

## PEOPLE'S EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER

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(Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee,  
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Friends, Comrades,

I welcome you to this historic gathering, a meeting of people from all over the country, from every province, from big and small towns, rural and urban areas. We gather here as a meeting of people drawn from all walks of life, from all sections of the people: students, teachers, parents, workers, community and political leaders. We bring together all sections of the oppressed community and all who detest apartheid. We have tried to ensure representation of all political tendencies and all sections of our population, black and white.

This is a truly historic conference in the tradition of earlier national meetings such as the Congress of the People of 1955 and the 1961 All-in Africa conference.

It is an important lesson to the apartheid forces: The people stand united. Ten years after the 1976 rising we remain united in our demand for the ending of apartheid education and the establishment of a democratic, people's education. We also remain convinced that this can only be achieved with the eradication of the apartheid system and the establishment of a democratic people's South Africa.

Ever since 1976 the people have recognised that apartheid education cannot be separated from apartheid in general. This conference once again asserts that the entire oppressed and democratic community is concerned with education, that we all see the necessity of ending gutter education and we all see that this is a political question affecting each and every one of us.

Let us now turn to the critical question which concerns us all, all oppressed and democratic South Africans. The December Conference gave the government until today to meet the demands of parents, students and teachers. Has the government met the demands? We want to answer this loudly and clearly so that there can be no mistaking what we are saying: The answer is NO. They have not met our demands.

We are saying this for two reasons: firstly most of the demands which we made in December have not been met. Secondly any steps the government has taken have been sideways steps. They lifted the emergency because they were forced to do so, because they were afraid of the united mass action of the people which they know is coming after March 31. At the same time they said they were going to impose a **permanent emergency** by giving the SAP and SADF powers throughout the country, whereas previously they have only had these in parts of the country.

In the meantime, the emergency in fact continues to exist throughout the country. There is little difference now from when the official state of emergency was in force. It was **after** the emergency was lifted that our children were shot in Kabokweni in the Eastern Transvaal and that other atrocities were perpetrated. The demands of the December Conference have not been met.

As we meet:

- \* Cosas remains banned
- \* Students are still in detention
- \* Teachers continue to be dismissed and forcibly transferred
- \* Attempts are still being made to stop democratic SRCs from functioning
- \* School buildings are unrepaired
- \* Troops are still in the townships.

Boycotts have taken place throughout the country because of the intransigence of the authorities, their refusal to meet our just demands.

## **THE CURRENT SITUATION**

We stand today at a crossroads in our struggle for national liberation. We hold the future in our hands. The decisions we take at this conference will be truly historic, in the sense that they will help determine whether we go forward to progress and peace, or whether the racists push us backwards and reverse some of the gains that we have made, towards barbarism and chaos.

I want to make it clear that these aren't empty slogans. When we say that we have reached a decisive historical moment, this

is based on a careful assessment of our current reality. In any struggle it is extremely important to recognise the critical moment, the time when decisive action can propel that struggle into a new phase. It is also important to understand that this moment doesn't last forever, that if we fail to take action that moment will be lost.

This moment has a number of important features:

- the state has lost the initiative to the people. It is no longer in control of events.
- the masses themselves recognise that the moment is decisive, and are calling for action.
- the people are united around a set of fundamental demands, and are prepared to take action on these demands.

Having said this, I want to strike a note of caution. It is important that we don't misrecognise the moment, or understand it to be something which it is not. We are not poised for the immediate transfer of power to the people. The belief that this is so could lead to serious errors and defeats. We are however poised to enter a phase which can lead to transfer of power. What we are seeking to do is to decisively shift the balance of forces in our favour. To do this we have to adopt the appropriate strategies and tactics, we have to understand our strengths and weaknesses, as well as that of the enemy, that is, the forces of apartheid reaction.

Having said this, let us describe some of the main features of the current situation. The government introduced the state of emergency because it was losing political control. It hoped that the emergency would achieve two objectives: firstly, to stop the advances of the democratic movement, and to destroy the people's organisations which were taking control in various parts of the country. Secondly it aimed to reinstitute the puppet bodies in the townships which had been destroyed since the Vaal uprising ten months previously. Through this two-pronged attack it hoped to regain control, regain the initiative, and impose its apartheid reforms on the people.

