

STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSION ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROPOSALS.

WHEREAS democracy is the means by which the free will of the people is expressed in electing their chosen representatives to govern, in the processes through which they rule and in the allocation of resources for the benefit of all the people; AND WHEREAS, these truths are cherished by the whole of the civilised world and are goals for which women and men have given up their lives and are willing to die;

AND WHEREAS, the constitutional reform proposals devised by the minority white government for South Africa, avoid recognition of these fundamental needs of democracy in that:

- they have been imposed without genuine consultation with an active participation by the people of this country.
- they make race and ethnicity the only criteria for the right to take part in government.
- they do not begin to redress the intrinsic economic and social inequalities which have been the deliberate result of centuries of white domination.
- they, in fact, perpetuate and consolidate economic and racial exploitation and entrench the apartheid state.

AND NOW THEREFORE we, democrats assembled on this 23rd day of January, 1983 at the Selbourne Hall in Johannesburg, South Africa, do hereby unanimously

- reject in their totality and without qualification the constitutional and reform proposals.
- form ourselves into a united democratic front (UDF) to oppose

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the implementation of this devious scheme disguised to divide the people.

WE declare that the broad principles on which this UDF is constituted are:

- A belief in the tenets of democracy referred to in the preamble
- An unshakable conviction in the creation of a non-racial, unitary state in South Africa undiluted by racial or ethnic considerations as formulated in the bantustan policy.
- An adherence to the need for unity in struggle through which all democrats regardless of race, religion or colour shall take part together.
- A recognition of the necessity to work in consultation with, and reflect accurately the demands of, democratic people wherever they may be in progressive worker, community, and student organisations.

We further undertake to work according to the following guidelines:

- The mobilisation of our people for the rejection of these constitutional reform proposals should complement and reinforce the ongoing day to day struggles on basic issues which face workers, communities and students.
- A firm acceptance of the existence of dangers at the local council level in the proposals which entail the retention of the Group Areas Act, maintenance of racially exclusive local areas, concentration of control in favour of the rich and exacerbation of poverty.

- An acknowledgement of the threat to the attainment of decent living standards by the African majority by these proposals which would facilitate forced removals, aggravate impoverishment in the bantustans and allow the continued escalation in rents, transport costs and food prices.
- A clear understanding of the utter failure of these proposals to address the problems of rising unemployment, low wages, poor working conditions and weakened collective bargaining powers.
- A true appreciation of the inability of the reform proposals to restructure and redirect education in this country to conform to the demands of democracy. In fact they maintain and consolidate racially separated and unequal education.

AND NOW THEREFORE

We pledge to fight together side by side against the government's constitutional and reform proposals.