



ACTION FOR DEMOCRACY

1986 NUSAS THEME PUBLICATION

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INTRODUCTION



NUSAS CONGRESS 1985 — students from all over the country decide that the theme for 1986 will be "Action for Democracy".

NUSAS in the 1980s

NUSAS believes that as young white South Africans with a commitment to a non-racial, democratic and peaceful future in South Africa, we are faced with certain responsibilities and challenges. We have a responsibility to find out what is really happening in this country and we are faced with the

challenge of finding ways to work to end the injustices of our society and build a democratic future.

Last December, students from all over South Africa came together at NUSAS Congress and adopted the theme "Action for Democracy". This

reflected their commitment to working for democracy and peace in a society which is increasingly torn by conflict. This publication is the beginning of what will hopefully be an ongoing process of thought and action on the campuses throughout this year.



CHAPTER ONE
Making sense of the world

Ways of Seeing



WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT AT SCHOOL

All of us see ourselves and the world around us in a particular way. What is important to understand is that we do not decide independently how we wish to see things. Rather, our "ways of seeing" and our values are the

result of a wide range of different influences – newspapers, TV, our family and friends, our teachers and religious ministers and the army if we've been. Our experience of life also shapes our attitudes and beliefs –

clearly an African child who has been brought up in one of the "homelands" will have a different impression of South African society from an English-speaking child brought up in a wealthy suburb.

Each of the different sources of influence on us presents its attitudes and values as being "correct" and unbiased; in reality though, each has its own specific view of society, its own particular perspective and its own prejudices. So, for example, both the English and the Afrikaans-speaking press claim to be objective and to simply "report the facts", yet each clearly presents the news in quite different ways. At school we are taught a "history of South Africa", yet we are basically presented with a history of white people in our country; all that we are told about black people is that they stole cattle and worked on the mines!

AGITATORS

We are told, and might believe, that conflict in South Africa is the result of a few Moscow-backed agitators, rather than the result of the fundamental inequalities of our society.

CHANGE FROM THE EXPERTS

And we are told, often quite subtly, that the way our society is now is the way it ought to be; to the extent that change is necessary, it should be thought out and implemented by a small group of politicians — the "experts". The effect of all this is that we are often prevented from seeing the possibility of building a just and democratic society and, therefore, prevented from involving ourselves in that process.



SEEING THE WORD FROM THE SAME PERSPECTIVE : Our views and values are shaped by the education we receive, the newspapers we read, TV, our family and friends.....

Those with similar backgrounds and experiences tend to have similar values.



CHAPTER TWO

The roots of conflict

Conflict in SA is nothing new



SOWETO 1976 — the conflict and massacres in Soweto horrified the world. Since then, conflict has escalated and South Africa has witnessed far worse incidents.

Every day of last year we read in our newspapers of workers out on strike; of mass protest against rent and busfare hikes; of whole communities engaging in consumer boycotts; of troops going into townships and hundreds dying in the violence that ensued; of thousands detained in the state of emergency and mass allegations of torture; of sabotage attacks by the ANC and of cross border raids by the SADF.

1985 was nothing new in this regard: conflict has characterised our society for many years and has intensified dramatically since 1976. This conflict involves us directly and as South Africans who see a future in this country, we need to understand its causes. We are used to the official view:

"South Africa is made up of a diverse range of peoples of different cultures and ethnicities. It is inevitable that in such a complex society many problems will arise. On our own, we would be able to resolve these problems satisfactorily and proceed with the

necessarily separate development of our peoples. The Soviet Union, however, has its eye on the mineral resources of our land and is intent on winning control of the strategically important Cape sea-route. It is waging a Total Onslaught against us. To this end, agitators have been planted through out the country to exploit our problems and to promote unrest. It is these agitators, together with the many other people who have been naively manipulated by them, that have made our society so conflicted."


After hearing this, we are expected to support more security laws being passed and more detentions and bannings as the government tries to "eliminate the agitators". Yet, these actions by the government have intensified, and not reduced, conflict. This is precisely because the conflict arises, not out of the work of "agitators", but out of the legitimate grievances of millions of South Africans living in a fundamentally unequal society.

"Revolutionaries may stamp their feet. The communists may scream their lies. Our enemies may try to undermine us. But here is the reality.....

I said that no South African will be excluded from full political rights."

(But that doesn't mean, Pik, that you can say we will some day have a black president)





**...is
great**

CHAPTER THREE
Entrenched Inequality

An Ordinary South African



Thabo Mhlaba is an ordinary South African, Reference (Pass) Book no 012 470653 003 21. Every morning he leaves home at 5.00am to be able to reach work at 7.00am. He works an eight-hour day, plus two hours of compulsory overtime (the company won't employ people who don't work overtime).

He produces shoes, thousands of shoes every day. By the end of the week, he has produced R120,00 worth of shoes, but gets a paycheck for R35,00. The other R85,00 goes to the boss, who covers his costs, and takes the remaining R65,00 as profit.

Out of his R35,00, Thabo has to pay for his food, his clothes and rent. It is difficult to pay for these things on R35,00 — transport costs and rents are increasing, and recently the government added a further 1 percent to General Sales Tax so that people like Thabo could be drawn on to finance the war in Namibia. Out of his R35,00 Thabo also has to support his wife and two children.

The government has called Thabo Mhlaba a Transkeian — he is a migrant worker — and they, therefore, do not allow his family to come to the city. Thabo only spends two weeks a year (his vacation) with them. They are forced to stay in the Transkei where they have no land, no work and, very often, no food.

Thabo arrives home at the men's single-sex hostel at 9.00pm. He cooks



food for himself and then goes straight to sleep, to be able to awaken the next morning at 5.00am.

He is often arrested by the police to see that his pass is "in order". He also experienced the police when in his previous job he and other workers at the factory went on strike, protesting that they could not live on their wages. They were immediately fired, and a group of unemployed workers brought in to replace them. The police broke up their meeting with batons and teargas. He was lucky to find another job. Most of his colleagues didn't and were "endorsed out" by the government (their pass books changed), forcing them to go and try to survive in the "homelands".

Thabo Mhlaba is not an exception. His daily experiences are those of millions



On the way to work; living in a single-sex hostel; Thabo's family lives in the Transkei.

of other South Africans. Our society is clearly not a democracy. Laws which determine the lives of most South Africans: the Pass Laws which control their movement; the Group Areas Act which determines where they may or may not live; the laws which deter-

mine what standard of education a child will receive; the "security" laws which prevent people from expressing their rejection of the situation — all of these are made by a government which represents about 7 per cent of the people.



Unemployed workers outside a factory gate in Port Elizabeth.

Who pulls the Economic strings?

Our economy, too, is controlled by a tiny minority. South Africa's wealth distribution pattern is among the most unequal in the world: 80 percent of the population own only 20 percent of the country's wealth. Although most South Africans spend almost their entire lives producing this wealth in the farms, factories and mines, they never enjoy the fruits of their labour.

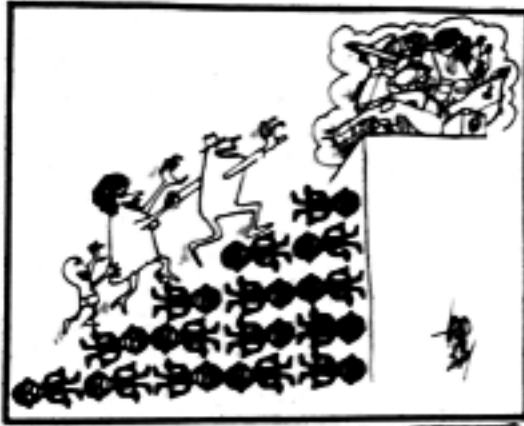
Instead, this wealth provides a minority with luxury and comfort.

Certainly it is NOT the majority of South Africa's people that pull the economic strings. 80 percent of the population owns only 20 percent of the country's wealth.

For the majority of South Africa's people, the consequences of the apartheid system amount to a daily struggle to survive.

AVERAGE WAGES BELOW POVERTY DATUM LINE

More than 3 million people are unemployed in South Africa; the average wage of African workers on the Witwatersrand is up to R50,00 below the Poverty Datum line, the incidence of malnutrition among children in some of the rural areas is over 60 percent and more than half a million families are on the waiting lists for houses.



Application of the pass laws through the years has resulted in mass arrests.



60 percent of children in the rural areas suffer from malnutrition.

This system is maintained through a series of mechanisms which control the lives of the majority. The Pass Laws are used to move people around according to the needs of industry and when they are no longer "needed", the same laws force them to return to the barren homelands where there is no work and little food. These laws are brutally applied — often in the demolition of squatter camps and

in mass pass arrests. In the course of this century, more than 17 million people have passed through South Africa's prisons because of pass offences.

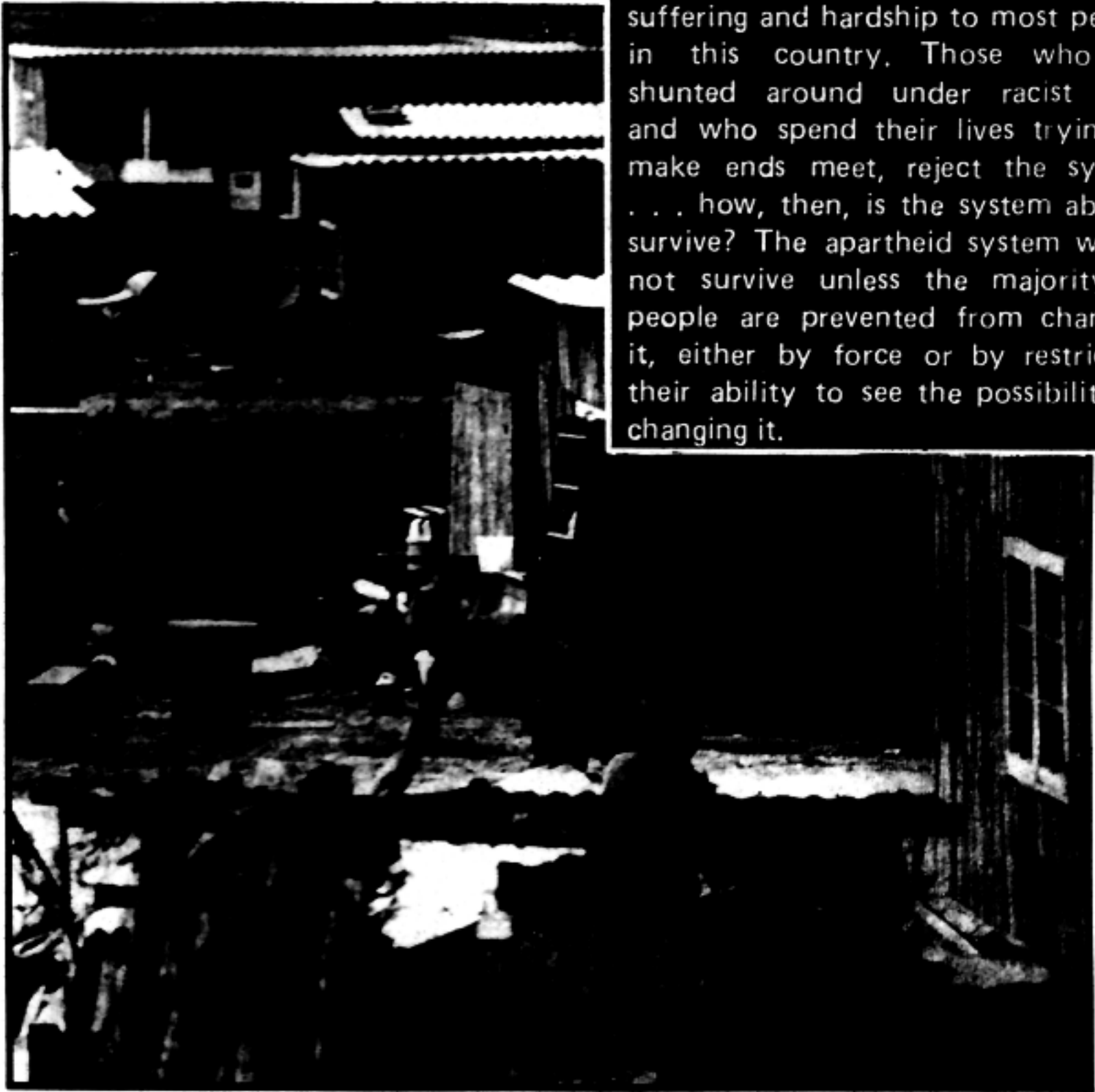
So we see that apartheid is a system of gross economic and political inequalities and these two aspects reinforce each other. Political inequalities are necessary to maintain economic

inequalities, which in turn benefit those who have political power. Apartheid is a system of organised violence — of the systematic and deliberate denial of basic political and human rights to the majority of our people. The conflict we see around us is the inevitable consequence of the economic and political inequalities that are the basis of apartheid South Africa.



