

DRAFT OUTLINE FOR UDF BOOK

Book is aimed at:

- * Activists, recovering history of Front and related mass struggles, hoping to play some educative function
- * Broader public in South Africa, hoping to reinforce the Front's moral authority etc.
- * International audience

The book will be well illustrated with original photographs, graphics (logos etc) and reproductions of stickers/pamphlets/posters.

The initial proposal should run to about 150 pages.

1. The racy introduction (5 pages)

Written in a more newsy/epic style

* begins with kombi winding its way through Mitchell's Plain with Bob Marley blaring from roof, then to Delmas judgement.

* optimism/hope, Front far exceeding expectations of its founders

* state trying to close down, but intractable gains made.

* the rapid accumulation of a wide range of political experience which would have taken decades in other struggles - activists, of necessity, quickly learned to combine a variety of different methods of work.

* the UDF as the flagship of a broader resurgence of mass struggle.

* the dialectics of its development/evolution, involving the immense creativity of thousands of people in a fast-changing situation - the UDF of today is not the UDF of 5 years ago. Baptism of fire, forced to develop/adapt/evolve its positions on a number of fronts as it has increasingly been asked to play a leadership role on a wide range of areas outside of its traditional turf - (moral authority idea, reflected in AAC stuff).

2. Background to the UDF (10 pages)

This section is composed of two parts: the first focuses on structural features: the nature of the system, and its crisis. The second focuses on the development of mass organisation in the early 80s.

This makes clear that UDF is not the result of a conspiracy, or even simply of a 'call to unity'. It is the product of objective forces at work in society, and the response of people to the forces.

a) *The system.* (5 pages)

A basic outline of the nature of South African society, and why it gives rise to opposition on all fronts. This section introduces the basic concepts of Colonialism of a Special Type although with minimal jargon (more journalistic than academic).

This emphasises the centrality of the national question, in understanding why political power has often been the focus even of fairly parochial struggles.

This discussion introduces the National Democratic Struggle, also simply explained. Mention that the NDS has guided the UDF's political work, but not mechanically - changing circumstances have seen the Front evolve and develop its overall political approach.

This discussion establishes the *general* context for the emergence and growth of a movement like the UDF. The *specific* political context must be explained in terms of the crisis faced by the system since the late 70s.

Therefore provide an outline of the different elements of the crisis, and the reform programme that emerged in response. Make point that the crisis was deep and structural, but not posing an immediate threat to the survival of the regime (as the crisis of 85/6 might have done) - Botha's reforms were an initiative to stabilise the system over a long period.

Outline the Front's critique of the constitutional proposals, how they predicted the revolt which occurred as a result.

Make the point that the state's initiative involved seeking national political legitimacy, and this opened up some political space (also, state strategy section should refer to General Coetzee's thinking on this question).

The state's reforms, and their acceptance by black collaborators, called for a new type of political formation.

b) *Growth of the mass movement* (5 pages)

- 1st great period of mass struggles in the 1950s (many of the ideas/approaches of that period carried over; many new ones): clamp-down led to long silence

- 76 etc. Many went to join up, others stayed behind and took up the struggle with new weapons, building mass organisation.

- organisational forms: the BC movement - its importance and limitations (quote Frank etc), bannings. Some take forward into AZAPO etc., others into the Front

- mention Charter, kept alive by veterans, winning new converts all the time.

- Economic crisis placing great strain on living standards; therefore defensive struggles became the main form of mass organisation: struggles on shopfloor, communities etc. These struggles produce a new generation of activists with their own specific set of experiences.

- early 80s: few national orgs - student and union fields: COSAS, AZASO, NUSAS.

FOSATU - not engaging in politics (source of friction with activists), but taking advantage of space created to build massive union movement of the late 80s - tradition of non-racialism, unity and mass collective action. SAAWU - militant shop-floor/community-political link (in SACTU tradition), developed traditions which were elaborated both in COSATU and UDF.

