

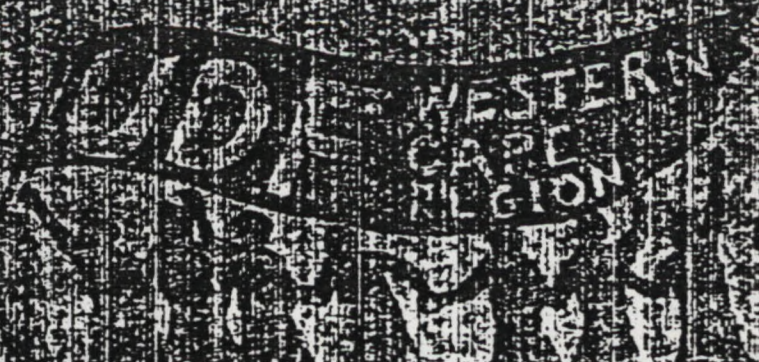
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UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

First AGM 16/17 March 1985  
Reports & Resolutions

From protest to challenge...  
Mobilisation to organisation!



DRAFT PROGRAM. AE FOR UDF WESTERN CAPE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 16 MARCH

9.00 to 9.30 Registration of delegates  
9.30 to 9.45 Agreement of Standing Rules  
9.45 to 10.15 Presidential Address  
10.15 to 10.30 Tea  
10.30 to 11.00 Secretarial Report (First Part)  
11.00 to 1.00 Discussion Arising  
1.00 to 2.00 Lunch  
2.00 to 2.30 Secretarial Report (Second Part)  
2.30 to 4.30 Discussion Arising  
4.30 to 4.45 Tea  
4.45 to 5.15 Joint Rural Areas Report  
5.15 to 5.45 Discussion Arising  
5.45 to 6.15 Treasurer's Report  
6.15 to 7.00 Discussion  
7.00 to 8.00 Motivation for Draft Resolutions (Pending)  
8.00 Adjournment for Supper/Social

SUNDAY 17 MARCH

9.00 to 10.00 Working Principles Amended  
10.00 to 12.00 Resolutions & Programme Adopted  
12.00 to 12.30 Lunch  
12.30 to 2.00 Elections  
2.00 to 2.15 Acceptance Speech  
2.15 Closure

(Unfortunately, the programme does not allow sufficient time for full discussion of sub-committee reports, thus these will be included in the Secretarial reports)

Fellow comrades, Members of the Executive and Delegates

I greet you all in the name of liberation. It is a great pleasure to praise our affiliates for the contribution they gave to the struggle in the past eighteen months.

I wish to thank our secretaries and my executive members for the tremendous work they have done for the U.D.F. I wonder how many of us in this conference realise the amount of work these comrades have done for the smooth running of the U.D.F.?

Comrades can only hope that the oncoming officials will as well run our office smoothly, and that all our affiliates will do their best to push forward our struggle.

I will be failing in my duty if I don't mention the gallant work that the Western Province people have done. I feel that I can safely say that as far as the Elections of the Community Councils are concerned, our people have given a unanimous NO to this Government dummy body.

Again in the Anti-Election campaign, what marvellous work our people have done. This Government thought they would divide us and make us peace meals, but our people refused to be divided by this notorious Government, as far as the 1 million signature campaign is concerned, our people have shown a hard force during that campaign as a result.

The Western Cape, as far as numbers are concerned, was leading all the other provinces.

This brings us to the conclusion that united we will win, divided we will fall.

I therefore call upon the W.C. to preserve this unity which has made a success of the signature campaign and other events. I know that there are petty personal differences which over the past year, nearly split us and made us the victims of the apartheid system.

Before I conclude, let me not forget the heroism of our youth, those who fell under the barrel of the gun, under this vicious Government, who professed not to be violent and asked Nelson Mandela to denounce violence.

May I ask, was it Nelson Mandela who massacred people in Sharpville and Langa?

At this point in time I ask you, comrades to stand in remembrance of the people of Crossroads and Sebokeng and other places.

