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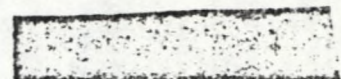
UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

UDF UNITES! APARTHEID DIVIDES!



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Our Dear Comrades

We are informed that the Soweto Youth Congress will be holding its first annual congress from the 3rd - 5th August 1984, and we wish your deliberations all the success it deserves.

As a Soweto based organisation SOYCO takes its cue and inherits the militant records of the youth of the past. You march on the footsteps of the ANC Youth League of the forties and fifties, you are imbued with the spirit of the youth that carried the squatter struggles of the forties under the militant leadership of Sofasonke Mpanza. As the reactionaries drag Mpanza's name in the mud of community councils the country looks up to you to salvage his image.

Above all, however, you have daunting task of matching the ability to organise, the militancy and selfless courage of the '76 Soweto youth. Respond to the challenge of the youth in Cradock, Lamontville and Parys.

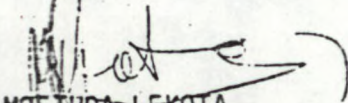
If you will claim your rightful place in the pages of the country's history you must perform as never before. Organise the employed and unemployed, drop-outs and illiterate youth. Let our generation's words and deeds inspire our people to levels of resistance that must crumble Apartheid forever.

Long Live SOYCO!

Long Live the Youth of Africa!

Long Live the United Democratic Front!

Yours in the struggle for a free, non-racial and democratic S Africa,


MOSTUOA LEKOTA
PUBLICITY SECRETARY

CURRENT NEWS "EDUCATION"

INTRODUCTION

Again we are witnessing mass actions in our schools. What is important for us is to try to grasp what is happening in a correct perspective.

COSAS has correctly predicted, early this year, that 1984 is going to be a year in which the events of '76 and '80 will look like a Sunday picnic. This was not done as an attempt to "instigate" students as it is always alleged, but this position was reached after the assessment of the situation in our schools, and after seeing the pressure building up among students.

Last year, as early as February 21, we witnessed a boycott at Ibhongo Secondary Senior school in Soweto. This spread to other schools in a sporadic manner.

We saw Mountview students in Cape Town coming out in solidarity with expelled fellow students. The slogan "Student Worker" alliance was put into practice when we saw Mdantsane students in the Ciskei supporting their working parents in a bus boycott.

On the other hand we saw the state penetrating into our schools in many ways. The first attempt was through legislation. The Quota Bill was enacted making it difficult for students to study where they wanted to, in so doing closing the "Doors of Learning and Culture". We saw the preparation of the implementation of age limit this year. The SADF was tirelessly trying to win the hearts and minds of students by offering a range of activities such as camps and picnics. We also witnessed a major development when private companies, the same companies who suck the blood of our working parents, suddenly becoming interested in education. This they did by offering extra classes, sponsoring sports activities and such like.

The brutality of the state was again exposed in spite of its talk about change and reform. The intimidation of COSAS activists and members was seen. The cold blooded slaughtering of school kids in Mdantsane, Ciskei, the murdering of five students in Ngoyi bear the testimony of recognition by the ruling class of the potential of student struggle if viewed in a correct perspective, of linking them with the broader struggle.

The 50.04 percent failure rate in "African" schools capped it all. More than 30 000 students failed matric last year. What is interesting about this, is that this is happening in a period when both the state and the bosses are showering our schools with text books, extra classes, new school buildings, "well qualified" soldiers to teach us etc.

WHAT THIS SHOWS IS WHAT COSAS HAS BEEN PREACHING; the inextricable link between education and society. The crisis in education is the manifestation of the broader political, social and economic crisis which is gripping South Africa. Cosmetic changes will not deter our struggle for an education which is not for exploitation and oppression.

1984 - ANOTHER YEAR OF ASH, YEAR OF FIRE??

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR WE SAW THE FOLLOWING EVENTS

January

Saulsville Secondary Senior students boycotted classes in solidarity 90 expelled pupils. Hofmeyr High boycotted class demanding an SRC, reinstatement of 50 students who were not accepted because of age limit, and end to corporal punishment.

Feb

Saulridge and DH Petra High schools joined the boycott. Situation back to "normal". Students go back to school. Students from Ibhongo High in Soweto boycotted classes in solidarity with 52 expelled. Hofmeyr, Saulridge and Saulville, 2600 students boycott against severe corporal punishment.

These schools are closed, Feb 7. In Cradock a total school boycott by high and primary students goes into full swing after a week. Students protest against the transference of a Principal, Mr Goniwe, an ex-Robben Island prisoner, also the Chairperson of the Cradock Residents Association (Cradock). Students from the three closed schools march to other high schools. Police break up the demonstration.

EMMA SATHEKGE (15) of DH Petra was killed. Students claim she was knocked down by a police vehicle whilst police were breaking up a march. Her funeral was attended by more than 10 000 pupils.

Minewa High students boycott demanding an SRC. Sexual harassment of women students.

Boycott erupts again at Ibhongo. Students in Pretoria decide, in a mass meeting to go back. Bishop Tutu intervenes.

5 000 Port Elizabeth schools boycott in sympathy with students who are not being admitted because of overcrowding. An ad hoc crisis in education committee is formed as a COSAS initiative involving youth, civic, women's organisations and trade unions.

March

Uitenhage Secondary Senior students boycott against an unpopular principal. PE students go back after education for 90 students is found. Isigonele Estrie High students in Duduza, Nigel boycott. A boycott at Dr WF Ndlovu erupts again. Paarl students boycotted. At Atteridgeville 8 000 pupils were shut out of schools until the end of the year. Students in Cradock are also on the street following a boycott of primary and high school.

