

U11-d

Ben "U11-d"

THE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

The Civic Association is an organisation that concerns itself mainly with the bread and butter issues faced by residents at local level. It is these problems experienced by the people that serve as a common basis for uniting the residents under the leadership of the Civic Association. Here people are brought together to share opinions and jointly develop a desired solution

Problems facing residents are many. Amongst these are the critical shortage of houses, high rentals, electricity and water bills that are beyond what residents can afford, demolishing of shacks, eviction from houses, leaking roofs and sewerage, dog tax and many more. All these problems can be linked directly to the RENT OFFICES and the new COMMUNITY COUNCILS or the so-called BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Others, such as increases in train and bus fares, the general sales tax (GST) and the high price increases of bread, sugar and maize products, can be seen as introduced by and linked to the STATE, a word difficult to locate and concretise at mass level. The anger of residents against these problems is usually voiced by attacking employers for failing to raise wages and salaries to equal the cost of living.

A closer look into the cost of houses, electricity and water, shows that these are produced and sold for profit. They are like any commodity that is available for a particular price at the supermarket. Ordinary four-roomed houses, the match box type, cost anything from R16 000 to R20 000, electricity costs between 6 and 8 cents per unit in Soweto whilst Johannesburg's almost exclusively white residents pay 5,14 cents a unit. These prices are determined by the Law of Supply and Demand. Thousands of people in Soweto are without accommodation or housing, nowhere else are houses so expensive. The same situation is equally relevant for electricity, water and other services. In the final analysis only Escom and Private Companies or Banks benefit.

Our struggle at local level is both a fight against the BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES and huge profits made by Employers at the expense of residents. It is a fight against Apartheid and Capitalism at local level.

For us to succeed we need to organise all our people. To do this well we should work like missionaries. We need to develop a dedicated group of volunteers who will pledge to go to the masses of our people wherever they may be, in their HOUSES, at HOSTELS, at SOCCER MATCHES, at BEER HALLS and everywhere, Our work should be systematic and thorough. Our patience should be limitless and from each we should demand beyond endurance. In this way we will achieve the best from each dedicated member.

Going to the residents is very important. It makes it possible for us to discover the thinking of the people, to change from wrong ideas that tend to mislead us, to increase our knowledge of our own area and build the necessary confidence. This form of approach brings the Civic Association to the residents, reduces the activist to the level of the masses, enables the residents to ask questions and sometimes even to "interrogate" the activist.

The Civic Organisation is mainly and not solely concerned with the bread and butter issues facing residents at local level. During times of high political activity and campaigns, the Civic Association identifies itself with such situations. Its tone becomes that of the times, reflecting correctly the mood of the masses. This, however, is merely a situation that arises at particular times.

That change will come is certain. The key question to be asked, however, is what role residents are going to play in achieving this goal? Or is change going to be brought about by activists, if so why worry about the masses?

The majority of people in African urban settlements are workers. If the Civic Organisations are to have the necessary appeal, the problems of the working people as residents demand special attention. It is mainly the African workers that hold the key. The role of the activist is important but its significance is not as crucial as that of the masses.

It is important to state that the residents who join the Civic Association do so for a number of different reasons. Others have hopes of unseating the councillors and getting better people to correct the situation from within. Many more are concerned only with the immediate short-term needs or short-term benefits such as those received from BURIAL SOCIETIES or MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES (STOKVELS). Yet more seek to wipe out crime through VIGILANTE groups (MAGKOTLA) or CULTURAL or SPORTS groups. These groups only want the blessing of the Civic Association.

There are also those who see their role as fellow travellers or passengers. They never worry about the point of departure or destination. Some others, a small grouping, are concerned with or committed to setting up structures, broadening, maintaining and consolidating these from gains made by the broad association. The association is therefore not a disciplined unitary structure but a broad "amorphous" body with both the characteristics of a movement and that of a unitary organisation. The latter is concerned primarily with establishing a stable membership. The way in which the association is built, reveals that the needs of the individual should not be confused with that of an organised group. This does not mean that the two should be in conflict. Likewise, the long-term goal of the association as an organised unit should correspond with its short-term objectives. In this way the possibilities for better co-ordination, planning and organising become brighter.

The hour is late and the challenge is great, BUT our task is more urgent.

*NB: A brief summary was made and we proceeded to a paper on STRUCTURE OF THE UDF
CF ATTACHED PAPER

c. PAPER ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE UDF

- a) (i) Paper was read cf. attached copy.
(ii) Participants were then divided into four small groups for 'group discussions'.
The necessary procedure was followed. Please refer to attached questions.

b) REPORT FROM GROUP ONE

- (i) The first group (GROUP ONE) answered a set of questions on FUNDRAISING or FINANCE. the following suggestions were given as a broad guide-line to ALL PARTICIPANTS.