Student orgs, SAAWU, often taking a leading role in national campaigns (in the absence of more suitable structures)

- campaigns: Free Mandela/Charter 1980, Anti-republic Day 1981 - small scale compared to later, but important in giving activists direction/coherence (important for later) Increasingly sophisticated local struggles, raising political issues. Newspapers etc.

- national campaigning - anti-SAIC major one. Ideologically important, but also showed that state not tolerating such a development - detentions etc.

- Neil Agget death: important symbol for developing non-racialism

- Save the Six campaign: mention spectacular armed propaganda exercises, nb politicising role. Student sector campaigning for 6, with sense that this could mean the chop at any point.

[Make the point either here or later that the Front fused a number of different organisational/political traditions, and created a new one.]

- throughout this period, there were limits on what was politically possible: many of the calls and campaigns of the UDF period would have been inconceivable before. (Unban the ANC etc. - state had refused to tolerate national coordination of even campaigns like Wilson Rowntree and Anti SAIC {B.Hogan trial})

- key weakness of this period the absence of national coordination, political structures. Existing organisational forms were unable to take up the challenge of national political reforms.

This section shows that Boesak's call was the formal expression of a process which was under way - one feels a bit silly saying the Front started with Boesak's call

3. Periodisation

This series of chapters should form the core of the book. It traces the growth of the Front through 4 main periods, looking at the changing conception of the Front's role, the programme of struggle which emerges in each, and the changing broader political dynamic.

a) Building the Front (10 pages) covering 1983, the prelaunch period and the emergence of the Front.

Why the Front emerged:

- * response to the political challenge of Botha's reforms, and the political opening they offered.
- * an extension of the development of mass organisations in the early 1980s.

Why a front?

- * combine dispersed organisations into the effective force essential to extend the struggle
- * minimise effects of repression
- * diversity of traditions/experiences/conditions across regions and sectors made a coherent unitary national organisation impossible at the outset
- * Most importantly, the need to generate the widest possible united action against the reforms - therefore broader than Charterists etc.

Criticisms of the Front from AZAPO/NF and unions.

The launch:

* The programme and character of the Front, resolutions and structures.

* Opening shots at the rally - speeches etc.

Significance:

* invigorating effect of creating a national movement.

* a national political voice for the emergent mass movement

* the UDF greater than the sum of its parts. A qualitative shift which laid the basis for great qualitative and quantitative gains.

b) Mass work (12 pages) covering the Front's early campaigning. This period ends after the August 1984 elections.

* Explain the Front's attitude to political work - writing letter to Botha, signature campaign etc. - need to involve the masses, not speed ahead etc.

* Campaign against the white referendum - in white areas, people's weekend.

* Campaign against Black Local Authorities

* PE Conference and referendum debate

* Million signatures campaign - building mass support, also training activists in the art of building mass organisation.

* Anti election campaign - mass work in Coloured and Indian sectors. Also rural areas. Defeating Botha's plan. Putting the question of political power and its transfer onto the agenda.

Campaigns of this period defeated reforms, laid the basis for shifting the political initiative into the hands of the people.

c) People's Power (22 pages). This period extends from the Vaal uprising of September 1984 to the Emergency of June 12 1986.

Ungovernability, people's power moves into vacuum. ANC playing a more prominent role. Regime loses initiative, crisis deepens.

* revolt: school boycott and struggle against BLAs/rents. Demolition of BLAs, troops into townships, leads to still wider politicisation. November 84 stayaway.

* Internationally regime loses ground, Front's interventions on this Front. Kennedy issue, Stofile NZ visit.

* Mandela refuses Botha's offer - symbolises shift in initiative - centrality of ANC in demands of mass struggle.

All of this challenges the Front to redefine its role - crystallised at April 85 NGC - "protest to challenge". Challenge implementation of BLAs etc - Front becomes longer-term anti-apartheid movement.

Organisational streamlining, also self-criticism leading to emphasis on African leadership. Put political power squarely onto the agenda.

* massacres/assinations as state launches wave of terror.

* Consumer boycotts - new method of struggle where repression heavier. Applied major pressure where well organised, even achieving major demands. Less effective where no street committees etc.

* First Emergency - highlighted regime's political failure. Still, it was a tentative Emergency, in which organisations still carved out space to maintain the momentum of struggle. Also banning of COSAS, treason trials.

* Major focus had been the Vaal late 84, then Eastern Cape early 85. Late in 85, Western Cape rose in revolt - highlighting regime's failure to win over Coloured community. Left indelible mark on community, who saw their destiny bound up with the majority (Ashley Kriel example).

* Natal - exempt from the Emergency because Inkatha doing the job - elaborate.

Insert here on the ANC's Kabwe conference, and its reading of the meaning of the revolt and the possibilities opened up.

Also, summarise the crisis facing the regime:

- * ungovernability
- * ANC gains
- * international pressure, loans crisis.
- * splits in the ruling bloc, delegations to ANC.

Brief bit on the National Convention Movement, and the Front's reasons for opposing it.

- * Emergence of people's power (on the ground, and as UDF slogan). Explain
 - street committees
 - people's courts
 - schools/factories

People's power changed the character of mass struggle - ordinary people drawn in, giving meaning on the ground to working class leadership etc.

Also, make the point that the process was uneven.

Formation of COSATU and NECC and the Front's role in these (particularly NECC, which was in line with a resolution taken at the NGC).

Emergency lifted, regime crisis ridden, divided. EPG visit - UDF's response.

Easter NECC conference - people's education, looking towards a great surge of struggle over May Day and June 16 - sense that conditions such that struggle could lay the basis for entering a period in which the transfer of power became possible.

AZAPO conflict

Call to whites campaign, and work done in this sector. Make point that perspectives opened up in subsequent period.

National Working Committee 1986 (need material).

Crossroads vigilante massacre - highlighted a new and sinister approach by the regime.

d) Twilight of legality (20 pages) A period which runs from June 12 1986 to the present.

* shift in regime, new approach to repression, mass organisation - explain JMC system/aims of the emergency

* rent boycotts

National United Action campaign - the perspective guiding this campaign became the focus of the Front's work in this period, allowing its programme to be implemented even after its restriction in township-level coordinating structures, and national initiatives like the AA Conference.

Front adopts the Charter - culmination of a process under way since 85 NGC

Mention SAYCO, Women's Congress, Unban ANC campaign. Major strikes on mines, post and railways.

Outline deepening of alliance with COSATU

Defend Consolidate Advance: a deepening of the perspective of national united action.

Struggle over white election.

Mbeki release

Restriction and significance.

state of the regime in 88.

Stayaways against Labour Bills

Struggle against municipal elections.

Anti Apartheid conference must figure prominently in this chapter, as an indication of general way forward. Reflection of the deepening of the Front's understanding of the national democratic struggle, product of the experiences of recent years.

Assesment which shows that although the Front unable to operate as such, its legacy continues. Within brief five years has made intractable gains in mass politicisation. Although dark days ahead, and mass struggle having to find creative and unusual methods of expression, clear way forward, and potential to put major pressure on state at certain points (eg 3 day stayaway)

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED AS AN APPENDIX

The other major focus chapter will be on organisational methods and styles of work developed by the Front.

Style of work/structures (20 pages)

This will include

* looking at how the UDF's structures evolved over the course of its history, and particularly the challenge thrown up by people's power, the growing relationship with COSATU and the need for political centres. This will look at some of the organisational democratic principles of the Front - democracy, leadership, accountability etc.

* Brief points about how the Front had to accomodate the regional diversity, affected by the social composition of the population in each centre

* Non-racialism: a process of struggle. Continuously being built, asserted. Much has been achieved, but no room for complacency. This includes

a) Look at whites, (must include pic of Helen addressing launch) early debates over NUSAS with AZAPO etc, touch on development of white participation, leadership structures, funerals (pic), Alex visit (Morice speech) etc.

b) working in Coloured and Indian communities, bringing them into struggle. Cultural questions, TIC debates. (also use this section to deal with National Forum criticisms of this form of work) [include Archie's error on TV re Indians?]

c) question of African leadership (85 NGC report).

