

The international goals of the United Democratic Front are in no way different from its internal goals. We seek to end apartheid, to free our people from the scourge that makes their lives miserable. To effect this, we engage inside the country, in mass political action to demonstrate our rejection of apartheid and especially its most recent manifestations in the new Constitution and Koornhof Bills.

In both internal and external struggles our strategy has been to isolate the racist regime from any support, to mobilise the greatest possible support behind the democratic movement, to encourage any action that will reduce the capacity of the regime to continue its oppressive system.

For our internal strategy to succeed we need to take into account the concrete conditions existing locally. Equally, the way that we wage the struggle on an international level must take account of the special character of international relations, its specific dynamics. The way that one conducts the international struggle is not the same as mounting an internal campaign.

When you are fighting in the mountains and jungles you cannot apply the same strategies and tactics that you do when you are fighting in the deserts. Your goal will be the same, but your strategy and tactics cannot be identical. So too with international relations. We need to know the terrain, and we need to develop appropriate strategies and tactics.

We need to form a correct assessment of the complex international relationship of forces. Both the forces against apartheid, the Socialist states, African and Asian nonaligned states, some of the more democratic Western and Latin

American states, and the more collaborationist Western and Latin American states, are not monoliths. We need to understand the strengths, divisions and weaknesses within these States and groupings of States. If we are to make an effective intervention we cannot settle for easy simplistic analyses that ignore the complexity and precise character of international relations.

We need, in our international activities, to form a variety of types of relationships -with international organisations, states, political organisations, church groups, etc. In each case we have to form an assessment of the character of each such organisation or state. One cannot make certain requests of some types of states or of states in general. International relations are conducted in such a manner that we have to respect certain diplomatic conventions. (This is something that the Bolsheviks had to learn. At first they used the diplomatic bag to smuggle propaganda leaflets into their host countries. But gradually they came to distinguish the specific requirements of state-to -state relationships, that is, diplomatic relationships, from party activities)

Similarly, we need to be quite clear as to our expectations in any particular relationship. Certain states and organisations will genuinely assist us because they do support our struggle and do understand that it is a national liberation struggle. Other states and organisations may hope to drive a wedge between the various components of the forces struggling for liberation. Such states might try to mute the most advanced sections of the democratic movement, seek to transform our struggle into a civil rights movement and attempt to project a 'third force' outside or within our struggle.

The fact that certain states and organisations may not totally share our goals or may not share most of our goals, the fact that certain of their motives

in entering the relationship, may not coincide with ours, does not bar us from forming a relationship on terms favourable to us. Certainly it does not mean that such a relationship is without advantages for us.

We can learn from the international strategy of the Vietnamese in their epic struggle against imperialist occupation. At one stage the Vietnamese liberation movement sought United States support against the French colonialists. Then, in the second phase of struggle, after defeat of the French, the Vietnamese played off the French against the American imperialists.

Nevertheless, whatever relations we enter into, whatever diplomatic initiatives we undertake, must be measured against our overall goals. We must therefore ask, when evaluating any particular action or possibility: does it or will it advance the struggle to end apartheid, either by widening and strengthening the anti-apartheid forces, and/or by weakening the regime and/or by exposing its criminal acts to the world and/or by loosening the ties between the regime and its sympathisers?

Alternatively, any activity that might diminish the power and prestige of the democratic forces against apartheid, any activity that might set the struggle back, must obviously be rejected.

Just as the UDF is formed internally on the basis of a united opposition to apartheid shared by a variety of groupings, externally it seeks support from all opponents of apartheid. Our relations are generally with those who are sympathetic to the UDF and with which we share a generally similar understanding on a variety of issues. But we have, also to be able to establish correct and principled relationships not only with such states and organisations. It may be very difficult to establish meaningful relationships with states which condemn apartheid on the one hand, but whose internal policies may not be to our liking, or whose

attitudes on certain other issues may be in conflict with ours. It may, nevertheless, be in the interests of the UDF to establish and maintain such relationships -provided that they serve to advance our struggle.

If we are to conduct a sophisticated domestic and foreign policy, we have to be adept not only at direct attacks and responses, but also at spotting and exploiting differences in the enemy camp. Even with out-and-out reactionary governments our job is to make it more and more difficult for them to collaborate with apartheid. And within reactionary states, our quarrel is not with every party or organisation in such a state. Nor do we have any quarrel with the ordinary people who generally support our struggle.

These then are some of the considerations that should guide our international policy. How this has been pursued in relation to the elections and their aftermath, especially the consulate affair will now be considered. Finally, attention will be given to future priorities.

The Elections and their aftermath

During the recent elections for the new 'tricameral' parliament, the UDF sent letters to various national and international organisations and states, explaining its objection to the new constitution, emerging from a regime that has no right to govern the people of South Africa. It called for expressions of solidarity. Amongst the most significant were that of the late Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, who called for a boycott on the eve of the polls, and the unprecedented statement of the United Nations Security Council, declaring the new Constitution to be null and void.

Since the elections, the rising popular resistance has thrown the regime into a panic. Not only have leading democrats been arrested but state

terror has been unleashed against ordinary people on an unprecedented scale. It is in this context that we need to consider the British consulate affair and the recent visit of the British Labour representative on Southern Africa, Donald Anderson MP.