Stand again

We must remember that not only has this Government shot our people but has deprived us of our leaders and detained and charged them with treason, harboring on the hope that the people will be intimidated and forced to accept apartheid.

In conclusion,

I call upon you comrades to sink all petty differences or squabbles and march forward

and march forward together to Victory.  
Long live U.D.F.!:  
Long live the Freedom Charter!  
There shall be houses for all.  
There shall be work for all.  
There shall be equal education for all.  
The people shall govern.

Amandla!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SECRETARIAL REPORT - PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF WORK DONE

Comrade Chair and delegates

This AGM takes place at an important point in our history. Firstly, we are now just a few days from the 25th anniversary of Sharpsville, which brings to mind both the violence of the apartheid government and the many lives lost in our struggle to be free. Yet 25 years later, we are stronger than ever. Throughout our country people are on the move. In Crossroads, the Eastern Cape, the Transvaal and the Free State — daily our people are challenging the government.

The government itself is in the weakest position since it came to power in 1948. Every move it has made to keep apartheid alive - the Flack Local Authorities, Tri-cameral Parliaments and the Coloured Labour Preferential policy - has collapsed as a result of mass action. More than that, its policies have very directly brought this country to the brink of economic ruin. We are now witnessing the most callous attempt by both the government and the bosses to shift the burden of this economic crisis onto the backs of our people. Every day, the toll of retrenchments and high prices rises.

It is in this context, comrades, that we meet to assess the past 19 months and the road that lies ahead of us. In this report, we shall look at the role that we, in the UDF, have played in shaping the present political situation. We shall also see some of the mistakes we have made, and we shall look forward to advancing our struggle even further.

19 MONTHS OF UNITED ACTION

Comrades, the last 19 months have been challenging and exciting ones. But they have also been hard months. When we look back we are painfully aware of our limitations - the weakening of our organisations that we had so painstakingly built, our problems in building democracy, working class leadership and non-racialism, our difficulties mobilisation into organisation. These are serious issues that need to be tackled. At the same time, however, we must see them in the context of what we have built and the real gains that we in the UDF have made.

Two years ago, when the apartheid government presented its 'new deal', it was an attempt to go on the offensive, to sweep the political ground from under our feet. In short, to build unity and power among the rulers and to throw the forces of opposition into disarray. We were poorly equipped to deal with this new situation. Our organisations were battling to sustain themselves and to move from the purely bread-

and butter issues to the broader political questions. We should also remember that there was very poor co-ordination between organisations and no links with the rest of the country.

Yet we took up the challenge and launched the UDF. Today, as we have already mentioned, the government's 'new deal' has failed miserably in achieving what it set out to. Internally the government faces opposition from all quarters: from our people who have been successfully mobilised to reject every one of apartheid's tricks and manoeuvres; from the big bosses who are even being forced to call for the unconditional release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC; now too from the Nationalists own support base, the farmers and white workers. Internationally, the apartheid regime has never been so isolated as the voice for disinvestment grows louder, and even the United States, apartheid's most important ally, is forced into condemning the arrests of the UDF leadership.

Comrades, much of this is due to the UDF. Although not without cost, the profile we have built for the UDF has undoubtedly made it the most important political force inside our country.

The UDF pushed back the frontiers of what was politically possible. We have seen how peoples awareness has been heightened by the buzz of activities associated with the UDF. It is now far easier to link bread - and - butter issues to politics. We experienced the resounding anti-election campaign victory. We read in the last issue of Grassroots how our people responded to Mandela's statement; we saw last week how ordinary people responded to the 'City Press' poll to find South Africa's most popular leadership. Very little of this was thought to be possible before August 20, 1983.

This awareness has stretched throughout the breadth of our land. It has reached into areas where no organisation existed before - and the presence of delegations from the rural areas here today bears testimony to this. In many areas, UDF structures have given birth to strong and militant grassroot organisation. The UDF has awakened our people's determination to fight back, it has become the symbol of our people's will throughout the country.

