graduates and professionals, black and white, who sought to apply their skills in ways that strengthened the democratic movement.



The people shall read... NUSAS activists played a major role in the silk-screening of posters for mass meetings on and off campus

Solidarity and Support for Wider Struggles

While NUSAS challenged the racist education system, and mobilized white students against apartheid, students were also organized to provide support for the wide range of struggles that emerged under the UDF banner. Not only did the UDF provide a common platform for the voice of grassroots structures, but also a vehicle through which apparently isolated struggles were able to build a cumulative and decisive impact.

When NUSAS activists weren't silk-screening posters for mass meetings on campus, they were doing so for youth organizations and unions; printing presses at NUSAS Head Office and on many campuses often cranked through the night, producing pamphlets that were not destined for campus consumption. Students campaigned for the release of political prisoners and pamphleteered buses and trains with 'Free Mandela' pamphlets; spoke at black schools to promote non-racialism side by side with COSAS; pamphleteered white schools in support of COSAS; organized support for consumer boycotts and worker struggles; picketed the tri-cameral parliament voting booths and marched in protest against the states of emergency, detentions and the treason trials of UDF leaders.

The advent of the UDF also brought new forms of organization, and opportunities for new forms of involvement in struggle by white students. In the white community, organizations such as the End Conscription Campaign, the Black Sash and the Five Freedoms Forum were bringing new constituencies into the anti-apartheid fold, even where these were not directly affiliated to the UDF.

New forms of constituency-based organization in the UDF also provided white students with opportunities to struggle alongside workers, youth and community members in the UDF's local and regional campaign structures: as part of the Million Signature Campaign, organising against tri-cameral and community council elections and Bantustan repression. Students also joined local youth structures, which often cut across the spatial racial divisions of the Group Areas Act, which were fraying at the edges in many urban centres; and campus women's movements were able to link up with community-based women's structures.

Troops in the Townships

In the context of the massive growth in popular organization that characterized the UDF period, as well as the formation of COSATU and the growing use of strikes and stay aways, the apartheid government made it clear that it intended to retain control at all costs: with massive repression.

In this context, the widespread deployment of SADF troops in the townships had a profound impact on the campuses; an impact enhanced by students' experiences of participating side by side in campaigns with the organizations now being targeted by apartheid's army.

At the time, white male students faced compulsory conscription to the SADF after leaving school or after completing their university studies. Opposition to conscription had grown in response to the South African war of occupation in Namibia and southern Angola and the murderous raids by the SADF into frontline states. On the campuses, opposition increasingly turned to rejection as student conscripts and potential conscripts confronted the immediate reality of war against their fellow South Africans in townships throughout the country. More and more white students demanded the removal of troops from the townships, supported the End Conscription Campaign and joined the struggle against apartheid.

TOWARDS A JUST PEACE IN OUR LAND

A Declaration to End Conscription

We live in an unjust society where basic human rights are denied to the majority of the people.

We live in an unequal society where the land and wealth are owned by the minority.

We live in a society in a state of civil war, where brother is called on to fight brother.

We call for an end to conscription.

Young men are conscripted to maintain the illegal occupation of Namibia, and to wage unjust war against foreign countries.

Young men are conscripted to assist in the implementation and defence of apartheid policies.

Young men who refuse to serve are faced with the choice of a life of exile or a possible six years in prison.

We call for an end to conscription.

We believe that the financial cost of the war increases the poverty of our country, and that money should rather be used in the interests of peace.

We believe that the extension of conscription to coloured and indian youths will increase conflict and further divide our country.

WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE MORAL RIGHT OF SOUTH AFRICANS TO EXERCISE FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND TO CHOOSE NOT TO SERVE IN THE SADF.

WE CALL FOR AN END TO CONSCRIPTION

WE CALL FOR A JUST PEACE IN OUR LAND

Through Nusas, more and more white students joined the End Conscription Campaign

NUSAS in the States of Emergency

In 1985, the NUSAS July Festival was due to be opened by Matthew Goniwe, speaking about the remarkable levels of community organization in the small towns of the Eastern Cape. Instead, the conference opened with the news of his disappearance: and then, during the conference, that his body,

together with the bodies of Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mlauli had been found on a back road outside Port Elizabeth, assassinated by apartheid forces. Their funeral attracted hundreds of thousands of people to the small town of Cradock; but that evening, PW Botha declared his first State of Emergency. In film footage used by the SABC to justify the emergency, Beyers Naude (who was honourary president of NUSAS at the time) was shown during his speech at the funeral. But instead of the measured words of solidarity and struggle he'd given, the footage had been speeded up, so that he was seen waving his arms demonically at the crowds. The propaganda onslaught against the democratic movement had entered a new phase of intensity and deceit.

The successive states of emergency were vicious in their attempts to smash organization. The exuberant presence of mass organization in the early stages of the UDF was forced into semi-clandestine forms of operation. Many activists were targeted and killed. Many ordinary people came under fire. Attending mass funerals of the victims of state violence became a form of solidarity in its own right. As community leadership was forced on the retreat, the state nurtured forms of vigilantism and internecine violence.

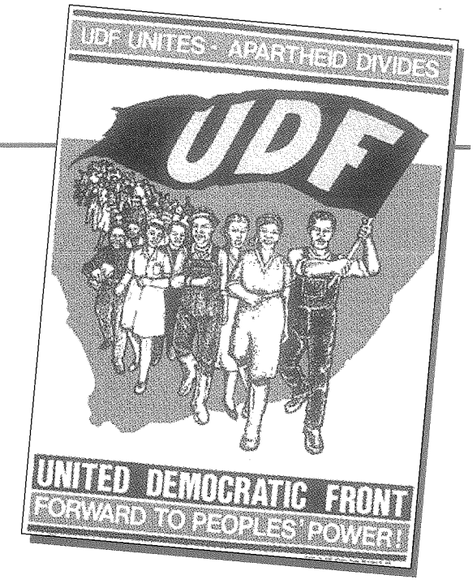
In this context, although the university campuses were not beyond the reach of repression, they were nevertheless a zone of relative protection. NUSAS did its utmost to use this space to maintain the profile of resistance and opposition, and to provide a platform for leaders from mass-based organizations in the UDF and COSATU. Under student pressure, university administrations were forced to choose sides, and many chose to protect the rights of students to create such platforms and to protest as part of academic freedom, using their powers – but not always successfully - to keep the riot police, the Casspirs and Hippos at bay.

The ability of NUSAS to operate nationally was also severely curtailed, with its Congress banned from Cape Town in 1985, its 1986 July Festival banned, many student leaders detained, and others living on the run as they ducked and dived to evade the attentions of the security police.

In those dark hours, it was hard to comprehend that what lay at the end of the tunnel was light; that the intensity of repression was part of the death throes of the regime; that the balance of forces had in fact tipped; and that the release of political prisoners, the unbanning of the ANC and the SACP and the negotiated transition to democracy would follow.

UDF Unites:

REFLECTIONS FROM THE WHITE AREAS



by Graeme Bloch

AS I THINK BACK to another time, the time of the UDF, all sorts of images flood back.

The dull thud-thud of helicopter blades. I have been watching outside the Manenberg police station all morning. The priests and imams, arms linked, lead a march over the bridge into the African township. Another funeral, another young death. Always under the spiky armed guard of the buffels, ratels, armoured cars, crammed with scared young recruits. Now sirens and helicopters. An ambulance. More sirens and shouts. Someone in the crowd has thrown a grenade, and the riot police chief is hit by shrapnel. We see it on TV that night in the crazy whirl as the cameraman dives for cover. The dull thud thud. Teargas, bullets, more deaths.

Being on the run. For three years, Cheryl Carolus and I held the national record, keeping out of their clutches, though my photo as wanted was up in Mowbray Police Station. So the funny stories, like when my brother and girlfriend were surrounded by armed cops at an open air food festival. Wrong G Bloch, but girlfriend didn't stick around to go through that again! Or Hugh, sweating it out as cops searched for me in the house, while his Honours thesis notes about torture were spread out all over his desk. He left soon afterwards, not to return, to evade an army call-up.

Being on the run. When you did meet with comrades, or go to a meeting, they would laugh – thick glasses, bokbaard, Rolf Harris look. People always laugh at you before they say hello –disconcerting, another break in human touch. You never say hello to the neighbour's kids, because you don't want to befriend their parents. Screens and disguise, evasions and deceit. You grow hard and tough. You don't cry easily.

Being on the run. Changing cars, never using the telephone. Quick meetings, and quick escapes if anyone is more than ten minutes late. Comrades getting detained, and young kids being tortured. At least you have resources, you get borrowed cars and change.

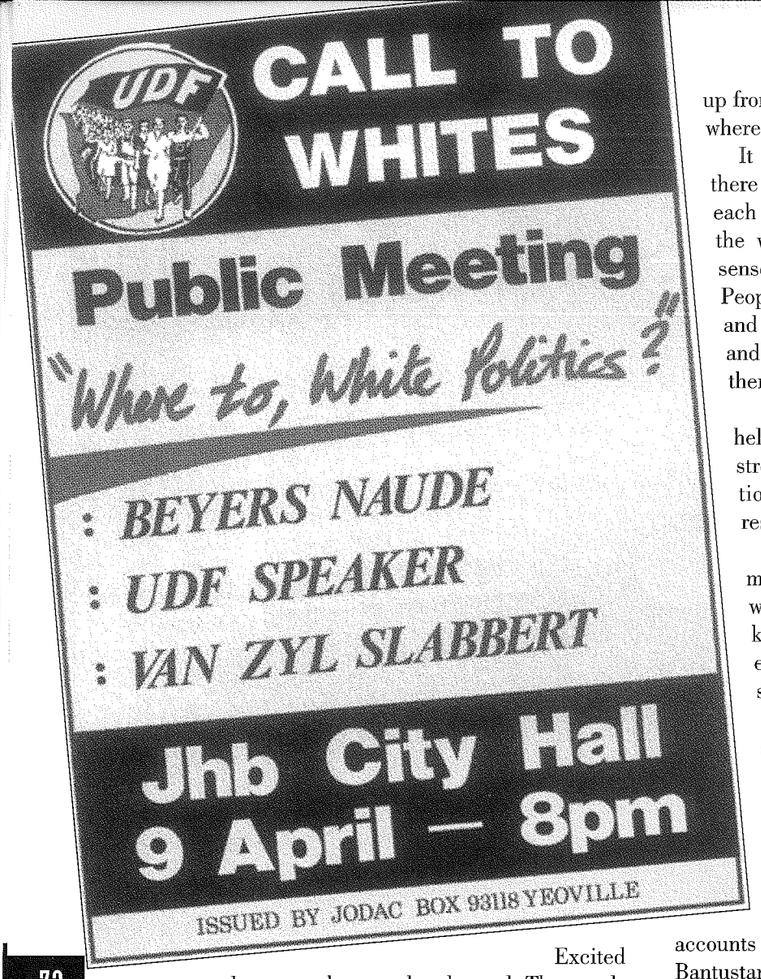
But to be young, restless, hunted, the brightest of the youth who could not sit back to take the things they saw. We felt the bravery and incredible courage in their pain and rage. Killed, detained, tortured, sometimes broken, but indomitable. They came back. "We'll eat teargas!" I remember one boy shouting at the cops. They fought back and paid a terrible price.

To be free. The UDF expressed our yearning. We were the '76 generation – since that turning point things would never be the same. Seven years later and the masses were beginning to move. We were all younger than 30. The tide of politics drew us in, and new resistance arose every day. The giant of labour was stirring, and shaking a slowing economy, rigid and out-of-date. In Southern Africa, arms had turned the tide. The piecemeal crumbs of PW's reforms opened more space to fight, to organise and raise demands. We want to speak, for ourselves. We want it all, we want it here, and we want it now!

Somehow, the UDF set us free. Always the people ahead of us, always surprising us with their energy. Their courage and willingness to come forward. Their creativity and new ideas. The networks and resources that they drew, who they knew and how they did things, their spontaneous imagination as they grew and learned.

Actions started to link millions and millions of people across the land in a common yearning, loosening that submerged feeling in our hearts and making us wonder if maybe we were nearly there.

When 13 000 came to Mitchells Plain to launch the UDF, I saw it through the practical frame of the catering crews who I led with Mrs Jaffer from Wynberg. 10 000 boiled and peeled eggs. Apples by the crate from Fariedah Omar at Salt River Market, dropped off in Makie's borrowed bakkie. Soup bowls and giant tubs of breyani, steaming as the delegates arrived, late at night, tired and cold off the bus from the Northern Transvaal and desperate for a meal. Comrades whom we'd never seen but had heard of, now were here!



Excited and unsure: the new day dawned. Thousands streamed to the launch, banners, colours and song, a new era of unity and defiance, of speaking out and shouting loud, of marches, demonstrations, pickets, hunger strikes, meetings, talks, executives and AGMs, resolutions, strikes, petitions and pamphlets. Action, comrade, action! Seize the imagination and show the way!

Pamphlets, pamphlets by the thousand. Door to door, one at a time, volunteers gave them out and explained their purpose and our goal. House by house by house, at stations, bus stops, in the streets, we talked and told the people what we could do. We explained and listened. Black and white, we tramped the streets of Guguletu and Lavender Hill, of white Claremont and Coloured Paarl. We linked neighbour to neighbour, one to the other, and a country to itself.

We linked ourselves, across barriers, and got to know, together, all the corners of our land. We learned about each other. We discussed what people said, and absorbed the lessons for our next campaign.

Campaigns didn't always work. A national bus boycott flopped, the call just didn't resonate down here. We kept on trying. We were here to stay, here to lead and show a way.

This was a UDF strength. First, courageous leadership sparked response. There were no privileges to being up front, to showing the way. Then, people organised where they were. Constituencies took charge.

It was the ultimate post-modern movement – there was a slogan, a unifying goal or theme. Then each centre took it up as best it could, expressed in the ways that integrated its own experience and sense of place. Small steps gave rise to more. People learned and stepped some more, grew bold and made the links. Action together sparked more, and action gave rise to reaction. The beast out there eventually had to sink!

It was a myriad of small actions, designed to help people get their courage and show them their strength. A million spontaneous steps, organisation, consolidation, discussion, and new response.

In the white areas, a powerful thrust was made. White democrats came together and worked their own areas. Always a minority, they kept the door open, brought information, gathered resources and provided deep bases for the struggle's resilient strength.

In Claremont Civic Centre, we read messages from Asmal of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement; we condemned the West's complicity and praised the Bonteheuwel young lions. We won a court order to overturn emergency bans. Zapiro did his first cartoons, the famous 1983 UDF calendar.

We brought to the suburbs first hand accounts from squatter camps, from the tortures in the Bantustans. And even deeper went the wedge, as the End Conscription Campaign mobilised and grew against the war, providing channels for deep choices of conscience by young white recruits who refused to serve.

The white areas, too, mobilised to take democrats into the UDF, and to learn from the strengths and differences of the townships and the ghettoes. Our eyes were opened by the realities of people's lives.

When everything came together, as in the vast marches that culminated the Defiance Campaign in 1989, reveling in the purple rain, our own celebrations to match the collapse of the Berlin Wall, finally when the state realised it could no longer shoot, what glory and confidence there was!

Gareth and I, finally detained, in Pollsmoor. Having survived the defiance and put it all in place, now we jog the courtyard restlessly while protests gather momentum outside. As we jog around the prison yard, we fantasise: "Today's the big march! They'll release us now, we'll get a taxi, we'll rush straight to the front!"

It was not to be. We had to wait again for Chris Giffard to come back from his trial to shout across the yard the latest news of the success. But inside, it was clear, even in the interrogations, that the security cops were not sure which way to turn, had lost their heart. We'd lost our fear, and they didn't know where to go.

Nor should we ever forget how brutal the state could be. People sat in solitary for 3 years. Brains were blown out and bodies blown up. Pickled hands, monkey's paws, chemical compounds and poison, explosives and assassination told the story of a state that knew few bounds. Nuclear bombs were researched and made and tested.

Our young people had to learn to fight rather than to build.



Our young people had to learn to fight rather than to build. The tragedy of a million opportunities lost.

I joined the ANC in 1987, the middle of the darkest nights of the emergency. Tony Yengeni convinced me the fight could not only stay above ground. I knew the ANC's history, the structures it had built, its morality even in its armed war, the palpable sense of its popular appeal . The annual calls that intermingled with the wider mood. The time of struggle we had reached. They all made my move inevitable. *'Make South Africa Ungovernable!'* A profound and complex call, that brought us to the final thrust.

The UDF too provided the structures in which we could talk about the new era that dawned after 1990. With the opening of negotiations, a new period had begun. The ANC began its long transformation to an electoral giant, the exiles returned, the talks started up. It was time to move on.

I think there are some enormous things we've gained. Everyday in South Africa, I see a new untroubled youth coming through, that tells me the fruits of our struggles are here to stay.

We learned to look at people's strengths, to take people for what they were. This sense of hegemony, this sense that we were right, did not make us arrogant but encouraged us to draw people in, to win them over and let our deeds show them the way. That we could learn from them. That we were different and did not all contribute in the same way.

That together we could change the world. That together we did, though there are long roads still to go.

And, oh yes. I met my love while on the run, late meetings under the railway bridge and stolen walks on Cape Town beaches; strolls up the berg. Somehow we lasted through the pain and fire; something human always burned. In the midst of struggle, I met my wife and love.

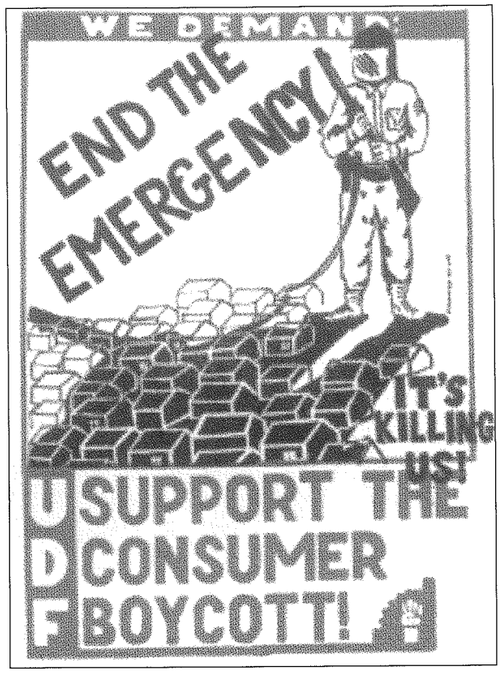
The UDF unites, they said!

Why we organise

From **ISIZWE**, *Journal of the UDF. Volume 1 Number 4, March 1987*

DURING THE 80's, the struggle against apartheid reached new heights and became more deeply rooted. Many more people were actively fighting for their rights; they became more united and more aware. We have seen this in the sustained mass action countrywide – in the factory and school, township and village, in the consumer boycotts, stay aways and rent boycotts, in the street committees and people's courts. Increasingly the people refused to be ruled in the old way, and demanded democratic self-government over their daily lives.

This fundamental challenge to apartheid rule did not just suddenly happen. Painstaking ORGANISATION, over many years, knocked down for our people the walls of passivity and powerlessness, of ignorance, divisions and fear. And it is organisation which remains the key to defending and taking further the challenge to apartheid rule.



The consumer boycotts was used as a tool to mobilise the people against apartheid rule

What is organisation?

For us in the democratic movement, the concept *'organisation'* has a particular meaning. When we talk of *'organising'* or *'organisation'*, we refer to a process which involves a number of things:

- Building the unity of our people
- Raising the level of understanding and awareness of people
- Bringing about their active involvement in struggle and in the issues of daily concern to us all; and
- Giving this unity and involvement structure and form, content, direction and consistency.

All of the above, taking place in an ongoing and living way, is the process of organisation. In other words, an organisation is not just a constitution or a committee. Organisation for us means fulfilling a key requirement in our struggle for national liberation.

Why organise?

Denied full political rights and access to the wealth of the country, the daily lot of our people was one of poverty and hardship. Denied a democratic say and control over their lives, the oppressed had no automatic power to change the situation. The councils, management committees and other puppet bodies that the apartheid government set up were undemocratic and unable to do anything about our problems. But by uniting and acting on our problems, we gained strength and power to challenge oppression and to overcome it. Organisation is our tool to build this strength and power.

Central to our understanding of the need for organisation is our belief that it is through our own efforts that we will be able to do something about our problems. Our experience has taught us that when we ourselves act on our problems, only then does change become possible. We have to take charge of our own lives in order to change them.

The efforts we talk about are the efforts of the mass of people. Not just a few individuals or a few enlightened leaders. Change in the true interests of the majority will come about only through the united action of the majority. So we organise to bring about the active participation of the maximum number of people in the issues of daily concern to them – issues of high rents and low wages, housing, education, land reform.

In acting on our problems, we act in unity. Without unity, we cannot effectively address the challenges that face us. We share common problems, and by taking them up together we exercise greater strength and power.

The enemy will always try to undermine and weaken our struggles through dividing us – offering concessions to some and not to others; trying to discredit and isolate democratic organisations and leadership from the people.

Where the apartheid government sought to divide us – parent from youth, homeowner from tenant, Zulu from Xhosa, urban from rural, Indian from African, black taxi-owner, nurse or trader from black worker – we organise to cement a lasting unity. Of course, we understand that not all the interest of these different groups and classes are exactly the same. The black working masses have the greatest interest in taking our struggle to its deepest conclusions. But all oppressed and democratic South Africans have an overriding interest in the final elimination of apartheid. Building the unity of our people around this unifying interest, maintaining and defending this unity, ranks as a priority for us.

To survive, apartheid depended not only on our disunity and lack of action, but also on our ignorance. Ignorance of the reasons for our hardship. Ignorance of our right to a better life. Ignorance of our ability to fight for that right and to achieve it.

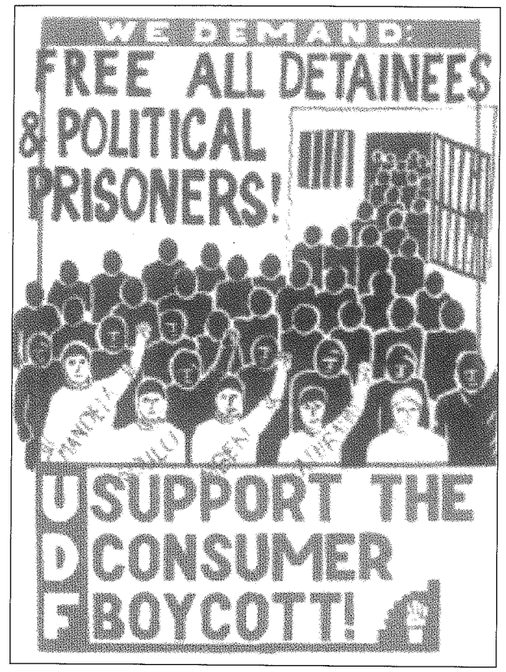
We organise to raise the level of understanding and awareness of our people. Through mass struggle we learn that there are reasons for our life of misery and oppression. We learn that our problems can be overcome. We learn about the power of, and need for united action. We develop confidence in our ability to make decisions for ourselves, to take charge of our own lives, and to influence the course and outcome of events.

To give proper expression to our unity in action, to coordinate and direct it, we form organisations, structures and committees. Our organisations allow us to communicate with one another, to discuss matters and jointly arrive at decisions. Through our organisations we are able to plan action, implement and coordinate it. It represents our collective voice and ensures we act in unity.

Organisations also help us to learn from our successes and failures. Without constant organisational assessment (does this strategy work. Is this possible? Why did that fail?) there can be little scientific base for ongoing work. Without organisation we can never learn from our collective mass struggle.

It is also within organisation that we develop democracy. The experience of our people in their own democratic organisations, is the experience of democratic participation. Our people are exposed to open discussion and a free expression of views; to working together and sharing joint responsibility; to discipline and accountability.

Through all of this – this dynamic process of organisation – we are protecting ourselves from attacks on our living standards, fighting to improve the quality of our lives, and bringing about change in our interests. As we organise, not only are we challenging and breaking down the old and the negative, but also creating and building the new and positive.



Forms of organisation

The democratic organisations we establish take many and varied forms. The kind of organisations we form and the way they are structured, is determined by a number of factors. These include who is being organised, what their interests are, what issues we are organising, what our goals are.

It could be hostel dwellers, students, commuters, teachers, or the unemployed who are being organised. The organisation that we establish could be a SRC, a trade union, rent action committee or a political organisation.

Sometimes we form bodies for specific sections of the people like an unemployed workers' association or youth congresses. Some of these bodies may come together under a civic association to represent the total interests of all residents in the community, or all of them can come together under a broad national political movement like the UDF to fight for national liberation.

Organisation, we can see, occurs at different levels and assumes different forms. A careful reading of all relevant factors and conditions, and the lessons and experience we gain while organising will guide us on the nature, form and structure of organisation. But almost as a rule, it is crucial to achieve the involvement of the people who directly experience a particular problem or set of problems.

It is not good, for example, for youth to lead and dominate a struggle against high rents while the workers, parents and tenants are not actively involved. In the same way it is not good for the taxi owners and bus drivers to take a decision on a bus boycott and not the commuters.

Approach to organisation

We refer to our approach to organisation as the mass approach. This is based on our understanding that mass struggle is the key to change. Our mass approach means that we must always be at the level of the people. To confuse the awareness and commitment of the masses with that of activists, would leave us as a small peripheral clique isolated from the people. What are the feelings of the majority of the people? How deeply do they feel about this particular problem? How far are they prepared to go with action? What is their level of understanding on the issue? These are important questions to ask for anyone who is serious about organising.

In line with this, our approach on any issue is one which seeks to win over as many people as possible. We are careful not to alienate people through ill-discipline, poor conduct or rash action. Important to this approach is consultation and hard work to ensure any decision or action enjoys the broadest possible support. Not only is this an important part of our democratic approach, but it is necessary for the success of that action.

All of this does not mean that our organisations must be passive in the face of those we seek to organise. We must also constantly provide active leadership to the people. To pursue a mass approach to organisation, does not mean folding our arms and moaning about the *'backwardness'* of this or that sector of the people.

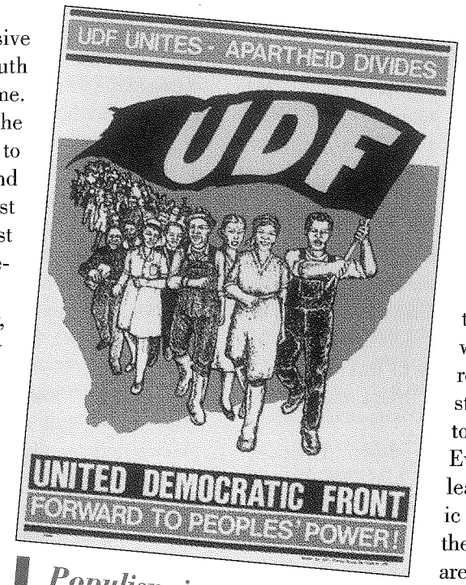
We must not be fifty steps ahead of the people. But equally, we must not fall behind them. To begin from where the people are at, this is the key to effective organisation. Organisation is the key to mass struggle. Mass struggle is the key to change.

The errors of populism

From **Isizwe**, *Journal of the UDF. Volume 1 Number 2, March 1986*

THE UDF ACHIEVED massive mobilisation all over South Africa in a short space of time. It confirmed the correctness of the broad strategy, that the struggle to end all forms of oppression and inequality is most effective and most speedily advanced by the broadest popular front. We call this a strategy of national democratic struggle.

This broad strategy is, however, sometimes labeled *'populist'* by some people. We are told that our use of the term *'the people'* in our slogans (Forward to People's Power! The People shall Govern!) proves that we are populist. These accusations are in fact false. Let us understand this issue more clearly.



Populism is an ideology that fails to understand (it often deliberately hides) the class and other differences within the ranks of the people.

Popular but not populist

First, it is important to understand how we use the term 'the people'. We use this term to distinguish between the two major camps in society – the enemy camp and the people's camp. The people's camp is made up of the overwhelming majority of South Africans – the black working class, the rural masses, the black petty bourgeoisie, and middle strata (clerks, teachers, nurses, intellectuals). The people's camp also includes several thousand whites who stand shoulder to shoulder in struggle with the majority.

The main common goals that unite the people's camp are

- The struggle to remove all racial oppression;
- The struggle to remove the grip of the monopoly companies over our country; and
- The struggle to build democratic majority rule in a united South Africa.

In this popular struggle, we identify the working class as the leading class. The capitalist system, benefiting from apartheid colonialism removed black workers from the countryside and left them with noting to lose – no land, no private wealth, no individual professional skills.

It has put the workers, millions strong, into the power-house of our country. It is there together, down the mines, on the large white farms, in the factories and in the big shops, that workers make most of the wealth of the country. And all the time, this great productive army, the working class is being exploited by the bosses.

You have only to list these things to see why we say that workers must play the leading role in the national democratic struggle. They are the key to victory for the whole people's camp. Every day of their lives, workers learn the great lesson of democratic struggle – that as individuals they are weak, but collectively they are strong.

Populism hides differences

Populism is an ideology that fails to understand (it often deliberately hides) the class and other differences within the ranks of the people. In the people's camp in South Africa there are common unifying interests, for instance, the opposition to apartheid. But within this unity there are differences. A black shopkeeper may oppose apartheid mainly because of the Group Areas Act and racist trading restrictions. A migrant worker may oppose apartheid because of pass laws and low wages. A black teacher may oppose it mainly because of Bantu Education. A white democrat may oppose apartheid for moral, ideological reasons.

These are just examples and things are not quite so simple in reality, of course. But these examples give us some idea of the need to understand the differences within the unity of the people's camp.

In fact, in order to develop this unity we must have a clear, scientific understanding of these differences. This is what we mean when we speak of the need to understand the differences in our unity.. We must not expect to mobilize and organise all sectors of the people for exactly the same reasons. A black trader and a black worker may have different reasons for joining the same

broad ranks of popular struggle.

This is the first major difference between our line and the line of populism. Populism speaks of the people as if the unity within the people's camp was based on completely the same interests.

Let us give an example. In South Africa, Africanist and Black Consciousness ideologists have often had strong populist tendencies. The claim that *'all Africans are socialists'* or talk of a single *'African personality'* or *'black soul'*, are all varieties of populism.

These examples of populism all show an unscientific grasp of reality. While they correctly understand the need for a maximum unity in the people's camp, they have a vague understanding of the basis of that unity.

Progressive and reactionary populism

Despite its populist weaknesses, it is important to note that an ideology like black consciousness (BC) played a broadly progressive role in South Africa. In particular in the 1970s, BC played a big role in mobilizing tens of thousands of our youth. The majority of this youth has since gone beyond the limitations of black consciousness.

But not all populism is broadly progressive. The case of Afrikaner Nationalism can be mentioned. This ideology also has a strong populist character. It speaks of a single *'people' ('die volk')*, with its own *'special soul'* and historical calling *('roeping')*. In speaking of the volk, Afrikaner Nationalism hides the class differences between Afrikaans bosses, the petty bourgeoisie and workers. This brand of populism tends to be based on a very reactionary, racist idea of the superiority of the volk.

The fact that populism can be broadly progressive or extremely reactionary is important to remember. Not all forms of populism must be handled in the same way. In its most reactionary form, populism is an enemy ideology, and it must be treated as such. But those who hold a more progressive brand of populism must be educated and developed. Elements of their outlook can be built upon, and their understanding and practice can be made more scientific.

Understanding workers' interests

Populism speaks about the people's camp as if there were no differences within it. But in practice it often advances the interests of one group or class within that camp. It pushes these particular interests as if they were equally everyone's interests.

Let us take the example of black consciousness in the 1970s. Using populism, BC ideologists spoke of a single *'Black Soul'*. But the fact that they concerned themselves mainly with issues of central concern to the 'black soul', blinded them to differences within the camp of the oppressed. In this way they often failed to address the issues of major concern to black workers, or to the rural masses. When such issues like passes or low wages were raised, they were not given enough importance.

Populism downplays organisation

We have said that populism, even progressive populism, has an unscientific understanding of the unity of the people's camp. It tends to base this unity on *'consciousness'* or on *'feelings'*. For this reason populism often relies on charismatic leaders – that is people who can sway the masses with fine speeches, but with very little content. Such *'leaders'* often speak without organizational mandate. For them the possession of a black skin, for instance, or some *'special insight'* into the *'black soul'* is sufficient as a mandate.

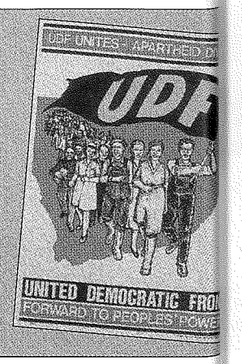
While we must not forget the crucial importance of mobilizing, and of strong fighting talk, the need for organization and democratic participation must also not be omitted. If we are blind to the objective differences within the people's camp, the task of solid organization is impossible. Without a clear understanding of these differences we will not be able to organize the different classes and sectors into a united fighting force. We will also not be able to understand what is of major importance, and what is of secondary importance. Not all groups within the people's camp have the same potential.

Conclusion

We have seen that to talk about *'the people'* does not mean that one is populist. We are absolutely correct in our broad national democratic movement, to struggle for people's power, and to demand that the people shall govern.

But for this strategy to work we have to ensure that we do not ignore the objective differences within the unity of the broad people's camp. We must avoid both the dangers of ultra-leftism and of populism. Ultra-leftism speaks only of the working class and neglects the task of uniting the broadest popular unity in the national democratic struggle. Populism tends to neglect the crucial leading role of the working class within that popular unity.

We are absolutely correct in our broad national democratic movement, to struggle for people's power, and to demand that the people shall govern.



Errors of workerism

From **ISIZWE**, *Journal of the UDF. Volume 1 Number 3, November 1986*

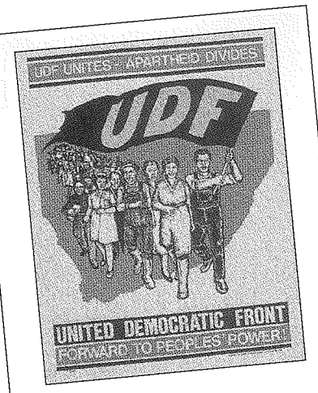
WORKERISM IS AN IDEOLOGY that has existed at different times in different parts of the world. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, workerism was one of the false approaches that the new, international workers' movement had to deal with and criticize. There were many important debates within workers' parties, trade unions and later with national liberation movements concerning workerism. We in South Africa can learn a great deal from a study of these historical criticisms. In this article we will be more concerned with local versions of workerism.