In fact, the state failed hopelessly in these objectives. The brutal behaviour of the SAP and the SADF only angered the people more and mobilised them in evergrowing numbers. Puppet structures, instead of being restored, came under more widespread

attack. In a number of areas people's organisations strengthened their structures and became more rooted in the masses. Struggle began to be waged in all corners of the country and new organisations sprang up daily. Where youth had previously waged the struggle alone, whole communities now involved themselves in united action against the regime.

Despite the heavy blows against our leaders and organisations, there was a real strengthening of the democratic forces, the people's camp; and a weakening of the forces of apartheid, the enemy camp. Let us first look at the situation in the enemy camp. When the regime declared the emergency, all sections of the white ruling bloc supported it, in the belief that the resistance of the people would be crushed, paving the way for a Buthelezi-Muzorewa option. Barely one month later this appearance of unity had crumbled. Mass resistance had spread and taken new forms. The regime stood more isolated than ever before at the international level; and the economic crisis reached new proportions with the loss of investor confidence in the stability of the South African regime.

This situation brought home to its allies that the regime was no longer able to rule in the old way. The people heightened contradictions within the ruling bloc by strategies such as the consumer boycott. The regime became increasingly divided and unable to act as greater pressure built up, locally and internationally, to meet the people's demands. The divisions reached right into the cabinet itself, as sections of the government differed with each other on the correct way to deal with the situation. The SPCC initiative created public divisions between the SADF and SAP on the one hand, and the DET on the other; something which previously would have been unthinkable.

The initiative passed into the hands of the people. The ANC, in particular, became seen as the primary actor on the South African stage. Not only the people, but sections of the white ruling bloc, began to look to the ANC to provide an indication of future direction.

Doubts amongst whites in the ability of parliament to provide a solution to the country's problems reached a peak with the resignation of Van Zyl Slabbert. Politically, therefore, the regime had become totally isolated, both locally and inter-

nationally. Morally, it had been exposed as totally bankrupt and without any legitimate right to rule. Economically, it faced its worst crisis ever.

It was in this context that they lifted the state of emergency. They did not do this from a position of strength. The people forced them to lift the emergency. They are trying to gain a breathing space before launching a new offensive against the people.

A number of pressures forced the regime to lift the emergency. But it was the deadline which was set at the December conference which was the decisive factor. They knew that the eyes of the whole country would be on decisions of this conference, and they hoped that the lifting of the emergency would defuse a programme of united action. We know that they intend re-imposing the emergency in another form. But we must not let this happen. We must frustrate this scheme.

#### **ADVANCES OF THE PEOPLE**

When the emergency was declared, a situation of ungovernability existed mainly in two areas, the Eastern Cape and the East Rand. By the beginning of this year the situation was very different. Ungovernability had not only extended to far more areas. The people had actually begun to govern themselves in a number of townships.

The period of the emergency saw very important advances made by the people. Confronted by the excesses of the SADF and SAP, the people, under the leadership of their organisations, closed ranks. Structures were built which would survive the period of the emergency and beyond it. In a number of townships, the area was split up into zones, blocks and areas, each of which would have its own committee, and some townships developed street committees.

As a result, in many cases our organisations matured and grew under the guns of the SADF. Action taken against the leadership didn't result in the collapse of our organisations. Not only did our organisations grow in strength, they often took over the running of the townships. So we saw the emergence of zones of People's Power in a number of townships. This development is so

important that I shall deal with it separately later.

Another feature of the emergency was the highly political character of the struggle we waged, and the **tendency for the struggles to develop in a national direction. The masses linked up local issues with the question of political power. A set of national demands emerged which transcended specific issues or regional differences. The transformation of SPOC from a locally based education initiative into a national body combining educational and political issues is an important instance of this development.**

Our struggle took on an increasingly national character in another sense too. From being youth-led, the struggle began to involve all sections of the population. Greater involvement of parents gave rise in turn to initiatives such as that of the SPOC. This development wasn't confined to education however. Parents and workers began to take a more active involvement in all issues concerning the community. There was a general recognition in the democratic movement that it was a major challenge to consolidate and accelerate this process. There was also a recognition that serious obstacles existed which had to be tackled. Our youth organisations began to play an important role in trying to channel the militancy of unorganised youth into disciplined action, responsible and accountable to the whole community.

