



Retrenchments - the causes, the effects, the fight against them

● See page 16, 17



Lifting up the load - Fedtraw on organising Transvaal women

● See page 19



Steps on the road towards the Congress of the People

● See centrespread



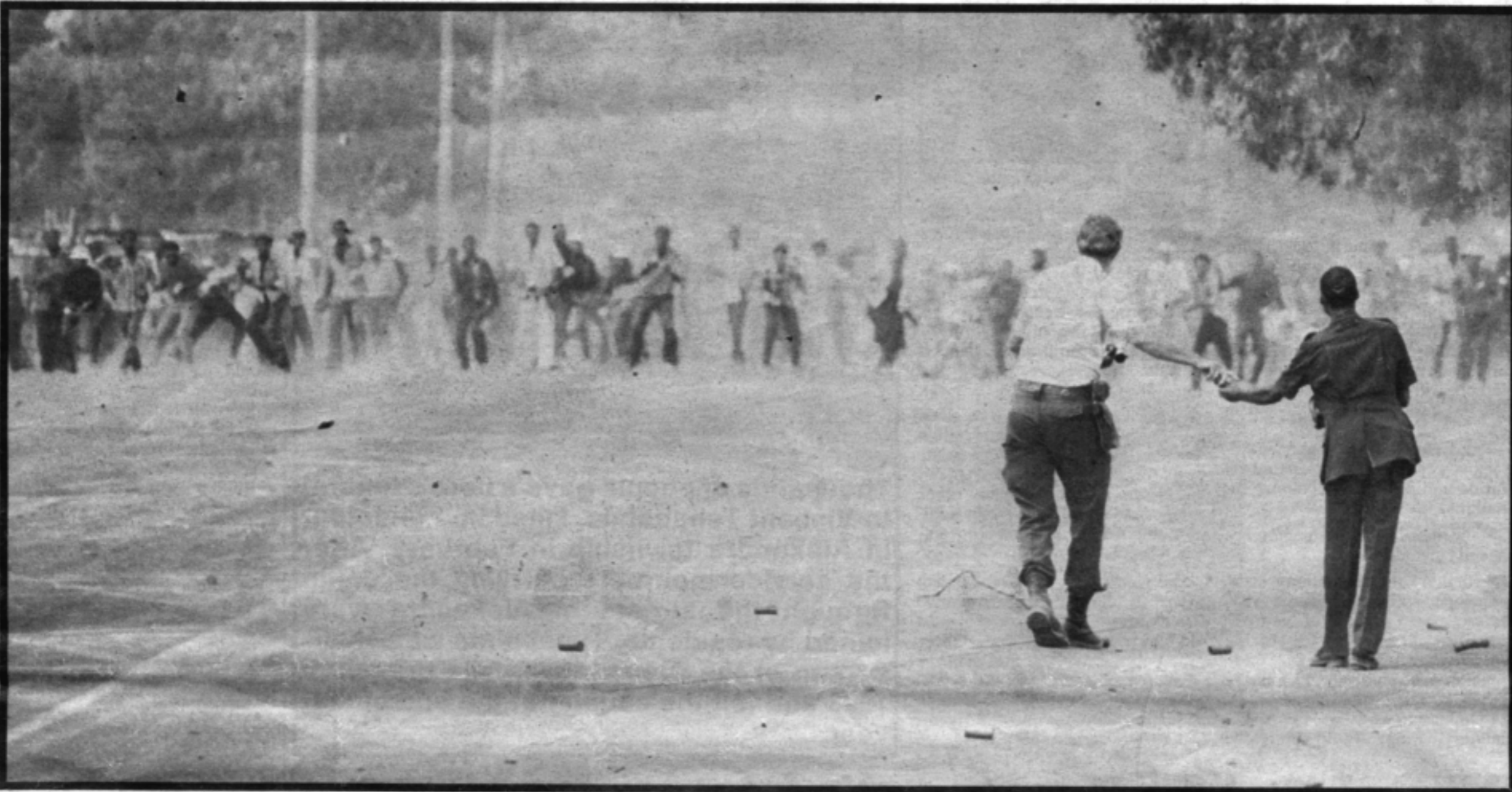
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Confrontation at Crossroads ... stones are thrown as a policeman is handed more ammunition. Eighteen residents died in the confrontations

SOUTH AFRICA is in the grip of one of the worst political and economic crises in years.

The government has not been able to halt the resistance in the communities, factories and schools and around the tri-cameral parliament that last year shook the country.

The recession — which has led to wage cuts, retrenchments, an increase in prices of basic commodities, and government over-spending — has fuelled resistance, adding more grievances to the already long list.

The government's response to political and economic grievances has been harsh.

In Crossroads near Cape Town, residents resisting removal to Khayelitsha advanced on riot police behind shields of corrugated iron, using stones against the birdshot, teargas and rubber bullets of the

Recession and repression has led to . . .