As the name shows, workerism concentrates more or less narrowly on the working class. Workerism correctly states that this class is the most progressive class in capitalist societies. But workerism then clings to this truth in a very mechanical, one-sided way.

Depending on the time or place, workerism has some or all of the following features. In the first place it is suspicious of all issues that are not "pure" working class issues. What is more, the approach tends to have a very narrow idea of working class concerns. It tends to think mainly of factory-based struggles over wages and working conditions. These are the really important problems for workerism. Insofar as other issues, beyond the point of production (beyond the factory) are taken up, these are seen as secondary matters. This means that workerism tends to under-rate the very important struggle for state power. By state power we mean control over the police, army, courts, parliament and administration.

Workerism also tends to be highly suspicious of any kind of popular alliance and any struggle that involves more than just the working class. In fact nowhere in the world has the working class achieved victory without large numbers of allies among other groups. Where the working class has won power, it has always had to fight against the ideology of workerism, which seeks to isolate the workers. Despite this history, and despite many examples of its weaknesses, workerism still rears its head from time to time.

In the last 10 to 15 years we have seen the emergence of a fairly strong workerist current in South Africa. Before we look more closely at this tendency, we need to understand the particular, historical conditions that made this development possible.



As the name shows, workerism concentrates more or less narrowly on the working class.

Re-emergence of progressive trade unions

It was the progressive trade unions that were the first genuine mass-based, progressive organizations to emerge in South Africa after the terrible repression of the 1960's. The beginnings of this re-emergence date back to 1973. In that year 100 000 workers went on strike in the Durban area. This wave of strikes set the pace. Unions began to re-emerge over the next years in all the major urban centers.

The main participants in these developments were:

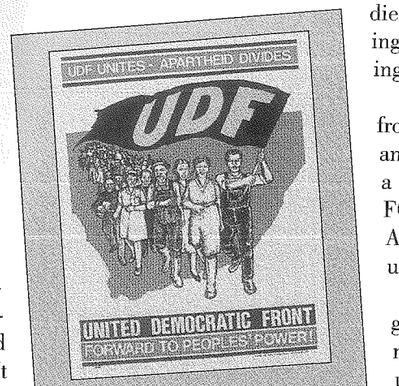
- The workers themselves
- Veteran worker leaders from the earlier SACTU period, some of whom at the time had recently been released from political imprisonment; and
- Young intellectuals, many (but not all) white, coming from the universities.

In considering the development of workerism, this third group needs to be looked at more closely. These young intellectuals made an important contribution in the early years of rebuilding progressive trade unions. They assisted with advice, research, resources and organizational skills. The ideological background of many of these intellectuals was an "academic" or "legal Marxism". This brand of "Marxism" had been learnt from university books, and not been sharpened and tested in mass struggle. (Of course this was not the fault of the intellectuals in question. It was not easy for them to develop progressive ideas, except through small reading groups in the heavy repression of the early 1970's). This "academic Marxism' was very European in character. It was not rooted in the South African struggle.

Looking back, one person from that time has said: *"I read many thick Marxist books. They were about Britain and France. I knew all about difficult economic theories*

before I had even heard about the Freedom Charter, or of SACTU's pound-a-day campaign of the 1950's."

As mass union organization grew in the late 1970's, some intellectuals in this group changed and deepened their outlook. They came to understand the history of our struggle, its traditions, and its strategies and tactics. But the outlook of some others continued to be heavily marked by their university background. It was this last group that became the most active ideologists of workerism.



Too often we use the words "populism" and "workerism" as loose sectarian slogans

Debates within the trade unions

A number of debates happened in the mid 1970's in and around the new trade unions. One debate concerned the question of trade unions and political involvement. Some argued that the re-emerged trade unions should not get involved in politics. They said that trade unions' best chance of survival and of growth was to concentrate narrowly on labour issues.

We must remember in this period of the early 1970's, the apartheid regime and the bosses were going all out to smash the new emerging trade unions. They were trying to impose instead dummy liaison committees. At this time, the progressive trade unions were quite small and inexperienced.

After the massive country wide struggles of 1976-1977, the apartheid government retreated on the trade union front. The government and the bosses were scared that the popular militancy, especially of the youth, would "infect" the new trade union movement.

The ruling class abandoned the liaison committees and went for a different approach. They decided to recognize the new trade unions, and in this way they hoped to tame them. They hoped that by recognizing the trade unions it would keep them free from politics.

In fact, this new approach did not really work. Instead it made a lot more space for progressive trade union work. It was, in practice, an important victory for the South African working class and its organizations.

For some workerists, this victory was seen as a victory for the strategy of narrow trade union work, by slowly pushing back the government and bosses by the careful building of trade union structures, and by not getting involved in "political adventures". Of course what this argument completely ignores is the massive effect that the 1976-1977 uprisings had on forcing the apartheid government and bosses back into making some reforms. Over 1000 people, mostly students and young workers, died in the struggles of 1976-77. The emerging trade union movement is one of the living monuments to these martyrs.

This newly opened space on the labour front was used effectively by the workers and their trade union leadership. By 1979, a new national trade union federation, FOSATU, was launched. Alongside FOSATU, SAAWU and many other trade unions also grew in strength.

The main feature of this short background history is that the working class movement re-emerged largely as a trade union movement.

This happened in a situation where there was little, if any, open mass-based political organizations in the people's camp. It was only in the early 1980's that progressive civics, youth congresses and women's organizations began to emerge. It was only in August 1983, with the launch of the UDF, that a truly national, political voice existed at an open level. By this stage, the re-emerged trade union movement had been in existence for some 10 years. It was in this situation, with a labour movement operating more or less independently of mass political struggle, that workerism developed.

A warning

A word of warning before we look more closely at the details of workerism. Too often we use the words "populism" and "workerism" as loose, sectarian slogans. Too often we label someone, or some group or organization "workerist" and then we imagine we can dismiss them. But this is not so.

In fact, individuals and organizations with workerist tendencies have made contributions to our struggle in the last 15 years. In criticizing the errors of workerism, we must also learn what we can from the strong points in theory and in organization of those who have workerist tendencies. We must seek to win them over to our position.

It is also important to note that when we use the word "tendency", we mean exactly that. Today you will find only a few pure workerists. But you will find the outlook and errors of workerism creeping in as a tendency in quite a few places. Our own UDF ranks have not been free of workerist tendencies.

There have been three broad forms of workerism in South Africa over the last 15 years.

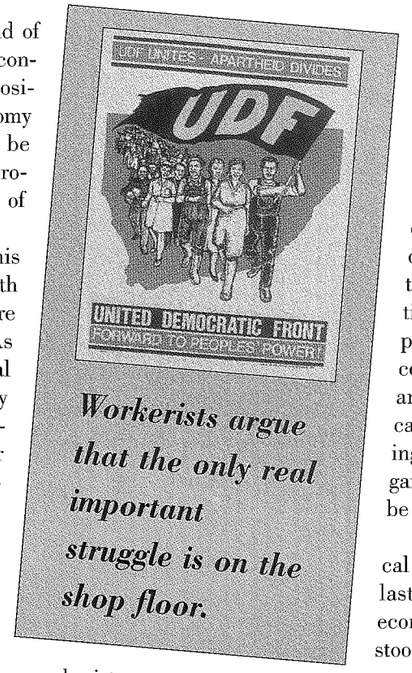
1. Workerism as economism

We have already spoken of 1973 and the debates that surrounded the new trade unions. The debates were whether the unions should get involved in politics. Some, but not all intellectuals associated with trade unions argued that the unions should not get involved. Generally, at this stage, this view was presented as a tactic for the particular time. It was, as we have said, a period when the unions were still weak and small. It is possible that this low profile, narrow trade union, factory floor approach was, then, the correct tactic. In any case, as long as this approach was seen, strictly, as a tactic and not as a general principle, then it is not really correct to describe it as workerism.

But many of those pushing this tactic of "independence" for trade unions in the early 1970's, soon began to develop a more elaborated theory – this was the ideology of economism.

By economism, we mean that brand of workerism that has argued that the "economy" is the key to everything. This position argues that in a capitalist economy like South Africa everything can be explained by capitalist relations of production – that is, by the exploitation of workers by bosses.

Now, there is a lot of truth in this view. Unfortunately, this important truth is advanced by economism as if it were the whole truth, and the only truth. As a result, it argues that the only real important struggle is on the factory floor. It is in the factory that the workers and bosses confront each other most purely. This struggle is the key to everything else.



Workerists argue that the only real important struggle is on the shop floor.

Workerists who advance this brand of economism tend to dismiss the political struggle as not so important. They see apartheid oppression as simply a mask behind which capitalist exploitation is hidden. For these workerists, struggles around who shall govern, and against apartheid oppression generally are not really important. They say such struggles have the danger of misleading workers away from the "real" struggle, the "pure" class struggle in the factory. Insofar as these more political struggles are taken up, they are useful only if they uncover to the workers the truth about capitalist exploitation. It is in production, they say, that the real power is located. If workers can change the system of production, if they can take over the factories and get rid of the bosses, then the apartheid government will crumble.

This economistic workerism is not all wrong. It is true that the power of the ruling class, of the bosses, rests very much on the exploitation of the workers at the point of production, in the factories. It is also true that meaningful change in our country will not come simply by removing apartheid. Full democracy for South Africa depends importantly on removing exploitation from our economy.

(This, incidentally, is why the UDF has committed itself to fighting all forms of oppression and exploitation).

But economism takes these truths and turns them into the whole truth. In this way, it tends to ignore the great importance of political questions. The factory is not the only place where the ruling class has power. Without an oppressive political machinery (police, army, courts, jails, administration) the bosses would not be able to continue for one single day their exploitation of the workers in the factory. In our country apartheid oppression (things like gutter education, pass laws, job reservations, the Bantustans) deepen the capitalist exploitation and control over workers, and also over all the oppressed.

While factory based struggles are of great importance, a complete strategy for change cannot simply rest at this level. What does it help a worker to win wage increases, if these are wiped out by more sales tax and higher rents introduced by the white minority regime?

Even from a "pure" working class and economic position, it is completely wrong to limit workers to factory based issues. The questions of politics, of who hold state power, of who makes the laws, of who controls the police, the courts, the army, prisons and administration cannot be ignored. Without addressing these questions the factory-based gains made by the workers will always be in danger of being wiped out.

With the upsurge of massive political struggles in South Africa over the last two years, the weaknesses of economism have been widely understood by workers, and most other progressives.

While economism still lingers on in some places, it has generally been abandoned, or adapted and reformed. One reformed brand of economism can be called syndicalism.

2. Workerism as syndicalism

This syndicalist brand of workerism does not deny the need for workers to get involved in wider political issues. But it sees the trade union as the main, or even as the only organizational base for this political involvement.

There are some reformist as well as more militant versions of this syndicalism. The reformist version hopes for some movement or party modeled on the British Labour Party to emerge. The trade union movement would be the main participant in such a labour movement. For the reformists, struggle is limited to the struggle to improve conditions, without ending our enslavement. More militant versions of this syndicalism see the

trade unions as the spearhead of attack on the apartheid government and bourgeois rule. In this case the chosen strategy is the general strike. In fact, the general strike tends to be stressed by these militant syndicalists to the exclusion of all other strategies and tactics.

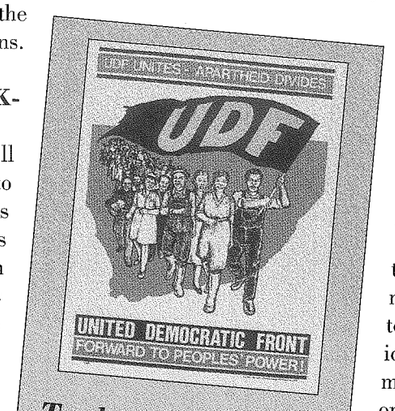
Both the reformist and militant versions of syndicalism have one thing in common. They both think that the leading role of the working class means the leading role of the progressive trade unions.

But the leading role of the working class in our struggle is not the same thing as the leading role of the progressive trade unions. To understand why we say this, and to understand more clearly the errors of syndicalism, we need to look at the strengths and weaknesses of trade unions.

THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions have made, and they will continue to make, a great contribution to the whole liberation movement. It is often within trade unions that workers begin to learn of their collective strength as a class. The trade union struggles enable workers to understand more clearly that their interests and those of the bosses are fundamentally opposed. In democratic trade unions, hundreds of thousands of South African workers get organizational training. They take part in discussions, elections, mandating and representing. The trade unions are a great school of struggle for workers. It is in the interest of the UDF and the entire national democratic struggle in South Africa that the maximum number of workers is organized into democratic, national, industrial trade unions.

The trade unions are also more than just a school of struggle. They are in their own right, powerful weapons, enabling workers to strike heavy blows against the bosses and against the whole apartheid system.



Trade unions are in their own right, powerful weapons, enabling workers to strike heavy blows against the bosses and against the whole apartheid system... But have limitations.

But trade unions have limitations. The first aim of a trade union is to organize the maximum number of workers in a factory, and eventually within an industry.

Its major means of mobilization and organization is around the immediate factory floor issues – like wages and working conditions. If this is the first aim of a progressive trade union, then it would be incorrect to exclude workers who say they are "not interested in politics", or who have many different, even confused political views. In South Africa, the progressive trade unions often include many ordinary workers who are not political, or who are, for instance, Inkatha members. Many of these workers are, nevertheless, loyal union members.

It is completely correct that the progressive trade unions should cast their net wide. They would be failing in their task if they excluded an ordinary worker because he or she has confused political views. This is not to say that trade unions should make no effort to educate their members politically. But this is a process, something that can take time. By casting their net wide, and by exposing thousands of workers to democratic organization and collective, militant struggle, the trade unions can act as a major link between the working class and political organizations and struggle.

What we have just said about trade unions shows why unions have political limitations. This is not the fault of trade unions. They would, in fact, be failing in their political tasks if they tried to become political parties open only to the most politically advanced workers with the same programme and outlook.

Because they recruit widely, trade unions are often not able to move quickly and effectively in day to day political struggles. The political mandates of officials are often more limited than those of political organizations, where the voluntary members have already agreed to a political programme.

But we must not take this argument too far!

Over the years, the progressive trade unions in South Africa have played an important political role. Unfortunately the political contribution of trade unions in the last period could sometimes have been much greater. The reasons for this have not always been the fundamental limitations of trade unions themselves. Often workerism has held back the fullest participation of the organized workers in our struggles. However, since the launch of COSATU at the end of last year, we have seen a bolder political approach. This represents a very big gain for the whole struggle.

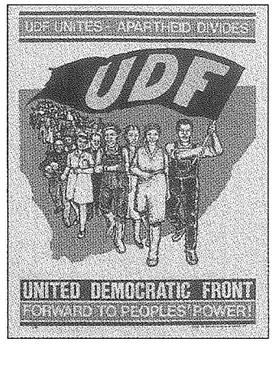
So far, we have considered two brands of workerism – economism and syndicalism. We have suggested that these forms of workerism have been closely associated with certain intellectuals linked to the trade union movement. The soil for the development of this workerist outlook has been a trade union movement emerging in the absence of a large, open political organization. But the errors of workerism are not confined to some of those who have been closely associated with the trade unions over the last period. There is a third, watered down version of workerism that we need finally to consider.

3. Workerism in national democratic clothing

This brand of watered down workerism is found within our own UDF ranks, and elsewhere. This brand of workerism shares many of the errors of the other brands of workerism, but in a watered down, not so strong form.

We are thinking here of those who pay lip service to our broad strategy of national democratic struggle. That is, those who say: "Yes, the popular struggle, NDS is important". But they do not really believe these words in their hearts. For these watered down workerists the national democratic struggle is simply a tactic of the moment. For them the broad front of the UDF is an unfortunate and temporary structure. Our talk about national democratic struggle is "merely a concession to the traditions and culture of the masses in South Africa". These workerists in NDS clothing would like to see the UDF become a socialist, workers' party. They would like to see the petty bourgeoisie and all those democrats who are not socialist "weeded out" from our ranks.

Those who still argue in this way have learnt very little from the experience of the past two years. In the short space of its existence, the UDF has paved the way for countrywide mass mobilization, and organization. These lessons have confirmed once more, in the hard school of struggle, the correctness of our broad strategy of national democratic struggle. The UDF sees as its main task the mobilization and organization of all South Africans committed to non-racial, majority rule in an undivided South Africa. On the basis of this fundamental goal we have achieved major victories.



For the UDF the problem with the workerists is not their correct call for worker leadership, but rather what they understand by this.

For those within our ranks who are committed to socialism, these victories have created the space and possibilities of raising the question of socialism not within the confines of a narrow, small sect, but at a mass level. But there are also other patriotic democrats, who are not necessarily socialist, who are making a large contribution to the struggle. While encouraging debate and discussion about the nature of change in a future South Africa, we must also safeguard and deepen our unity.

The golden rule in a political struggle is always to isolate the most dangerous enemy, while at the same time strengthening to the maximum the progressive camp. In South African conditions, the broad strategy of national democratic struggle is the route to the most far-reaching and rapid changes in our country. It is not an unfortunate or delaying tactic, it is a broad strategy that we consider with the utmost seriousness.

There are many practical ways in which we can illustrate the strategic weakness of the watered down version of workerism. Let us take just one example. The watered down workerist has a very defeatist, passive attitude towards the oppressed, black petty bourgeoisie, and middle strata in our country. In the last few years these workerists have argued that the government's tri-cameral parliament and its Black Local Authorities system is designed to create a large collaborating "black middle class". This is true. But from this correct understanding, these workerists have concluded that we must concentrate all our efforts on black workers.

In other words, because it is the government and bosses' intention to create a large, collaborating "black middle class", we are asked to believe that such a group must already exist. These workerists want to hand this victory over to the government and bosses without a fight!

Fortunately, the majority view within the UDF has not been swayed by this view. Guided by the broad strategy of national democratic struggle – in our million signature campaign, in our anti-election struggle, for instance – we have mobilized, informed and organized all classes and groups among the oppressed. We mustrefuse to confine ourselves to factories and working class areas in the townships. Because of this, the government failed miserably in its attempts to gain significant support for its reforms among the black middle strata. It is true that there are some sell-outs and collaborators, but they are a small minority, and they are generally very isolated within our communities. We can say, confidently, that on this front, the government and bosses are further away from realizing their dreams of a large collaborating group than they were in 1983.

The leading role of the working class

We have looked at three brands of workerism that have developed over the last 15 years. We have also looked at some of the errors and weaknesses within these three brands of workerism. In conclusion we need to consider the question of the leading role of the working class. This is a point that all workerists stress a great deal. It is also on this point that they are most confused.

The workerists are not alone in calling for the leading role of the working class in our struggle. The entire UDF (in its national resolutions), COSATU, the ANC and many other organizations have recognized the need for

working class leadership. For the UDF the problem with the workerists is not their correct call for worker leadership, but rather what they understand by this.

The economistic brand of workerism fails to realize that working class leadership must be exerted in all fields of struggle. The position, outlook and discipline of the workers must provide direction not just within the confines of the factory – but also in the political struggle, in struggles against gutter education, and community oppression.

Likewise, the syndicalist brand of workerism tends to hold back workers form the fullest involvement in popular organizations and alliances. It is strange that the same workerists intellectuals who, in theory, praise the automatic wisdom of the working class, often have a very patronizing view of workers in practice. In practice, these workerists think of the working class as weak and ignorant, constantly threatened by "populism" and petty bourgeois nationalism". This is often the underlying reason for their syndicalism. They want to lock workers safely up within "pure working class" trade unions, holding them in quarantine until they are "sufficiently educated" to be able to stand up to the threats of "populism".

Insofar as workerists have succeeded in this aim of isolating workers within trade unions, they have achieved two negative results:

- they have deprived workers of political experience, of the chance to learn in and through political practice. It is not in standing off in isolation that workers will learn the strengths and weaknesses, the possibilities and limitations of other potential allies; and
- they have deprived the national democratic struggle of strong worker leadership.

Fortunately, the attempt to fence organized workers inside a syndicalist compound has generally not succeeded. The two negative results have not been as far reaching as they might have been.

Finally, the most fundamental error of workerism in all three of its varieties, is its failure to understand that in South African conditions the working class can, and needs to exert its leadership over the broadest popular unity. Nowhere in the capitalist world, in a country with so many features of advanced capitalism, are the medium term prospects of the working class so good. In South Africa, the ruling bloc is able to secure support only from a small minority of our people. The special combination of racial oppression and capitalist exploitation has created a vast people's camp struggling to remove all forms of oppression and exploitation from our land.

To ensure that our struggle is advanced to the maximum, the working class needs increasingly to provide leadership not just to its own members – but to all democratic and oppressed South Africans – to the black middle strata, to the rural masses, to the unemployed, and to the youth.

The errors of workerism (whether it is economism or syndicalism, or a watered down lip service to the national democratic struggle) holds us all back. But above all, it holds back the working class itself, from the fullest realization of its important tasks.

The UDF and the township revolt

by Mark Swilling

WORK IN PROGRESS, 9 September 1987

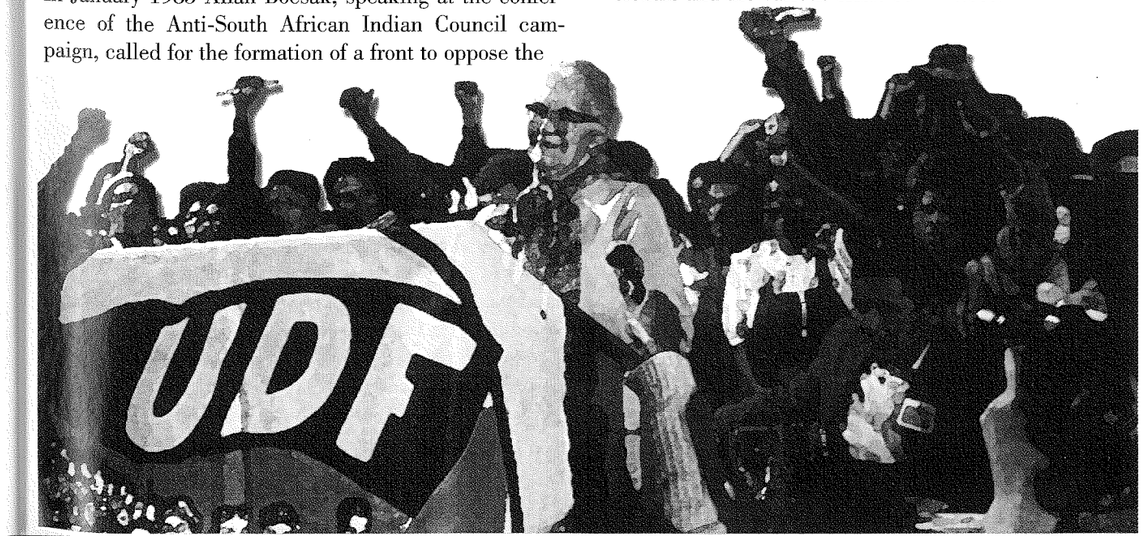
RECENT YEARS have witnessed mass opposition to apartheid. Fighting in the townships, labour unrest, classroom revolts, rent strikes, consumer boycotts, worker stay aways and guerilla warfare have become familiar features of South Africa's political landscape since 1976. But with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983, radical opposition assumed a more organized form.

Resistance became increasingly effective because of the UDF's capacity to provide a national political and ideological center. However, the township revolt was not caused by strategies formulated and implemented by the UDF national leadership. With the exception of key national campaigns (e.g. the black local authorities election boycotts of 1983-84 and the anti-tri-cameral parliament campaigns), the driving force of resistance came from below, as communities responded to their terrible living conditions. As these local struggles spread, the UDF played an important role in putting forward common national demands for the dismantling of apartheid. Black communities were drawn into a national movement which believes the transfer of political power to representatives of the majority is a precondition for the realization of basic economic demands. These include decent shelter, cheap transport, proper health care, adequate education, the right to occupy land and the right to a living wage.

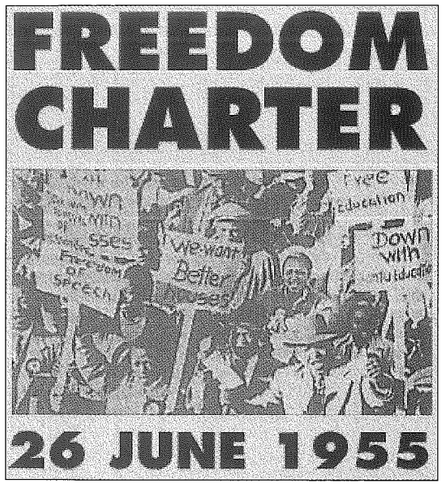
The UDF is formed

In January 1983 Allan Boesak, speaking at the conference of the Anti-South African Indian Council campaign, called for the formation of a front to oppose the government's tri-cameral constitutional proposals. This call was later expanded to include opposition to new influx control laws and local government structures for Africans, based on the 'Koornhof Bills'. The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 was particularly isolated for attack: it provided for the establishment of autonomous municipal institutions in the African townships. The UDF was launched as a national body at a meeting in Cape Town on 20 August 1983. About 600 organisations eventually affiliated. They included trade unions, youth organizations, student movements, women's groups, religious groups, civic associations, political parties and a range of support and professional organizations.

The UDF was conceived of as a front, a federation to which different groups could affiliate and a body which could link different social interests with common short term objectives. Since early 1984, literally hundreds of community organizations allied to the UDF have sprung up around the country. And although the major trade union federations have not formally affiliated, they have developed strong working relationships with the UDF over the years. Ad hoc and constituency-based committees were established to handle specific campaigns or represent particular groups with special grievances. Well-known ad hoc organization included the consumer boycott committees and burial committees. Examples of groups represented by constituency committees included squatters, communities threatened with forced removals, commuters opposed to their transport conditions, hostel dwellers, traders, detainees, unemployed groups, professionals and the various crisis committees.



The complex patchwork of local community organizations which became the organizational foundation of the UDF developed out of local urban struggles that took place before and after the formation of the front. At first these struggles involved minor conflicts between communities and local authorities over issues such as transport, housing, rent and service charges. But the authorities' coercive responses and refusal to make concessions transformed the local urban struggles into campaigns with a national political focus. This transformation was not the simple outcome of local 'reformist' organisations affiliating to the front's national class-based programme. Rather, these struggles contained an increasingly powerful national challenge to the state's racial and class character which the front expressed instead of directly instigating.



Peoples power... The majority of UDF affiliates subscribed to the Freedom Charter

Working-class or petty-bourgeois leaders?

The mixed social and class composition of UDF leadership belies attempts to explain its ideological position in simplistic class categories. Some have claimed the UDF has a 'petty-bourgeois leadership'. This implies the UDF is dominated by people of petty-bourgeois class origin and so cannot be expected to adopt a proletarian ideology. It is questionable whether ideological affiliation is reducible to class origins, but even so, this argument misrepresents the class origins of UDF leadership. Although the UDF is a multi-class front, a high proportion of its leadership comes from poor working-class origins.

The current Eastern Cape regional executive is a good example. Its president, Edgar Ngoyi, is a building painter by profession. After being politically active in the ANC in the 1950s he was sentenced to 17 years on Robben Island. Vice-president Henry Fazzie was a full-time trade unionist in the 1940s and 1950s. In the early 1960s he was sentenced to 20 years on the Island. Stone Sizani, publicity secretary, is a skilled worker in a chemical factory and previously worked as an organiser for the African Food and Canning Workers Union. Michael Dube, recording secretary is a factory worker at Nova Board. Only Derek Swartz, general secretary, and the late Matthew Goniwe, regional organizer, were not workers. Swartz is a teacher and Goniwe was a headmaster in Cradock.

The Western Cape regional executive has a slightly different profile. The president, who used to be a petrol pump attendant, was imprisoned for his political activities and after his release has remained unemployed. The vice-president started his adult life as a mine worker in the Transvaal. He then worked in Cape Town as a migrant labourer and became an organizer for the South African Congress of Trade Unions during the 1950s. He was later imprisoned and has been unemployed since his release. The second vice-president was a clothing worker but is now unemployed because of police harassment. The remaining nine members of the executive are teachers, lecturers and students – four of whom have working class origins, the rest coming from middle-class backgrounds.

Using a sample of 62 UDF leaders from six regional executives, 33 are currently in economic positions that can be defined as working class, while the rest are teachers/lecturers (16), doctors/nurses/social workers (4), lawyers (5), priests (2), technicians (2) and students (2). Significantly, there is not one businessperson in this sample. This profile reflects a working-class and intellectual/professional leadership.

A Complex Ideology

Ideologically, the UDF is equally complex. The major affiliates subscribe to the national democratic programme of the Freedom Charter. This involves dismantling white minority rule and establishing a non-racial unitary democratic state based on the rule of law, constitutional equality, freedom of association and other democratic liberties. The charter proposes dismantling the white capitalist power-structures through a combination of nationalization, land redistribution and social welfare. The UDF insists the Freedom Charter is anti-capitalist: if implemented it will dislodge the basic foundations of South African capitalism. But this, they acknowledge, does not make it a socialist programme. Presenting the Freedom Charter as anti-capitalist reflects the UDF's concern to represent the front's ideology in a way that mirrors its multi-class character.

UDF publications and speakers maintain that the extent to which the South African revolution achieves a socialist order largely depends on the working class establishing its hegemony within the front, gearing the struggle towards socialist goals. Some UDF leaders – particularly those close to the trade union movement – openly describe the anti-apartheid struggle in terms of a class struggle. Socialists in the UDF have emphasized the links between oppression in the communities and exploitation in production.

Speaking at the 1987 National Union of Mineworkers congress, UDF acting publicity secretary Murphy Morobe argued that 'Öwe know how it is for people to go to work in the morning and find their shack demolished when they come back home. To such people it is completely artificial to build a Chinese wall between trade unions and community organizationsÖTherefore who would deny the patently symbiotic relationship between the rent boycott and struggle for high wages?'

The rhetoric of religious leaders in the UDF is more conservative. They refer to divinely ordained human rights and liberal conceptions of individual liberty. However, for socialists within the UDF, this marriage of proletarian and liberal/religious political ideologies reflects the reality of racial oppression and class exploitation which has made it necessary for all oppressed classes to unite against the common enemy of white rule.

Organization and development of structures

The UDF's organizational power is reducible to the capacities of its affiliates. But its regional and national structures have a political and ideological influence on political relations in local communities and on national and international perceptions of South Africa. The UDF is a front, not a centrally co-ordinated political party. This makes it impossible to explain the wide range of mass protests since 1983 by initiatives originating from within the front. Nevertheless, it is possible to periodise the general orientation of the UDF and its affiliates into four phases.

Phase one: reactive politics

The first phase of UDF activities began when it was formed to organize nationwide opposition to the new constitution and 'Koornhof Bills'. The idea behind this campaign was to use the inadequacy of these forms of political representation to demand substantive political rights. The subsequent successful boycotts of the tri-cameral parliament and black local authority elections dealt a severe blow to the state's reformist initiatives. The success of the boycott tactic established the UDF as a variable extra-parliamentary alternative. The UDF slogan expressing this objective was 'Apartheid Divides, UDF Unites', indicating that the front was responding to state initiatives on a terrain determined by the state. So its politics can be described as reactive.

At this stage, the UDF's objective was not to pose alternatives to apartheid or establish organizational structures designed to sustain a long-term struggle. Rather, the front aimed to counter the divisive tactics of state reforms by calling for the maximum unity of the oppressed, urging them to reject apartheid by refusing to vote. The concern to build this consensus was reflected



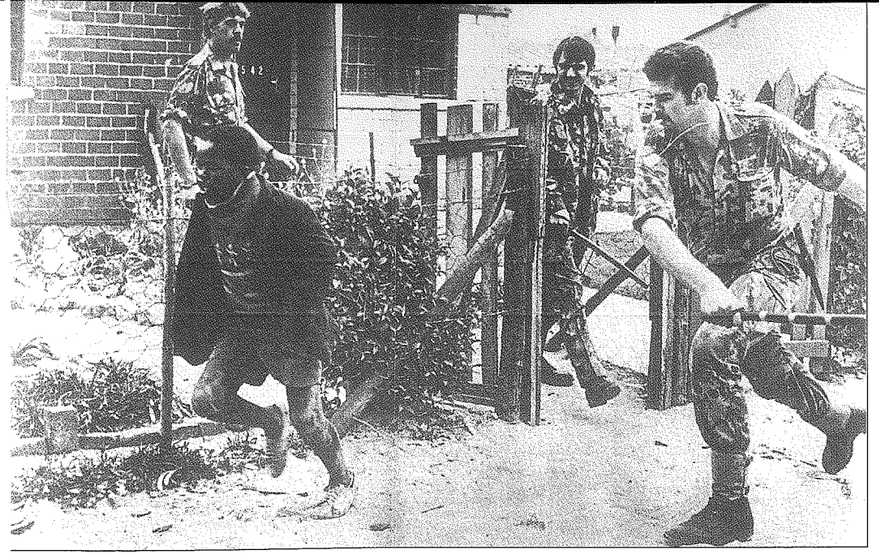
in the UDF's decision not to adopt the Freedom Charter as a formal statement of principles. It still wanted to draw in non-charterist groups like black consciousness and major trade union organizations.

The reactive phase of UDF politics ended with the Million Signature Campaign involving a petition against apartheid. The campaign objective was to challenge the apartheid state's legitimacy at an ideological level. The campaign also provided township activists with a vehicle for solid door-to-door organizing for the first time. In a number of Eastern Cape towns, the organizational infrastructure for strong grassroots community organizations was laid during this period. But in some Transvaal areas activists refused to collect signatures. They believed the campaign was a futile form of protest politics. In the event, the campaign failed to get a million signatures.

Phase two: community struggle

The second phase of UDF politics began after the tri-cameral elections of August 1984. Then struggles initiated by local community organizations began to center around more basic issues of township life. Transport and rent boycotts, squatter revolts, housing movements, labour strikes, school protests and township stay aways followed. The depth and geographic extent of these actions resulted in an urban uprising which culminated in the declaration of a state of emergency in July 1985.

This shift from national anti-constitutional campaigns to local community struggles was not due to changes in national UDF policy. The shift was the product of local



After the state lost control of many townships it responded with brutal force

community organizations and activists mobilizing around daily urban issues. Some of these organizations had been active since 1979 while others were only formed during 1984 and 1985. They were able to exploit the contradiction between state attempts to improve urban living conditions and fiscal bankruptcy and political illegitimacy of black local government. These local organizations rode a wave of anger and protest that transformed political relations in the communities.