Complementing this was the development of a close relationship between the trade unions and the rest of the democratic movement. The formation of Cosatu was of particular importance in this regard, since it took a strong stand supporting trade union involvement in community and political issues.

In terms of developing the struggle nationally, we made our most significant advance in the last months of the emergency. For the first time in decades, our people took up the struggle in the rural areas. People in a number of bantustan areas challenged the so-called tribal authorities, and in some instances even replaced these bantustan sellouts with people's village councils. Areas which the enemy could previously rely on as zones of subservience and passivity were now being turned into zones of struggle. In the midst of the emergency our people wages campaigns against these puppets in seven of the nine

bantustans. Of course, the majority of our people in the rural areas have yet to challenge their oppressors. But the significance of these developments should not be underestimated. Every day this process is being furthered as more and more people in the rural areas take up the cudgels of freedom.

In summary, then, a new situation developed in the course of the emergency, with a number of special features. On the side of the regime, they found themselves totally isolated, divided and unable to act effectively. On the people's side, organisation often matured, sprung up in new areas, and resistance took on an increasingly national character. We have isolated these as the most significant features of this period, as the features which characterise the special situation, or decisive moment in which we find ourselves.

This doesn't mean that the regime has no strengths and we have no weaknesses. If we overlay the regime's weaknesses and ignore their strengths we shall be fooling ourselves. More importantly, if we only concentrate on our strengths and ignore our weaknesses we shall commit serious errors. I have pointed to positive tendencies which have to be encouraged. But we must also be aware of the counter tendencies which threaten to reverse our struggle if we don't address them seriously. We need to consolidate, defend and advance the gains we have made in this period. In this way we can deepen the breakthroughs we have achieved in the various parts, thereby ensuring that temporary gains are transformed into fundamental and long-lasting features of our struggle.

#### **DEFEND, CONSOLIDATE AND ADVANCE**

We have said that we must have no illusions about the type of regime we are dealing with. The increase in atrocities since the lifting of the state of emergency shows that we can expect no let-up. The regime may be losing control, but as it gets more desperate, so its actions get more outrageous. The advances which the people have made mean that old methods of state repression are no longer effective. Detaining our leaders no longer frightens off our people or breaks our organisations.

This is why the system is adopting new methods to try and

destroy us. These methods are taking three main forms. What they all have in common is that they are illegal or semi-legal, and that they use secret terror or more open fascist methods. They all involve physical attacks or killing of our leaders and ordinary residents.

Firstly our people are being attacked by apartheid vigilante squads in areas where apartheid authority has been challenged or destroyed. From Moutse to Welkom to Lamontville these agents are operating to try and prop up the rejected community councils and tribal authorities.

Secondly apartheid death squads are operating to assassinate important leaders of the people. Since the killing of Matthew Goniwe a number of our leaders have fallen to these agents. Our people have foiled a number of other attempts on the lives of our leaders. Assassinations have happened in areas such as Leandra where our people are threatening to establish democratic control of their communities; or where the process of people's power has advanced such as in the Eastern Cape and Pretoria. It is not possible to say exactly who is responsible for such murderous acts, since these cowards strike under the cover of darkness. But we just have to ask ourselves, who has the capacity to mount these actions, and who stands to benefit from them?

Thirdly, the SADF and SAP are being given power to act as they please, to use emergency powers, whether there is an emergency or not, killing and maiming our people. The government has said that it intends to make this legal by giving them permanent emergency powers throughout the country. This is a formal declaration of war on the people of South Africa.

The aim of these three methods is to frighten our people and break their morale, thereby leading to the disintegration of their resistance. So far they have only had this effect where our people are not strongly organised. In areas where we have developed strong people's committees, these attacks have been resisted and sometimes frustrated. The people have seen the need to defend their leaders, defend their organisations in order to consolidate and advance.



**FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER**

Why do we use the slogan "Forward to People's Power"? Firstly it indicates that our people are now seeing the day when the people of South Africa shall have the power, when the people shall govern all aspects of their lives, as an **achievable reality** which we are working towards.

Secondly, it expresses the growing trend for our people to move towards realising people's power **now**, in the process of struggle, before actual liberation. By this we mean that people are beginning to exert control over their own lives in different ways. In some townships and schools people are beginning to govern themselves, despite being under racist rule.

