

STATEMENT OF THE UDF NGC HELD ON 5,6,7 April 1985

This meeting of more than 300 committed and enthusiastic delegates, representing millions of people throughout the country on this Easter weekend in Azaadville is ample proof and eloquent testimony to the strength and resilience of the UDF as a mass organisation.

Meeting in the context of state repression unparalleled in the past twenty five years and on the basis of overwhelming popular support throughout the country, the UDF continues to represent and articulate the genuine needs and demands of all democratic South Africans.

There is still time for the racist minority regime to consult with the authentic leaders of the people, with the sole objective of making the necessary arrangements for the speedy and effective dismantling of the apartheid state and the transfer of power to the people.

The precondition for the achievement of peace in this country is the removal of the evil apartheid system. That is why we say that our struggle for liberation is a struggle for peace.

Not one more drop of blood need be shed;
Not one more family need live in misery and starve;
No man or woman need go without work;
Not one more family need go without shelter;

if these conditions are met.

The state and its agents are engaged in the wholesale letting of blood in the townships, billions of rands are spent maintaining apartheid structures; while subsidies for essential food are reduced or withdrawn, raised GST pays for SADF aggressions. Instead of homes at affordable rent, adequate recreational facilities, equal, democratic education, the people experience ever increased misery and oppression.

We also meet at a time of unequalled world-wide support from ordinary men and women, organisations in all countries committed to the elimination of racism, and of most governments throughout the world. Against this massive show of international solidarity, the right wing Reagan/Thatcher/Kohl axis and their allies continue to bolster the apartheid regime.

Oppressed and democratic South Africans demand that these imperialist powers support the forces of justice and democracy. They must abandon their traditional role in backing the oppressive and undemocratic governments purely for motives of greed and profit. Their international duty is to support the just struggle of the South African people for peace, justice and freedom.

We take the opportunity during this period of grave crises, when the progressive forces are being threatened on all fronts, to caution those individuals and organisations who differ with us to desist from attacking the UDF and fragmenting the ranks of the oppressed and instead to emphasise the points of common concern.

We call on them to be mindful that the state is arming its agents, seeking to strengthen its support and broaden its base by coopting the Hendrickses, Rajbansis, the Sebes and the Buthelezi, and it therefore becomes the historic duty of all who oppose apartheid to foster unity.

We have analysed our weaknesses and recognised our shortcomings. We are fully resolved in the coming years to increase the effectiveness and democratic content of our organisations, to raise the quality of our activists and leadership, to translate our living experiences amongst the people during struggle into viable programmes and to transcend the constraints of regional differences.

We recognise the need to encourage the increased and dynamic participation of progressive trade unions within our Front and to build the UDF so that it accurately reflects the centrality and leadership of the African masses in our struggle.

Finally we pledge to organise the masses of our people to effectively challenge the apartheid state by frustrating its efforts, preventing its advance, forcing its retreat and if possible to cut off all its lines of retreat.

We therefore make the following immediate demands as the beginning of a process of transition from the prevailing oppressive and exploitative order to a democratic state:

1. the immediate scrapping of the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts and all Group Areas Laws, and an end to any form of forced removals
2. the dissolution of the bantustans and the ending of the migratory labour system
3. the scrapping of the tri-cameral parliament and all other puppet bodies created under the Black Local Authorities Act and other instruments of racist rule
4. a unified and democratic education system
5. the repeal of the pass laws and all other restrictions on freedom of movement
6. the right of workers to freely organise in trade unions, to collectively bargain and the right to strike without being penalised, the right to security of employment, housing, social welfare, pensions and maternity benefits, as laid down in the United Nations Human Rights Covenants and the Charters of the International Labour Organisation
7. the release of all political prisoners, the unbanning of the banned individuals and organisations, the return of exiles and the lifting of all restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly
8. the disbanding of the SADF, Koevoet, the SAP and all other repressive apparatuses
9. the scrapping of all barbaric 'security' laws which violate the fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.