The change was so fast that UDF local, regional and national leaders could not build organizational structures to keep pace with the levels of mobilization and politicization. The deepening recession and illegitimacy of state reforms were the underlying causes of this urban uprising. The recession – which began in early 1982 – undermined real wage levels. It also limited the state's capacity to subsidise transport and bread prices, finance housing construction, urban services and educational and health facility upgrading. The illegitimacy of state reforms and in particular the new black local authorities' failure to attract support from the African communities, meant economic grievances were quickly politicized. The resulting struggles included both economic and political demands.

There were four decisive moments during this period. Firstly, the Vaal Uprising, which began in September 1984. It was sparked by a rent increase announced by the Lekoa Town Council. The uprising led to at least 31 deaths and the beginning of a rent boycott in the region which continues into 1987.

Secondly, the nation-wide schools boycott. This began in Cradock in late 1983 when students protested against the dismissal of Matthew Goniwe, a local headmaster and UDF leader subsequently assassinated in 1985. The boycott spread to Pretoria in early 1984 and to the rest of the country by the end of the year. Student demands included recognition of elected student representative councils, an end to sexual harassment of female students and corporal punishment, release of detained students, and upgrading of educational facilities.

Thirdly, the mass November 1984 worker stayaway in the Transvaal marked the beginning of strong working relationships between community organizations, student movements and trade unions. The stayaway, supported by 800 000 workers and 400 000 students, was called to protest against army occupation of the townships and to support students' educational demands. This was followed by the equally successful but organizationally more complex stay aways in Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage during March 1985. These were called in support of the demand for a reduction in the petrol price and in protest against security force action.

These mass actions mobilized unprecedented numbers of people, and displayed new features which signaled a turning point in the recent history of black protest. They mobilized all sectors of the township population including youth and older residents; they involved co-ordinated action between trade unions and political organizations; they were called in support of demands that challenged the coercive, urban and educational policies of the apartheid state; and they gave rise to ungovernable areas as state authority collapsed in many townships in the wake of the resignation of black local authority councilors.

An internal discussion document circulated by the UDF's Transvaal education forum in May 1985, recognized that 'we have been unable to respond effectively to the spontaneous waves of militancy around the country'. The UDF's 1985 theme, 'From Protest to Challenge. Mobilization to Organization', was part of the leadership's attempt to find ways to transform mass mobilization into coherent mass organization. UDF documents and speakers began emphasizing the need to create strong organizational structures at local, regional and national levels, built on more traditional party-type lines. Accountability, direct representation, ideological cohesion, national rather than localised campaigns, and disciplined legal rather than illegal forms of struggle were all stressed.

The state's coercive response to rising levels of mobilization during the last few months of 1984 and early 1985 prevented the UDF leadership from consolidating the front's structures. After the army occupied townships in late 1984, community struggles became increasingly militarist. Groups of youth engaged the security forces in running street battles and hundreds of lives were lost. The militant voluntarism of the youth eclipsed the organizational concerns of grassroots activists, making it even more difficult to establish long-term structures.

Phase three: Ungovernability

The first few months of 1985 amounted to urban civil warfare. The state was forced to admit it had lost control of many townships and declared a state of emergency in July 1985. This marked the beginning of the third phase of UDF politics. In many areas organs of civil government had collapsed or been rendered inoperable by mass and/or violent opposition.

The responsibility for re-establishing civil government in the townships fell largely on the shoulders of over-extended police and relatively inexperienced military personnel. In the end, the state of emergency failed to restore civil government. The permanent presence of security forces in the townships fuelled rather than quelled resistance and some areas became effectively ungovernable. Militant youth, organized into quasi-military action squads by elements outside UDF affiliates, were able to use crude guerilla tactics to harass the security forces. But clearly, in the light of the later 1986-87 emergency, the state had not yet committed itself to a complete assault against opposition groups. Activists were caught between the youth's militarism and security force terror tactics. Whereas the youth were criticizing UDF activists for being too moderate in refusing to abandon non-violence, security forces were hunting them down and detaining them.

Phase Four: Organs of People's Power

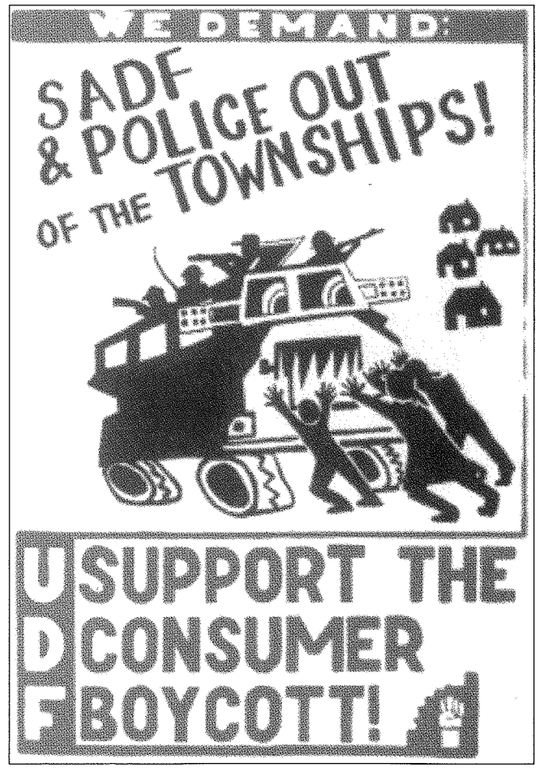
This unenviable position forced grassroots activists to set up new durable decentralized organizational structures. These had to be strong enough to withstand the effects of repression while also bringing the youth under control. The result was the establishment of what many activists refer to as 'alternative organs of people's power'. The process of creating these structures began in earnest towards the end of 1985, marking the beginning of the fourth – and probably most important – phase of UDF politics.

Structures of 'people's power' involve sophisticated forms of organization based on street and area committees. Each street elects a street committee, which in turn elects representatives to an area committee. These structures have developed most effectively in the Eastern Cape and parts of the Transvaal. But they have also spread to some small Western Cape and Natal townships. Street and area committees helped activists bring militant youth under control by dividing youth squads into smaller more disciplined units attached to a street or area committee. Tight local-level organization lessened the damaging effect which detention, disappearance or death of leaders might otherwise have had. Obviously they are not invulnerable. There is evidence that many Eastern Cape street committees collapsed towards the end of 1986 as security forces began detaining their entire membership.

Consumer boycotts

One dimension of the attempt to establish organs of 'people's power' was the Eastern Cape's consumer boycott movement. Consumer boycotts began as early as March 1985 and proved most successful when called in support of local community grievances. Demands included rent reductions, improved housing, installment of proper services, deracialisation of trading facilities, withdrawal of troops and the establishment of non-racial municipalities. At one time 15 Eastern Cape towns were affected by boycotts.

High levels of unity and solidarity over long periods (in some cases six months) helped consolidate and



Consumer boycotts proved a successful tool in mobilising in support of community grievances.

strengthen community organizations. The success of the Eastern Cape boycotts helped spread the tactic to other regions. But initiatives in other regions came from UDF regional leaders who tried to call consumer boycotts without the necessary organizational infrastructure. They also posed general political rather than specific local demands. Additional problems included profiteering by township business men and the difficulties involved in organizing the huge Natal and Transvaal townships.

Local activists organized the most successful consumer boycotts around basic community grievances. But the regional and national UDF leadership tended to present the objectives as the unification of all sectors of the community around a common set of short and long-term demands; and the need to put sufficient pressure on white middle class shopkeepers to support these demands and in so doing detach their support from the white state. Accordingly, local chambers of commerce, reflecting the anxiety of near-bankrupt retailers, were the first to capitulate. In some cases they actually negotiated the withdrawal of troops from townships and undertook to desegregate central business district facilities.

Consumer boycotts worked best where organization was most developed. In small towns like Port Alfred and Cradock a remarkable community consensus existed, with virtually total participation, few reports of intimidation, and united leadership exercising a high degree of control and discipline. In Cradock, for example, youthful activists refrained from trying to kill discredited community councilors at the request of leadership. In Port Elizabeth, boycott organizers managed to ensure township businesspeople did not raise their prices during the boycotts.

Regional differences in the boycott reflected the varying quality of UDF organization and influence during 1985. It was relatively weak in Natal. The often bloody antipathy between the UDF and Inkatha seriously weakened UDF organization in African townships. But where trade unions initiated consumer boycotts in Natal, the campaigns were relatively successful. In the Transvaal, Pretoria and the East Rand were better organized than Soweto. But the UDF seemed most entrenched through its various affiliates in the Eastern Cape communities.

The consumer boycotts were sustained where street and area committees developed most strongly. The roots of the movement for national liberation which the UDF represents went too deep in certain communities to be eradicated by force. And with this entrenchment in many working-class communities, the UDF is likely to generate an increasingly radical conception of a liberated society. The concept of 'people's power', for example, is more than a mobilizing slogan. The new forms of organization developed during the township revolt are rudimentary organs of self-government. The collapse of state authority and the legitimacy of the UDF-affiliated community groups enabled these organizations to take responsibility for administering a number of township services. They have also on occasion negotiated with state representatives, demanding and winning improvements in the terms and conditions of township living.

The rent boycotts

Evidence that political consciousness in the townships had become increasingly combative emerged during 1986 when the rent boycott spread to 54 townships countrywide. This involved about 300 000 households and cost the state at least R40-million per month. The rent boycotts were a response to both economic and political grievances.

Economic grievances involved the level and quality of urban subsistence: declining real wages as inflation increased the costs of basic foodstuffs and transport by 20%; overcrowding with a national average of 12 people per household; massive housing shortages (conservative estimates detail a shortage of 600 000 housing units excluding the 'independent' Bantustans); rising rent and service charges (sometimes by 100%); and a growing rate moves beyond the 40% mark. Political grievances were linked to state failure to give blacks substantive political rights in general, and the persistent inadequacy and illegitimacy of the black local authorities in particular.

An August 1986 UDF information pamphlet pointed out that rent was not being paid because 'people are simply unable to afford it'. It also linked the boycott to political demands: 'The (rent) boycott is 'part of an attempt to make apartheid unworkable. The black local authorities are structures designed to make apartheid work – to make people participate in their own domination by a white minority government. The rent boycott weakens these structures and demonstrates to the government that there can be no taxation without representation and that the people will accept nothing less than majority rule'.

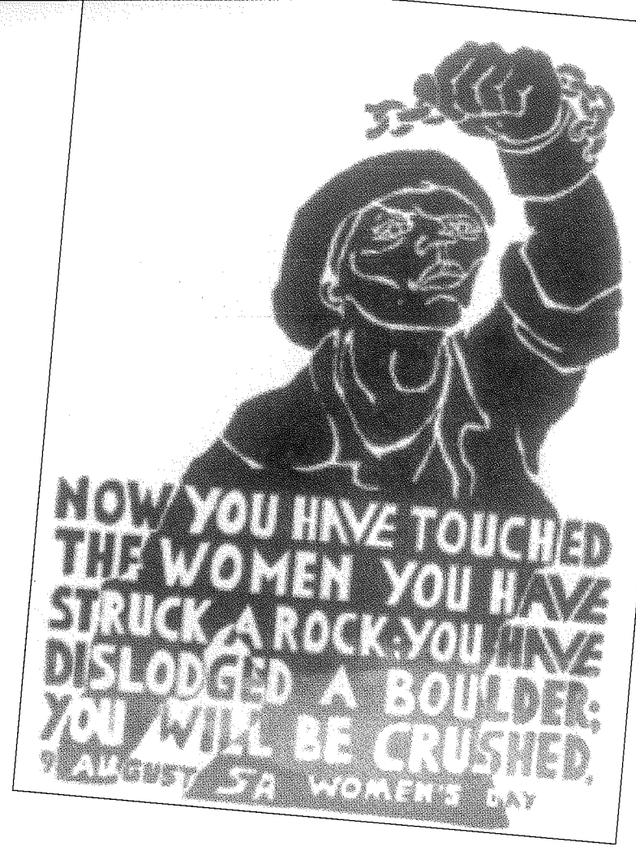
In most cases a rent boycott began in response to a sudden change in the relationship between the communities and the state: the shooting of 30 people in Mamelodi; the declaration of the 1986 State of Emergency in Port Elizabeth; forced removal of people in Uitenhage; and a local official's failure to keep his promise to meet the community in Parys. Most importantly rent boycotts have united largely working-class communities around a strategy with the potential to sustain itself for a considerable length of time. Unlike consumer boycotts, which aimed at pressurizing the state via middle-class white commercial interests, rent boycotts challenge the state directly. They undermine the fiscal foundations of township administration and have received the full support of both trade union and community organizations. A result of this unity was that trade unions prevented employers from accepting a state security council recommendation that rents be deducted from pay packets through stop orders. The current state of emergency is unlikely to 'normalise' local government and 'restore law and order' in the townships as long as the rent boycott persists. Nor is it likely the rent boycott will end before the state of emergency has been lifted.

Community struggle and national liberation

As conflict between oppressed communities and the state escalates outside the workplace, local UDF affiliates have become progressively more entrenched in poor working-class communities. During 1986 this led to a radicalization of its ideology and democratization of its structures as working-class elements asserted their right to control their organizations both in and outside the workplaces. This is why the state, after the 1986 emergency was declared in June, decided to launch a full frontal assault to head-off this radicalizing movement.

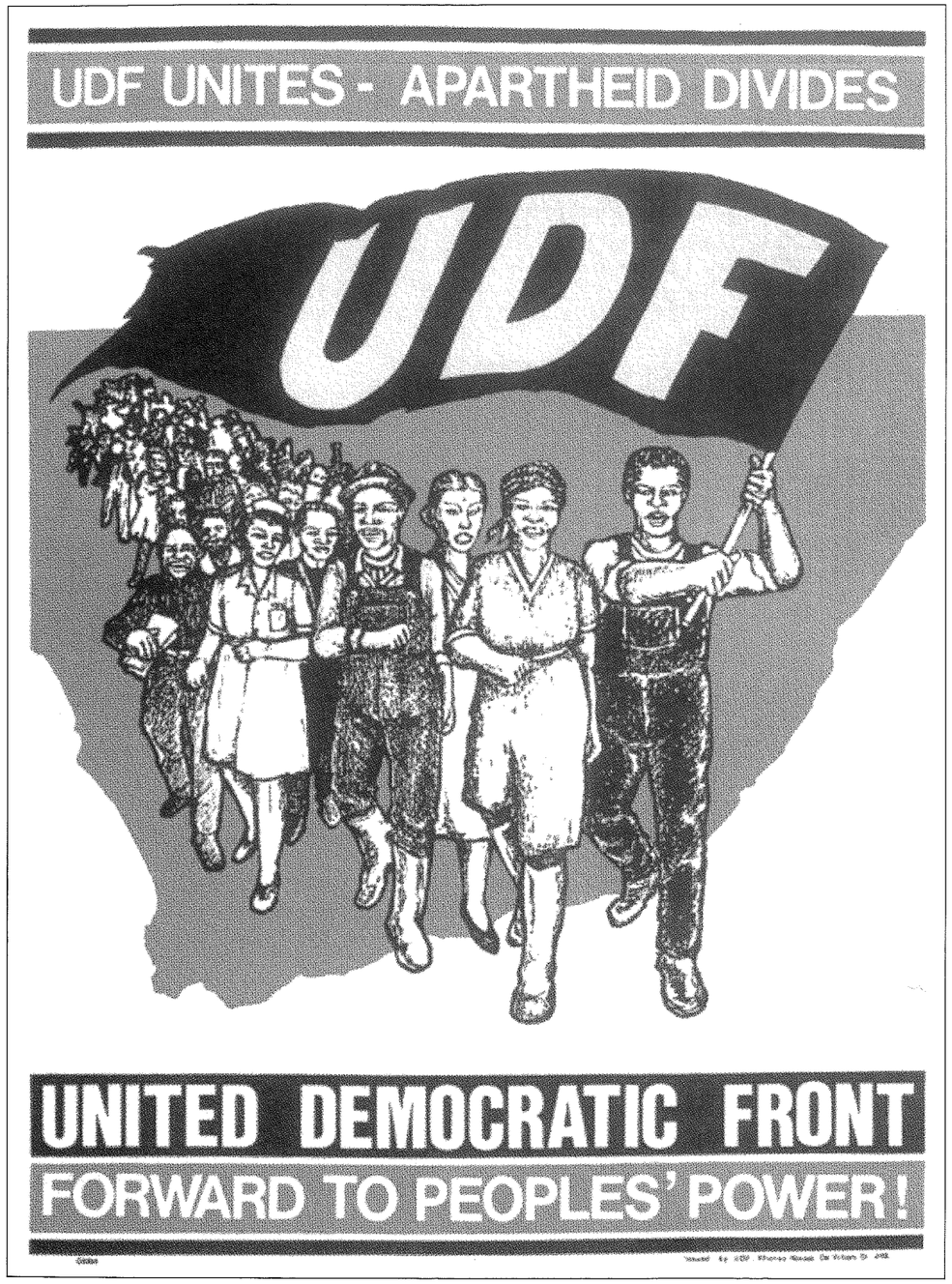
Two organizational forms have come to complement one another within the broad parameters of the UDF. Firstly, there are processes associated with developing local community organizations. Secondly, these local community movements are part of a national liberation movement with an objective of dismantling the present white minority regime. Just as the formation of COSATU can be seen as the fusion of political and collective bargaining unionism, so the UDF can be understood in terms of the distinct but complementary functions of local community and national liberation movements. But when legal space organize is regained, the UDF will have to evaluate its structure. The front-type structure has proved workable in most authoritarian societies. But two outstanding features of South Africa's democratic movement are the strength of the trade unions and the resilience of local-level community organizations. A structure founded more directly on the democratic structures of community and workplace organizations may become appropriate in the future.

There will also be the question of developing an organizational infrastructure able to cope with the rapid radicalization and politicization of the masses than inevitably occurs during periods of rebellion. A critical problem faced by political activists since the uprising began in 1984 was how to hold back political mobilization while organizations were built to guide and direct the oppositional movements. Repression and inadequate organizational resources prevented them from resolving this problem. Communities and particularly the youth moved too quickly to take on the full might of the state without the protection, despite the street committee system, of strong national organization.



Inspiring future generations

The UDF has been shaped by pressures and processes largely beyond its control as the dynamics of black resistance have shifted from reactive politics to the establishment of organs of democracy in communities, schools and factories. Despite its severely weakened national organizational structures due to successive repressive assaults, UDF affiliates and leaders remain crucial representatives of South Africa's black majority. The UDF is not a pressure group, nor a political party. It is essentially what its architects always intended it to be: a front representing a broad spectrum of oppressed class interests. Beneath this formal level of public appearances is a complex network of local organizations. Their campaigns and struggles have generated an increasingly radical conception of the road that should be followed to achieve a liberated society. No matter how far South Africa's rulers go to crush the UDF and its affiliates, the ideas, aspirations and struggles which have made it what it is will continue to inspire present and future generations to struggle for political and economic justice.



Teaching religion
OR TEACHING RELIGIONS?

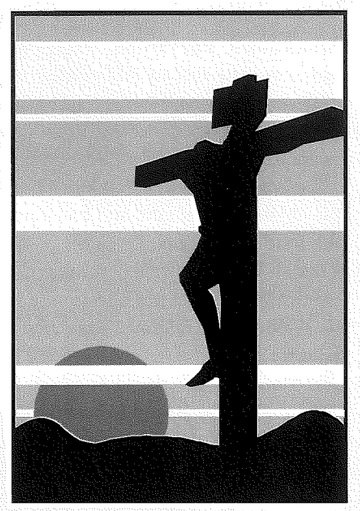
by Rev. Cedric Mayson

Introduction

Whenever people have the courage to tackle a major challenge you can be sure they will be opposed. One such challenge is what to teach children about religion. Some countries (like the US) say religion must not be taught at all. In others, only one faith is allowed. Some teachers use 'Religious Instruction' periods to propagate their personal beliefs, and others treat the subject as a joke.

South Africa has produced a new policy for learning about religion in schools. Political and religious leaders who are opposed to the ANC have been spreading false stories about this policy, and twisting the truth.

CEDRIC MAYSON of the ANC Commission for Religious Affairs reports on the matter, quoting extensively from the policy document itself. This new initiative is exciting religion education around the world, and there will be much interest in the text books being written in preparation for its launch in 2005.



SOUTH AFRICA has a rich diverse religious heritage. It is rooted in the primary traditional spirituality from the beginnings of human community; it includes many historical religions imported from other parts of the world; and flourishes in the African indigenous spirituality which is spreading so rapidly today.

Our responsibility is to pass on this rich religious heritage which falls into two parts; Religion education and Religious education

Religious education means the instruction of an adherent in the tenets, tradition and practices of a particular religion, the nurturing of faith and the advocacy of membership.

It seeks to inculcate a specific viewpoint on faith and of religious adherance.

This is unquestionably the responsibility of the religious bodies themselves, of the home, and of the family.

In a democratic country like South Africa all religious groups are free to propagate their confession or sectoral form of faith (provided it is not racist) and no government education department can interfere or usurp that right and duty. Religious Education is a religious matter in which religions are free to preach advocate or indoctrinate people within the limits of the Constitution. The state is not a religious organization, or theological body and cannot abuse its power by attempting to propagate any particular religion or religions. The state must maintain neutrality with respect to religion in all of its public institutions, including public schools. Religious institutions need not be neutral, and can teach children whatever they want.

Religion Education, on the other hand, is a different process. The educational mission of public schools in a democracy includes the responsibility to provide a free open space in which learners can explore religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. It concerns teaching not preaching; and its focus is not on being a person of faith but a person informed on the facts of all the faith groupings in South Africa. Government has clear educational goals and objectives to explain what religions there are, what they are about, and ways that increase understanding, respect, diversity

and clarify the religious and non-religious sources of moral values. Religion – like politics, economics or literature – is an important human activity that learners should know about if they are to be well educated.

The country's Coat of Arms says 'diverse people, unite'. According to our Constitution everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Religious citizens are free to exercise their basic right to religious conviction, expression and association. It is general education in this field that is the concern of the Education Department, not the promotion of this or that religion.

Diversity is a national resource: the knowledge of it is enriching and the core values to which all religions adhere are included in the Constitution. These include equity, tolerance, religious diversity, openness, accountability and social honour.

Three basic features of religion education are:-

- Educational knowledge, exposing learners to the richness and variety of religion in a well prepared and respectful manner.
- Education about diversity, in an environment which encourages the sense of acceptance and security for all, whatever their race or creed. It means that people should appreciate, and feel emotionally secure, in the field of religion.
- Education in traditional values: these are moral values which include the question of moral regeneration to which all religious and non-religious citizens adhere.

The State is a secular state which is neither religious nor anti-religious. Policy is based on neutrality towards specific religions, but a cooperation which affirms both legal separation and creative interaction.

Religion education must be justified by the educational character and value of the information conveyed to learners. It is justified by the human aspects and values that religions promote such as the transcendental, the human search for meaning, love and service to others, and by the desirable social ends such as expanding understanding, increasing tolerance and reducing prejudice, the promotion of social justice and care of the environment, that can be served by this field of study within the school curriculum.

A programme in religion education can facilitate constructive thinking as it provides an opportunity for learners to develop a disciplined imagination that will empower them to recognize a common humanity within religious diversity. Religion education creates a context in which learners can increase their understanding of themselves and others, deepen their capacity for empathy, and eventually develop powers of critical reflection in thinking through problems of religious or moral concern. By teaching learners about the role of religion in history, society and the world, a unified multi-tradition programme in the academic study of religion can be an important part of the world balance and complete education.

Like any learning programme the study of religion, religions and religious diversity must be developmental. It begins at junior primary level by exploring the more tangible forms of religion and the observable aspects of diversity found in churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of gathering for religious life.

At primary level learners begin to study the basic components of religion such as stories, songs, sacred places, founders, rituals and festivals with illustrations drawn from various religious traditions and communities in South Africa and the world. At junior secondary level religion education assists to intergrate these component parts of religion into a disciplined study of the variety of religious traditions.

At senior secondary level religion education introduces learners to the kinds of critical thinking about significant issues of personal morality and social ethics often associated with the religion.

Such a programme needs to be facilitated by trained committed and enthusiastic professional educators, who can include qualified members of religious communities.

School assemblies have been a long-standing tradition in many of our schools but they are not compulsory. They may form an integral part of school activity. Assembly is not necessarily to be seen as an occasion for religious expression, but if such an expression does take place it should acknowledge and reflect the multi religious nature of South African society in an appropriate manner.

The law enables schools to be used for the promotion of religious activities, but these must be conducted outside the normal school curriculum, and schools with public support must make the facilities available to people of different religious groups if so required.

Citizens with sufficient means can establish their own schools, (providing these comply with the law) and may propagate their own sectarian form of religion should they so wish, but this must not exclude the promotion of religion education to all South African learners.

A great deal of the political propaganda being raised in some of the media, is based on false interpretations of the new religion education. Religion education is an exciting South African initiative in a field which has caused concern to people throughout the world. It is something which we may practice with delight, in the knowledge that our children are being properly informed and educated in the field of religion as they are in the other fields of study. Religion education puts no barriers on the activity of religious institutions, homes, parents or families to propagate religious education in their own space. Religion education is the wider context of what is happening in our society to preserve our heritage and respect our diversity as we build new bridges into unity.

Religion education

Extract from *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy.*

Ministry of Education, August 2001.

FAITH, WHATEVER ITS CORE MIGHT BE, AND however public its expression, is the consequence of spiritual journeying that is, at heart, a voyage of intimacy. Religion, which expresses it, is a matter of choice in conscience. And, under the Constitution, that choice – and the observances that go with it – is subject to protection as one of the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.

There is no place in the classroom, then, for an education that promotes any one creed or belief over any other. Yet, there is every reason for schools to expose learners to the diversity of religions that impel and inspire society, and the morality and values that underpin them.

Speaking at the Saamtrek conference on the distinction between "religion education" and "religious education", Albert Nolan of CHALLENGE magazine argued that while religious education was about "nurturing a religious consciousness, and ...should be done in churches", the aim of "religion education" was to provide knowledge about different religions.

In public education, "the school is not responsible for nurturing the religious development of the scholars (but for providing) learners with the knowledge about religion and morality and values and the diversity of religion:.

South Africa is recognized as being a deeply religious society, and religions offer highly organized and often very effective moral codes upon which value systems are based. We must acknowledge that as cultural systems for the transmission of values, religions are resources for clarifying morals, ethics, and regard for others.

Religions embody values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, compassion and cooperation. They chart profound ways of being human in relation to other humans.

As has been noted, the Constitution guarantees the right to equality, to non-discrimination on the basis of religion, and to freedom of belief, thought and conscience. Schools can reinforce the Constitution by using "religion education" to reaffirm the values of diversity, tolerance, respect, justice, compassion and commitment in young South Africans.

Adopting a multi-tradition approach to the study of religion is one way of achieving this, enabling students to examine, critically and creatively, the moral codes embedded in all religions, their own and others'.

If religious education, with specific spiritual aims, is the responsibility of the home, family and the community of faith, then religion education, with clear educational aims, is the responsibility of the school.

"Religion education" is not engaged in the promotion of a religion but is a programme for studying religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum.

Such education can provide opportunities for both a deeper sense of self-realisation and a broader civil toleration of others, and it can balance the familiar and the foreign in ways that give students new insights into both.

Furthermore, it can teach students about a world of religious diversity, and, at the same time, encourage them to think in terms of a new national unity in South Africa.

- "Religion education" – and consciousness about the role and effect of religion – will be integrated into the General Education and Training Band, specifically in Life Orientation and Social Studies.

- "Religion studies" will be introduced in the further education and training band for matriculation purposes as an optional, specialized and examinable subject.

- Because "religion education" should be taught according to educational rather than religious outcomes, educators – particularly those in Life Orientation and Social Studies – will require significant retraining.

- According to the Constitution, schools may be made available for religious observance so long as it is outside of school hours, association is free and voluntary rather than mandatory, and the facilities are made available on an equitable basis to all who apply.

  School governing bodies need to be familiarized with these conditions.

- Weekly assemblies are a long-standing tradition of many of our schools, and play an important role in bonding and unifying the school community.

  Nevertheless, they should not be compulsory and should, under no circumstances, be used as occasions for religious observance.

  Like the rest of the school's learning programmes, the assembly should be an occasion for affirming and celebrating unity in diversity.

  Accordingly, if religious materials are used in assembly, they should be presented in the framework outlines for "religion education" as an educational exercise rather than as a religious ceremony. Schools governing bodies and principals need to be empowered with ways of transforming assemblies from being occasions for imposing religious uniformity to being forums where diversity is celebrated, along with the values of our Constitution.

Comment on comments

THE ANC COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS RESPONDS

There have been three main responses to the publication of the draft Bill on Religion Education.

1. **Some who oppose the government for political, ideological or commercial reasons have spread deliberate distortions in order to stir up an anti-governmental response. We deplore the fact that people who try to claim the high moral ground should spread lies in such a vital area. Government is not removing religion from schools, promoting atheism, undermining the religions, or planning to abolish Christian festivals.**

2. **The second type of response comes from those who seem to see their role as one of opposition to the government, but who take the bill seriously and have made some clear criticisms.**

3. **The third group – comprising the majority of religious bodies including the National Religion Leaders Forum – welcomes the Bill in general, and makes a number of positive suggestions about how it can be improved. The distinction between religious instruction, religion education, and religious observance was found particularly helpful. Most of the concerns and proposals were in the area of finding an acceptable solution to religious observance in a multi-cultural society as it affects school assemblies supported by the State. All the objections and proposals are receiving attention by the Department, in good democratic fashion, and there will be much interest in the final formulation.**

Some of the most interested are those who will have to write the text books and formulate the lessons for this new South African approach to Religion Education. The crucial role of religion in history, the vitality of value systems, and the power of spiritually, have often been given a wrong focus and been destructive of human community. This attempt to refocus the role of Religion Education as part of the South Africa liberation and transformation process is been watched with interest throughout the world. It is in many respects, unique.

Tackling the challenge of youth unemployment:

A NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

by Carmel Marock

UMRABULO NO. 18 (JUNE 2003) highlighted the submission made by the youth sector to the Growth and Development Summit. The submission proposed a number of programmatic interventions that could be made to address the priority of unemployed young people. Figures cited recently speak to the large numbers of young people that are leaving school (many without matrics) that are unable to access the labour market. There is a recognition that there is a need for a number of initiatives that address this urgent challenge.

Specifically, the submission gave support to National Youth Service as an overarching programme, which engages young people in a disciplined process of providing a valued and necessary service to the community in which they live, while increasing their own skills, education and opportunities to generate income. The submission welcomed the adoption, by Government, of National Youth Service for unemployed young people between the ages of 18 and 35, and called for linkages between existing programmes and priorities of government and national youth service.

Since then the GDS has agreed on the need for an expanded public works programme, and has decided to both expand the infrastructural projects and to launch projects that cover social services with a view to meeting basic needs. It has also agreed that some of these programmes will take the form of the National Youth Service.

These steps pave the way for large-scale national youth service programmes that span the country and the different sectors of society. This article provides a more detailed look at national youth service, and highlights the challenges ahead.

What is Youth Service Programme

National Youth Service contains the following three elements illustrated in the diagram below. Each of these elements needs to be seen as part of an integrated whole, such that each element builds onto and feeds into the other.

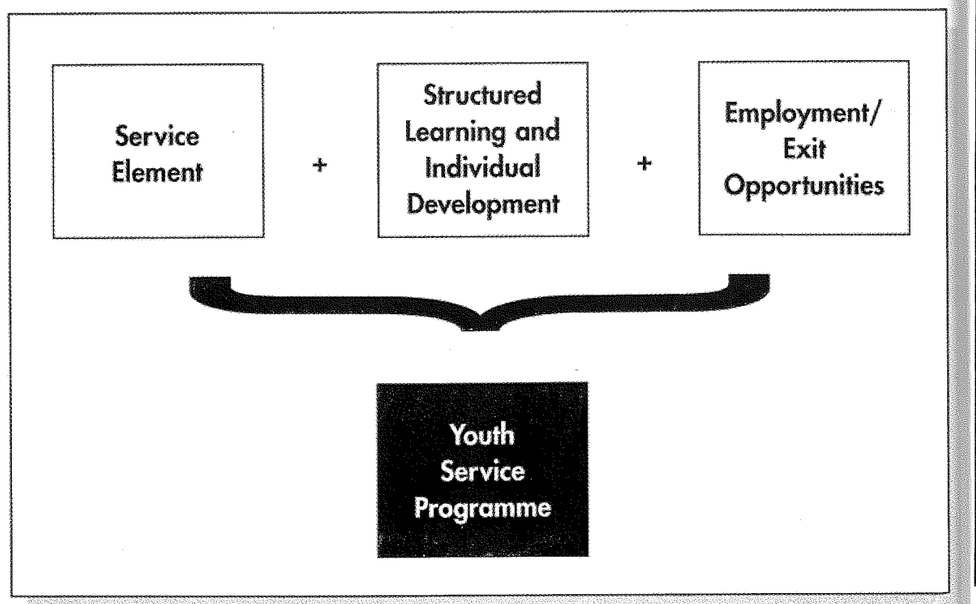


Table 1: Youth Service Programme

These elements are illustrated by the following examples.

Youth Service in Community Development:

Imagine 2 young people in every ward (there are more than 2700 wards throughout the country) being nominated by their community structure to undertake a community development national youth service programme.

The service period begins with an orientation programme, which is run by a youth development organisation, and ensures that the young people involved in the programme understand and are committed to national youth service. During this period they will be also receive basic skills training (delivered by a provider accredited by the relevant SETA). The skills will allow the service participants to undertake the role of a Community Development Worker (CDW). These skills will be built on throughout the programme as the service participants will apply these skills during the service activities, and will attend further education and training modules during the youth service programme (which will be for a period of a year).

During their service, these service participants will, under the supervision of the CDW supervisors, interact with community members and structures in a manner that facilitates public participation in government development projects and supports the IDP processes. The service participants will also identify any problems or blockages that may be arising in the delivery of these projects and programmes, and will work with the community (through community structures) and relevant government structures, to develop possible solutions to allow any blockages to be removed. This may require that the service participants interact with the different community workers in the area (including health, agricultural, and other community workers) as well as with individuals in the different spheres of government.

The young people in service report to the local or district level CDWs to ensure that they act in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the governments CDW programme, and that they receive adequate supervision and support. Through their work the CDWs are able to reach across communities and the CDW programme is able to meaningfully impact on the lives of people living in the different communities.

The service participants will receive credits towards a national Development Practitioner qualification, and will be supported to identify and plan their career and learning progression pathways. Once the service has been completed, they will be assisted, as far as possible, to access these opportunities. The types of opportunities could include: further learning to complete the CDW qualification or learning in one of the specialized roles as a CDW (for example health). They may also enter the formal CDW public service posts, or may wish to start a small business (in which case they will get further support for this process).