So today we can talk of a national political response and movement against apartheid. Slowly, we can begin to talk of a nationally co-ordinated struggle. This comrades, is important. Firstly we tend to become caught up in our work and our problems to the point where we forget that we extend beyond Du Toits Kloof mountains, and secondly, because this national movement has only been made possible by the UDF. Our organisations as they existed could never have achieved what they have now, united in the UDF.

All this, however, has not been without problems and losses. In the process of

carving out a space of legitimacy for the UDF, of operating in a new and unfamiliar terrain, there have, of course been problems and mistakes.

We are still battling with the question of how a front should operate and at times the differences between a front and an organisation have been blurred.

We are all aware that at the time of launching, there was great unevenness from one organisation and region to the next. The growth of UDF structures and organisation in previously unorganised areas has gone some way in addressing this problem. In general, however, the manner of our work has not assisted in correcting these imbalances, so in some instances the unevenness is more marked. We have not given our affiliates sufficient encouragement to strengthen themselves, even though there were golden opportunities for this. Yet at the same time, it would not be correct to lay the blame on the UDF. We must remember the difficulties and the deadlock that our organisations had reached prior to the UDF. We must also realise that the space does exist for our organisations to intervene and build themselves - as the UWO has shown in New Crossroads recently. The presence of UDF, in fact, deepens and strengthens these interventions.. We are equally guilty of not devoting sufficient attention to such problems.

It is often said that we have tried to march too far ahead of our organisations and that we have not done sufficient ground work. Yet we must remember that our people will not wait until we believe we have adequately prepared the ground. The anger that is exploding all around the country bears testimony to our people's readiness for mass action, and we must be committed to taking this forward.

Lastly comrades, we have not found the formula for taking democratic decisions in the shortest space of time, but this will be dealt with fully in the other part of the report.

#### THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Comrades, with the experiences which we have gained, we address ourselves to the future. I would like to suggest briefly, some of the challenges which confront us - either by way of campaigns, or by way of improved practice.

#### \* THE NEW DEAL

We have seen throughout the country the anger of our people against structures such as the Black Local Authorities and community councils, an anger that in many places



make it impossible for these structures to continue their oppressive practices. We salute our people and we will continue to ensure that the influence of such structures over our people's lives is challenged. Wherever possible we will mobilise mass action against these community councils, management committees and the tricameral parliament itself.

\* Balance between political and bread - and - butter organisations

Comrades, I think that our starting point must be that this is a false distinction and that both forms of organisations are inextricably linked. It should be clear that the UDF cannot remain silent on the important political events of our time such as the Treason Trial. In the same way, cost of living increases, rentals and wage demands are equally the life blood of our organisations. The challenge, comrades, is to find the balance.

\* BUILDING WORKING CLASS PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

Comrades, most of us would accept that we need to build the participation and leadership of the majority of our people, the workers. We need to acknowledge that over the past 19 months, we have not gone very far in either involving working people in the work of the Front or in building their leadership. This is a problem that needs serious attention, it is a challenge to both our organisations and our regions.

\* BUILDING A DISCIPLINED MOVEMENT: UNITY, SELF - CRITICISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Without going into specifics, comrades, there have been times of unity and distrust, among our own ranks. While we recognize that we are not a party, there exists amongst us differences of approaches which we must not allow to divide us. We need to understand that no movement can be built without a disciplined approach. Such a discipline includes a respect for our people, our organisations and our leaders; a comradely love for those who struggle with us; and, at all times, a commitment to democracy and unity. We must work as a team of responsables, and with a willingness to recognise our own shortcomings. This we build in ourselves; it must dominate our attitude and our relationships within our organisations and it is this we bring into the Front.

\* TAKING ALL OUR AFFILIATES ALONG WITH US IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR POLITICAL PROGRAMMES (OR LACK THEREOF)

Again, we must emphasize that we are a Front and that we exist to advance the broadest range of opposition against apartheid. As such, it is not our function to dictate the political programme of our affiliates. At the same time, through discussion and working together we must strive to build a united approach, a strengthening of all our affiliates so that we can advance together.