Violent battles in apartheid's streets

police. 18 residents died in the fighting. But the community has vowed to continue defending their homes.

In Uitenhage four people died when police opened fire on crowds demanding the scrapping of the community councils.

Deaths from police action have also been reported in Kroonstad,

Duduzi, Tembisa, Atteridgeville, Katlehong, Welkom, Port Elizabeth, KwaNobuhle and Bloemfontein.

'But,' said a Crossroads resident, 'living conditions are so bad that rubber bullets and teargas will not stop the ongoing and militant protests.'

In Kroonstad and Welkom —

where funerals have been banned over weekends — the town has come to a standstill as workers stay away from work to attend.

In Port Elizabeth a massive stay-away is expected to protest against the closure of a Ford plant and the retrenchment of 2 500 workers, a bus fare increase, high unemployment, low wages, high rents, and in

support of students' demand for student representative councils.

At Atlantis outside Cape Town the threat of evictions lead residents to reject the community council and to form their own civic organisation.

Students are continuing their two-year battle for SRC's, an end to corporal punishment and a lifting of the age-limit law. At least 50 Cosas members are in detention, many have died, hundreds face charges of public violence and others have been expelled.

In Thabong, where schools are still being boycotted, one scholar died after being allegedly shot by police. In Fort Beaufort, four students were shot dead, two after allegedly having opened fire on police officers.

Meanwhile, Cosas, youth and UDF activists' houses in Soweto, Welkom and Kroonstad have been fire-bombed. In Beaufort West a UDF activist was allegedly killed by police in his home.

In response to the spreading resistance the government has detained people throughout the country, and arrested 16 UDF leaders on charges of treason.

Despite the repression, community and student organisations report a increase in support. And despite retrenchments, trade unions also report increased membership.

Many organisations see the Freedom Charter as the alternative to the present conflict. Community organisations in the Western Cape are drawing up a housing charter setting out their demands and alternatives.

Azaso, Cosas and Nusas are continuing their campaign to draw up an education charter which would represent the aspirations of all students and their parents.

Thousands pay tribute to Sactu



Thousands celebrate Sactu's 30th anniversary

5000 PEOPLE sang and danced as they celebrated the 30th anniversary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) in Tembisa on Sunday, March 11.

Bright Sactu, union, community, student and youth T-shirts coloured the tightly packed hall where people gathered to salute Sactu. They paid tribute to the pioneers of the workers' movement in this country, among them Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks and Yusuf Dadoo.

Samson Ndou, president of the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU) and Transvaal vice-president of the UDF, said, "This celebration is an act to inspire all the workers of South Africa to better heights of struggle.

"It is us who history has entrusted to face the challenges of our time."

Ndou shared a platform with representatives of the Council of South African Trade

Unions (Cusa), the South African Domestic Workers Association (Sadwa), the Federation of Transvaal Women (Fedtraw) and the Clothing Workers Union of South Africa (Clowu).

Speakers described the many campaigns Sactu fought. Said James Mndaweni of CUSA: "Our struggle was Sactu's struggle — against poverty wages, to restore peace and respect, and to bring about stability and justice in our society."

Elizabeth Erasmus of Clowu spoke of how Sactu was involved in community issues. "It didn't just operate on the factory floor. And we salute those who laid the way for progressive trade unions in the country today. We carry on their struggle, and the fruits of their work — the rebuilding of progressive forces

● To page 3

Major ANC conference coming up

THOUSANDS of African National Congress (ANC) members are preparing for the organisation's second consultative conference.

According to sources within the ANC, the conference — which is the second to be held since the organisation was banned in 1960 — will assess the ANC's activities over the past 15 years, and will discuss how members and supporters of the movement can build its strength and direction.

The conference is due to be held at an undisclosed venue in the next few months. Arrangements are being kept secret.

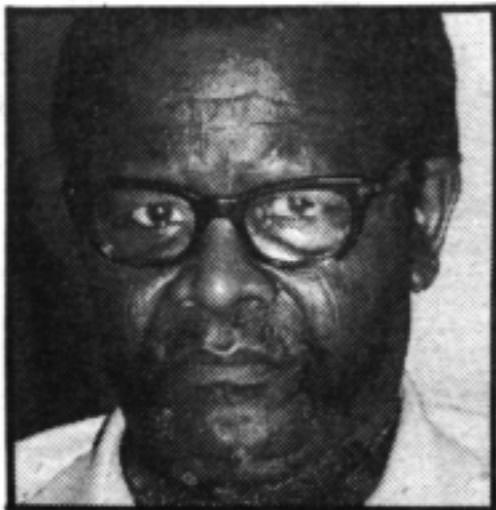
The last conference was held at Morogoro, Tanzania in 1969. There the document 'Strategy and Tactics' was adopted, which has been the guiding policy of the ANC for the past 16 years.

According to reports the ANC is optimistic that the forthcoming conference will develop the strength of the organisation internally and in exile.