In another example:

Youth Service in Public Works

Imagine 100 young people are recruited to support a community to develop rural roads. These roads have been identified as a priority in the integrated plan for the area (and is seen as critical for LED). The Provincial Government has endorsed these roads as a priority and has outlined how these roads will link into the road network that is being developed in the Province.

The young people enter the programme; they undertake an orientation programme to ensure that they understand and are committed to national youth service, and receive some training in construction. This training is reinforced throughout the programme as the service participants attend structured learning sessions every second week of the programme and then actually undertake the construction work during the alternate weeks.

The group has been split into two so when the one group is in training the other group is undertaking construction work, and visa-versa. This ensures minimal disruption in the construction project and ensures an interactive learning process. During the programme there are also weekly team meetings, which allow the group to reflect on their own behavior and to develop inter-personal and leadership skills. The service participants are assessed during, and upon completion of the programme, and successful participants are awarded credits towards a Construction Qualification (level 4 on the NQF) in Labour Intensive Construction.

Throughout the programme the service participants have been introduced to the different career possibilities in the sector, and prior to the completion of the programme these participants have identified what they wish to do after the programme. Many of the participants wish to work for contractors, and they have been introduced to the contractors in the area. The majority of the participants has secured employment with these contractors and are undertaking work for the Provincial Roads Agency, and one group has formed a cooperative that will be tendering for contracts in the Province. A few of these participants wish to study further (some in engineering and a few others in administration) and they have been assisted to access loans to enable them to pursue their studies. Finally, some of the participants have remained in the programme to support the next group of young people who enter the youth service programme.

These developments have been marked by a ceremony with the community, which included community leaders, parents, and the young people and affirms the respect that the community has developed for the young people and the view that has grown that the young people are real resources in the community.

These examples highlight the potential benefit to communities of involving young people in service. Critically, they also highlight the impact that these programmes can have in addressing the imperative of enabling young people to access the labour market.

The criteria for each of the elements that make up a Youth Service programme is discussed in more detail below:

Service element

The service element of a Youth Service programme has three essential functions:

1. Provides a service that benefits people other than the youth participants (e.g. the community);
2. Promotes the development of a positive profile of youth within the community benefiting from the service; and
3. Provides the young participants with an opportunity for experiential learning or on-the-job experience linked to the structured learning and individual development element.

Service activities should support a national or local development objective and should be completed in accordance with high standards, so that young people are viewed as a positive force and resource in that community.

Structured learning and individual development

The second element of Youth Service programmes requires that young people engage in a structured learning programme that enables them to develop their own skills, knowledge and competence and that promotes individual development. This component must also enable young men and women to obtain credits registered on the National Qualifications Framework. The learning interventions should integrate (i) technical skills, (ii) life skills and (iii) experience.

This approach to integrated learning is premised on the belief that technical skills, life skills or experience alone are not adequate to prepare a young person to face the challenges of his/her working life and personal life and that holistic development of the individual must be prioritised. This means that the structured learning must be integrated with the service activities and the different learning components must be delivered and assessed in an integrated manner.

Employment/exit opportunities

The third element of a Youth Service programme is that it must include the identification of real and meaningful employment or exit opportunities for young people at the point of completion.

If this element is not achieved neither are the purposes of Youth Service programmes. As such, it is critical that significant attention is placed on developing and integrating strategies to reduce youth unemployment into individual Youth Service projects.

Young people should be aware of the employment or entrepreneurial opportunities they could realistically access at the end of participating in a youth service programme. At the end of the programme they should have accumulated sufficient experience and competence to be able to access these. Programmes should not engage young people if there is not a clear "exit pathway" that young people can pursue.

In addition, Youth Service programmes must include a post-service component that actively supports young people to access economic opportunities. The programme must have begun the process of identifying and concretising these possible opportunities from the planning stages.

Incentives for youth to participate

National youth service is about involving young people in the development of our country, it is an opportunity for young people to actively serve their communities. It is critical though that the young person participating in Youth Service programme is provided with education and training, so that there is a significant increase in opportunities to generate income beyond the project.

Further, participants in a youth service programme should not be financially disadvantaged because of their involvement. For this reason, a stipend may be paid to participants in order to facilitate their involvement in a programme.

Meeting the challenge

The way ahead relies on government departments exploring how national youth service can take forward the priorities within the department. Already certain departments have begun to look at ways of integrating national youth service into their programmes as a way of expanding the reach and impact of their programmes.

The initiative coordinated by the Presidency seeks to support departments to deliver youth service programmes that support the department's objectives as well as the broader vision of young people in service. It is anticipated that a unit within the Presidency will take responsibility for registering youth service programmes (to ensure that these programmes meet the criteria outlined), and provide support to these departments to plan programmes to ensure their success. Further, through coordinating this programme, it is anticipated that departments can work collaboratively to deliver the programme.

Thus the departments will take responsibility for the delivery of the service, for example:

- The *Department of Public Works* has indicated that it will provide opportunities for young people to undertake service through the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP);
- The *Department of Health* has indicated that they will support youth service and involve young people in

the delivery of community health work – such as home-based care and other primary health care activities;

- *Johannesburg City* through *Ecocity* has begun to explore the role that young people in service can play in developing eco-villages, and so on..

The Department of Labour has indicated that they will fund the training components of the programme and will provide support to ensure that these skills programmes are meaningful. This will take place through the National Skills Fund as well as with the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) support. Already SETAs are exploring how they can support the activities being proposed by departments, for example the HWSETA is supporting the department in the development of relevant qualifications for community health work.

Other organisations such as the Umsobomvu Youth Fund will support the youth development aspects of the programme as well as the development of exit opportunities.

The youth sector through institutions such as the National Youth Commission will support the programme by identifying opportunities, encouraging young people to serve and advocating for these programmes.

Other players in society such as business and trade unions will also support the programme, and the Growth and Development Summit agreement spells out the manner in which these sectors will support these activities.

Conclusion

In summary, the challenges of youth unemployment are vast and require a coordinated effort to ensure that more and more young people are able to access opportunities. The presidency is suggesting that we should set a target of 7000 young people being actively involved in national youth service by March 2004. This requires that across all spheres of government there is a need to act and consider:

- Which activities could form the basis of the service programmes;
- What training/skills development is possible within the service area; and
- The type of employment or income generation opportunities that could exist for participants beyond the service programme.

South Africa:

PARADISE WITH EARTHLY PROBLEMS

Translation from Russian:"SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA" (Moscow) 13 May 2003

by Vyacheslav Tetekin

FOR SEVERAL DAYS after arriving to South Africa from cold and cloudy Moscow you can't stop thinking: "here is the Paradise". Colourful flowers and palms, ever-blue sky and emerald green grass make you excited. The nature is not the only thing that raises your spirits. South Africa (just as in the rest of Africa) is populated by friendly, smiling and very cheerful people. Reading UN economic reports, it looks as if the whole continent is a disaster zone. But when in Africa, one doesn't find even a shadow of gloom. People there can enjoy life as it is (though they can as well fight for their rights!).

Apart from inherent friendliness, South Africans are working hard to strengthen the image of an extremely hospitable country. Anyone arriving in South Africa constantly hears "Enjoy your stay", "Enjoy your trip", "Enjoy your meal". And it works. Over the last two or three years, tourists are pouring into the country. The number of big aircraft at the Johannesburg Airport is staggering. Crowds of tourists descend from these aircraft. They quickly go through immigration and customs and then.... lions, rhinoceroses, gold mines, Zulu dance. All this, of course, is very appealing and we will come back to it. There are, however, issues of greater importance to us.

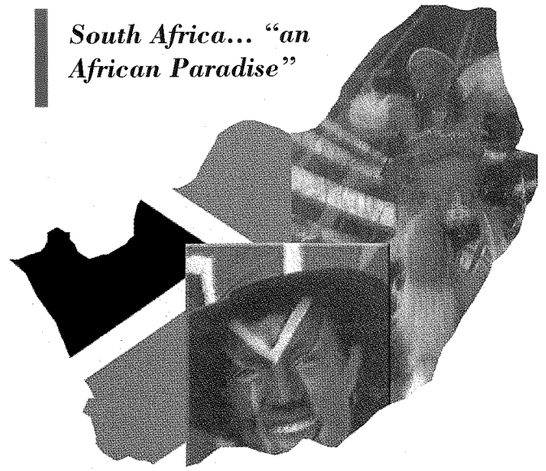
Particularly interesting are, for instance, social transformations started after the elimination of apartheid. Not long ago the country was divided by an enormous gap between the levels of life of its black and white citizens. The majority of Whites lived in luxurious villas. The majority of Africans lived in shacks. 5 million Whites possessed absolute power. Tens of millions of Blacks had to struggle for 80 years (including 30 years of the armed struggle) just for the right to vote. After the ANC-led alliance won the first democratic election in April 1994, the new government faced a new and even more difficult task of overcoming economic inequality. It has accumulated over three centuries. Therefore its elimination turned out to be more difficult than winning political power.

Our friends have succeeded in achieving a number of goals. Let us note that South Africa is rarely mentioned in the world news. Bomb explosions, street riots, rebellions or uprisings don't happen here. To put it short, it is a successful country. Such countries are few in the modern world. One must keep in mind that from the apartheid regime South Africa inherited a distorted economy serving the needs of 5 million Whites and indifferent to over 30 million Blacks. Africans were taught to read and write (to do simplest job). However, few could become engineers or skilled workers. Therefore paradoxically with about 35% unemployment, the country lacks skilled labour. In turn, unemployment gives rise to crime.

The new government's commitment to change faced an unexpected obstacle. For decades South Africa was in international isolation. However, when sanctions were lifted the country jumped from the frying pan of boycott into the fire of globalization. Its essence is an immediate transfer of capital from one country to another if investors feel uncomfortable. The International Monetary Fund started to dictate its conditions to the world.

The South African government works hard to improve people's lives. For this it needs to increase state expenditures and to raise the role of the state in the economy.

South Africa... "an African Paradise"



The IMF however demands "increased efficiency" i.e. introduction of liberalization, privatization and other free market "wonders". In short the withdrawal of the state from the economy. The international institutions use very subtle methods to twist arms. A country is given a number of macroeconomic objectives. It is up to a country to accept them or not. However, if it doesn't comply, the West drops the country's credit rating signaling the Western business to refrain from investing. South Africa being a part of the Western economy, this could have been disastrous. Thus, it had to compromise.

If however a country accepted the IMF demands (even those contrary to its interests), the situation became still worse. The IMF immediately "moves the goalposts" by introducing new demands. This goes on until the country becomes totally dependent on the IMF. Yeltsin's "democratic" Russia joyfully fell into this trap 12 years ago and remains there today.

South Africa was actively offered foreign loans, which was another trap. Eloquent IMF officials claimed that these loans were a great blessing. Yeltsin used those loans in abundance. Currently Russia faces hard consequences. South African leaders rejected that "favour". Therefore South Africa doesn't have enormous foreign debts and is able to conduct an independent foreign policy.

There is a strong debate on what path to follow. It becomes increasingly clear that the demands to "increase the efficiency" contradict the main goal – the improvement of people's lives. Quite often, the "efficiency" brings about the growth of unemployment. Thus, privatization issue provokes hot debates. Certainly, South African privatization has nothing in common with Chubais's privatization in Russia that looked more like a robbery. Control over various economic sectors in South Africa can't be given to groups of "nouvaux riches", as it was in Russia.

South Africa retains state control over railways and air transport, telecommunications, ports, electricity and energy. The state sector is quite successful. For example, South African Airlines bought back its 30% of shares from the insolvent Swiss Airways and gained US$ 130 million of profit last year. Between 2003 and 2012, the company is planning to buy 42 new aircraft including brand new Airbuses to replace old Boeings.

However, debates are indeed intense. Will privatization raise efficiency? Will it lead to the growth of unemployment or to its reduction? While discussing long-term programmes, the government is working to improve lives of the poorest, particularly of African peasants. The primary target is to provide them with the access to clean water, which is an issue of life and death in Africa. Over the recent years, millions of people have been provided with clean water through facilities installed in or close to their houses.

480 hospitals have been built in rural areas. By the way, hundreds of Cuban doctors work there selflessly (on very modest terms) compensating for the lack of medical staff in those areas. During the apartheid times, millions of people were illiterate. Currently the government is ensuring that all children go to school. 4.5 million pupils are provided with breakfast. During the apartheid regime electricity was basically a privilege of the Whites. After 1994, electricity was supplied to 3.8 million families that had used oil lamps (an unbelievable fact at the end of the 20th century).

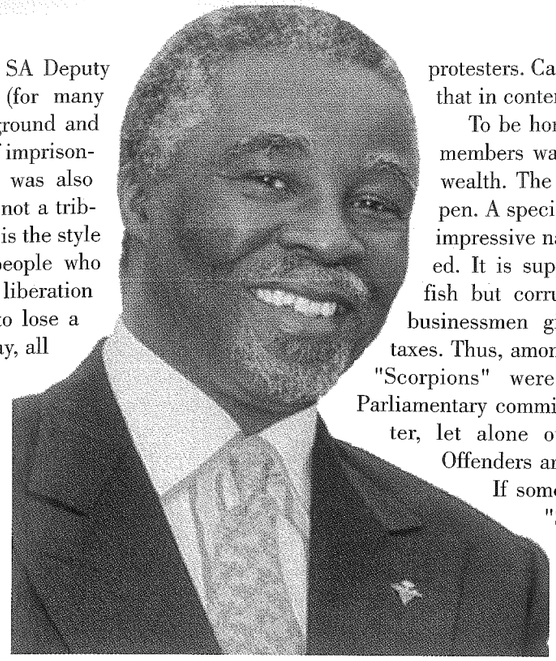
Services cost money. South African leadership knows that unemployed and peasants often have no money to pay for water and electricity. What is the way out? It is simple – every family receives certain quotes for free water (6 thousand liters per month) and electricity. It's not much, but enough for people to feel themselves human beings. Thousands of houses have been constructed primarily for the homeless. Before 1994, a telephone was a dream beyond the reach for the majority of Africans. Today telephones become available.

These changes may seem insignificant to us brought up in the Soviet era. But for millions of Africans, who only ten years ago were regarded as third-rate people, such changes represent sound evidence that the ANC, which they have brought to power, is fulfilling its promises.

The ruling African National Congress is the largest party of Center-Left orientation. The ANC has approximately 400 thousand members and it is not in a hurry to boost its membership. Certainly, in the ANC (as was the case with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), some people tried to use the ruling party to promote their careers. This is exactly what the ANC wants to avoid and till now has managed to do quite successfully. The ANC didn't become fat nor did it became bronze. It firmly controls its MPs and Cabinet ministers – ANC-members. All of them must act in compliance with the ANC policy documents. But it is not a kind of strict control of Party bureaucracy as was the case with the CPSU. It is a creative process, where all (I emphasize – all!) ANC members can and must participate in the development of the party's policy and then consciously implement it.

The ANC is doing active theoretical work. It has nothing to do with boring scholastic theorizing. The ANC research is directed at solving practical tasks. Analyzing different situations, South African politicians don't hesitate to consult the works of Marx and Lenin. It is not the dogmatic "ask-the-classics". Simply when Marxist methods of class analysis help to resolve issues facing the country, they are applied regardless of Western cries about the collapse of Marxism. Well! Russia's left wing and patriotic forces have a lot to learn from our friends!

Party leaders are not puffing their cheeks and don't pretend to be big bosses. On Monday at the modest headquarters of the ruling party in Johannesburg I met in the corridor the ANC Secretary General, wise Cde. Kgalema Motlanthe (former trade union leader, five years of imprisonment on Robben Island). He was wearing a simple shirt and no tie. Five minutes later I was received by the ANC Vice-President (and SA Deputy President) Cde.Jacob Zuma (for many years he ran the ANC underground and military operations, 10 years of imprisonment on Robben Island). He was also wearing a simple shirt. It was not a tribute to "democratic fashion". It is the style of life (and of thinking) of people who emerged as leaders during the liberation struggle and who don't want to lose a link with the people. By the way, all the ANC leaders have a good sense of humour and never hesitate to laugh aloud (not forgetting about work).



[South African President]... Thabo Mbeki is a talented politician by nature. He is irresistibly charming and at the same time self-disciplined and firm.

The President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki received your correspondent at an unpretentious residence in Cape Town. A small cozy office. A friendly host. The discussion was on the economic issues (the white business is not in a hurry to invest money probably still hoping that the past will come back), on Iraq (what kind of world will emerge after the war?), on Russia (the President warmly recalled Russian officers who taught him to handle weapons). Thabo Mbeki is a talented politician by nature. He is irresistibly charming and at the same time self-disciplined and firm. He studied economics at the University of Sussex (England) and did military training in the Soviet Union. He possesses enormous experience of successful freedom struggle and of running the country. Thabo Mbeki is one of the leading world politicians. Nonetheless, no signs of snobbery.

It happened that after that meeting I was driven in the direction of Groote Schuur Estate. On the road, the presidential cavalcade overtook my car. It was surprising to see that side streets were not closed and the traffic was not stopped. The cavalcade was driving through the traffic. Security people just skillfully (and very carefully) blocked other cars from the presidential limousine. That was it. No sirens, no pomp. There is only one security post at the presidential residence – just at the entrance. All you need to do at the entrance is to tell the security your name and if your visit is expected. And that is that. Same is everywhere whether at the Parliament or at the Government building. It is a style – anti-bureaucratic.

The President told me that in the morning he attended the opening of a hospital in one of the poorest districts in Cape Town. Big problems are still there and dissatisfied people are also there. Not far from the ceremony venue there was a group of protesters. You might think that they were chased away or ignored. Not at all. The President stopped the car, got out and went to talk to the protesters. Can you imagine anything like that in contemporary Russia?

To be honest, after 1994 some ANC members wanted to convert power into wealth. The ANC could not let it happen. A special government body with an impressive name "Scorpions" was created. It is supposed to handle not small fish but corrupted top officials or rich businessmen giving bribes and evading taxes. Thus, among the people caught by the "Scorpions" were one Chairperson of a Parliamentary committee and one former minister, let alone other less known figures. Offenders are treated unceremoniously. If somebody is proved guilty, the "Scorpions" confiscate houses and cars, take away furniture and electronics in front of the TV cameras. Such scenes make some people think twice. After the creation of the "Scorpions", the tax collection in South Africa has increased by almost a billion dollars a year.

The ANC is a part of the Alliance with the South African Communist Party and COSATU. The SACP has a very high reputation earned through decades of its members' involvement in the struggle in the most dangerous sectors – the ANC underground structures and its armed wing "Umkhonto we Sizwe". The party has tens of thousands of members. The SACP main principle is the same as in the ANC: every member should be not a burden but an activist. Several SACP members serve as Cabinet ministers: Charles Nqakula -(a former detainee) – Minister for Safety and Security, Ronnie Kasrils (former head of the ANC military intelligence) – Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry and Jeff Radebe (four years on Robben Island) – Minister of Public Enterprises.

The SACP role has changed as a result of general changes in the country. After Party leader Chris Hani was murdered by a Polish racist émigré, young but very active and committed Blade Nzimande was elected SACP Secretary General. The Party is involved in vigorous debates with the ANC leaders on economic strategy. In my view, such debates are useful (the truth is born through disputes). Simultaneously it creates a counterbalance to the tremendous pressure on the government by international and South African business. (On the other hand, the European and US leftists are trying to influence the SACP and COSATU). Debates inside the Alliance do not become antagonistic. Comrades try to avoid going personal, though sometimes it is not easy.

South African polemics however are nowhere close to the dirt of Russian "democratic" politics and mass media.

Certainly, there is a right-wing opposition: the Democratic Alliance (a mixture of our Union of Rightist Forces and the "Apple"). The DA is a clearly pro-Western party, promoting the interests of the Western and big South African business. The opposition criticizes the government without choosing expressions. Nonetheless, nobody shuts it up. Parliamentary debates including speeches of the opposition leaders are regularly broadcast on the TV. Compare it to Russian "democracy" where the opposition is almost banned from the TV.

Let's come back to tourism however. It is not all about lions among the palms. Tourism is a very important part of the economy. In Russia, they claim that the right to travel abroad is one of the major achievements of the "reforms". The South Africans, on the contrary, try to attract tourists from all over the world. To put it simply: money flows out of Russia, while South Africa gets it in. From 600 to 800 thousand tourists come to South Africa annually. For instance, for the Germans (and they are fond of traveling) South Africa is among the seven most popular destinations. Income generated by tourism comes fourth after gold and diamonds mining, agriculture and the manufacturing industry. Last year, South Africa received 16% more tourists than the previous year. This is a great step forward.

Martin Wiest of the "Welcome Tourism Services" believes that after the terrorist attacks on the US and the escalation of the Middle Eastern conflict the world has reassessed certain things. South Africa turned out to be one of the safest countries. There are neither terror attacks nor ethnic conflicts. There is the Kruger National Park where one can see the famous "African five": elephants, lions, rhinoceroses, giraffes and buffaloes. There is fabulous Cape Town and beautiful beaches of Durban. Smart South African tour operators have invented dozens of exotic tours. It became profitable to combine rest with medical treatment (laser vision correction in South Africa is much cheaper than in Germany). It has also become popular among European and American couples to wed in South Africa. Travel agency handle all formalities, you do not need to invite guests and can have your honeymoon on the spot.

For some people tourism means rest, for some it means work. The development of tourism helps to fight unemployment. It is estimated that seven foreign tourists create a job for one person. The importance is obvious, as among 10 million economically active South Africans about 1.2 million work in the services sector. Moreover, this kind of work (drivers, waiters, room cleaners) doesn't require particularly high skills (a very important job-creating factor for South Africa). Thus, lions and elephants contribute to the solution of socio-economic issues.

Special efforts have been made to attract Africans to tourism and the services sectors. My new friend Antony Chlote, used benefits offered to small African business to create a small transport firm providing services to foreign tourists.

In South Africa tourism and politics are inseparable. Having noticed an ANC badge on the lapel of my jacket, a female immigration officer at the airport smiled and said: "Very good". Cheryl Carolus – in the 80s one of the leaders of the ANC underground in Cape Town – heads the "Tourism South Africa". She is a glamorous woman full of joyful energy. Appointed SA High Commissioner in London, she impressed stern British by her determination to make routine receptions animated and human. Having assumed her duties in the tourism sector, she stunned the white business by the ability to apply to tourism development the principles of.underground work. By the way, Valli Moosa, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, at the end of 80s created lots of noise by his sensational escape from custody.

Having written all this I realized that the majority in the South African Cabinet, including the President and the Deputy President, are the people who ten years ago were regarded by the West as "terrorists". Many of them have spent several years in prison. However, they (and it is a widely recognized fact) are running the country very successfully. Probably this is precisely because they have developed strength and commitment through struggle and imprisonment...

Not only tourists are attracted by the South African prosperity. People, who have failed to find their place under the sun in their home countries, are flying like butterflies from all over the world. Immigrants (including illegal immigrants) are coming not only from neighboring countries but also from such remote places as China and Russia. Our countrymen tempted by the hope of quick success are facing difficulties. Some have transferred to South Africa their money stolen in Russia and are now enjoying life behind high fences of luxurious villas. However others seduced by rumours about the fabulous life of the Whites often sell everything at home and travel to South Africa just to find that they have to start from zero. The idea is simple: no one and nowhere is waiting for us to come and enjoy ready-made prosperity. We should put order in our own house.

South Africans are very positive towards Russia. Many remember the contribution of the Soviet Union to the liberation struggle (the USSR was one of few countries that supported the ANC armed struggle). Many of South Africans regret the destruction of the Soviet Union and are watching closely the developments in new Russia.

The appearance of paradise hides very earthly problems. But the people and the government of South Africa are handling them successfully. Let's wish them luck.

Foxing the miniature

by Phumla Mnganga

Foxed by the miniature?

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is the Minister of Minerals and Energy, and Dr Nkosazana Zuma is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, so why does the prospect of a woman at the helm of Anglo American, SAB Miller or Standard Bank seem such a long way off? When will women in numbers that resemble their representation in the workforce, make it to the highest ranks of corporate South Africa? Could it be that "ladies can't climb corporate ladders"? Or could it be that the gender cause has been foxed by the miniature?

The miniature is a mythological beast, which is half beast, half human. This beast lived in a labyrinth through which no way out could be found. The labyrinth was the mind of the miniature. The miniature can be likened to the complex maze of systemic factors that result in the poor representation of women in leadership positions in most South Africa's business organizations. There exists a growing consensus that despite the influx of women into tertiary education and the labour market, little progress has been made towards making gender a central theme in the transformation of business in South Africa.

A pathway out of the labyrinth

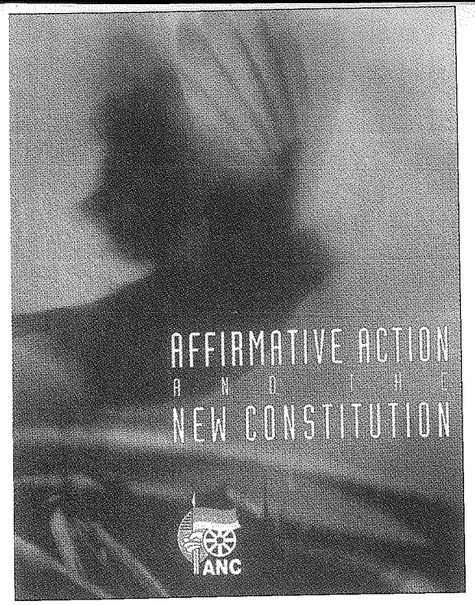
This paper will not provide an exhaustive analysis of the structural and systemic causes for the position of women in South African society as this is well documented. Focused attention will be paid to the causes of the low representation of women (especially African women) in key business leadership positions. Two related themes that can form the basis of positive intervention are discussed in depth. The discussion that follows will explore whether South Africa's current Employment Equity framework has adequately dealt with the prevailing business culture that presents as a labyrinth for women generally, especially African women. It is hoped that this concussed approach will assist in charting a definitive pathway out of the labyrinth. This is essential as there can be no meaningful business transformation in South Africa without gender equality.

When affirmative action measures are conceptualized, developed and implemented by business, specific attention must be paid to the position of black and African women

An international perspective

The entry and progression of women into management varies across the world reflecting the cultural, social and legal framework in each country. However, the situation in most Western industrialised nations is similar, and the representation of women in management is significantly lower than that of men. On both sides of the Atlantic the average percentage of women in top management hovers around 10% and less. Even in Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Finland, women make up just 9% and 11% of all management positions respectively. In this regard, researchers make two interesting observations: firstly, even in countries with an exemplary record of equal opportunity the proportion of women in business leadership positions is not much higher, and secondly the cause for poor representation of women is not a failure to train or recruit women into junior management, the problem lies in company cultures that don't enable the transition from junior to senior management. In summary, equal opportunity legislation internationally has not dealt adequately with hostile business cultures that present both direct and indirect barriers to the advancement of women in business.





The ANC booklet setting out guidelines on Affirmative Action

International trends suggest an interrelationship between the growth in the service economy and the nature of women's participation in the workforce. As services expand, so there is more possibility for skilled and experienced women to exit from large companies to start their own companies, or join smaller companies in the service sector. This gives women flexibility and access to their own disposable income, which in turn fuels the growth in services. Those that remain in corporations continue to experience barriers to advancement to the top.

White males continue to dominate the plum jobs

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 was a social, economic and political imperative aimed at the elimination of discrimination and the implementation of Affirmative Action to achieve a diverse workforce representative of South Africa's demographics. It was promulgated at a time when research conducted by the Breakwater Monitor (a body assessing progress of Employment Equity in a number of South African organizations voluntarily) reported that little progress had been made in Employment Equity and that there was a need to significantly accelerate the pace of transformation.

Five years on, since the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act, white males continue to dominate the plum jobs. In an interview with BUSINESS DAY on 25 April 2003, the Minister of Labour Membathisi Mdladlana said that private sector managers in South Africa still remain overwhelmingly *"pale and male"*. In the interview, he expresses concern regarding the limited progress made by companies in the implementation of the provisions of the Employment Equity Act. According to the Department of Labour Commission for Employment Equity Report for 2001 (which is cited as it had a larger sample of employers), African women hold 0.9% of top management positions, 1.4% of senior management positions and 4.3% of middle management positions. Women of all races hold 13% of top management positions and 20% of senior management positions. The representation of African women is shocking to say the least.

Whist Employment Equity policies and Affirmative Action programmes have succeeded to a limited extent in bringing the question of race to the forefront of business transformation, the centrality of the gender question still remains a challenge. In understanding why this is the case, it is useful to distinguish between formal and substantive equality. Formal equality prescribes equal treatment of individuals regardless of the actual circumstances pre-supposing that all persons are equal bearers of rights. Substantive equality on the other hand recognizes a world of diverse disparate groups. It acknowledges that all persons are not equal bearers of rights and that these differences need to be taken into account. A substantive perspective acknowledges specific disparities experiences to black women in particular. This means that when affirmative action measures are conceptualized, developed and implemented by business specific attention must be paid to position of black and African women.

The Employment Equity Act identifies the beneficiaries of Affirmative Action as "designated groups"; this includes blacks, women and people with disabilities. The designated groups are a homogenous group with little recognition being given to the fact that certain designated groups such as black people with disabilities and women experience multiple barriers. Seeing designated groups as a homogenous can result in indirect discrimination being experienced by those designated groups who experience multiple discrimination. This could involve the application of apparently neutral criteria that have the effect of excluding or causing disadvantage or disparate impact on a certain designated group. The most practical example is entrance requirements for certain jobs. A driver's license may appear to be apparently neutral criteria for a job. But it may be found that a much larger percentage of females may not have the relevant licenses to drive certain categories of vehicles. Accordingly this criterion could have a disparate impact on women. A gender conscious approach calls for the disagregation of *"designated groups"* in order to understand specific barriers to the employment and advancement in order to eliminate these. In this way, focused strategies can be developed.

In the determination of affirmative action measures priority should be given to those designated groups who face multiple barriers such as African women. Such an approach would be consistent with the Act's acceptance of the concept of preferential treatment in managing the requirements of affirmative action. In this case the concept would be broadened to encompass preferential treatment within the designated groups.

South Africa's business culture: the labyrinth

In addressing the question of organization culture, I will provide a theoretical framework for defining the concept, then, explore its practical application based on personal experience.

Organization culture can be defined as a shared appreciative system, a system of shared beliefs that predispose people to see the world in a certain way. The mission beliefs, values systems, policies, rituals and philosophies of a corporation make up its culture. Though a company may have distinctive subcultures (which are often counter-cultures), the dominant culture tends to prevail. Culture is strongly influenced by the core ideology of top management and in the case of South African business organizations, the "dominant" prevailing culture is influenced by a 87% white male worldview. Having spent over 10 years in corporate South Africa, I would like to share my personal experiences regarding common invisible assumptions, the subtle gender discrimination that prevents women from advancement.

1. The *"gender-blind"* companies:

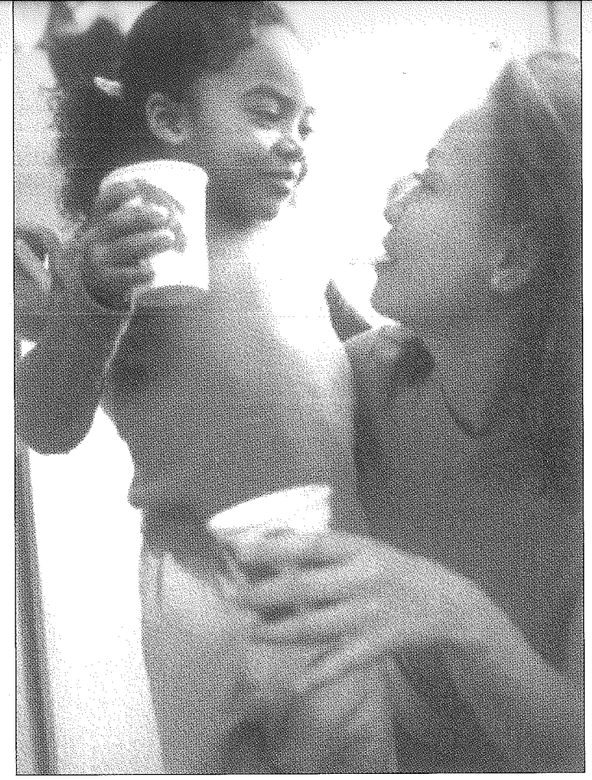
Some companies are proud in their pursuit of gender-blind policies. They claim to offer both sexes equally opportunities for employment, development and advancement to senior levels. "Gender-blind" companies refuse to acknowledge the gender specific barriers that are experienced by women. Such companies often have one or two women (who are happy to be the only women) in top management and are not concerned with the need to proactively recruit, train and develop a critical mass of women.

2. The marriage and children *"barrier"*:

A commonly shared view is that even the most talented women, if they are young will at some point marry, follow husband if they relocate and have children. This means that they cannot be relied on as a solid succession pipeline for senior and top management. As such it is seen as risky to promote women into key positions of responsibility. Whilst the question of family responsibilities is a key issue, it provides a useful means to detract attention from the organization culture barriers that women face in many working environments. It locates the problem squarely with the women.

3. The *"no concessions"* ethic:

At the beginning of my career, I was offered "well meaning" advice, to expect no special favors as a woman, in fact I was told that a certain American "iron lady" once said to her female colleagues: it is best to look like a lady, act like a man and work like a dog. This ethic is supported by the view that the reason that there are so few female executives is that "only a few iron ladies exist". The "no concessions" ethic is often found in gender-blind companies discussed earlier.



A commonly shared view is that even the most talented women, if they are young will at some point marry, follow their husbands if they relocate and have children.

4. The race first, gender later argument:

This view also articulated by many blacks, suggests that the dual focus on race and gender dilutes the focus of Affirmative Action. Achieving racial representivity is difficult enough without the added complexity of gender issues. What is concerning about this argument is that it is even articulated by black women. The concept of the "dual role" of women as Affirmative Action and Gender activists is articulated by a very small fraction of women.

5. The two career tournaments:

In many cases the career progression pathway tends to differ between men and women. More women are found in social science based disciplines such as marketing, public relations and human resources, than in technical disciplines such as engineering, finance and operations. This has its origins in high school when subject choices are made. In most businesses a technical background provides a greater range of opportunities for executive progression.

6. The assimilation of hostile company culture by women:

In order to survive many women assimilate gender hos-

tile company culture and even promote it. In some cases this results in such cognitive dissonance that those who fail to successfully engage in dissonance reduction through a process of rationalization finally opt out and leave the business world to other working environment that offer more congruence.

