

Unity is Built in Struggle

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT.

- ZAKES KHULU

A united democratic front is not a new phenomenon. The history of the African National Congress confirms this, that it advocated a policy of united action with all forces opposed to apartheid. In 1926 we had the Non-European Conference; in 1935 the All-African Convention; the Non-European United Front (NEUF) in 1938 and the historic Congress Alliance of 1953. The organisational structures and tasks of these fronts corresponded with the objective demands of their time. Noteworthy is that all of them were born in action. This also reminds us that 1983 marks the 30th anniversary of this historic Congress Alliance.

Today the United Democratic Front is of crucial importance to all democratic forces in South Africa. This importance lies in the urgency of revolutionary change and the absolute necessity of involving the greatest number of our people in the liberation struggle. In response to the increased offensive of the forces of change, the racist regime has embarked on divisive tactics to paralyse the democratic forces. Increased violence, deceptive constitutional changes, repressive labour laws, mass removals and bantustanisation reflect the enemy schemes to prolong the existence of white supremacy. However, contrary to the enemy's desires, his frenzy has led to an unprecedented growth of mass organisations in our country.

IMPETUS

The Labour Party's decision to participate in the bogus Presidential Council sparked off an intense battle in our country which gave an immediate impetus to the formation of a united democratic front. It crystalized the fact that only through united action shall we stop the designs of racist Pretoria. A call made by Rev. Allan Boesak in the Transvaal anti-SAIC meeting to form a united democratic front to oppose the racist fraudulent constitutional proposals was welcomed with overwhelming enthusiasm.

This became evident in the United Democratic Front launching rally at the Rocklands, Mitchell's Plain, in Cape Town. The words of the Reverend Allen Boesak set the mood of the 12,000 people, representing more than 400 organisations. He said: "*We want all our all our rights. We want them here and we want them now. We have pleaded, cried, petitioned for too long now. We have been jailed, exiled, killed for too long now. Now is the time!*"

The conference elected Oscar Mpetha, Albertina Sisulu and Archie Gumede Presidents of the UDF. Popo Molefe of the Soweto Civic Association and Mosiuoa Lekota, a former SASO National Organiser, were elected National and Publicity Secretaries respectively.

Among these leaders, Nelson Mandela was elected a Patron of the UDF, with Martha Mahlangu, Hassan Howa and all Rivonia Trialists imprisoned for life.

The UDF is a coalition of forces irrespective of size. It bases itself on the principle of unshakable conviction in the creation of a non-racial unitary state in South Africa. This principle binds the UDF to consult and reflect accurately the democratic aspira-

tions of the people. The success of the UDF lies on this and its ability to mobilise the people at grassroot level. Again the success of the UDF lies on its ability to maintain unity irrespective of ideological differences, while at the same time being able to implement a viable programme of action that will involve the masses in active struggle.



Part of the delegates outside the hall at the launching of the UDF.

The UDF emerged in struggle as a response of the people to the deepening apartheid crisis which the enemy tries to put on their shoulders. It is an off-shoot of grassroot revolutionary mass mobilisation. The UDF therefore is a product of mass action, bearing the stamp of the unflinching courage of our people. In the words of Archie Gumede, a Congress Alliance veteran: *"Slogans are not enough Sweat and labour, careful thought and careful actions are needed..."*

THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND THE UDF

The African National Congress and its allies believe that a determined and relentless struggle by our people opens up possibilities to advance our struggle further. At all times the ANC has stressed the strategic value of unity of all the oppressed and democratic forces in our country. In 1978 the ANC advocated a political programme which elaborated on the forms of struggle to raise our offensive. On the basis of this programme the masses formed their own mass political organisations. This initiative culminated in the historic anti-republic campaign of 1981.

On January 8th our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, called on the people to form a united democratic front for national liberation to engage the enemy at all times in united action. Our role as an advanced contingent of this offensive should be to streng-

then all the forces for change. The UDF is a powerful weapon in the national liberation struggle. In reality in the UDF one can see the political and social edifice which also determines our forward drive to victory. Hence the ANC is obliged to support its (UDF's) actions politically and organisationally.

The ANC must strive to encourage the people to support and participate in the activities of the UDF. Our ideological work must be able to determine the behaviour and activities of the people at all times. Our ideological work must uphold the people's fighting tradition, mass heroism and an unbending revolutionary spirit.

For more than seven decades the ANC has been in the forefront of this battle. Long, fearless and persistent work by our underground units under trying conditions is paying dividends to our struggle. The ANC has won its rightful place in our struggle, among the masses, as the only reliable and revolutionary vanguard of our people.

Tru'o'ng Chihn, writing on the relation of the party and the front says:

"The Party cannot demand the front to recognise its leadership. It must instead show itself to be the most loyal, active and dedicated member of the front. It is only through daily struggle and work and only after the workers have recognised the correctness of the policies and leading capacity of the Party - that the Party can win the leading position".

Also we are not the vanguard because of what we say of ourselves, but because of what we actually do in the day to day life-and-death struggle and which the people see. The national liberation alliance headed by the ANC shall be able to guide the UDF only if we have our own underground structures within the UDF. These structures must be skilful, give the correct guide to the UDF and above all raise the tasks of the front.



Martha Mahlangu, Hassan Howa and Rev. Allan Boesak at the launching of the UDF.

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE UDF

Unity initiatives among workers continue as witnessed by the 5th trade union summit in Athlone. On their own workers can only elaborate trade union consciousness on the basis of their daily experiences at the point of production. By their nature trade unions are heterogeneous. Their daily experience is the only thing which unites them against the exploiter. A democratic union must be judged by its attitude towards the grievances of workers, the position it assumes in the event of action by the workers and by its policies as enshrined in its constitution.

Ideological differences among unions retard workers' unity and cannot be emphasised at the expense of the points that unite workers. The same with the tactics of registration and non-registration which affect unions equally through the Labour Registration Act. The UDF cannot supersede workers' unity. Instead the unity of the workers lays a wide basis for the success of the UDF.

The workers are a leading force in our struggle, not only because of their numerical strength, but because of the objective position they occupy in the South African society. They are the producers of material wealth, while being denied the leading position in the production of this wealth, moreover they are denied political rights. Because of this and their organisation and political consciousness, they are a decisive force in the struggle for the destruction of the racist colonial structures and to ensure that: *"ALL SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH."*

The workers therefore must contribute this revolutionary courage to the UDF by supporting and joining it. The numerical strength of the UDF depends on the extent to which the workers are unionised and politicised. The participation of the rural masses depends on the understanding that the rural people and farm labourers are the workers' time-tested allies in the struggle for change. Only when the co-ordinating centre of



OUR ARMY NEEDS A DYNAMIC POLITICAL PROGRAMME

- ISAAC MAKANA

The article written by comrade Amos Aluko entitled *"Mastering the Art of Winning Victory"* raises topical problems of our revolution. In the article the comrade discusses, among other things, the important question of political education in the ranks of our revolutionary army. He argues, and correctly so, that in order to master the dynamic situation developing in our country, we must work out a political programme which will be geared towards producing political organisers, propagandists and agitators who will give solutions to the day to day political problems agitating our people