Sources say the ANC has been collecting reports from its members inside and outside the country for months.

Main items on the conference agenda include:

- whether the conditions have developed sufficiently for the ANC to move into a phase of 'people's war' — where every one of the organisation's supporters develop their role in political and military struggle. The 'armed propaganda' of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing, could thus be



ANC president Oliver Tambo

- ways of improving and extending the ANC's underground structures inside South Africa;
- the role of the working class as the leading social force in the struggle for progressive change;
- increasing the organisation of people in the rural areas, bantustans, farmworkers and the unemployed; and
- what formal status is to be given to whites, coloured and Indian members of the ANC. The ANC has formally been an African organisation, but has many other supporters and members. In addition, the ANC leadership is not solely African.

The conference will include elections to the National Executive Committee — the ANC's highest administrative body. Oliver Tambo, the ANC's President, is expected to be re-elected to his position because of the overwhelming support he enjoys within the organisation.



Thousands of people gave a hero's funeral to Vincent Tshabalala, killed in a shootout in Alexandra township in February. After the service mourners carrying the coffin through the streets of Alexandra were joined by residents. Tshabalala was chairperson of the Alexandra Cosas branch in 1983 and left the country at the end of that year.

N Tvl fights against divide and rule

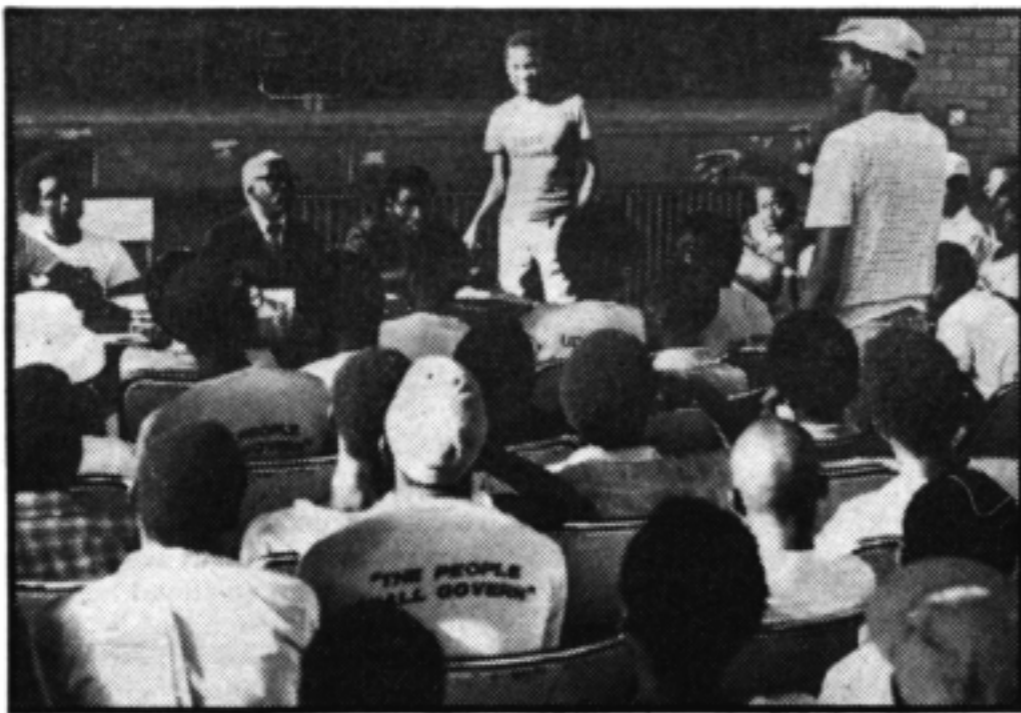
BANTUSTAN LEADERS and the bantustan system are responsible for the fierce fighting and killing which has broken out between villagers in Nkowa-Nkowa and Lenyenye in the Northern Transvaal.

This was the feeling at a meeting of United Democratic Front (UDF) affiliates in the Northern Transvaal recently.

The meeting was convened by the UDF Northern Transvaal Coordinating Committee which was formed in June last year. It was a follow-up to previous meetings which discussed how to popularise and structure the UDF in the region.

More than 150 people from trade unions, youth, student, women and other groups attended the meeting. Mankweng, Seshego, Sekhukhune-land, Steelpoort, Tzaneen, Duiwelskloof, Potgietersrust, Nkowa-Nkowa, Maviljan and Lenyenye were all represented.

Delegates from the trouble stricken areas told how a Lebowa Minister called a meeting in Lenyenye and told people the Shangaan



Tackling rural problems. Delegates at the UDF Northern Transvaal rally

people were illegally occupying Pedi land. He said they should destroy the border fence between Lenyenye and Gazankulu.

'The minister led the whole thing of cutting down the Pretoria fence, and then he told people to attack the Shangaan-speaking people as they were occupying Lebowa land.