It should be noted that the organisational culture barriers discussed above are experienced by women in addition to the well documented difficulties with Affirmative Action experienced by people from designated groups. Because in business the race debate is louder, the gender debate is voiceless.

Out of the labyrinth we must all march

A strong multifaceted approach is required to capitalize on women as a critical resource in our economy. The centrality of the gender cause in our society was emphasized by the President Thabo Mbeki when he said; "The progress we make towards the attainment of a democratic society can only have full and deeper meaning if it is accompanied by significant progress in the struggle for the emancipation of women" (pg 261 The Emancipation of women: Paper delivered at the National Conference on Women Abuse and Domestic violence, Cape Town 23 November 1995) Similarly there can be no business transformation without the participation of women in the leadership and ownership of businesses.

In order to fox the miniature, the Employment Equity framework must be strengthened, possibly through a Code of Good Practice to specifically provide guidelines on measures to be taken to ensure an improved gender representation at all levels. This will provide an enabling framework for women, in particular black and African women to embrace their dual role as Affirmative Action and Gender activists. Women in business must spearhead initiatives aimed at ensuring women, but in particular African women are represented at all levels of management. They must represent a new way of thinking about competitiveness - that the most sustainable source of competitive advantage lies in attracting and retaining the largest pool of talent and ability.

In order to fox the miniature companies, especially those that are product-oriented must become increasingly aware that women are often the primary decision makers regarding a large range of buying decisions. Women drive more than 85 percent of purchasing decisions in most consumer products. The organizations of the future needs people at all levels to reflect the demographics of the consumer base and such individuals are especially needed in top management positions providing leadership.

Lastly, in order to fox the miniature women in business must rise, organise, speak, act and strike at the rock of business culture!

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Participatory democracy AND THE BUDGET

by Joan Fubbs

The author is a member of the Provincial Executive Committees of the ANC and ANCWL in Gauteng, as well as the Chairperson of the ANC Finance Study Group, Gauteng Provincial Legislature

IF THE BUDGET IS AN implementation instrument of policy then how can we bring the budget closer to the people it is intended to serve? This is an exploratory article that seeks to chart a way forward through the ensuing debate it hopes to generate. Democracy means and communicates different ideas. The neo-liberal framework includes democratic market reforms while for most western states the idea of democracy is that of a multi-party state.

Within the framework of the National Democratic Revolution the concept of democracy seeks to resolve the deep contradictions in South African society: monopoly capital (mainly white) and the majority of the population (large majority black). The Bill of Rights within the South African Constitution is the *"cornerstone of democracy"* in South Africa and it enshrines non-racialism, non-sexism, equality, socio-economic rights, human dignity and freedom It also shifts second-degree freedoms such as health and education to first degree freedoms. The constitution also confirms the participatory principle to broaden the base of democracy and introduces the concept of co-operative governance.

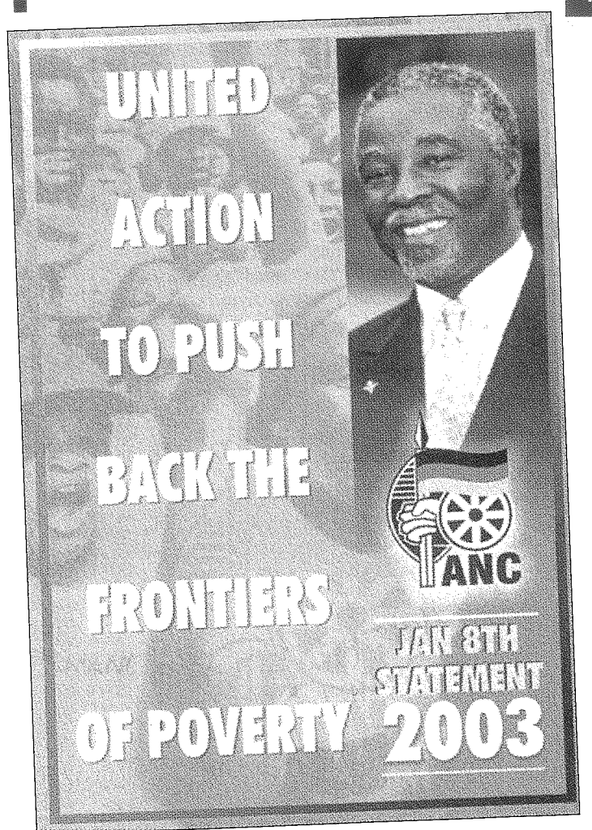
The search for sustainable solutions that lead to a progressive realisation of the NDR requires an appreciation of the internal and external contradictions in South African society, which can only be resolved through radical transformation of social relationships and organisation.

The motive forces that drive the NDR are mainly black working people including the unemployed. It also includes the rural masses, the middle strata in general including professionals as well as small and medium business people. The challenge of high unemployment and the growing gap between the small percentage of wealthy and the large percentage of impoverished continues to confront South Africa. Re-emphasizing the ANCs leaning towards the poor, President Mbeki called on the ANC and the nation this year to *"push back the frontiers of poverty"*.

The question then is: *How can this call be translated into effective delivery of services through the budget and good governance?*

This paper argues that the challenge for those concerned with promoting participatory democracy and participatory forms of development is not simply to oppose the liberal paradigm and to promote a more radical, leftist or rightwing approach. Instead in line with the NDR there is a need to transform the very basis of state/society relations by conceptualizing new forms of political

ANC January 8th Statement 2003 calls for united action to push back the frontiers of poverty



organization that confronts the contradictions in South African society, encourages active and informed participation, decentralised decision-making within the NDR strategic objectives and within the centrality principle of democracy. There is a close conceptual relationship between the concept of a unitary state with a fiscal federal structure and the concept of co-operative governance with this understanding of participatory democracy.

New contexts new challenges

Bridging the gap between party and government and government and people poses fresh challenges. We need to move beyond a mechanical conceptualisation to one that recognises the relationship between policy, planning and implementation within a realistic functional framework. We need to avoid the alienation that can develop with the growing gap between government and the people it serves. Two ways to bridge this gap is to strengthen the relationship and two-way communication with civil society and to develop processes that will enable party political structures of the ANC Alliance to directly, and strategically contribute to the development of the budget.

Rhetoric cannot replace reform. Processes must be institutionalised to ensure such engagements achieve their goals. This is already reflected in ANC policy which calls for fresh forms of inclusion, consultation and mobilisation which could effectively inform and influence institutions and policies including the budget which concretizes policy for planned implementation.

The Stellenbosch Conference (2002) resolution on the *Transformation of the State and Governance* underlines the NDR imperatives of the consolidation of the democratic order. It notes that this requires the transformation of institutions of governance to ensure that they are capable of facilitating the pursuit of the goal of creating a better life for all, the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights, non-racism and a new patriotism and African unity for reconstruction and development.

Corruption, which can also lead to a reduction in the available financial resources, poses a "major challenge within the public, private and civil sectors" and "undermines the values and objectives of the NDR."

This is also translated into good governance through the policy and process of deepening participatory democracy. Principles of transparency, accountability and responsiveness have driven a number of policy changes in institutional design and the development of enabling structures for good governance, which is reflected in the South African Constitution.

The range of institutions supporting democracy introduced by the ANC reflects the movement's commitment to "an active democratic transparent and development State. These institutions include the Public Protector, the Human rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, the Auditor General, the Financial and Fiscal Commission and the Reserve Bank among others. This recognises that there is a need to increase the management capacity of the public service to a meet the needs of a developmental State.

Contradictions and balancing strategies

At the ANC's 50th Conference in Mafikeng (1997) the resolution on participatory democracy Governance noted that "the collective, democratic management of our people's lives extends beyond government; and that good governance requires the involvement of civil society including labour and business in the decision-making and development of society". It was resolved that "government (should) take steps to promote participatory democracy and the culture of liberation in all institutions of governance, and it was further resolved that: mechanisms and strategies for determining a clear role for appropriate organs of civil society in promoting participatory democracy be devised."

As recently as the Stellenbosch Conference the ANC reiterated the importance of balancing strategies: On one hand it is imperative that ANC membership is consulted in a number of ways that reinforces inclusivity in the translation of policies into implementation strategies. On the other hand, it is also important for government to be able to govern with checks and balances of legislation such as the Public Finance Management Act as well as the overarching oversight that legislatures can exercise to ensure accountability and responsiveness.

Each perspective often perceives the other as inadequate with one warning that consultation without attention to power and politics will lead to "voice without influence" and the other arguing that reform of political institutions without attention to inclusion and consultation will only reinforce the status quo. However it is more apparent than ever before that the principle of "either/or" is conflictual compared to "and/but" which seeks to harmonise the natural tensions that exist in reality. Thus in the North and in the South there is agreement that an active and engaged civil society is as necessary as a responsive government. South Africa has been the first country to entrench the principle of participatory democracy in its constitution.

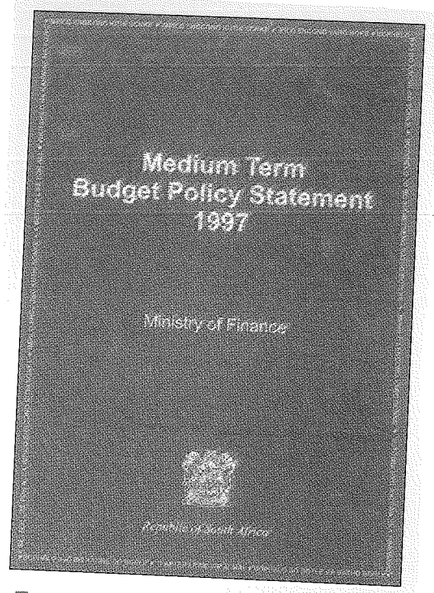
Political space and party participation in the budget

How do we address the challenges arising from a non-homogeneous civil society which exists in South Africa so that we can close the gap between those resources and capacity and those without these benefits so that the substantive weight of the views is not distorted and/or diluted?

The Stellenbosch resolution on Transformation of the State and governance notes that: "Where people are not involved in decisions that affect their lives, social policies and political interventions are less likely to succeed. Participatory democracy should therefore complement and enhance representative democracy."

In the context of participatory democracy, political space created by this convergence of ideas creates a natural opportunity for greater participation in the development of the budget. The ruling party in the government is elected on a mandate which has its genesis in the prioritised policies of the ANC. *"Over the years"* the ANC *"has defined the strategic objective of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist democratic and prosperous South Africa"* the Secretary General reported at the Stellenbosch Conference.

The dynamic nature of policy enables it to remain contextualised. However if technocrats craft the budget without being influenced by a political policy process, then the tyranny of bureaucracy reigns.



Budgeting is at the heart of good governance.

ANC policy is overturned as technocrats seek to give it a fresh spin. Given the manner in which ANC policy, as resolved in the Mafikeng conference is developed, a technically sound budget uninformed by ANC policy loses touch with reality. It becomes an efficient rather than an effective instrument of policy, which is in turn stunted by its inability to be shaped by its beneficiaries. There is a direct correlation between this perspective and that which recognizes the developmental character of the State.

The Gauteng Provincial Government has developed measures to bring government closer to the people through restructuring the Office of the Premier to focus on good governance, ensure closer co-operation between departments and foster integrated delivery. Inevitably this has opened the space for greater engagement with the people but now needs also to actively promote fiscal policy engagement within the party right down to branch level which is now ward based.

The question is how can we strengthen the capacity of all legislatures including both Houses of Parliament to examine and assess the linkages between the performance of government and the allocation of resources to achieve the stated targeted results?

"Fiscal policy must support growth, employment creation and development by ensuring that government expenditure continues to grow in a robust but sustainable fashion. Like all policies it must be subject to regular review in terms of its impact on our overall objectives," fiscal policy resolution adopted at the Stellenbosch Conference.

Historically, budgets in South Africa were driven by technicians and the administration with little if any political intervention and an implicit policy to produce documentation that made it impossible for the public to appreciate the purpose of expenditure and the achievements of objectives. Budget reform over the last six years has striven to ensure greater political intervention with Ministers and MECs now responsible for the outcomes. However this process needs to move beyond the executive to ensure the budget remains relevant.

The question is how branches can effectively participate in the development of the budget in terms of prioritised policies for implementation and alert government to new developments, which can be incorporated into the MTEF three-year budget cycle. In this way the outcomes of implementation impact strategically on the dynamic nature of policy, which in turn requires a review of strategic plans.

The first question is how can we increase public and party structure awareness and understanding of both the current and long-term implications of the fiscal situation?

The second question is how can we create enhanced opportunities for party public and parliamentary input to budgetary decisions?

Convergence of two participatory streams

Budgeting is at the heart of good governance. The journey to fiscal good governance in South Africa has its seeds in a commitment to deliver more social services while reducing the debt incurred prior to 1994. Thus the budget is not simply a technical instrument but also a political instrument to transform our socio-economic environment.

The programme of the NDR identifies broad challenges in the critical spheres of social transformation, informed in the main by the RDP. This covers issues of democracy and governance, meeting social needs, economic transformation and safety and security matters.

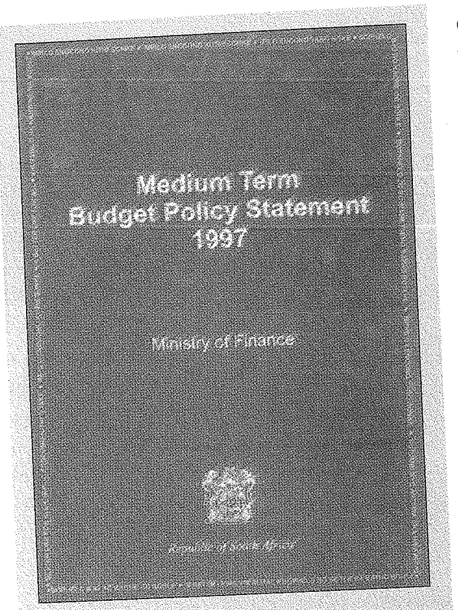
The 51st Conference further notes *"the reforms introduced by the ANC to transform management in all spheres government to meet the needs of a developmental state and to improve its capacity to delivery including the introduction of financial management legislation like the Public finance Management Act and public service reforms such as the establishment of Senior Management*

Services."

But what is a developmental state? It is a system of good governance and not a government. It is a state that moves away from authoritarianism and acts as a catalyst, which seeks to unlock the resources of the state and to use its capacity to develop an enabling environment to improve the quality of life of its people.

Budget reform measures have shifted the purpose of the budget from its narrow focus on prudent stewardship to embrace the development of sustainable programmes to deliver quality services that will "push back the frontiers of poverty" grow the economy, develop skills and create an enabling environment for employment.

"To realise these transformation objectives, the ANC must proceed to further deepen the mass character and capacity of the movement to provide leadership to society as a whole. This requires a strong, capable, focused and conscious cadreship, as well as branches that serve as catalysts for community development," President Mbeki 91st ANC Anniversary.



Budget reform measures have shifted the purpose of the budget from its narrow focus on prudent stewardship to embrace the development of sustainable programmes to deliver quality services...

Taking the budget direct to the community without also engaging the party reinforces the gap between government and the party. However this necessary engagement without a corresponding branch process will lead to a government dependent on the whims of a fickle electorate rather than the support of informed and disciplined cadres and ANC branches. However once again it is not an "either/or" challenge rather it is an "and/but". A politically naïve civil society is as dangerous to progress as is a dogmatic party. One of the central organizational challenges is how the ANC should relate to other organs of civil society, and how we characterize the latter as our emerging democracy matures.

However this raises the question of party accountability within and between ANC structures and between ANC structures and structures of governance.

Co-operative governance and Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations

Good governance and fiscal decentralization are attuned in our country through co-operative governance. The unitary state with its system of fiscal decentralization has been institutionalized in the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act. A fiscal decentralized framework addresses the question of the appropriate level of centralization by assigning competency to tax, spending and regulatory responsibility to the various spheres of government and the interface with the private sector and civil society. This framework assigns responsibility to that sphere of government at the coalface of delivery. However fiscal decentralization is not automatically better than fiscal centralization.

Sub-national governments often pursue "self-interest " policies and strategies seeking a "free-ride with no accountability and undermining national unity". The principle of co-operative governance is an essential catalyst to overcoming this problem. This principle is informed by the collective principle which characterizes the ANC and acts as a countervailing weight to the "beggar-thy-neighbour" policies practiced by governments characterized by fiscal centralization.

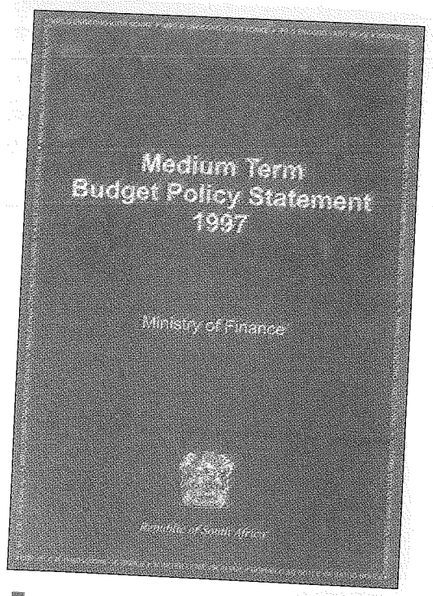
However the accessibility of information, which is related to the principle of transparency, is not only necessary but also an essential requirement for effective oversight by the legislatures. If branches, civil society and labour are to effectively contribute to the development of the policy priorities in the budget then access to relevant information is an imperative.

The Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations (IGFR) system underpins this principle because it facilitates fiscal harmonization and stabilization and stability checks. The advantages of a unitary state are successfully merged with the advantages of fiscal decentralization in an effective Intergovernmental Fiscal system. One of the effects of globalization is the impact on the design of a fiscal system in a borderless world economy.

The IGFR complements the budget review which provides consolidated MTEF figures but not detailed provincial and local budgets. Considering the critical role of provinces and local government in delivery of social and basic service the consolidated information provided by the IGFR facilitates a better understanding of the issues by these two spheres of government. The IGFR also focuses on the performance based outputs. Gauteng believes that the reliable provision of data is directly related to improving quality service delivery.

The integrity of data of is not simply a technical exercise. The selection, collection and classification of data is determined by the objective reality which is why what was presented as statistics under an apartheid era hardly took account of the existence of black people. Clearly raw data is of no use until it has been transformed into relevant information which is vital for the evaluation of the achievement of strategic objectives.

Of course any system of good governance requires not only political will and well-functioning accounting and financial management systems but also information systems of integrity and accessibility. An information system is a set of people, procedures and resources that collects, transforms and disseminates information in an organization.



How do we retain a balance between the managerial requirements of politicians in government and the need to improve systems of political accountability within all ANC structures and spheres of governance?

Comparative challenges in the shift from the twentieth to the twenty-first Century

What are the comparative challenges of transfers as we shift from the twentieth to the twenty-first century? A series of shifts, informed by a phalanx of policy leading to legislation has paved the way for a new fiscal management paradigm within the NDR framework. At least eight such shifts within this paradigm can be identified.

First, there is the shift from a unitary or centralized fiscal system to a federal or decentralized fiscal system. Second, borderless economies is breaking down the centralized national silos and replacing them with positions and decisions that are both globalized and localized. Third, the centre which was managed within a framework of rules to a centre that leads and encourages discretionary decentralized management. Fourth we have moved from a rigid fiscal bureaucracy towards participatory fiscal democracy.

Fifth the command and control character that flourished prior to 1994 has buckled under the pressure of a democratic constitution and shifted towards transparency and accountability. Sixth the internally dependent public service with its focus on administration and not management has moved towards the capacity to initiate, act and compete. Seventh the inward thinking that fostered the sluggish performance of the public service is beginning to shift towards a more outward thinking attitude that encourages people to be swift and smart. Eight the public service mandarins whose intolerance of risk leading to a psychosis of fear and failure which crippled the performance of the public service has with the move to a more horizontal management structure liberated the public service and given people the freedom to fail and/or succeed.

The operational decisions arising out of the PFMA have underpinned the difference between the decisions concerning the desired outcomes of government action and the decisions about the outputs of government that are undertaken in pursuit of the outcomes. This distinction further emphasizes the critical policy decision enacted in the PFMA to ensure clear delegations of competence and responsibility and leads to more creative and productive management. Managers now have discretion to make decisions, but must also take responsibility for these decisions. Linked to this is the performance contracts. However, we now need to focus on political accountability but this requires careful understanding of the role and function of politicians in the executive in relation to outcomes.

The question this raises is how do we retain a balance between the managerial requirements of politicians in government and the need to improve systems of political accountability within all ANC structures and spheres of governance?

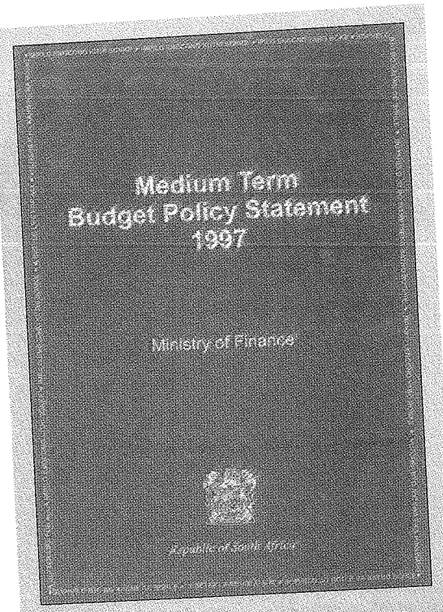
ANC constitutional structures and institutions of governance

Again the seminal policy direction provided for by the Mafikeng Conference recognized the need to build and strengthen the relationship between ANC constitutional structures and institutions of governance. The portfolio study groups of Caucus can play a pivotal role in ANC policy implementation as Ministers and MECs are an integral part of these groups which are chaired by chairpersons of legislature. The Mafikeng Conference also

clearly recognized the "necessity for the ANC to provide political direction to the institutions of governance without undermining their integrity." It did so while "acknowledging that there is only one ANC irrespective of areas of operation (and further) that the ANC and its structures are central to the management and co-ordination of all processes of governance and that the ANC needs to be transformed to enable it to meet the demands of governance."

This resolution on the relationship between constitutional structures and institutions of governance goes on to highlight the important role of the caucus structures, in particular the study groups, which would drive the decisions and positions of the policy committees into the executive and legislature through the caucus.

The Stellenbosch Conference re-emphasized the role of ANC branches in informing policy and legislation. The budget is indeed a piece of legislation. The Stellenbosch Conference also resolved in respect of institutions enhancing democracy and transformation to "accelerate the pace of implementing the accountability system for better performance on service delivery and financial management, by fully and properly implementing the management and performance reforms like the PFMA and Senior Management Service."



The three-year medium term framework budget offers greater opportunity for the party political structures of the ANC to directly contribute to the development of the budget.

How can provincial MTEF budgets remain politically informed by branches?

The resolution on the relationship between ANC constitutional structures and institutions of governance underpins the principle of accountability to constituencies. The ANC ward based branches provide a sound starting point for reviewing budget policy priorities and ensuring this engagement with the region and the province becomes a political policy highway and not a one way street of instruction. There is an element of political arrogance in the position that refuses to recognize the understanding of membership at grassroots about critical socio-economic issues within their personal and public environment that can be improved.

Already the policy structures with their involvement of the executive, legislators councilors and ANC constitutional structures are in place provincially and regionally but may require certain modifications in the clustering. The intention has always been to establish and develop similar structures at the branch or zonal level. The three-year medium term framework budget offers greater opportunity for the party political structures of the ANC to directly contribute to the development of the budget.

The Mafikeng Conference in its resolution on the ANC policy process also notes that "policy development appears to have shifted to government and away from ANC constitutional structures". The revitalization of the policy conferences at provincial and national level in 1997 which was successfully taken down to branch level in 2001 and 2002 in preparation for the 51st ANC National Conference at Stellenbosch has positively arrested this shift.

The resolution lays the foundation for strengthening the policy structures in a way that will "sustain an on-going cycle of policy development, implementation and monitoring". These policy structures provide the political platform for the policy involvement and development of the budget. The heads of the working groups of the respective sectors eg health, education, social development, housing and transport could be clustered along the lines of the Economic Transformation Committee. Within the policy working group the engagement on micro-prioritization issues and their translation into the budget would begin.

This process could be consolidated by the respective policy committee cluster before going to the provincial executive committee. At the PEC political engagement would continue within the macro level as it assimilates the micro-prioritization within the macro framework. Budget policy conferences at regional and then provincial level could take place where issues can be prioritized and the resolutions taken forward by the chairperson of the ANC Province Executive Committee to the Executive Council of provincial government.

During this phase the executive working with the administration of the respective portfolio departments and indeed provincial treasury which has the technical competence to lead this process would work towards indicative budget. The relationship between the MEC of Finance and the ANC provincial budget policy structure would ensure that the political direction of the ANC Provincial Executive Committee arrived at through the process of engagement with branches is fully incorporated into the MTEF budget.

If this process is properly institutionalized then perhaps the amendment of the budget becomes a far less important consideration and instrument for retaining the budget on course. The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement of National provides a process framework, with early information to the public, of budget policy intentions and provides scope for legislatures to contribute to budget decisions which are firm but not set in stone.

However the question is whether if early input into the medium term budget process is effected would it be necessary to introduce legislation to amend budgets? Secondly do legislatures have the resource capacity to amend the budget?

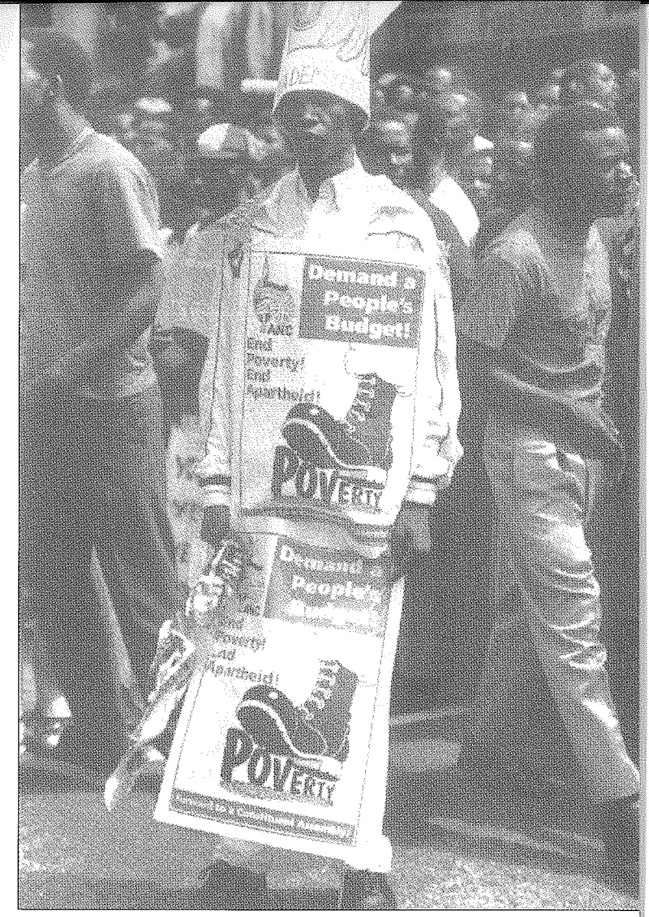
Budget reform, transparency and accountability

The key question that informs the process of prioritising and re-prioritising is the purpose of the budget. This is the challenge for the executive and the question that the oversight structures of the legislature must grapple with as it evaluates the effective relationship between policy priorities and the budget. In this respect the budget must be unpacked as a political tool, economic tool, legal tool, planning tool; a tool for allocation, reallocation and redistribution and an accountability mechanism.

The question is how can the budget as a political tool effectively reflect government policy within the framework of the NDR. How do we address the fundamental contradictions of South African society?

The Gauteng legislature has developed an oversight tool called PEBA to promote executive accountability. It does this by tracking the implementation of provincial policies through the implementation of resolutions adopted in the House, the budget, the quarterly and annual reports and through oversight visits and monitoring of statements by the respective MECs.

In the last six years there has not simply been a change in the instruments of public management but also a change in the style and mode of governance. Budget reforms like the MTEF constitute a set of institutional interventions. These reforms have led to budget integrity, greater transparency and increasing accessibility through changes in the format of budget statements. Budget reforms have been described as rules of procedure and position that are introduced to transform the behaviour of those involved in the budget process. However budget reform is also informed by the need to strengthen the redistributive thrust of expenditure which is one of the core elements of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which remains the fundamental policy of the African National Congress and its Alliance partners and which was adopted by Parliament.



How can the budget as a political tool effectively reflect government policy within the framework of the NDR?

Institutionalising instruments and processes is a key plank in budget reform exemplified by the MTEF. The implementation at national and provincial level – certainly in Gauteng's case – provides argument and evidence that well-constructed budgetary processes influence behaviour. A paradigm shift requires a consequent shift in behaviour, which is necessary to overcome the challenges of fiscal illusion, information revelation and asymmetric information as well as to facilitate optimal social outcomes.

> ***"Branches shall be the place where members exercise their basic democratic rights to discuss and formulate policy"*** ANC Constitution.

Thus strengthening the capacity of branches to participate in policy formulations and in turn to the translation of these policy priorities in the medium term three-year expenditure framework budget, is essential to effective participatory democracy and the full realization of the NDR.

Quarantine and feel sorry FOR THESE BARBARIC GMO TECHNOLOGIES!

A REPLY TO NEO MASITHELE

by Prof. Peter Stewart

THE RECENT ARTICLE by Neo Masithele (UMRABULO no 18 June 2003) must be welcomed for keeping open an important debate, but it needs to be challenged. It is too much on the side of business; it is not enough on the side of communities and poorer farmers; and is misleading in a number of respects. And it reflects the weaknesses of the Genetically Modified Organisms Act of 1997.

Cde Masithele writes with a basic trust of both the economic benefit of GM technology particularly as regards food security, and the ease with which current and potential environmental and health problems can be contained. On both counts, trust is unwarranted.

Cynical economics and food insecurity

Biotechnology involving GMOs is an industry not connected in any way to the needs of the poor, at present. It is firstly an extension of the agribusiness and pharmaceutical industries of the rich north, and has been facilitated by the World Trade Organisation allowing patenting of genetically engineered organisms. This means tha a GE plant or animal which has tens of thousands genes inherited from nature and, in the case of foo crops, selected by generations of farmers over thousand of years, with the simple addition of one gene fro another species, now belongs to the holder of the paten Such patenting is considered by many public group around the world to be invalid, but at the moment it i backed by the WTO. Patenting combined with GM foo and pharmaceutical technology has been a centra means of extending monopolistic conditions into th farming, food and medical fields.

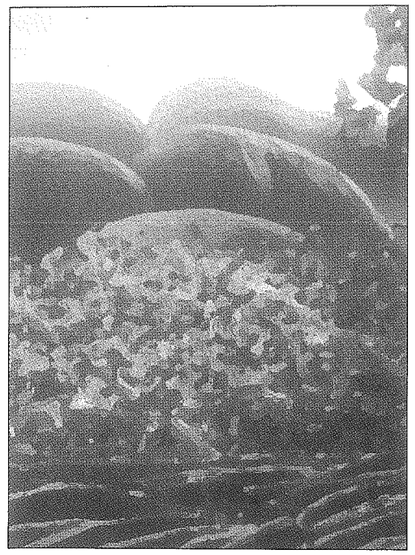
GM agriculture has not been particularly successful even in its own terms of higher yields and less pesti cides. The most impartial and thorough studies to dat show 'a highly mixed performance in the field', and sig nificant cases where more, not less, pesticide had to b used (Pretty 2002: 139; see also Altieri 2000). I Argentina, more than 150 000 small farmers have le the land as a result of the spread of GM soya. Further current GM crops often use extremely strong and ofte toxic general herbicide which can damage huma health [for example, in th case of herbicide-resistan forage maize Chardon LL glufosinate, a neurotoxin an teratogen (dangerous t human pregnancy) is use (Soil Association 2003)] The Bt crops, with a gen from the toxin-producin *bacillus thuringiensis*, whic are insect-resistant, are als toxic for non-pest organism such as earthworms. Thi cannot be good for the soi and constitutes a hidden cost.

It is possible that some *future* more environmentally sophisticated GM crops or animals could be produced, and that selected cases of these GMOs might form a limited part of future food security (Pretty: 142ff). Perhaps we should expect such products to be made available from some sources in about five years. At present, however, GM food offers little except quick profits (mostly repatriated elsewhere), a further invasion of national large- medium- and small-scale agriculture by transnational agribusiness, a further geographical spread of extreme monocropping, and also increased food allergies and new forms of pesticide pollution. In addition, the current GM industry (which also includes a huge range of GMOs used in the pharmaceutical industry) introduces risks of genetic pollution which can be extremely difficult to manage.

Current strategies of food security do not need this industry, or at least this stage of the industry. The primary issues of food security – for those who are vulnerable, ie the poor – are those of distribution, income and price of existing food – people are hungry because they are poor. Food security needs a reinvestment in community agriculture, community commons and local ecosystems, including the replenishment of soil. All this is very far from the GM rationale in agriculture. Genetic engineering in its present form cannot be regarded as an ally of sustainable development or sustainable national agriculture. While indeed having potential – if put at the service of the public– it is at an early and hazardous stage of development, and in addition is dominated by private business interests. The different levels of farming, in order to flourish and help towards food security, must be protected from the imperious strategies of transnational agribusiness and 'bioagropharmachemical' monopolies (McNally & Wheale 1998: 314).

So no, Cde Masithele, with present technologies and the international structure of agro-business, GM crops are not the answer to Southern African food security problems.

And the extent of GMO activity in our country is much larger than that suggested by Cde Masithele. As of January 2003, permits had been given for 152 field trials. Huge volumes of GM maize and soyabean have been imported. Even bigger volumes have been imported of non-GM maize which may be contaminated by GM maize but not to an extent of more than 1% of total volume. It is likely that the majority of people in our country are eating foods with GM components (particularly from soyabean and maize) without knowing it.



GM crops are not the answer to Southern African food security problems.

High-tech business, immature science

Genetic engineering is regarded as a high-tech industry, and indeed it concentrates much scientific expertise and is a site of creative experimentation worldwide. Unfortunately this science is practiced on a terrain which is not well understood – namely that of the relation between particular transgene constructs and particular hosts, the particular patterns of transgene expression and protein interaction in the host, and the effect of particular GMOs on a variety of natural environments.

Biotechnology is a standard capitalist concern, aiming to maximize profits and externalize costs. Because of the scientific ignorance mentioned above and the limitations in current GM technology – and because of the inherent slowness of finding how a new organism interacts with natural environments – GE business attempts to shift the cost of risk, unintended effects, and unavoidable environmental costs onto ordinary farmers, consumers, the environment and the nations of the South.