CHAPTER FOUR
Learning the System

South African society, as we have seen, is highly unjust, causing great suffering and hardship to most people in this country. Those who are shunted around under racist laws and who spend their lives trying to make ends meet, reject the system . . . how, then, is the system able to survive? The apartheid system would not survive unless the majority of people are prevented from changing it, either by force or by restricting their ability to see the possibility of changing it.



The Violence of apartheid

Maintaining apartheid
THEN



Apartheid is a violent system: it was established by force and it is maintained by force. Black people only began to work on the white farms and mines after they had been forced off their land by white settlers in the 19th century: without their land, Africans had no choice but to go to the cities as migrant workers to earn a living. The pass laws, the homelands system, residential segregation and unequal education all originated from this process and all depended on the superior might of the settlers for their implementation. This has not changed.

DESPARATE MEASURES

Besides the day-to-day violence of apartheid in the form of pass arrests and squatter removals, we see the government resorting to desperate measures in trying to preserve apartheid.

"Security" legislation like the Internal Security Act contains provisions which would be found in no civilised country. By ministerial decree, any individual can be detained for years on end without recourse to trial, lawyer, doctor or family. Detainees are kept in conditions described by doctors and psychologists as "bar-

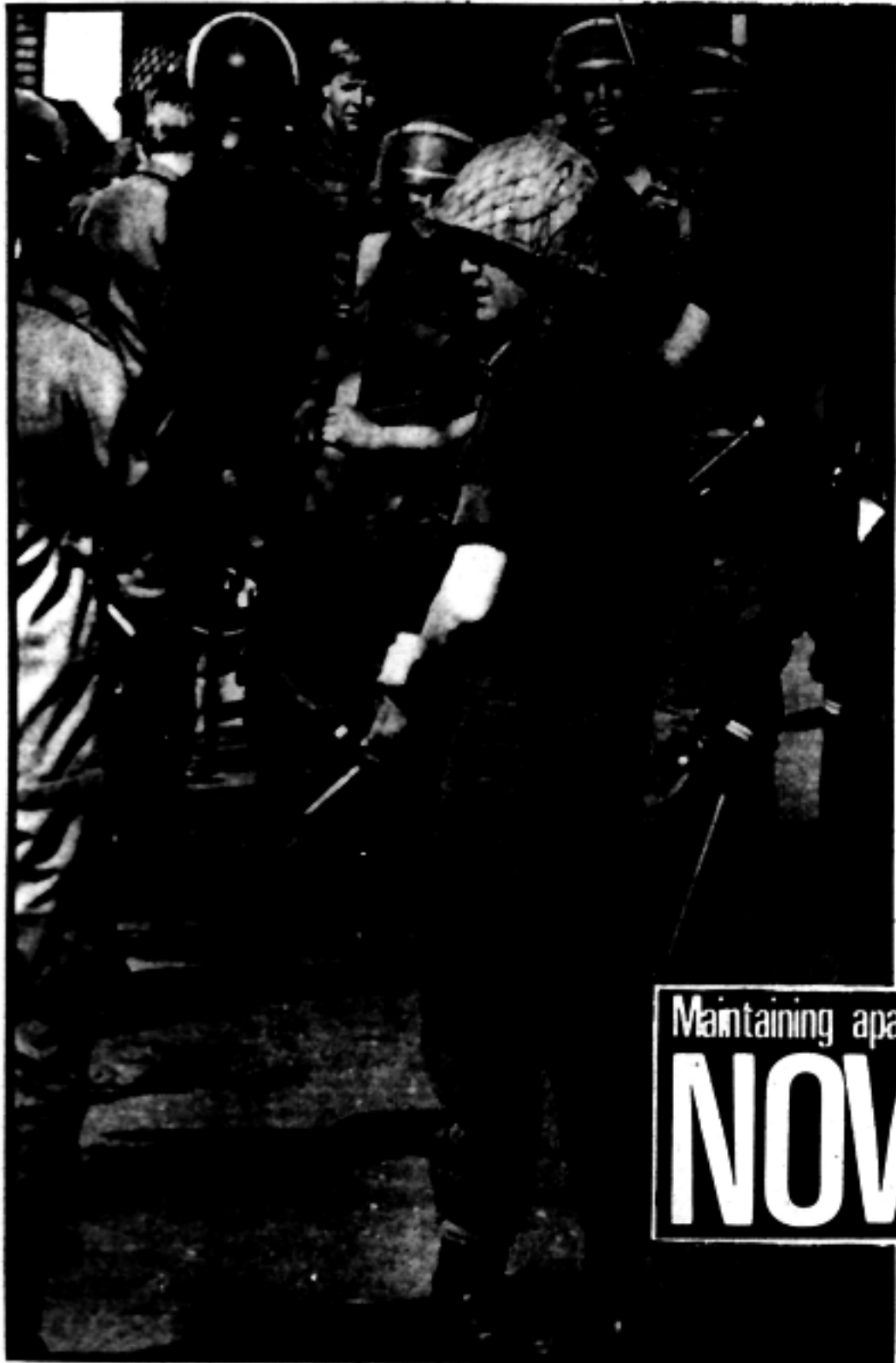
baric" and there have been widespread allegations made in court of the systematic and brutal torture by the security police. 85 people have died since 1960 while in the custody of the security police. The problem is not simply that detainees are often not brought to court . . . if a detainee finally ends up in court, he or she is tried under security legislation drawn-up by the apartheid government, which makes legitimate forms of political opposition into a criminal offence.

DETENTIONS AND BANNINGS

If the detainee is then acquitted, the government can still silence him or her with an arbitrary banning order, restricting that person to a magisterial district, preventing them from speaking publicly or publishing their views and forbidding them to be in a room with more than two people. The government also has the power to (and regularly does) ban publications and meetings.

IDEOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Apartheid employs force as a means to survive. Other means are also important to maintain the system; methods which prevent the majority of South Africans from realising their potential to change our society. For these purposes, they have a well-stocked arsenal of ideological weapons.



Maintaining apartheid
NOW

Divide and Rule

This is one of the oldest tactics used by minority governments to stay in power: by dividing sections of the majority from each other and trying to create differences between them.

LACK OF POWER

Through these tactics, the apartheid government hopes to prevent people from realising that they have more in common — their lack of political and economic power — than they have differences and that by uniting they can build a democratic society.

SEPARATE AREAS

The most obvious division made by the government is between whites, coloureds, Indians and Africans. They force these groups to live in separate areas, give them different rights and separate education. At times they play different sections off against each other, trying to buy the support of some sections by giving them slight privileges over other sections. With the tri-cameral parliament, for example, the government tried to entrench more subtle divisions between the "coloured", "Indian" and African

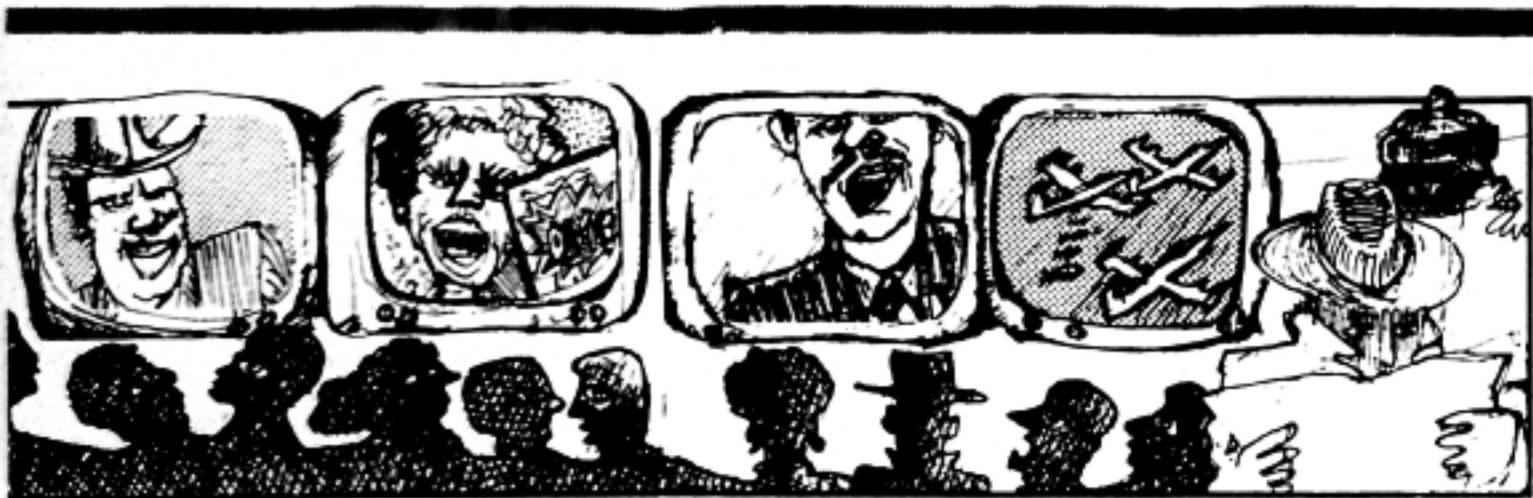
communities.

These tactics are used in an attempt to prevent all South Africans, black and white, from realising that they share a common future in a united and democratic South Africa. Unfortunately, the tactics have often worked. There is a great deal of tension between groups in South Africa. Apartheid has successfully divided people from each other. Daily, we read in our newspapers of faction fights and racial incidents. It is in this environment that work and action for a non-racial South Africa becomes imperative.



They've gone into the tricameral parliament! Hendrikse (left) of the coloured "Labour Party" and Rujbunsi (right) of the Indian "National People's Party".

You can't fool all of the people all the time. The old saying tells us. But that does not stop the South African Government from trying



The Power of Ideology

The political and economic power of this country's rulers gives them access to a wide range of mechanisms which shape the values and ideas of many people. They control television, radio, education, sections of the church and large sections of the press through which they are able to convince people of the validity of apartheid, or discourage them from acting against it.

Through these media, we are told that the government is acting in the "national interest", in the interests of society as a whole, when it detains people, or when it bulldozes squatter shacks, or when it bans an organisation, or when it attacks a neighbouring country. We are asked to support these actions because they tell us that these actions are in our interest.

If the government cannot get people to endorse apartheid, it tries, through the same media, to confuse. This will often mean trying to disguise things: a few years ago, the government stopped using the word "apartheid",

proclaiming its death despite the basic apartheid laws remaining on the statutes, and now talk about the system as "Free Enterprise" and "Democracy", "Consociation" or whatever.

Otherwise it tries to confuse people by making them believe that they can do nothing about a situation: for example, during a school boycott, at no matter what state, SABC-TV will always tell us that the boycott is effectively over. The government cannot allow people to see the potential for winning gains by standing together.

There is also the strategy of "disinformation", where false pamphlets are distributed purporting to come from progressive organisations. These pamphlets will call off campaigns, change the venues of large meetings, or present the organisations in such a way that their supporters are alienated.



Former NUSAS president, Kate Phillip, holding copies of a smear pamphlet that claimed to be issued by Nusas.

So, through these various strategies, the government attempts to shape the values and ideas of South Africa's people.

Those who want to seize power shout that apartheid lives. Well, those who want to share power say that it is dying.

That is reality.

I said that no South African will be excluded from full political rights. That they should participate both in Government and the future of this country through their elected leaders. This is now reality. The proposed National Statutory Council is not just a forum for the talkers. It is the first step towards institutionalised power sharing.

Where black leaders can now have a voice in central Government and under my chairmanship make a positive contribution to the running of this country.

That is reality.

I said we were committed to a single education policy. I have already created a department to achieve this. Not millions, but billions are being and will be poured into a programme that will mean equal education for all.

That is reality.

I said human dignity must be advanced and any affront to it eliminated. I also realise that the pass system was seen as a major stumbling block. Well I can tell you the pass system will be scrapped by July 1 this year. What's more a common identity document will be issued to everybody as is the case in other countries. In the near future existing influx control measures will be abolished in favour of a system of urbanization that applies to all South Africans. Our policy is one of encouraging development.

