



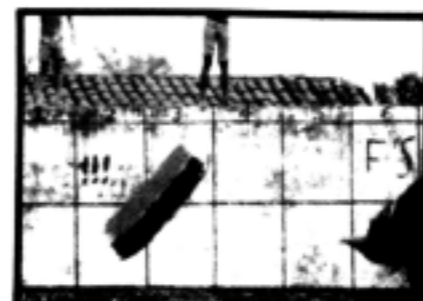
1985: Conflict, repression, reform - what does it mean?

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PF, Inkatha and a National Convention - barking up the wrong tree?

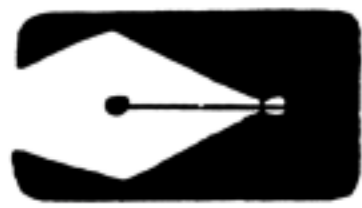
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SASPU



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Workers came from all over South Africa to take part in the launch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions - Cosatu. It's the biggest union federation this country has ever seen.

One federation, one country!

"NOW IS the time for the workers to share in the wealth of the country", was the message given to the huge crowd gathered in Durban's Kings Park Stadium

They had come from all over SA to take part in the launch of the Congress of Trade Unions of South Africa (Cosatu). With over half a million members, it is the largest and most powerful union federation this country has ever seen.

"The launching of Cosatu comes at a crucial time", said Jay Naidoo, Cosatu's new General Secretary.

"Botha and his boys kill people in the townships. The townships are burning and there is ungovernability.

"The economy is in crisis. Our struggle is not only against apartheid or to change the face of the government. It is a struggle to end exploitation.

"Our politics should not be empty slogans. We must prepare our people for actions that will liberate them.

"We should go out and consolidate our organisations and teach the politics of the working class in the townships."

After four years of unity talks amongst SA's progressive trade unions, the launch represents a great leap forward for the workers' struggle.

Opening the congress, Cyril Ramaphosa, National Union of Mineworkers' General Secretary, said, "This Congress should lead the working class people of this country.

"The government has clearly demonstrated that it is failing to control this country. We call on PW Botha to resign and give power to the legitimate leaders. "We workers should seize power and build a

new society. Organisations are growing stronger and are fighting side by side with trade unions against apartheid and capitalism."

741 delegates, representing 33 unions, met the next day to adopt the constitution and discuss the resolutions that will shape Cosatu's future. Although it was a closed session, an exception was made for two people Curnick Ndlovu and Billy Nair, former office bearers of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu).

The message to the government was made clear:

- *Lift the State of Emergency and withdraw all troops from the townships immediately;
- *Unban political organisations and individuals;
- *Dismantle the bantustan system, and end migrant labour;
- *Scrap the pass laws within six months, or face mass defiance.

A broad range of resolutions dealt with organisation against the present system. Some of the issues covered were:

Industrial unions: there must be one national union in each sector of industry.

A living wage: there must be an ongoing campaign for a national minimum, linked to the inflation rate;

Unemployment: all workers have a right to work. Overtime must be banned, and all should work a 40 hour week; workers must fight the introduction of technology that costs jobs.

Strikes: all workers must have the right to this democratic form of struggle.

Women: because women are exploited on the basis of sex, class and race, workers must fight all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the federation; Worker education: to combat the present education system which undemocratic, divisive and serves the interests of the working class, there must be education programmes to politicise, mobilise and organise the working class so that they can lead the transformation towards a society that serves the needs of those now oppressed and exploited. Disinvestment: an essential and effective form of pressure on the regime

that must be supported; Cosatu's office bearers are Elijah Barayi of Num, President; Chris Dhlamini of Sfawu, and Makhulu Ledwaba of Ccawusa, Vice Presidents; Jay Naidoo of Sfawu, General Secretary; Sydney Mafumadi of Gawu, Assistant General Secretary; and Maxwell Xulu of Mawu, Treasurer.

With its five principles of non-racialism, one union one industry, worker control, representation on the basis of paid-up membership, and co-operation between affiliates at national level, the new federation clearly intends to learn from the mistakes of the past, and build a strong democratic structure to face the challenges of the future.

Among the messages of support from around the world was one from Sactu.

"South Africa's future lies in the hands of its workers. Only they, together with progressive people of all races can liberate us from racial hatred, inequality, class exploitation and national oppression.

"Our struggle requires a united and strong trade union movement, determined to satisfy demands for higher wages, good working conditions, removal of colour bars, equal opportunities and the achievement of complete emancipation.

"Long live the Congress of South African Trade Unions!"

50 000 gather to grieve in peace

FOR THE second time in less than two weeks Mamelodi residents staged a work stayway to attend the mass funeral of 12 people killed when police and soldiers opened fire during a march on the local administration board.

More than 50000 mourners packed the stadium and sang, danced and

shouted slogans. Coffins were draped in the black, green and gold of the African National Congress and mourners carried a huge black, green and gold flag.

Speakers condemned the police and SADF and said they should get out of their townships. They only

caused problems there and were the only criminals remaining in Mamelodi.

Mrs Mahlangu, mother of ANC guerilla Solomon Mahlangu who was sentenced to death in 1983, said the police were responsible for the

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Concern over Xmas

CAPE TOWN'S townships have taken a heavy battering during the State of Emergency, declared there on October 27.

Hundreds of activists have been detained and many others forced into hiding.

Many have been picked up in seal and search operations.

UDF Executive member Trevor Manuel was served a five year banning order on his release from detention.

But despite severe repression, a series of campaigns are winning mass support.

The 'lights out campaign' is

reported to be extensive. It is a symbolic protest in support of the demand to lift the State of Emergency, withdrawal of troops and police from the townships and the release of detainees.

Every Wednesday night between 8pm and 9pm, street after street of houses throughout the area are in total darkness except for candles burning.

But even this has met the wrath of security forces and recently police allegedly intervened, marching into houses and grabbing the candles.

The 'Concerned Christmas' campaign was launched at the beginning of December and continues until the week of Christmas. There is a theme for each week of December.

In the first week it was 'Unemployment and Hardship', then 'Children Under Apartheid' including a focus on child detainees. The theme for the third week is 'Families under Apartheid' with a focus on African workers and migrant labour, and finally in the week of Christmas 'The future is ours' which will look at the way forward.

In line with the continuing con-

sumer boycott in the region, the Concerned Christmas includes a call to 'buy wisely'.

Pamphlets detailing the campaign have been distributed and Western Cape activists say it is fast winning support.

The campaign aims to mobilise Christians and religious groups and also includes a focus on detentions and repression. Churches and mosques have been asked to focus on the themes in church services and to pray for those killed, injured or detained.

17 massacred in Queenstown

WHEN 61 YEAR OLD Lizo Ngcaka was shot in the back through the window of the Mlungisi Methodist Church, he was only one of more than 17 people shot dead there on the 17 November.

Mlungisi residents had gathered for a report-back of discussions about the consumer boycott, held between their representatives and the Queenstown Municipality, Eastern Cape Development Board, the Chamber of Commerce and the Sakekamer. The talks had reached deadlock. The ECDB had suggested a committee for rent consultations, with the Mlungisi Residents Ad Hoc Committee (MRAC) represented on it, but this was rejected as being like the advisory boards of the past, with MRAC's participation giving it credibility.

Two hippos arrived at the report-back and police started taking pictures of people in the hall through the windows.

Activists say that the shooting began after people decided to continue the boycott. By that evening, more than 17 people had been shot dead. Dozens of people are still missing and rumours abound that bodies have been dumped in remote places.

Three Coloured activists were arrested at a report-back in New Rest.

House to House raids

Since the massacre, there have been house-to-house raids and many arrests. There seems to be no end in sight, say residents.

On Tuesday 19 November, a group of students was taken in a hippo to a remote area in Tylden. There they were blind-folded, their hands tied behind their backs and brutally beaten up with truncheons.

The students claim Zulu policemen urged the white police officer who

seemed to be in command to kill them all. The boys were left there for dead.

A week before the massacre, 16 year old Sixishe was arrested; two days later he was found in a State mortuary. The post-mortem was done without his parents knowledge.

In October, a former Cosas E.Cape branch chairperson, Andile Matshoba, was shot at point-blank range when he left his house.

Building People's Democracy with Co-operatives

The green, black and gold dresses that are the latest fashion in Queenstown are just one of the things being made by the People's Co-operatives.

These People's Co-operatives have been formed through the street committees to counter unemployment, and lessen the dependency of the townships on the white town. In the People's Co-operatives, retrenched workers and unemployed youth are learning skills and putting them to good use for the community.

They are learning to do shoe-repairs, build furniture, and make candles; they have also started lessons in bricklaying, painting, and sculpture.

"These structures serve to unite us and give us meaning in life. With them, we have actually broken sex and age barriers. We now realise that unity is the most important thing if we are to get over this oppression," said an elderly resident.

Community solidarity with striking workers has also been strengthened through the street committees.

After the stayaway in Queenstown,



all workers at one factory were dismissed. But management was forced to reinstate workers unconditionally because they could not find a single scab to take their place.

SAAWU and community organisation campaigned even in rural areas to explain the dismissals, the importance of "an injury to one is an injury to all", and the immorality of scabbing.

SAAWU's ranks swelled after this, and now most employers consult with SAAWU before taking action affecting the workers.

When SAAWU leadership in Queenstown was detained, the youth continued their work. They organised new factories, set up shop steward structures, and drew workers in to run the SAAWU office. The Queenstown Youth Organisation (QUEEYO), with more than 1 500 members, is now organising one-street towns like Sterkstroom.

Consumer boycott the white residents hit back

"The Consumer Boycott Committee has so infused discipline that not a single soul is drinking liquor in Queenstown. The only bottle stores are in town, and also the cops bribe drunkards into selling out, and drunkards disturb mass gatherings. So it was only too proper for the people to consider a remedy for this putting a total stop to drinking alcohol," said a street committee representative.

Meanwhile in Queenstown pamphlets in the name of the Queenstown Housewives Anti-Boycott Action Committee have been distributed.

To end the consumer boycott, it advises members to stop giving food and rations to their "servants" to take home. This food, they say, is to feed the "intimidators".

They suggest cuts in working hours and pay of domestic workers, and that white households should cut down to only one "servant" until the boycott ends. They encourage housewives to help the SAP in tracking down the "intimidators". "We can't allow the next step of whites being

retrenched also" the QHABAC said.

Preventing crime and infiltration

The street committees help prevent crime and settle disputes in the community. But the street committees do not have a mandate to punish people all issues must go to the area level.

In disputes, the community leadership discourages the use of violence. Instead, "people must be educated. It's pointless to imprison or assault someone for stealing, when poverty is the cause. So we explain the causes of poverty and how best it can be got rid of," said an organiser.

Old tricks of informers to divide people are being used, people say, and organisations have been infiltrated. Suspected informers have used smear campaigns, spreading rumours that committed activists are informers. This lead to some key activists being "necklaced", assaulted or forced to flee the township.

"We are taking steps to counter this new trend," said an organiser. "Some informers doing these things have been exposed. We believe they must be re-educated."

Labour Party backs SAP, SADF

The local Labour Party MP, Jason, is showing his true colours by forming a Queenstown Coloured Commando as part of the SADF and SAP, "to protect Coloureds and our property from Africans."

While police did house-to-house raids in Mlungisi, criminal elements from coloured townships attacked too. Many people were "knifed and hacked with pangas." Africans living in the Coloured township were also brutalised.



Outrage at Mamelodi Massacre

SOUTH Africa's latest horror story, the Mamelodi massacre shocked Pretoria's most hardened opponents.

To many it was yet another stain in Apartheid's bloody history, but it was a day Mamelodi residents will never forget.

On the day more than 50000 residents led by mothers, young and old, marched to the Administration Board offices. They were protesting against the funeral restrictions, the presence of police and soldiers in the township and high rents.

It had been planned two days before. No-one went to work, and shops were closed as the whole township focussed on the march.

People had had enough and were going to collect the local mayor Bennet Ndlazi, to go to the police station to present their demands. After that he and other councillors would be told to resign. People said Ndlazi can forget about rents until their demands were met.

When the first part of the march arrived at the admin board, Ndlazi was already there, inside a hippo and protected by a wall of police and soldiers surrounding the admin board. Roadblocks had been set up at all entrances and at one there was a police and SADF base. A police helicopter was hovering above.

A large crowd gathered outside the offices. The streets were still filled

with people walking from all directions.

According to eyewitnesses, police told some people to go to the stadium. But people said, we are not paying rent at the stadium, we are paying at the admin board offices.

'People were demanding that Ndlazi come out. A policeman said something on a loudhailer, but few people could hear what was being said'.

During this time, reinforcements of police and soldiers were arriving in armoured vehicles and positioned themselves at strategic points in the admin board grounds, on top of nearby hostels and in front of the nearby football ground.

It is uncertain which policemen or soldiers fired the first teargas which sent people fleeing. But immediately after that, live bullets and teargas were shot into the crowd from all directions.

People fled in panick, many of the older people struggled to escape. Most of those killed were shot running away from the police. Among the victims were people who stopped to help those who had fallen. The mother of 24 year old Malaza Thoko said her daughter had her head shot off as she was helping a 65 year old woman who had been shot in the chest.

The official death toll was 13, but



A youth expressing outrage, points an accusing finger

residents estimated it closer to 40 dead and more than 500 injured, many of them older people and women.

Police picked up the dead and injured people and piled them into police vans, hippos and landrovers.

Not content with the first aftermath, police and soldiers in armoured vehicles and landrovers chased fleeing residents throughout the township, still shooting bullets and teargas in coordination with the helicopter above. One person was shot in A4 section.