The weakness of current GE technology can be illustrated through the nature of the transgene construct inserted into the host cell in plants. In this microscopic process, the new gene introduced to improve the plant, the transgene, is put into the cell through a combination of mechanisms which are each capable of, and sometimes likely to create cellular instability. The artificial GE gene construct which is placed in the cell can consist of five or more unrelated and foreign components or 'expression cassettes'. In many cases, the transgene is attached to a viral vector, a part of a virus associated with serious diseases that is able to invade the cells of that particular plant. The transgene itself comes from a different species – often a different kingdom. Sometimes the transgene itself is bacterial or viral in origin and associated with disease or toxin production, as in the case with bT GMOs. The transgene is inserted because it produces a specific trait in the fully grown GMO.

However, genes commonly produce more than one protein, depending on how they are spliced. The full biochemical pathways involved in expression of the transgene in its parent organism are often not known, and the



People are hungry because they are poor.

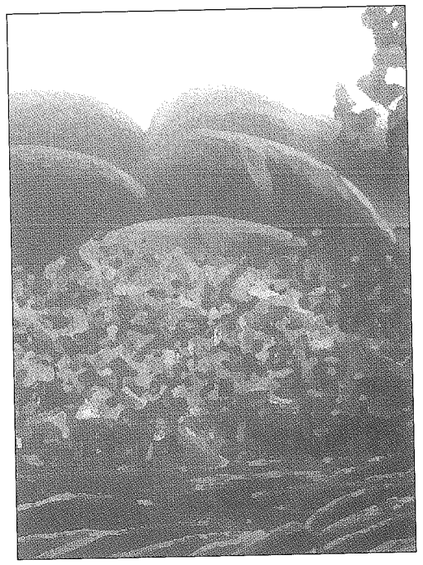
effect of the gene in the cells and organism of the GMO are also usually not known – other than that the desired trait is produced in the GMO. Also in the inserted gene construct is a promoter gene, to make the main transgene express itself. This promoter usually switches the transgene on all the time, not occasionally like most genes.

Then there may also be a 'terminator', another unrelated piece of DNA. Lastly, the inserted gene construct may have an antibiotic marker gene, which produces an antibiotic in the cells where the transgene construct successfully locates itself. This is so that the biotech company can breed the successfully invaded cells, and discard the unmarked cells. The genetic 'engineers' do not (in a large number of the processes used) otherwise know in which cells the transgene has successfully located. Further, in no GE process are the genes located in particular positions on the chromosomes. Rather, several or even many copies of the gene construct are attached randomly to the target cell's DNA. This too creates an unusual and sometimes disruptive process in the engineered cell and its descendants.

All of the factors above make it reasonably likely that cell metabolism will be disturbed well beyond producing the protein that gives the desired trait. It also makes it entirely possible that the health of the GMO will be weakened by the production of unfamiliar proteins. Further, the different expression cassettes can separate and combine strangely with other genetic elements in the cell. Where, rarely, the transgene's insertion results in a thriving organism, the problem may be more with the effect of the novel organism on the environment into which it is placed. The nature of the transgene construct and its mode of attachment also make it possible that there may be 'horizontal gene transfer' of the transgene into the environment, particularly into bacteria.

Areas of high risk: genetic pollution, abuse of people

The hazards created by GMOs are real, not just potential. In the early days of GE, in an infamous case, a GE food supplement, L-tryptophan, caused thousands of people to fall ill in 1989; 'Within months dozens had died and thousands were maimed as a result of EMA (eosinophilic-myalgia syndrome)' (Shiva 2001:75). In the more recent case of Starlink corn, engineered to produce its own pesticide but approved only for animal use in the U.S., in the year 2000 it appeared in various human foods and produced 48 cases of allergic reaction, in some instances extremely severe. The ensuing lawsuits and consumer reaction created huge losses for Aventis Crop Science (Anderson 2001).



The pollution of food staples and their wild relatives is one area of crucial concern

The risk of serious genetic pollution (resulting in high costs to society, individual victims, or to the environment) may be small or large, but, unlike chemical pollution, there are risks of irreversible changes. 'If some unknown, unpredictable adverse effect results from GMOs, the effect could be uncontrollable, permanent, and irreversible. And by that time it would be too late' (Anderson 2001:p220). Faced with such a catastrophe, The GMO Act of 1997 would only empower the government to close down the offending company and sentence the persons responsible to at most two or four years or a fine (depending on previous warnings).

The pollution of food staples and their wild relatives is one area of crucial concern, and one that concerns our country, seeing that most of the permits granted by January 2003 were to do with GM maize and soya, along with Bt cotton. Imagine the consequence if an allergy-creating GM maize variety interbred with all the locally used strains of the staple. In Britain, 'a 50% rise in soya allergies is reported since imports of GM soya started and a similar rise in allergies was reported in Ireland (Soil Association 2003).

Other areas of concern include bioweapons, genetically engineered vaccines, the use of the HIV family of viruses in producing viral vectors, acute hazards such as 'naked' and 'free' nucleic acids (Ho,Ryan, Cummins & Traavik), and the problem of GE wastes from failed experiments, dead GMOs and so forth.

Even the richer industrialized countries are struggling to establish controls over premature marketing of unsafe GM products, experimentation in new and dangerous areas, and illegal trade and disposal of GMOs.

Is it not clear that for now and the next few years this whole industry has extremely little relevance to the poor? It does its business while there is further marginalization of the poor, and it goes with a further seizing of public 'commons' by the corporate private sphere.

Gaps in current legislation

Finally I offer some reflections on the GMO Act of 1997. It was an excellent step to have a specific act dealing with genetically modified organisms. However, against Cde Masithele's argument I am convinced that the current regulations are not safe enough.

The Act gives the government the power to do most of what is necessary to preserve biosafety, but it does not oblige the Council or Minister to do anything. The Council 'may' perform actions which regulate – and promote – GMO use. But there is nothing saying what the council shall do, other than meet. In one way the Act is justified in having a Council, Advisory Committee registrar and inspectors with highly discretionary powers. In the context of a fast-changing industry, these are necessary. However, especially in a world of transnational corporate bribery and attempts at bribery, the present Act does not enjoin on the council those duties that will guarantee the public interest in environmental protection and safeguards to health.

Perhaps, adapting from the duties of the advisory committee in the Act, there should be a provision that 'The Council shall, in the public interest, give due consideration of all aspects relating to the introduction of GMOs into the environment, and take appropriate action in the public interest thereto.' The Act must hold the government structures to the public task of safeguarding health and the environment in the face of GMOs. Perhaps it should also hold the government to the task of safer, much cheaper GMOs designed in the interest of farmers and the public.

Similarly, perhaps through far more prohibitions and regulations from the Minister, or perhaps in an amended Act, there need to be some specific environmental regulations. This could assist in deterrence and in prosecutions. For example: It shall be an offence to pollute a human food through genetic modification. It shall be an offense to import, export, create or use a GMO without a license. In addition, the Act or the Minister should prohibit certain kinds of GE – for instance of human cells using non-human genes, or using human genes in non-human cells, using the Human Immune virus family for the vector for the transgene, the use of GE to produce specified kinds of poisons and GE experiments on certain disease-creating bacteria and viruses. There should be specific legislation outlawing GE bioweapons too.

There are two crucial social-environmental imperatives: 'the precautionary principle' and 'the polluter pays' principle.

The precautionary principle, which lies behind the EU's moratorium on many GM activities and transactions, is that when there is a small but real chance of a terrible thing happening, one should take proper precautions, even though it is unlikely to happen. The GMO Act allows the government to exercise the precautionary principle with particular GMO events and GM products. However, there is nothing like a moratorium, nor even precautions against certain classes of GM activity. I must say there would have been little loss to agriculture or any other sector in imposing a complete moratorium on GM processes and products in South Africa, if we had not permitted so many GM events and allowed the intertwining of sections of our agricultural and food economy with the GM strategies of the global food business. Legislation – and policy – should be modified to reduce this entanglement. The aim should be protection against the crude industry of the present, while keeping the door open to fourth-generation GE products which are stable, environmentally benign, and designed with public participation to serve the public rather than corporate interest.

We seem to be even further from 'the polluter pays' principle, unless the fine that can be imposed can be completely out of proportion to the jail sentences permitted. The penalty for infringing the Act is only a maximum of two years for a first offence and four years for subsequent offences. It is important that the penalty for major ecological damage be at a level that deters potential criminals, and forces corporations and indeed the mandated government committees to energetically pursue safety standards. I would recommend more daunting sentence maximums, and up to full liability for environmental and health costs. Patent-holders, applicants and users (in the sense used in the Act) should be made liable in specified degree for overall environmental and health costs, including the loss of life and manslaughter.

Finally, and this is also an immediate essential, legislation or a ministerial regulation should compel the food industry in our country to identify all, not selected, GM products and derivatives on consumer labels-including the <1% GM maize. This honesty to consumers will, I am happy to say, increase the pressure on this present generation of all too often barbaric GM technology.

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Introduction TO THE POLITICAL EDUCATION SERIES

THIS SERIES IS AIMED AT branches of the ANC; to provide regional and branch political education officers with basic materials to run a political education programme for ANC members and branch leadership. The aim of education in the movement is to empower members to become active contributors in the process of change. Internal education helps members understand and contribute to the work of the organisation. Community education communicates information or campaign messages and can be used to empower, mobilise and organise people.

Education programmes can help the branch to:

- introduce new members to ANC policies and programmes;
- help members to understand the causes of the problems they face, so that they can take part in deciding how the organisation should deal with the problems;
- teach members skills that will make it possible for them to contribute to the branch programme;
- enable members to participate in the democratic process of debate and decision- making; and
- develop a clear understanding among members of the theory that guides the organisation (e.g. political or economic theory).

In the broader community, education programmes can be used to:

- communicate information to people about their rights – for example farmworkers and evictions;
- involve people in learning about and discussing processes that affect them – for example a housing development;
- involve people in debates around national issues such as crime or jobs;
- raise awareness about an issue or campaign the branch is involved in – for example HIV/AIDS;
- teach people concrete skills like literacy or brick-making; and
- mobilise people to become involved in action – for example training clinic volunteers.

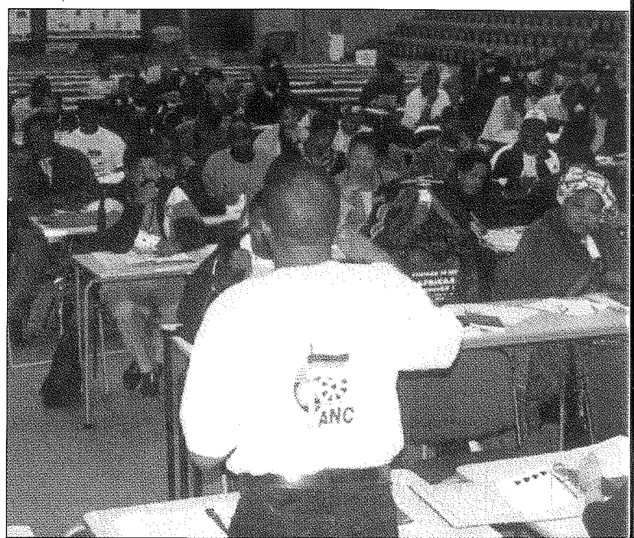
There are many different types of education and training programmes, such as workshops or seminars on a specific issue, ongoing programmes with the same people like a literacy class or study group and short educational slots during branch meetings. Political education and training should be built into all the work of the organisation.

Education as part of your branch work

Political education officers and BEC members need to see all the things that happen in the branch as opportunity to educate and empower members. It is easier for members to learn while they prepare for actions or campaigns – they learn while doing the work and also while they analyse and evaluate the impact of what was done.

All leaders need to understand the importance of education in the branch. They must feel that they are responsible for educating members and plan activities so that members learn from the process. The following process can also assist in educating members:

Programme of action: Start by developing a Programme of Action for the year. This programme tells you what branch priorities are and what major campaigns and other work members will do. This is a process



where members will discuss and sometimes argue about what the organisation must do (strategic priorities) and then develop an action plan.

Action plans: The second step deals with plans of the organisation for that particular year. Throughout the year we plan the day-to-day work the branch must carry out, we decide exactly what we want to achieve, what we have to do and when and who will do it. It involves working out how the action relates to the programme of action, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses at this time, a discussion of possible things to do, selecting the best action and planning it in detail. Training workshops should be organised to make sure members have the skills to implement plans.

Action and Struggle: In this phase we put plans into practice. Out of concrete action, we discover new challenges and new conditions, which we have to take into account when we plan the programme of action for the next year. Local action must involve ordinary members because it will provide them with more opportunities to learn than an action that they watch our leaders carry out. For example, going door to door and collecting signatures can teach members about how the ANC is seen by the public and how to answer questions, which requires a practical understanding of policies of the organisation.

Analysing and evaluating: This is the most important part of organisational work, in terms of education. It is about doing the analysis and evaluating the impact of the action of an organisation, the people we want to reach and the situation as a whole. This will assist in future planning so that we avoid the mistakes committed in the previous action. If we do thorough evaluation, we sharpen our understanding of how the ANC works, what strategies work or do not work under what conditions, and how to take work forward.

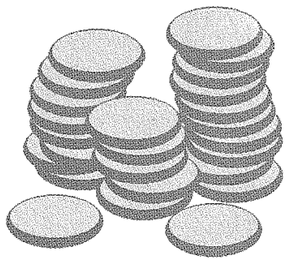
Educational events: The branch also needs to have an education programme, which is separate from the programme of action. This education programme can be a series of workshops or educational inputs as part of branch meetings, seminars or study groups. The education programme must be based on and closely related to the strategic priorities of the branch.

It must also deal with current concerns and issues that come up and help members to understand the causes of the issue, the ANC's response to it and how it affects the organisation's strategic priorities.

The first part of the **UMRABULO POLITICAL EDUCATION SERIES** will focus on helping to deepen members understanding of the Economy. This is a task which was identified at the National General Council in July 2000, when the NGC resolved that we must deepen economic literacy among all ANC members.

We hope that political education officers will find this series useful, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Part 1 Understanding Basic Economics



THE ECONOMY is about how wealth is created, distributed and consumed. It concerns the ways in which a country produces, distributes and consumes the tangible, material commodities of life. It is also about how the proceeds or income from these activities are distributed amongst those that contribute towards them: businesses, workers, the state and the whole of society. Every person affects the economy in some way and we are all affected by it.

Economics attempts to answer questions such as: What is produced and how? Why does a particular country produce particular goods and services? How are the natural resources used? How does a country earn and spend its money? How are its people employed, and what technology do they use in their work? What is the relationship between these things and the wealth and poverty of different communities?

The size of the economy

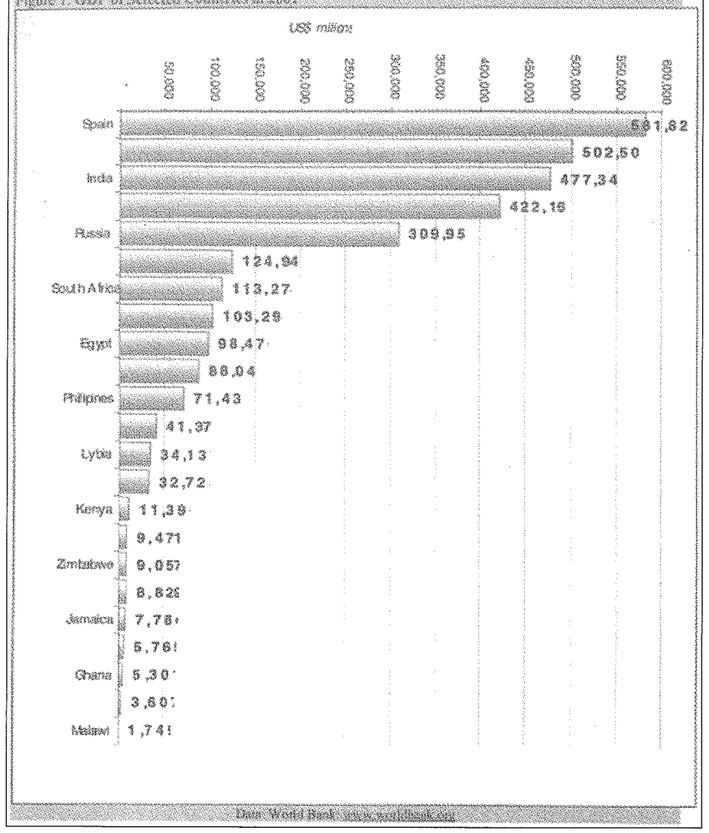
The way we usually measure the size of an economy is by its ***Gross Domestic Product (GDP)***. GDP is the value of all the goods and services produced within our borders in one year. This value is equal to the economic wealth of the country, all the things of economic value which can be bought or sold, that have been produced in South Africa in one year. This includes all the goods like loaves of bread, mielies, cars and gold, as well as all the services, like taxi rides, telephone units, haircuts, hotel rooms or tickets to football matches. We add the prices of all these things together to get GDP.

The estimated value of all goods and services produced in South Africa in 2001 amounts to about one hundred and fifteen thousand million US dollars or US$115 billion. We use dollars because this makes it easy to compare our GDP with other countries.

One of the drawbacks of the GDP number is that it excludes unrecorded economic activity. Any exchange of money that is not reported to the government in some way goes unmentioned in the GDP figure, although Stats SA does attempt to estimate the size of the 'informal economy'. Unrecorded transactions would include the informal sector, subsistence production (i.e. growing mielies or tomatoes to eat them yourself), the criminal economy and white-collar crime or other means in which the wealthy evade the notice of governments. Also unrecorded in total GDP is the work done by members of society that contributes to production but which is not sold for money. The classic example is housework mainly performed by women. Cooking, raising children and housework are all economic activities essential for producing wealth, but none find their way into GDP, unless they are done for money and registered with government, such as formal domestic work.

Figure one shows how South Africa compared with some other countries in 2001. Which countries on the graph do you think should be compared to South Africa economically or for other reasons? Explain why?

Figure 1: GDP of Selected Countries in 2001



As you can see South Africa is in the middle of this selection of countries. Many of our neighbours have very small economies compared to us. The country on our continent with a GDP closest to South Africa is Nigeria. On the other hand South Africa has an economy that is much smaller than many in the world. If you add together the GDP of all the countries listed in the graph it amounts to more than US$3 thousand billion (which is called three trillion). Japan in 2001 produced goods and services alone valued at more than $4 trillion. And the value of goods and services produced in 2001 in the USA, the wealth it created that year, is worth more than US$10 trillion.

Economic growth

The GDP figure gives you a snapshot of how large an economy is in any particular year. But the GDP of all countries is changing all the time. If there are more goods and services produced this year than last year we say there has been growth in South Africa's GDP.

We measure GDP growth using percentage change. For example if GDP is $100billion this year and next year it is $110billion, we say that GDP has grown by ten percent (because $10billion is 10% of $100billion).

The graph below shows growth of our GDP from 1948 until 2002

Figure 2: South African Real GDP Growth (1948 - 2002)

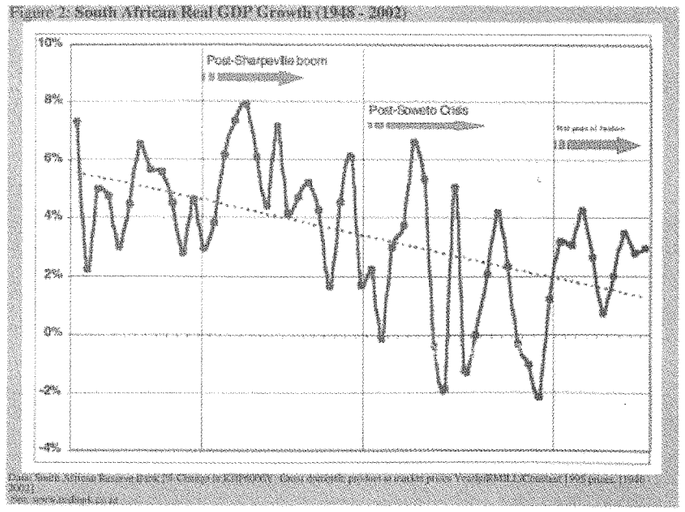
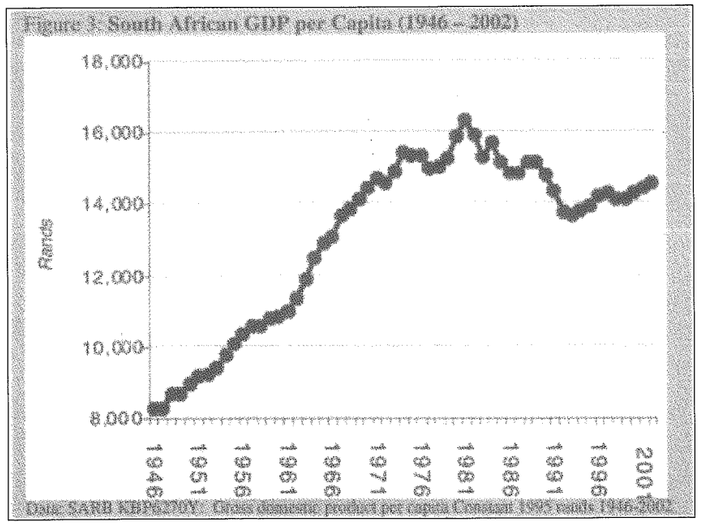


Figure 3: South African GDP per Capita (1946 – 2002)



There are a huge variety of factors that influence GDP growth over the long run. These include economic factors, but also all kinds of social, political and even cultural conditions. This can be seen by observing the graph of South Africa's GDP. Even without analysing the economic conditions in the country of the period, we can see how various political conditions affected growth.

The Sharpeville massacre led to the first state of emergency and the banning of the ANC and the PAC. After the Rivonia Trial all resistance to the state was incarcerated, exiled or forced underground. The regime successfully restored the racist order and to a large extent pacified the masses. Once they had completed these tasks, there was an investment boom, with foreign investors pouring millions into the country.

This Post-Sharpeville boom can be seen in the fact that in 1962 GDP grew by almost 4%. The next year growth was up to 6% and two years later GDP grew by a massive 8%, the highest level of growth seen in the post-war era. Even after this high point there is not a single year in which growth was below 4% of GDP from 1962 until 1972 – a decade long boom in the South African economy.

In the period following the Soweto uprising, when the future of the system of apartheid was in constant doubt, GDP growth became very volatile (jumping up and down). In 1977 GDP did not grow at all (i.e. 0% growth). In 1980, it reached almost seven percent, boosted by the high international gold price. Two years later it grew smaller, or contracted, by 2%.

You can see that more recently, in the first decade of freedom, growth has been far less volatile, but has not reached levels we are satisfied with. If you consider the dotted line in the graph, which is called the trend line, perhaps you'll agree that this is not surprising. The trend-line gives the average of all the movements up and down over the whole period. As you can see it has moved consistently down.

Perhaps our policies are turning it around, taking our nation out of the crisis of declining growth and moving us into a new era sustained growth and development. But that is a matter for speculating the future: something which economists are notoriously bad at!

Population

One of the reasons why it is important for us to generate growth every year is that every year our population also grows.

If our GDP was to remain the same while our population grew, this would mean there would be fewer goods and services produced per person on average.

This can be easily shown using GDP per capita, which is simply GDP divided by the number of people in the country. This gives us average production, or average wealth produced, per person. As you can see in Figure 3, while our GDP has grown consistently over the last fifty years, since the 1970s this growth has become more volatile and declined from its peak in 1983.

GDP per capita is a useful measure of how the economy is doing. However, it is important to remember the following problems with this figure. First, GDP per capita is an average: it tells us how much each South African would have if all the wealth in the country were divided equally amongst the whole population. From the graph we can see this is at the moment around R14,000 a year. As we know, wealth is highly uneven. In South Africa the vast majority earn much less than the R14,000, while a tiny minority earn a great deal more than this average.

The second thing to remember is that GDP per capita, by definition, depends on two estimates: (a) GDP and (b) population. If either of these is wrong for any reason then the GDP per capita figure will itself be wrong. In South Africa, as in most developing countries, population figures must be viewed with some circumspection. If we look at the graph below, for example, we may want to ask questions such as: Are the TBVC states included in the calculation of population and/or the GDP figures? If they are added at a certain stage, when does this happen? Before we can answer these questions the figures can be viewed with the healthy suspicion that is due to all statistics.

The Structure of the Economy

The economy can be broken down, or classified, in various ways. The classifications in the chart (on page 88) are taken from Stats SA methodology.

The chart compares the percentage of total South African GDP produced in various sectors of the economy in 1986 and in 2002. Which sectors produce relatively more GDP than in 1986? Remember that all sectors have grown larger in GDP since 1986. But some have grown faster than others and therefore account for a larger proportion of GDP. Can you discern any relationship between those sectors that have grown and those that have got relatively smaller?

Lets look closer at how Stats SA defines these sectors:

- ***Mining:*** Includes both mining and quarrying: the extraction of our natural mineral wealth such as gold, coal, iron and diamonds. Mining was the first industrial sector in the economy and the whole structure of our economy has grown up around mining.
- ***Agriculture:*** Farming to produce foods like maize, wheat, meat, fruit and vegetables.
- ***Manufacturing:*** The production of goods in factories. This includes a wide range of products such as food, beverages, tobacco, textiles and clothing, wood and paper and their products, petroleum products, metals like steel as well as machinery and metal equipment, electrical goods, transport equipment and furniture. South Africa's largest manufactured products are.
- ***Utilities:*** This category includes electricity, gas and water supplies to the community and to industry. This infrastructure and services are usually provided by the state.
- ***Construction:*** The building of houses, roads, bridges, factories, office blocks, shopping malls and other buildings.
- ***Finance:*** The institutions that hold the savings, or

How the South African Economy Developed

Early Economy: From the arrival of the colonialists to the discovery of gold and diamonds in the late 1800's, South Africa's economy was based on farming. There was almost no industry. The development of big mines led to the growth of big business which needed lots of cheap labour.

Early Development 1880s to 1940s: The government introduced land and tax laws which limited the African people to the reserves and forced them to earn a money wage. Cheap black labour was directed to the mines and farms which were owned by white capitalists. Mining was key to generating a modern economy. The profits from mining were used to set up finance houses which set up factories. The government budget was used to favour the white minority and the capitalists. The African people suffered a great deal.

Rapid Growth 1950s to 1970s: From the 1950s onwards, the South African economy grew much faster than the population. South Africans began to produce goods which previously could only be obtained from abroad through imports. This model that guided South Africa through its boom years was called Import Substitution and Industrialisation (ISI). In order to produce these goods machinery was imported from other countries. Gold was sold at an internationally fixed price so that South Africa had a stable income (foreign exchange money that we received from foreign countries buying our gold). As a result of these policies rapid growth did occur, but this growth did not benefit people equally. White people, in general, became richer while the black working class in particular continued to be exploited. Capitalists produced more and more luxury goods that only the white and rich sections of society could afford. Huge profits were made as the government's policies at the time ensured a supply of cheap labour. This model relied on three factors for its success: the fixed gold price, the cheap import of machinery and a cheap and stable workforce.

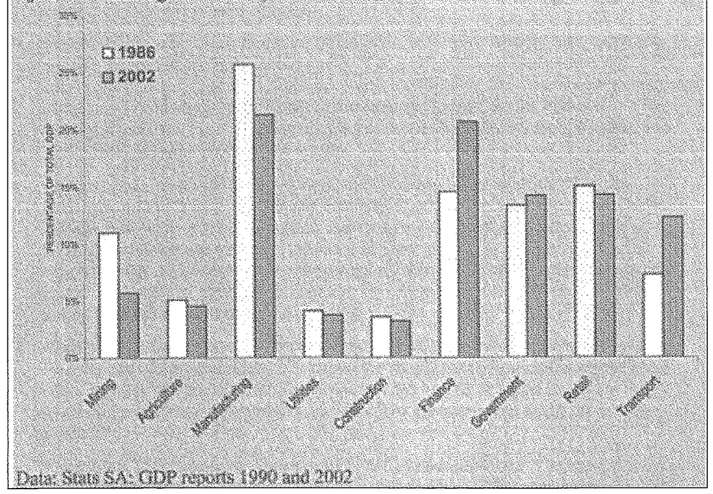
Economic Crisis 1970s to 1990s

From 1970 onward the rapid growth rate began to decline. This was because the Import Substitution and Industrialisation model broke down. It did so for the following reasons:

1. In 1971, the gold price was no longer fixed and started going up and down according to how much people in the world markets wanted to buy and how much was available to be sold. This meant that South Africa no longer had a stable income of foreign exchange.
2. An international oil crisis hit the world economy in 1973 and the oil price shot up. One of the results of this crisis was that South Africa had to pay much higher prices for oil and all other imports. So while we got less income from our gold, we had more expenses.
3. From 1973 stronger union organisations were built and there was a huge increase in strikes and other labour action. This meant that employers could no longer get away with paying such low wages. Mass political activity such as the Soweto Uprising of 1976 also led to increased instability. Sanctions meant that many foreign capitalists took their investments out of South Africa. Many big South African businesses also took a lot of their money to other countries.
4. The issue of racial fordism is also linked to the failures of ISI. Racial fordism means that the domestic South African market was divided upon racial lines with black people not having the same access to the economy as white people. This meant that the domestic market for goods and services was limited and quite small.

We started spending more than we were earning. In the 1980s and 1990s the downward movement of the economy continued and South Africa faced a recession and negative growth. A recession occurs when the population is growing faster than the economy. This was the economy that we inherited in 1994.

Figure 4: Percentage of GDP by Economic Sector in 1986 and 2002



Data: Stats SA: GDP reports 1990 and 2002

surplus wealth, such as banks, pension funds and the insurance industry. The products these institutions sell to the public (such as life insurance, bank accounts, etc) account for a significant proportion of the goods and services produced in the country. Indeed, South Africa is distinguished from most other developing countries by the size, sophistication and global integration of its financial sector.

- ***Government:*** All government taxation and spending is part and parcel of the economic interactions in society. Government contribution to GDP can be divided into the following types of economic interaction: (a) *transfers:* where the government takes money from one sector of the economy and gives it to another, e.g. child support grant; (b) *consumption:* the paying of salaries and other recurring costs that keeps the system of government moving; (c) *investment:* where the government builds new infrastructure.
- ***Retail:*** The official name for this category is *Wholesale, retail, and motor trade; catering and accommodation.* It includes the shops, the restaurants, the hotels and other services that consumers use every day. (Do you think spaza shops are included in this figure? How much would you guess they are accounted for in the economy as a whole?)
- ***Transport:*** This is actually both transport and communications. The moving of goods and people throughout the country by rail, road and air. The communications sector includes Telkom and the new cellular operators.

Each sector is interlinked with other sectors in various ways. A factory could not operate without electricity, which may be generated from coal, while from its profits the government takes taxes and may, for example, transfer these through a child support grant.

Another way of looking at the economy is to define it according to primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. These are terms you should be familiar with from the education system. Look at these classifications as given in table one and try to explain the logic that underpin them.

Table 1:
Classifying Economic Sectors

PRIMARY	• Mining and Quarrying • Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
SECONDARY	• Manufacturing, • Electricity, Gas, Water (utilities) • Construction
TERTIARY	• Finance, insurance, real estate and business services • General Government • Transport and communications

The *primary sector* is the closest to natural resource Both mining and agriculture work directly on the prod ucts of nature found on, or under, our soil. The *secondar sector* is a step away from this: it consists of activitie that process raw materials into manufactured products material goods that are used by consumers. While grow ing mielies is part of the primary sector, the productio of mielie meal is a manufacturing process.

The *tertiary sector* is even farther removed from natu al resources. This is where the mielie meal is sold to th consumer and marketed under a particular brand identit Most of its activities can be said to belong to the servic sector.

Having defined our sectors better, and grouped the into broader economic categories, let's go back to th questions we posed at the beginning of this section: wha is the general trend with respect to the growth of variou economic sectors? Looking at the data you can see tha those falling into the tertiary sector account for a greate proportion of our total GDP than they did in 198 Conversely, those that fall into the primary secto account for a much lower proportion our total GDP. I fact, using the same data we did in figure 4 we can sa that the in 1986 the primary sector accounted for 16% production, while in 2002 it was worth only 10%. I 1986 the secondary sector made up 34%, while in 200 it had gone down to 28%. And the tertiary sector, whic means essentially services, had grown from 50% of GD in 1986 to 61% in 2002.

This relative growth of services and relative declin of primary and secondary sectors is not confined to Sout Africa. In fact, it is a worldwide trend that is observabl in all of the advanced capitalist economies throughou the twentieth century. These developments pose impor tant challenges to all varieties of economic theory.

In Part 2 of the UMRABULO POLITICAL EDUCATION SERIE we will look at Globalisation and the South African Economy.

Readers' Forum



Does our transition HAVE TIME FRAMES?

by Lindinto Hlekani alias Monde Keke

WHAT WE HAVE IS OURS. It is our own. But it does not belong to us. It belongs to our forbearers and the generations and generations to come.

I have always tried to make my voice heard when and where I thought my contribution would add value and thus contribute to a much-needed positive outcome. I have learnt, at times painfully, that it is not always important to win the argument.

Sometimes, I have come to appreciate, it is not unwise to retreat exactly when you thought you were on the verge of grabbing what you always wanted. Wisdom's invaluable and characteristic ingredient is time. Time has afforded us what we have, and which at times we regard as obvious and unimportant. To revolutionaries time is priceless.

Before 1994 the struggling people of South Africa agreed that there would be a period of transition where the process of the positive destruction of apartheid and the building of the new South Africa would commence. South Africans, supported by the peoples of the world, set themselves the mammoth task of building a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist society.

In building a new society South Africans needed to look no further, because the same tools used to destroy Apartheid bore the seeds of transformation. These tools were to be redesigned to suite the new challenges of building a new society. There was not going to be any indentured labour or brigades of volunteers from outside South Africa that were to be organised to help build a new South Africa. As they brought about the demise of Apartheid, South Africans are expected to bring about a new society. As I intimated, not only is there building material, there is also a work force consisting of bricklayers, land surveyors, civil engineers, architects, and so on.

Why, all of a sudden, does there seem to be disagreement as to what to build, how to go about building it and who should overseer the whole building process?

Perhaps, to try and give answers to these questions it might be appropriate to reflect on the few years preceding the seizure of political power on the 27th April, 1994.

I alluded to the fact that before 1994 the embittered but struggling people of South Africa unanimously agreed not only to destroy Apartheid, but to also in its ashes build a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society.