SUGGESTIONS :

- Selling CAKES and T-SHIRTS
- Organising fundraising "BRAAIS"
- Organising RUFFLES
- Organising Mini-cultural festivals
- Organising sporting activities
- Approaching wealthy people within the different communities

*NB: It was not clear whether it is the TVL regional committee or the Area Committee that should be responsible for raising funds

*NB: Lack of clarity on CONTROL and STRUCTURES

*NB: FUND RAISING ACT to be studied. Area Committee to consult lawyer on the Act.

(ii) SUGGESTED SPECIFIC PROGRAMME ON FUNDRAISING

- film shows with political content
- Amusic festival
- 1985 CALENDAR of the UDF or by UDF should be printed and sold.
- printing of UDF badges and T-shirts

(iii) POINTS THAT EMERGED AFTER GROUP ONE HAD REPORTED

- * It was suggested that each organisation should contribute an "affiliation fee" to the Area COMMITTEE.
- * It was also suggested that AREA COMMITTEE should keep a quarter (1/4) of the money raised (ie. by the AREA COMMITTEE).
- * Some of the participants thought that it is not a good idea "to establish 'formal' structures and keep funds at the AREA COMMITTEE-LEVEL....."

NAME OF ORGANISATION	PRESENT ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF BRANCHES	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	NO. OF ACTIVISTS	PROBLEMS	FUTURE ACTION
10. FEDSAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working on education crisis - Striving to ESTABLISH BRANCHES - Busy on the preparation for a regional conference 7th-9th Dec '84 	6 branches in SOWETO				
11. DETAINEE AID MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distributing Food parcels - Arranging Transport jointly with DPSC for relatives to "visit" detainees 					
12. RMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Busy arranging meetings on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PUTCO Bus Fare increases; * Electricity * December 16 - Working on the idea of BLACK CHRISTMAS 					Co-operation with *NPSL AND *SHOP KEEPERS

BDF AREA COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

1. DATE : SUNDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 1984
2. VENUE : DJUBE YMCA
3. ATTENDANCE : CF ATTACHED COPY
4. PROGRAMME : CF ATTACHED COPY
5. QUESTION GUIDES : CF ATTACHED COPY
6. CONTENT OF PROGRAMME

- A. INTRODUCTION: The following pattern was used (a) NAME (b) AREA
- B. BRIEF REPORT FROM INDIVIDUALS ON ORGANISATIONS

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	PRESENT ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF BRANCHES	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	NO. OF ACTIVISTS	PROB.	FUTURE ACTION
1. SOWETO CIVIC ASSOCIATION	Preparing for the SCA AGM, ON THE 1st of December 1984	+16		+60		
2. SOWETO YOUTH CONGRESS	- Busy with the Revival of branches - Seminar on "IYY" 25th - 26th Nov 1984	6 functional branches	+80	+40		
3. LENASIA YOUTH LEAGUE	Preparing for a seminar to be held on the 9th of DEC 1984			+20		
4. TRANSVAAL INDIAN CONGRESS	- Consolidation of political and organisational gains * Seminars on a) history of congress. b) history & conditions that led to the FREEDOM CHARTER. c) THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT NB: ATTENDANCE in the 2 afore-mentioned seminars varied from 100 to 120 people.					

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ANTI PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL COMMITTEE ("ANTI-PC")	- Busy preparing for a workshop on ASSESSMENT of ANTI-PC Campaign	4				
6. GENERAL & ALLIED WORKERS UNION	- Working on concretising the IDEA of "BLACK CHRISTMAS" - Busy consolidating shop-floor structures	3			Recovering from repression	
7. CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS	- Busy building COSAS Area Committees in SOWETO - Busy on Education Charter Campaign	1 SOWETO BRANCH ie. SOWETO constitutes a branch			Many individuals on boycott but no school is boycotting as a whole ie. enblock	
8. SOUTH AFRICAN ALLIED WORKERS UNION	- Working on the "idea" of "BLACK CHRISTMAS" - Busy building JHB union structures				- Lack of manpower in JOHANNESBURG	
9. SOUTH AFRICAN SCOOTER DRIVERS UNION	- Establishing Branches - Working on the "idea" of "BLACK CHRISTMAS"					

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REPORT FROM GROUP TWO

This group answered a set of questions on the ROLE OF THE AREA COMMITTEE, the ROLE OF AREA COMMITTEE in relation to AUTONOMY of INDIVIDUAL AFFILIATES and democracy (Within the AREA COMMITTEE).