Not controlling movement.

That is reality.

My speech included other points that will certainly have an effect on our lives. I don't intend to stop here. Progress is on-going. But my Government and I are dedicated to it. I know there are some who say I should have gone further. Let them rest assured, I will go further. The wheel of reform is turning. South Africa will never hand this country over to those who would see it destroyed, to those under the misapprehension that solutions lie in anarchy.

Friends, fellow South Africans, that is the reality.

Anyone who thinks otherwise is wrong.

Peace and prosperity will come about for those who are with us. And despite those who are against us.

From my heart I ask you to share in the future.

To share in the new South Africa.

P.W. Botha
State President

This letter, supposedly written by P. W. Botha, appeared in all the major South African newspapers at the beginning of February 1986. Botha is clearly trying to sell his reform package once again.

He claims that no South African will be excluded from full political rights. Yet, a few days later, he reprimanded his Foreign Minister, Pik Botha in parliament for suggesting that South Africa could one day have a black president.

Unequal Education



Bantu Education — equipping people to be labourers.

But where does education fit into all of this?

South Africa has a highly unequal and racially divided education system.

Only a small minority of black students ever get beyond Standard 8 and less than 1 percent reach university.

CHRISTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION

Most white children, on the other hand, experience 12 years of Christian National Education which provides them with the training necessary for university and the expectation that they will enjoy the better side of South African life; their schools are well-equipped with books, laboratory facilities, sports equipment and other aids. Black children experience highly inferior education.

DIFFERENT ROLES

These inequalities in education are not accidental; nor are they simply the result of a blind racial prejudice on the part of the government. Rather, unequal education in South Africa serves a particular purpose: to prepare different groups of people for the different roles they must later fill in

Natives will be taught from early childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them. What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics which it cannot use in practise? There is no place for him above the level of certain forms of labour.



Verwoerd.

our unequal society. The white education system, particularly university

education, equips students with the skills necessary to maintain the top end of the pile in our unequal society: as executives, technicians, planners and professionals.

BANTU EDUCATION

Bantu education, on the other hand, gives black children no more than the elementary skills needed by a worker in a modern factory: reading, writing and counting.

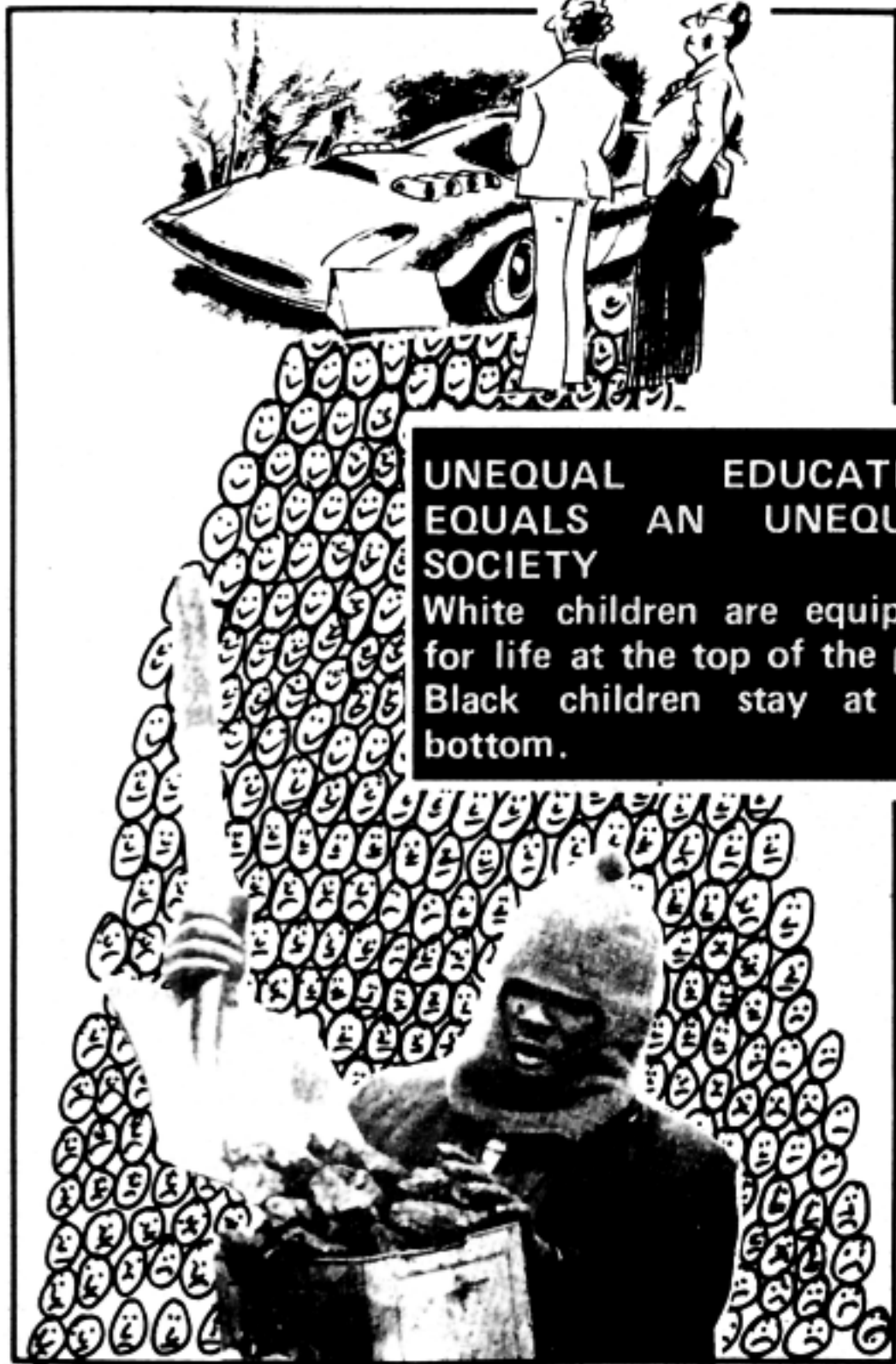
REFLECTING BROADER INEQUALITIES

What becomes clear is that the inequalities of the South African education system reflect and help to maintain the inequalities of broader society. Consequently, we cannot see the education we receive at university as being somehow neutral or "objective".

Our education is, by definition, political: it is a part of the political and economic system of apartheid.

TWO SIDES OF ONE COIN

Thus, the superior education of whites and the inferior education of blacks are not separate issues, but are two sides of the same coin.



**UNEQUAL EDUCATION
EQUALS AN UNEQUAL
SOCIETY**

White children are equipped for life at the top of the pile. Black children stay at the bottom.



CHAPTER FIVE
Challenging apartheid

The Deep Roots of Resistance

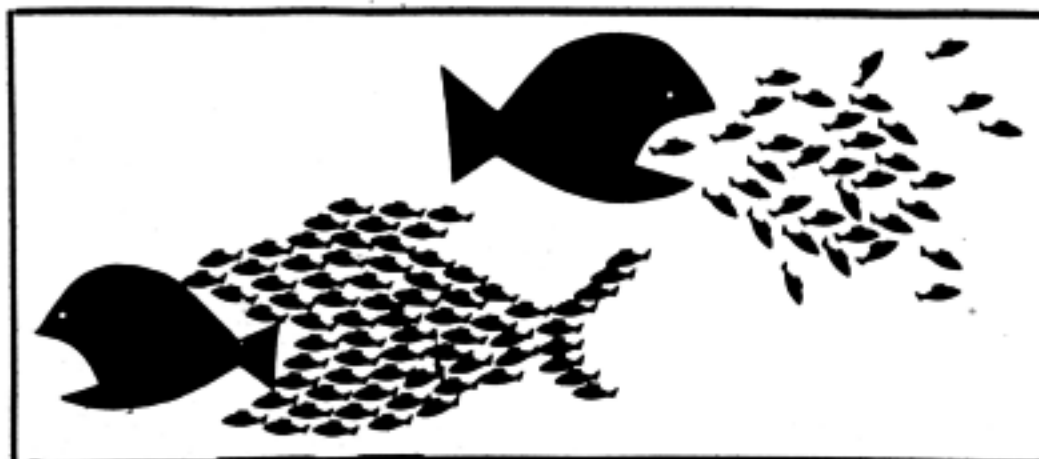
Wherever people suffer injustice and great hardship, it is inevitable that they will fight to change their situation. Despite the vast array of weapons available to the government, the apartheid system has never gone unchallenged by those South Africans on whom it places the heaviest burden.

Every day we see the challenge to apartheid mounting as organisations committed to a non-racial and democratic South Africa grow in strength. In every area of society where grievances are felt, organisations have emerged to unite people in a struggle to better their situation: trade unions in the factories; civic organisations in the communities; student organisations in the schools and universities; women's organisations challenging women's oppression and church, sport and other organisations.

The vast majority of these groups subscribe to the principles of unity, non-racialism and democracy.

It is in these organisations that we can see the seeds of a new South Africa germinating.

These organisations are working to transform the conditions that exploit and oppress the majority of people at every level of our society.



People can take only so much injustice and hardship before they will fight to change their lives.

The Freedom Charter



The Charter is a document containing the minimum demands for the creation of a free South Africa

Where did the Charter come from? Who drew it up?

Answering these questions helps us uncover the real history of our country (untold in our school history books) – the history of resistance to apartheid – for the roots of the Freedom Charter lie in the earliest resistance. What our school books tell as “kaffir wars” where “savage heathen culture attacked the civilised and Christian culture”, were the resistance of indigenous South Africans to the seizing of their land by white colonists and the disruption of their lives and their livelihood.

THE 1913 LAND ACT

But the spears of the tribes people were no match for the guns of the invader, and the land was conquered. In 1913, the Land Act was passed “reserving” 13 percent of the land for Africans, while declaring the other 87 percent for white ownership. In 1912 the ANC was formed to fight the Land Act and unite all Africans across the tribal divisions that the government was trying to encourage.



The 1913 Land Act “reserved” 13 per cent of South Africa’s land for Africans. The other 87 per cent was given to the whites.

LOW WAGES

Trade unions emerged to fight against the low wages and poor working conditions of Africans who had been deprived of their land and forced to work in the cities.

In the early part of this century, the

ANC adopted moderate means; pleading with the government through petitions and deportations. These proved fruitless and in 1948 the Nationalists came to power introducing even harsher apartheid measures: extending influx control policy, Group Areas Act, Bantu Education Act and security legislation aimed at curtailing opposition.

A Mass Movement

As conditions in South Africa worsened, the leadership of the ANC passed to a younger and more militant generation: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and others.

PEACEFUL MASS RESISTANCE

They embarked on a campaign of peaceful mass resistance, culminating in the Defiance Campaign of 1952 where thousands of people defied apartheid laws. By this stage, a mass movement had emerged: the Congress Alliance united the ANC, the Indian Congress, the Coloured Peoples Congress, the South African Congress of Trade Unions and white democrats in the Congress of Democrats, in the struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa. They took up campaigns against pass laws, removals, the introduction of Bantu Education, busfare increases and many other grievances.

FREEDOM CHARTER

In 1955, the Congress Alliance embarked on a campaign to draw up a Freedom Charter which was to reflect the aspirations of the majority of South Africans. To make the Charter a representative document, they set out to involve as many people as possible in drawing it up. More than one



million people sent in demands to be included in the Charter, which was finally adopted at the Congress of the People on June 26, 1955.

This Congress was attended by over 3 000 delegates of all races, and has been hailed as perhaps the most representative gathering in our country's history. So the Freedom Charter has a rich history and represents the democratic aspirations of millions of South Africans.



In 1956, women demonstrated against the extension of passes to women. 20 000 women marched on the Union Buildings to take a petition to the Prime Minister.

FREEDOM CHARTER

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people;

That our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

That only a democratic state, based on the will of the people can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white, together with our countrymen and brothers adopt this FREEDOM CHARTER. And we pledge ourselves to work together, sparing nothing of our strength and resources, until the democratic principles here set forth are fully achieved.