This is a society that would give a true meaning to the values of democracy, non-racialism and non-sexism founded on the centuries-old principle of ubuntu. The mandate to build such a society has been given to the ANC in the elections.

Unity

Founded on the dire necessity to build unity, the ANC has continued to unite not only the African people in the South African society, it has gone further to unite the whole South African population whilst at the same time appreciating and valuing their diversity. Their diversity as ethnic groups or national groups helps enrich their unity as the South African nation.

Before the defeat of Apartheid the ANC had gone further and much further to unite the peoples of Southern Africa (Hare Declaration) of Africa (Kuala Lumpur), and the World (UN Declaration) in facilitating the downfall of Apartheid and the building of a new society. Unity therefore is what helped us defeat Apartheid and, no doubt, it is what will help South Africans build a new society. It is a united South Africa that will help build a united African Union and ensure a successfully NEPAD.

What ensured our victory, among other most important things, was the existence of united formations sharing a uniform vision.

Our united formations

These are the formations that I referred to as our tools of struggle. We had the churches, sports bodies, student organisations, cultural workers, intellectuals, etc. all brought together by the deafening desire to unshackle our society. Leading these mass formations was the working class. The South African working class went through a hazardous journey of firstly, winning 'legal' recognition as unions (Wiehan Commission) and of further struggling to unite in a much stronger COSATU and NACTU. The struggle for the unity of the working class happened at the same time as the struggle from general workers unions to ONE INDUSTRY ONE UNION formations.

Perhaps it might be important to note that the formation of COSATU as a federation was a joint responsibility of the Alliance, which then was comprising of SACTU, SACP and the ANC. This is the same Alliance that is in power today. I sometimes think that to make mention of these historical facts is not just to know history for the sake of it. The reason that we study or know history is because we need to learn from it. By knowing our history we sometimes spare ourselves committing mistakes that were done before or re-entering into discussions that were undertaken before. We need not re-invent the wheel.

The Alliance therefore cooperated in jointly forming COSATU, as an instrument of the working class. The Alliance partners understood too well that even though under capitalism the main motive force behind revolutionary change in society is the working class, but because the struggle in South Africa was to liberate the black people and mainly the African people it had to be led by the African National Congress. By the time of the attainment of our political power and even today, the ideals of the ANC continue to be shared by non-communists and communists alike.

Like the other formations in our society then and now, the working class is expected to occupy its historical and rightful role in building a new society. It was the understanding then and it is the understanding now that in building a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa the working class is paving the way for a socialist society which society is its ultimate vision as a class. The vision of the people of SA as it exists now is no different from that of the working class except to say the vision we all have forms part of a broader vision of the working class.

Candidly speaking, the non-capitalist path we are following is neither anti-capitalist nor anti-communist. It is a National Democratic Revolution. National democracy is different from bourgeois democracy in that the form is different and the content is much richer as is the case in pure bourgeois democracies.

I would boldly say it is a path more similar to what we have in the Scandinavian countries. I am making such a bold statement because, more often than not, I am tempted to conclude that some of us who claim to represent the working class suffer from impatience. If we are not impatient we deliberately ignore the dialectical connection between our transition as it unfolds now and the ultimate goal of the working class.

Whatever changes we are effecting now should be changes that must help better and enhance the standard a living of all South Africans regardless of status or position in society. Most importantly, we should be driven by the desire to throw away all that reminds our people of their bitter past, especially poverty, joblessness and disease.

On the present discourse

What is presently absent in the ongoing discourse, and glaringly so, is our common desire to succeed as a country as we succeeded as a people in defeating Apartheid. It would seem to me that some of us have suddenly decided to put emphasis on individuality rather than placing emphasis on our commonality and communality. Honestly, there seems to be a growing number of people who are only interested in who is saying what rather than what is being said. If we are so interested in who is saying what, shouldn't it be because we are in search of wisdom.

Much as I believe in the equality of comrades, I also believe that the contribution of comrades in the struggle can never be the same. Some of the stalwarts can now and again help us find our way when we think we have lost our topographical charts.

Until that February day in 1990 no one, for certain, would predetermine that on that day F.W. De Klerk would unban political organisations. Even De Klerk himself would not have known that one day he would be the one who would make such an important announcement. Much as we do not know, for certain, what tomorrow will bring we nonetheless have the ability to plan for our tomorrow. That ability emanates from the fact that our cognitive abilities help us know our present, living the present whilst we prepare for the future. It is our combined future as citizens of South Africa that will determine the future of our country.

There can therefore be no stipulated time frames as to when we can say the transition is over. Time will tell when we look at the situation of South Africans and say we have managed to fight poverty, joblessness, disease, etc.

From what we can learn from the history of our struggle itself was the need for the Alliance in destroying Apartheid. That need is much greater now that we have to build the new as well as safeguard what we have won.

Let us once again sing in unison:
Comrades fighting all together
With courage, valour never ending.
We fight not for glory nor distinction
Our goal is our liberty.

Building a new cadre – A DAUNTING TASK FACING OUR MOVEMENT IN THIS EPOCH

by Nathi Mthethwa

Introduction

In the year 2000, the ANC held its National General Council, which arguably was one of the historic gatherings in its lifetime. This was one intensive and extensive cadre development school that witnessed high levels of political debates. Under the theme "A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.ANC AN AGENT FOR CHANGE", the Council displayed impressive levels of political maturity. It made introspection of the movement by reporting on successes and highlighting challenges in the broad task of building a strong ANC. A strong ANC is essential for the transformation of our society into a united; non-racial; non-sexist; democratic and prosperous one.

What made the gathering of this magnitude unique was that whilst it was of interest to society at large, its preparations were not deviated by lobbying for this or that position. Political debates and discussions were the hallmarks of preparations and this made it easy for the ANC to reclaim it's political stature of being a disciplined force of the left and a body of internationalists.

The participation was broad, involving all the major forces of the left and all cadres of the movement deployed in all facets of our society. The major question, which confronted the NGC, was how to change reality in the world and at home for the better. In order for this question to be responded to properly, the NGC acknowledged that the question of building a new cadre is central.

Why discussion on the subject of a cadre today?

I assume we all agree that a cadre is a prototype member of our movement; the subject is therefore relevant at all times. We are referring here to an all-round cadre, an organic revolutionary, a person who is able to interpret practically each message communicated to society by leading organs of the movement.

This year's call is for instance *"United action to push back the frontiers of poverty"*. Within this call we are charged with the task of building a cadre of community development workers. According to January 8th 2003 statement, this cadre should be able to *"...assist the people to tackle the immediate problems they face...including those relating to health; welfare; agricultural development; economic activity; education and safety and security."* These marching orders need no rocket scientists, but ordinary disciples of change ready to serve the people. In the same breath, we need cadres with a high political consciousness in order to counter the ongoing ideological onslaught against the progressive forces.

The new dispensation has seen cadres of the movement being exposed to massive resources under their control. In most cases this situation has tested the commitment of such cadres to the cause of transformation. We have witnessed a string of un-ANC practices and tendencies of patronage, self-enrichment and cliques, to mention but a few. Clearly the new epoch is fraught with traps, which have eroded the fundamental ethics of the movement.

The ability to differentiate between a wrong and a right by cadres in good standing is a clear indication that the ANC represents humanity's best qualities. Building a new cadre therefore, I would argue is in essence going back to basics.

Great revolutionaries like O. R. Tambo, Amilcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara et al, have in the past written extensively on the subject of building a new (hu)man or person, which in essence was about building a new cadre. Samora Machel spoke about the need for a new mindset and a new person during his country's independence in 1975.

Cadreship: Political Line and Tasks

There is a dialectical interrelation between cadres and a revolutionary movement of the masses. A cadre's life is lived within a framework of multi-faceted relationships. It is these relationships, which makes a cadre a cadre. In this relationship, a cadre is at the same time the cause and effect. Conversely a cadre is at the same time effect and cause. A cadre cannot be conceived outside an organisation, for a cadre is an element of the organisation.

A cadre lives in a definite organisation, s/he makes an organisation a living organism. On the other hand, after organisation has become a quantity existing in it's own right and has struck deep roots in life, organisation in its turn has a decisive effect on people. It determines who will do what, what position and function s/he should hold in apparatus of activity. It defines beforehand the direction and objective of human beings' actions. It directs people and obliges them to act one way instead of another. Organisation in it's activity, bring forth in people definite characteristics and qualities. It trains human beings. The capacities and people's activities depend on organisation.

On the question of a cadre, this is somebody who is ever prepared to learn, learn more and learn forever. As the Chinese proverb goes *"Live as if you are going to die tomorrow and learn as if you are going to live forever".*

Every cadre whatever the position in the organisation and whether an old hand or newcomer must study hard. The higher the position you occupy the harder you must learn for the higher your position the heavier your responsibilities. Errors or defects which can be caused by one's incapability inflict major damages in the forward march to building a strong organisation.

Cadres need to learn not only through books but also in practical life. In our own work, in summing up of the effectiveness of our work, we must engage in frequent self-criticism and criticism. Without learning from struggle and tapping on humanity's experience in life, book knowledge is worthless. The goal of learning for each cadre should not simply be limited to raising of knowledge, rather to achieve the best results in our activities and our work, which is our struggle to change the world for better.

Complete loyalty to the ideals and principles of the movement is a pre-requisite for a true cadre. By the way there is nothing like "blind loyalty", it is either loyalty as stated above or something else.

Former Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh would have said, *"Be true to the party and loyal to the people, fulfill any task, overcome any difficulty and defeat any enemy".*
Other important ethos of a good cadre includes:

- Severest sense of organisation and discipline
- Humility to the people
- Sensitivity to injustice wherever it occurs in the world
- Selflessness devotion to revolution
- Voluntarism in pursuit of a just society
- Dedication to human solidarity, with an insight that cadres can never be confined by national borders.
- Revolutionary honesty. On this one Amilcar Cabral said *"Tell no lies, Claim no easy victories, Mask no difficulties".*
- Close contact with ordinary people and believe that their power can make miracles

These are fundamental though not exhaustive unvarying requirements in the qualifications of cadres, in whatever period.

All this relates directly to the examination and resolution of the problem of cadreship. Cadres need to overcome all theories of reaction, which separate theory from practice and vice versa. The question is not only to increase individual productivity, but also to use co-operative methods in creating a new productive force made up of cadres that operate as a single collective force. The interconnection between a cadre and organisation goes thus: A strong organisation releases a potential strength in each person and the strength of each person makes the strength of the organisation. To that extent the opposite is equally true.

Cadres are trained and produced under a wise line. However the line itself is not dogma for cadres take part in the development of the line. Through practice they ensure the realisation of the line. Without competent and dedicated cadres the goodness of the line will be useless .If cadres are good and able they will not only help carry it out creatively but also contribute to its further development. Over and above, sound or correctness of the line, there are many other factors contributing positively or negatively on the life of a movement including one's personal attributes. A correct line is the basic condition in bringing the revolutionary tasks to success. Thus whether cadres are good or bad depend primarily on their political training and political line. Once a line has been worked out the next task becomes the organisation of its application – organisation is the basic measure to ensure the application of the line.

In our practical experience our organisation (the ANC) has the ability to work out clear line and tasks, but most often than not we are found wanting on its application or implementation. This brings into sharp focus the role of our primary party organs – the branches. These organs are strategically located in the midst of the people and if properly utilised can be of great assistance to the movement.

In most instances there is no honesty among cadres and leaders alike in dealing with branches. How many leaders take part or interest in the day to day life of a branch for instance? Do we not remember them only when approaching conferences? Until we confront some of these questions we will continue doing disservice in the quest of building a cadre of community development workers.

It must not be forgotten that post 1994 there has been a qualitative change from struggle to power. Without understanding the essence of this big leap forward, or the content, nature and unprecedented scope of the revolutionary tasks in the new stage, it is impossible to examine and correctly solve the problem of cadreship. We are now a party leading all the people in the management of the country's affairs. It means the party's leadership has been extended to the entire society, encompassing all aspects of life, which are more diversified and complex. It means the introduction of new ethics into our revolutionary movement which are negative and positive. Cadres must be steeped in this understanding.

Leadership to Society

The revolution needs a contingent of cadres equal to political tasks, with regard to number and quality. These cadres must be capable of fulfilling to the highest degree the requirements of the political tasks in each period. There has to be a way of measuring progress or otherwise of these tasks. In the movement, a mandate by way of national congress resolutions becomes one major way of measuring success or lack thereof of those given responsibilities. These resolutions or mandate are the political line of organisation combined with broad policy questions.

Closing the ANC 51st National Conference, President Thabo Mbeki, spelt out in a comprehensive manner the line which should guide all cadres of the movement. On this there should no confusion nor ignorance on the tasks that lie ahead. The President said:

*"On the consolidation of democracy and ensuring that the people govern or involving the masses in the transformation of their lives – **we have the policies,***

*On strengthening of the system of local government or the role and place of the traditional system of government – **we have the policies,***

*On economic growth and development, social equity or job creation – **we have the policies,***

*On the eradication of racism and sexism or the advancement of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, the youth and children – **we have the policies,***

*On the resolution of the land question or integrated and sustainable rural development – **we have the policies,***

*On the eradication of urban slums or ending the apartheid patterns of settlement – **we have the policies,***

*On a comprehensive social security system or human resource development – **we have the policies,***

*On the struggle against T.B., AIDS, and any other threatening health conditions or creating socio-economic conditions necessary for us to realise the goal of health for all – **we have the policies,***

*On the RDP of the soul or the fight for the safety and security of all our people – **we have the policies,***

*Responding to the challenge of an inclusive language policy or the development of a new patriotism – **we have the policies,***

*On the accountability of the public sector institutions and personnel or the accountability to the movement of our cadres deployed in these institutions – **we have the policies."***

So did the President go.

Why should it be difficult then for the cadreship to defend, interpret and lead communities in the implementation thereof? It is branches of the movement which must take up these policies/programmes thus mobilising our communities. From the national policy conference both our sub-regional and branch leadership went about explaining to the community the decisions taken by the said conference.

One amongst many such decisions communicated, was the increase of the age of child support grant from 7 to 14. By the time we went to national conference people were keen to know whether this would be endorsed at conference and subsequently by government. It is now common knowledge that both the 51st conference and government endorsed this. The point on this modest example is that this branch and community at large know that the originator of this legislation is the ANC. To this community no one would claim easy victory on this

because they know what took place.

I am certain that other branches have performed many more important tasks than what I have cited above. On the Human Rights day for instance EThekwini region of the ANC launched the distribution of food parcel programme targeting the very needy families. These food parcels were fundraised by REC: another way of practically pushing back the frontiers of poverty by grassroots structures of the movement.

In simple terms the above constitutes the provision of leadership to society by our movement. Accordingly, the President made a call in ANC TODAY volume 3, No.9 that *'Every member a cadre for social transformation'*. It means that as we assume areas of responsibilities we must be alive of the tasks we shoulder as individual cadres and collectively in the current epoch.

The task of building different layers of cadreship and leadership cannot be over-emphasized. There is no better way to sum up this issue than our former president comrade N. R Mandela's closing remarks at the Mafikeng conference. This is what he said *'I am certain that I speak on behalf of the veterans who graced this historic conference, and many others, when I say that, if we were fortunate to smell the sweet scent of freedom, there are many more who deserved, perhaps more than us to be here to witness the rise of a generation that they nurtured. But for the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Oliver Tambo, Moses Kotane, Yusuf Dadoo, J.B Marks, Lillian Ngoyi, Florence Mophosho, Kate Molale, Alex La Guma, Helen Joseph, Joe Slovo, Bram Fischer, Moses Mabhida, Ruth First and others would have been witnesses to the end of a lap in a relay that they ran with such energy and devotion.'*

Principles of Organisational Democracy

The discussion document in preparation for the 50th National Conference of the ANC is comprehensive on this. It deals with sub-topics like 'Democracy as a goal, Principle and part of our strategic approached' (see ANC website). However for purposes of this document we will concentrate on the enumeration of principles of organisational democracy without expatiating on it. The importance on these principles cannot be over emphasised since they reflect on an ideal cadre for the movement. The details again, would need to be searched in the ANC website. These principles are: elected leadership, collective leadership, consultation, National Conference as the highest decision making body, mandates, accountability, reporting, criticism and self-criticism and democratic centralism. These are core principles towards building a new cadre.

Conclusion

This debate is ongoing, non-static and dictated to by challenges of each epoch in a given situation. To further probe this one would to direct cadres of the movement to specific documents like the NWC's pamphlet 'Through the eye of the needle' and 'Conduct of a new cadre' prepared by ANC Gauteng Province. The work of organising and politicising ANC members has been done by thousands of political organisers over years. For purposes of this document I dare to mention the late leader of our people, cde Steve Tshwete, Ma-Thomas, Nyambose Mthethwa, Vusi Mzimela and many more who have in practice shown us what it means to be a true cadre of the movement.

The motive forces – A RESPONSE TO CHRISTOPHER MALIKANE

by Amie S. Molelekwa

Dear Editor

Before I respond, I want to correct something that I have realized, my first name was wrongly captured as "Annie". The correct name is **AMIE**.

There are of cause a number of points that I agreed with in the previous and current paper. Comrade Christopher Malikane (CM) please read a paper by SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande (GS) on reflections on the contemporary significance, relevance and meaning of Joe Slovo's paper, "The South African working class and the National Democratic Revolution" (1988). It was like he was responding to both your paper and mine and he was putting the issues and debates in perspective.

He said that *"these discussions and debates keep coming back and what was significant throughout Cde Slovo's own contributions to strategic debates within our movement is that he took these as part of the very necessary process of elaborating our own theory, strategy and tactics, rather than as an opportunity to label and denounce one's opponents or detractors. Internal debate is not to be treated as deviation from our positions but a strength that will enhance the refinement and implementation of our strategy and tactics. Internal debates both quantitatively and qualitatively have declined inside our movement and within the broad democratic camp."* Therefore understand these debates within that context of elaborating on theory, strategy and tactics and as strength that enhance the refinement and implementation of our strategy and tactics.

It is within this context that I was raising my debates and hope that CM will understand these debates and deal with the challenges that faces the country head on. I was relieved when I read this paper by GS and felt that he came to my defense and was actually putting these debates in a correct perspective. The GS went further to say that "it is in the distinctiveness of the national and class struggles that Slovo highlights the deep interconnectedness between the two. Whilst the two cannot be collapsed into each other, given the deep interconnectedness between national oppression and capitalism in our country, the two cannot also be separated."

He further said *"in some instances these debates today might increasingly be a reflection of a debate between and within those who share the goal of socialism, with those who either no longer share this vision or are doubtful of the viability of socialism in the foreseeable future."* I really do not want to conclude that you might be that person who is doubtful of socialism or have been co-opted into the capitalist class. But hope that we are doing a service for the SACP/ANC/COSATU and actually responding to the call for rigorous class analysis. I want to believe that GS was in a way helping you to understand the current debates and what are the real issues.

CM understands that our debates today are about the enhancement and implementation of our policies and not about the complexities. We need to be looking for the solutions or alternatives of how to we reduce unemployment, push back the frontiers of poverty, reverse the legacy of underdevelopment within the scare resources that we have as a country. If you remember how the RDP was conceived, we need such debates and it still remains the framework on which the ANC-led government is built on. Its spirit and content remains unambiguous in relation to the kind of South Africa we need to build. All the organizations that represent the motive forces in this country were involved. The interest and aspirations of these motive forces were correctly captured and that document remains the guiding framework for development in this country. This is a process of enhancing and finding suitable implementation approach and hence it is necessary that we engage each other in constructive debates.

The unnecessary abandonment of our policies calls for critical review. Such a review process should involve everybody concerned in this country. The SACP, strategic perspective document says that *"since 1989, there has been an open debates and discussion about the meaning and implications of locating the South African National Democratic Revolution (NDR) in the new glob-*

al developments". I just hope that we are continuing that process here. The document went further to say that *"the main strategic opponent in this phase of the NDR remains capital, both national and international"*. For me, poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment and many more others are challenges facing the democratic government.

CM understands that capitalism bases itself on the monopoly of the means of production. The vast majority of our people are cut off from the means of life unless they work on terms dictated by the capitalist class. I believe that the reason we are engaging in this debate is to find the correct balance in relation to resource allocation. CM response is that he cannot engage in debates about GEAR and the restructuring of the state assets without regard to the complexity posed by class relations in the motive forces. For the mere fact that you regard the so-called "black patriotic bourgeoisie" as part of the motive forces then those complexities will definitely arise. The complexity will arise once those who were part of the motive forces have been co-opted into the capitalist class.

What are these complexities posed by class relations in the motive forces and what do you regard as challenges in the current conjuncture of our struggle? I understand and fully agreed with you that during our struggle our movements called strongly for the unity of those who are opposed to apartheid. We had both black and white business people in this country that supported our struggle. Their interests and those of the motive forces cannot be the same and will not be the same. Currently, it depends on the strongest class to steer the government policies towards its direction. The capitalist's class in this country wants to determine the direction that our government must take. This is what workers in this country will not allow. What do you think represents apartheid now? For me, poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment and many more are issues that represent apartheid now. Therefore this calls for the unity of the motive forces, lead by the working class. The issue of resource allocation, GEAR and the restructuring of the state assets are critical in ensuring that we deal with issues that I have raised.

The leading motive force over the years of our struggle has been and will be the working class. The majority of working class in this country are Africans and black people in general. The ANC Strategy and Tactics document says, *"the strategic objective of the NDR is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This in essence means the liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and* ***economic bondage.***" (my emphasis).

The reason that I am quoting this statement again is that liberating Africans in particular and black people in general does not mean that we should as a country and an ANC-led government advance the interest of this "black patriotic bourgeoisie" at the expense of the majority of whom are the working class. The interest of the working class and that of black bourgeoisie are not the same.

Some analysts (e.g. Moeletsi Mbeki) in this country have said that the government's black economic empowerment is not effectively redistributing the country's resources, but is instead empowering the few. They have not said that government is failing but they were just ringing a warning bell and call on the ANC-led government to find appropriate ways to redistribute resources and empower our people. But even before they raised those concerns the ANC Conference had already alluded to the fact that *"little progress has been made in achieving greater operational participation and control in the economy by black people and we have instead seen the rise in so-called fronting."* This is a concern to the whole country and hence our debates. Therefore the issue of resource allocation and the debates around the macro-economic policy are critical.

Our country just hosted a successful Growth and Development Summit in an attempt to address these issues that I have raised and you want to dismiss this as secondary challenges. How do you built confidence and always mobilize the motive forces for political action whenever you restructure the state assets that the National Party used over the years to advance the white minority in this country? Is the restructuring of the state assets in a way advancing the interests of the working class in this country?

As a member of the ANC, I fully understand that there was a need to restructure the economy and make sure that the economy is balanced and do addresses the concerns of the majority. We should work as South Africans to find the balance that will benefit the majority. We need to make sure that the South African economy benefits all its citizens. The reason is that we need to have deliberate policies and programs that make sure that our people join and become part of the South African mainstream economy. The question remains, are we not making the rich to be richer with the restructuring of the state assets? How do we ensure that black entrepreneurs buy those restructured assets? These are critical questions that we must find answers.

I must indicate that in no way in my earlier paper did I deny the class contradictions altogether. I fully agree with you that these class contradictions are healthy. Historical materialism fundamental proposition can be summed up, as *"it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness."* Capitalism monopolizes the means of production. The vast majority is cut off from the means of life unless they work on terms dictated by the capitalist class. We in South Africa, who have seen what apartheid did to our people, I belief that we are going to refuse to be cut off from the means of life.

The SACP strategic perspective document says, *"we have refused the path of unprincipled abandonment of our communist values, our communist organization and our commitment to a communist future. But we have also refused to be stuck in a dogmatic stupor, as if there were nothing to be learned, nothing to be criticized, and nothing to be renewed and adapted in our communist legacy."*

This statement alone calls for serious debates within the democratic camp. Why are we afraid of experimenting on some of the ideas of Marxists in this country? Why every time when we have to take important and critical decisions are we calling for review of our strategies and tactics? Are there no communist values that can be renewed and adapted in our situation in South Africa? I understand and agree with you that we should always pause and reflect on the previous processes, policies and strategies and tactics. My argument is that irrespective of being a communist or not, we should refuse the path of unprincipled abandonment of communist values and refuse to accept that nothing is to be learned, nothing is to be criticized and nothing is to renewed and adapted.

The ANC National Conference resolution, held at Stellenbosch University, on economic transformation, said *"the economy, our vision has been one of decent work and living standards for all, in the context of qualitatively improved equity in ownership, management skills and access to opportunities. When the ANC took power, we inherited an economy shaped by colonial dispossession, and apartheid which resulted in huge inequalities and increasing poverty, rising unemployment and unsustainable government debt."* These are the challenges that call for these debates. The crux of these challenges is the restructuring of state assets and GEAR, which you decided not to entertain because of the complexities of the class interests in the motive forces. I just hope that you now realize that we will not as a country be able to prosper, create decent work and living standards for all without addressing the allocation of resources.

The Party has called for the growth of the co-operative movement in this country. The ANC conference has accepted the idea. There are lots of communist ideas that can be criticized and adapted to our situation in South Africa.

Before I conclude, I want to remain firm that the issues of the restructuring of the state assets and the macroeconomic framework are critical now. GS said in his paper, *"it is in the distinctiveness of the national and class struggles that Slovo highlights the deep interconnectedness between the two. Whilst the two cannot be collapsed into each other, given the deep interconnectedness between national oppression and capitalism in our country, the two cannot also be separated."* The interest of the motive forces and those of capital in this country will never be the same. In no way in our country that you will want to separate national oppression from capital. Our national oppression was based on capital. In our attempt to free our people, the issue of resource allocation will always remain the first priority. We did not fight for political freedom but we fought for economic freedom as well. Who should benefit from the state resources?

CM understands that when Telkom, Eskom and other state companies were putting telephone lines and electrification programmes throughout our country, they did that because government has a mandate to deliver to the poorest of the poor. Why have these companies failed to engage in this kind of programmes for all those years? Do you think any person who is concerned with profit will give to the poor without them pay for the product or service? The government has a social responsibility to ensure that all qualifies and has access to these services hence the progressive programmes that we have developed as ANC-led government.

Our engagements in this debates is not that we are fighting nor criticizing our own movement but try as South Africans to find suitable solutions to our problems. The ANC President, Thabo Mbeki, every time when he is asked about Zimbabwe, always and consistently respond by saying that *"no foreign power will dictate to the people of Zimbabwe, how should they resolve their problems. But the people of Zimbabwe must find and talk amongst themselves about the possible solutions to their problem."* We in South Africa understands this statement clearly and hence our pride to be hailed a success and a model throughout the world.

In conclusion, the statement above calls for the rigorous analysis and discussions on those communist and non-communist values that can be renewed and adapted in our country. It's a call to action, as South Africans from home and abroad to find amicable ways and means of pushing back the frontiers of poverty, reduce the unemployment rate; deal with the legacy of underdevelopment and not only of our country and even that of Africa as a whole. The challenges facing this country and Africa as a whole still remains huge.

The Party programme for 2003 identify the following three areas that all of us as members of the Party should struggle for and that should led to a state-led growth and development strategy. Those are 1) fighting poverty and meeting basic needs through a growth and development strategy and sustainable local transformation, 2) deepening the socialist outlook, consciousness of the working class and 3) honouring and remembering communist martyrs, heroes and heroines. The SACP slogan calls for

action and implementation of concrete programs that are aim at the above-mentioned three areas of focus this year. Lets all live up to the slogan of the Party that is *"Socialism is the future, built it now."*

The other issue, which the Party and the ANC has said we should be working towards, is the ANC victory in 2004. Progress that we have made as a country has to increase and it is the ANC–led government that will deliver on the promises that it has made to our people. Lets all remember what the former President Nelson Mandela said when he came out of prison, he said, *"I am not a prophet."* He said that statement because he understood that the problems of this country would never be resolved in 5–10 years but we should be committed and remain firm behind our leadership – the ANC. Go out and vote for landslide victory.

I am current serving ANC Youth League, Branch Secretary at Ward 36, in Botshabelo, Motheo Region, Free State Province.

Amie S. Molelekwa

Reference:

African Communist
SACP Strategic perspective
ANC Strategy and Tactics
Historical materialism
SACP Annual programme of action for the year 2003

Women stand together: THE LIFE OF DORA TAMANA 1901 – 1983

DORA TAMANA WAS BORN ON 11 November 1901 at Hlobo, Gqamakwe. The nearest town was Idutywa, and they had four hours to walk to the nearest shop.

There were no buses in Hlobo, roads were extremely rough, medical facilities were non-existent, and a two-roomed mission school catered up to standard six. Dora attended this mission school up to standard four. Her father worked a small allotment on which she and her sisters helped before and after school. The nearest water supply for the family was a spring about half a mile away. Every day Dora and her sisters made several trips to collect water, working in and around their homes.

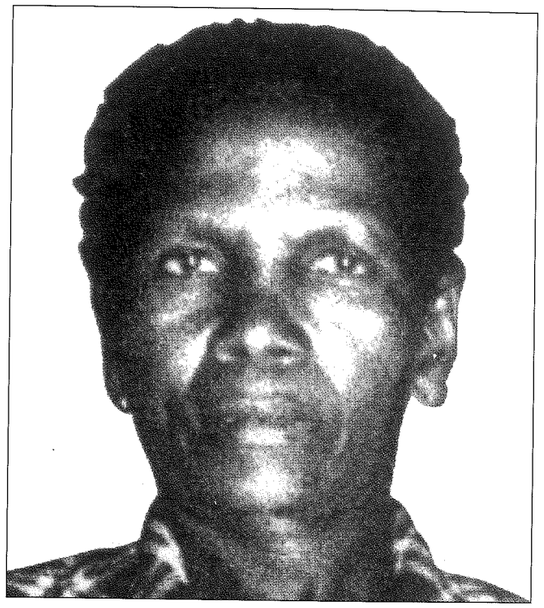
Under these conditions, Dora grew up with little or no knowledge of the outside world. Women traditionally occupied a junior position, yet increasingly, the burden of all agricultural work was falling on women and Dora was no exception.

Her father and two uncles were followers of Enoch Mgijima, and were killed in the Bulhoek Massacre, in which 163 people were shot dead. The massacre was condemned by the then United Communist Party, which distributed a pamphlet headed, 'Murder! Murder! Murder!' The Bulhoek Massacre made a deep impression on the 20-year old Dora.

In 1923 Dora married John Tamana, also from the Transkei. Living in Queenstown, Dora scraped together a meager income by fetching thatching grass from the surrounding hills to sell in the locations. By that time, she had four children, three of whom died from starvation and tuberculosis. In 1930, in desperation, she insisted on joining her husband in Cape Town, where he was working.

The family settled in the shanty area of Blouvlei, near Retreat. Dora soon became a leader of the community. They organised a branch of the ANC and succeeded in resisting attempts by the authorities to demolish their camp.

When war broke out, Dora, together with other African and Coloured women, responded to the shortage of food and the savage increases in food prices, and built the Women's Food Committees, which forced the authorities to bring food in lorries at controlled prices, not only



to District Six, but to Langa, Retreat and other outlying areas.

She joined the Communist Party in 1942, met other women Party members, and appealed to them to assist her in establishing the first ever crèche for African and Coloured children in a shack at her small but clean home. This was not only a pioneering action, but a pioneering idea, with the barest minimum of facilities – a shack, cardboard boxes for the babies to sleep in, a large pot and fire cook on. She organised this creche with local mothers in 1943 – sixty years ago!

Dora fully participated as a leader and organiser in the 1940's, in every campaign against the passes, influx control, demolition of homes and against increases in bus and train fairs, in school feeding schemes for African children, and in the 1952 Defiance Campaign.

When the WIDF convened the World Congress of Mothers in 1955, Lillian Ngoyi and Dora Tamana were elected as delegates from South Africa. The ANC arranged for them to go by boat, and they were dressed up like Cape Malay women going to Mecca. After all the

trouble to disguise them and get them onto the boat, the Special Branch got to hear about it. They got them off the boat, but the movement then succeeded in sending them by air. They worked as a team and were a real credit to our organisation and to our struggle.

Dora, together with other comrades, organised the big contingent from the Cape Province to participate in the courageous march to the Union Buildings in 1956, when 20 000 women presented petitions carrying 100 000 signatures against the pass laws, singing the famous song:

"Strijdom, you have tampered with the women
You have struck a rock
You have dislodged a boulder
You will be crushed."

She was detained in 1960 for four months. She was from time to time harassed by the police, and on one occasion when they came to arrest her during the night, she dressed all her children and grandchildren and insisted they come with her, as she was not going to leave them alone. Her determination forced the police to leave her. She was an inspiration to all her comrades with her.

When the Rivonia comrades were imprisoned in 1964, Aunt Dora, together with other comrades, orgaised to receive their relatives when they visited the comrades on Robben Island. She organised food parcels for comrades at Christmast and on their birthdays.

She never deserted the comrades or gave up the struggle for freedom. Right through the years of reaction, she saw to it that August 9th was remembered, though in small gatherings – round fires, children were told about the big demonstration of 1956.

Together with others, she organised the big rally in Hanover Square on August 9th 1978, and helped to establish the United Women's Association, a forerunner to the United Women's Organisation.

When Cape Town women commemorated August 9th 1980 in a hall in Lansdowne, holding the pride of place at the gathering were three honoured guests, all veterans in the struggle for women's rights: Mrs Annie Silinga, Mrs Dora Tamana and Mrs Francis Baard.

On Saturday 4 April 1981, about 300 people – men and women – from all over the Western Cape gathered in the hall of the St Francis Cultural Centre in Langa. People came in from Paarl, Worcester, Wolsley, Stellenbosch, Montague, Ashton, Elsies River, in minibuses, cars and by public transport. Women from Nyanga, Gugulethu, Langa and the Cape Flats, as well as Cape Town, came and joined the spirit of the first Conference of the United Women's Organisation (UWO).

This is how UWO was formed, by Aunt Dora's leadership. She said, "I came to speak to you out of love for you.." She spoke with fire in her heart. She called on everyone present to speak out:

"You who have no work, speak.
You who have no homes, speak.
You who have no schools, speak.
You who have to run like chickens from the vultures, speak.
We must share the problems so that we can solve them together.
We must free ourselves."

Men and women must share housework.
Men and women must work together in the home and out in the world.
There are no crèches and nursery schools for our children, no homes for the aged, or people to care for the sick.

Women must unite to fight for these rights, Aunt Dora said.

"I opened the road for you.
You must go forward!

The government put us in stables for horses, not houses.
There are no ceilings, no floors, no doors, but the rents are high.

