

L September 1987

UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

The UDF explains its policy on controversial
issues such as negotiation and violence.

It spells out how it sees the role of whites in
working against apartheid

UDF UNITES, APARTHEID DIVIDES

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The recent election highlighted the exclusion of African people from parliament September 1987

The UDF was formed just over four years ago to oppose the tricameral parliament and the "Koomhof Bills". It aimed to draw together all South

Africans who opposed these laws and wanted to replace apartheid with a non-racial and united South Africa.

The UDF was never and probably never will be a political party in the conventional sense of the word. When it was formed, the UDF was a loose alliance of organisations who, despite other differences found themselves at one in opposition to the government's reform programme.

Today the UDF has a total of over seven hundred affiliates nationwide. They include civic associations, youth, student and women's organisation, trade unions and religious bodies. The concerns of the UDF have broadened to embrace opposition to every aspect of life under apartheid, including forced removals, high rents, detentions, the Group Areas Act, "homeland" independence and "Bantu Education".

Charter Protects Rights

On the 20th of August this year, the UDF celebrated its fourth birthday by adopting the Freedom Charter as its political programme. The Freedom Charter is regarded by the majority of South Africans as a blueprint of what life in a non-racial society will be like. It states in its preamble that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people."

The Charter guarantees all South Africans a right to vote and to participate in all government institutions. It protects citizens from forced removals and arbitrary arrest. It guarantees to all the right to speak, meet, worship and publish freely. It protects the cultural rights of different groups to their language and their own traditions. It promises that no one shall be imprisoned or restricted without the right to a fair trial.

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"Power and control are being diverted from parliament and the courts to the hands of P.W. Botha's chosen few

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The road to change

The UDF did not choose the extra-parliamentary road to change. Seventy years before the formation of the UDF, the Act of Union of 1910 deprived the majority of South Africans of the right to vote and to participate in parliament. This decision was entrenched when Africans were removed from the Cape voters roll in the thirties and coloureds from the common voters roll in the fifties.

The UDF cannot participate in a "parliamentary road" because the majority of its members are denied the right to vote and therefore can have no say over what happens in parliament.

Over the years parliament has passed one law after another entrenching apartheid rule over all aspects of South African society. Far from reforming this situation the tricameral parliament in fact further entrenched the lack of rights of African people, and gave coloureds and Indians second class citizenship. This has been borne out by the way in which the State President has treated the members of the Houses of Delegates and Representatives. Rule by decree

Today even white democracy is being eroded. The present State of Emergency has entrenched a trend which began with the premiership of P.W. Botha: rule by administrative decree rather than parliamentary process. Large areas of public life such as the press, the arrest and detention of citizens, have been removed from the jurisdiction of parliament and the courts and are now subject to "the ministers' opinion". The State Security Council and Joint Management Committees have been given far reaching and secret powers to rule from outside of parliament.

There is thus decreasing hope that democracy will be gained through the ballot box. It is for this reason that the UDF is firmly convinced that change can only come about through extra-parliamentary organisation and pressure. The history of the independent trade union movement in this country has proved that this is indeed a viable strategy.

The UDF'S
attitude to
Violence

extra-parliamentary opposition is not the same as violent opposition to apartheid. Under very difficult conditions and sustained attacks from the Nationalist government, the UDF has consistently looked for new and creative ways to oppose apartheid within the confines of the law.

In addition to organising public meetings, placard demonstrations, distributing hundreds of thousands of posters and pamphlets, the UDF has written open letters to the government, conducted a Million Signature Campaign and supported a sit-in of the British Embassy to bring the injustices of apartheid to the notice of all South Africans and the outside world. For the last two years the government has tried to cut off every avenue of legal resistance. Over fifty thousand people have been detained, dozens of UDF leaders nationwide are languishing in prison cells, almost all forms of political expression have been restricted: all outdoor meetings are banned, funerals in African townships are restricted and hundreds of orders restrict daily life in black communities.

Under the cover of darkness apartheid's supporters have resorted to illegal means to prevent opposition to apartheid: Cosatu offices nationwide have been bombed, activists' homes have been petrol bombed, dozens of UDF activists have been kidnapped and have disappeared without trace while others have been found brutally murdered, their killers never brought to justice.

Stopping the violence

In the face of such an onslaught on legal opposition to apartheid the UDF is aware that many people in our communities have resorted to violence themselves. We believe that these people have been driven to such desperate measures by the violation of their daily lives by inferior education, unemployment, low wages and life in overcrowded and squalid ghettos.

