



Consolidated Main Reef, worker compound, Johannesburg 1980, Ben MacLennan

**Apartheid affronts humanity. Few could deny that it must end. Yet beneath its tissue of laws lies a deeper evil that it has helped to create and perpetuate. It perpetuates poverty, which affects blacks almost exclusively.**

Poverty in South Africa is different from its spectre in other Third World countries. Nowhere else does the gap between rich and poor result primarily from deliberate government policy. Nowhere else is material want coupled with the spiritual degradation of apartheid, as one fifth of the population is legally entitled to despise and discriminate against the remaining four fifths on the basis solely of color. To end apartheid is the necessary first step to ending poverty in South Africa.

First, the dimensions of apartheid and poverty must be defined if they are to be eradicated. What are the harsh realities of survival for blacks in South Africa and its surrounding client states? How do they find work, a place to live, enough food and fuel? What is the human meaning of "forced removals" and life in the "homelands" and in the squatters' camps circling the segregated cities? In 1982 the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa was established to answer these and other basic questions. Supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York and directed by Francis Wilson, head of the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town, the Inquiry has sponsored more than three hundred studies by South Africans from many disciplines. This exhibition and its accompanying book are the Inquiry's first report.

We give thanks to the photographers of *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* for their courage, passion, and compassion in bringing us insiders' truths about South Africa that deserve to be known. Indeed these are truths that *must* be known as we struggle to understand tumultuous current events in South Africa and the complex and terrible history that impels them. Their photographs speak to the heart with a speed and wisdom beyond words.

*Cornell Capa*, Director,  
International Center of Photography

**In other societies, justice is an abstract idea. In South Africa it is a very clear thing. Justice for me means I can walk wherever I want; I can stay where I want; travel however I want; send my child wherever I want; and have the right to vote—simple things, defined for me, continuously defined for me. I can never forget it. Here you don't need a writer to tell you that you are being stripped of your rights. You just walk out the door and there it is.**

**Omar Badsha, Durban, S.A. 1985**

In our mind's eye each of us carries pictures of South Africa—dramatic images from the front pages and the nightly news of the battle in the streets. We know all too well the police whips and the stone throwers, the bullets and the fleeing crowds. South African photographers have been involved for many years in documenting this combat, serving often as the only recorders of the violence. Their evidence has helped to focus the attention of the world on the struggle in their divided country.

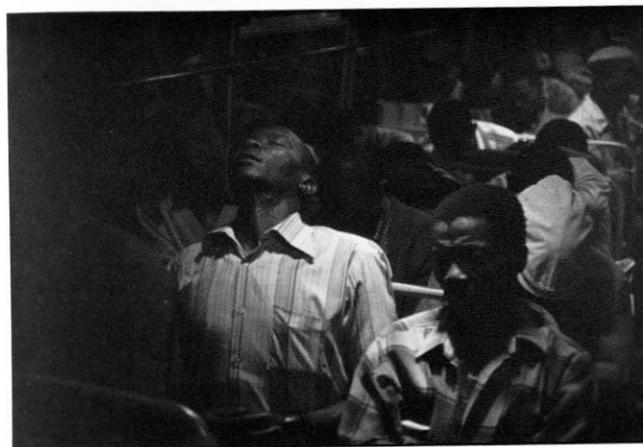
The photographs of *The Cordoned Heart* are a different kind of document, less familiar and in some ways even more deeply troubling. They are about the conditions of life and work for the great majority of South Africans, about the loneliness of the migrant worker compounds, the desperate poverty of the townships and the "homelands," the weariness and waste that arise from "separate development." These pictures show something of the meaning of apartheid in particular lives and places. They also attest, however, to a strikingly energetic and resolute people, a people organizing and working for change.

From the point of view of the South African photographers responsible for this work, these photographs are at least as important as their better-known images of violent confrontations. Change is coming: who are the people that will shape it, what are their problems and hopes? Whatever happens, whether changes come quickly or over time, South Africans and concerned outsiders need to know more about the real life of the country.

"South Africa: The Cordoned Heart" is the work of a multi-racial group of twenty South African photographers, coordinated by Omar Badsha, a South African artist and union organizer turned photographer, whose pictures are also represented here. The prints in this exhibition were selected from more than a thousand pictures originally submitted by these photographers for the conference of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa held at the University of Cape Town in 1984.

In putting together the photographic survey of the Carnegie Inquiry, Omar Badsha could have relied on South Africa's few established independent documentary photographers along with the members of Afrapix, a South African photographers' collective he helped to form in 1982 to serve the alternative press and community-based organizations. But Badsha opened up the project to all South African photographers, regardless of experience, because he wanted to help build a larger community of documentarians. Those plans are becoming a reality. It is worth noting that the photographers participating in this project have donated the royalties from the book *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* to the formation of a Center for Documentary Photography at the University of Cape Town, the first center of its kind in southern Africa.

