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International Youth Year
1985

Beakia...
UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT
UDF UNITESI APARTHEID DIVIDES!



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UDF - IYY NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE(S. A.)

WORKING DOCUMENT

(which emerged as a result of IYY-national co-ordinators meeting held at Khotso House, Johannesburg)

16 March 1985

-Introduction: This document has been drafted with the precise aim of giving direction to the progressive youth organisations in South Africa when taking on the United Nations initiative on the International Youth year. By now we all know that the United Nation's General Assembly declared 1985 the International Youth Year on the 7th Dec 1979. In this conference two major political forces opposed to the South African government were represented. These are the South West African People's Organisation (Swapo) of Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. according to documents from the United Nations IYY-Desk. We shall realise that a working document is like a policy of an organisation which gives clear direction to the membership in their daily activities pursuance of the organisation's aims and objectives. It serves as a guiding principle to any action or campaign to be taken. It gives clarity and uniformity to practice and theory. In short, it makes it possible for our ideas and beliefs to be carried out in action without any contradiction. Therefore, in taking on the International Youth Year under the theme of Participation Development and Peace, we find this theme suited to South African conditions in terms of our understanding of it and relating it to action.

We live in a South African society that is torn apart by the division of its people into workers and the bosses and again into a white minority privileged group and the deprived African majority including other groups. The bosses are merely interested in the labour of all working South Africans who produce profit for them, irrespective of colour or creed; while at the same time the majority of the oppressed people in the country have no political, economic, social and other rights in the country of their birth.

We hereby submit as young South Africans and declare for the World to know that the struggle for total self-determination of our people is

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at the same time the struggle to do away with control of workers by the bosses. We further emphasise that we cannot destroy the system of exploitation without the liberation of the oppressed majority, in fact these two are inter-twined. We therefore understand our struggle to be addressing itself to national liberation as well as class exploitation.

Theme of the United Nations on the International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace. We young people of South Africa submit that this is what we understand of the theme, as related to our situation.

Participation: The South African government has forcefully removed and dumped the majority of the African people in Bantustans, where there is no basic industry to supply people with work, where the land is dry and cannot be ploughed and where there is death and disease because of famine and unemployment; the Black Local Authorities Act was devised by the National Party as a local and municipal government for urban blacks. This community council structure is responsible for high rents, high electricity bills etc in our townships; the tri-came ral Parliament/the Presidents Council is government manouvre to co-opt a section of our oppressed people to defend apartheid at the border. All these government structures have been rejected unanimously by our people through various campaigns waged in the past.

We therefore submit that by Participation we understand:

- i. The right to vote and full participation in the political, economic, social and educational decision making machinery of our country.
- ii. The right to Participate in social, cultural, sporting and political activities and mix freely across the colour line without restraints from the Group Areas Act.
- iii. The right to Participate in the activities of the progressive youth organisations locally and internationally.
- iv. The right to Participate in organising the youths in our townships.
- v. To Participate in building and launching youth organisations locally and internationally.
- vi. To Participate in the United Nations initiative of the International Youth Year through activities and campaigns.

Development: Bantu Education now called Department of Education and Training, limits the scope of the African child and stifles his or her talents; the Job Reservation Act blocks all job opportunities to the oppressed majority; the projection of western culture in our schools and SABC TV undermines and suppresses our own people's culture; the

seperate Amenities Act provides for few facilities of lower quality and no theatres and cultural youth centres in our townships.

Therefore we submit that:

- i. The South African government is deliberately denying to Develop the talents and skills of its young people through the enforcement of an inferior education system in order to further the policy of apartheid.
- ii. Job discrimination negates the notion of Developing an equitable and skilled working force amongst young people.
- iii. The development of our culture, particularly poetry, music and drama could be accelerated with access to theatres youth centres and other facilities in our townships.
- iv. Another impediment to our cultural Development is the banning of our songs, poems and plays which express our true feelings by the : South African censorship Board.
- v. The youths and students of this country shall continue to strive for a free, compulsory, dynamic and non-racial Education system which will open the doors of learning and culture to all young South Africans irrespective of colour or creed.

