

WE celebrate the third birthday of the United Democratic Front (UDF) against the background of a massive State clampdown on legal mass democratic opposition to its (the Government's) apartheid policies.

More ominous was the threat by the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, to "smash" the UDF, coming just a few days before the declaration of a general state of emergency.

Our view remains that the national state of emergency is in fact an admission by the Government of its total inability to rule this country without the use of massive force.

We challenge anyone who will want to claim (as Brian Pottinger attempted to do in his article on this page last week), that so-called "radical leftwing opposition groups pushed the Government to unconscionable lengths" making it "inevitably retaliate savagely".

What we do claim credit for is, that in our short lifespan of three years, we have succeeded (despite ongoing Security Police attempts to frustrate us) in channelling the popular abhorrence of apartheid into increasingly effective forms of united mass action.

Through its so-called Bureau of Information, the Government boasts that the emergency is succeeding. But that is a serious misreading of the situation. Freedom cannot be stopped by Caspirs, Buffels and more police powers.

It will also be sheer bravado on our side were we to claim that we've not been affected by the emergency. With well over 10 000 people detained — most from our affiliates countrywide — the effects cannot but be felt.

But because of the present depth of organisation in our various communi-

No pussyfooting will change Nat thinking



By MURPHY MOROBE

acting publicity secretary of the United Democratic Front, on the 3rd anniversary of the movement

ties and the continued monopolising of political power by the white minority, the tide of anti-apartheid opposition cannot be reversed.

"Stability" *a la* Pretoria will remain an illusive goal. No matter what the time span, history teaches that a minority cannot dominate a majority forever.

In fact, it is the Nats and their allies who have more to lose and are being affected more by the prevailing political climate than some would care to admit.

Consider the following:

● Since the emergency was declared, more black authorities are collapsing.

● The Government's pipedream of "independent homelands" blew up in its own face when the KwaNdebele legislature was forced to reject independence.

● The Government has failed dismally in its attempts to woo "moderate" blacks into its National Statutory Council initiative. Instead, the state of emergency has had the opposite effect of uniting the black community against the Nationalists' schemes, and even bolstering support for the African National Congress.

● The stringent Department of Education and Training (DET) regulations requiring black students to carry IDs have led to the building of even greater unity between students, parents and teachers.

● The declaration of the emergency and the detention of thousands of people — including numerous trade union leaders — has further alienated important sections of the business community from the Government.

● On the international front the emergency has helped isolate the apartheid state more than ever before — to the point where even the Governments of the United States, Britain, West Germany and others sympathetic to South Africa — have been forced by their own people to implement sanctions.

● While in the short term the emergency may have served to forge white unity, it has also alienated significant sectors of the white community. This is clear from the fact that about 1 500 whites — most of them professional people — are emigrating every month.

● The armed struggle in South Africa has intensified dramatically recently, with the ANC carrying out numerous successful attacks since the emergency was declared.

In coming to grips with these realities — with the crisis the Government finds itself in and with the ability of the democratic movement to survive re-

pression — it is worth examining the period which preceded it and the seminal role the UDF played in influencing it.

The launch of the UDF on August 20 1983 marked a dramatic leap forward in the national liberation struggle. It brought more than 500 grassroots organisations together in a broad front against apartheid.

At that time we set ourselves three broad objectives:

● To campaign for the mass rejection of the tricameral Parliament, the black local authorities and other Government schemes to impose apartheid structures on our people.

● To broaden the basis of national unity, to facilitate the setting up of organisations in unorganised areas.

● To deepen the content of organisation to the point where it becomes an effective weapon for mass involvement in campaigning against apartheid.

All of these goals have been carried out with a level of success few envisaged three years ago, and in the process the struggle has been taken to

higher levels.

Despite the growing level of repression, the UDF slogan "Forward to People's Power" has become a reality in many areas.

Contrary to Brian Pottinger's claim in last week's Sunday Times, the UDF has never believed that "a little international buff and domestic puff would topple the Government".

It is precisely because the Government has demonstrated so often in the past that it despises weakness and is incapable of understanding reason that we believe that there is no easy road to freedom.

Our history shows that the Nationalists have only moved when forced to do so, and no amount of sweet words or pussyfooting will change their minds. So it is not a question of pushing them to "unconscionable lengths", but rather one of bringing them to the point where democracy is the only option.

The increasing level of violence we are experiencing in our country today is a product of apartheid.

Ultimately it comes down to a question of political power. In South Africa this power is wielded by a white minority government and until that changes the UDF and all democratic forces

have a moral obligation to continue pushing that Government to even greater lengths.

We have no illusions that the period ahead will be fraught with enormous hardship to all our people. With the Government intent on crushing us, and having closed off most of the legal gaps we have used in the past, our task will be to deepen grassroots organisation in a way which no amount of repression can break; to continue to build national unity against apartheid and to ensure that the momentum of struggle in every area is maintained and intensified.

Our demands for a settlement to South Africa's problems are reasonable.

There can be no "open-ended" negotiations in South Africa while political prisoners and detainees are incarcerated, while exiles cannot return freely; while the ANC and 30 other organisations are banned; while apartheid laws are still on the statute books and while the Government rejects the idea that the majority of South Africa's peoples can decide for themselves how they want to live. The UDF can never assent to the notion of negotiations over the heads of the people.

Anything less than one vote in a unitary South Africa will not be acceptable to the majority of our people. And until the Government realises this the cycle of violence will continue to escalate.

Now is the time for all democrats to pick up the key to South Africa's future that P W Botha has thrown away, and to ensure that together we end minority rule and create the conditions for lasting peace and prosperity.

● Picture courtesy The New Nation.