What would be the correct response for the UDF in this situation? The scale of repression appeared to signal a return to 'darker times' with a possible banning of UDF, wholesale banning of affiliates and leaders. The job of the UDF, it is suggested, was on the one hand to take defensive action, whatever action that could give our organisations protection. At the same time it had to intensify its offensive against the apartheid regime and its allies. In a changing situation it had to adopt flexible tactics in order to obtain maximum advantage. Its job was to ensure that whatever the regime sought to do to the democratic movement, would cost it a great deal, whether in internal resistance or increased international embarrassment and isolation. For every thing that is done to us we must try and exact a price, sufficiently dear to make the racists think before they attack us again.

After being freed by the Natal Supreme Court on the basis that their detention orders were defective, 5 UDF and Natal Indian Congress activists went underground. After the orders were modified, police launched a massive search for them. Had they simply given themselves up, these men would undoubtedly have been victims of apartheid.

Instead of being objects of our pity and/or protest alone, the five UDF and NIC leaders, joined by Paul David, who was also being sought, presented themselves at the British Consulate and applied for temporary asylum.

Kader Hassim of APDUSA (before giving himself up to the police) suggested

that he didnt want to go to the consulate because he did not want to give Britain the opportunity of appearing to be the champion of South Africa's oppressed people. 'Britain is not an ally or friend of the oppressed and exploited people here or anywhere else. Britain, together with the other Western powers, are the technical advisers of the PW Botha Regime.' (City Press 23.09.84)

Now I am sure that the Consulate Six had no illusions about Thatcher's government. Let us examine what they achieved, by creatively exploiting international contradictions:

*Instead of giving themselves up and going meekly to prison, being leaders of the oppressed and democratic movement, they took the initiative and created an entirely new theatre of struggle.

* This threw into the international limelight the repression of democratic leaders, whose 'offence' was to have campaigned against the racist constitution of an illegitimate regime. The popular victory against the constitution, which was well-known within the country, became internationally publicised.

They were thus able to externalise and take forward the offensive around the constitutional 'reforms' by providing an international issue through which the allies of the South African people could focus attention on the various atrocities being perpetrated by the apartheid regime

* This wiped out what 'gains' had been made in PW Botha's European tour in 'respectabilising' the regime -and upstaged his inauguration.

* Though activists have always known where Thatcher and Reagan stand, the consulate affair demonstrated before the masses of South Africa and the world, ^{this reality} ~~this reality~~, through their overt support for the racist government.

- * The UDF nevertheless appealed over the heads of Thatcher and Reagan to the people of their countries and democrats throughout the world. The result was a pressure which prevented the ejection of the people from the consulate.

- * Simultaneously, these events drove a wedge between the South African and the Thatcher regimes. The UK government was unable to kick the UDF leaders out. South Africa was unable to march into the consulate and retaliated by refusing to send its alleged arms smugglers back to Britain. The result was increased tension between 'friends'. One symptom of this tension was the United Kingdom's voting in favour of militant anti-apartheid resolution in the UN Security Council. Normally they would abstain or veto such resolutions.

- * These actions drove a further wedge within the western Five. While the UK and US were demonstrated to be collaborators, France sought to distance itself, with an unprecedented appearance before the special committee against apartheid.

- * The consulate 6 made use of international media coverage to speak about events well beyond their own personal situation. Their occupation of the consulate provided a means for throwing the spotlight on racist repression in general, whether through detentions, shooting in the townships or other violence. It is unprecedented that we should read a statement by Archie Gumede, Billy Nair and Paul David, on the front pages not only of overseas newspapers but as the lead story of our own newspapers. In the Star of 18.10.84 we read of their call on the government that 'in the interests of peaceful change to stop all police violence in the Vaal Triangle, meet the demands of the people in this area, return the four men to London to face charges of arms smuggling, stop all acts of denigration and threats against the United Democratic Front, and undertake to scrap detention without trial.'

The visit of Mr Donald Anderson provided ^{extensive} ~~represented~~ coverage of police violence, genuine popular grievances and focussed repeated attention on the UDF. Never before has the UDF had so much opportunity to present its case through the media. The fact that the British Labour Party has taken up the issue ^{so} ~~as~~ forcefully also provides UDF with some protection, that would not have been received had it not made such contacts.

The Future

Despite this great success, there is still much that needs to be done before the UDF can develop an adequate international presence, as an important factor in the struggle for national liberation in South Africa.

The UDF needs to deepen and widen its links and activities on this front. It should increase its contacts with States, the United Nations, OAU, Commonwealth, Nonaligned movement, political, women, students, church and other organisations sympathetic to our struggle. These organisations and States need to be supplied with regular information to facilitate their campaign to isolate the regime.

The UDF and its affiliates are in a position to publicise the indiscriminate repression against blacks that the regime attempts to conceal. We must ensure that the truth is known in all corners of the earth.

We need to continually assert that the present minority regime has no right to represent the people of South Africa, whether inside or outside the country. The fact that the people do not and have never governed South Africa needs to be stressed as part of the struggle to combat attempts to characterise the people's struggle as being for civil rights. We must clearly state that ours is a struggle for self-determination, for the national liberation of the people of South Africa