The solution to such violence does not lie in imposing a State of Emergency and

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TOP: Unless
apartheid is
dismantled the
spiral of violence
and counter-
violence will
intensify

RIGHT: Apartheid
is at the source of
much violence in
South Africa

sending thousands of troops, kitskonstabels and the police into unarmed and defenceless communities. The solution lies in eradicating apartheid and the evils which it has created. Any other solution serves merely to intensify the

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spiral of violence racking our country.

Within the UDF there is a profound
realisation of the damage of the brutalisa-
tion of our country and its people by apart-
heid . It is for this reason that the UDF
supports all attempts to repair the damage

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done by violence and to strive for peace.

It is for this reason that the UDF has warmly welcomed the End Conscription Campaign which confronts the violence inflicted on young whites conscripted to fight in the apartheid army.

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A climate for negotiations

he UDF believes that negotiations

Between the main political forces in South African society are both urgent and necessary. The history of the last ten years has made it clear to all concerned that the main forces in the conflict are the Nationalist Party and the African National Congress.

For this reason the UDF cannot accept government attempts to "negotiate" a political solution to the present crisis with those black leaders whom it appoints, recognises and approves. Solutions to South African problems will not be found whilst the government insists on only talking to those who will not disagree.

It is true that both the UDF and the ANC have set conditions for negotiations. This does not indicate a lack of commitment to negotiation. On the contrary it is a recognition

that for parties to negotiate they must be truly representative of their constituencies.

. The UDF argues that

' there are barriers

presently preventing

South Africans from in-

dicating which parties

they support, who they

consider to be their

leadership and what is-

sues they consider to be

central in the negotiation

process. Solutions to

South African problems

cannot be imposed from

above by either side. For

this reason barriers to

freedom of political as-

sociation must be

removed so that all par-

ties can get a mandate

from their constituents.

Free political

climate

The UDF therefore ar-

gues that negotiations re-

quire the unbanning of

banned organisations

and individuals, the

release of political

prisoners and detainees,

the lifting of the State of

Emergency and the right of freedom of as-

sociation.

Negotiations can only take place on a

basis of equality. When referring to mean-

ingful negotiations, the UDF means dis-

cussions about how all South Africans, black and white, become part and parcel of the decision-making processes in the country.

The road to negotiation must thus presume a process directed towards the scrapping of all discriminatory legislation and the dissolution of all apartheid structures such as the tricameral parliament, the homeland governments and the black local authorities.

Finally negotiations can only take place in a climate free of fear. For this reason the UDF calls on the SADF and SAP to withdraw from the townships and to lay down their arms. The ANC has already expressed its willingness to do likewise should the government agree to dismantling the SADF and SAP.

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The UDF Call to Whites

The late Molly Blackburn was a symbol of non-racial trust and understanding in the Eastern Cape

Building the new South Africa

The UDF calls on whites to abandon apartheid and to stay and contribute towards the building of a new South Africa.

The UDF believes whites have a critically important role to play along the road to change. It is firmly committed to non-racialism both as a practice and a principle. Whites participate in the UDF in the same way as anyone else - both in organisations that work in the white community, as well as in non-racial structures such as the Johannesburg Youth Congress (JOYCO), and the United Women's Congress (UWCO) based in Cape Town.

In addition UDF feels that membership of its affiliates is not the only way in which whites can contribute to change. The attitude of the white community towards the key political issues of our time will be a critical variable in determining the pace of change in our country. As such, the UDF warmly welcomes all initiatives and actions by members of the white community that strengthen opposition to apartheid.

Staying outside

apartheid is a laager

Nearly 40 years of apartheid rule has drawn us all into the beginnings of what is fast becoming a bloody civil war. In order to withstand the inevitable erosion of minority rule, the government is trying to draw whites into an ever tighter laager.

The UDF is convinced that the more whites that can withstand apartheid's laager, the sooner the day will come that conflict will end.

The UDF also believes that we need to move beyond apartheid. The participation of whites in UDF and anti-apartheid organisations is one way in which we can start to build a new South Africa, free of racism and apartheid.

The UDF's "Call to Whites" campaign which started in 1985 is still a central part of UDF's programme. The UDF calls on whites to BREAK WITH APARTHEID and to STAY AND CONTRIBUTE

towards the building of a new South Africa. In addition it calls on whites to counter the wall of silence that censorship and state propaganda has built between the black and white communities.

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They say apartheid is dead but Group Areas remain. The UDF welcomes all campaigns which try and rid our country of segregation
Breaking the wall of silence

he government does not want whites
Tto know what is happening in the townships. Two years of emergency with ever more press censorship has shown this.

Not only must whites oppose press curbs but they need to find ways to meet and talk with their fellow black South Africans to truly understand what is happening in our country.

Spreading information and knowledge about the true feelings of our people is a critical way of building the trust and understanding so essential for the future.