The People Shall Govern

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All the people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

All National Groups Shall Have Equal Rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The People Shall Share In The Country's Wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industries and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions

FREEDOM CHARTER



The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;
The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;
Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;
All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;
People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All Shall Be Equal Before The Law!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without fair trial;
No one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official;
The courts shall be representative of all the people;
Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;
The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;
All laws which discriminate on the grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All Shall Enjoy Human Rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;
The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;
All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad.
Pass laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

FREEDOM CHARTER



There Shall Be Houses, Security And Comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;
Unused housing space to be made available to the people;
Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry;
A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;
Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children;
Slums shall be demolished and new suburbs built where all shall have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres;
The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;
Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all;
Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There Shall Be Peace And Friendship!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;
South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation not war;
Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;
The people of the protectorates Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;
The right of all the peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close cooperation.

Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here:

**THESE FREEDOMS WE WILL FIGHT FOR, SIDE BY SIDE,
THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES UNTIL WE HAVE WON OUR LIBERTY.**

FREEDOM CHARTER

"I have cherished the ideals of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

NELSON MANDELA, SPEECH FROM THE DOCK

MANDELA

The People's Leader

Black youths, many of them born after Mandela went to prison, use his name as a rallying cry in the townships. In a 1985 newspaper survey, Mandela was the overwhelming choice for president of South Africa.

After 23 and a half years in prison, Nelson Mandela's stature and support have grown to the extent that he is undoubtedly the most respected leader in South Africa today.

He was born in Umtata, now the capital of South Africa's biggest bantustan, nearly 68 years ago.

As a student, Mandela became involved in protests against the oppression and exploitation of African people. He is a qualified lawyer and as a young man, he practised as one of a handful of black attorneys in South Africa.

He joined the ANC before it was banned and became a leading member of the organisation. At the time the organisation was banned and forced underground, Mandela was president.

Here and internationally, Mandela is recognised for his eloquence, his deep integrity and his powerful leadership. He has streets named after him around the world and has been declared patron and president of numerous organisations inside South Africa.

The calls to FREE MANDELA from numerous sectors in South Africa are growing, and the South African government, feeling the pressure is hinting at his release.





The Crackdown



People stood by their leaders during the clampdown on anti-apartheid organisations in the 1950s and 1960s.

After the police opened fire on peaceful anti-pass protests at Sharpeville and Langa in 1960, the government banned the ANC and the break-away Pan Africanist Congress. With all legal and peaceful channels closed, the ANC launched its armed wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe, in 1961 to try and shock the government to its senses.

Although the state crackdown in 1960 delivered a heavy blow to the democratic movement, opposition began to re-emerge in the early 1970's and by the late 1970's, apartheid was facing its greatest ever crisis.



**RELEASE
MANDELA**



SHARPEVILLE

MARCH 21st 1960 — Police opened fire on peaceful protests at Langa and Sharpeville. 69 people died in the shootings. A state of emergency was declared, hundreds detained and the PAC and ANC were declared banned organisations with all legal and peaceful channels for political expression closed, the ANC launched its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We have a
PROBLEM!!
Please be
Patient...



CHAPTER SIX

The Great Crisis

What caused the crisis?

By the mid-1970s, the South African economy was facing severe problems, most evident in the spiralling unemployment rate and rampant inflation.

The economic crisis is fundamentally a crisis of growth. There are two fundamental problems: firstly, the economy has grown too slowly to support its population and, secondly, the form of such growth has not been of the kind to spread wealth and employment effectively.

An explanation of the industrial slowdown in South Africa in the 1970s is quite simple. The boom that SA experienced from 1930 to 1960 was based on the replacement of a range of imported goods by locally manufactured ones. By the end of the 1960s, the limits of this kind of import substitution had more or less been reached. Because of the slow growth of the internal market, predicated on the low living standards of the vast majority of the black population, the scope of consumer orientated import substitution had become very narrow. Export markets were blocked by political factors and a lack of international competitiveness. Successful exporters in the Far East pushed aside international competition. On the top of this, South Africa was hit by the oil price explosion. From the late 1970s, South Africa entered a period of steady economic decline.



**Zimbabwe
must
be free!**



In the late '70s South Africa entered a period of economic decline. Unemployment was on the increase. In addition there was a pressure on South Africa's borders. Angola and Mozambique had won their independence from Portugal. The efforts of the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe were taking it closer to independence.

Politically, too, things began to look worse in the 1970s for those in command. Mozambique and Angola won their independence from Portugal, presenting a beacon of hope to the people in South Africa.

At the same time, the efforts of the Patriotic Front were taking Zimbabwe closer to independence. And right next door in Namibia, which South Africa regards as its "5th Province", SWAPO began to increase its efforts

to end the South African occupation. The position of the Nationalist Government in Southern Africa was clearly deteriorating.

The most important pressure on the government came from the nationwide uprising in 1976, after which apartheid South Africa would never be the same. Verkrampte dreams faded from significance as P W Botha told the white nation that "We must adapt or we will die."

SOWETO 1976

Led by the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), the uprising began as a peaceful protest against the use of Afrikaans as a teaching medium. 200 000 students gathered for a demonstration against their inferior education. The police opened fire on the students turning a peaceful protest into a bloody massacre and eventually a national revolt. The revolt expanded both numerically and in terms of its horizons. Thousands of people – both students and their parents, the workers – began joining in all over South Africa. Four national work stay-aways were observed between August and November 1976.

AFRIKAANS ISSUE

The Afrikaans issue soon developed into an attack on Bantu education and then on the apartheid system as a whole.

Many young people left SA to return in the following years as ANC guerillas. Many others went into trade unions and civic, youth, student and women's organisations.

The 1976 uprising was the turning point in the re-emergence of the mass political opposition that we see in South Africa today.



Hundreds of people were killed during 1976! The anger of the people resulted in the re-emergence of mass political opposition.



In the wake of 1976, there were two groupings amongst the rulers realising that apartheid would have to be adapted: Firstly, big business, whose profits were threatened by political and economic instability. And secondly, the leaders of the South African Defence Force and "verligte" elements of the government who recognised that to win the growing civil war in South Africa, apartheid would have to appear less objectionable and the support of some black people would have to be won. Magnus Malan called it the need to develop "militarily defensible policies".

Adapt or Die

Reforms and Response

It was from this alliance that reforms emerged which included:

Creation of an Urban Black Middle Class

* A major initiative involving the creation of an urban black middle-class. The project involved the government's relaxation of influx control over the minority of Africans, while tightening it up for the majority. The Riekert Commission made recommendations which allowed wealthier blacks a more permanent status, while streamlining the process of removing unemployed Africans to the "homelands". Despite these divisive moves, democratic community organisations fighting for the rights of all South Africans, continued to emerge.

Trade Unions

* On the trade union front, the government attempted to stem the growth of progressive trade unions with a "reform". On the advice of the Wiehahn Commission, it offered legal recognition to the independent black trade unions, a status they had never been granted. Along with this legal recognition, went extensive controls over these unions and limitations



Many magazines carry adverts directed at the aspirations of the new urban black middle class.

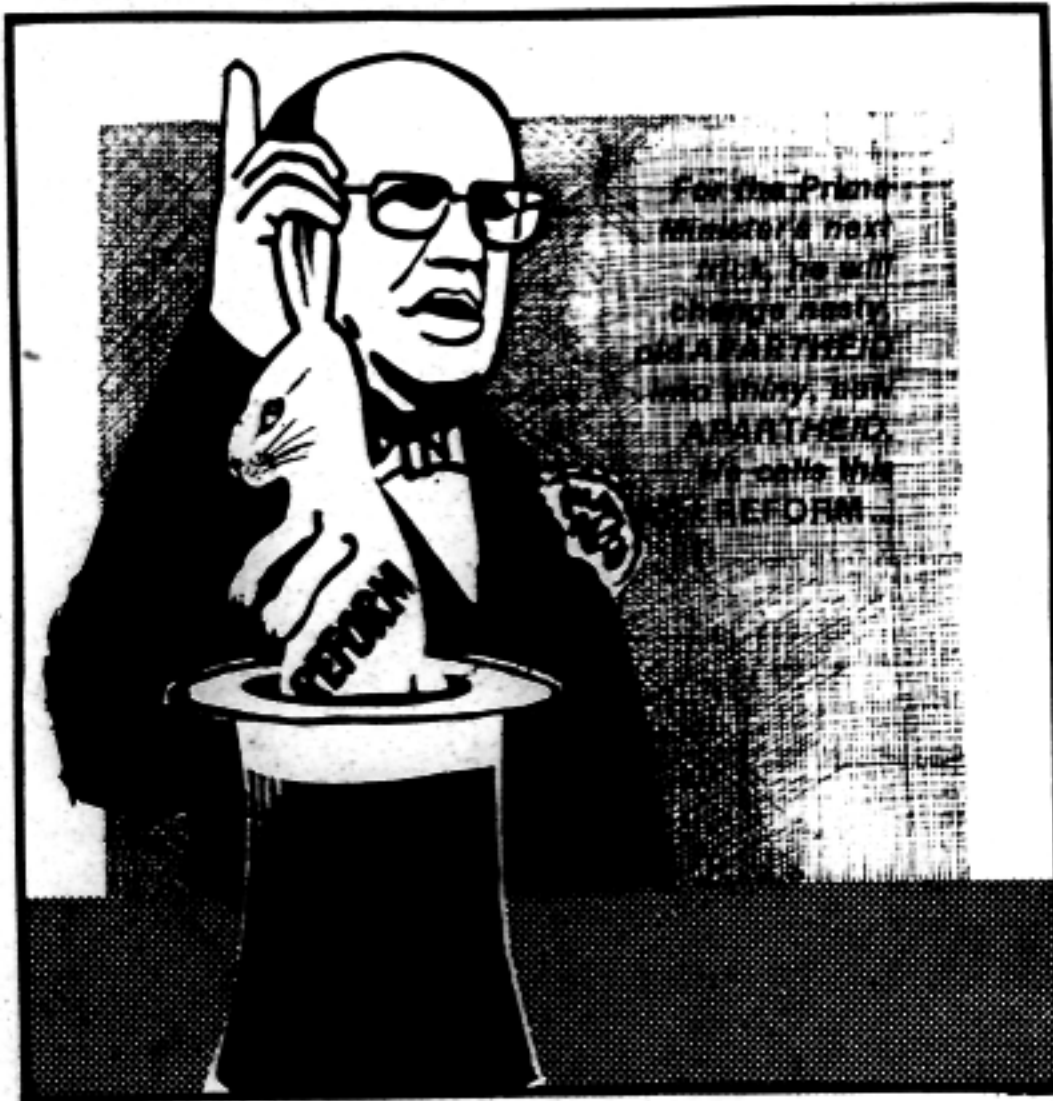
on their right to organise workers. Instead of being brought under control by these moves, the independent unions continued to grow, building unity in their ranks and organising the unorganised.

Education

* In education reforms have been designed to alleviate the current

skilled labour shortage and to facilitate the creation of a black elite. However, the government has not broken from the essential formula of apartheid education, and progressive student organisations, fighting apartheid in education and in society more broadly, have grown in the schools and universities.

NEW CONSTITUTION & KOORNHOF BILLS



* In late 1982, the government presented its final solution : the NEW CONSTITUTION AND KOORNHOF BILLS' The new constitution aimed to draw the coloured and Indian communities closer to the white laager by giving these communities a "vote" for one of three separate parliamentary chambers where whites, coloureds and Indians are represented in a ratio of 4:2:1.

The new constitution has entrenched racism in South Africa : separate parliaments and voters' rolls; separate group areas and facilities and a separate education have all remained essential parts of the system.

At the same time, the new constitution represented a move even further away from what little democracy whites enjoyed in South Africa, as immense power is concentrated in the hands of the executive state president.

The exclusion of Africans, more than 80 percent of South Africa's population, is, of course, the most glaring inadequacy of the new constitution.