Private cars and taxi's used to transport old people away from the

danger zones were also fired at.

The youth began to fight back and fierce battles raged in the township streets. Many were barricaded with burning tyres, old cars, rocks and municipal rubbish bins. Youths fought with stones and petrol bombs and some black policemen's houses were attacked.

Some sections of the township were sealed off and police and soldiers conducted house to house raids. Many youths were arrested.

According to activists, even as people were running away, they were saying, until our demands are met we won't pay rent.

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killings in Mamelodi. But they called her son a terrorist. He was not a terrorist.

A Mamelodi student leader said, 'now we are mobilised, we must strengthen our organisations, moving from mobilisation to challenging the system'.

A UDF speaker slammed a fake pamphlet which said the consumer boycott had been cancelled. The boycott began the day before the funeral and would continue till January 2.

Other speakers were from the Mamelodi Youth Organisation, the Saulsville/Atteridgeville Youth Organisation, the SA Catholic Bishops Conference, Pretoria Council of Churches, Detainees Parents' Support Committee, the Federation of Transvaal Women (Fedtraw) and Azaso.

Ambassadors from eleven countries attended the funeral.

A massive procession to the cemetery after the service was led by churchmen, followed by the coffins and hearses, then thousands of mourners led by the black, green and gold flag.

After the burial great excitement broke out when Winnie Mandela arrived. Thousands returned to the stadium to hear her speak.

After the massacre a relief committee with welfare, financial, funeral and legal subcommittees was set up from a broad range of organisations in Mamelodi.

Members of the committee met a senior police official the day before the funeral and he agreed that police and soldiers would withdraw from the township for the day of the funeral. And the Wonderboom chief magistrate authorised the funeral.

Police and soldiers watched the proceedings from nearby mountains and from one high school, but didn't intervene.

Consumer boycotts bite business

ACROSS THE country consumer boycotts are gaining momentum in support of progressive demands.

Following powerful boycotts in the Eastern Cape, there are now plans for national co-ordination.

At a recent mass rally in PE, 50 000 people decided to suspend their boycott conditionally until April and, if demands have still not been met, a national consumer boycott could be called.

The April deadline coincides with that set by Commonwealth leaders for the SA government to dismantle Apartheid.

Based on strong mass based organisation, the PE boycott has been the most effective. Local white businesses were virtually crippled, forcing PE's Chamber of Commerce to hold discussions with the Consumer Boycott Committee (CBC).

East London, King Williamstown, Port Alfred, Grahamstown and Uitenhage have also suspended their boycotts temporarily. But boycott leaders in the region have warned of further action unless the

authorities address people's demands.

But in other areas the consumer boycotts continue.

Key demands nationally include:

*The lifting of the State of Emergency, the unbanning of meetings and the release of detainees.

*The withdrawal of troops from the townships and an end to police repression.

*The release of political prisoners, the unbanning of organisations and the return of exiles.

*Recognition of democratic SRCs.

Some areas have concentrated on demands relating to local township conditions. And in many cases a distinction has been drawn between short and long term demands.

The consumer boycotts have been aimed primarily at white-owned shops, but some have also targeted shops and businesses owned by councillors, policemen and other 'collaborators'.

As a Witwatersrand CBC spokesperson said, the consumer boycotts were a way of taking the struggle

into the white community. Whites should take their sons in the SADF out of the townships, and pressurise the government to meet township demands.

In the Transvaal, plans to step up the boycott campaign have been fuelled by the Mamelodi massacre.

The boycott was launched in the Witwatersrand in August. But activists say it was not fully effective because of the the clampdown on progressive organisations and the ban on meetings.

It has been called off for the first week of December, but will continue from December 8 -30 in Johannesburg, East and West Rand, Vaal triangle and Potchefstroom.

A wide range of progressive organisations, including trade unions, civics, student, womens' and youth organisations support the boycott. Local structures are being set up to popularise and coordinate it, and thousands of pamphlets are being distributed.

The CBC has asked that township shopkeepers keep their prices down, that people refrain from

excessive drinking and that taxi associations don't ferry people who have bought in town.

A CBC spokesperson said the committee's policy was to educate people and urged the youth not to rely on force, but rather to talk to people. 'This can mobilise support and more people can join the liberation process', he said.

In Pretoria's townships, plans for a consumer boycott from December 1 January 2 were fuelled by the Mamelodi massacre, the dismissal of 500 Metal Box workers in Rosslyn, and ongoing repression.

Residents have ignored fake pamphlets which claimed the boycotts were off, and say they are 'the work of the system'.

Since mid-November, people in and around the Northern Transvaal towns of Mankweng, Lebowakgomo and Seshego have been boycotting shops belong to whites, policemen and councillors. Thousands of pamphlets have been distributed, and taxi associations in Mankweng and Lebowakgomo are refusing to transport people who have bought in town.

Printpak workers occupy factory

NINETY WORKERS at Printpak seized control of their factory in Industria recently and occupied it for two and a half weeks.

Their stand secured the re-instatement of an unfairly dismissed worker, and shorter shifts.

"It's a very good strategy for workers to use", said Joseph Nene, who chairs the shop stewards' committee at the plant.

"If we'd gone out on strike, management could have locked us out and hired casual labour. This way made it difficult to dismiss us, because we refused to leave.

"And because we all stayed together, we remained united."

Through their union, the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (PWAU), the workers have strong and democratic structures within their factory. For some time now the workers at the plant have been complaining that they're short-staffed. And because they

work a 12 hour shift, the shortage becomes critical when a worker is away sick.

So when management announced it wanted to retrench six people, they felt this was a deliberate attack. "Management could see we were a united force, and they wanted to kill morale", said Nene. "So we declared a dispute. The workers are sick and tired of being kicked around like tennis balls".

Before the issue was resolved, a crisis developed when a worker was off sick. Because one machine was now critically understaffed, a worker from another section was told to leave his machine and help out.

When he explained that this would delay production, the foreman gave him a warning. An hour later the foreman gave him his final warning, and without waiting for any explanation, dismissed him.

"This worker was victimised",

explained Siphon Kubeka, a PWAU organiser. "The understaffing issue was a collective issue, not an individual one. And the foreman ignored dismissal procedures completely."

All the workers on night shift downed tools immediately. When the day shift arrived the next morning, Thursday, October 10, they joined the strike. After discussing the issue thoroughly they decided that they would not leave the factory but would occupy it. This way management would not be able to hire other labour.

Because the shifts are so long, the factory shuts down from Thursday night to Monday. The workers felt it was senseless to carry on the occupation over the weekend as they'd only be draining their own energy.

On Monday they arrived at the factory to find themselves locked out. They were told they would only be allowed in if they accepted

the dismissal of their fellow worker. They refused.

So one worker drove his car to the factory gates, pressed his hooter — and the guards opened the gate.

Before they could stop him, he had parked his car across the entrance so the gates couldn't be closed and the workers surged through into the factory.

The occupation was on again.

After a full day of discussions, the workers slept at the factory that night. Relatives and union officials brought them food.

"By then it was clear that management was scared", said Kubeka. "And when they tried to apply for an eviction order, the workers warned they would hit back if they were evicted by force. There would be no guarantee over the safety of the machines, or personnel."

And so the workers occupied the factory for two and a half weeks. "To occupy a factory, you need strong people and people who are

united. But we proved that we are the most important part of that factory", said Nene.

"Factories are what they are today because of the workers".

"The occupation gave the workers a chance to discuss many issues, especially the question of control. Who controls the factories? It is clear the workers are the rightful owners."

Strong solidarity action came from workers at other Barlows' plants organised by PWAU. Shop stewards met and decided to approach management at each of the plants to apply pressure on Printpak management. If the issue still wasn't resolved, they would strike. So Printpak management was forced to retreat. An arbitrator called in to judge the fairness of the dismissal ruled that management was clearly in the wrong, and the worker was reinstated.

And the Printpak workers now work an eight hour shift.

Sarmcol workers hit back with co-ops

"NEGOTIATE OR get out, BTR", say over 900 striking Sarmcol workers.

But BTR Sarmcol, a British company, is still refusing to negotiate with the workers or their union, the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (Mawu).

This has left the dismissed workers without jobs since April.

Most of the Sarmcol workers live in Mpophomeni, just outside Howick. They are struggling to feed their families on the R4 food parcels which union collection committees provide each week.

Now their union has helped the striking workers set up the Sarmcol Workers' Co-operative (Sawco).

A consumer co-operative has been established to buy food in bulk at

cheaper prices. This co-op has recently been broadened to include other residents of Mpophomeni.

A second project is the T-shirt co-op. Their first job was to make T-shirts for the launching of the new super-federation, Cosatu.

None of the workers are paid individually. Cash raised through the co-op is channelled into a central fund which is used to buy supplies for all co-op workers.

Now plans are under way to extend co-op activity into other areas health, agriculture, education and culture.

"We don't see the co-operative as a final solution", said a Mawu organiser. "Instead, it's a way for the workers' to fill their stomachs so that their hands are free to continue



Without jobs since April

the struggle for trade union recognition and reinstatement."

Right now they have few options. BTR Sarmcol is the only big employer in the area, and, blocked by pass laws from moving to bigger towns, blacklisted workers can't

find other jobs. Transport problems keep jobs further away out of reach.

For over two years Mawu has been trying to negotiate a recognition agreement with Sarmcol. It was the final breakdown of these talks in April that led to a walk-out by Mawu's 925 members at the plant.

Management refused to re-open negotiations, and within 72 hours had sacked all those that had gone on strike. Non-union workers were brought in from outside to scab.

Sarmcol has refused even to consider a settlement proposed by the union which had the support of local union, civic, church, youth and political groupings.

Mawu's attempts to apply for an Industrial Court hearing were also blocked by the company. This has forced the union to apply for a Conciliation Board hearing which could stretch out the dispute for most of next year.

Saawu's Ntlonti reports on conference

PENDROSE NTLONTI, a worker at Da Gama Textiles in East London, is the new president of the SA Allied Workers' Union (Saawu). He was elected at a recent national Saawu conference in Soweto.

SASPU NATIONAL spoke to him about the conference.

"Since Saawu was formed in 1979, the harassment and intimidation from both the state and the employers has been more brutal and vicious than on any other union in the country.

"But we always come out of the crises stronger and wiser than before. And despite these problems, 158 people attended the conference.

"The major business of the conference was to discuss in detail the issues surrounding the new federation, and deal with amendments to the constitution — management has found loopholes to delay the struggle of the workers by refusing to deal with the union.

"We have always been committed to a united trade union movement. Saawu was kicked out of the unity talks last year, but then in June 1985 we were invited to rejoin the talks.

"At the conference we discussed these issues fully. It was re-iterated that the interests of the workers are the same, irrespective of their union affiliation, and it is important that the workers from all unions should have a forum through which they can fight for the fulfilment of these interests.

"The conference noted with concern the artificial differences amongst unions, which are a direct cause of officials in these unions. The conference resolved to take to task anybody within the unions who is bent on perpetuating these artificial barriers amongst workers. They only delay further the advancement of the workers struggle for liberation.

"For this federation to be a viable vehicle for the liberation of the working people, it must have a clear and progressive attitude towards other organisations that are fighting for a better future for everybody in this country.

"To be the success we all hope it to be, the federation has to be built on these foundations."

Still temporary after 15 years work at Bara

"THERE IS no such thing as a legal strike in the public sector. To survive you have to fight", said a worker discussing the Baragwanath health workers' dispute.

But health workers at Bara are struggling to survive. Some have been working for over 15 years, yet are still 'temporary un-classified workers'. Their wages range from R90 to R170 per month.

"That is not a starvation wage it's an assault", said Samson Ndou, president of the General and Allied Workers' Union which represents many of the Bara workers.

They haven't had a wage increase since 1983.

And working conditions are bad.



Bara student nurses call for a fair deal

Cleaners in the sterilizing section are often exposed to bedding and clothes infected with dangerous diseases like TB. But they don't have masks, or gloves, or protective clothing.

Management has consistently refused to meet with the workers.

When the workers met on November 15 to discuss strike action, police raided and arrested about thirty people. When those at

the meeting insisted that they should all be arrested, all 719 were booked. They were released, but had to appear in court.

That weekend 600 SADF medical personnel moved into the hospital as scab workers. Hippos and truckloads of police with rifles stood guard at the bus and taxi ranks outside the hospital.

When the health workers demanded to see the Superintendent before going back to work, they were told to collect their money and were dismissed.

After a court application, a Johannesburg judge ruled that they had been unlawfully dismissed. Most have their jobs back, and a full enquiry will be launched to decide the position of those not yet reinstated.

But hospital management still doesn't seem to be taking their grievances seriously.

● 914 dismissed student nurses at Baragwanath Hospital now have their jobs back, after a court ruled that they had been dismissed unfairly.

Hospital security guards baton-charged student nurses protesting about conditions in their hostel. They get locked in at 8 pm, their food is bad, and they say anyone who complains about being over-worked gets victimised.

When the students downed tools and demanded a meeting with the superintendent, all were dismissed — including some who were away on leave.

Court stops Saawu's boycott call

A BOYCOTT of cans has been launched in support of 500 fired workers from the Metal Box factory in Rosslyn near Pretoria.

The boycott is already in full force in Pretoria townships. This is despite a court interdict preventing the South African Allied Workers Union (Saawu) the union the workers belong to from promoting the boycott.

Progressive organisations in other parts of the Transvaal and Northern Transvaal are supporting the boycott of cooldrink, beer and wine cans — all Metal Box products.

In March this year shop stewards were told workers would be retrenched because of redundancies 79 jobs would go. But in October, the company

hired three new whites.

The workers asked why new people were being hired when others were losing their jobs. They were simply told the three would stay.