When our people kicked out the puppets from the townships they made it impossible for the regime to govern. They had to bring in the SADF as an army of occupation. All they could do was to harass and use force against our people. But they couldn't stop the people in some townships from taking power under their very noses, by starting to run those townships in different ways. In other words the struggles which the people has fought, and the resulting situation of ungovernability, created the possibilities for the exercise of people's power.

People exercised power by starting to take control in areas such as crime, the clearing of the townships and the creation of people's parks, the provisions of first aid, and even in the schools.

I want to emphasise here that these advances were only possible because of the development of democratic organs, or committees, of people's power. Our people set up bodies which were controlled by, and accountable to, the masses of people in each area. In such areas, the distinction between the people and their organisations disappeared. All the people young and old participated in committees from street level upwards.

The development of people's power has caught the imagination of our people, even where struggles are breaking out for the first time. There is a growing tendency for ungovernability to be transformed into elementary forms of people's power, as people take the lead from the semi-liberated zones.

In the bantustans, for example, struggles against the tribal

authorities have developed into struggles for democratic village councils. These councils are actually taking over in some areas, thereby adapting the forms of people's power developed in the townships to rural conditions.

We must stress that there is an important distinction between ungovernability and people's power. In a situation of ungovernability the **government** doesn't have control. But nor do the people. While they have broken the shackles of direct government rule the people haven't yet managed to control and direct the situation. There is a power vacuum. In a situation of people's power the **people** are starting to exercise control.

An important difference between ungovernability and people's power is that no matter how ungovernable a township is, unless the people are organised, the gains made through ungovernability can be rolled back by state repression. Because there is no organised centre of people's power, the people are relatively defenceless and vulnerable. Removal of our leadership in such situations can enable the state to reimpose control. We saw, for example, the setbacks experienced by our people in the Vaal and East Rand. Despite heroic struggles and sustained ungovernability, the state through its vicious action was able to reverse some of the gains made in these areas. Where, however, people's power has become advanced, not even the most vicious repression has been able to decisively reverse our people's advances. If anything, their repressive actions serve to deepen people's power in these zones and unite the people against the occupying forces. In the Eastern Cape people's power forced the SADF out of the townships, if only temporarily.

The reason that people's power strengthens us to this extent is that our organisation became one with the masses. It becomes much more difficult for the state to cripple us by removing our leadership, or attacking our organisations. Instead they confront the whole population and occupy our townships. As our people make increasing gains through the exercise of people's power, experience the protection of our mass organisations, and frustrate the attacks of the regime, the masses tend to consolidate their position and advance. In other words, people's power tends to protect us and constantly opens up new possibilities, thereby taking the struggle to a new level. This explains why

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people's power is both defensive and offensive at the same time.

Struggles over the past few months demonstrate that it is of absolute importance that we don't confuse coercion, the use of force ~~against~~ the community. For example, when bands of youth set up so called "kangaroo courts" and give out punishments, under the control of no-one with no democratic mandate from the community, this is **not** people's power. This situation often arises in times of ungovernability. We know that this type of undisciplined individual action can have very negative consequences.

When disciplined, organised youth, together with other older people participate in the exercise of people's justice and the setting up of people's courts; when these structures are acting on a mandate from the community and are under the democratic control of the community, this is an example of people's power.

We have seen that people's power, unlike exercise of power by individuals, tends to be disciplined, democratic and an expression of the will of the people. It develops the confidence of our people to exercise control over their own lives and has the capacity to achieve practical improvements in our every day lives.

A very important, almost astonishing, achievement of our people in this regard has been in the area of crime control. Apartheid and crime make very good bedfellows. They thrive on each other. In fact, very often it is difficult to tell them apart! But people's power and crime cannot co-exist. I am not saying this lightly. Crime has thrived in all townships in the country. But in the areas where people are taking control, crime is being wiped out.

This shows that the people do have the power, if we stand united in action. We can achieve things we would otherwise never imagine possible - if we are organised, if we use our collective strength. Where we have developed people's power we have shown that the tendency for one section of the community to lead, while the others remain passive, can be overcome. Therefore, those initiatives which overcome these divisions and bring our people together must be jealously guarded and developed to their full potential. The National Education Crisis Committee is one such initiative.