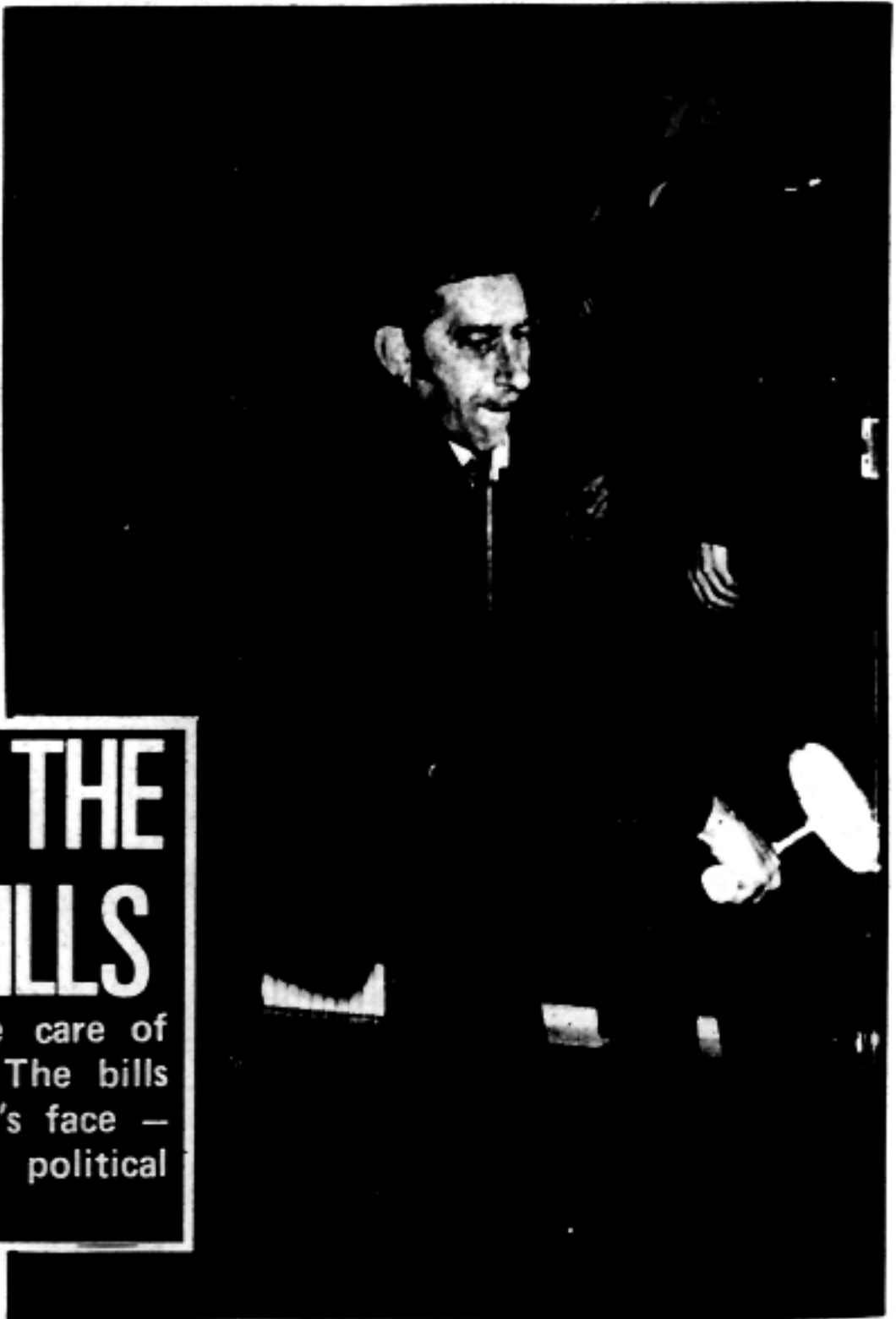
THE KOORNHOF BILLS

The Koornhof Bills, which were designed to take care of African political aspirations, proved a recipe for political disaster in the years that followed. The Bills included two main aspects:

(1) An attempt to upgrade the community councils as township representative bodies and make them appear to have more power than they really do.

The intention was to give credibility to those African "leaders" who were prepared to make the system work;

(2) an attempt to make the townships responsible for their own finances — the community councils now had to take responsibility for raising rents of the already hard-pressed township residents. This would hopefully deflect the anger of the residents from the government to the community councils.



SERVING UP THE KOORNHOF BILLS

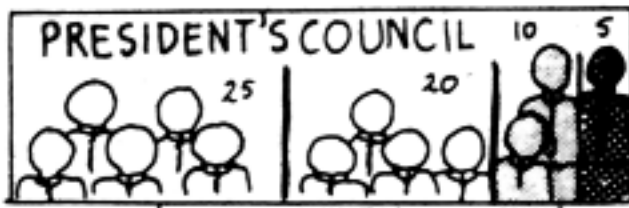
They were designed to take care of African political aspirations. The bills bounced back into Koornhof's face — proving to be a recipe for political disaster.

How the Constitution works



← HE WILL BE IN POWER FOR 7 YEARS

ELECTED BY ELECTORAL COLLEGE



PRESIDENTS MEN **WHITES**

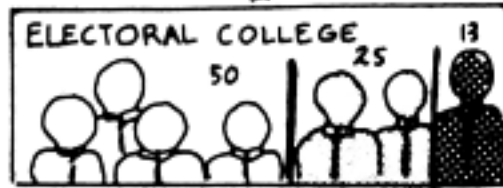
NOMINATED BY PRESIDENT

ELECTED BY WHITES

COLOURED INDIANS

ELECTED BY COLOURED

ELECTED BY INDIANS



WHITES

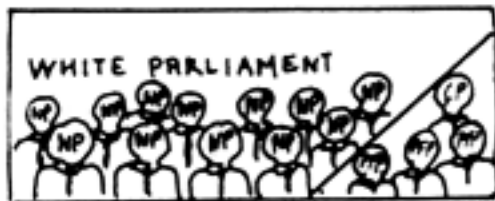
ELECTED BY WHITES

COLOURED

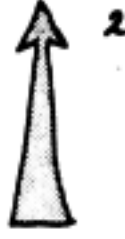
ELECTED BY COLOURED

INDIANS

ELECTED BY INDIANS



WHITE VOTER'S ROLE



COLOURED VOTER'S ROLE



INDIAN VOTER'S ROLE



The People's Response

With the government trying to implement a more sophisticated and all-embracing "reform" package, the democratic forces in South Africa needed a more all-embracing response.

On August 20, 1983, 2 000 delegates from over 400 organisations nationwide came together in Cape Town to form the United Democratic Front: it was launched at a mass rally attended by more than 12 000 people.

The UDF was formed to bring a broad range of anti-apartheid organisations together in an alliance against the constitution and Koornhof Bills. The non-racial front has been hailed as the largest and most significant political movement in South Africa since the Congress Alliance of the 1950s and within three months, a further 200 organisations had joined.

NON-RACIAL FRONT

The UDF is composed of political organisations, trade unions, women's, community, youth and student organisations. It aims to present the government with a united force of rejection of apartheid and to demand a free and democratic South Africa. Since its emergence, the UDF has gathered more and more support. But it has also attracted the attention of the government and the security forces.



The United Democratic Front was formed in 1983 in response to the New Constitution and the Koornhof Bills.

UDF leaders have been systematically harassed, detained, banned and even murdered. Some UDF members have been placed on trial for treason.



Boesak — patron of the UDF

The massive Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial collapsed due to the lack of evidence. But, a further 22 UDF members face charges in Delmas in the Transvaal.

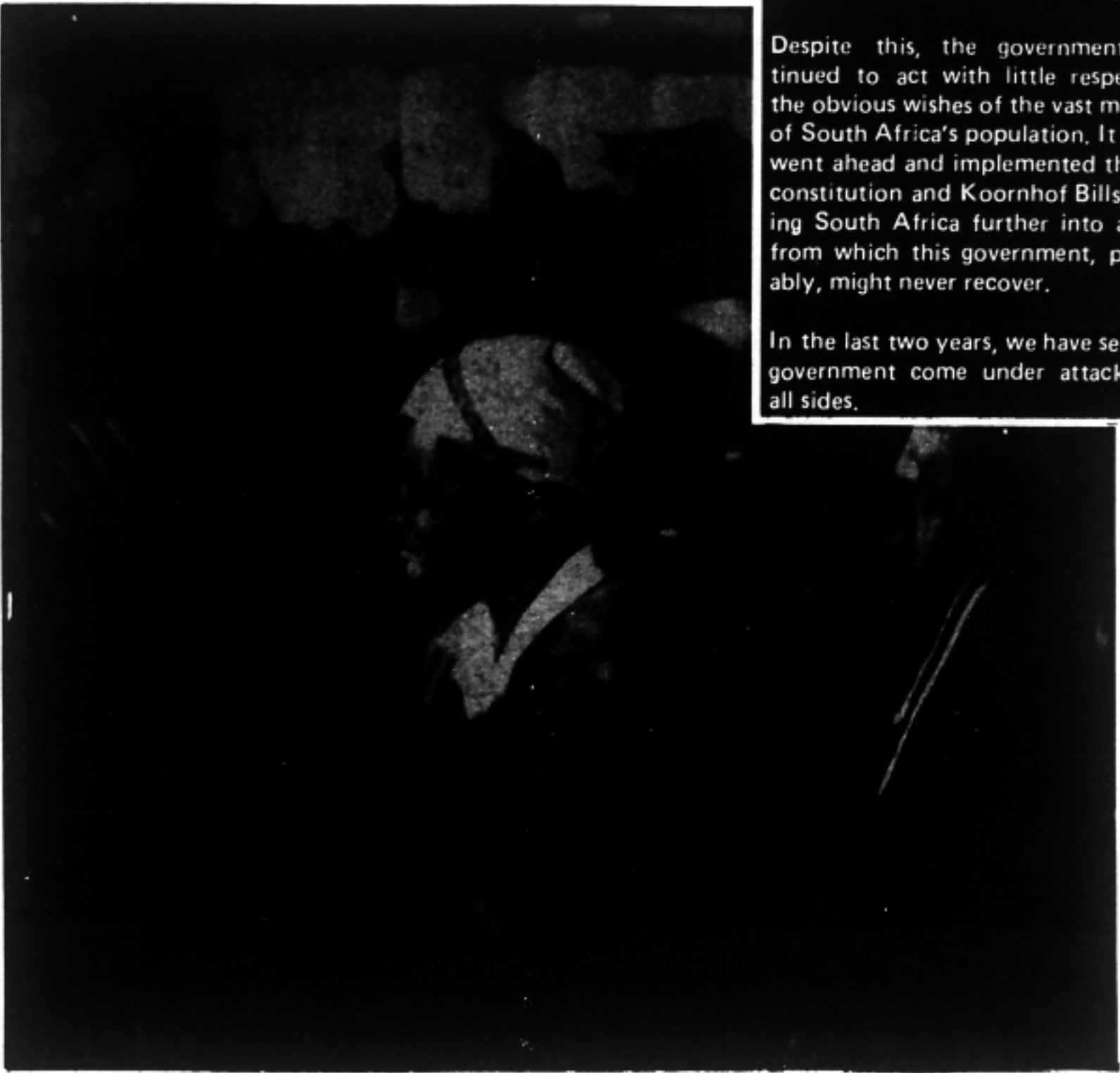
POWER

During the state of emergency, many UDF meetings were banned and leaders detained. These actions have not affected the grassroots support for the front in the townships around the country and it continues, undaunted, to struggle for peoples' power in 1986.



"We the freedom loving people of South Africa say with one voice to the whole world that we cherish the vision of a united, democratic South Africa based on the will of the people and will strive for the unity of our people through united action against the evils of apartheid, economic and all other forms of exploitation."
From the UDF Declaration.





This massive rejection of its new constitution resulted in very low polls for the first tricameral elections.

Despite this, the government continued to act with little respect for the obvious wishes of the vast majority of South Africa's population. It boldly went ahead and implemented the new constitution and Koornhof Bills, pushing South Africa further into a crisis from which this government, perceptibly, might never recover.

In the last two years, we have seen the government come under attack from all sides.



Funeral of 29 people shot by police at a peaceful procession in Langa, Uitenhage on March 21st 1985, exactly 25 years after the Sharpeville massacre

The Township Uprisings

Towards the end of 1984, South Africa's townships exploded. South Africa had never previously experienced so extended and violent an expression of the people's opposition to apartheid. In the 18 months preceding the "state of emergency", scattered student boycotts became more general. These gave way to protests and marches by adults, to stone throwing and blockages, to bus

and consumer boycotts and general strikes.

Local officials and the police, white and black, could not contain the unrest. Army units were deployed, moving from township to township but they too failed to "restore order" to the townships.

The "state of emergency" announced

in July 1985, was an expression of state power, but also of state impotence and vulnerability. The state confronted and could barely quell, the gathering chorus of African voices that rejected bantu education, the new township local authorities and development boards, the new constitutional order, white officials and police and above all, their local and national African collaborators.

The Roots of the Uprisings



Free food is handed out to the few that voted in the community council elections.



Poverty — a major cause of unrest

The township uprisings last year were triggered off by a number of factors.