Workers then said they wanted a clearer explanation, or they wouldn't work. They started a sit-in.

On 7 November, management gave an ultimatum that the workers should return to work, or consider themselves dismissed. The workers took a unanimous decision not to go back until their demands were met.

On 15 November, a court interdict was served on Saawu, banning them from 'organising, propagating

or encouraging' the boycott in any way. The ban hasn't stopped the community from supporting and actively promoting the boycott. Activists say it is 99% successful in the Pretoria townships and is growing strong in the Pietersburg area in the Northern Transvaal.

According to union officials, the workers have remained firm in their demands and have been meeting together regularly. Only a handful returned to work, including one suspected police informer.

Near the end of November three shop stewards were detained for a week. They were charged with arson and released on bail. And police and soldiers recently disrupted a meeting of the fired workers in a church hall in Soshanguve.



A SOYCO leader speaks



SOYCO youths organise the clean-up

Operation cleans up

PROGRESSIVE youth in Mamelodi and Soweto are taking steps to solve the problem of what they call 'undisciplined elements' in their communities.

Youth activists said such elements, mainly youth, were committing crimes in the name of organisations like the now-banned Cosas and the Mamelodi Youth Organisation (Mayo).

"They would go to shebeens and shops demanding money, they would hijack taxi's for their own pleasure, and attack and threaten ordinary residents and workers'.

At the same time, repression made organisation difficult. Police and soldiers patrolled the streets and there were regular battles between youth and security forces.

Many members of youth organisations were in detention or on the run. In Soweto there was a curfew

and meetings were banned.

Youth activists decided they had to act. The undisciplined elements were dividing residents at a time when the whole community needed to stand together.

In August, youth in some sections of Mamelodi organised themselves into informal groups.

They became known as 'Operation Clean-up'. Their aim was to defend residents against criminals and thugs and against the excesses of police and soldiers.

Operation Clean-Up groups trace people known to be committing crimes against residents, and then take them to their home. They explain to the parents that their child is accused of certain things. The community is then invited to listen to both sides of the story, and suggest how to deal with the problem.

These groups also disarm people at shebeens.

Residents have turned to them to help deal with rape and theft.

According to local activists, crime has decreased and 'the situation is 80 percent under control'. 'Ram-paging' in the name of progressive organisations has almost come to a halt.

Residents support the groups as they can now move about without

fear of rape or robbery. Private cars are no longer stoned for no apparent reason. Many of the 'undisciplined elements' have changed their ways and now participate in the youth structures.

Soweto residents had similar problems. 'Since the State of Emergency and the consumer boycott in Soweto, people were doing whatever

they want in an undisciplined way, and this is creating divisions in the community', said one youth activist.

He said some criminal elements were trying to take advantage of the situation for their personal aims.

The Soweto Youth Congress (Soyco) called a mass meeting at which parents and youth resolved to set up local structures to work out how to bring the situation under control.

One Soyco activist said the approach was not to fight thugs, but to talk to them.

He said many didn't understand what Soyco and other progressive organisations stood for. He felt Soyco activists should have discussions with them, convince them of

the need to act in a disciplined manner and bring them into people's organisations.

Huhudi vigilantes murder activists

ARMED VIGILANTES have murdered two activists in Huhudi, and are terrorising the residents.

Residents say there are two community councillors among the vigilantes.

● Sylvester Gasebue was chased by the vigilantes, stabbed with spears and assegais, and then shot dead.

● Thomas Seitsane was killed after an attack on the home of Huhudi Civic chairperson, Hoffman Galeng. Seitsane ran outside when the attack began, chased by the vigilantes. He was later found in the police mortuary with three bullet holes in his chest, and panga cuts all over his body.

Another occupant of the house, 'Shagura', was badly burnt when the vigilantes set fire to Galeng's house.

● Galeng's brother Eliah was assaulted with a pick by 15 vigilantes in an earlier attack on the house.

● Rhode Jood is in hospital after being dragged from his bicycle by a group of armed men, and then shot in the head by them.

● Isaac Peloeng was beaten up by vigilantes when he tried to help his sister, who was being held in a community councillor's shop after vigilantes clashed with residents returning from a Huca meeting.

KwaNdebele: don't kidnap the Dennilton community

ANGRY RESIDENTS from Dennilton in the Northern Transvaal say they would rather die than be incorporated into KwaNdebele.

"The people are totally against the incorporation, but the government is still going ahead with it", said a member of the Dennilton Youth Congress (Deyco), which has a membership of over a thousand. Deyco formed an anti-incorporation campaign committee, and drew up a petition which had the backing of 99 percent of the people. Activists went house to house in the townships and villages discussing the issue with people. If the government has its way, the incorporation becomes official in January. But the incorporation is already underway. Teachers have been transferred, and businessmen and taxi drivers have to apply to the KwaNdebele authorities for licences. In protest against the incorporation, Dennilton people have resolved to boycott anything associated with KwaNdebele.

But Deyco feels that these divisions are created by the Apartheid system.

"The government would like to see the people fighting each other so that could say to the international community, 'how can we hand over power to people who fight each other?' "We must know who the enemy is", said one activist. "We don't need to fight each other. Together we must decide on our destiny and together demand the government stop this incorporation." Residents feel that the incorporation is part of KwaNdebele's plan to go for independence. Students and youth have

been a target of repression in recent months. After one teacher was dismissed, Mohlabetzi High students approached the principal to reinstate him. The principal left after students demanded his resignation, but students said the circuit office still recognised him as principal. They marched on the circuit board office but were stopped by police, who ordered them back to the school. There the police fired teargas and rubber bullets at them, and sjambokked them. 69 students were arrested.

All were released except four, who were eventually let out on bail. They have appeared in court four times but still don't know on what charges. Students refused to go back to school until the four were released. Parents are supporting the students and have condemned the police action, say local activists.



Police shot dead three Leandra youths at a peaceful meeting held to protest the removal of 116 families to KwaNdebele. They moved there last year to await housing. Now they have to move again. Residents stayed home on November 19 to stage a peaceful protest. But it turned bloody when police moved in. Now they say "we won't move till you bring those dead people back to life."

Vaal residents head for clash with board

THE DEADLOCK over rents could lead to confrontation between Vaal residents and the Orange-Vaal Development Board (OVDB).

The Board and the Lekoa Town Council have threatened residents from Tumahole, Parys and Vaal townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Bophelong and Boipatong with mass evictions for boycotting rent. And 250 Evaton stand owners are to be summonsed for failing to pay their site rentals.

The OVDB town clerk said 20500 Vaal residents will be summonsed to appear in court. Some have

already been summonsed and ordered to pay rent arrears. People may be forced to sign stop orders with employers. The board has hinted it will confiscate movable property such as furniture if people fail to pay.

Those who failed to appear in court are charged with contempt of court and some are already serving regular weekend jail sentences.

Since September last year Vaal residents have refused to pay rents. Tumahole residents have not paid rent since April last year.

The VCA has called on residents served with summonses to contact

VCA members or their local priests.

Recently the Vaal Trade Union Coordinating Committee, the Vaal Civic Association (VCA) and other local civics met representatives from the OVDB, Lekoa Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, the Urban Foundation and the Overvaal MP, Chris Ballade, to discuss rents. But the talks ended in deadlock.

Ballade said he would exert pressure on OVDB head Ganz, to stop the summonses. The VCA says they doubt his influence over Ganz as summonses are still being issued

and if he still wants to meet them he will have to prove his influence.

VCA conditions for negotiations were that summonses be halted and the VCA be allowed to have meetings with residents to get mandates for decisions to be taken.

Residents have said since the Board won't reduce rents to R30 per month, they will only pay for existing services. But this is on condition their demands are met rent arrears must be written off, councillors must resign, the State of Emergency must be lifted and detainees must be released.

COSATU

At a time when workers are under enormous attack through retrenchments, low wages, high prices, and political control, it is testimony to their courage and commitment that the union movement is on the offensive today.

At a time when the state onslaught is silencing many progressive voices, it is all the more important that workers are organised to take up the leading role in the struggle.

The road to trade union unity was not smooth, but in forging that unity the workers have provided an important lead for the progressive movement as a whole.

The skills of democracy and organisation that many workers have learned in the trade unions are essential for struggle in every sphere, and for the long-term transformation of our society.

Mamelodi and Queenstown massacres

SASPU NATIONAL deplores the security force brutality that lead to these massacres and countless other atrocities. In both cases, the state was clearly threatened by the extent of unity displayed through action in these communities. However, the anger that such actions cause only increase that unity and militance.

SASPU NATIONAL deplores also the little attention that these massacres have received. This reflects the effectiveness of the State of Emergency in silencing the truth. SASPU NATIONAL is committed to finding ways of making the truth known

Are you being fooled by RSC's?

PART TWO of Botha's 'New Deal' will be launched early next year: the Regional Service Councils (RSCs). The RSCs will be multi-racial bodies which administer 'general affairs' in government-defined regions.

This covers essential services such as water and electricity, sewerage, passenger transport, abattoirs, fresh produce markets, health services and so on. They will also administer land usage, transport services, tourism and other local services.

Decision-makers on the RSCs will include representatives of the white city councils, the 'coloured' and Indian Management committees, and the African community councils.

The government claims the RSCs are designed to provide services for South Africa's urban areas in a systematic way, and serve as 'a vehicle for political participation at local government level'.

What they mean is that they want the RSC's to help calm township militance through improving services, and by giving discredited community councils more money to play with.

The government claims that through RSCs, township residents will be able to take part in decisions affecting the quality of their daily life.

Funded by new taxes on business and industry, the government hopes the RSCs will redistribute some wealth to the townships.

REPRESENTATION

Township representatives on the RSCs will be community councillors. But without popular support for these local authorities, the RSC's will be meaningless as 'vehicles for political participation'.

Within the RSC, voting power will be decided by how much money each local authority spends on services. So the wealthiest municipality or community council will have the most say.

For decisions to be made, a two thirds majority will be necessary so no decision will be possible without the votes of the dominant local authority. This will limit the extent to which wealth is re-directed into the townships.

The actual people who sit on the council will be nominated by the local authority, while the chairman of the RSC will be nominated by the provincial administrator.

If any of the local authorities on the council don't like a decision, they will have the right to appeal to an Appeal Board. But the Appeal Board will consist of government appointees. So if a community council wanted to appeal against electricity tariffs, for example, they would be appealing directly to people appointed by the Nationalist government.

Only 'local authorities' will have the right to appeal against decisions made by the RSC's. So this excludes residents' organisations, trade unions, and other democratic bodies.

FINANCING

If the RSC's are to improve the quality of people's lives, as the government claims, they will need large amounts of money. The government hopes the money will come from the sale of services and taxes placed on local business and industry.

The first problem here is that business is likely to make a fuss about footing the bill. Big business has been quick to condemn apartheid now that they feel their profits and security are threatened by current 'unrest' but they are not likely to be as quick to pay for the attempted solutions.

If businesses and industry are not prepared to cut profits to pay a living wage can they be expected to be keen to dip into profits to improve the same workers' lives in the townships?

And if they do agree, or are forced to pay the taxes, we can be sure they will pass the bill on to the consumer, and resist wage demands. The RSC's are designed to allow for the 'privatisation' of essential services. This means that services such as transport could be provided by private companies who seek to make a profit out of it which means they could cost more.

In this way the government hopes to cut back on the amount it has to spend.

In short the government realises conditions need to be improved and has tried to design a way of doing this without paying by passing the bill on to business, industry and ordinary people. The whole scheme will continue to rely on the already rejected local authorities, group areas, influx control, the bantustans and the tri-cameral parliament. And the RSC's will leave the majority of South Africans a long way from the country they have demanded in the Freedom Charter.

"Detribalise Bloemfontein schools"

A PETITION campaign to detribalise schools has been launched by the Bloemfontein Students' Council (BSC), together with the local Parents' Action Committee.

Organisers plan to go door to door with the petition to discuss the issue with residents and students, and will then present it to the DET.

"With this campaign we want to start breaking down the tribalism that is rife in Bloemfontein's townships", a BSC spokesperson said. "Tribalist attitudes create tensions and disunity between residents who live in ethnically segregated areas, and between students who go to ethnic schools.

"An example of the problems this has caused happened during the school boycotts earlier this year.

"The boycotts started at Vul-amasango High School, which is Xhosa. Xhosa-speaking parents were told by others they had 'stupid' children."

Another problem is that Xhosa-speaking students who live one street away from a Tswana school are forced to walk long distances or catch expensive transport to go to the Xhosa school.

A second priority of the BSC is to campaign for SRCs. Workshops are being planned where students can discuss the role SRCs can play.



W.Cape backs students' demands

155 WESTERN CAPE organisations and trade unions have signed a statement in support of boycotting students, and have demanded the postponement of exams till March next year.

"There is no doubt that all the people, parents, teachers and workers stand immovably behind the students in their struggle for a democratic, compulsory and free system of education in a unified SA", the statement said.

At some schools students have been forced to write exams under police or army guard.

At Kasselsvlei and Belleville

South Secondary schools, students were arrested after they tore up their exam papers.

The 2 000 members of the Western Cape Teachers' Union (Wectu) have refused to have anything to do with the 'farical' exams at coloured schools, and are considering legal action to have the exams declared invalid.

Pupils had been subjected to traumatic pressures of state repression and were being examined on work they hadn't covered, they said.

Over 200 teachers now face suspension or dismissal because of

their stand.

At least nine teachers have already been suspended, and have been refused their December pay cheques.

Withholding pay cheques seems to be Education Minister Ebrahim Carter's latest strategy to keep teachers in line.