The NECC has opened the way for people's power to be developed in our struggle for a free, democratic, compulsory and non-racial education. The crisis committees have brought all sectors of the community together in the pursuit of this noble goal. Students, parents and teachers now have democratic organisations available through which we have begun to take some control over education. They provide the vehicles through which divisions between young and old, teachers and parents can be overcome. Not only this, but our democratic crisis committees can, and must, be used to help tackle all the problems which we face, to develop and deepen people's power in the townships and in the schools. The education struggle is a political struggle in South Africa. We are fighting for the right to self-determination in the education sphere as in all other spheres.

### **PEOPLE'S EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER**

The struggle for People's Education is no longer a struggle of the students alone. It has become a struggle of the whole community with the involvement of all sections of the community. This is not something which has happened in the school sphere alone; it reflects a new level of development in the struggle as a whole.

It is no accident that the historic December Conference took place at a time when our people were taking the struggle for democracy to new heights. At a time when the struggle against apartheid was being transformed into a struggle for people's power. In line with this, students and parents were no longer only saying "Away with apartheid, gutter education!" We are now also saying "Forward with People's Education, Education for Liberation!"

The struggle for people's education can only finally be won when we have won the struggle for people's power. We are facing a vicious and desperate enemy, an enemy which wants at all costs to maintain a system of racist domination and exploitation that includes Bantu Education. Any gains which we make are only finally guaranteed when that enemy is finally defeated, once and for all.

We are also facing an enemy which is unwilling to reason,

which is unmoved by the hunger of children, or cries of suffering. It only understands power and that there are two types of power. Its own power and the power which comes from the organised masses, people's power. Therefore gains we make in the education struggle depend on our organised strength, on the extent to which we establish organs of people's power.

In the few short months since the December conference, we have already seen some of the things People's Power can achieve in our education struggle. We have also seen that the state will do anything it can to reverse these gains and turn them into defeats. In hundreds of schools students have established democratic SRCs, but the state is doing everything it can to frustrate and crush them. The state has conceded our demand for free text books, but tries to wriggle out of this by saying there aren't enough. Also, many detainees, student leaders, are being released, but then excluded from schools. These are only a few examples which show the kind of enemy we face.

But it is also true that where we are strongest, where people's power is most advanced, we are able to frustrate the state in its objectives. For example, in the Eastern Cape, they fired one of our democratic teachers. Through being organised, the people in that area were able to simply send that teacher back to school. They employed him. In fact they raised the funds among themselves, and said this is the people's teacher. If the state can't pay him, they said, we will pay him ourselves, because this is how important people's education is to us.

Of course the people shouldn't have to pay that salary. They are getting slave wages and the taxes from the profits they make for the bosses are going to Botha's army. But since they do not yet control the budget for People's Education, this was one way they could enforce the people's will. That teacher is now teaching in their school.

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Each gain we make opens up new possibilities. This is so, as long as we know the enemy we are fighting, and we never lose sight of the fact that we are waging a struggle for national liberation, for a democratic people's South Africa.

Another area where we are demonstrating the possibilities of people's power is through the school committees. The December Conference took a resolution to replace statutory parents' committees with progressive parent, teacher, student structures. Although these government committees continue in name, they have been rendered unworkable in many parts of the country. Our democratic people's committees have been established and are preparing to take more and more control over the running of the schools. They are the ones who are putting forward the pupils' demands and negotiating with the school principals. The government committees are now being ignored. In effect they are falling away. In some areas their members have abandoned them and joined the people's committees.

Even the Regional Directors of Education are meeting with the people's committees. And finally, of course, the central government has been forced to recognise the people's crisis committees by meeting with representatives of the NECC. Therefore the government-appointed bodies are being replaced at local, regional and national level by bodies of the people. This is a substantial achievement, since what the government has enforced for decades are now being replaced by the people in a period of three short months.

Of course we should mention here that teachers are also coming into the fold of the people. The decision by the traditionally conservative Atasa to withdraw from the structures of the DET reflects the beginning of this process. We now have to ensure that this process is accelerated, that teachers fully identify with the aspirations and struggles of the people. Gone are the days when teachers were forced to collaborate with apartheid structures. The people have opened the way. It is up to the teachers and the teacher's organisations to ensure that teachers follow the path of the people, the path of democracy. Our teachers need to follow the lead given by progressive teachers organisations such as Neusa and Wectu.