\* BROADENING THE FRONT AND RELATIONS WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THE FRONT

Comrades, in the 19 months of its existence, the UDF has won a great deal of support

and goodwill. It is our task to reach out and consolidate that support; as far as possible to broaden our Front so that we may present a united opposition of our people. At the same time, we must always remember those organisations that, for one reason or another, do not feel that they are in a position to affiliate directly to the UDF and we must strive to build our contact with them and their membership. In this regard, we must think particularly of the trade unions. Comrades, these issues need to be addressed at a local, regional, provincial and national level.

\* SETTING CLEAR GOALS

When we look back, we will all agree that the most difficult period in the life of the Front has been the 7 months between September and March. The reasons for this are quite clear - we had not determined a direction or programme beyond our election campaign. And let us be quite clear that while we will not allow the state's initiative to go unchallenged, neither can we allow them to determine the pace or the programme of the UDF. Comrades we need to be much clearer in this regard. In addition, we need to have sufficient in-built checks to ensure that we are progressing towards these goals which we ourselves have defined.

\* POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES

While in the past we protested against an increase here or boycotted an election there, we had not set for ourselves the task of presenting our people with a positive alternative, a vision of the new South Africa we are building. This is a challenge that we face.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Comrades, to summarize:

1. Deepening the gains which result from the increased politicisation and renewed circumstances which flow out of the popularity of the UDF.
2. Ensuring a role for each affiliate as well as a continued co-ordinating role for the UDF.
3. Campaigns around the major issues - forced removals, cost of living, unemployment, the International Year of the Youth and the Freedom Charter.

Comrades, all of these matters require very serious discussion.

LONG LIVE UNITY AND DISCIPLINE!

LONG LIVE THE UDF!

FORWARD EVER! BACKWARDS NEVER!

## SECRETARIAL REPORT PART 2

Comrades, the second part of the secretarial report will deal with the more internal aspects of our work:

democracy and the Front and how appropriate our structures are in building a democratic approach;  
our approaches to and methods of struggle

This report has been based on the observations and recommendations that have been raised during consultations with our affiliates. Obviously it has not been possible to raise all the criticisms, motivations and suggestions that have been raised. Nor, for practical reasons, have we included the rural areas and our relationship with the UDF at national level. We hope that from the points raised, we will be able to take decisive action to resolve the many practical problems encountered in our daily work.

### DECISION MAKING IN THE FRONT:

Over the past 19 months we have experienced grave problems in the process of taking decisions. This has led, at times, to confusion and disunity amongst our ranks, as well as an inability to execute the decisions which we have made.

Our structures do not exist for their own sake; they must be geared to achieving our aims and advancing our struggle. We must recognize that the Front is a new experience for us. Moreover, that the pace and demands are not static and we must continually be adapting and improving the structures that exist. We need constant assessment and criticism so that we can identify the problem-areas, develop co-ordination, build unity and participation in order to ensure democracy as a means as well as a practical, achievable aim in our country.

Our experience shows that not all GC decisions were accepted by all concerned and, consequently, were not always acted upon. The reason given for this situation relates to whether decisions were based on mandates; where, these decisions were taken and to what extent affiliates were adequately prepared to take decisions. We know from experience that it is not possible for GC to take decisions purely on the basis of mandates. We cannot always avoid important issues from arising just before, or at GC itself.

#### Possible solutions to these problems:

- while as far as possible taking decisions by mandate we need to allow for GC to take decisions on urgent matters.
- Organizations themselves raise matters in good time.
- Accept that everyone is bound by a GC decision, whether by mandate or by a resolution.
- Accept that a decision on a matter also involves the practical tasks that go with it.
- Accept that a decision often has implications and that these must be considered.