The Gazankulu bantustan puppets also mobilised their people to arm themselves and attack other people,' said one speaker.

After that everything exploded as fighting broke out between the different groups armed with kieres, spears, and other home made weapons. Houses, shops and cars

were burnt and many people were killed.

Using back roads to escape the main areas of fighting, youth groups from Nkowa-Nkowa and Lenyenye managed to meet to discuss the situation.

They discussed bantustans and how they promoted tribalism, and how this props up the apartheid system. They agreed that people were fighting the wrong battles and should rather be fighting to get rid of apartheid. They decided to speak to others to stop the war between the people.

'The Lebowa and Gazankulu bantustan governments have agreed on one thing, and that is to divide the people,' said another speaker at the meeting.

'The South African government is using their puppet leaders to divide us. They tell us we have representation in the bantustans but these puppets are adding fuel to fire.'

A speaker from the floor added, 'we shouldn't allow Pretoria to divide us. We have been living together for centuries, intermarrying. They have taken away our land and now they are trying to make us fight over the crumbs they have left for us.'

Other speakers said the problem was that people had been indoctrinated to believe Bantustan leaders and local representatives.

'People accept these things. It is for us to go and talk to the people to tell them what the bantustan system is about. In some areas where people are trying to form organisations there is much repression and this makes it very difficult.'

'But we will do everything in our power.'

Shotguns in court for Soweto 14

HEAVILY ARMED police crowded the Johannesburg Magistrate's Courts on February 28 when 14 men appeared in connection with allegations of high treason.

More than 70 activists attended the brief hearing, after which the 14 were remanded until April 1.

Police sharpshooters were positioned outside and security police with shotguns formed a barrier between the public and the

men. Armoured vehicles were used to take the 14 accused and the police from the court after the hearing.

The 14, detained at different times from June last year, first appeared in court in December. No details of the charges have been given yet.

The accused are: Mr Siphon Ngwenya, 33, of Orlando West, Mr Joseph Boitomelo Leepile, 26, of Tladi, Mr Justice Mafa Ngidi, 30, of Alexandra, Mr Jabu Marines

Ngabese, 23, of Mamelodi, Mr Xolani Nduna, 33, of Daveyton, Mr Zanemvula Mapela, 24, of Daveyton, Mr Mathlare Lesotho, 26, of Orlando, Mr Mathews Dime Kekane, 27, of Jabavu, Mr Kingsley Stephen Sithole, 28, of Orlando, Mr James Dubasem 25, of Jabavu, Mr Jongumzi Sisulu, 26, of Orlando, Mr Happy Mkhafa, 20, of Emdeni, Mr David Matsose, 24, and Mr Joseph Mafa, 25, of Tladi.

Housing, security comfort

UDF AFFILIATES in the Western Cape are drawing up a charter of their demands for 'Houses, Security and Comfort'.

At a UDF Anti-Forced Removals conference in January, 100 delegates from 25 organisations discussed forced removals — looking at influx control, pass laws, government housing policy and group areas.

The conference looked at the Freedom Charter clause, 'There shall be Housing, Security and Comfort' and compared the people's demands of 30 years ago with those being made today.

The draft list of demands now being discussed in organisations are:

- SHORT TERM DEMANDS:**
- Stop forced removals.
 - End police harassment.
 - Release those in jail.
 - Build Phase 2 and 3 of Crossroads.
 - Build more houses at rents we can afford. These houses should be built in existing open spaces — not at Khayelitsha. Those who wish to should be allowed to buy their houses.
 - Stop all rent increases. Wages must keep pace with prices.
 - Lift the freeze on township development.
 - Build schools, creches and other facilities immediately.
 - Away with black local authorities, management committees and the tri-cameral parliament. They do not represent us.
 - Venues in the townships (civic centres and church halls) to be open to use by all.
 - Scrap the township permit system.
 - All people must have the right to belong to any democratic organisation of their choice.

- LONG TERM DEMANDS:**
- One housing policy for all. Housing is a government responsibility. Houses should be built near work.
 - Transport for people — not for profits.
 - Pass laws must go. People must be able to live and work where they choose.
 - Scrap the Group Areas Act.

Organisations are to meet again this month to finalise these demands and to draw up a programme of action.

Since the conference the government, faced with increased resistance, has been forced to make the following concessions:

- 99 year leasehold for all African townships: This means people from Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu will not be moved to Khayelitsha and the freeze on township development will be lifted.
- Upgrading of Crossroads: This could mean the implementation of phases two and three of the 'Koorhof Deal'.

But the worst problems remain. Khayelitsha, together with other townships will remain for 'legals' only.

'What will happen to the 'illegals' of Crossroads and KTC, said to number over 80 000 people?' asked one delegate. 'Will they still be forced into the homelands?'

Even if Crossroads is 'developed', up to 60 percent will be left without housing. And Dr Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Co-operation and Development, has said that he can't rule out the possibility of forced removals.

