

1 AUGUST 1983

KHOTSO HOUSE, JOHANNESBURG

STATEMENT BY UDF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LAUNCHING OF UDF

The national executive committee of the United Democratic Front (UDF) met in Johannesburg on Saturday July 30 and Sunday July 31. It was decided that the UDF should be launched nationally in Cape Town at a People's rally on August 20. The executive meeting brought together the leaderships of the Transvaal, Natal and Western Cape UDFs. The purpose of the meeting was to define a common approach and policy in resistance to the constitutional and Koornhof Bills.

This meeting was the result of months of hard work, concerted efforts and mass consultations with organisations and individuals throughout the country.

Over the past six months a number of fully constituted units of the UDF have emerged. A UDF was launched in Natal in May, in the Transvaal in the same month, and in the Cape in July.

This executive meeting therefore reflected the aspirations and expectations of the vast majority of the oppressed masses.

The strength of the UDF lies in the democratic nature of its composition. The central characteristic of the UDF is that it is made up of trade unions as well as community, women's, student, religious, youth, sports, political, professional, and business organisations and interest groups. These organisations represent people of all colours and creeds from all strata of South African society.

All have clearly rejected the constitutional and Koornhof Bills. All of us have recognised that these manoeuvres of the state are designed to weaken the people's resistance by dividing them whilst entrenching apartheid. We have firmly and unanimously committed ourselves to the achievement of a democratic society under the banner of the UDF through the active participation of thousands of members of our organisations.

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A declaration of policy and intent has evolved and is in the process of being finalised.

The conscience and the moral impulses of all freedom-loving people of South Africa have been aroused. People have been moved to reject these pernicious and evil laws which consolidate the heresy of apartheid.

Whilst the UDF articulates the viewpoint of the broad cross-section of people, we accept as fundamental that the main burden of exploitation and discrimination falls on the poor.

Accordingly, the main thrust of the organisation is directed towards the participation of working people in the workplace, in the communities and wherever they may be.

We call upon all democratic organisations who have not as yet identified with the UDF to join us and further unify the resistance to these new Bills.

The grand design of apartheid is to fragment our people's unity. And those who deliberately refrain from helping us to maximise this unity advance the cause of the enemy and delay the cause of democracy.

At this stage in constructing unity, hundreds of organisations are already an integral part of the UDF. This process continues.

The UDF draws inspiration from the overwhelming support and commitment of the people. And we announce the national launching of the UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT in Cape Town on August 20 1983.

This historic event is the culmination of the first phase of this process. It is a tangible manifestation of the indomitable will of the people and is a momentous step on the long road to freedom.

ISSUED BY: National Executive Committee of the United Democratic Front
Johannesburg, August 1, 1983.