(i) SUGGESTIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE AREA COMMITTEE

- Bring together affiliates into a forum;
- Strengthen organisations
- Popularise the UDF

(ii) SUGGESTIONS ON AUTONOMY OF EACH AFFILIATE

Participants understands the role of UDF AREA COMMITTEE to be:

- (a) Co-ordinating; and
- (b) Seeking and generating active practical support for particular struggles in different communities
- (c) Promoting and showing non-racial struggle in practice eg. ensuring that ACTIVISTS are seen to be doing door to door work together in different communities.
- (d) to organise Petit-bourgeois organisations into the AREA COMMITTEE on condition that they support the struggle of the poor.
- (e) To ensure that organisations affiliated to the UDF are represented by delegates - in all AREA COMMITTEE meetings. Observers not to be allowed into these meetings.

(iii) DEMOCRACY

All decisions taken to be based on - the principles of DEMOCRACY.

(iv) POINTS THAT EMERGES FROM PARTICIPANTS AFTER GROUP TWO HAD REPORTED:

- The General Council should avoid appointing or electing people to serve in commissions (at GENERAL COUNCIL level) without first ascertaining
 - (a) the role of individual at local level; and
 - (b) how busy that person is with local organisational work

* The AREA COMMITTEE should strengthen organisation by playing a support ^{we} role in their programmes and activities eg. UDF to consistantly tell people that no individual can become its member except by joining affiliates.

* The AREA COMMITTEE should should popularise the UDF eg. printing UDF T-shirts etc.

- The AREA COMMITTEE should/.....

- The AREA COMMITTEE should organise more organisations that are not affiliated to the FRONT INTO the AREA COMMITTEE.

D. REPORT FROM GROUP THREE

This group answered a question on the AREA COMMITTEE'S PROGRAMME OF ACTION for the next fourteen months. The group felt it was impossible to discuss and draw a "PROGRAMME OF ACTION" in forty minutes. It (the group) listed points that will require attention when such a programme is drawn. These are -

- (a) that such a programme should not conflict with programmes of affiliated organisations; and
- (b) that such a programme should be flexible and cater for emergencies.

The group further suggested that the following should constitute the content of the programme:

- Consolidating the AREA COMMITTEE;
- Improving Co-ordination of activities within the AREA COMMITTEE;
- Printing and distribution of the UDF NEWSLETTER; and
- Working on the idea of "BLACK CHRISTMAS"

COMMENTS FROM OTHER PARTICIPANTS:

- * The AREA COMMITTEE should be supplied with a programme of action of each affiliate. This will improve Co-ordination and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- * The 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter in 1985 should be looked into.
- * The United Nations Organisations's "INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE YOUTH" should be examined and the possibility of building this into the PROGRAMME OF ACTION looked into.

E. REPORT FROM GROUP FOUR

This group answered a set of questions on PRESS STATEMENTS and the POLITICAL PROFILE OF UDF AREA COMMITTEE. These following points were reported by this group:

- (a) UDF AREA COMMITTEE should limit itself to a co-ordinating role;
- (b) UDF AREA COMMITTEE should avoid a high political profile;
- (c) UDF AREA COMMITTEE should not stifle but ensure the growth of organisations; and

ON PRESS STATEMENTS, and the UDF AREA COMMITTEE

The group said:

- (i) Area Committee should not issue press statements, especially on policy issues.
- Other participant said
- (ii) that some press statement are mere announcements eg. statement on venue, date, time and Agenda of a mass meeting;
 - (iii) they also felt/.....

- (iii) they also felt AREA COMMITTEE should issue press statements only on condition that there is prior consultation with the UDF TRANSVALL executive committee;

F. A committee of 4 people was appointed to work on this REPORT.

G. It was resolved that:

- (a) Each organisation that attended the workshop should send concrete suggestions to the Area Committee on:
 - (i) What is the role and function of your area committee for the next 14 months?
 - (ii) What is the responsibility of organisations to their area committees? (accountability, acceptance of area committee decisions, discipline, etc)
 - (iii) How are organisations to be represented on our area committee?
 - (iv) What structures are needed in our area committee? (eg. Executive Committee Education committee, Finance Committee etc.)
 - (v) How our area committee can raise funds so that it is financially independent of the UDF (TVL).

NB: Each organisation is requested to make the relevant recommendations as soon as possible.

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