The entire teaching staff — 35 teachers — at Harold Cressy Senior Secondary have been told to hand back their November and December pay cheques after a mass meeting where parents, teachers and students decided that exams would not go ahead.

Teachers at Alexander Sinton and Cathkin Senior Secondary are in the same position.

Others complain of a 'daily psychological war' against inspectors who have threatened them with dismissal.

*Students at the University of the Western Cape, University of Cape Town and Peninsula Technikon have been allowed to write their exams next year.

But Western Cape Teachers' Training College students were threatened with expulsion, cancellation of credits and repayment of bursaries if they didn't write.

Tivumbeni expulsions

TWO student leaders from Tivumbeni College in Gazankulu have been expelled following student boycotts in the area.

The students have taken the issue to court.

Thousands of school students in different parts of the Northern Transvaal boycotted classes in solidarity with Turfloop students for a week at the end of September. They were demanding an end to police repression, the lifting of the State of emergency and recognition of democratic SRCs.

Demands for democratic SRC's have been refused in Gazankulu schools.

During the school boycott one Tivumbeni student was expelled while he was in detention.

Tivumbeni students boycotted classes demanding the release of one student leader. While he was still in detention the student was told he was expelled. And the rector threatened to expell all those on boycott.

Students went back to classes. But a student who was called to the rector's office was told he too was expelled.

The rector refused to give the two expelled students reasons for their expulsion and gave them five minutes to leave campus.

The students applied for a court order allowing them to write exams. They were allowed to write on condition they didn't speak to any students on the campus. But their exam results will only be released if they win the court order.

The students suspect security police involvement in their expulsion.

In nearby Shiluvane, 86 members of the Shiluvane Youth Congress (Sycu) are being charged with burning a school principal's car.

And the Muhlaba Youth Organisation (Muyo) is due to be officially launched soon.

"Use talents for change"- CAOS

STUDENTS IN Natal's 'coloured' areas haven't been able to form SRC's yet. But now Wentworth students have launched an organisation to represent their interests the Committee of Austerville Organised Students (Caos).

"Are we using our skills and talents to work for change?" asked a speaker at the launch of Caos, held on December 1. "We can't all be dancers or singers or politicians,

but we can all work to make our lives better. We need to build grass roots structures."

Caos aims to work for SRCs, abolish the prefect system, and improve relationships between parents, students and principals so that together they can work for a non-racial and democratic education.

Before its banning, Cosas was gaining strength in Wentworth. But

it is a conservative town, and parents and principals tried to prevent students joining Cosas, or boycotting.

Despite intimidation, there have been three school boycotts in Wentworth this year. The most successful was shortly after Cosas was banned.

Caos plans to spread to other schools in the area, and eventually link up with schools in the African townships.

Learning lessons on the streets

CLAREMONT

STUDENTS at Clermont high schools, outside Durban, have formed the Clermont Students' Representative Council, CSRC.

'After the banning of our organisation, Cosas, we felt the necessity for a locally based student organisation to represent our interests and take up our problems', said a member.

'For example, there is the SADF presence, the prefect system, and the Special Branch interrogating and beating our students.

'The national campaign for SRCs is a main issue. We also debated whether or not to write exams but students couldn't have a united stand on the issue so almost everyone is writing now.'

The CSRC has representatives from four schools one high school and three secondary and each school elects five representatives onto the executive. Sub-committees deal with the Education Charter Campaign, the Freedom Charter anniversary, and organising.

'As Clermont students form part of the broader society, so the education struggle must be linked to the broader struggle,' say the CSRC.

The students are still working for official recognition of SRCs but students at each school recognise their five reps to the CSRC as their SRC in the meantime.

'Even some of the prefects themselves have acknowledged that the prefect system doesn't work,' says a CSRC member.

For a long time Clermont students found it very difficult to hold meetings without being disturbed.

'At each and every meeting there were Casspirs and Hippos next to the hall. They have even shot at students and many were hurt. But things have quietened down a bit now.'

BECHET COLLEGE

BECHET COLLEGE students and parents are prepared to take Carter Ebrahim and his education department to court to win unconditional supplementary exams.

They have given him until Thursday, December 3 to reply to a memorandum outlining their reasons.

If he refuses, the issue will go to court.

90 percent of the students signed a petition supporting the demand for supplementary exams, and they have their parents' backing.

Bechet students decided to boycott exams in solidarity with the rest of the country, especially the Western Cape.

But most were recently forced back to college after the department threatened to expel students, force them to pay back bursaries, and cancel previous credits if they continued to boycott exams.

'These exams are an utter fraud and everyone knows it even those who have been intimidated into writing,' a student told a meeting of parents and students.

The last straw came when students discovered that the rector had refused to evacuate students during a bomb scare because he didn't want to disrupt exams.

'The authorities were prepared to risk our lives so that the exams could go on,' complained SRC member Clifford Collins.

'It started off in solidarity with the rest of the country but now our stance against exams is because of the atmosphere right here on our own campus.'

But the strain of writing exams



Inkatha Impis make life difficult for youth and students in Natal.

CHESTERVILLE

THE A-TEAM, a vigilante group, has been terrorising Chesterville High School students. Their school outside Durban is still closed after a long class boycott.

Chesterville High School has an SRC executive, elected by class representatives. The boycott began after the SRC demanded that the principal repair broken windows and blackboards.

'But instead he just repaired his own office,' a student told SASPU.

When the students complained, the principal refused to explain. Instead he called a meeting of Chesterville parents and blamed the students, who he said were just campaigning for a boycott.

Parents should stop the students, he said, and allegedly threatened to kick out the 'agitators'.

This was not the first clash with the school authorities.

Shortly before the death of Mrs Mxenge, a student was detained. Students boycotted classes demanding his release.

The regional DET inspector, Mr Bengu, arrived, backed by a police force. The police withdrew after the students refused to meet with the inspector until they did, but when he left, the police allegedly moved back in and beat up students and even some teachers.

Mr Bengu threatened to close the school if students didn't go back to classes.

On the same day a different inspector, Mr Du Toit, arrived. According to a student both he and the students lost their tempers and he was stoned. Chesterville High School was then closed and many students, including most SRC members, were detained.

Weeks later Mr Du Toit came back to re-open the school. But students said they would not go back until their demands were met. Du Toit then said he would not meet a single demand because students had 'got these ideas from UDF people'.

Students suspect that the inspectors recruited a small group of students who were paid to give them the minutes of meetings, as they always knew what they had discussed.

It was then that the A-Team entered the picture.

SRC members houses were attacked with petrol bombs.

'These people are supported by the police they have RIs,' said a student, who had his front teeth knocked out by the A-Team. Police took him to the Mayville police station and allegedly interrogated him, hurt as he was.

Students claim the A-Team had attacked someone with bush knives, and had hijacked and wrecked a car.

Now some people have formed small groups to protect themselves the A-Team after police showed little interest.

AZASO GSC

AZASO WILL hold its annual General Students Council at Medunsa in Pretoria from December 17 to 20.

High up on the agenda are the women's conference, the role of students in the national democratic struggle, the crisis in education, the education charter campaign, sport, the Freedom Charter and the working class.

The congress will end with a discussion on the theme and programme of action for 1986.

The congress was to be held in Cape Town, but because many gatherings there have been banned, it has been moved to Pretoria.

Thousands remember Ramalepe

THOUSANDS came from all over the Northern Transvaal to attend the funeral of student, youth and UDF activist Ngoako Ramalepe in Bodlokwa near Soekmekaar.

Ngoako was allegedly beaten to death by Lebowa police after he was arrested in Kgapane village, near Duiwelskloof, at a demonstration against the hanging of ANC activist Ben Moloise.

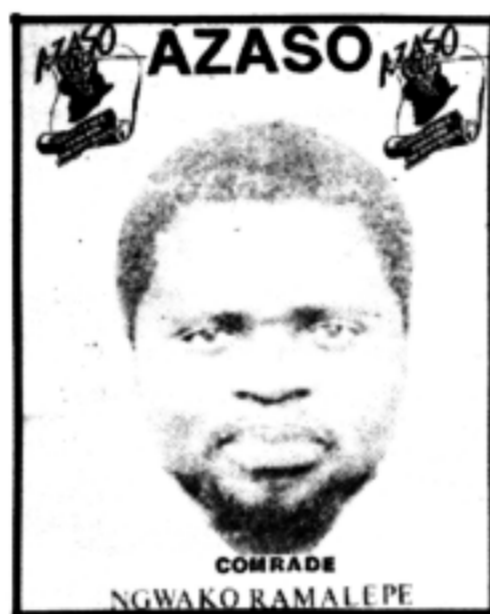
A fellow student, Robert Makokga, who was arrested and beaten at the same time, alleges that Ngoako was lying on the floor of the police station while six police beat him repeatedly. He and Ngoako were then loaded into a police van and dumped at the side of the road.

Ngoako was covered in blood and couldn't speak. Makokga went for help. He later heard Ngoako had died.

According to Northern Transvaal activists Ngoako's death had mobilised parents, youth, students and teachers in the rural areas.

He was at the forefront of students' battle for a democratic SRC at Modjadji College in Duiwelskloof. Students won their demand and Ngoako was elected president of the SRC. He was key in setting up an Azaso branch at the college.

He gave leadership and direction



to school students in their struggle for SRC's and was a founder member of the Kgapane Youth Congress (Kayco).

His inspiration lived on even after his death.

It was the biggest funeral in the area in recent years. Police kept away as mourners gathered, carrying banners and singing freedom songs.

Speakers at the funeral praised him as a gallant fighter, and a dedicated, disciplined and committed leader. They condemned the police, the bantustans and the entire Apartheid system.

People were called on to take for-

ward the struggle Ngoako had died for the progressive struggle in the rural areas.

The Modjadji college principal spoke and a unanimous resolution was passed that Modjadji College should be renamed Ngoako Ramalepe College in his honour.

Other speakers included veteran congress activist Peter Nchabaleng from the Northern Transvaal UDF, newly elected Turfloop SRC president Timothy Mahlangu, members of Kayco and Ngoako's lawyer, Ramusi Collins.

Collins said he would inform the outside world about the atrocities committed by the Pretoria government and its puppets.

After the funeral youth marched through the village chanting and singing freedom songs. Local people said they had never seen a funeral where so many people stood together to support each other.

Recently the house of one Kayco member who spoke at the funeral, Zondi Nkuna, was destroyed by fire. Police are now hunting him. There have been battles between police and youth in the village.

Modjadji students boycotted classes and end of year exams. They said who is going to write Ngoako's paper? They felt they would be selling him out if they wrote.

T'kei repression rife

THE TRANSKEI bantustan is following closely in the footsteps of its Pretoria masters.

Matanzima declared a state of emergency there even before Botha did, curfews have been imposed, and close to two thousand people have been detained in recent months.

Mass detentions followed student boycotts and the brutal killing of rural health organiser and ex-student leader, Bathandwa Ndonga in Cala.

Villagers, chiefs, headmen and members of a tribal court were detained after a shootout in Engcobo.

Among the 1840 detainees reported were doctors, accountants, school vice-principals, and

under such conditions has forced at least three students to seek psychiatric help and one student suffered a mild stroke.

NTISO

A NEW organisation has been formed to unite students at colleges and technicons: the National Tert-

ary Institutes Students' Organisation, Ntiso.

Ndonga was picked up from his home near the end of September. Half an hour later he was dead, shot at point blank range. According to eyewitnesses, his assassins called him a dog as he was shot. People who attended Ndonga's funeral, including family members and friends, were picked up in a massive swoop by Transkei authorities.

In a tribute to Ndonga, Azaso said he represented the generation of young South Africans who are determined to see freedom now. He was a principled, disciplined and dedicated student leader who refused to be the subject of a homeland.

It is based mainly at teachers' training colleges.

'Teachers must be conscientised as they are very influential in the community', said publicity secretary Clifford Collins. 'Most of our teachers in the past have served to help the system rather than challenge it.'

He grew up in rural Transkei and experienced the daily hardships people face there. His hatred for the apartheid system stemmed from his love for the people.

He was a member of the 1983/84 Unitra SRC and, under his leadership, students became a force to be reckoned with in the Transkei.

Azaso said Matanzima's rule had been rejected by the masses, and must be challenged. They did not recognise Transkei as an independent state, and people living there were part of SA and the national democratic struggle.

'Bathandwa has been an example of what is required of all students in SA. We have no choice but to carry on where he left off.'

'You only need to look at the Tricameral Parliament to see how many teachers have sold out. And many more have sold out by playing a role against the students.'

Ntiso is debating whether to affiliate with Azaso. Through Azaso structures on Ntiso campuses, students have been able to link up with other campuses around the country.

Battles for survival

Conditions are ripe for revolution in the townships, many businessmen are saying. Under the early morning layer of township smog, on the outskirts of every white city, the townships smoulder.

One tap for a street. Eleven people to a room in a matchbox house. The stench of the bucket system. The helplessness of unemployment. Day after day in the mines and the factories, for a wage that can not meet the rising prices. Struggling to survive on small plots of land ravaged by erosion.

So 1985 started with bitter battles for survival, battles to force the administration, the government and the bosses to improve conditions, through unity in action.

Duduza battled against the bucket system; New Crossroads resisted rent increases; Atlantis fought evictions, workers at Spar, Dairymaid, and many other factories resisted retrenchment, Empangeni refused to pay higher bus-fares.

But sectors of capital and the government also realise that inhuman conditions can spark township uprisings, which can push people's consciousness to a point of no return with demands for nothing short of full economic and political rights.

So in 1985, sectors in the ruling class have been working out their own plans for township 'upliftment'. The community councils and tri-cameral parliaments have also tried to buy credibility by improving conditions.

