

National Student Conference

IDASA, Stellenbosch, presented a student conference during the weekend of 26 to 28 June at the Wine Route Hotel near Stellenbosch. The title of the conference was: Students and Democracy.

The conference brought together 173 students from different orientations nationwide and all were involved in discussions focussing on the problems and process of democratization in S.A.

This conference must be seen as a first attempt. Mistakes made will be rectified in future activities. One point of critique was that the conference, according to Dr. Boraine, was a bit top heavy. More student speakers will be used in future. However many positive reports have been received. Students welcomed the unique opportunity to meet and talk to many others. The value of the conference therefore lay in the knowledge acquired from the speakers,



Prof. Abraham Viljoen, regional director for the Northern Transvaal, in conversation with Mr. James Selfe at the recent Students Conference in Stellenbosch.

the new friends made, the richness of discussion and the deepening of commitment to a non-racial, democratic future!

The following groups were represented:

From the SRC's of the following Universities:

WITS, UCT, UOVS, Namibia Academy, RAU, Stellenbosch, UPE, University of Pretoria.

Representatives from:

NUSAS, SANSCO, Concerned Students, PESCO, East London Youth Congress, Namibia National Students Organisation, Anglican Students Federation, Youth for S.A., PEYCO, Stellenbosch Studente Gesprek, Belydende Groep.

Many people attended in their personal capacity as well.

ERIC MNTONGA was murdered on Friday 24 July in the East London-King Williamstown area. The circumstances of his death, and at such a young age, came as a brutal shock to his family, colleagues and many friends throughout the Border region and beyond.

Dr. Alex Boraine, executive director of IDASA made this statement to the press: "It was with shock and great distress that I learnt of the death of Eric Mntonga over the weekend. Eric joined us earlier this year as co-ordinator of our East London office and has been a hard-working and dedicated colleague. We were all horrified at his brutal murder. This killing has all the hallmarks of an execution and is the most recent of a number of apparently unsolved deaths of activists in the Border area.

We are all deeply shocked at the loss of Eric as a colleague and a friend and condemn in the strongest terms the killing of a man who was committed to a non-racial democracy in our country. Our sincere condolences go to Eric's wife and children in their bereavement."

In our next issue a full tribute will be paid to him by

Mxolisi Eric Mntonga

his colleagues, but we share this brief obituary with you as we mourn his loss.

Eric was born in Duncan Village, East London and matriculated there in 1972. He soon became active in worker's committees, first at Pick and Pay where he was elected chairman, and later at Wilson Rowntree. In 1980 he joined the SA Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and served as the local branch chairman from 1981-1983. He then joined Elegant Dining as Sales Manager from 1983-1986, joining IDASA in March 1987. He was appointed as IDASA co-director for the Border Region. His leadership ability and widespread social concerns were further expressed in a range of other areas; he was a chairman of the Committee of Ten, a form-



er member of the U.D.F. field work committee and a member of the Mdantsane Residence Association.

He also distinguished himself in the sporting area: as a member of the non-racial Tembu Rugby Football Club and their representative to the E.L. Rugby Union — thereafter serving on several committees of the union. He was also active as manager of the Amateur Boxing club, and later as adviser and policy consultant to the non-racial Mdantsane Amateur Boxing Council.

In the soccer world Eric was the founder and Vice-President of the Mdantsane non-racial Soccer Board. He was elected as a delegate to both the Border Soccer Board and the S.A. Soccer Federation.

Eric was clearly a man of the

community, both in a leadership and service capacity. In his brief thirty-five years he contributed more than most men do in a life-time. He was a deeply respected community leader and a trusted friend. He leaves his wife Fikiswa Bukani and two children. Our deepest sympathy is extended to them, their wider family and friends, and we commit ourselves to maintain the fine work he started as a living memorial to his spirit.

As we went to print tributes were pouring in . . . one of them from Mr. Theo Heffer of the Premier Group (Human Resources):

"It is with deep sadness that I have learnt of the tragic death of Mxolisi Eric Mntonga. I first came to know and respect Eric as a SAAWU unionist during the height of the workers' struggle in East London in the early eighties. I will always remember his cheerfulness and his unselfish dedication to the service of his fellow-man. I mourn the untimely loss of a gentleman whom it was a privilege to know. Please convey my deepest sympathy to Mrs. Mntonga, her children and family. Yours sincerely, Theo Heffer."