Denounce
apartheid

he majority of the people in our country and virtually the entire international community have rejected apartheid and want no truck with it. White South Africans need to do the same. UDF calls on whites to denounce apartheid and withdraw their support from the apartheid government.

Actions directed towards different aspects of apartheid life are all part of the process of abandoning apartheid and building a new society. For example, despite talk that apartheid is dead, segregation still exists. UDF would welcome action to rid our country of segregated facilities as well as campaigns for integrated facilities such as schools. Dr Wendy Orr,s expose of torture amongst Port Elizabeth detainees was a decisive withdrawal of support for apartheid practices. So was Marion Crawfordis decision to go to jail for breaking influx control legislation and not registering her domestic worker. The UDF salutes such people and calls on others in similar positions to follow their example.

Challenging apartheid

Similarly the National Medical and Dental Association (Namda) was formed by doctors outraged by the response of the official medical association to the doctors responsible for the lack of health care which led to Steve Bikois death. There are many other professional groups that could move away from working with apartheid or from complicit silence to an active challenge.

The UDF believes that business has the capacity to more effectively resist apartheid by intensifyin g the withdrawal of their support from government initiatives. For example, there is no onus on business to supply the government with goods to be used by the tricameral parliament.

Supporting the struggles of black South Africans is at the same time a rejection of apartheid. The UDF has always appreciated and encouraged white participation in campaigns around detainees; the

giving of support to victims of forced removals; helping to protect Group Areas Act victims etc. Such collective and united action has done much to force concessions from the government.

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Become part of the movement for change made many whites feel that the only road open to them is emigration. Those making this difficult choice are often people who feel deeply about the horror of apartheid, but who have not seen any way open for themselves to act against it in any meaningful way.

The UDF believes that whites should remain in this country now and in the future. The way is open through the UDF. The political crisis in our country has and the democratic movement as a whole for whites to participate meaningfully in the process of change. In addition, UDF feels strongly that our country needs ALL of its people. The skills that white people have through access to education are invaluable - now and in the future.

UDF, by welcoming whites into its ranks, and by supporting anti-apartheid initiatives has made it clear that it believes that South Africa belongs to all its citizens. It is for whites to take this forward by contributing actively towards the building of a new non-racial and democratic South Africa.

How you can get involved in the UDF

There are a number of UDF affiliates in the white areas. Below is a list of some of there names and addresses:

ADDRESSES OF UDF AFFILIATES

Johannesburg Cape Town Pietermaritzburg
Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee UDF Area Committee Descom
(Jodac) C/o UDF Office 170 Berg Street
PO. Box 93118 Community House
Yeoville 2198 41 Salt River Road National Education Union of South Africa (Neusa)
Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC)
2nd Floor
Khotso House
42 De Villiers Street, Johannesburg
National Education Union of South Africa (Ncusa)
PO. Box 15833
Doomfontein 2028
National Union of South African Students (Nusas)
Wits SRC
Wits University 2050
Young Christian Students
c/o Wits SRC
Wits University 2050
Salt River
National Union of South African Students
Cape Town SRC
Cape Town University
Rondebosch
Women's Movement for Peace
United Women's Organisation
Grahamstown
Grahamstown Democratic Action Committee
(Gradac)
National Union of South African Students (Nusas)
Rhodes University, SRC
Friends of the UDF

The friends of the UDF is an organisation which has been formed to raise money in South Africa for UDF projects. It hopes to support the UDF and bring it closer to self sufficiency. This is important in the light of attempts by the government to cut off the financial lifelines of the democratic movement. In 1986, the UDF was declared an affected organisation, although an appeal against this succeeded.

The funds of Friends of UDF will be administered by an Executive Committee which will be elected at an Annual General Meeting. Members will receive UDF publications.

If you want more details about Friends of UDF write to:

PO Box 32883

Braamfontein

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3 I am interested in joining a UDF affiliate

(Please indicate which one)

I am interested in knowing more about the UDF E

D I am interested in knowing more about Friends of the UDF

Mm b As; m,

10 Knipe Street

Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Action

170 Berg Street

National Union of South African Students (Neusa)

University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, SRC

Joint Academic Staff Association

University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

P.O. Box 375

Pietermaritzburg

Durban

Durban Democratic Association

c/o ECF

20 St Andrews Street

National Education Union of South Africa (Neusa)

Descom

c/o ECT

20 St Andrews Street

Jasa

Joint Academic Staff Association

University of Natal, Durban

King George V Ave

National Union of South African Students

University of Natal, Durban SRC

There are also a number of organisations who support the UDF although are not affiliated.

If you want to know more about the UDF or how to get involved in any of its affiliates feel free to fill in the form opposite:

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Johannesburg.