Every month thousands of people come to the Western Cape from the barren homelands. There are no plans to accommodate them. The government now talks of 'orderly urbanisation' but people are asking whether this will really be any different to influx control.



'We stand by our leaders'. Strong support for democrats charged with treason from a crowd at a Johannesburg meeting

Treason trials sparks protest

SELDOM HAS the government faced such overwhelming condemnation as when it charged United Democratic Front, Release Mandela Committee, Natal and Transvaal Indian Congress and labour leaders with treason.

Anti-apartheid organisations both locally and abroad, as well as governments which support the South African government, protested against the action.

Two of the UDF's three national presidents are included in the 'show trial' — Mrs Albertina Sisulu, detained in a dawn raid on her

Celebrations for Sactu's anniversary



'Workers must speak out'

From page 1

within the factories."

Speakers stressed that all must stand together in the present crisis. Workers must speak out, with one voice, against rising prices and rents, the community councils, repression and the education crisis.

"We pledge ourselves to build a society which provides liberty - not oppression; peace — not war; equal — not discriminatory - education; SRC's — not prefects; to live where we want to — and not in the ghetto's; to live in a free, democratic and just society. We need to break our chains today!" said one speaker.

Fedtraw's Amanda Kwadi called on women to unite and stand with their men. "Women must take up the struggles in the communities and the factories, and support the struggles of the youth — because these struggles affect us all."

A representative of Sadwa also called for unity amongst women: "We must open our eyes and see we face a double oppression. We face oppression in the home as well as in society. We must unite and overcome our oppression."

Messages of support from a variety of unions and organizations were read before the meeting ended late in the afternoon.

home, and Archie Gumede, who has been in custody for over three months since he emerged as one of 'Durban Three' from the British Consulate.

Leaders rounded up in the recent countrywide police swoop joined eight others already awaiting trial under charges of treason, bringing the total to 16.

The original eight include Archie Gumede, Paul David of the Natal Release Mandela Committee and NIC; Curtis Nkondo and Aubrey Mokoena, both of the Release Mandela Campaign and UDF Transvaal executives; MJ Naidoo of the NIC;

Those detained and charged in last month's swoop are: Mrs Albertina Sisulu, Mr Cassim Saloojee, the UDF national treasurer; Rev Frank Chikane, a UDF Transvaal vice-president; Prof Ismail Mohammed, leader of the Anti-Presidents' Council Committee; Mr Thozamile Gqweta and Sisa Njikelana, president and general secretary of the South African Allied Workers Union; and Mr Sam Kikine and Mr Isaac Ngobo, both Saawu members.

They have all been refused bail, and may have to stay in jail throughout the trial. Lawyers say the trial may take over two years.

The 16 charged with treason also face alternative charges under one of the widest ranging laws ever drawn up to combat anti-government activity. Section 54 of the Internal Security Act could mean that almost any opposition to the new constitution is illegal.

According to a prominent lawyer: 'If interpreted generously the section would include any form of extra-parliamentary activity'.

The refusal to grant bail has been widely condemned. Said a UDF spokesperson: 'refusing bail for the 16 has the same effect as detention without trial. They are unjustly deprived of their freedom and their organisations hampered by the long imprisonment of their leaders'.

At a mass meeting in Lenasia, Advocate Zac Yacoob of the NIC said the government had now replaced 'detention without charge' for 'detention with charge.'

'For those who think that justice will take its course, then think of



Mrs Mohammed after the swoop

whether justice can exist in an unjust society. There is such a vast river between law and justice in South Africa that it is impossible for anyone to swim it'.

He called for a campaign to secure the release of the trialists.

Achmed Dangor from the Anti-PC Committee said the government chose this time to arrest UDF leaders because it wanted to reassert its dominance.

'You cannot reform a police state', he said of the government's promises of 'reform'. 'You can only dismantle it and build something else in its place.'

A youth speaker said, 'Our struggle is not simply against unjust laws and oppression. It is also against the economic structure based on permanent unemployment and poverty.'

'The vast majority of South Africans are workers. We will not accept any change which does not take their demands into account. And our minimum changes are set out in the Freedom Charter.'

SAAWU East London has also condemned collaboration between Ciskei security police and the SA security police in the detention of Thozamile Gwetha. 'Ciskei is playing junior partner role in the oppressive measures waged by SA. We strongly condemn the Ciskei security police action in handing over Thozai to SA security police. But this crackdown will not deter people in the fight for their inalienable rights', said a SAAWU spokesperson.

Crossroads fights removal

WHEN CROSSROADS residents heard that 700 men had been trucked into Khayelitsha to help with removals, they decided to defend their homes and their right to live where they choose.

The next day, Gerrit Viljoen — Deputy Minister of Co-operation and Development — released a statement making it clear that 'Crossroads must go'.

He also banned all meetings in the African townships of the Western Cape that weekend.

To the residents, it looked like the department meant business.