An important factor was the black community council system. Township residents recognised from the outset that this new system was just another way of administering apartheid in the townships, except now they were now being called upon to finance their own oppression. From their inception, the new community councils lacked any credibility. On average, only 7 percent of the urban black population turned up to vote for candidates to the new councils

in October 1983. In some townships, the percentage poll was as low as 0,4 percent.

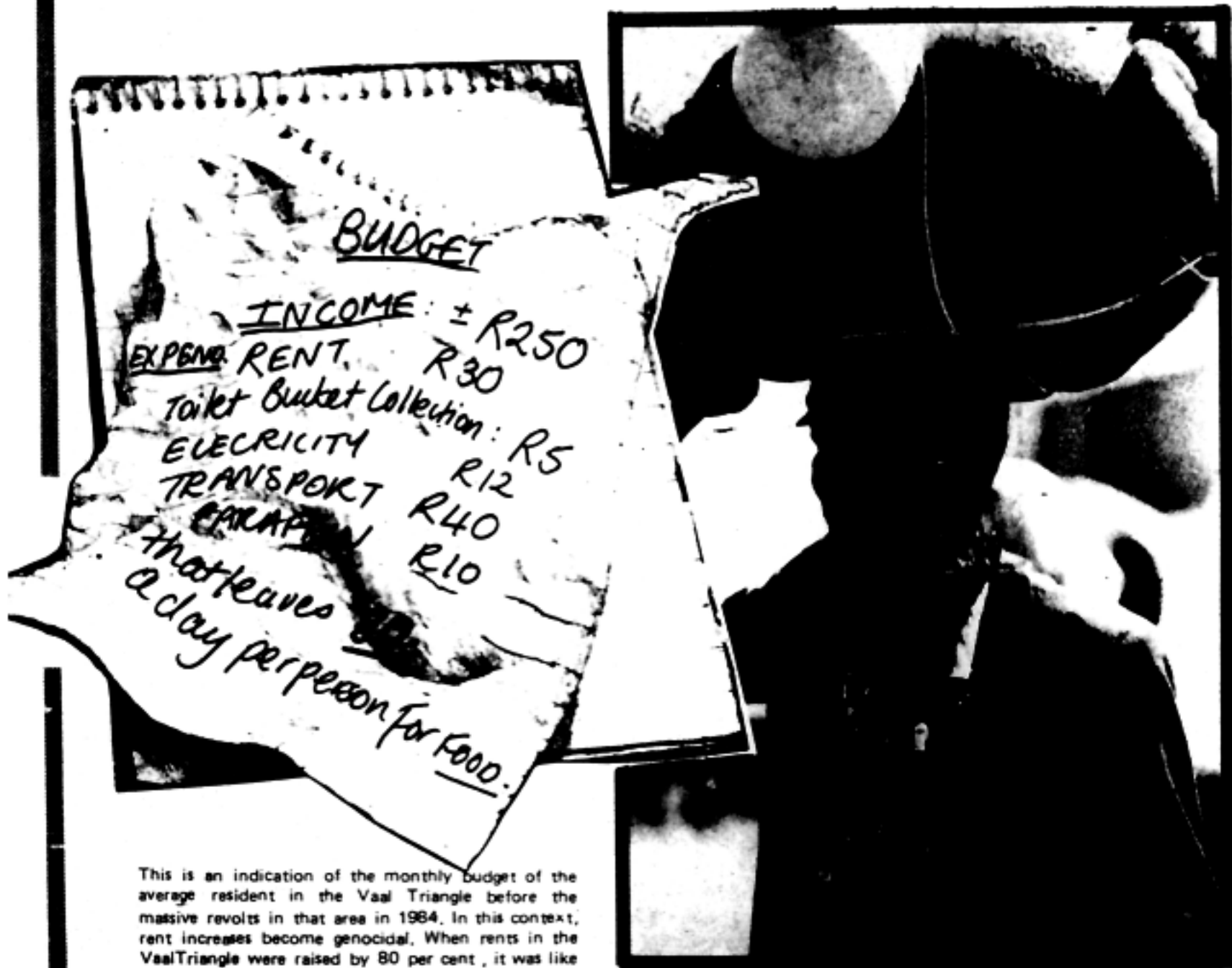
In June 1984, the largely discredited councils attempted to increase rents and service charges in order to finance their costs. The popular response to these increases contributed in a major way to the uprisings that followed.

A second important factor is that of POVERTY. In recent years, the generally low wages paid to black working people have not compensated for the rising cost of living. In 1985, for example, an inflation rate

of 17 percent, GST of 12 percent and massive increases in the costs of basic foodstuffs such as milk, maize and meat made it increasingly difficult for township residents to make ends meet.

More than 2 million of South Africa's workers are unemployed. This figure is spiralling upwards as thousands more are being retrenched in the current economic decline. The combination of these two factors has made life in the townships an on-going struggle for physical survival.

Carrying the heaviest Burden



BUDGET

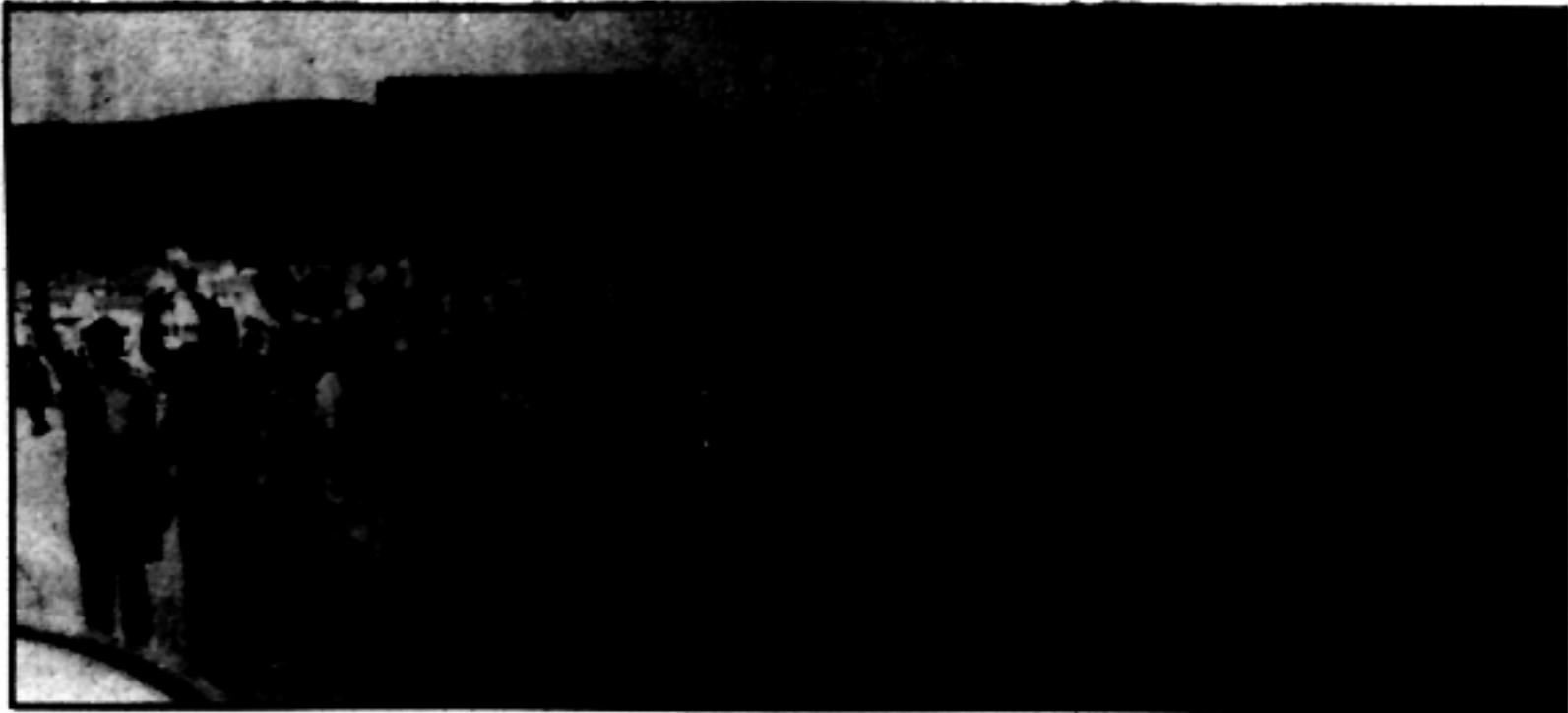
INCOME: ± R250

EXPENSE

RENT	R30
Toilet Bucket Collection	R5
ELECTRICITY	R12
TRANSPORT	R40
PARAFFIN	R10

That leaves
a day per person for FOOD.

This is an indication of the monthly budget of the average resident in the Vaal Triangle before the massive revolts in that area in 1984. In this context, rent increases become genocidal. When rents in the Vaal Triangle were raised by 80 per cent, it was like pouring gasoline onto a fire: the uprisings were not only predictable, but entirely understandable.



The townships continue to organise themselves despite their occupation by the SADF and the heavy clampdown on township organisations and their leadership

Growth of Township Organisation

Since the late 1970s, residents and civic organisations have formed in most townships to contest the living conditions of the people. These organisations have grown in strength as living conditions have worsened and constituted real leadership of the African community. Protest marches, consumer boycotts of white shops, rents boycotts and stay-aways from work, are all strategies employed by democratic organisations to resist measures of apartheid control.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

In the process, the community coun-

cil system has been destroyed: there are 350 000 African township residents in the Vaal Triangle who have not paid rent since the September 1984 unrest; 155 townships have ultimately been caught up in the spreading revolt, at least 300 homes of community councillors and African policemen have been damaged in protest action; 12 councillors have been killed and 240 town councillors have resigned their positions.

This challenge to the system of apartheid has not gone unanswered by the state: massive contingents of SADF and the police were deployed to occupy the townships. Township or-

ganisations were decimated through detention without trial, shootings, assassination of community leaders and mysterious disappearances.

None of these measures have proved successful in quelling the political protest in the townships. While community organisation has suffered, it has found new ways to operate against all odds. Some communities are now democratically organised on a street and area basis. Democratic organisation of the townships grows as ordinary people assert their right to determine their destiny and as a result the RESISTANCE CONTINUES.

Struggles in Education

Central to the upheaval in 1984/85 has been the continuing dissatisfaction with black education in South Africa. Somewhere between 250 000 and 650 000 students were boycotting classes at any given time over the past year. It seems that bantu education has never recovered from the accumulated challenges of 1976 and 1980.

Over the past two years, there have been several universal demands which were adopted by students nationwide.

Scrap the Age— limit Laws

The unpopular age limit laws (introduced in 1981) were seriously contested in Port Elizabeth in March 1984. These laws stipulated the maximum age of students permitted to enter Standards 6 - 10. Black students argued that these limits were unrealistic in terms of the conditions being faced by most families in the townships. Shortages of money for schooling or reliance on school-going family members for financial support meant that many students must interrupt their schooling to work. To exclude students in this situation is unjust. This demand remains one of the key issues in ongoing school struggle.

The Right to SRCs

This demand has become the major rallying point of the schools' boycotts in both 1984 and 1985 with widespread support from parents and students. In May 1984, the Department of Education and Training (DET) proposed a system of 'Pupils Representative Councils'. This in no way met student demands for democratically elected bodies with an effective say over their education. COSAS proposed an alternative constitution for SRCs. The DET agreed to suspend the PRCs and the hated prefect systems while considering the new SRC constitution. This did not happen however, and students have continued on a local level to pressurise headmasters to allow SRCs.