### GENERAL COUNCIL

1. We need to pay serious attention to the practical arrangement for GC's so that it becomes a workable structure and not just a talkshop.
  - Timing: Fixed day of month, starting time, stopping time, adjournment, quorum.
  - Discipline, absence, lateness, apologies, respect to speakers, organizations.
  - Preparation : Agenda, minutes, reports.
  - Status of organizations- credentials.
2. Attention should be given to the way in which discussions are conducted.
  - Procedures for discussions.
  - Procedures for motions.
  - Language use, translations.
  - Discipline in discussion.
  - Time for organizations to caucus when necessary.
3. A major feature of the past was the extent to which the REC raised and initiated matters for discussion. It is vital that the situation must be reversed.
4. Another disadvantage is that GC has to consider too many things at one time. In depth discussions on a systematic basis was not always possible. Perhaps in-depth discussion on key issues can be handled in the activist forums to initiate discussions on the subjects.
5. The problem of special GC's are understood by all. But this does not help us to find a method to deal with emergency situations. Special GC's do not seem to be the solution since organizations have not had time to consider matters; perhaps meetings of all the members of the organizations should be called when emergency situations arise.

### REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- 1 the REC faced an enormous task, had been responsible for a number of dispersed activities and was hopelessly overloaded. There is a need for work to be shared amongst REC members.
2. The REC represents the leadership of the front and the balance of all the older and younger comrades should be kept in all the activities of the Front.
3. It is important that the REC is seen as a structure that is functioning regularly. The REC and its members cannot see their role as operating at REC meetings only. Matters affecting the Front are raised and attended to all the time. This entails regular consultation of all the REC members.
4. The question of REC members and the position of trust needs to be considered. It is expected of REC members to act responsibly and in line with policy. This question of trust should also give the REC members the responsibility of acting in the best interests of the Front. This is important since there are many situations to which the REC, or specific members, have to respond, making it difficult to make hard and fast rules.

ACTIVIST FORUMS

In spite of the problems associated with past forums the one held on the Freedom Charter showed that they are necessary.

If their purpose is made clear and they are properly planned and organized by the REC they can become the platform for disciplined discussion within the Front. The opportunity for comrades to express their views is important for educational reasons, and to build unity.

Forums can be used to:

- provide political education for activists
- look at ways to implement decisions that have been taken at GC.
- can be used to introduce debate on subjects before matters are finally decided upon in organizations.

SUB REGIONS (REGIONS)

1. During the campaigns regions performed a vital task, as the executing arm of the Front. Regions allowed greater scope for involvement of smaller organizations and individuals in discussion and work. Regions are responsible for the practical co-ordination between affiliates at a local level. Because of these important tasks regions have been given voting status at GC.
2. The actual situation in most regions is very different. They aren't functioning as they should. Their representativeness and accountability must be questioned. Some of the difficulties present are:
  - often regional structures are a grouping of individuals
  - some have problems in that there are no organizations
  - others have organizations but do not really involve organizations
  - others are faced with tensions
  - some have never really operated as proper structures
3. We recommend that a commission be appointed to do something about these problems so that they start operating efficiently again. Regions are direct UDF structures and must be assessed from time to time.

In summary then, GC, REC, and sub regions are the working structures of our front. There's nothing magical about them. They are the means to give direction to our activities, to translate political programmes into practical action. They need to give the widest room for democratic participation. We are expected to give leadership and show the way. We are also expected to do this with maximum discipline and responsibility so that leadership can lead in such a way that it is fed to the base. Our structures can only be built through work and patient and comradely discussion. We need correct and acceptable procedures and we also need to be sure that they are suited to the task at hand, both short and long term.

AFFILIATES:

We have seen that affiliates in the Front have followed an

uneven path to the contribution to the Front and its activities. This is regardless of the size of the organization or whether it has 3 votes or 1.

This differing response of affiliates is showing in the attendance and participation in the GC and its practical work.