But if the demand for better conditions comes from organisation and unity in the townships, if mass participation and township democracy are built in the process of making those demands, if people demand also the right to democratic control over community decisions, then even the demand for electricity or running water is seen as a threat to ruling class power.

Because demands such as these are linked to the demand for democratic rights at every level; for the right to participate in controlling the resources of the country rather than just accepting the left-overs once the Defence Budget has been paid; for the right for the people to govern, and to share in the country's wealth.

Organisation mushrooms

From the start of the year, organisation has drawn all these links and organisation has mushroomed in every dusty forgotten township. Student and youth organisation spread throughout the country, often leading to further organisation being formed.

Control and domination were being fought on every level, and new forms of organisation emerged to do so; hostel associations; village committees; and many different strategies emerged for organising unemployed and retrenched workers.

Whatever the form of organisation, key lessons were learned. Through participation, discussion and action, a political understanding of the structures of control and domination grew, an understanding of the potential and limitations of different forms of action to undermine these controls, and of alternatives for the future.

And confidence grew on a mass level too confidence not only to resist the present system, but to replace it with a democratic one, the confidence to start transforming areas of society now.

Struggles and township uprisings in 1985 have not only been acts of protest; they have not only challenged the legitimacy of the undemocratic, racist structures of power which administer the townships and rule people's lives. In 1985, they have started going a step further than that by replacing these structures.

The community councils, as representatives not of the people but of apartheid control, were first in line for this challenge.

Community councils first in the firing line

Last year, the community councils were discredited. This year, they largely ceased to function. At first, councillors were isolated in the community; their businesses were boycotted, and so were council facilities. In the Vaal rent boycott, townships simply refused to accept the authority of the councils. Many councillors fled from their townships, or resigned.

Security force atrocities meant black policemen were far from welcome as next-door-neighbours in the township either. Many were forced to leave and live in police camps with their families, and some even chose to live in prison cells for safety.

'No-go zones'

Even Le Grange admitted that many townships had become no-go zones with barricades of burning tyres and groups of youths attacking hippos and caspiers with stones, petrol bombs, and even firing back at the security forces with their own guns.

There was a record number of sabotage attacks in 1985, and the ANC Consultative Conference called for the intensification of a 'People's War'. Mandela's rejection of a National Convention for any purpose other than to discuss a transfer of power, and the call for people in the townships to develop 'mass revolutionary bases' is in line with the ANC's stated commitment to seizing state power, without being prepared to negotiate compromises on full democratic rights for all in a united SA.

Massacres and Mass Funerals

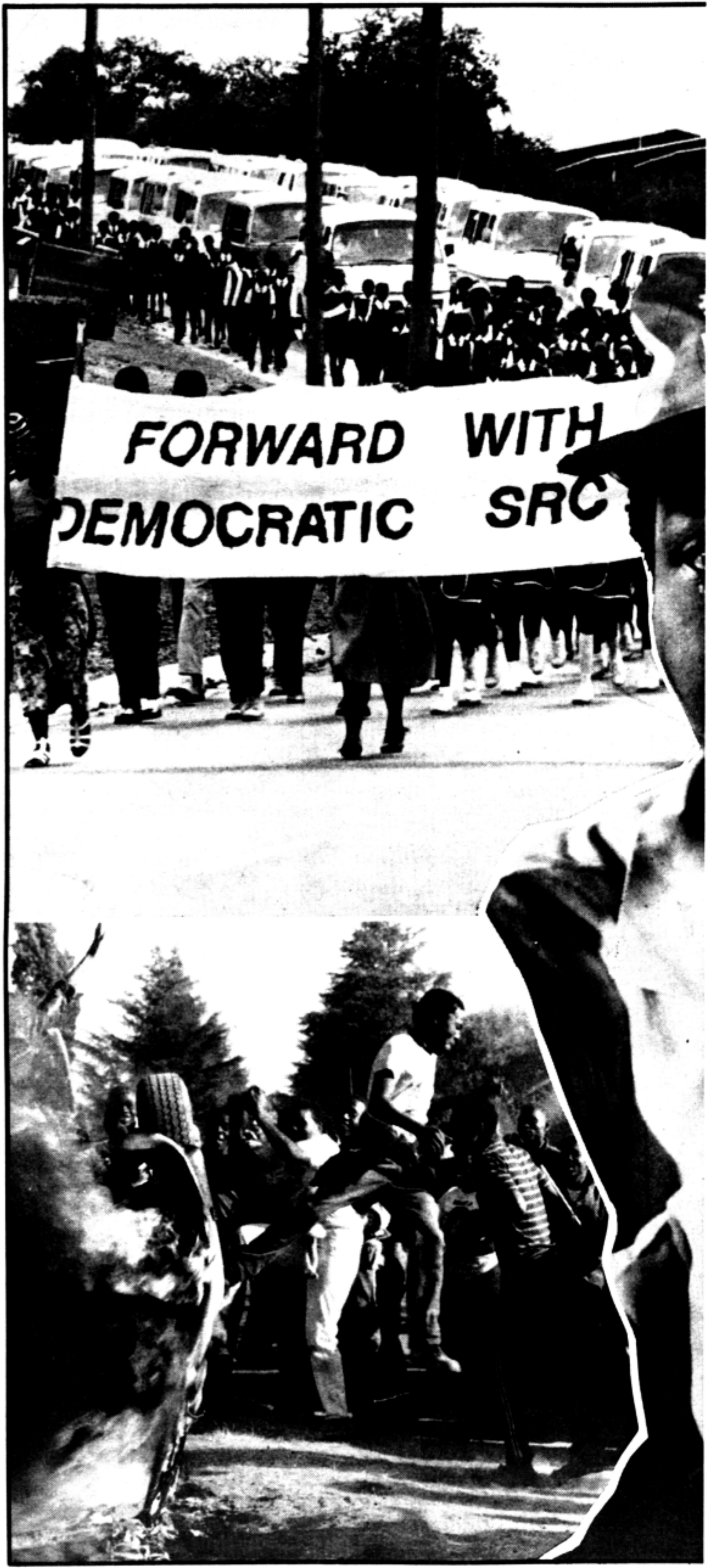
Mass action everywhere was met with the crude violence of the security forces. The Uitenhage massacre shocked the world, but was just one example of a pattern of repression used to stop the rising tide of resistance. Le Grange's orders to use live bullets was a calculated recognition that people were ungovernable.

Funerals became the emblem of mass political education, with tens of thousands of people again to join the mass-based

When the government ban on week-ends and public holidays became worker stayaways, tribute to the courage of those who have meant even tighter control has been defied. As a man, "You have the power never tell us how we must be

The dirty tricks

Control through the barrel of a ruling class in crisis, and the security forces have been



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ally-charged occasion for the way forward was spelt out, who were urged time and time again.

funerals in some areas on simply meant funerals also workers downed tools to pay tribute. The State of Emergency meant funerals, but these regulations Tinto said to a policeman: "I will protect our children, but you will protect them."

Divide and rule

gun is the last line of defence in a crisis in SA has worsened, increasingly trigger-happy.

But SA's rulers know force alone won't stop the struggle, which is why in 1985 we saw more attempts to reconstruct the form of ruling-class power through reform, as well as many attempts to disunite the forces of opposition.

Divide and rule strategies are an old favorite of SA's rulers. Early in the year, when UDF leaders' houses were attacked by people in Azapo T-shirts, it was clear a third force was promoting the conflict.

But the government used it to imply that blacks were not quite ready for democracy, and that the security forces really were in the townships to protect the lives of innocent citizens.

This 'third force' problem emerged in many townships, with council vigilantes assassinating activists in Thabong, Inkatha imps attacking UDF supporters in Natal, gangs claiming to be Cosas in Atteridgeville, agents provocateur spreading spy-rumours to discredit activists, and taking energy from the real issues.

From Mobilisation to Organisation, From Protest to Challenge

In 1985 organisation united across constituencies; workers, students, the unemployed, women, youth and all sectors forged unity in action. In more and more areas, Fosatu unions and UDF organisations acted as one, with the frequent use of the stayaway showing the growth of worker/community unity.

Stayaways protested retrenchments, the Uitenhage massacre, the death of Cosas activists by hand-grenades in Duduza, the deaths in detention of Sipho Mutsi and Andries Raditsela, support for the Sarmcol workers, and many other issues.

With workers using their power on the factory floor to assert political demands, strong links between organisation in the community and the factory were made; and the link between political and economic control was drawn.

Workers took the lead in the trade unions and community organisations in places like the East Rand and the call for democratic control not only in government but in the factories too, was made widely.

Cosas became the largest organisation in UDF and where it was able to win the right to SRC's, it took the struggle a step further, not just contesting lack of democracy in the schools, but actually building democratic alternatives able to take control of aspects of school life.

Many townships started building democratic alternatives to the undemocratic structures imposed on them. Township organisation has stopped simply being defensive, but has started to be offensive as well in certain areas.

Building People's Power despite repression

In the Eastern Cape, the ban on meetings meant that for UDF to take up its theme "From Mobilisation to Organisation, from Protest to Challenge," new structures and strategies of organisation had to be adopted.

Progressive organisation had to adopt increasingly covert methods to survive. And covert methods demand a higher level of organisation if the community as a whole is to be involved.

No more can community leadership rely on pamphlets or mass meetings rather, they have to rely on structures rooted in the people; on word of mouth; on house meetings, street meetings, area committees, and shop steward structures.

The anger of the people alone cannot ensure strategies that advance the struggle. Networks of trained activists are needed, with a political consciousness of how to challenge and transform the structures of power and domination.

Townships develop at different paces. But by June, conditions were worsening everywhere as the ruling class grappled with an economic and political crisis far beyond its control, and made worse by ongoing township resistance. Hardly a single township had been untouched by teargas, by the sight of hippos cruising in the streets, the sound of shots, and blood in the streets.

Then four activists from Cradock went missing. They were not the first. Throughout 1985, death squads have hit at key activists, and many have been kidnapped and murdered. But at the Cradock funeral, the State of Emergency was announced.

The State of Emergency.

When thousands of people are dead, detained or missing, the ever-increasing statistics start to lose any impact. But for every single activist gone, there is a wound in his or her community that cannot be healed.

In many townships, organisation has suffered badly. Structures have been crushed, curfews and controls on access to townships make contact between areas very difficult, and press controls eat away at the real news.

But despite setbacks, the democratic movement has found ways of keeping on the offensive. UDF may be prevented from meeting openly, its leaders may be on trial for treason, but the unity in action that UDF helped to build continues in the townships.

The consumer boycotts have brought business to its knees in many areas, at the same time as strengthening alliances with black traders on terms controlled by the community. Forms of organisation have become more deeply rooted as repression grows.

Cosatu is uniting workers into a powerful force. But reformist forces are also organising. Big business know that if the Freedom Charter is implemented, and monopoly industry is nationalised, then the 10% of businessmen that own 60% of the country's wealth at present have a lot to lose.

Many businessmen believe apartheid and growing resistance to it has become bad for profits, so they too want apartheid to go.

So they are looking for a middle option a political solution that gives some political rights to blacks, while keeping a tight hold on economic control, and the profits from the mines and the factories. Which is probably one of the major reasons they wanted to speak to the ANC to see whether an ANC government might guarantee this for them. It seems they were disappointed.



Troops must get out now!

Casspirs and hippos lined the streets of Mamelodi. A police helicopter hovered, surveying the hundred thousand people gathered there.

Shots rang out. As people fled, some fell, shot.

Witnesses claim over 42 people died, killed by the security forces the residents wanted out of the township.

The Mamelodi killings have focused anger on the presence of troops in the townships, and fuelled demands that they be removed.

But the use of the Security Forces in the townships has not crushed the spirit of the people. In fact, their presence has mobilised people never involved in any organisation or campaign before.

As Eastern Cape UDF publicity secretary, Stone Sizane, said, "We are saying the troops and riot police should withdraw because pretty soon there will not be a single person here who has not lost someone close in this violence."

People angry

"Our people grow angrier by the hour when they see how their residential area, already so delapidated and neglected, is ending up like a battlefield. It cannot continue."

In response, Crisis Committees and Parents' Committees have been formed in many townships. They have added their voices to the call of students out on boycott demanding that the troops leave. After huge community meetings, representatives of the committees have met with local authorities, and presented them with their demands.

Trade unions and a wide range of organisations have demanded that the troops withdraw.

In Soweto and Mamelodi, mothers have joined together to march on police stations there to protest the SADF presence.

In many townships, barricades have been built across the streets to keep the troops out.

Troop carriers have been attacked and ambushed by angry residents.

But the most significant campaign has been the Consumer Boycotts. In PE it was responsible for the withdrawal of troops from the townships.

Boycotters know well that the links between local businesses and the authorities are close. And when business wants to speak, it makes itself heard loudly.

Lift emergency

Chief amongst the demands put forward by communities was the call to lift the Emergency and withdraw all troops from the townships.

And now, with the call for a Black December, the weight of millions of consumers will pressure the authorities into a response.

The degree to which the Security Forces are being used now reflects the extent of the crisis facing the government.

The dramatic growth in progressive organisation has been matched by a massive growth in the size of the SADF.

For the state, the use of the army is



Call for a just peace gains support

The End Conscription Campaign (ECC) recently held a three week long 'Troops Out' campaign aimed at raising awareness about the use of SADF troops in the townships.

"The ECC is a broad front of 43 organisations, and individuals, opposed to conscription. What we have in common is a belief in the right of individual conscience and choice when it comes to killing, or being killed", said an ECC spokesperson.

"This becomes particularly important in the South African context, where people conscripted into the army are forced to defend apartheid. Those who refuse face a six year prison sentence.

