

C29

Report on First National Seminar
of Media Committees of the United Democratic Front
21 - 22 January 1984

Present:

Transvaal media committee members
West Cape media committee members
Eastern Cape media committee members
Border: two observers
Concern was expressed at the absence of representation from
Natal, OPS and North Cape.

Agenda:

1. Welcoming address from National UDP publicity secretary
2. Discussion on the theory of media
3. Outline by each region of their structures and procedures for UDP media production and distribution
4. Review of past national UDP media, and drawing lessons therefrom
5. Assessment of current situation in each region with implications for UDP media
6. Proposals (both general and specific) for UDP media today at national, regional and affiliate media levels
7. Proposals for swapping UDP media between different regions
8. Proposals for international distribution of UDP media
9. Proposals for UDP media archive
10. Proposals for sharing photographs.
11. Proposals on national communication, caucassing and feedback
12. Proposals on distribution in general
13. Proposals on financing UDP media
14. Proposals on production of UDP national media
15. Proposals on use of commercial press.

1. Welcoming address

See copy attached.

2. Theory of media

It was discussed how media could play the following general roles:

- a. Mobilising (propagandising / popularizing)
- b. Educational
- c. Informational
- d. Organisational
- e. Unifying

- f. Dis-unify
- g. Entertain.

Most media involved several of these roles, although one role was usually uppermost. For media to succeed in playing one role, it often needed to also play - albeit to a smaller extent - some of the other roles. Different media were suited to emphasizing different roles - handbills for mobilizing, booklets for educating, newsletters for informing, etc.

3. Outline of each region

The Border UDP did not have a UDP media committee nor UDP media because of the severe repression in the area. Access to reproduction technology was limited.

Eastern Cape was working towards setting up a media committee. Media (stickers and a UDP News round pamphlet) had gone out at the launch.

Western Cape had a media committee structure recently formed. Previous media for UDP had been done on an ad hoc basis.

Transvaal had a media committee which produced Tvl UDP media and which assisted the National Publicity Secretary in producing national media. A division of labour existed within the committee, though it was not rigid.

4. Review of past national UDP media

Past national UDP media was criticised for lacking content with regard to issues such as non-racialism, UDP as a front, slogans, abstractions (like 'We want our rights'). It was also criticised for trying to give a nationwide news picture at a superficial level. Problems of producing a national publication for a mass audience that differed regionally and with regard to community at this historical stage, were also discussed.

5. Assessment of current situation

Conditions varied vastly in different regions. Border had come through a state of war. Eastern Cape faced the problem of a strong Labour Party presence and the need to popularize UDP in Coloured areas. Western Cape said UDP was popular in the region, and a strong community press kept up the UDP profile. Transvaal

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stressed the need for building first-level organisation in the region, including media structures in existing organisations.

5 - 15 Proposals and recommendations on UDP media structures

1. Media committees should each have someone responsible for sending copies of posters, etc. to:

- a. Other media committees
- b. The Transvaal media committee for international distribution
- c. A local library in each area
- d. A UDP national archive (to be established).

2. Media committees should try to get feedback on UDP media from UDP affiliates and mass readers, and tell other regions about the results.

3. Media committees should inform each other about conditions of distribution in their area, and suggestions for distribution, before March 31.

4. Media committees should ensure a close link between media and distribution.

5. Media committees should try to see that photos are taken of UDP events in regions.

6. Media committees should have a person to contact about exchanging photos if possible.

7. UDP media committees can help affiliates use the commercial press where needed.

8. Regional publicity secretaries are responsible for press conferences, with the help of the media committees.

9. Media committees should ensure that their own members develop media skills.

10. Each media committee to discuss handling of video showings, T-shirts, buttons, stickers and banners in their region.

Proposals on National UDP media

1. National media should get some national funding.

UDP NEWS at national level aiming at a mass audience and based on existing UDP media structures was difficult to produce. In short-term, UDP NEWS would be produced regionally and sometimes

inter-regionally where possible (eg. Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Border region). Depending on the issue, UDP NEWS might be distributed with an emphasis on a specific community.

3. National statements on issues (when they arise) should be made available to the regions for use by media committees. In particular, a national call on the signature campaign was requested.

4. An educational kit or handbook for activists in the signature campaign might be considered at regional or inter-regional level.

5. A national newsbriefing with an informative role aimed at affiliates was proposed. Suggested title was UDP Update, with subtitle being National Newsbriefing of the United Democratic Front, and a suggested slogan being Tell no lies, claim no easy victories. National content would include a who's who on the national executive, important national UDP statements and responses to issues, messages of international support and activity, and UDP national activity (eg. conferences). Regional content would be forwarded to a central point by the 15th of every month, to enable the newsbriefing to be a monthly. Transvaal media committee would try to act as this central point at first, with regions rotating responsibility as they became able. Information to be forwarded should not be more than 5 pages long, and should cover where possible the following as they are now and with regard to future changes:

1. Structure of the regional UDP
2. Who's who in the regional exec (and subcommittees if region wants)
3. Updated list of affiliates
4. UDP regional activity: meetings
seminars
publications
campaigns
burning issues in the area
repression
contact with non-affiliates
criticisms and attacks on UDP, and responses to these
evaluations of UDP activity (if any have been made)
suggestions (eg. from fundraising committees if they have any)
5. Affiliate's activity that is related to UDP.

Regional media committees should send a quota for the number of copies they require - with an average of two per affiliate/area committee. This should be before 15 March, and should come to the Tvl media committee.

6. A national booklet was proposed that would have the role of informing, educating and organising. Its audience would be activists and potential affiliates, and it would be a one-off publication - not a regular one. Its contents were proposed as:
- a. Introduction (to cover the issues: what is a front - with regard to the background and emergence of UDP, non-racialism, different sites of struggle, the issue of a broad front, of a loose front as opposed to a tight party, of UDP not being separate from its affiliates but depending on their active participation).
 - b. Structures and regions in the UDP (with diagrams)
 - c. Explanation of colours, logo, slogan.
 - d. List of affiliates, officials and patrons.
 - e. Explanation of affiliate procedure.
 - f. Declaration.
 - g. Working principles.
 - h. UDP launch resolutions.
 - i. Illustrations of UDP media.
 - j. addresses of UDP offices.
 - k. UDP policy statements.
 - l. Photographs.
 - m. Messages of support for UDP.
 - n. Cartoon graphic relating UDP to different sites of struggle.

Proposed titles are: UNITE! Documents of the United Democratic Front; UNITE!! An introduction to the United Democratic Front; UNITE!! The Emergence of the Front; UDP in Motion; UDP for Beginners; The United Democratic Front; What is the UDP?; UDP: 'the Front'; UDP - A History is Made; United Democratic Front - A Beacon of Hope; United Democratic Front - 'Freedom in our Lifetime';, UDP - On the March to Freedom; The United Democratic Front. An Introduction; Unity in Action (United Action); The United Democratic Front at a Glance; UDP: Another page in the history of resistance; UDP: how long is our objective? UDP: Will white supremacy survive?; UDP: A People's United Front; A Landmark in our History - the UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT; A Long-needed (or desired) People's Front - the United Democratic Front; Phambili Enkululwakeni: Glimpses of the United Democratic Front; Lalalane: the Documents of the UDP.

Proposals on Regional media

1. Regions to produce their own UDP News, posters, pamphlets, etc. as is regionally necessary.

Affiliate media - proposals.

1. Affiliate media should have a subtitle noting affiliation to UDP.
2. Affiliate media should be encouraged.
3. Media committees should try to get affiliate media that covers UDP activities into the local and national UDP archive.

Progressive press - proposals

1. Media committees should work closely with the progressive press.

General proposals

1. Media should be cost-effective and not wasted.
2. UDP media should reflect the content of the launch resolution on the working class.
3. UDP media committees should resolve to involve more women in their structures.
4. National publicity secretary asked to devote more time to visit media committees in different regions.
5. A second national media committee seminar should be held within the next six months.

Practical

The seminar ended with practical work on a design for a poster for the UDP signature campaign, and a format for the newsbriefing and booklet.

OUR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IN 1984 - by UDF National Publicity Secretary,
'Terror' Lekota

MAY I welcome you all to this media workshop - our first in 1984. This workshop is designed both to review our publicity work to date and plan for the future. We must review our national, regional and local publicity machinery and the products of its work so far. At the same time, we must devise means of correcting our shortcomings and improving our performance. But I must emphasise that **only** thoroughgoing and frank criticism and self-criticism will expose to us our mistakes.

YOU will notice then that the initial part of the agenda consists of reviews and general theoretical discussions designed to arm us with ideas. The second part of the agenda will involve devising strategies and practical arrangements for work in the future.

As publicity and media workers we have the task of bringing to the attention of the public certain valuable factual information in as accurate a fashion as possible. This is an important task because the ruling classes in whose interest it is to maintain their class rule employ large quantities of resources either to suppress information that threatens their rule or present it in such a way that its damning edge is blunted.

In SA today this is particularly true because the state continuously places restrictions on what may and may not be known.

Inherent in our process of reporting is the recording of our heritage of struggle for future generations. Let us treat this with the seriousness and care worthy of the task.

Hand in hand with factual reporting is the task of interpretation of events. We are not unconcerned recorders of events like cameras. We are at the same time interpreters who assist the masses of our people to read meaning into events. Out of the apparent disorder of daily happenings is a definite process

of social movement from one point to another. There is the decay and degeneration of the oppressive structures of apartheid (revealing itself in the collapse of discipline within Nationalist ranks and their quislings, eg. the Info scandal, Diedrichs estate, smuggling of exam papers, activities of Koevoet, etc.).

In contradistinction to this process of rotting and dying away of the old order, is the emergence of a free, democratic and nonracial society manifesting itself in the stronger resistance of our day, eg. the UDF, objection to conscription, rejection of each carrot the state offers, and so on.

Our task then entails also the revelation of this process of birth of a new order. New slogans, new values, new ambitions, a new South Africa. To make this known and to help define roles for classes and strata of our society if they are to play their role properly in history, is our obligation.

As a primary condition we must be knowledgeable about the tasks of publicity and media. That is to say we should master the art of how to do these things both by our preparedness to learn from each other and from our past mistakes.

Let us therefore make this seminar, truly, an occasion that will enable us to learn from each other how media and organisation relate to each other, how media can help mobilise, inform, and educate our masses in our struggle. UDF UNITES! APARTHEID DIVIDES!

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