We call upon those teachers following the path of collabora-



tion to abandon that path. Some teachers have allowed themselves to be used as tools to victimise student leaders and progressive teachers. Others have even been used as vigilantes against the struggles of their communities. It is our duty, parents, students and teachers alike, to ensure that all teachers understand and are made part of the struggle for people's education. We cannot afford to allow any section of the community to be used against the struggles of our people. Let us use the heroic example of Matthew Goniwe as an inspiration to our teachers! Let us organise a fighting alliance between teachers, students and parents that will be unbreakable!

What do we mean when we say we want people's education? We are agreed that we don't want Bantu Education but we must be clear about what we want in its place. We must also be clear as to how we are going to achieve this.

We are no longer demanding the same education as whites, since this is education for domination. People's education means education at the service of the people as a whole, education that liberates, education that puts the people in command of their lives.

We are not prepared to accept any 'alternative' to Bantu Education which is imposed on the people from above. This includes American or other imperialist alternatives designed to safeguard their selfish interests in the country, by promoting elitist and divisive ideas and values which will ensure foreign monopoly exploitation continues.

Another type of 'alternative school' we reject is the one which gives students from a more wealthy background avenues to opt out of the struggle, such as commercially-run schools which are springing up.

To be acceptable, every initiative must come from the people themselves, must be accountable to the people and must advance the broad mass of students, not just a select few. In effect this means taking over the schools, transforming them from institutions of oppression into zones of progress and people's power. Of course this is a long-term process, a process of struggle, which can only ultimately be secured by total liberation. But we have already begun this process.

When we fight for and achieve democratic SRCs, and parents

committees, we are starting to realise our demands that the People Shall Govern and that the Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened. We have to take this further and make sure that our teachers are prepared and able to assist students in formulating education programmes which liberate not enslave our children. The campaign to draw up an Education Charter is an important part in this process of shaping People's Education, since it will articulate the type of education people want in a democratic South Africa.

The apartheid authorities are unable to accept the transformation that is taking place in the schools. That is why, unlike previously when the authorities were doing their utmost to get children back to school, they are now locking children out of schools. Lock outs have occurred in a number of places including parts of the Eastern and Western Cape and Soshanguve and Witbank in the Transvaal. The regional director in the Western Transvaal simply closed all schools in his area recently. The response of students and parents has been to demand that the doors of learning and culture be opened, and there has been a move towards occupying the schools. People are claiming the schools as their property and demanding education as their right. In P.E. last week the DET locked the students out of the schools. Over two thousand parents took their children to the schools to demand that they be opened. I understand that they successfully occupied the schools. This is in line with action workers are taking in certain parts of the country, where they are occupying factories in defiance of the bosses' attempts to lock them out. These school occupations give students the opportunity to start implementing alternative programmes, people's education.

### **STRUGGLES IN THE COMMUNITIES**

The demand for free, democratic people's education we have said, is part of, indeed inextricably tied, to the struggle for a free, democratic, people's South Africa. The struggle against apartheid education is not a question for students and teachers alone. A conference like this demonstrates the concern of the entire community with the problem of gutter education.

A crucial demand of the entire African people remains the abolition of the pass system. Sensing the continued popular anger and militancy, Comrade Barayi, president of Cosatu, made a call at the launch of the trade union federation, for the burning of the badges of slavery. Should such a call be implemented it is likely to capture popular imagination, to involve every section of the African community and enjoy the support of all democrats.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

The struggles which I have mentioned are the context within which, I think, we need to understand our education struggles. I do not want to in any way dictate or pre-empt the outcome of the discussions at this conference. However, I believe that we need to plan our future struggle on the education front in the context of the broader struggle against apartheid and in line with the general tasks of the anti-apartheid forces at present.

During the emergency, the National Education Crisis Committee was both a shield and a spear: the question which we must now ask ourselves is how do we advance our struggle on the education front and at the same time strengthen, consolidate, unite and deepen our organisations?

In answering these questions, we need to weigh up how we advance the gains of the Parents Crisis Committees over the last three months and at the same time overcome their weaknesses.