Organizations in the Front have a right and obligation to be party to all decisions and work. For this reason it is vital for affiliates to ensure that delegates represent their views fully and report back. We must see that all affiliates are part of developments. One organization should not lag behind another. In this way the problem of the Front moving separately from organizations will be overcome.

### SUBCOMMITTEES

We can distinguish between permanent and ad hoc committees - Permanent (media, fundraising). Members are persons who have been released from organizations to serve on committees. Expected to perform certain regular tasks.

- Ad hoc (MSC, AFRC) formed when the need arises such as during a campaign when tasks need to be performed. Such committees should be of assistance to organizations.

2. The reason this distinction has been made is because some difficulties were experienced with the operations of the anti-conscription committee and with the Forced Removals committee. The problems are that organizations are expected to send regular reps to meetings; sometimes decisions are taken at this level which should not, strictly speaking, be taken there; committees should not act independently and must avoid becoming a duplication of GC's work.

3. Sub committees should have observer status at GC.

4. Area committees should be responsible to REC for consultation, contact.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ET)

1. ET should be an ongoing process undertaken by all organizations and not necessarily the responsibility of the ET officer of the Front. ET programmes should be held regularly and not only when something crops up.

2. We should guard against a few people being regarded as the experts in ET. collective effort and new people should be encouraged in participation and preparation.

3. Possible subjects that could be considered for the Front

- ways to improve our ability to organize people
- acquiring skills and methods connected with specific campaigns
- dealing with various political questions
- political situation in SA
- role of an activist- discipline, conduct.

TRADE UNIONS

Only SAAwu and MWASA are members of the Front . Although the majority of the unions of the Western Cape are not part of the Front there exists an understanding with the unions that and we get together from time to time. There is mutual support and acknowledgement for the work done by each other.

2. On the question of affiliating to the Front the Unions positions are that their priority is the formation of a federation and it is difficult to consider the question of affiliation now.

3. Since we have been able to co-operate in the past we have to continue to find ways to strengthen the relationship. This has been accepted as one of the tasks of the new REC.

4. The common ground between the unions and the Front must be found with the cost of living, unemployment and other issues.

5. We need also to recognise that the majority of workers in the Western Cape are still either unorganized or in TUCSA-type unions. We need to ensure that consistent ways of reaching these workers are found.

BROADENING THE FRONT

1. In broadening the Front we have to consider  
 - working towards getting new affiliates  
 - working so that the Front enjoys wider support in the communities

2. Good relations exist with many church organizations and leaders. We have to look at ways in which closer relationships can be established at area and regional levels.

3. After discussions between the UDF and SACOS at a national level it became clear that SACOS would not decide for its affiliates on the question of political affiliation. The scope therefore exists for local sport organizations to be drawn closer to our area and regional structures, and even to affiliate to us.

4. Areas and regions and organizations should seriously consider activities to bring the Front to the masses in a constructive way. When work is done we should fight the issues |campaigns , build local organization and popularize the Front at the same time. Bring supporters into our organizations.

METHODS OF STRUGGLE

We have responded to many issues on various public platforms - mass meetings, newspapers, various media. We have often taken up issues that were of national significance. All this has given the UDF a certain image - with the masses, the ruling class and overseas. On the other hand, we went door to door, and local activities to involve the masses in campaigns and struggles.

Concern has been expressed that we have been involved in too many high profile activities. Can we in fact draw a distinction between high profile and other work. To campaign around detentions and repression could be high profile. But what does this mean when our leaders are now facing treason charges? In our work therefore we have to ;

- Retain the role of the UDF as an important opposition to the apartheid state
- Ensure mass support and participation

The task of the Front is to work so that the struggle is taken into the hands of the people. The people that have been mobilised must be drawn into our organisations.

The issues around the programme of action show that the UDF will have to continue with the two methods of work. But, more important present the scope for organisations to play a key role in initiating action. If this happens then it will not be necessary for initiative to come from UDF centrally.

Finally, together with the issues we have identified, tasks must be set in a way that will initiate mass action.

FORWARD TO FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME !

LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS !



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**DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989**

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