Abolish Corporal Punishment

Authoritarian headmasters' overzealous use of corporal punishment has been another of the student grievances. By law, male students may only receive a maximum of four cuts a day (and female students, none). In most of the black schools this ruling is ignored. Some

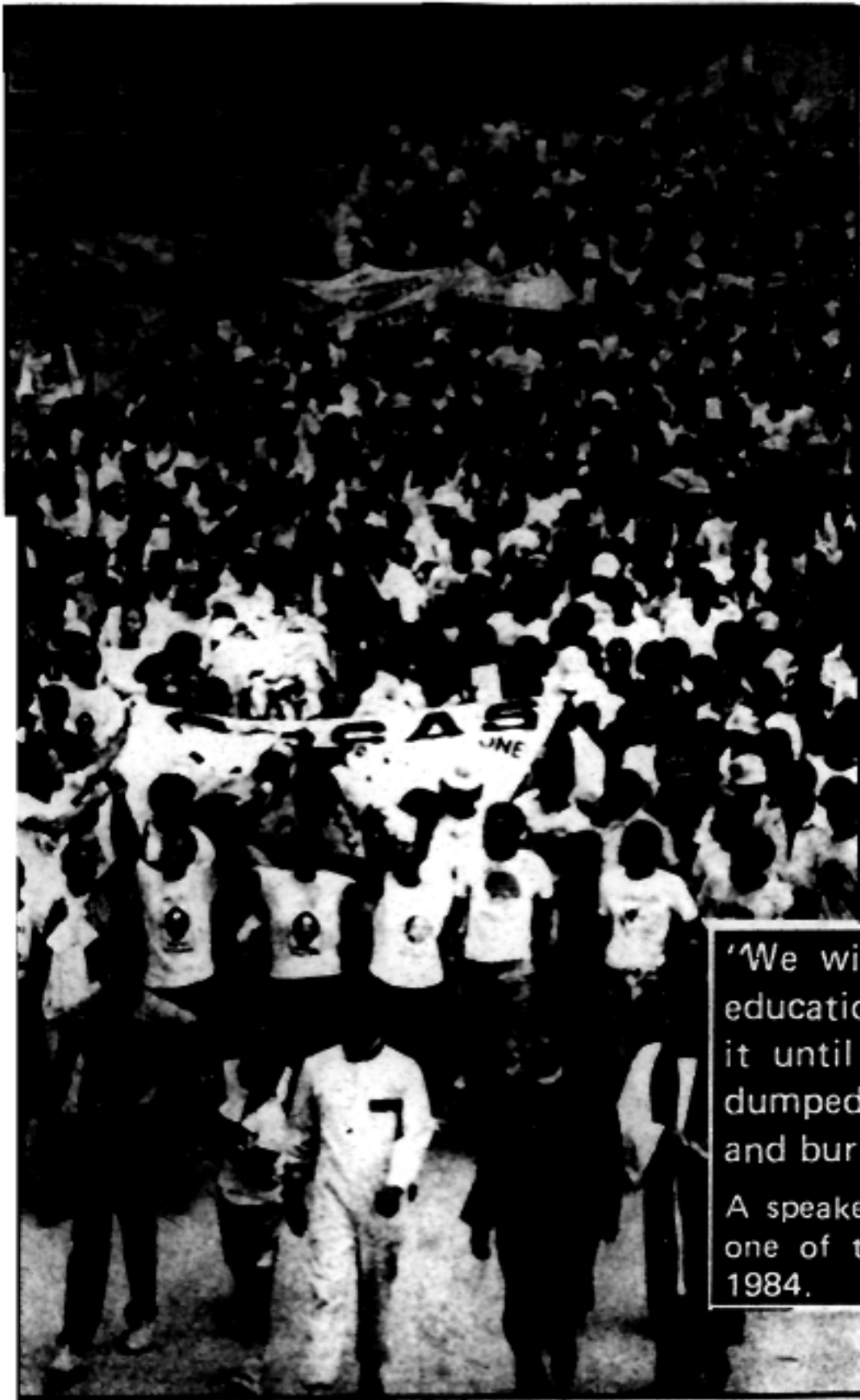
students have received 40 cuts and other means of punishments such as sjambokking, beating with fists and in the case of female students, sexual harassment from teachers and headmasters. Women students have little protection against teachers who seek to sexually abuse them or to exchange sexual favours for academic results.

Adequate School Facilities

Overcrowding of classrooms (and the double sessions) constitutes another grievance of black school students. When one compares white and black education — Africans average 40 pupils per class, while whites average 18.

Reinstatement of Dismissed Teachers

Many teachers who have supported students' demands have been victimised by headmasters and the DET. Students are demanding the reinstatement of dismissed teachers. Recently, a highly successful campaign was waged in Cape Town, resulting in the reinstatement of teachers black-listed during the state of emergency.



Funeral of a COSAS student.

Many have died during the 1984 and 1985 struggles for a democratic and equal education system: Emma Satekge, (13) of Pretoria, crushed by a police van; Papike Loape (18) of Welkom, shot dead; Johannes Ngalo of Parys died in police custody; Patrick Phala of Daveyton shot in the head; Willian Bibi (15) of the Vaal, shot while standing at a school fence; Bongani Kumala, Soweto, a COSAS official repeatedly shot at point blank range; Hunga Kaibe (17) of Bloemfontein, shot; Toboko Bokobane of Thabong, shot; and many others who remain nameless.

Despite the high tolls being paid, students, parents and teachers remain resolved to strive for these demands and for the long-term realisation of "people's education" (as it was termed at a conference called in January 1986 to discuss the crisis in education).

"We will prove in action that Bantu education is evil. We will revolt against it until it has been utterly scrapped, dumped on the junk heap of history and buried once and for all!"

A speaker at the funeral of Emma Satekge, one of the first school students to die in 1984.

Struggles of the Workers

The relationship between employers and black workers has been conflictual and volatile throughout South Africa's history.

The poverty wage levels which characterize the South African economy and the rapid and brutal intervention of police in labour disputes have ensured that labour relations remain a highly politicised issue

Apartheid laws such as influx control, the homeland's policy and the denial of black political rights have ensured that black workers are at distinct disadvantage when negotiating with employers. This has meant that black workers in South Africa have increasingly linked their subordinate position in the workplace to their

subordinate position in the South African society as a whole.

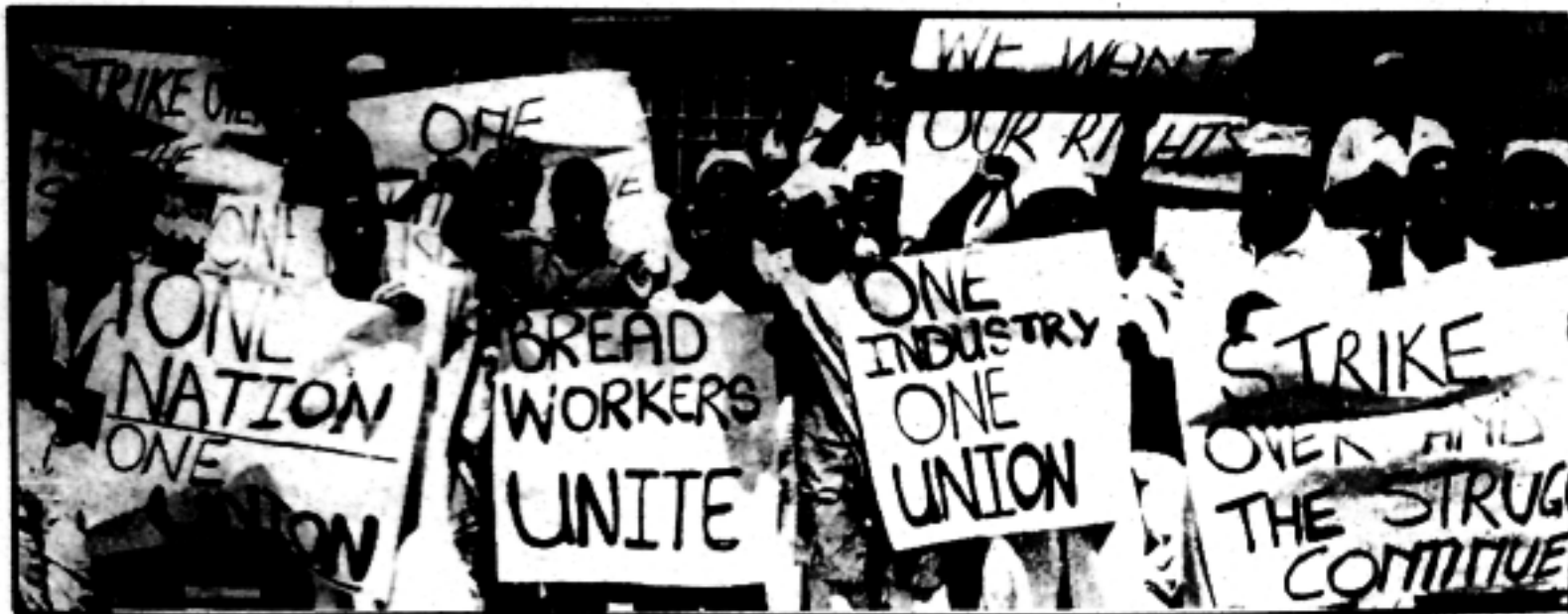
In the last decade, there has been a massive and sustained growth in the strength and the size of the black trade union movement. This has been accompanied by an increase in strike action involving hundreds of thousands of workers.

In 1984 there were a record number of strikes (469) involving over 200 000 workers. In 1985 this number was dramatically surpassed. This increase in worker action can be put down to a number of factors including:

- * Firstly, the plummeting standard of living mentioned earlier which has turned the struggle for wage increases into a struggle for survival.

- * Secondly, a growth in the militancy of workers as the spirit of resistance in the townships has logically filtered into the factories. Workers who have experienced and protested against the police and army occupation and shooting in the townships are less likely to tolerate a racist supervisor or unrealistic wages.

The exclusion of black South Africans from political power has meant that trade unions which are concerned to represent the interests of their members are forced to play a broader political role. Increasingly this "political trade unionism" has resulted in alliances being forged between trade unions, community organisations and students in the townships to fight issues of common concern.



July 1985 — workers at the Baker's Bread factory strike for a living wage.



The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was launched in Durban at the end of last year. The Federation represents half a million workers.

Over the last two years, many trade unions have participated in the "stay-aways" from work in solidarity with township residents in response to police shootings, rent increases and school boycotts. A powerful example of this was a massive stayaway on the 5th and 6th November, 1984 when unions pledged support for the demands of black school children in the Vaal Triangle and on the East Rand.

For two days, 800 000 workers and 400 000 students stayed away from

work and school in a protest action that rocked the government and the business community into action to solve the schools crisis.

The growing strength and unity of the trade union movement culminated on the 29th November, 1985 with the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

The formation of this new trade

union federation unites most of the black trade unions in the largest black worker organisation in South Africa's history. The Federation now has a membership of over 500 000 workers.

The new federation is likely to increase the strength and effectiveness of worker action both in the factories and in alliance with community and student organisations in the townships for a democratic system of government in South Africa.



Wits students demonstrate against the state of emergency. Despite indications that it was a peaceful protest, the police launched into the students with teargas and sjamboks.

White Opposition

The crisis that the government found itself in, in 1985 was reflected in the breakdown in the cohesion and confidence of the white community. As mass protest swept the country, whites reacted with confusion and fear. Responses have ranged from right-wing vigilante squads to mass emigration (emigration in 1985 was 64 percent higher than in 1984).

But at the same time, there was a growth in the number of whites who

refuse to be accomplices to the apartheid crime. There are a number of indications of this:

- Within parliament, large sections of the PFP leadership and membership became increasingly disillusioned with the new constitution, which was proving to be as dictatorial and repressive as its strongest critics had anticipated. An indication of this breakdown in confidence was Van Zyl Slabbert's visit to the ANC, which was a slap in

the face for the state's attempts to exclude the ANC from being seen as a central political force in South African politics.

- There has been a marked increase in support for white democratic organisations outside of parliament. NUSAS mobilised thousands of students in protests against the state of emergency; the ranks of the Black Sash swelled and importantly, there was growing support for the Campaign to

CONSCRIPTS



**WITH NO
RIGHT TO CHOOSE**

End Conscription Poster

End Conscription as the idea of active defence of apartheid became increasingly repugnant to many young white South Africans. There was also a growth in all the major centres of professional organisations offering their skills and services to the democratic movement as a whole.

* Other initiatives which have signified white dissatisfaction with the parliamentary processes have included the "Let South Africa Speak" campaign and the "Petition for Peace" run by Fair Lady magazine.

All these things taken together, plus the many courageous acts of white democrats, like Beyers Naude and Molly Blackburn, signify a small but growing trend of white opposition to apartheid.

SLABBERT - Why I left Parliament?

"I came to the conclusion that I could not see myself playing a constructive role there."



WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE PACKING THEIR BAGS AND LEAVING! Immigration in 1985 was 64 per cent higher than in 1984

By 1985 the international spotlight was focussed heavily on South Africa. Demonstrations and protests occurred on an almost daily basis in Europe and America.

The disinvestment campaign against South Africa was stepped up, as were the calls to boycott South African products.



Placard demonstrations near the South African embassy in Washington

International Pressure

Internationally, too, as the conflict within South Africa intensifies, the pressure on the government to reform and change has increased.

