

C106

Rev "C106"

Comrades, I greet you on the occasion of the first NGC since the launching of the UDF in August 1983.

I greet you in the name of the leading patriots who continue to inspire us from Robben Island, Polsmoor Prison and in exile.

I greet you in the name of comrades Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and ~~others~~ ^{and many} who continue to contribute to the struggle for liberation from outside our borders.

We are meeting in a critical stage of our history, at a time when there have been important developments in the ranks of the democratic forces and in that of the enemy camp, those struggling to maintain apartheid.

What is the task of the Front at a meeting of this nature? We believe that we need to :-

1. Understand the current stage of our struggle. In other words we need to appreciate the context within which we are now operating.
2. We Need then, to take account of changes in the objective conditions. In other words, the modes of domination and exploitation, the changes in the way that our people are being oppressed and exploited. We also need to understand the changing strenghts and weaknesses within our own ranks and that of the forces of apartheid.
3. We need then to appreciate changes in the composition of the enemy camp, and look at the changes in the way the enemy is working today, and formulate a fresh and dynamic approach to our own allies and potential allies.

This is the time to frankly consider what we have expereined in the last 18 months. We can proudly acclaim our victories. But we must, in a conference like this, honestly admit our errors and weaknesses. On the basis of such a frank appraisal we can map out a path for our immediate campaigns, and also for our long-term struggles.

On the basis of a correct characterisation, a proper understanding of the present phase of our struggle, we must formulate our key objectives and overall approach.

This will enable us to develop creative strategies and tactics. This will give us the capacity to seize the initiative, to make new and decisive interventions.

On this basis, we will be able to plan the campaigns through which we will take our struggle forward.

But before we can go any further, I wish to draw your attention to certain observations.

I do this in the belief that we meet here today as democrats who are serious about the struggle, who have a genuine concern for our unity, and a clear realisation that we meet at a time of serious crises in our own ranks.

We must warn ourselves that unless certain indisciplens in our ranks are eliminated, our own organisations are threatened with disunity and division.

For us to have a successful NGC, all forms of regionalism, individualism, cliquism must be stopped.

We have important decisions to make this weekend - it is the task of every single comrade present at this NGC to ensure that we emerge as one united family in the interest of our peoples' struggle. Remember that we meet not in our individual capacities, but as activists of a peoples front. Let us resolve our differences in a comradely spirit.

The 1976^{up} rising created a crises for the partheid state. Wholesale bloodshed temporarily contained mass resistance. It was necessary to provide a more long-term strategy which would widen the power base of the regime. Instead of whites ruling alone, staffing most of the civil service, police force and SADF, The new strategy initiated by the 1983 constitution would try to draw in sections of the oppressed community. It is aimed to split the unity of black resistance, to co-opt sections of the Indian and Coloured community, to help in maintaining apartheid in general, and in particular: the exclusion of the African majority.

Linked to the constitution were the Koornhoff Bills. Their effect was to spell out the implications of african exclusion from the tri-cameral parliament. Not only were they to be declared foreigners in the land of their birth, to realise their political aspirations in the bantustans and other puppet structures. In addition the Koornhoff legislation provided for tighter control over urban Africans, yet also sought to intensify divisions between urban and rural people. It also depended on ever-increasing uprooting and forced removals of African communities.

This confronted the democratic movement with a major threat and an urgent task to frustrate this process. At that point we had to deal with the question of how best to develop the maximum participation of all the oppressed and democratic people in the struggle against this legislation.

Because a handful of activists are not going to liberate S.A.; we had to ask; in the concrete conditions of 1983, how would we best mobilise the broad masses.

What were the conditions that led to the decision to form the UDF - a popular Front. These were :-

- * The low level of political organisation existing at the time.
- * Limited regional co-ordination.
- * Very limited number of political organisations in existence.

These factors made it impossible to seriously contemplate the formation of a single political organisation. The creation of a united front enabled us to base the new front structure on existing political, community, women, student, church, worker and youth organisations. It also provided impetus for the proliferation of new organisations.

Instead of various sectors of our struggle maintaining their opposition to apartheid in relative isolation, the UDF, while retaining the distinctive qualities of each affiliate, provided the possibility for greater unity in our opposition.

We can justly claim major victories for our struggle through the ~~work~~ ~~of~~ the UDF.

- * We have successfully reached out and mobilised freedom loving people in all corners of our land.
- * We have shown S.A. and the world that this government, its new constitution and puppet leaders do not enjoy the support of the masses.
- * The UDF has effectively mobilised progressive sectors of the ^{international} community to oppose apartheid and destroy the myth that P.W. reforms are meaningful change.
- * The people of the Vaal, Crossroads and Uitenhage, demonstrated in their courage that the Botha regime is not interested in meeting the demands of our people. Bullets and the massacring of our people have been their response to our people's calling for peace and justice.

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remind ourselves of the fundamental principles that guide us in our quest for freedom.

What then ^{is} The Nature of our struggle?

Amidst the confused claims and counter-claims of the Nationalists and their puppets; the monthly celebrations of bantustan independence and the empty speeches of the discredited Coloured Representatives and Indian Delegates we must once more restate the nature of our S.A. struggle. Especially because some people in the neighbouring states and in the United States now describe our struggle as a civil-rights question. The whole chorus of "Reform, reform in South Africa!" is based on the failure to understand the nature of this struggle.

Our struggle is a national democratic struggle. It ^{is} a struggle of the majority of the people of S.A. against a minority regime that represents the interests of foreigners and, tramples under its feet the aspirations of the people. It is a struggle in which this country and all its resources must be returned to its rightful owners (ie. Black and White South Africans) and establish a government that will fulfil their wishes and needs.

Who are the people? We have stated in the past that the people consist of all those classes, parts of classes, organisations, groups and individuals who form part of or support the struggle against apartheid. The people, therefore, do not consist of one class or race. Indeed, they consist of persons from all racial groups who have an interest in a struggle to destroy apartheid.

On the other hand, the forces of apartheid are all those classes, sections of classes, organisations, groups and individuals who form part of or support the machinery of apartheid. This category includes Blacks as well as Whites. Blacks who support apartheid do so for group interests such as the business people in the town Councils and the Indian and Coloured Parliaments, or simply because of personal ambition. Whatever their motives it is not for the

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The masses agree with what they are doing, or not. They represent themselves. Furthermore, they participate in the state machinery despite the clear rejection by our people.

The dividing line between the people and the forces of reaction is not static. It always shifts with the changing phases and stages of the struggle. We need at all times to be aware that people do not remain in the camp of the people or enemy permanently. This can change as the struggle intensifies. Our responsibility is to win over the maximum number of people to ~~side~~ our side, even those we once considered our enemy.

The over-riding challenge for our Broad Front is whether it will continue to win more and more individuals, groups and organisations to its fold. If not, it must draw them into limited campaigns ~~in the Western Cape~~, such as the joint UDF-Unions anti-election rally of last August in the Western Cape or the August rally of the UDF, trade unions and other organisations in P.E. or the Transvaal stayaway of last November.

From our experience in S.A. we see that Imperialism continues to support the position of the white minority in its domination of the majority.

Imperialist forces today continue to bolster Apartheid and ~~in~~ protect their own economic interests. They have destabilised independent neighbouring states and have compromised the potential of the Angolan & Mozambican governments could have played to support our struggle.

Imperialist countries especially USA & U.K. have often refused to condemn the Nats. In this regard they are accomplices to atrocities perpetrated against opponents of the apartheid regime.

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We must remember that the question of organising our people is a historical process. It is a long and hard road.

Our glorious heroes of the past have taken us some distance along this road. Our people have built a tradition of courageous battles in the fight for our liberation. The UDF is merely another stage along this journey of our tradition. However the UDF is not at the end of this journey.

We must still continue until we reach our goal of a highly organised people capable of swinging the overall balance of forces in our favour. At the end of this conference we must plan to move to the next stage on the road to becoming highly organised.

Central to planning our future for the next year is a correct understanding of this government's strategy and its weaknesses.

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In General Terms, state strategy is one of Reform, co-optation, division^{and}, repression.