We have to find a strong organisation to fight for us. This organisation is the UWO.
Now that we are strong, call the women to join.
Hambani Makhosikazi!
Mothers, release yourselves. All people are crying for relief, people of all colours.

Senzenina? Senzenina? Senzenina?
What have we done? What have we done?

Women, stand together, build the organisation, make it strong!"

Through her family, she became personally involved in the armed struggle at an early age. He son, Bothwell, fought Rhodesian and South African troups as part of a joint campaign by the ANC and the Zimbabwe People's Union (ZAPU). He was captured, and spent thirteen years in the Smith regime's maximum security prison, only being released when Zimbabwe became independent in 1980.

During the Unilateral Declaration of Independent in Zimbabwe by Ian Smith, Aunt Dora managed to make the hazardous journey to see him and other South African prisoners in goal. At first she traveled on a South African passport. After 1976 she was told to apply for a Transkeian passport, and so she was no longer able to visit her son. For to have done this would have implied recognition of the 'independence' of the Transkey bantustan. She died without seeing him.

Comrade Dora Tamana passed away on 23 July 1983 in her Gugulethu home in Cape Town.

Books



The UDF – A HISTORY OF THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT IN SOUTH AFRICA 1983–1991

(Published by David Philip, Cape Town) by ***Jeremy Seekings***

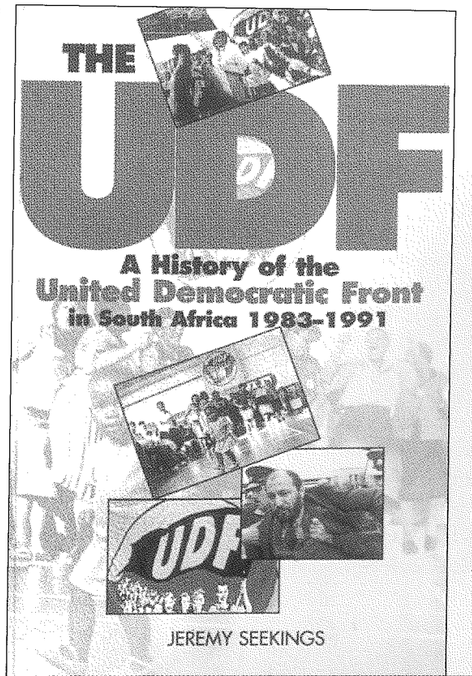
Review by Jeremy Cronin

CONSERVATIVE FORCES are tireless in their effort to expropriate the labour and even the aspirations of the poor. If you're not careful, they will mess with your own memory. Over the past decade, there has been a concerted effort from our local neo-conservatives to prevent millions of South Africans taking possession of their own immediate past. Pundits, like the Institute of Race Relations' John Kane-Berman, or the journalist RW Johnson, find it immensely threatening that ordinary people might build confidence in their ability to struggle successfully, to change history.

And so, week after week, MK's history is reduced to Quatro detention camp; the important role of self defence units, in the midst of a bitter apartheid-launched low intensity conflict strategy in the early 1990s, is reduced to a story of "indiscipline"; and the whole of the 1980s is supposed to be summed up in the slogan, "No education before liberation". (A slogan that – just to remind you, in case your memory HAS been messed with - was roundly condemned by both the ANC and the UDF at the time).

History, our own immediate history, is contested.

It's in this context that Jeremy Seekings' substantive, scholarly, sympathetic but not uncritical history of the United Democratic Front should be warmly acclaimed. Writing a history of the UDF, as Seekings is well aware, presents challenges. Contemporary history has the advantage of providing many first-hand sources, but these can also be overwhelming, and oversensitive.



Then there is the character of the UDF itself. As Seekings writes: *"This book provides a critical history of the UDF during the tumultuous years between 1983 and 1991. But what was 'it', this UDF? Was it an organisation or a movement? What kind of organisation, or what kind of movement, was it? What was it a front for or of?"*

As he goes on to demonstrate, there are no simple answers. The UDF was launched in August 1983 essentially as a front of community and sectoral social movements to oppose the apartheid regime's attempt to co-opt the Coloured and Indian communities into a tricameral parliamentary dispensation. Initially, the UDF was meant to be little more than the sum of its affiliated parts. But the vacuum of above-board, nation-wide resistance politics in the still repressive early 1980s, quickly propelled the UDF into becoming more than this.

It was, however, always an uneven process. From the very beginning, it was an open secret that the UDF was ANC-aligned. It was a front **of** affiliates, but it was also a legal and more or less self-conscious front **for** the banned ANC, standing in, but without claiming to substitute for it. However, not all ANC-supporting structures inside our country joined the UDF, or initially accepted it as a national co-ordinating structure of Charterist forces. This was partly related to the initial campaigning focus of the UDF. While the UDF always acknowledged African –leadership of our struggle,

defeating the apartheid regime's tricameral initiative required significant emphasis on the Coloured and Indian communities. Naturally, enough, the UDF also saw this campaign as a contest not just for the radicals in these communities, but for the "middle-ground", and UDF media and statements in the first year were often tailored to the task. This tactical focus was not particularly in synch with the mood of a generation of militant African youth in townships, or with an increasingly socialist-influenced trade union movement.

Following the overwhelming boycott of the 1994 tricameral elections, the UDF's prestige and standing were enhanced. But, mission number one accomplished, its own direction forward now became uncertain. In subsequent interviews by the author with many UDF leadership figures, they readily concede that there were some months of drifting at this point.

Then a new wave of popular struggle, beginning in the Vaal in September 1994, provided fresh challenges. This new popular upsurge began, as it happens, in townships in which the UDF was not, initially, particularly influential. *"The UDF's own leadership was taken by surprise by the initial revolt...as its own leaders acknowledged in internal documents, the UDF was at the margins of the revolt. Indeed, the sites of the initial revolt were areas with particularly weak direct links to the UDF: Tumahole, Atteridgeville, the East Rand, the Vaal Triangle, Cradock."*

Among the most valuable sections in this book is the chapter dealing with the UDF's eventual response to these township uprisings. It was often local issues – rents, despised councillors, education crises – that detonated these township uprisings. The UDF was not, particularly, an initiator. However, from mid-1985, it was the UDF (backed by the ANC's Radio Freedom) that began to provide an overall strategic and organisational approach to the uprising, by advancing and popularising the perspective of building "people's power". The objective of the struggle was not just ungovernability for its own sake. Making communities ungovernable, created the necessary, semi-liberated space to begin to build alternative power. Matthew Goniwe's work in building street committees in Cradock, or the formation of peoples courts in many places, or the beginning of "people's education" in schools, or the taking up of civic activities like rubbish removal, soup kitchens, and the opening up of "people's parks" were all cited as examples of the forging of local-level popular power.

"Neither the UDF nor the ANC could claim the credit for the formation of street committees and other manifestations of people's power", Seekings writes. *"These were primarily a response to conditions on the ground, shaped by deep-rooted traditions of localised self-government and self-help. But the UDF and ANC played a central role in formulating an organisational strategy of people's power, both at a conceptual level and in terms of co-ordination and networking. The UDF provided organisational and conceptual links between disparate localised struggles and the overall struggle for national political change, and thereby greatly boosted local-level development."*

All of this is, in my view, an appropriate and accurate assessment. In calling for the building of people's power from the bottom up, the UDF leadership were well aware that they were re-kindling the traditions of popular participation that had been the hall-mark of the Congress of People campaign. (1985 was, of course, the 30th anniversary year of the Freedom Charter.) They were also giving concrete and contemporary meaning to what had seemed like a remote, abstract aspiration: *"The People Shall Govern"*.

Seekings quotes from the theoretical journal of the UDF, ISIZWE:

"It is true that the fullest consolidation of people's power is still in the future. It is true that control over central state power is the key to many things...Nevertheless, the building of people's power is something that ***is already beginning to happen in the course of our struggle****. It is not for us to sit back and merely dream of the day that the people shall govern. It is our task to realise that goal now."*

Seekings is generous in his praise of this shift in the UDF's strategic thinking. *"A discourse of power had conclusively replaced discourses of rights within the UDF. The brilliance of the discourse was that it combined an emphasis on power with a fundamental concern with organisation building. By mid-1986 people's power had taken on an appealing coherence, rescuing both the ANC and UDF from the dilemmas of uncontrolled insurrectionism."*

This is fulsome praise. But is there a note of instrumentalism, of pragmatism in the author's approval of this strategic shift? Was the idea of people's power just a smart "discourse" move? Was its principal merit the fact that it "rescued" the UDF and the ANC from a "dilemma"? Or did it describe a real, transformational process? I'll come back to this in a moment.

There is much else that is important and fascinating in the book. For instance, it is helpful to be reminded of some of the demographic and social realities that underpinned the growth of the UDF. Seekings emphasises the rapid urbanisation that had occurred in the preceding decades. *"The South Africa of the 1980s was very different from the South Africa of the 1940s or 1950s"* – the urban African population was 2,2 million in 1951; 4,4 million in 1970; and 5,6 million in 1980. Most of the UDF's leadership and activist base were drawn from a stratum that was township born-and-bred, unlike their parents who were typically transitional, a generation that had moved in from rural areas. The UDF generation had also experienced a massive expansion in primary and later secondary education.

"In greater Soweto, for example, there were just eight secondary schools up to 1972; by 1976 there were twenty secondary schools, with three times as many students as in 1972. By the end of 1984 there were fifty-five secondary schools."

Or consider comparative statistics for tertiary education:

"In 1960 there were fewer than 800 African students at universities (excluding Unisa...). By 1983 there were about 20,000 African students at universities, with a further 12,700 enrolled in Unisa. Most of this expansion occurred during the 1970s."

Of course, no single book is going to be able to do justice to such a broad and complex theme. Seekings is well aware that there is much more to be told. He has focused on the UDF itself, rather than on its affiliates. Accordingly, his primary sources, a significant number of interviews, are largely former UDF head-office and regional leadership personalities. This is a deliberate choice, and it is fair enough, but, as Seekings is quick to acknowledge, it has its own limitations.

In August 1991, a year and a half after the ANC's unbanning, and with virtually all of the UDF's leading cadre absorbed in various ways into the ANC and its allied structures, the UDF was formally disbanded. But what was the UDF's contribution to the new South Africa? Seekings is generous and, I think, generally fair in his estimation of this. *"The lasting impact of the UDF was not confined to the ANC alone. The whole character of the overall post-apartheid political system reflects, in some respects, the influences of the UDF. The legacy of the UDF can be seen in the character of South African democracy, the contours of political society and the chequered emergence of civil society."*

However, I think that Seekings, for whatever reason, falls short of his own earlier insights into the key 1985-6 "people's power" period. Perhaps this has something to do with one of the organising paradigms of the book – a tendency to contrast a "discourse of rights", with a "discourse of power". The ANC, and less consistently the UDF, affirmed correctly in the decades before 1994, that our's was a national liberation and not a civil rights struggle. In other words, our struggle was not taking place in an essentially democratic dispensation. Our democratic struggle was, therefore, not for inclusion within the existing order. But this was NOT a "discourse" of power as opposed to a "discourse" of rights. In order to establish democratic rights (of the kind envisaged in the Freedom Charter), we had to transform (revolutionise) power, and not merely transfer (or extend) existing rights. In short, our position involved BOTH a "discourse" of power and a "discourse" of rights, each was the condition for the other.

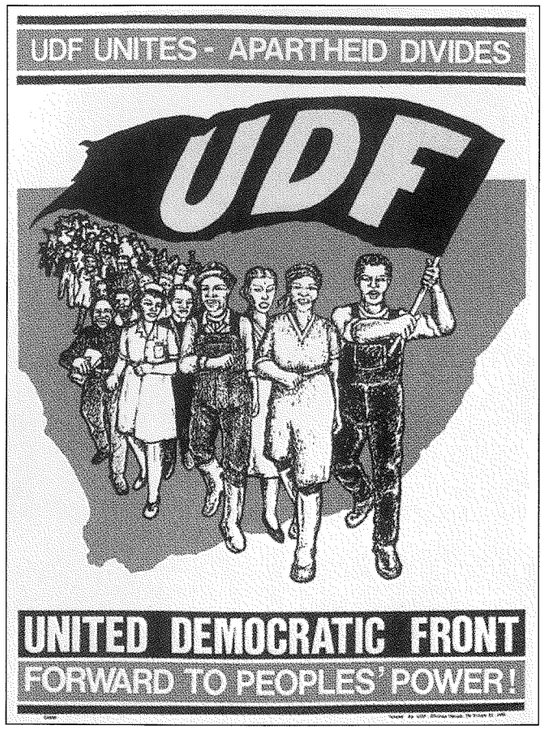
I am not making an academic point. I think that the struggle to give real content to rights, and the struggle to transform power are deeply interrelated in our present reality. Seekings celebrates the UDF's strategic popularisation of grass-roots-up people's power, but somehow does not recognise the reality and its subsequent legacy in our struggle. In his concluding chapter, he more or less asserts that with the unbanning of the ANC, the negotiations process, and the 1994 electoral victory, people's power was written out of the script.

"The ANC's change of perspective from 1993 is not difficult to understand, whether or not we agree with it. What is harder to understand is the ANC's failure to utilise the strategies and tactics of the 1980s in the transitional period of 1990s-3, when it might have chosen to maintain the pressure on the National Party government."

To be sure, there were varying emphases and important debates within the ANC and its alliance during this period, including around the relevance and character of mass mobilisation. But, especially at critical moments (in the immediate aftermath of comrade Chris Hani's assassination for instance), the negotiations process and the shifting of the balance of power, were decisively influenced by the irruption of popular power.

To be sure, the ANC's overwhelming electoral victory in 1994, and again in 1999, established a new political power configuration, new possibilities, new responsibilities and, no doubt, new confusions. But again, to consign the legacy of "popular power" to a past decade, is quite wrong. These traditions live on, not just as memory, but as essential strategic approaches for any advance, consolidation and defence of our 1994 democratic breakthrough. The UDF tradition (and it's not just a UDF tradition) lives on in community policing forums, in school governing bodies, in the masakhane and letsema campaigns, in ward committees, in government-community izimbizo, and in a burgeoning co-operative movement.

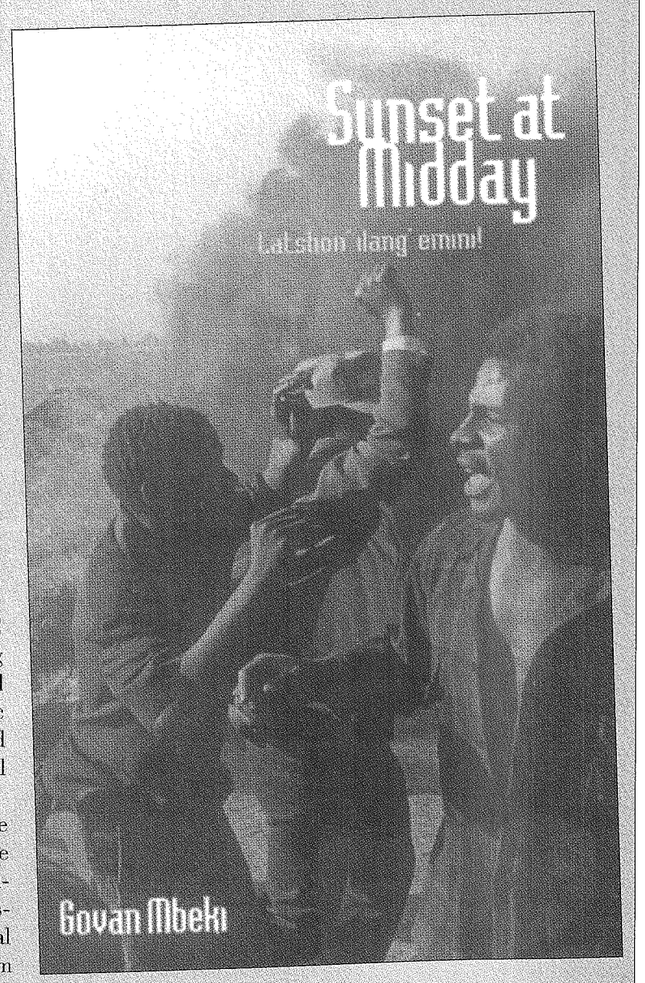
But these are topics for other books. I hope that the 1990s, and our present, are gifted with research as helpful and as competent as Seekings' account of the UDF years.



Sunset at Midday. LATSHON' ILANG EMINI!

by Govan Mbeki

Published by Nolwazi Educational Publishing, Braamfontein (1996)



THIS UMRABULO focus on the United Democratic Front would not be complete without reference to the analysis of the mass struggles of the 1980's in this seminal work by the late cde Govan Mbeki.

In this book he argues that the defeat of apartheid was the result of systematic planning and the mobilisation of millions of people towards the objective of liberation. Mbeki shows that the single most important player in this struggle was the ANC. The book examines the reemergence of ANC after the Rivonia trial and traced developments leading to the Congress Alliance of the 1950's, the formation of the UDF and the mass mobilisation that forced the apartheid regime to the negotiation table.

The chapter dedicated to the United Democratic Front examines how the UDF came to assume the prominence it did during the 1980's and its relationship with the ANC. He argues that the relationship between the ANC and the UDF can best be explained by looking at the ANC's change in strategy towards the end of the 1970's. The ANC 1978/9 Strategic Review advocated 'mass mobilisation ... and the creation of the broadest possible national front for liberation.'

As a result of this review, the ANC since 1979 took on a number of tasks, including the establishment of mass organisations in the country, influencing those already formed and devising themes and slogans around which mass legal organisations could mobilise. Hence, from 1979, the January 8 statements outlined the theme for the coming year and set the tone for political mobilisation. Many UDF and affiliate activists from the 1980's recall the important role played by the January 8 statements in setting the agenda for mass mobilisation – including the call to make the country ungovernable and make apartheid unworkable.

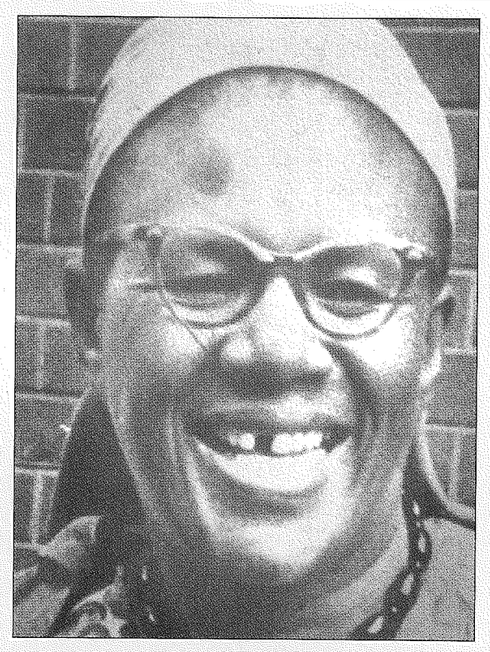
Cde Govan Mbeki's very accessible book is amongst the emerging body of work that brings together the different strands of our struggle, and gives a more holistic picture of our history.

My Spirit is not Banned – FRANCES BAARD

*(As told to **Barbara Schreiner**, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare. 1986)*

"Are you still a member of the African National Congress?"
"Yes."
"But the organisation is banned."
"But my spirit is not banned. I still say that I want freedom in my lifetime."

In her own words, Ma Frances Baard tells of her early years, through her growing participation in trade unions, the ANC, the Federation of South African Women and other organisations. Active in the struggle for freedom in South Africa since the 1940s, her fascinating narrative ranges from failures and successes in organising and activating workers in the factories, to the mass actions in the 1950s, which showed the government the strength and determination of South African women. Her involvement brought about increasing harassment, culminating in a jail sentence and banishment. This is not only the story of one person. Spanning nearly 80 years, it is also a remarkable record of important events in our struggle for freedom.



Forming the Federation

'The battle for democracy and liberation can only be won when women, mothers of the nation – half of the whole population – can take their rightful place as free and equal partners with men."

From the invitation to the 1954 Women's Conference

From the time I joined the ANC we spent a long time organising the women. When I joined there were only a few women there, but after we began to organise – shjoo – soon many women were organised.

In the early fifties, the government decided to make black women carry passes as well. Up to then the women didn't have to carry passes, only the men, but now they wanted to make us carry passes as well. Well lots of things happened then because the women didn't want these passes.

A pass is this little book you must get when you are 16 and it says where you can work, and where you can be, and if you have got work. You can't get a job without this book. And you can only get a job where they stamp your pass to say 'Johannesburg' or 'Pretoria' and so on. You must carry it with you all the time because the police can ask you, 'Where is your pass?' any time, and then you must show them. If you haven't got your pass, they put you in jail for some days or else you must pay some money to get out.

In 1953 Ray Alexander came to Port Elizabeth, and while she was there she wanted to have a meeting with the women. Florence and I helped to organise the meeting quickly for that same night. We told many women and each told another one that there would be a meeting. There were about 40 or 50 women at the meeting. We

were talking about the position of women, and what we could do, and we were talking about passes, food prices, rent and so on. At that time they wanted to start influx control for women in Port Elizabeth so the women were very worried what would happen to them. We were very worried about all these things that were happening against women. At that meeting a woman suggested that we should have a conference to set up a national organisation of women. We knew that we would be much stronger if we could all work together. We all though that it was a very good idea and we decided that Ray must start to organise such a thing.

So she organised the conference, and Hilda Watts in Johannesburg helped a log, and some other women too. In the beginning of 1954 se all got invitations to go to a conference of women in Johannesburg. I was one of the women that signed that invitation.

In April many women from all over South Africa came together in Johannesburg to talk to each other. The women from the ANC, the Congress of Democrats, the Indian Congress and the Coloured People's Congress; and the women from the trade unions all came to Johannesburg, from Port Elizabeth and East London. We went by car. Mrs. Njongwe (she was the wife of one of our leaders) drove the car all the way from East London. It was a very long way for a woman to drive in that time.

We were late to arrive at the conference because our car broke down on the way. Hawu! We were so scared we should not get there. When we got to the hall there was somebody speaking, but we were so glad to be there we just walked into the hall to join all the women. There were four or five or six of us, I don't remember now, all in our Eastern Cape dress, long ochre skirts and headdresses, and that whole conference stopped. We stopped that whole conference and they turned to look at us, such a group, looking so good.

It was a very exciting conference. We felt very strong with all the women coming together. We felt very proud that we were all together. It was very important that the women were following us. When the people are behind you, then you can do a lot of things.

We spoke at that conference about women and their problems and how we can organise to change things. Some people gave speeches, Ida Mtwana and some others, and we all spoke our problems and ideas. I told the women at the conference about the passes in Port Elizabeth, and how the women didn't want them.

I remember Lillian (Ngoyi) stood up and she said that there would have been many more women there but there husbands didn't want them to go. The husbands say the want democracy, but then they wont let their wives go to meetings.

My friend Florence Matomela was there too from Port Elizabeth and she also spoke. It was getting late and there was a lot to do, so the chairwoman said, 'Time is getting short; each speaker is only allowed three minutes.'

When Florence was talking the chairwoman reminded her that she could only talk for three minutes, and Florence – she was a big woman – she stood there and folded her arms, and she said, 'I am a defier', meaning that she had been a volunteer in the Defiance Campaign; 'I am a defier, and I shall speak for as long as I like!'

And she did! And she said that the conference could bring tears to Dr. Malan, because he did not want the women to be united. She said, 'We want to go to war with Malan. We have no guns for our war, but we shall fight till he gives in.'

While we were having our meetings at that conference, and talking about this and this, there were some men looking after the tea and food and everything so we didn't have to waste time with that. I think it was the men from the Indian Youth Congress. They served us with tea and everything while we had our meeting!

At that conference we adopted the Women's Charter, which says all the things that we women believe and our aims. We said that women should be equal with men, and there should be maternity homes and proper hospitals for women and their children. We want proper houses, and we want all the laws that stop one working anywhere and living anywhere taken away. And we said that women must work and organise so we can get all the things we want. There were many things that we wanted.

When everybody had spoken at this conference and we had discussed things, we decided that we must form a national organisation for women and we decided to call it the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). The Federation was made up of all the organisations that were at the conference: The ANC Women's League, the Congress of Democrats, the South African Indian Congress and the Coloured People's Organisation. You couldn't join the Federation as an individual; you had to be a member of one of those organisations and then you were automatically a member of the Federation.

We elected a committee for the Federation and Ida Mtwana was elected as our first President. She was the president of the Transvaal Women's League. Florence Matomela was one of the vice-presidents and Lilian Ngoyi and some others, and I was elected onto the committee too.

We talked a lot about the pass laws at that conference and everyone was saying that they are a bad thing, and the first thing the Federation must do is to fight these pass laws. We must organise the women to fight them.

The Congress of the People

There were such a lot of things happening at that time, and some very good things too. In 1955 a very great thing happened. We organised the Congress of the People at Kliptown. Ooh! What a wonderful thing was there! All over the country people organised to com to that congress, and all the groups worked together to organise and make it truly national, so that everyone was represented there. Everyone was invited to come. Even SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) sent delegates too, though they weren't a member of the Congress Alliance yet. SACTU only joined the Congress Alliance later. At that time it was only the ANC, the Coloured Congress, the Indian Congress and the Congress of Democrats.

In Port Elizabeth we from the ANC organised too. We went from door to door telling people that we are going to have this conference and that it is for all the people of South Africa. We got people together in small groups, maybe 10 together, and we asked them, 'If you go to this conference, how would you like South Africa to be handled? How would you like things to be here?'

Then the people say what and what, 'I want to do this and this.' And we listen to the wishes of the people and we give them some pieces of paper so they must write what they want, what they think the country should be. And those who couldn't write, they tell us, 'Write such-and-such a thing and this and this and this.'

We collected demands from all the members of our branch in the ANC and then we collected demands from the workers in the trade unions. Some people went to the churches too to collect demands. Someone from the ANC would go to the church meeting and tem them about us wanting to make the Freedom Charter and what it was for, and then collect their demands. And maybe you see some people sitting somewhere in a group, sitting talking maybe, so you go to them and you ask them what they want, how thy think the country should be. Then we have a meeting and we pile all these wishes together. All those wishes were taken to the National Executive Offices and there they were sorted these things out and found what most people want and so forth. They took all the things that everyone wants and they put all these wishes together and made the Freedom Charter. That is how the people made the Freedom Charter.

The Federation organised for the Congress too. We made a list of what the women demanded so that the women should not be forgotten in the Freedom Charter. We had already made the Women's Charter at the Federation Conference and we wanted them to put some of these things in the Freedom Charter too. We wanted proper care and help for pregnant women and mothers; we wanted free education for everyone. We demanded proper housing that we could afford, with proper electricity and proper toilets, because our houses did not have these things. And we wanted food for everyone and better prices for food because we all knew what it is like when your child is crying and you have no money to buy him food. And then too of course, we demanded that the women be equal with the men in everything, and we wanted that all the women in South Africa should be allowed to vote.

Then, in about April, we elected all the delegates that we wanted to snd to the Congress. There were more than a hundred delegates that went from the Eastern Cape. Florence Matomela was one of our delegates I remember, from the ANC Women's League.

The Federation in Johannesburg organised accommodation for most of these delegates, in Soweto and so on. They went around to all the houses in the townships near Kliptown, and they told the people about the Congress and they asked them if they had some space for people to stay. They made a big list of all the houses and how many people must stay where. The people were to bring their own blankets with them to the Congress, and then we find them some space, on the floor, or maybe a mattress if they are lucky, and they can stay their in someone's house.

On the day of the Congress of the People, hawu! It started the day before Freedom Day, on Saturday. There were a lot of people. They came by buses, cars, taxis, anything, just to be brought there. That place was in Kliptown near Johannesburg in a big open space, a flat area. And they made a stage, a big stage, because people had to go up there where there were loudspeakers so that everybody could hear what they were saying. The whole place was packed. And everyone was dressed so

FRANCES "MABAARD" BAARD was born in 1901. She worked as a domestic servant and then as a teacher but was turned into a militant as a result of her experiences of oppression and exploitation in South Africa.

As a budding activist she drew her influence from Raymond Mhlaba and Ray Alexander.

During the 1952 Defiance Campaign she was an organizer of the ANC Women's League, and later became secretary and treasurer of the League's Port Elizabeth branch. She was also national treasurer of the Women's League and on the executive committee of the Federation of South Africa Women in the mid-1950s. She played a leading role in the Women's march to protest against passes in 1956. She was actively involved with the drafting of the Freedom Charter in 1955 and became one of the defendants in the marathon Treason Trial.

In 1956 she became a member of the executive committee of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). She was detained in 1960 and again in 1963, when she was held for 12 months in solitary confinement. In 1964 she was sentenced to five years imprisonment for ANC activities and in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. After her release in 1969, she was banned and restricted to Mabopane, near Pretoria.

In the 1980s Frances worked with the United Democratic Front, a body that was formed bringing together civic workers, churchs and other organizations to oppose the introduction of Botha's Tricameral Parliament.

MaBaard died in 1997.

Source: www.sahistory.org.za

brightly you know, the ANC colours everywhere, and the Indian women in saris, and some people in traditional dress, colour everywhere. I was there too as a delegate of the Women's League. There was a lot of excitement and what, I don't know. It was wonderful!

Father Huddleston and Chief Luthuli and Dr Dadoo were given awards that day by the people to honour them. Chief Luthuli was such a nice man. I used to know him quite well, and he was a very nice, quiet man. I stayed at his place in Durban when I was once there. And his wife too – they were nice people.

All those demands that had been collected from the people and had been put into the Freedom Charter, they were read out by the different leaders, read out to the people so we could say whether we accepted them. They were all read out in English, Sotho and Xhosa so that everyone must understand. And them people spoke about those demands, for work for all, houses, security and comfort, about learning and culture, al of those demands in the Freedom Charter, especially the one that says, 'The people shall govern'. We said why we wanted these things to be like this. It went on like that with the people singing and clapping and everyone was very happy.

Then during the second afternoon the police came, as a force man! They came with horses and with motor cars and the whole Congress was surrounded by them. They came in and they sort of rounded us up. They took the names of everybody there, thousands of us, and they confiscated cameras and papers and so on. But we carried on and finished the conference. The people told us that there were a lot of people who were coming to the conference who were stopped on the way in road-blocks, and sent back, or kept in jail for the weekend. Some people didn't make it at all because of the police. But there were a lot of people who came and the conference was a success anyway.

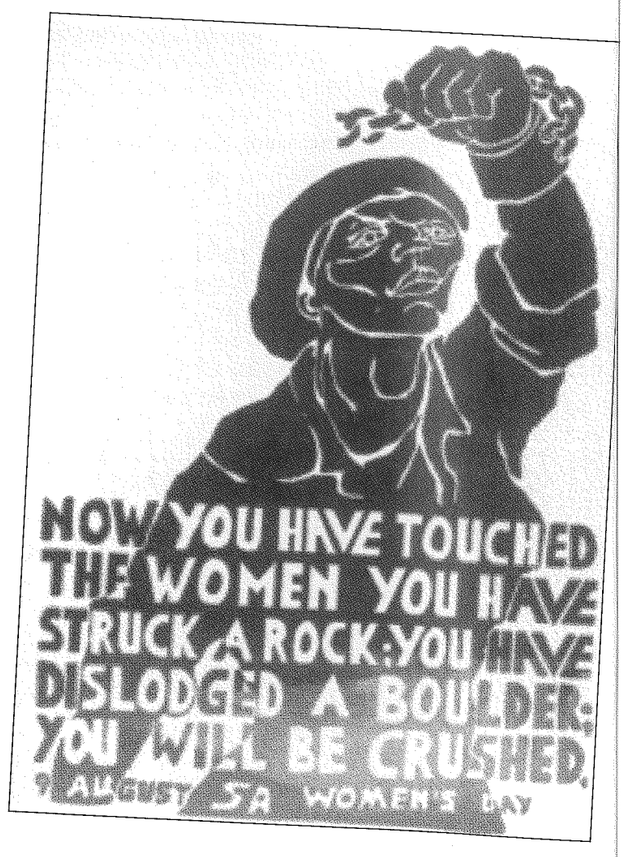
There were something like 3 000 delegates there for the two days of the conference, from all over the country, from every part of South Africa. Everyone was invited to the conference. Even the government was invited to come. But they sent their police instead!

After that Congress the we had to go back to our places and make sure that all the people knew about the Freedom Charter and what it said, so that everyone must know what we went to Johannesburg for and how was the Charter created by the people. We did that through all our organisations; we did it through the trade union too. We spoke to all our trade union members about this thing.

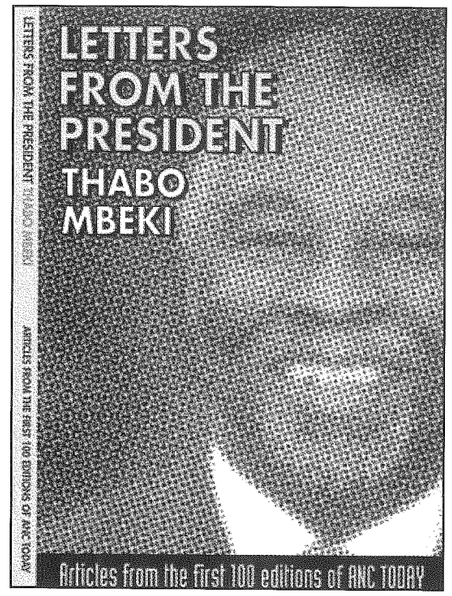
I remember one time when we were in Cape Town doing this work, talking to the people about the Freedom Charter. One of the girls who were with me there was carrying her Freedom Charter with her and there comes the security! They came up to her and wanted to grab her Freedom Charter, but she swallowed it! She ate it! So that the policeman couldn't get a thing out of that; it was already chewed and swallowed.

After the Congress of the People you would see on the trains, on the walls, written everywhere, all the demands of the Freedom Charter. Nobody knew how they do it, but we see it when we get up in the morning. The volunteers painted those things everywhere. It was because they were so happy when they heard that we wanted South Africa to be like this, that we want the people to rule themselves in this way, that we want the people's government, and that we want to share. That is why they went about doing all this graffiti of the Freedom Charter in every town, on the factory walls, everywhere. Every morning the government had to have some people to go about scrubbing these things away! I think they had to hire extra people to go about scrubbing the walls.

Sometimes when the people know that you are working for the government and so forth, they had some stickers too, and you'll be walking and they put a sticker behind you here on your back. And then you'll be going about all day with this sticker and the people go 'Huh! Huh!' Perhaps on the sticker it says ' The people shall govern' or something from the Freedom Charter. When you get home and take off your jacket, then you find this sticker there. We did a lot of things with the Freedom Charter.



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