Since the Nationalist party came into power in 1948, its policy has been to divide and separate South Africans along racial lines. Apartheid has made it not only extraordinarily difficult, but often illegal and dangerous for people of one ethnic group to come into contact with other groups. If South Africa is to turn away from apartheid and create a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, national identity—not just a set of group identities—then it is crucial



4 a.m., commuters on the Marabastad-Waterval bus, David Goldblatt



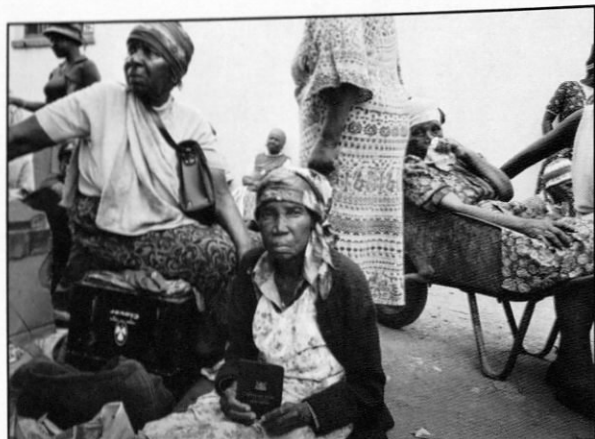
BMW workers on strike, Pretoria 1984, Paul Weinberg

for South Africans to have a sense of one another, to be able to visualize their countrymen and women. The work of these twenty South African photographers is a vital step in that direction.

These South African photographers have concerned themselves with people and organizations ignored by the usual media. They have worked in regions of their country normally inaccessible to outsiders. In so doing, they are creating an alternative national archive—a repository for their own history. The photographic record they are making is an impassioned plea for change to their own countrymen and women. But just as important, the pictures encourage the people and organizations being photographed. Their images are being seen in the alternative press, books, and exhibitions in many locations within the South Africa they document.

To work as a photographer in South Africa is to wear a badge. The camera around your neck declares "I am a witness." While the act of witnessing carries with it special hazards for the photographer, it also elicits a unique responsiveness from their "subjects" who understand that pictures can empower them.

When the Carnegie Inquiry and its photographic survey project began in 1982, many of the photographers were already involved in documenting the work of community-based organizations and the vigorous, black trade union movement. Ironically their pictures made those same organizations more vulnerable to the Nationalist government. A record existed. Pictures and film could be confiscated and used as evidence, as in the treason trials of the United Democratic Front leaders in the fall of 1986. Yet despite



Waiting for pension payments, Inanda 1983, Omar Badsha

this risk, the people involved in these new associations are eager to be recorded. They want others to know and share their hopes. They do not want their struggle to be forgotten.

The white photographers in the Inquiry have made a break with their communities and, in some cases, with their families, by identifying with and photographing the "opposition." One might say the biggest part of that break is simply *seeing*. At the most basic level, it can be profoundly estranging to look carefully at realities most whites refuse to see.

There are also serious difficulties for black South Africans who choose to photograph. Each puts his own welfare and the safety of his family in jeopardy by carrying a camera. The black photographers are more vulnerable to the police and authorities than their white colleagues. But like the white photographers, they can also find themselves estranged from close family members: parents push the photographers to be more careful, while their children often demand they do more, and do it now, to change the system.

Among South African photographers, there is a debate, quite heated at times, on the right use of the camera. Should one pay scrupulous attention to the complexities of South African society, or should the camera be used as a weapon to help bring about rapid social change? Whatever stance individual photographers take on this issue, however, their pictures have a certain unity. Each photograph offers its own testimony that the system of apartheid is wrong.

*Alex Harris and Bruce Payne*

Center for Documentary Photography at Duke University

The exhibition *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* is guest-curated by Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor in consultation with Omar Badsha and circulated in the United States by the International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Avenue, New York City 10128. Information (212) 860-1775

*South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*, text by Francis Wilson, edited by Omar Badsha, foreword by Bishop Desmond Tutu, is published in the United States by W.W. Norton & Co. in association with the Center for Documentary Photography at Duke University. 136 duotone illustrations. \$25 cloth, \$14.95 paper

## The Photographers

Paul Alberts  
 Joseph Alpers  
 Michael Barry  
 Omar Badsha  
 Lee Berman  
 Michael Davies  
 David Goldblatt  
 Paul Konings  
 Lesley Lawson  
 Rashid Lombard  
 Chris Ledechowski  
 Jimi Mathews  
 Ben MacLennan  
 Gideon Mendel  
 Cedric Nunn  
 Myron Peters  
 Jeeva Rajgopaul  
 Wendy Schwegmann  
 Paul Weinberg

Exhibition photographs printed  
in South Africa by Alex Harris

Brochure prepared for the  
Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty  
and Development in Southern Africa

# SOUTH AFRICA THE GORDONED HEART

Mpukonyoni Farmers' Association meeting, 1983 Paul Weinberg

## Twenty South African Photographers

An exhibition organized by the International Center of Photography in association with the Center for Documentary Photography at Duke University and prepared for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa.