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UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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S.A.D.F IN OUR SCHOOLS

Dear Parents, Teachers and members of the Community,

You may have read in the newspapers last week that a teacher at Belmore Primary School in Hanover Park organised for the Std. 4 and 5 children to go camping at Faure. The parents of these children approached UDF to help them find out what this camp was all about, and a delegation went to the School Principal. He knew nothing about this camp, even though it was organised by a teacher in his school.

Eventually, the parents heard the story from the PT teacher. He had asked the South African Defence Force (SADF) to take the children to Faure. There, they would camp, play-sport and learn about Civil Defence. The teacher said that there are no facilities in Hanover Park, so the children hang around on street corners. He wanted to give the children something special.

UDF says to all parents and teachers of young children: The PT teacher is right that there are no playgrounds, libraries and sportsfields in our areas. But that problem is not solved by sending children to Faure. In each of our areas, residents have formed civic organisations to fight for better living conditions. If we want playgrounds and libraries, we should join these civics to fight for them.

The Hanover Park camp is not the only one. Last year there were similar camps in Guguletu and Mbekweni. The SADF is taking many children on these camps, and they organise programmes for the children during the holidays.

But we ask these questions: Why do the SADF and the teachers who organise these camps hide it from the parents? Why do they not tell parents who will take responsibility for the children? Can we be sure that our children will be safe with SADF soldiers? What will our children do on these camps?

We want our children to grow up in peace and friendship. Our children must not believe that violence, war and the army are here forever.

But the Nationalist government and the SADF want to win the hearts and minds of our children. Then the government can conscript them, and force them to join the army. This is the same army which chased and shot students in 1976 and 1980.

All of this is part of the Nationalists "New Deal". They want to offer some sections of the population a vote in Apartheid so that they can force our sons to defend Apartheid.

But do we bring our children up so that they can die defending a system

- that forces us to live in Mitchells Plain, Atlantis and Khayelitsha in bad conditions,
- where prices of food and rent go up and up while our wages are kept low,
- that forces our children to go to gutter education schools
- that forces us to pay GST on everything we buy so the government can spend all their money on the army?

UDF rejects this New Deal. It will not bring an end to our problems.

We call on you to talk to people in your area about why the army is organising camps for young children. Ask the principal at the local school if he will allow these kinds of camps. Maybe there has already been a camp at that school; maybe they are planning one for the near future. Raise these questions at the PTA. Ask your priest or imam what he thinks about these SADF camps. UDF is keen to advise and assist anyone who is concerned about these camps. We are concerned because we want a peaceful and democratic South Africa for all the people of the country. We do not want a South Africa where the army controls our lives and our country.

APARTHEID DIVIDES, UDF UNITES

Collection Number: AK2117

DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: **Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location: **Johannesburg**

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