STUDENT DEMANDS

In spite of the fact that the above student struggle seems to be sporadic, some important demands are beginning to emerge.

through concrete action, not in workshops, conferences, symposiums, subscribing to the demands in the Education Charter, they are actively opening the doors of culture and learning.

WE DEMAND INDEPENDENT

SRC'S This demand for students indicates their love for democracy. They are demanding a say in the running of their lives. They are striving for organs with which to voice their aspirations and an end to the present system and its replacement with democratically elected SRC's.

AWAY WITH AGE RESTRICTION; the Department of Education and Training (DET), tries to deprive thousands of students their right to education by using this type of regulation legislation at school. We know why some of us are still 20 and are doing standard 8 (Sub A - age 10). We are sometimes forced to go and work to help our starving families and come back later. We fail because of the social background of poverty. Some of us have lost academic years in '76 and '80. For that matter we were allowed to

start schooling at the age of 7. The situation of overcrowding is therefore not of our making.

DOWN WITH CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WHICH ENSURES SUBMISSIVENESS; Because of the mess the DET finds itself in, in terms of the explosive situation caused by high failure rates, there has been increase in the use of the rod; the sjambok to "discipline" the students. Again we loudly proclaim that the failure rate is a manifestation of capitalist crisis. We are not prepared to take the blame.

"WHEN I HAVEN'T DONE MY HOMEWORK, PUNISH ME, DO NOT ASK FOR A KISS". DOWN WITH SEXUAL HARRASMENT

The conditions for female students is worse because of the motherly role they must play at an early age, in the place of the mother, who is forced to work "sleep-in". Thus their performance in school is in most cases poor. This is further exploited by teachers. To these teachers we say; do not channel your middle class frustration into us. Instead join us and march forward to a democratic education which is not for exploitation and oppression.

These are some of the demands of students countryside. The important thing about them is that students are

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THESE STRUGGLES??

1. UNITY IN ACTION:

The mass action that the students are embarking on indicates an awareness in students that it is through unity that we can begin to change the conditions under which we live.

2) STUDENT WORKER ALLIANCE;

The steps taken by students and COSAS in particular in Port Elizabeth, is an example of the recognition of the lines enshrined in the COSAS preamble: "We recognise that we are members of our society before we are students." For students to form a front with Youth Women, Civic organisations and trade unions is necessary for the success of our struggles. We must always ensure the support of our parents. We must not bulldoze and bully them around. We must ensure that they understand. The misunderstanding between parents and students must be seen as being to the detriment of our struggle. Pretoria is the most recent example of this.

3. AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

The solidarity action taken by students again shows their commitment to a new system of education which will aim not at

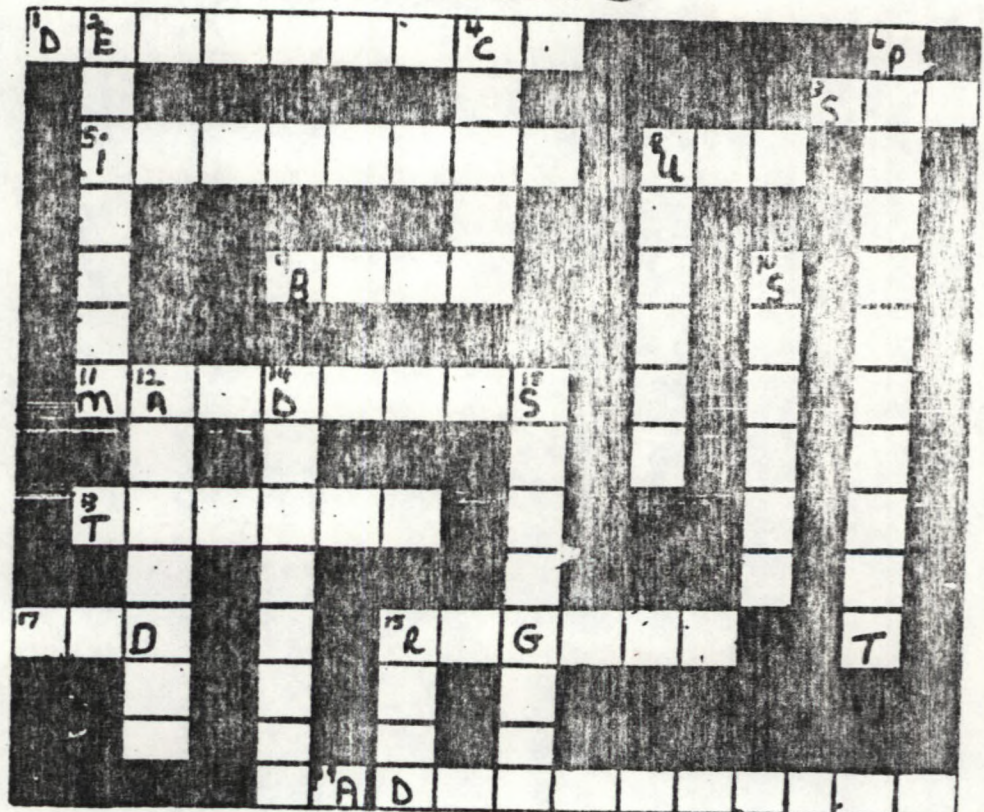
individualism, but at collective action. It is through collective action that we are able to advance our struggle.

DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION

We must always ensure that our methods of organisation are democratic. We must recognise that the level of political awareness is uneven. We must ensure that there are regular meeting reports and mandated delegation. This we must not even when we form alliances with other organisations. We must not allow unmandated people to deputize on our behalf. Our struggle depends on the masses not on their charismatic personality.

IT IS BY CONSTANTLY ASSESSING OUR ACTIONS THAT WE CAN ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL MARCH TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA THAT WILL SURELY BE FREE OF EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION!

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