'The enemy is about to begin its dirty work — we need to fight it with a united force', they said. 'We refuse to be divided into 'illegals' and 'legals'.'

Defying the ban, a mass meeting was held that Sunday.

'Over our dead bodies will we move to Khayelitsha', a speaker said. 'And we know from the past the enemy might demolish houses while we are at work'. Residents resolved to stay at home on the Monday.

At 6am barricades were erected around the camp. When police arrived the people fought back using kierries and stones.



Crossroads residents, determined not to move

'People were determined not to move. Some advanced on the police behind the shelter of corrugated iron sheets, while others flung volleys of stones from behind', a resident said.

'They chased the police from the area, singing 'Asiyi eKhayelitsha.' In Nyanga, also under threat of removal, a beerhall was stoned. And attempts were made to burn the Western Cape Administration Board offices.

By the end of the next day 16 people were dead and 230 injured. Health workers in the camp said most victims were shot in the back.

Police action was more of a threat to health than living conditions at the camp, they said.

Timo Bezuidenhout — chief commissioner for the Department of Co-operation and Development — met with squatter leaders.

By this time, water, electricity and sewerage removals had been cut off. The UDF organized legal and medical help and traders organized emergency supplies of food.

Fighting continued and by Wednesday, 22 February, 18 people were dead.

The next day, 1 000 residents

marched down Mahobe Drive towards Cape Town, demanding the release of their leaders. They were met by 10 police vans who teargassed the crowd.

UDF solidarity meetings were held in Bonteheuwel and St George's Cathedral.

The government backed down on some of its plans, and announced that Nyanga, Langa and Guguletu residents would be able to get 99 year leasehold rights, and would not be moved to Khayelitsha.

They later promised to develop Crossroads and KTC, and will reconsider earlier plans to build more houses at New Crossroads.

But residents say this is not enough. About 60 percent of the Crossroads people will still have to be moved. The government has said it 'cannot rule out' force.

And the 90 000 'illegals' at Crossroads and KTC could still be forced into the overcrowded homelands.

At Mbekweni, near Paarl, police fired teargas and rubber bullets on a crowd marching in solidarity with Crossroads residents. Water and sewerage collection were cut off until pressure from the UDF and other organisations led to these services being restored.



Kroonstad funeral - 'We are not fighting. Just to bury our hero. Yes to SRC's.'

Free State townships rage

GOVERNMENT forces, threatened by growing student mass action, are intensifying their campaign of repression.

Thousands of students nationwide continue to throw their weight behind the call for democratic SRC's and other demands.

But the response from the police, councillors and the Department of Education and Training (DET) has been detentions, baton charges, shootings, expulsions, security police harassment, closing of schools, and court prosecutions.

Students have been beaten, arrested and shot for demanding:

- Democratic Students' Representative Councils (SRC's), and the scrapping of the DET SRC constitution;
- the release of jailed students, and the removal of police from the townships;
- free textbooks and reduced school fees; readmission of expelled students.