* Working class leadership

a) meaning given to this in UDF's style of work - evolution of this, particularly in the people's power period.

b) make theoretical points about how it is seen in UDF, i.e. as leadership over other classes, therefore needing a broad front. Show what this means in practise vis-a-vis taxis etc.

* Question of women in leadership: major weakness in the Front, and the Front's approach to addressing it.

* The evolution of the Front's approach to united action.

Smaller sections include specific focuses which occur in the periodisation, but should be briefly highlighted as evolving processes. Some could be separate short chapters. Others could be blocks placed within the text.

These are:

1. State strategy and repression
2. International policy
3. Relations with trade unions
4. Work among whites
5. Attitude to AZAPO and Inkatha
6. Attitude to the ANC
7. Negotiations
8. Women sector
9. Education sector
10. Youth sector
11. Rural areas and Bantustans
12. Culture and sport sectors

Also include a section paying tribute to various UDF leaders who have suffered, and perhaps also something showing where they are now.

The book should conclude with a brief section pointing the way forward.

State strategy and repression (8 pages)

Look at the evolution of state strategy as mapping the context in which the UDF grows. Make point about politics and war in their strategies: some have inverted Clausewitz's "war is the continuation of politics by other means".

- brief resume on Total Strategy
- the 'spring' of 1983/4 - political defeat, followed by the revolt
- the 1985 Emergency: debates within the state between hawks and doves: the question of Mandela/negotiations. New dimensions/immediacy to the state's crisis.
- the EPG, bombing of Lusaka etc. introducing the new programme - hawks: outline NSMS, views on mass organisation, negotiation etc. Background to the twilight legality (Vlok statements on mass organisations, ECC trial statements about war)
- include something on the weaknesses of state strategy.

LINK THIS BREAKDOWN TO THE TYPE OF REPRESSION SUFFERED BY THE FRONT IN EACH PERIOD

- from early smear pamphlets, polite arrests to massive bannings, detentions, shootings etc. Give statistics etc.
- look at psycho-warfare. Fake pamphlets, inducements to inform etc.
- bans on gatherings
- detentions/deaths. Detentions became a systematic response from week preceding August 84 elections
- trials
- Bantustan repression
- assassinations, disappearances
- question of vigilantes (located in context that Low Intensity Warfare suggests use of proxy forces?)
- massacres: Langa, Crossroads, Mamelodi, Winterveld, Trojan Horse, White City, Alexandra,
- financial attacks (affected organisation, new regulations, Chris Ball hearings to intimidate).

- banning and restriction of Front and affiliates

International (8 pages)

a) Isolating apartheid

Look at UDF's attitude to international work. Begin with launch messages/resolutions, show evolution towards wider conception. Key moments/issues include:

- Swedish peace prize (seemed like a big thing at the time)

- consulate drama (1) - could show how became popular tactic: De Jonge, even police spy Forsythe

- Anderson/Kennedy
- Tutu's peace prize (here?)
- Stofile's New Zealand trip
- Question of sanctions
- EPG: debate, meeting with them, effect
- Consulate (2)

Also look at overall positions on imperialism, international work developed at NGC/NWC level.

b) solidarity

Look at UDF solidarity with regional struggles: mostly by resolutions etc (or NGC documents saying not doing enough). Key moments/issues include:

- Launch resolutions
- relations with SWAPO
- resolutions etc on Southern Africa
- Machel's memorial
- Palestine letter contra Motlana

Trade Unions

From early refusal, to later cooperation, through Tvl stayaway, Peoples Power, growing unity in action - COSATU. Mention SACTU commemoration in March 85. Look at COSATU resolutions on natural allies etc. discussion of united front (also use this to deal with workerist critiques)

Whites

Outline development of thinking and work in this sphere. Include business, ECC, FFF, CBM etc. questions of parliament etc.

UDF and the ANC

Evolution of positions on this question:

- launch resolutions not to displace
- state attacks, responses
- more assertive positions on unbanning etc.
- first formal meeting early 86.
- unban ANC campaign
- Mbeki/Mandela releases