

Y5



Row "Y5"

UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

WESTERN CAPE REGION

P.O. BOX 274
SALT RIVER
7925

16 April 198

The Secretary

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Dear

RE: PROPOSALS FOR NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CIVIC ORGANISATIONS

Following our decision at the NEC and our subsequent discussions at the National Secretariat, we have discussed the ideas in the Western Cape. Also, in telephonic communication with Popo, we were requested to take initiatives along with CAHAC to implement the plans for a conference.

Attached, are the proposals which emerged from Western Cape consultations. Kindly forward copies of the attached to the major civics in your region and ensure that the discussions are conducted in the appropriate forums.

I will telephone all regional secretaries on Thursday 19 April for a progress report. I realise that this leaves very little time, but as can be gleaned from the attached, these matters demand some urgency.

We await your positive responses.

Yours in struggle

Trevor Manuel
Regional Secretary

CIRCULAR: NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CIVIC ORGANISATIONS

TO: ALL UDF REGIONAL SECRETARIES FOR REFERRAL TO CIVIC ORGANISATIONS

FROM: UDF WESTERN CAPE /CAHAC

The UDF NEC meeting held in Pretoria on 21/22 January decided to implement whatever steps were necessary to convene a National Conference of civic organisations. Subsequently, the National Secretariat discussed this matter at its meeting in Johannesburg on 10/11 March where the urgency of the conference was re-emphasised.

In accordance with the above, our REC has discussed the conference with CAHAC and the following proposals have emerged from these consultations.

1. AIMS

- 1.1 Major thrust should be the discussion of a campaign around the 'new housing deal', forced removals & local government. Discussions should facilitate the strengthening of civic organisations and the campaign should attempt to bridge racial divisions, urban/rural divisions and organisational unevenness.
- 1.2 Make a political statement (concretised) on the housing crisis.

2. CONTENT

- 2.1 Discussion of the implications of the 'new housing deal'.
- 2.2 Looking at involving civics nationally in the campaign.
- 2.3 Discussing and developing approaches to changed local government, both as Black Local Authorities and Local Councils as per new constitution.
- 2.4 Developing approaches to the 'Koornhof Bills' and forced removals with emphasis placed on attempts at co-option.

3. DATE

- 3.1 1 & 2 June : The advantages of this date would be a) the long weekend would allow for a full 2-day conference and facilitate travelling and therefore participation by working people. b) sufficient time would be allowed for the campaign to take shape and possibly climax around the time of elections c) the matters under discussion could be placed on the agenda of civic organisations sooner, thereby giving impetus to campaigns such as forced removals. The major disadvantage is the short time within which to adequately prepare.
- 3.2 Mid- July: The advantages would be a) more time for preparation and consolidation before the conference b) The impact of the 'political statement' would be greater because it will be made closer to the elections. The disadvantages are a) the short time for a campaign to take shape in the community before the elections. b) Reactionaries like the Labour Party have placed a heavy emphasis on housing and are gaining ground by seeking concessions.

4. PREPARATION

- 4.1 Discussion of this circular/proposal within civic organisations.
- 4.2 Initial feedback at UDF NEC.
- 4.3 In W.Cape a mini-conference of the rurally-based emerging civic organisations is scheduled for 29 April.
- 4.4 A trip from the Western Cape (CAHAC & WCCA) during early MAY for national consultation, touching at the major centres. If the idea is acceptable, consultations should be held with the primary civic organisations (rather than a few activists) in each centre.

4.5 Establishing a pre-conference National Co-ordinating Committee.

5. THE CONFERENCE

5.1 Suggested size ±300 i.e 50 per centre/region.

5.2 Suggested situation : W.Cape either in Cape Town or one of the inland towns (Motivation to follow)

5.3 Consideration needs to be given to the inclusion of groups like trade unions and churches who might share concerns about the matters under discussion.

6. FINANCES

Budget to follow.

DRAFT

CONTENT OR PROGRAMME OF CONFERENCE ON HOUSING

The conference must not be seen as one where many long papers (talks) are given, to be followed by little discussion. But rather as one which reflects the anger of our people. Our people are angry because of the hardships caused by bad housing, bad planning, high rents, bad living conditions and low wages. It is very important that the conference and talks given make it easy for a fair amount of participation by all the people.

The discussion and decisions must be able to guide us in our struggles around housing issues in the future. It must also assist us to solve the many organisational problems that make our work difficult.

The conference must be seen as our statement (or view) i.e. the view of democratic organisations from all over the country, to the housing crisis and the new housing policy of the government.

Any programme we accept must take into account the points made above. A suggested programme is presented below. We would like it to be discussed by as many people and organisations as possible. With feedback and criticism a final programme would be worked out.

1. HOUSING CRISIS

A talk (input) on what we understand by the Housing Crisis and how it has come about. For example, the housing backlog, problems with rents and maintenance, lack of facilities, the Group Areas Act, etc. would be looked at.

2. CHANGES IN THE HOUSING POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT

A short input (talk) on how the state has responded to the housing crisis and why. It would look at the various (different) aspects of the New Housing Policy:-

- sale of houses
- lowering of standards
- decision not to build houses for those earning more than R150 p.m.
- new formula for calculating rents
- etc.

3. OUR RESPONSE TO THE NEW HOUSING POLICY

In this session we would work out our response (what we are going to do) to the new housing policy i.e. to the different aspects that make this up e.g.

- sale of houses
- rent increases
- etc, etc.

4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

We all know about the successful boycott of the community council and Black Local Authority Act elections in the African areas. Many of us, however, do not understand all the details of the local proposals of the President's Council. These are now part of the constitution.

A talk (input) on the implications of the decision of the government to create new local authorities. It would also look at what this would mean for our organisation when they take up problems experienced in our communities.

We would also need to discuss the type of problems we must take up after our successful boycott of Community Councils and Black Local Authority Act.

5. ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY "CIVICS"

Our organisations are experiencing many difficulties. We also talk about building unity across townships. But very often we are not clear as to how we must respond to these. In this session we hope to have a talk or paper on what are some of our organisational problems and how to go about building unity. This would be followed by discussions.

6. FORCED REMOVALS

We hear constantly of new townships which are going to be built far from our places of work. In Cape Town there is talk of moving all the Africans to Khayalitsha.

In this session a talk (paper) on the threat of forced relocation of our people all over the country. In the discussion that would follow we can discuss how we must respond to these forced relocations and what kind of support and assistance we can give to each other.

NOTE

1. We would like a lot of discussion and for this reason papers or talks would be ~~short~~ ^{short} and simply presented.

2. Resolutions could be passed after each session. These would be published as our joint views on a number of issues or problems.
3. Copies of talks or papers, if they are ready before the conference, would be sent to the different centres.

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