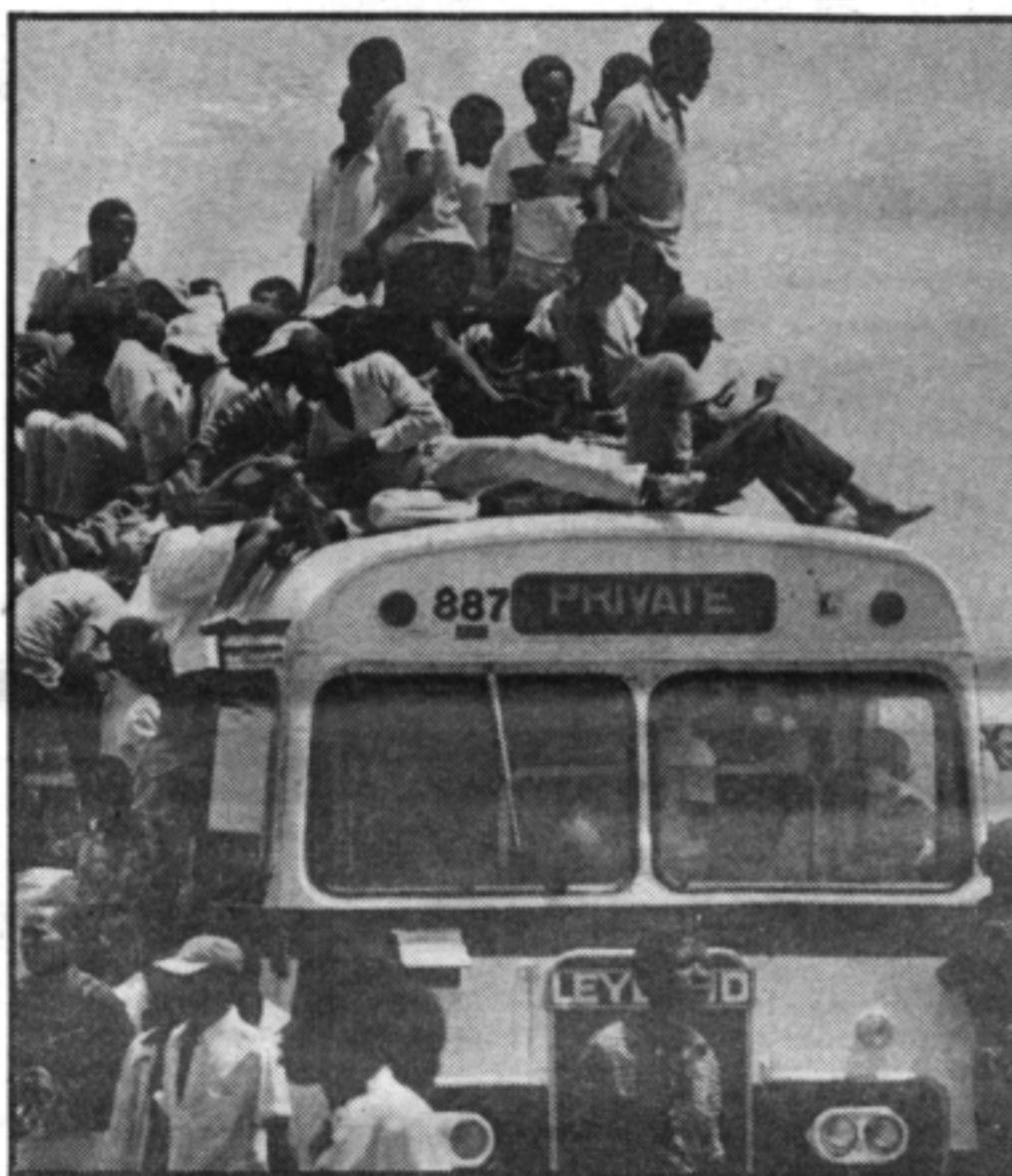
Free State towns, Welkom, Kroonstad, Bultfontein, Wesselsbron, Bothaville, Virginia, Odendaalsrus and Bloemfontein have become like battlegrounds with frequent clashes between police and students.

At two schools in Thabong, Welkom, students staged a stay-in protest against the detention of fellow students. A principal sent to secure the students release was reporting back to students, when police fired teargas and chased students into the township with batons.

In Kroonstad, Cosas and Azaso students from three high schools and a training college formed a joint organisation to fight for democratic SRC's.

But soon after they had drafted their demands and distributed pamphlets, police intervened. Many student leaders were detained, at least four people killed and scores injured.

The house of local UDF committee member, Dennis Bloem's was petrol bombed and he was later detained. Cosas members homes in



Thousands head for the cemetery to bury the dead

Welkom, Kroonstad and Soweto were also bombed.

In Bothaville, students demanded the resignation of a Pupils' Representative Council (PRC) which the principal had appointed. Members of the school's Cosas interim committee were then expelled, so students called a boycott, demanding their readmission. Police arrived at the school and violent confrontations broke out.

In Odendaalsrus, students strongly rejected the DET SRC and went on boycott. Police broke up a meeting and broke windows as they chased students. Many students were arrested and some were charged with public violence.

A few weeks later, the school was suspended. As students left the

school singing freedom songs, police attacked again. Camouflage police forced students to give their own names and the names of Cosas members. Cosas members were later arrested.

In Bloemfontein, students boycotted classes in protest against Cosas detentions. Police arrived and 17 year-old Hunga Kaibe died in the conflict which followed.

Police and newspaper reports said he was killed by a bus, but students say he was shot dead. One student told Saspu National 'We heard four shots. After the dust had settled we saw Hunga lying in the road. The police went up to the body and kicked it.'

A few days later riot police beat up students at Vulamasango High

nearby. Students said one girl was thrown out of the window of an upstairs classroom and badly injured.

In Thabong police allegedly drove through the township shooting rubber bullets at people standing in their yards.

About eight councillors drove around the township in a combi, stopping to sjambok and shoot at groups of people who were standing around. Fifteen year-old Toboko Petrus Bokobane was the first victim. He was shot dead while standing on a street corner about 15 metres from his home.

An estimated 50 000 people attended Bokobane's funeral. Workers stayed away from work, shops closed and transport came to a standstill.

Residents have not even been allowed to bury victims in peace.

At Hunga Kaibe's funeral in Bloemfontein, police repeatedly threw teargas at mourners before they could even bury him. Kaibe's uncle was shot dead.

After the unity and solidarity displayed at Bokobane's funeral, Thabong councillors renewed their attacks on students and residents. An 8pm to 4am curfew was introduced and anyone found breaking it was severely beaten up.

Councillors have also brought in a 'trigger happy' vigilante squad. Residents say the squad consists of councillors' relatives and migrants from Msinga in Natal, recruited by a councillor who is an Inkatha member.