"Our prime aim is to end conscription into the SADF. And until conscription is abolished, ECC has demanded the right for national ser-

vice as a last resort. It is an attempt to silence through force the voice of a people determined to be free.

The power and size of the state's defence network has expanded dramatically.

Over the next ten years, the size of the police force will double. A training centre for council armies

vicemen to refuse to serve in the townships.

"We see ourselves as part of the broad peace movement working for a just peace in this country. And peace is not just the absence of war. It involves democratic representation, the unbanning of organisations, the release of political prisoners, and a range of other issues.

"We also feel it's important to show people in the townships that there are many whites who oppose what the SADF stands for, and what it does."

During the Troops Out campaign, ECC speakers stressed that the military could bring no solution to what remain essentially political problems.

"The campaign was highly successful. There were 4 000 people at the 'Troops Out' rally in Cape Town,

and across the country we broke new ground, winning the support of many new people.

"It culminated in a mass fast on October 7. The fast was very important as it involved people more actively than a meeting could have.

"International support for ECC is growing fast. We're in contact with over 80 groups around the world who take an active interest in what's going on in South Africa. And they provide active support there were groupings in American and Europe who fasted with us during the 'Troops Out' fast.

● 'Forces Favourites' is a new record album which features local groups and individuals who sing out against repression and the military. Produced by ECC and Shifty Records, it sells for R12 and is available from record bars. Funds go to ECC.

they define.

Repression is used to clear a space for the reformist forces to manoeuvre. And where the reformist forces are rejected, more repression is used.

Take the community councils. Given new powers and new offices, the councillors were to be

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the puppets of the 'reformists' within the townships.

When they were rejected by residents, the police and army were called in to protect the councillors, and crush the residents' organisations.

Many months later, the troops are still in the townships.

Over 800 people have been killed in township violence since July, mostly by Security Forces.

Not only is the behaviour of the troops often provocative, but there have been sworn reports of acts of violence like the bombing of activists' houses committed while 'security forces' looked on. And there have been countless reports of atrocities committed by the troops.

A white national serviceman described with disgust how he took part in maintaining law and order in one of PE's townships:

I will not forget my first patrol in a Casspir.

A large stone hits the armour and bounces through the roof opening. The sergeant reacts by immediately sending a 37mm gas cannister in the direction the stone came from. It lands on a house and the residents pour out coughing, their eyes streaming.

"The funeral is over. Knots of people form on street corners singing and shouting their defiance.

"Gooi julle bliksems, kommaan, gooi!" shouts a cop. A sudden hail of stones is just what they've been waiting for. "Let's go!"

"We hurtle past streams of panicking, running people, pumping gas and rubber bullets. It's over in a couple of minutes."

The troops are used to enforce curfews, even where curfews are not officially in force.

They conduct pass raids and house-to-house searches, and constantly harass residents through roadblocks and patrols.

They arrest anyone they feel looks suspicious. Said one township resident, "People are becoming too afraid to move in the streets, especially after dark, mainly because they are terrified of being confronted by a weapon-wielding 18 year old in browns".

They guard abandoned schools, and where students still attend, check that Bantu Education is still being taught.

They guard the homes of those community councillors and policemen who have not yet resigned, and protect the shops of those more interested in short-term profits than better relations with the community.

They break up meetings and funerals.

And at Baragwanath Hospital, they have recently been used as scab labour to break the strike of workers demanding a living wage.

"We don't need the troops", said one Pretoria activist. "They must leave and let the community solve its own problems."



The UDF is still united in action

Murphy Morobe, UDF publicity secretary, spoke to SASPU National about UDF struggles and gains.

How has the State of Emergency affected the UDF?

With two Treason Trials, hundreds of our activists detained, our meetings banned, offices raided, and those remaining constantly hounded by the security police, survival has been high on our list of priorities.

The democratic movement has grown at such a rate that to stop the UDF the state will have to arrest everybody.

Our structures in most areas have remained fairly intact.

Our ability to continue with UDF activities has a lot to do with the calibre of activists in our ranks: a leadership that has shown total commitment.

What forms of action has the UDF been able to initiate in this period?

The forms of action that the UDF has engaged in differ from region to region. Our campaign to get the SADF out of our townships has gained tremendous momentum, together with the national call for the release of all detainees and political prisoners.

The consumer boycott has been very successful. Its strength differed from area to area, depending on both objective and subjective factors. In the PE and surrounding areas, where it began, people were politicised through years of struggle against apartheid.

It is disciplined organisation that will ensure the voluntary and conscious participation of the people. Compulsion can never be a substitute for organisation. Unity in action is born out of sober and deliberate scientific evaluation of a situation.

Overall, the success of the boycotts lay in the ability of organisers to communicate with the masses. Through funerals, churches and so on, the message was spread.

How does the UDF view Cosatu?

The formation of the new trade union federation is an event of immense historical significance. It



comes after years of abortive attempts by the State to stem the rise of the working class movement in the country.

It is only when the working class is united and occupying its rightful place in the liberation movement that we can begin to challenge the apartheid regime seriously. We expect to co-operate very closely, and establish an alliance that will ensure our struggle advances on all fronts. Unity in action must be our guiding principle.

How does the UDF view the National Convention Alliance?

Our stand on the matter of the national convention as spearheaded by Inkatha and the PFP is quite clear we shall and will have no truck with the move.

With the State of Emergency in force in almost the whole country, with political prisoners still in prison, with thousands of people detained, with the UDF and other progressive organisations being subjected to the worst repression in years, and with the ANC and other organisations still banned all these make it impossible for us to think of a national convention as being anything but remote at this stage.

How do you see the alliance between the PFP and Inkatha?

It is a clear attempt by them to undermine the extra-parliamentary popular democratic movement.

Because of the advance of the democratic movement, all those outside it are trying frantically to strengthen their own camps. This

is geared towards ensuring that their institutions and privileges are preserved.

Can you outline the differences between UDF and the PFP

We agree with the PFP that apartheid must go. But that's as far as agreement goes.

To us apartheid goes far beyond skin colour. In SA apartheid reflects the way the factories, the land and all the wealth in this country is racially owned.

Solutions must address this question. The PFP and friends do not.

Unlike the PFP, we don't believe the Nationalist government can be persuaded to bring about fundamental change.

It's not participation that has put the government under such pressure today, but pressure from forces acting outside of the government's

structures.

These are the only forces capable of bringing an end to apartheid. They are not armed with bitterness but with the correctness of their convictions, sharpened by the support of all the democratic peoples of the world.

Ours is a mass approach, one that seeks to involve people in their own liberation and thus lay the basis for a people's government.

To us, the creation of a non-racial democratic and unitary SA based on one person one vote is non-negotiable.

How has the UDF responded to Inkatha's attacks on the UDF and its affiliates?

It will be noted that not until some of our members got killed by Inkatha hordes did we condemn Inkatha. Even then it's always been our policy to respond to such matters as cautiously and maturely as possible.

We will not be distracted from our main objective of liberation.

Has the UDF been subjected to dirty tricks and divisive tricks by the state?

As the movement develops it will find itself in direct confrontation with all the forces that are determined to maintain the status quo.

The UDF has been the main focus of all these forces recently. Some consist of a concerted campaign of disinformation carried out through fake leaflets, and, increasingly, through 'agents provocateur'.

This method is common with all fascist governments.

There have been many attempts to create divisions, between the UDF and the community, within the UDF, between the UDF and non-affiliates, and sometimes by the police and army who have distributed thousands of leaflets.

'Agents provocateur', those faceless members or non-members of organisations, are the most dangerous. It is through them that a lot of disinformation, through leaflets and rumour, is spread like accusations that committed activists are spies.

It is crucial that our organisations be vigilant.

PFP

Still protecting privilege

The PFP have always found support among the rich. And now that apartheid's becoming more expensive, they're calling for a national convention. What's behind this plan?

THE PFP has always been the party of big business. From the start it's been kept alive by donations from Harry Oppenheimer of Anglo American. And until 1974, its only Member of Parliament (MP) was Helen Suzman, who represented one of the richest constituencies in the country.

Within parliament, the PFP has set itself up as a champion of democracy. But the interests behind the PFP's policies become clear when we trace the history of its call for 'votes for all' and a national convention.

The PFP, or Progressive Party as it was then, was formed in 1959 when 12 MPs broke away from the United Party. It aimed to give the vote only to South Africans who had property, and at least ten years of schooling.

The Progressive Party - 'Progs' - first called for a national convention and votes for all in 1960. At the convention a new constitution would be drawn up, agreed on by all race groups. Linked to this would be a qualified franchise policy or 'votes for some'.

A report drawn up for the Progs in 1960 shows clearly the thinking behind this plan. To draw people away from the appeal of communism, the living standards of 'backward' communities must be raised to make 'democracy' work more effectively.

Meanwhile, democratic rights could be given to those who were 'ready' for them. So the Progs came up with a 'Test of Civilisation' which, according to the report, should sift out those who did not identify with the values of the ruling classes.

Voters would then be divided into two groups the privileged and the rest. The privileged would vote for 90 percent of MPs, while the rest, those over 21 who could read English or Afrikaans, would vote in separate elections.

In this way, the Progressive Party aimed to protect the interests of the ruling class. Although it called for a universal franchise, this call was just window dressing for an undemocratic system.

The Prog's call in 1960 for a national convention aimed to lend credibility to their franchise proposals.

Between 1961 and 1974, the Progs remained a small party drawing support from liberal, wealthy whites.

In 1974 the Progs became the Progressive Reform Party, when



Peter Gastrow, PFP MP

they were joined by some MPs from the United Party. Their strength in parliament jumped to 7 MPs.

In 1977 they changed name again to become the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), and in the elections that year won a fifth of white votes, to become the official Opposition within the white parliament.

In 1975, the party simplified its franchise policy to make it more widely acceptable. But it retained its policy of power for some.

The privileged few would now elect 'only' 50 percent of MPs, but would be able to overrule the demands of the majority through a minority veto.

And, significantly, the party drew up its own homelands plan, sketching a federation of self-governing states within SA.

By 1978, the PFP was working earnestly on its plans for a new constitution. While it believed that a national convention of all political groupings was necessary to draw up this new constitution, it did not call for the unbanning of organisations or the release of political prisoners.

Seven years later, the PFP is making these demands within the National Convention Alliance (NCA). The PFP is now willing to meet with exiled groups.

This willingness does not come from a commitment to a free SA,



Helen Suzman, PFP stalwart

or to hearing leaders who have been silenced. Important developments have taken place in the last seven years which have forced the PFP to make concessions.

SA is in a state of crisis. Profits are falling, the value of the rand has dropped, and, crucially, 'unrest' is threatening business profits.

Panic at these developments has forced the PFP to change its policies. Proof of this is that in 1980 attempts to launch a convention movement were made by a very similar group of people to those in the current alliance.

The aims of the 1980 alliance are identical to those of the 1985 move. Many of the people involved are the same. But the 1980 alliance did not call for the release of political prisoners or the unbanning of organisations.

If their current call for the lifting of bans and the release of prisoners came from a genuine commitment to democracy, rather than fear at what is happening in SA today, they would have issued that call five years ago.

But five years ago the PFP was making it clear they were against giving the majority an equal say in governing the country.

When the National Party claimed

the PFP stood for one man one vote and so for black domination, PFP leader Van Zyl Slabbert said this was 'a blatant lie'. 'The PFP stands for a constitution negotiated at a national convention which excludes the possibility of domination of any one race group by any other race group.'

Nor did the PFP plan to include all groupings at the convention it had in mind. As a 1978 policy statement said,

"Because the PFP is firmly opposed to violence and subversion as a means of change, no political group that ... advocates or uses violence or subversion will be invited to send representatives to the National Convention."

Ignoring the fact that apartheid is upheld through repression and the use of violence, the PFP appealed to the Nationalist government to convene the convention.

The PFP's current call for a national convention which will include exiled groups is blatant political opportunism. A recent speech by PFP leader Van Zyl Slabbert indicates why they're making this call. He focussed on the effects of the government's political policies on the economy. He accused the government of destroying overseas investors' confidence, as well as that of local businessmen.

The pass laws, influx control and

the homelands system were criticised for swallowing 'billions of hard earned rands from the nation's harassed taxpayers. And this is non-productive expenditure'.

For the PFP and their constituency, apartheid is becoming frustratingly expensive. This, and their belief that the Nat's attempts at defusing the crisis in SA have failed, have led to the search for new ways of making SA safe for big business.

The Convention Alliance should be understood in this light.

Together with Inkatha, the PFP has now pulled out of the Convention Alliance. This does not change the fact that the alliance was their baby. While the undemocratic and racist tri-cameral parliament has been rejected by the majority, the PFP takes part in this structure. Yet they themselves condemn it as an entrenchment of injustice in SA.

Now they are keen to recruit new members from other racial groups, and put up candidates for other houses in the tri-cameral parliament.

The crisis the government now faces is a result of struggles fought in the communities, the factories and the schools. It is not for the PFP to step in now with its Convention Alliance to determine the future of South Africa. It is not a forum of the people's making.



Van Zyl Slabbert - leading the PFP



Van Zyl Slabbert and

NOW facing a new challenge

THE MURDER in August of Victoria Mxenge and its violent aftermath has seriously affected the running of the Natal Organisation of Women (Now).

Now members were significantly demobilised as it was difficult for women to meet and continue organisation. Immediate plans were abandoned as energy was channelled into responding to the crises within Durban's townships.

But the organisation has now identified Inkatha as being part of the system, and an oppressor to organise against.

Now had been challenging the system actively on a number of issues. Women demanded child care facilities and lower rents, and worked to build community-based organisation.

Members set up buying clubs, vegetable growing schemes, and raised funds for the Hambanati refugees.