African Sector

- Community councils
- Creation of Forum
- Reinforcing homelands
- Recognition of permanent African urban rights
- Creation of middle class
- Influx control relaxation
- Inclusion in local government schemes

What have we achieved so far?

- Community councils - virtually non-existent. Due to mass action
- ideological rejection of homelands, but level of resistance & organisation in homelands is weak.

Indian & Coloured

- Tricameral system with local government which has not been fully worked out
 - These have been rejected
 - Key strategy - more money for these schemes
 - Offering perks - eg more money for housing, education etc. created a middle class.
- Government has attempted to co-opt.

Broadly - creation of middle class

- shows by opening of CBD, ^{CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT} creation of small business development corporations

Labour

- Recognition of African Trade Unions provided limited economic issues.
- Mass action is curtailed
- Development in Eastern Cape shows that this has failed
- ~~There~~ There is a hesitancy of leadership of T.U. to mass action. However, workers in communities ^{face} ~~face~~ repression and hardship, thus have engaged in mass action.

Repression

- Army, police & legal system are used in acts of repression to remove leadership and kill the ~~lead~~ movement.

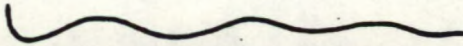
International

- encourage investment
- Create an impression of change

Overall - state strategy is in a melting point and ~~is~~ ^{is} being determined by:-

1. contradictions within ruling classes
ie between state & capital
local & international
state & right wing
2. resistance of people

Now is the time to act decisively and seize the initiative from the state.



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Weaknesses:

1. Capacity to build organisational structures which will enable us to take up issues affecting the people in a most effective manner.
2. To cultivate the quality of our leadership, both at leadership and activists level.
3. To ensure that our structures will be strengthened - that they are able to withstand repressive measures of the state.
2. We have, however other weaknesses related to inexperience, limited understanding as well as handling political issues. - due to lack of training at activist level.
3. Lack of political, theoretical understanding, clarity - leads to limited understanding of the basic issues. This is also due to inadequate training of our activists. Lack of common understanding and approach leads to unequal development and differences in the way we see issues. Therefore, different conceptions of issues like the centrality of the African masses in our struggle, working class leadership, etc. The overcoming of this weakness is essential for the development of our unity.
4. We have not maximised participation of peoples organisations in the Front. Broaden out - specially Trade Unions. Even participation of affiliates is limited. In our decision making we must find the balance between maximum participation and the need to respond to issues quickly.
5. Regionalism and factionalism.
6. We have not articulated our alternatives and demands clearly. This must become part of our challenge to the state.

Let us recall what we have done so far.

We have recalled our fundamental approach to the liberation struggle; we have characterised the current stage of our struggle; we have looked at briefly at govt. strategy and its weaknesses and have reflected upon our own weaknesses.

We now need to look at the road ahead.

In order to move to ~~this~~ higher level of organisation, we need to understand and implement the slogans of the NEC that was adopted for this conference.:

FROM PROTEST TO CHALLENGE; FROM MOBILISATION TO ORGANISATION.

What do we mean by these words?

By Protest, we mean a state of affairs where one articulates disapproval of a particular issue or even a system. There is a proud tradition of protest in this country, going back to the end of the 19th century.

By Challenge, we mean a situation where one takes on the state in certain arenas, where one attempts, as far as possible to frustrate its efforts, prevents its advances, force it to retreat, and if possible, cut off all its lines of retreat. Recent examples are the ANTI-Saic campaign, the anti-Constitution campaign, The Soweto uprisings, the resistance in Langa, Crossroads, The Vaal, the boycott of gutter education.

Where that challenge has sometimes been spontaneous, our job is to transform it into a conscious process, planned as part of coherent strategy.

We need also to expand the base of our challenge. We have not yet developed a sufficiently coherent approach to take up the issues most affecting the African people, especially the working class and people on the land or those being forced off the land.

This conference needs to pay particular attention to these issues.

It is not sufficient for us to harness a massive force. We must know where to direct it. We must be capable of co-ordinating it and it must be capable of achieving its objectives.

There is no point if we are capable of challenging the state, in striking at the point where it is strongest. We need to harness our forces in such a way that we can strike at the weakest link in the apartheid chain.