As organisation aiming at co-ordinated national response to the education crisis, NECC was able to unite parents, teachers, and students nationally around a single set of demands. This achievement was historic in the level of coherence it achieved in our organisations nationally and in terms of the enormous pressure it placed on the regime.

When planning our future, we need to ask ourselves how do we deepen and broaden this national unity? In assessing different strategies, we need to ask ourselves whether they will reach out to communities not yet touched by our organisations, particularly those in the rural areas, bantustans and small towns.

We need to ask ourselves what actions, campaigns and strategies will overcome the uneven level of development of our or-

ganisations in different areas. In short, what action will pave the way for us to take even greater strides forward in all sections of the community, in all areas?

We also need to examine ways of making inroads into the white community. To break the stranglehold that apartheid education has on the minds of white children. We must show their parents that apartheid education provides no future for their children, or any of South Africa's children.

A significant achievement of NECC was its ability to begin building alliances between different sections of our oppressed people: between parents and students, between students and teachers, between parents and teachers. This has laid the basis for undermining the divisions which the state tried to create between youth and older people, between urban and rural communities, between professionals and other members of the community. We have already given examples of the achievements of these alliances so far. But we know that the bonds between these different sections of the community could be strengthened still further.

There are still areas where students are fighting the education struggle without the support of their parents or teachers. There are still areas where the struggle is led by the youth and the students and older members of the community are left behind or alienated. There are still sections of the teaching profession who side with the apartheid government and promote its will. The question we face is how to strengthen the alliance between parents, teachers, and students. We will not defeat apartheid while the youth alone carry on the struggle against Bantu Education or other aspects of racist rule. We will not win while our ranks are split by teachers who have not yet thrown in their lot with the democratic movement. We will not win while parents remain alienated from the demands of their children. These weaknesses and divisions will only delay our victory.

Our task is to deepen the alliance between all sections of the community against Bantu Education and all aspects of apartheid rule. It is to look for strategies which continually strengthen and enlarge the ranks of the people and constantly weaken, divide and isolate the ranks of the enemy.

The December conference not only united different sections of the community, it also united all opponents of apartheid under a single banner against Bantu Education. The unity and hence the strength of the December conference shook the apartheid regime to its roots. Alone, isolated and disorganised it was unable to reassert Bantu Education in our schools. It lost the initiative and only able to respond piecemeal to our demands. For this reason the government and all the forces of facism and exploitation in our country have a deep-seated desire to prevent the success of this conference.

They long to undermine us by disuniting us. Just as we need unity in order to advance, so we must understand that any act of disunity is an act against the struggle, against the people. Any act of disunity aids the enemy. To cast aside our unity at this time is to weaken our shield and blunt our spear. Our greatest weapon lies in our collective organised strength.

We must remember that the enemy is not sleeping while we plan our activities. We know that it openly attacks us. But it does not only operate outside our ranks. It also operates from within our ranks.

From within, the enemy takes advantage of any sign of indiscipline, any disunity, every sign of weakness. It does this in order to confuse our people, to increase disunity, and sow chaos in our ranks.

When we look to the future we need to remember that our task is not only to broaden our unity, but also to deepen our organisation. It was the people's organisation which built democratically controlled schools committees, SRCs and parents Crisis Committees. This organisation has taken us from opposing Bantu Education to organising the people's alternative. The building of democratic organs of people's power is now our priority. For those of you struggling on the education front, your task is to deepen people's control over education. This means strengthening democratic teachers organisations by recruiting all teachers into the ranks of these organisations, setting up SRCs in every school, and parent, teacher, student committees to control education in these schools. During the last months we have learnt that the state will not stand idly by and allow us to implement these actions. They will continue to harass us, to

detain student leaders, to occupy our communities and to dismiss and transfer democratic teachers.

Our task is not only to build democratic organisation, but to build these in such a way that they can withstand the harassment of the apartheid government. We know that our greatest strength lies in the power of the people, in our mass based committees in the schools, streets and factories; in our co-ordinated strength in our national organisations, such as NECC.

Long live the struggle for democratic, people's education!

Long live the united popular struggle against apartheid!

Forward to a free, democratic people's South Africa!

Amandla Ngawethu!

Power to the People!

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