The assassination of Mxenge a Now exec member was fol-

lowed by a campaign of attacks on UDF-affiliated organisations and their members, including Now. After telephone threats came petrol bomb attacks on the homes of activists and supporters.

Many abandoned their homes after crowds of kierie-wielding impis attacked in broad daylight.

The focus of these attacks was Kwa Mashu, although residents in nearby townships were also threatened.

Now's major focus is now to re-mobilise and develop new organisation.

"It has become very clear that the fight against the oppressive system is two pronged", said a Now spokesperson. "Firstly, there is the system as we know it, and secondly, its agents, like Inkatha.

"Inkatha has shown very clearly that its position is between the system and the people, and actually plays an extensive role in their oppression."

Formed in 1983, Now is an affiliate of the UDF. It aims to organise women around the issues that affect them most the lack of childcare facilities and maternity benefits, tax problems, high rents and health care.

Its goal is a non-sexist and non-racial democratic SA.

Inkatha loses out

UMLAZI YOUTH LEAGUE members had a narrow escape just after Winnington Sabelo, Inkatha MP and known anti-UDF campaigner, drove past their meeting.

Shortly after Sabelo drove past an impi of amabutho arrived and tried to disperse the meeting.

'But they were too few and we chased them away,' said a member.

Later the police arrived and fired teargas to disperse the meeting of 200 members of the E section branch. Some Umlazi youth had to run through the river into the Lamontville 'no-go zone' to be safe.

But in spite of such attacks Umlazi Youth League is growing tremendously people are joining in great numbers. There is a branch in each and every section (there are 15) in Umlazi.

The 200 at the meeting were only from one section. Youth meet on street level, section level and general level.

'In Umlazi it used to be the tradition to go to the disco, braai, cinema etc. But now it is vice versa. If you don't sup-



Inkatha Impis instil fear in many townships

INKATHA

'IF INKATHA was a peacemaker in August, they were only putting out the flames which they had lit', said a Durban community organiser.

Statements have been collected by the Black Sash, the Institute of Black Research and University of Natal academics, which detail the anger of local residents.

Inkatha, the SAP and SADF have come under heavy attack for their actions in August's unrest.

An Umlazi resident told how he was forced to join an Inkatha impi: "When we reached the stadium we were told to drink as much sorghum beer as our stomachs could take.

"Later an Inkatha official arrived, carrying a firearm. He announced that everybody should move to Lamontville where we would kill everything ... he would point out which houses were to be destroyed.

"I also observed members of his group moving from house to house, robbing people of their property. Any resistance was mercilessly crushed.

In another statement, an Umlazi resident described what he saw after being arrested on August 11.

"I was taken to the Executive Hotel in Umlazi. There I saw many people who had been killed jointly by the SADF and by Inkatha.

"Some who were lying there were further assaulted, and died in my presence.

"I was made to carry these bodies and load them into a police van. I personally handled ten bodies. I believe that the number was much higher."

In a recent survey of residents attitudes, the Institute of Black Research showed that UDF support had doubled in the African townships, while Inkatha's support had fallen to 5,3 percent.

This could be related to the fact that 41 percent of the residents in the African areas thought Inkatha was the group active 'in the trouble once it had started'. 38,3 percent thought it was the police.

In the same sample, 56 percent said police instigators started the trouble. 20 percent thought it was Inkatha.

Few people believed newspaper and SABC TV reports that Inkatha helped stop the unrest.

Another significant result was that 54,2 percent of African people expressed support for jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela, whereas in 1979 only 2,5 percent were willing to show support

How not to win friends

GATSHA BUTHELEZI would like the world to believe that he is a major force for change in South Africa.

He has even said that without his support, the ANC, the UDF, the trade union movement and other organisations would be able to

achieve nothing. But while the army stood on the sidelines in Natal, Inkatha impis systematically went through KwaMashu, Umlazi, Lamontville, Hambanathi and elsewhere to search for UDF supporters.

Once found, they were mercilessly beaten. Some were even killed.

These attacks have lost Buthelezi and Inkatha much support. Many have been shocked by Inkatha's violence.

But since Inkatha was formed ten years ago, Buthelezi has adopted strategies and principles which conflict with the democratic mainstream.

At a time when non-racialism was accepted by the vast majority of South Africans, Buthelezi was preaching Zulu nationalism from a bantustan base. He was also assert-

ing the validity of changing the system 'from within'. Buthelezi's base is a bantustan, the worst of all apartheid's creations. He administers an area of SA almost entirely dependent on migrant labour for its income. It is poverty stricken: hundreds of thousands of unemployed people are forced to live there because they are Zulus and because they are unwanted in the industrial centres. These millions of Kwazulu residents make a captive membership for Buthelezi.

Access to work in Kwazulu depends entirely on Inkatha membership. Migrant workers have to

show Inkatha membership cards before getting a stamp of approval to work in a white area. And it is not possible to get a trading license, or a job as a teacher or civil servant without being an Inkatha member. Inkatha claims more members than any other organisation resisting apartheid. But other organisations are less co-ercive in their membership. Buthelezi claims to lead the opposition against the government. But he is doing a lot of the government's work for it.

He has refused to support the call for the release of Nelson Mandela.

He has opposed the consumer boycott. He has worked with the government in trying to force entire townships to join KwaZulu despite residents' opposition.

He has called for foreign investment in SA despite overwhelming rejection of foreign companies' support for the government.

And now, in a scathing attack on the new super-federation, he has called on Cosatu's leaders to resign their jobs "as an example of what they want others to taste when sanctions are applied in South Africa".

But the big question is can Buthelezi turn from an aggressive opponent of the democratic movement into a friend? Or is the writing

already on the wall: a loss of membership to the democrats who see the apartheid system and not each other as the major enemy?



Buthelezi - forging an unholy alliance

to Umlazi Youth

port what the residents call 'the comrades organisation' you are out of order,' a youth activist told SASPU.

'It is the fashion now to belong to the Youth League.

'For example, when Mandla Ndimande (who died in the bomb blast at the school where elections were to be held) was buried his funeral was well supported.

'From Thursday to Saturday about 500 youths guarded his parents home against Inkatha.

Some think it is a bit surprising that the Youth League has grown so much, especially because Umlazi used be regarded as an Inkatha stronghold. But activists and recent surveys say Inkatha support is shrinking fast.

'Since the Durban unrest people in the trains are saying: "How can we join Inkatha when they burn down houses for no reason?" Even people who Inkatha suspects are UDF are burnt. And all those people have friends who now ask why?'

'Everything with a stick and a spear is regarded as Inkatha. During the unrest people were forced to join the impi. But in fact most Inkatha members are hostel dwellers.'



NUSAS set for 1986

"Nusas has faced new and difficult conditions in 1985," said Brendan Barry, Nusas President, opening the Nusas Congress in Durban. "But the climate is ripe than ever before for providing progressive answers to the problems of our society."

And Nusas is breaking new ground in winning democrats in the white community.

In a warmly welcomed move, 160 Afrikaans students at Stellenbosch have signed up with Nusas, and there have been approaches from three other Afrikaans campuses.

But for these Afrikaans democrats, their political choice has already brought them face to face with a "right wing backlash". A Nusas supporter at Potchefstroom was dragged around campus, and had his hair shaved off by right wing students after the SRC turned down an application to set up a Nusas branch.

Nusas and SASPU congresses had to move to Durban after they were banned in Cape Town under the State of Emergency regulations.

"The ban was simply retaliation for the high level of protest and mobilisation on Nusas campuses this year," said Barry.

TV shots of riot police dragging a white UCT student across the road by her hair and sjambokking her during a Nusas protest were shown repeatedly on BBC news.

Andrew Boraine, ex-Nusas President and ex-UDF W.Cape executive member, contrasted the current crisis of legitimacy of the government with the re-emergence of mass public support for the ANC. He also pointed to the development not simply of a situation of "ungovernability" in the townships, but of forms of mass democratic organisation.

In many workshops, students will thrash out Nusas priorities for 1986.

SASPU

At the SASPU Congress, student newspapers affiliated to the South African Students Press Union met in the shadow of increasingly strict press controls.

"When national contact and even the normal flow of news is so drastically limited, the progressive student press must not be terrorised into censoring itself, but must use all possible means to publicise the atrocities taking place in the name of law and order," said Steve Kromberg, newly-elected SASPU president.

THERE HAVE been many fierce clashes between hostel dwellers and township residents. But in many townships the divisions are being overcome.

Township residents described events in Mamelodi and Soweto to SASPU NATIONAL.

In Soweto a battle broke out after students approached a shopkeeper from a hostel to donate money for a funeral. An argument broke out and one student was allegedly shot dead.

Students retaliated by stoning and burning the shop. The shopkeeper ended up in hospital. This provoked rumours that residents were attacking the hostel.

Hostel dwellers responded by arming themselves and going into the community, beating people.

But many of the hostel dwellers were members of progressive trade unions and organisations. Activists got together to discuss the problem, and then held discussions with headmen from the different hostels, and with the community.

Pamphlets were distributed saying the system was dividing the people, and called on them to unite and stop killing each other.

Hostel dwellers - making friends

Activists told SASPU NATIONAL that a joint meeting of workers from the hostel and other residents was disrupted by police. They believe this was done because people were starting to unite.

In Mamelodi, the clashes began in August.

The hostel dwellers were angered by people robbing them. They armed themselves and went about the township assaulting people.

This was met with resistance from local youths who fought back, resulting in the death of one of the youths.

At the night vigil held for him, mourners decided to seek revenge. The next day at the funeral, the clashes continued.

Hostel dwellers were armed with knives, batons and sticks.

Police intervened only when the youths retaliated.

But clashes continued throughout the day and many were injured.

A few days later priests called a meeting for people whose houses had been damaged. Many residents attended, and said the council should repair their houses.

Some called for the hostel dwellers to leave the township, but others felt they should attempt to build unity between the hostel dwellers and the residents.

By the end of the meeting a unity committee had been set up, consisting of representatives of the priests, youth, and hostel dwellers.

But the tension and sporadic attacks continued.

Because of these conflicts, the hostel dwellers no longer went to the shebeens in the townships, but

set up their own inside the hostel. Local councillors then tried to cash in on this by setting up their own shebeens within the hostel.

When the hostel dwellers boycotted the councillors' shebeens, police raided and confiscated the hostel dwellers' liquor. Five people were injured in the clashes with police that followed.

Activists said that after this the hostel dwellers and residents realised the need to unite: they were facing a common enemy.

Now the township residents are saying that the hostels are a crime against humanity, and are calling for them to be demolished. They say Section Ten controls should be scrapped, and houses built to accommodate the hostel dwellers and their families in the township.

An ad-hoc structure has now been set up where hostel dwellers can meet with Mamelodi activists.

"There is no need to fight one another. We are one family. We were divided by the enemy, and now we must unite."

And the hostel dwellers joined the march on the admin board in Mamelodi on November 21.



"Inhumane hostel conditions"



Atlantis puts down its roots

"TWELVE THOUSAND workers-60 percent of the workforce are unemployed in Atlantis," says Noel Williams, Atlantis Residents Association chair. Atlantis was built far outside Cape Town as part of the Government's decentralisation policy.

Now many of the industries there have gone bankrupt.

Many families are losing their houses. The ARA and the Atlantis Youth Congress are working on ways to move people back into their houses as fast as they are evicted, to reconnect water and electricity, and to pressurise the council.

"We are organising people in each street to provide their own food. Every garden will become a farm. We will grow our own potatoes, carrots and mielies; we will buy groceries in bulk and share them," says ARA.

"The people in each street will look after their gardens and exchange produce to feed themselves.

"The people of Atlantis have decided to take their future into their own hands because Divco, the Atlantis Management Committee and the state have failed in their duty to provide for the residents."

Fedtraw focuses on the main enemy

"There is no such thing as people not wanting to work, the problem is rather the way capitalism works", said Fedtraw speaker Susan Shibangu, on November 23 in Kagiso.

She was speaking about workers' problems during repressive times at the first Fedtraw meeting since the State of Emergency was declared.

"Workers are affected during a recession. Plans which are made well in advance to retrench them are never discussed with workers, who are making profits for the company", she said.

She criticised the use of the Consumer Price Index in wage negotia-

tions, and stressed that trade unions cannot separate work-place demands from community issues.

"This Consumer Price Index is their statistics. But we know when they say there's a family of 5 people in each house, in fact there are far more there."

She urged community, student and worker leaders to unite against the 'main enemy'.

"They are coming with reforms, but we can see the enemy. They can do away with apartheid, but the enemy is capitalism. People can see the problem is that people are not equal," she said.

Attorney Priscilla Jana spoke

about using legal action, and some of the recent victories lawyers had won, where loopholes had been found in the law which allowed certain detentions to be stopped.

But she stressed that loopholes in the law are rare, and if a case is won, the law is often changed to close the loophole.

Jana said cases against the police are the most difficult to prove, and urged the meeting to note the name and rank of security officers, the names of witnesses, and to report any incident involving the security forces to a lawyer as soon as possible if they want to try legal action.

Finding legal loopholes in unjust laws

A SUPREME COURT decision hit the headlines recently when security forces were legally barred from assaulting detainees in PE.

Increasingly, the courts are starting to challenge the powers of the security police, and in some cases important gains have been made. The court actions have aimed to prevent security forces from assaulting detainees, and to challenge the harshness of conditions in detention.

They take place against a backdrop of allegations of torture and abuses in detention. Affidavits have detailed the brutality of police action within and beyond official Emergency areas.

In PE, Dr Wendy Orr told the court that Emergency detainees from PE and Uitenhage examined by her were assaulted systematically and brutally by police.

