

PASSING ON THE MESSAGE



A general view of the protest rally on the Grand Parade.

TODAY when we talk about going to the Parade we mean that we are going to buy fruit or flowers or cloth; thirty years ago we would have gone to the Parade to hear people's leaders speak out against apartheid.

Mr J Morrison told Grassroots about those days: "People came in their thousands, sometimes as many as 15,000, and gathered on the Parade in front of the statue of King George. They would come from all over. Some would come on lorries from places like Paarl and Stellenbosch, others by bus or train from Athlone, Elsies, Lange Wynberg and many other places. Others just walked down Hanover Street from District Six. There, people like Moses Kotane, Dr Dadoo and Cassie Goof would tell us about the struggles facing the people."

Mr Morrison told us that there were mass meetings on the Parade on most weekends and even during the week at luncheon, when people who worked in the area would gather.

"When there was a really big issue, like when they took our vote away, we would march from the Parade, thousands of us, up Adderley Street and past Parliament to protest."

When the government cracked down on the people's organisations they banned meetings on the Parade. Today it is illegal to hold meetings there.

**Emancipate yourself from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds.**
(Bob. Marley.)

MR JANSEN is walking barefoot through the streets of Hanover Park. Around him he sees crumbling, dirty buildings, badly lit streets, broken gutters. He has lost his job. He doesn't know where he will get money to pay for the rent or food.

He goes into his house and switches on the TV. The man on the box tells him that apartheid is right, that Alan Barendse and the PC will solve all his problems.

Mr Jansen knows that his life is full of hardship and struggle. But, he thinks, if they say those things on TV and the newspapers, they must be true.

There is a knock at the door. "Koop 'n Grassroots, manner!" Mr Jansen looks at the paper. He reads about unemployment, high rents, and people's organisations. "Ja, dis mos waar!" he thinks. He picks up a pencil, and slowly begins to write a letter to Grassroots. Mr Jansen is learning to speak for himself!

All over South Africa people are hearing the words of the bosses and the government. TV, the radio, the newspapers and films control what we know and think. We need to answer back. We need to speak for ourselves, to find ways of reaching people and of passing on our own messages.

Grassroots is one way of doing this. Grassroots brings us news about our organisations and what



26 years of people's press

People's organisations have always used newspapers to tell of their struggles, and to help build their organisation. Today we have papers like Grassroots. In the past, there was the Guardian, New Age, and many others.

The Guardian was founded in Cape Town in 1936. Every Thursday for the next 26 years, thousands of people throughout South Africa would buy the paper.

The Guardian had news of all struggles being fought, from a recent campaign in Silverton to the Congress of the People in 1955. They exposed the conditions under which people suffered. For example,

There were stories about other countries as well, such as the liberation struggle in Kenya, and changes in people's lives in the Socialist countries. These stories showed that the South African people were not alone in their fight for a better life.

Ruth First wrote about the abuse treatment of farm workers, which led to the Congress Alliance calling for a potato boycott.

Leaders like Moses Kotane, Ray Alexander, and Alex la Guma wrote about the week's events. Many letters used to pour in for the Letters Page. People also said that the Guardian had the best racing

tips in Cape Town!

The paper was sold door-to-door. While selling the paper, people would discuss the stories with the people in the community. It was also sold in public places.

The Guardian always struggled for money. There was little advertising because the bosses did not want to support a people's paper. Readers would send in small donations, and the committees held fundraising dances and other activities.

The Guardian showed the truth about the suffering caused by apartheid, and showed how people stood together to fight - This is why the government burned the

paper.

Thousands of people flocked to meetings around the country to protest against the ban. The following Thursday, the Guardian editors brought out a new paper, the Clarion. This was almost the same as the Guardian. When that was banned, they brought out People's World, then Advice and Finally New Age.

New Age finally stopped publishing soon after the people's organisations were banned in the sixties. But it had played an important part in the struggle of the fifties. It had passed on the message to thousands of people throughout the country.

MEDIA AT WORK

THROUGHOUT the world, the ruling class has used media to control People's ideas and political beliefs.

During the Zimbabwe war, for example, the Smith government spent millions on propaganda. Through newspapers, TV, radio, leaflets dropped from helicopters and T-shirts, they tried to make people support them.

They told the people that the Patriotic Front's Liberation Army were terrorists, murderers and robbers. They tried to frighten the people by saying that if they protected the freedom fighters, they would go to jail.

The Liberation Army did not have money or technology to use these kinds of media. They did not have control over the newspapers and radio. But they found ways of telling people of their side of the story - through educational programs, discussions and songs.

The ordinary, working people of Zimbabwe saw the cruelty of the Rhodesian Government soldiers every day. They knew that the Liberation Army was fighting for their demands for a free and democratic society.

A million pamphlets could not hide the truth. When the 1980 elections were held 84% of the people chose the Patriotic Front as their leaders. They showed that they had not been fooled by Smith's propaganda.

The communist terrorist Army nothing but sickness and death to the people

See the monster coming. See the just reward that the communist through their policies have with it. The monster communist through their policies have with it. The monster communist through their policies have with it.



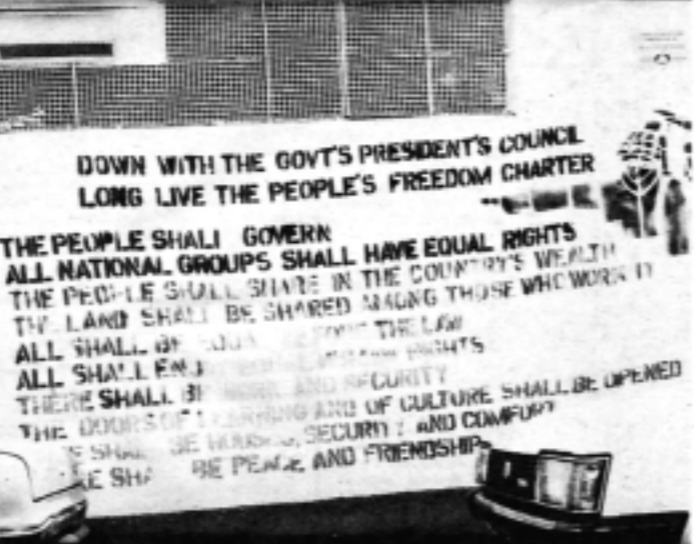
The other side of the story - Drawings by village children



ABOVE: Zipsa fighters having discussions with the villagers.



RIGHT: helicopter dropping Government leaflets. Below: Rhodesian government soldiers set fire to village hubs.



POSTERS: One of the easiest and cheapest ways of both informing and educating people is to use posters. All that is needed to make one, is some paper, and anything that will make a mark on it. You can also stick photographs on if you want to. A third but more expensive way is to do the design, and then send it to a printer.



T-SHIRTS: T-shirts, buttons and anything else you wear can become walking newspapers. It is better to have a message than just the name of an organisation. In this way, your clothes can say something to others. The process of printing onto cloth is also easy. A workshop is a good idea to enable people to learn these skills.