We need then to develop a capacity that we do not yet command. This entails an ability to assess where the apartheid structure is at its weakest. It also means marshalling our forces and being able to co-ordinate and direct them accurately.

Where such a challenge is adequately co-ordinated, we can start the process towards the achievement of our fundamental goals. Where we can present such a sustained and organised, systematic challenge, we can start the process whereby one moves as closer towards the transformation of S.A. from a racist tyranny towards a democratic state.

If we want to achieve this goal, if we even want to initiate this process, we need to start a much more sustained effort to build unity within our own ranks. We cannot even contemplate taking our struggle to a higher level if we do not overcome our regional divisions and factionalism. We need to build greater unity.

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What then are OUR MAIN TASKS?

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It is not my ^{role} task to spell out the detailed tasks of the

However, certain guidelines will be offered to assist us in defining our tasks during the course of this NAC.

1. UNDERSTANDING OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD

Let us be mindful that the correctness of our approach to the struggle will depend on the accuracy with which we interpret the situation around us - that is, on the analysis of our country and struggle.

2. DEFINING THE STAGE OF OUR STRUGGLE

The struggle for freedom ~~is~~ goes through various stages - each stage having its own characteristics and tasks. We have defined this stage as one of increasing challenge to the apartheid system and the building of strong organisation.

3. EDUCATE OURSELVES

Strong organisation depends on the extent to which the membership of the organisation is educated about and familiar with the analysis, stage of struggle and key tasks. Otherwise we work at cross ~~for~~ purposes with each other.

4. HIGHER LEVEL OF ORGANISATION AMONG US

Unless certain crucial organisational tasks are undertaken, ~~our~~ our ability to execute our responsibilities will be seriously compromised:

4.1 BROADENING THE FRONT

AND AGREEMENT

4.2 BUILDING GREATER COHESIVENESS ON QUESTIONS OF

- nature of our struggle
- organisational approach
- style of work

4.3 BUILDING PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

through the length and breadth of the country among all sections of our people.

4.4 DEVELOPING AN EXPERIENCED LEADERSHIP

without which no organisation can move ahead effectively

4.5 TRAIN OUR ACTIVISTS AND ORGANISERS

5. DEVELOP CREATIVELY THE STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF CHALLENGE

Struggling with the apartheid regime is a science - not a haphazard process. The decision that it is time to challenge and not merely protest - must be made after a scientific assessment of the situation.

Having done this we must creatively work out how our challenge is to be executed.

6. BUILD GENUINE UNITY

We must struggle in a comradely way against all tendencies which sow division and suspicion in our ranks -

This is vital or we face a dim future

Factionalism, Regionalism, individualism must stop.

7. FORMULATING A PROGRAM

This is our task today -

to draw up the program which will serve to guide our work in the coming year.

8. STRUGGLE WITH PEOPLE : DAY TO DAY

Let us not stand apart from our people - let us participate at every level in the day-to-day struggles of our people.

Our task is to develop the skills and experience which will enable us channel and direct the energies of our people.

CONCLUSION

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Comrades, let us look at the issues we have raised today.

Our task is a serious and profound historical responsibility -

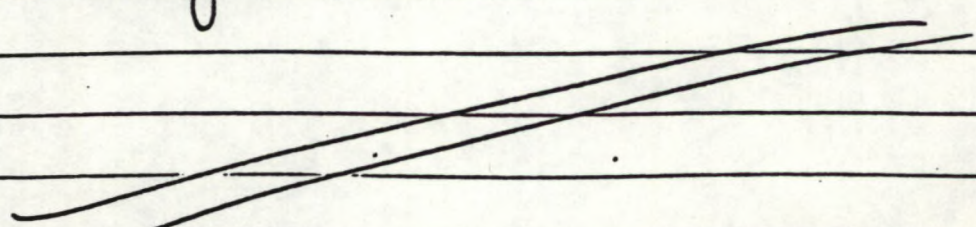
let us not fall short because of our own weaknesses - which are within our abilities to resolve.

But our future is a bright one -

You and other comrades in the UDF and its affiliates have achieved tremendous results.

Let us not stop - let us continue in

the proudest traditions of our democratic movements to a free S.A



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