The ranks of the anti-apartheid movement in Europe and the Free South Africa Movement in the United States have swelled as the world television cameras focussed on the

horrific events of 1985. The international consumer boycott of South African products gained momentum in countries such as New Zealand,

Australia, Sweden, Scandinavia and the UK and the campaign to isolate South Africa culturally and in the sports arena was pursued with vigour.

The disinvestment campaign has also started to leave its mark on the South

African economy, exacerbating the already serious shortage of foreign reserves.

The sympathies of the majority of the international community have never been clearer. Street after street is named after Nelson Mandela and universities and cities honour the heroes and heroines of the South African democratic movement.

The Argus

CAPE TOWN, FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 1966

LAMPDOWN

... areas in Mitchell's Plain, Manenberg and ...
Violence and lawlessness can be tolerated no longer' — P.M.

STATE OF EMERGENCY



CHAPTER EIGHT The State Response

State of Emergency

On 22 July 1985, the State President, P W Botha, declared a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts, in the most populated areas of South Africa. This was later extended to other areas, including the Cape Peninsula.

This is the most draconian step taken by the government since the last state of emergency in 1960. The emergency regulations gave unlimited powers of questioning, search, detentions, arrest and occupation to the South African Defence Force and the police. Press coverage was severely restricted, curfews were imposed, meetings of political organisations and public funerals were banned. Members of the "security forces" were indemnified from any civil or criminal liability for the actions during the state of emergency. As a result, ordinary South Africans had no recourse to courts in the case of death and damage to property caused by security forces.

The state of emergency was declared in order to put an end to the unprecedented level of resistance to apartheid by black South Africans. Apartheid rule was in crisis, as more and more South Africans ignored and actively opposed the structures of racist and undemocratic control and apartheid laws.

In the year preceding the state of emergency declaration, the government had stepped-up its process of



A student gets arrested during the state of emergency protests at Wits. He subsequently spent two weeks in detention

repression against opponents of apartheid. Regular detention swoops and the deployment of 43 000 soldiers in and around the townships in 1984

had failed to quell the rising protest. The state of emergency was a desperate step by a wounded and cornered South African government. This des-



The funeral of four murdered Cradock community leaders which took place on the day the state of emergency was declared.

paration was evident in a statement by P W Botha in declaring the emergency. He said: "I will maintain 'law and order' in South Africa and nothing in the world will stop me!" He certainly tried: large detachments of SADF troops were deployed in African townships throughout South Africa. Thousands of anti-apartheid activists were arrested and imprisoned.

The United Democratic Front (UDF), whose campaigns against Botha's sham reforms had been highly successful, suffered the brunt of the government crackdown.

In the seven months after the state of emergency was declared, 7 800 people have been detained under emergency regulations; 750 people have been killed, mostly by security force action. The extent of the crackdown goes much further, as illustrated

by statistics for the whole of 1985: 11 000 people were detained under state of emergency regulations and security legislation. 25 000 people were arrested in connection with political protest, 13 people died while being held in police custody, 1 040 people were killed in connection with political protest. The vast majority of deaths resulted directly from security force operations. This constituted the most widespread and violent attacks on government opponents in this century.

Despite the massive repression, political protest has not abated. It has, in fact, spread to new areas in the country and adapted to continuous government crackdown. P W Botha's declaration of the state of emergency was an admission of his own failure to control black South Africans. Now the state of emergency itself has failed to quell the protest, but at great cost both in human life and in suffering.

"The acts of violence and thuggery in the townships are mainly directed at the property and person of law-abiding black people and take the form of incitement, intimidation, arson, inhuman forms of assault and even murder.

This state of affairs can no longer be tolerated. So far, the government has shown the utmost patience.

However I cannot ignore the insistence of all responsible South Africans, especially of the black communities, who ask that conditions be normalised and that they are granted the full protection of the law to continue their normal way of life.

It is the government's duty to ensure that a normal community life is re-established and that community services are efficiently rendered.

It is essential that the situation be normalised in such a way that the climate for continued dialogue in the interest of all peoples, in the constitutional, economic and social fields, is ensured."

Excerpt from a statement by P W Botha issued on 20 July 1985 announcing the State of Emergency. The State of Emergency came into effect at midnight on that day. In the early hours of 21 July, hundreds of people were detained under the new regulations.

Desparately Seeking Legitimacy

The growing uprisings in the mid-1980s and the breakdown of governance in the townships, illustrates the nature and depth of the government's illegitimacy in South Africa. In this situation, as we have seen, the government was forced to rely more and more heavily on coercive methods to retain control; but at the same time, it has become even more preoccupied with fashioning some type of legitimacy formulae. To appreciate the scope of this project, we shall briefly examine some of the areas where this process is underway:

APARTHEID IS DEAD

The South African government has gone to great lengths, particularly in the present period, to pronounce the death of apartheid. During 1985, as the turmoil spread across South Africa, the state radio and television service proceeded to pull apart and deny the basic elements of the apartheid ideological structure. However, in affirming apartheid's death, no effort was made to substitute some new set of ideas that would order state and society. The state simply negated the traditional construction as exclusive, obtrusive and politicizing and moved instead to some principles that have proved to be vague and generalised.

APARTHEID -passed away 1997, sorely missed, lovingly remembered, always in our minds. You will miss P.W., Pik, Koornhof and the whole team.

DESPERATELY SEEKING LEGITIMACY

But I need you in this time of crisis. Don't know how much longer I can hold out. Meet me in parliament? At Nkomati? Anywhere will do. Love and hoping for a quick response - P.W.

WANTED - somebody to stand for community council elections.

Vote in community council elections

DE-NATIONALISING POLITICAL STRUGGLE

The government has also sought to break the unmediated encounter between the national state and the African population. To untangle the combatants, the government has supported, firstly, localisation to devolve functions and politics to local levels where conflict is more diffuse

and more manageable. Secondly, it has supported regionalisation to reinforce the diffusion of power.

The black community councils, were the first piece in this strategy. But, as we saw earlier, the African communities boycotted the local elections and drove out those few leaders who chose to participate. The structure of local government lay in shambles, but the government remained insistent that African politics be localised. The

State President, even as he looked back on 10 months of untiring turmoil in the townships, rejected any national solution, pointing stubbornly to the local option:

"I believe that the basis for democracy is local government. Without proper local government, no democracy can really exist. What we are doing now is to bring about local authorities for black communities in the urban areas." (May 1985)

CONSTITUTIONAL MANOEUVERINGS

We have examined, in some depth already, the constitutional manoeuvrings of the government. These manoeuvrings are by no means over. Despite the massive rejection of the new constitution and its separate and racially defined parliaments, there is much official talk, at the moment, of a fourth parliamentary chamber or alternatively, a black forum for discussion.

However, despite these efforts, what is clear is that the nationalist party government have never yielded on white control of the central political institutions, the police-military apparatus, the integrity of the Afrikaner in educational and cultural matters, on the privileged economic position of the white community. For Africans faced with the harsh reality of economic deprivation and the force of the white-controlled coercive and political structures, there is little plausibility to these efforts. South Africa remains a racist and undemocratic society, illegitimate for the great majority of its people.



SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS



ACTION FOR DEMOCRACY

CHAPTER NINE
Into 1986

Action for Democracy

Democracy is a term bandied around by most politicians in South Africa. The tri-cameral parliament and the black Community Councils are engaged in "democratic processes of decision-making".

The SADF and SAP claim to be fighting agitators who seek to subvert democracy. But many ordinary South Africans also argue that they are striving for democracy in community organisations, trade unions, student groups and youth associations.

NUSAS's theme for 1986 is "Action

for Democracy". What do we mean by democracy and what makes our understanding of the term so different from the government's?

What is Democracy?

The essence of democracy is control over one's own life. In South African society, there is very little real democracy for the majority of people. The

ruling group has constructed a myriad of laws which ensnare and control people's lives. In addition, people are conditioned into accepting the present state of things as correct and natural — this can be termed ideological control.

The recognition of the extreme lack of democracy in South Africa is not new. The Freedom Charter, drawn up in 1955, encapsulated key democratic demands. Recently a call has emerged from many townships around the country for "PEOPLE'S POWER". This is not just rhetoric. Organisations are confronting the real



question of how to develop in people, who have been raised as submissive and inferior, the confidence to assert their right to participate in decision-making about their community, their schooling, their workplace and the running of their country.

The Cradock example

The Cradock Residents' Association (CRADORA), formed in the small Karoo town in the Eastern Cape, is one such organisation which has gone some way towards building "People's Power" or the democratic participation of everyone in the community.

STREET COMMITTEES

Formed initially by Mathew Goniwe, himself a man who consistently strove to make democracy a reality for ordinary people, CRADORA grew in strength until today it has the support of virtually all the people in the Cradock township.

CRADORA has exploded the myth of leaders who make decisions on behalf of the people. CRADORA has structured itself to facilitate the maximum participation of the residents. Every street forms a street

Building a Democratic Future

For people who have grown up in a society which denies them any form of political power or any chance to participate in making decisions that affect their lives; building People's Power is a difficult process, especially when the government makes every effort to hinder such efforts.

But when people everywhere are learning how as ordinary citizens to assert their opinions and make their needs felt, then the process of building a democratic future has begun.

committee, drawing representatives from each household. These will discuss domestic problems (eg: alcoholism and immediate neighbourhood disputes) as well as participate in deciding the programme of CRADORA. Street committees send reps to zone committees which have jurisdiction over larger areas of the township.

In this manner, CRADORA can take decisions about any action in the space of a couple of hours. The communication network is so strong that a meeting of the entire community can be called in four hours.

If students want to boycott school, for example, they must motivate why they think this is important to their parents and other members of the community to secure their support.

MATHEW GONIWE

This is what occurred when Mathew Goniwe and another community leader were given transfers from CRADORA (where they were teachers) — the entire community supported the boycott of schools to protest these actions.

MATHEW GONIWE

Mathew Goniwe, who helped to set up the Cradock's Residents' Association (CRADORA) was a man who consistently strove to make democracy a reality for ordinary people.

Goniwe and three other anti-apartheid campaigners were murdered last year under mysterious circumstances. They join the thousands of people who have given their lives in the fight against apartheid.



CONCLUSION

The theme for 1986 "Action for Democracy" challenges us to question the undemocratic society in which we live and the roles we play in it. But students often have the attitude that we can do nothing or that there is no future in this country for whites. Many graduates are thinking of leaving SA, for more secure and lucrative prospects.

Certainly, there is and will be further turmoil in our country. But the future is not without hope. We have, in this booklet, examined the Freedom Charter and the vision of a new South Africa it encapsulates. We have looked at the struggles, agony and hopes of ordinary South African township dwellers engaged now in the process of building democracy and non-racialism. We have described how young black South Africans are striving to transform their education system so that it serves their needs. We have seen the workers uniting to form the powerful federation COSATU, which fights a day-to-day battle for workers' survival. We must draw hope and inspiration from their struggles and their commitment to those ideals.

As young white South Africans, we hold an extremely privileged position in our society. We are served from childhood by people who are oppressed and exploited by the system from which we gain our privileges — domestic workers, cleaners, bus drivers, factory workers, etc. We have a responsibility as university students with access to skills and knowledge to ensure we are not blind to the terrible agony people are suffering.

Our skills need not be used to oil the wheels of this unjust system. We must ensure that when we leave the confines of the white universities, we are equipped to make a contribution to changing South Africa — and there are channels for us to do this.

Professional organisations that define a role for themselves in change have sprung up all over the country — democratic lawyers, doctors, social workers, accountants, associations. They unite progressive professionals who want to see their skills used to the benefit of all South Africans and not just for financial/personal gain.

On campus, there are structures created by NUSAS and the SRC for

student involvement — projects committees, local committees, wages comms and others. These define their role to help raise the awareness of ourselves and our fellow students about the harsh realities of South African society. This is crucial given the level of censorship which denies us information about what is going on. In addition, our protected upbringing isolates us completely from the daily experiences of poverty and suffering of most South Africans.

Protest action demonstrates white students' rejection of injustice and repression in a society where many of these brutal incidents have become the norm. Protest action also plays an essential role in communicating to the majority of South Africans our rejection of the actions of those presently in power. It is this solidarity action which builds the foundations of a non-racial future.

The rulers of our country depend on apathy and acceptance of the system to maintain it. NUSAS provides a channel for students to make a commitment to democratic action for a new South Africa.