Detainees she examined had weals, bruising and blisters all over their bodies, badly injured lips and several had burst eardrums.

The court ruled that any member of the security forces who assaulted

detainees in PE would be prosecuted.

In Durban, church worker Paddy Kearney was released from detention under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act (ISA) after a court ruling which lawyers describe as the most important decision in the last ten years. Justice Milne found Kearney's detention illegal because the authorities had failed to provide evidence that he had committed an offence, or had any information about an offence.

The importance of this decision is that until now Section 29 detentions have been seen as outside the reach of the courts. It has called into question one of the harshest of SA's security laws.

If Security police can't provide proof that the detainee has committed an offence, or has information about an offence, the courts can rule that detention is invalid.

Within days of Kearney's release, three other Section 29 detainees in Durban were released after an urgent application.

In Johannesburg, five detainees

were released shortly before an urgent application on behalf of three of them, challenging the validity of their detentions, came to court.

Court action has also succeeded in other cases.

Justice Leon ordered that a 16 year old boy be examined by a doctor after the boy claimed his skull, jaw-bone and arm were crushed after assaults by the Security Police. He was later released.

Also in Durban, Justice Milne ruled that police should be restrained from assaulting a Section 29 detainee NIC member Billy Nair.

Soon after this an interim order was granted to five other detainees in similar situations.

In Grahamstown the Supreme Court ruled that the police had no right to detain a person held under the Emergency regulations for more than 14 days unless the Minister of Law and Order felt it necessary.

This decision led to the release of Port Alfred community leader

Gugile Nkwinti.

Court decisions have not always favoured detainees. In the Rand Supreme Court, Justice Curlewis dismissed an application by former detainees to restrain police at Protea and Diepkloof from assaulting detainees.

Although applicants described abuses of detainees — torture, suffocation by hooding, beatings, death threats and forced exercise while carrying weights — the court dismissed the application, claiming the applicants had failed to prove any urgency.

In Cape Town an application to restrain police from assaulting detainee Trevor Oostewyk was dismissed. The court held that it had not been established whether there had been any injury, nor whether there was a reasonable possibility that Oostewyk would be assaulted in the future.

While important gains have been made to restrict the abuse of detainees, those detainees with

access to a lawyer are a small minority.

As Di Cooper, an organiser for the General Workers' Union, said after her release from detention, "If you are a high profile person with a strong organisation backing you and putting pressure on the authorities, you have chance of being released."

"But there are hundreds of people in there who have no public profile who will languish in detention until the police feel like releasing them".

It seems the effect that the Emergency has had on the legal and medical profession has been to galvanise them into action.

The various law societies and Bar Councils have expressed grave concern about the imposition of the State of Emergency and have condemned particularly the detention. The Mamelodi killings highlighted the continued presence of troops in the townships. Township residents have responded with anger and organisation.

Nicaraguans owning their future



NATIONAL talked to Roger Sanchez from the official Sandanist newspaper Barricada.

"You ask what the revolution means for the people of Nicaragua? It means that every morning, when you wake up and put your feet on the ground, you find that although you are in a country at war, although you are in a country where there are shortages of everything, you are at peace, because despite these problems, you know you are living in a country with a future, and you can feel it.

"In Nicaragua, popular power is with the masses, and you can feel the difference as you walk in the streets," says Roger Sanchez.

How have the FSLN structured people's power since the seizure of power from Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator?

"We have to make our talk of liberation during the struggle a reality. After we won liberation, we used to say the seizure of power was the easy part. Now the real difficulties of transforming our society begin," says Sanchez.

"For years and years, our prime task was to overturn the government, and our movement was structured to do that. Then, suddenly, WE were the government, and we had to look at how different aspects of our strategy for seizing power from Somoza fitted into our strategies for building people's power.

"We waged our struggle at three levels the level of mass organisation, the level of alliances, and the level of the revolutionary war. All three were dynamically linked. Our armed struggle was never separate from the political struggle, and every armed act was destined to have a political effect."

The FSLN slogan in period after liberation was 'organisation, organisation, and more organisation.'

The underground structures and mass organisations set up during the struggle were transformed into organs of peoples power after liberation.

So, for example, the underground factory committees, whose tasks in the struggle included attacks on the state, and sabotaging factories and machinery, developed into trade unions.

A key part of people's power in Nicaragua since the revolution are the community-based Sandinista Defence Committees, the CDS's. Each city block makes up one of these defence committees, and they participate actively in making policy they discuss production and distribution, social programmes and priorities, and the ongoing armed defense of the revolution.

In the rural areas, the Association of Rural Workers (the ATC) had organised mass political action of workers and peasants, and ensured their participation in armed struggle. Now, most of the rural population is organised by ATC, in peasant co-operatives.

So the mass based organisations



Young and old at FSLN rally

which arose during the struggle are now a vital part of transforming the state and society. SN asked Roger Sanchez to explain some of the problems confronting the FSLN after liberation.

"Firstly I must emphasise that no two revolutions are the same, and no revolution can be a blueprint for another. At the same time, lessons can be learnt from every revolution. And so it is important to talk not only about the victories in struggle, but about the mistakes, too. This also builds the trust of the masses. And if they are participating in decision making, then mistakes are a collective responsibility, and self-criticism is a necessary part of building people's democracy.

"After liberation, we faced many problems, and contradictory demands. On the one hand, we needed to improve working conditions; but the economy was very weak. Production was at a standstill, and there was not enough surplus being produced to provide

money to implement our programmes, nor even to increase wages.

"We also desperately needed to produce food for people in the towns, but at the same time to transform the social relations on the land. In addressing these problems, we faced difficulties we had not expected.

"For example, we bought beans from the peasants at inflated prices to give them a fair deal and encourage food production.

Then we sold those beans at a cheaper price to the masses in the towns, to compensate for the fact that wages were still low.

"But then we discovered that the peasants were coming to town, buying beans at the reduced rate, and reselling them to the government at a profit - without growing a single bean - which of course added to the food shortage. We clearly had to do more educational work among the peasants."

"Another difficult area was the question of redistribution of land.

"Initially, the agrarian reform policy involved handing out ownership to co-operatives only. But the class structure in the rural areas is complex. For the farm-workers and seasonal workers, co-operative farming made good sense. But collectivisation didn't take into account what the soil means to the peasants - they don't have the same attitude to the land as the workers.

"So while the peasants are the natural allies of the workers in the class struggle, their ideology in terms of the land is different. Our agrarian reform policies had to take into account their consciousness and aspirations.

"Transforming social relations on the new co-operative farms is another major challenge, if these are not to become simply 'state capitalist' farms. In a speech, a Sandinista leader said: "Some people

say that the old boss is simply being replaced by a new one - the state. But the state now is not the same state, it is a state of workers and producers, who organise production and place it at the disposal of the people, and above all of the working class. These people are not wage labourers, but producers of social wealth, their consciousness is quite different from that of wage labourer. They know that each stroke of the machete (axe) is no longer to create wealth for a boss, but perhaps to create a new pair of shoes for a barefoot child.

To transform relations of production on the land and in the factories needed politically-trained cadres. "But the mistake we made initially was to make some of our best cadres factory and farm managers," said Sanchez. "They knew what needed to be done politically, but had no knowledge of the technical aspects of production."

The lack of technicians gave the bourgeoisie a certain amount of power.

"In the struggle, the FSLN achieved unity of a range of different forces, including sectors of the national bourgeoisie that opposed Somoza. The FSLN also allied with the churches, and certain political parties. However, it was the FSLN that set the pace and defined the course of struggle," says Sanchez.

When the FSLN structured a "people's veto" into the state structures, to formally entrench the active participation of the mass organisations in the state, the bourgeoisie fought hard against this erosion of their power. They have also strongly opposed all moves towards workers control in the factories.

Through legislation, propaganda, and specific structures of democracy in the factory, the FSLN government has shown its determination to move towards workers control, despite the limitations imposed by war economy, and the urgent need to increase production to provide the social wealth necessary to build the clinics, schools, roads, literacy programmes and much more that are part of building liberation in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua faces a shortage of the skills needed for reconstruction. SN asked about the role of students in the post-liberation period.

"They must repay that debt. To be a good student means to give a positive return to the revolution. At present, they have had to leave their books and take up their guns to defend the people's revolution," says Sanchez.

Reconstruction has been held back by the counter-revolutionary war in Nicaragua, being waged by ex-members of Somoza's National Guard - with US aid and training.

"This war is a necessary step to full liberation," says Roger Sanchez. "It is a war we expected to fight, and so we don't see it as a tragedy, but as a product of class confrontation. The only way to overcome it is to win it. And winning the war comes before all else in Nicaragua, because if we lose it, we will lose all our victories.

"Everybody is implicated, whether they are actually fighting, or producing in the factories and on the farms to support the people's defence. The FSLN can mobilise more than 500 000 fully-armed, trained volunteers in 2 days.

"People's attitude is summed up by what Jose Marti said that in history, it is a criminal act to support a war that is avoidable, and a criminal act to prevent a war that is necessary. The war against US imperialism is a war that must be fought."



Peasant holds document giving him rights to re-possessed land in Nicaragua.



"Oliver Tambo is much more than a brother to me. He is my greatest friend and comrade. If there is anyone amongst you who cherishes my freedom, Oliver Tambo cherishes it more, and I know he would give his life to set me free."
Nelson Mandela

FREE NELSON MANDIELA

THERE ARE MORE streets named after Nelson Mandela than anyone else in the world; the song "Free Nelson Mandela" by AKA was top of the pops in Britain; Stevie Wonder adapted one of his songs to sing to the United Nations "Mandela, we just called to say we love you"; democratic governments and even International Bankers have joined the call of South Africa's people for Mandela and his co-accused to be released.

Big business, the PFP, Church leaders and a small band of Afrikaans students have been queuing up at the ANC's door in Lusaka. And with his Cape Times interview, Oliver Tambo showed that if the press laws gave him half a chance, his views would certainly be food for thought for South Africans.

But while the ANC continues to engage in high-level diplomatic talks, it has made it quite clear that its political and military offensives will also intensify.

Mandela and Umkhonto

Mandela has become a symbol of the ANC. He and his co-accused were imprisoned for spear-heading the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, initiating the sabotage strategy, and promoting ANC underground structures.

Mandela set a brisk political pace in the ANC. As part of the ANC Youth League, Mandela pushed

the ANC to adopt a clear programme of action, which included the Defiance Campaign.

As ANC membership grew to over 100 000 people by 1953, Mandela started arguing that the ANC must prepare for a time when it would be prevented from mobilising so openly; that structures must be built that did not rely so heavily on bringing about mass action through public mass meetings, press statements and pamphlets.

The M-Plan

Mandela proposed the M-Plan in the 1950's. This was a system of cells, based on membership in a single street, and headed by a cell steward. Seven street cells would make a zone, and the chief steward of each zone would meet with four others to make a ward. One person from each ward would make up the ANC branch secretariat to administer the ANC in a township.

To set up this network involved a huge amount of organisational work. In 1955 an NEC report said, "The National liberation movement has not yet succeeded in the organisational field in moving out of the domain of mass meetings and this type of agitation. Mass gatherings and large public activities are important, but so is house to house work, the building of small local branches, close contact with members, and their continual education."

When the ANC was finally forced underground by the banning and the State of Emergency in 1960, Mandela motivated the turn to armed struggle.

Speech from the dock

In his trial, he explains some of the factors that led him along this path:

"The whole life of any thinking African in this country drives continuously to a conflict between his conscience on the one hand and the law on the other. The law as it is written and designed by the Nationalist Government is a law which, in our view, is immoral, unjust, and intolerable.

Our consciences dictate that we must protest against it, that we must oppose it and that we must attempt to alter it.

Mandela went on to warn of the dangers of government violence to uphold unjust laws: "Government violence can do only one thing and that is to breed counter violence.

We have warned repeatedly that the Government, by resorting to violence, will breed in this country counter-violence amongst the people, until ultimately, if there is no dawning of sanity on the part of the Government, ultimately the dispute between the Government and my people will finish up being settled in violence and force.

"Already there are indications that African people are turning to deliberate acts of violence and of force against the Government, in order to persuade the Government, in the only language which it shows, by its own behaviour, that it understands."

The next time that Mandela was able to put his views on violence to South Africans, was 20 years later, when PW offered Mandela conditional release if he renounced violence.

No to release offer

But after 20 years of prison, Mandela refused his own freedom rather than compromise his beliefs. He showed this inner strength before when he was allegedly offered conditional release to the Transkei. He rejected it because he refused to recognise the Transkei.

Mandela laid the blame for violence in South Africa firmly at the governments' door, and called on Botha to renounce violence.

"I am surprised at the conditions the government wants to impose on me. I am not a violent man," Mandela said. "It was only when all other forms of resistance were no longer open to us that we turned to armed struggle."

"Too many have died since I went to prison. Too many have suffered for their love of freedom. I owe it to

their widows, to their orphans, to their mothers and fathers who have grieved and wept for them.

"Not only I have suffered during these long, lonely, wasted years. I am not less life-loving than you are. But I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free," Mandela said.

"I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you the people are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I WILL return."

If Mandela were released tomorrow, he might find conditions sadly unchanged from what he left behind so long ago. But while conditions might be the same, the balance of forces has changed to a point where the ANC believes the struggle has entered a new era.

Mandela would find an apartheid government isolated internationally, facing an economic crisis beyond its control; losing its grip politically as the townships become ungovernable, and faced with the threat of alternative "mass revolutionary bases" being built in the townships.

He would find the ANC confident of its future after its recent Consultative Conference, and on a wave of international credibility. And if support for the call for his release is anything to go by, the ANC has still mass support inside the country.