Peace:The deployment of riot squad police and the SADF in our townships to kill young people; the Internal Security Act empowering the security police to keep a political detainee in prison independently without trial; the President's Council and Black Local Authorities Act to extend the base of apartheid; the banning and imprisonment of our leaders and other political prisoners is certainly not the way towards achieving Peace in South Africa.

We therefore submit that the conditions which would herald Peace in South Africa are:

- i. The unconditional release of our recognised leadership and other political prisoners and detainees.
- ii. The unbanning of all banned political organisations in the country.
- iii. The unbanning of all banned political activists in the country.
- iv. The unconditional return of all political exiles and leaders including banished political activists.
- v. The withdrawal and future curbing of riot squad police and SADF deployment from our townships.
- vi. The suspension of the Republic of South Africa's Constitution and all apartheid laws.
- vii. And to engage in dialogue with the authentic and recognised leadership of our people now imprisoned and exiled.

Youth

We appreciate the United Nations' definition of Youth, but we South African youths define ourselves differently. Firstly, our youth organisations consist of young workers, young married couples, the unemployed, students and other culturally and politically motivated young people. We do not define youth in terms of age, although certain constitutions stipulate between the ages of 15 and 35. It is commitment to and involvement in the cause of youth that is primary. Devotion towards the achievement of the aims and objectives of young people in the country, like organising and strengthening youth organisations, is what makes one a youth. This includes both rural and urban youths.

Brief UN General Strategy on IYY

The general strategy of the UN in adopting the International Year of the Youth was to promote youth participation in social, economic, cultural and political development, according to the UN Quarterly Bulletin no. 1-2, 1983.

It divided the IYY programme into three phases.

First phase: 1983-1984

Formation of national coordination structures throughout the world.

Second phase: 1985

Planning long-term objectives and implementation of IYY activities throughout the world.

Third phase: 1986-1995

Evaluation of policies, strategies, plans and programmes of action.

Our strategic approach to IYY

We have already made our point clear that we do not see IYY activities as separate from the way we have been engaging ourselves in the task of mobilising, organising and consolidating our youth members and structures.

A. General Objectives

1. To contribute to the dismantling of the apartheid system which has also been declared a heresy by the international world.
2. To continue to contribute to the struggle for liberation and the creation of a just, peaceful and equal society.

B. Objective Conditions

1. Security police harassment and state repression of our youth activists and organisations.

2. Lack of recreational facilities particularly theatres and community youth centres where young people could carry out their cultural activities.
3. Poor coordination regionally and nationally because of lack of finances and resources.
4. Lack of politically developed youth activists on the youth front regionally and nationally.
5. Low level of political awareness amongst young people in other social, cultural and religious youth groups in the country.

C. Subjective Conditions

1. To make representation to the UN and the international world to highlight state repression of youth initiatives in the country.
2. To challenge state repression in the courts of law through our legal representatives
3. To consciously develop and train youths to achieve a higher political understanding of their situation.
4. To strive and make representations to acquire finance and resources.
5. To build a politically developed leadership on the youth front, regionally and nationally.

D Specific Objectives

1. To undermine the state's initiative on IYY and project the Freedom Charter, the Education Charter and the United Democratic Front (UDF).
2. To mobilise and organise the youth through IYY activities.
3. To build youth leadership and strengthen our organisations.
4. To build cohesion and communication regionally and nationally.
5. To forge international relations with friendly countries, anti-apartheid groups and youth organisations.
6. To secure material gains for the youth organisations during the International Youth Year.
7. To promote unity among young people and youth organisations, both in the urban and rural areas.

E Strategic Approach

1. To counter the South African government's initiative on IYY by spearheading youth activity in our townships.
2. To challenge the state from exercising its influence ideologically on young people both regionally and nationally.
3. To intensify regional campaigns of IYY.

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