At least 20 people have been seriously injured. One man, Solomon Modise was beaten unconscious by vigilantes and left lying in the street. People who went to the police station to report the incident were detained.

The houses of two policemen and one councillor have been burnt down. Another councillor who is a teacher has resigned in protest against the councillors' actions.

Calls for the resignation of councillors are now winning mass support among residents.

Round one to students in Imbali

THOUSANDS OF Imbali students recently took on the Department of Education and Training (DET) in a successful three week boycott.

Police patrolled the township throughout the boycott, and repeatedly used teargas to disperse singing and placard-waving students.

Students rejected the DET Students' Representative Councils which they called Pretoria's Representative Councils and formed their own Imbali SRC.

At a number of mass meetings, parents supported students demands and formed the Imbali Schools Crisis Committee (ISCC).

'We will never speak to an unruly mass of students chanting at a meeting,' said DET official, Peter Nicholson, at the beginning of the boycotts. But after united action by students and parents, he agreed to meet them.

According to ISCC spokesperson, Miriam Mkhize, students won most of their short term demands and made their feelings on longer term issues clear.

In their demands, students rejected certain things outright:

- The compulsory book deposit of R25, lack of free textbooks, expensive school uniforms and textbooks;
- age-limit laws, last year's high failure rates and the refusal to readmit students who failed last year;
- excessive corporal punishment;
- love affairs between students and teachers;
- lack of adequately trained staff;
- lack of communication between school authorities and students.

After negotiations Nicholson agreed to drop the compulsory book deposit, readmit students who failed last year and accept students of any age after consultation with the headmaster.

He also said he would send circulars to staff and school committees emphasising the existing rules about corporal punishment.

DET policy was to issue free textbooks to all students, he claimed, but 'the extravagant loss of books by students seriously jeopardised this'.

'Stop closing our schools'

THE CLOSURE of schools in Bloemfontein, Odendaalsrus, Welkom, Kroonstad and Wesselsbron has angered many parents.

In Wesselsbron, schools were closed after boycotts erupted over high school fees. Students said the principal was cheating them and boycotted classes after he refused to give their money back. Form 2 students said they had to pay up to R175 a year.

A meeting of parents in Bloemfontein mandated a newly-formed Parents Action Committee to send a memorandum to the Regional DET director, saying they would not tolerate the closing of schools without consultation.

'When they close the schools they don't consult us. Then they re-open them when it suits them and call us when we are supposed to be going to work. They're wasting our time', said one parent.

The Parents Action Committee was also mandated to send memo's to:

- the Chief of Police in Bloemfontein, saying parents would not tolerate police assaults on students, and
- the Town Council, asking them how they can allow police into the schools if they claim they are in charge of the townships.

East Cape schools are out to get SRC's

EASTERN Cape coloured schools and training colleges have added their voices to the nationwide demand for democratic SRC's.

Boycotts in support of democratic SRC's began at two Uitenhage high schools.

Secondary schools in Port Elizabeth, Graaff-Reinet, Somerset East, Mossel Bay and Humansdorp as well as the Dower Teachers Training College came out in solidarity with Uitenhage students and in support of their own demands.

PE students formed the United Students Congress (Unisco) to coordinate their activities, and say they plan to join Cosas in the near future. Alternative education activities have been well supported and thousands of students marched from different schools to a mass meeting at Dower College.

Uitenhage students on a march to primary schools were baton-charged. Primary school students showed their support by singing freedom songs.

Teachers and parents have rallied

to the support of students, and PE teachers plan to form an organisation which will strive for a non-racial and democratic education system.

Support for the boycotts has pressured Labour Party Education authorities to reinstate Uitenhage teachers and reopen Uitenhage schools unconditionally. But many demands have still not been met.

These include recognition of autonomous, democratic SRC's; the resignation of a Uitenhage principal and a teacher, both Labour

Party members; unconditional reinstatement of expelled Dower students; free textbooks and reduced school fees, and an end to excessive corporal punishment.

PE students have drawn up a 'Declaration of Intent' to commit education authorities to accepting certain demands on paper. This will be circulated in all high schools and the Unisco executive will meet with principals and teachers.

If the demands are not met by a certain date, students say they will boycott classes indefinitely.

Thirty rand rent or nothing, says Vaal

'ORGANISE OR BE HOMELESS,' says the Ratanda Civic Association. And in Ratanda, like other townships throughout the country, united action is the people's strongest weapon against rent, electricity, water and rubbish removal increases.

As the cost of survival shoots up, this really has become a life and death struggle. In Katlehong, even the cost of dying has gone up, with huge cemetery fee increases.

In more and more townships, the

people are testing the strength of unity, by simply refusing to pay the rents. In the Vaal, 350 000 people have paid no rent since September.

'We are owed more than R14 000 000!' moans the Lekoa Town Council. 'R14 000 000 that the people in the Vaal townships need desperately to feed their children', says a member of the Vaal Civic Association.

Many strategies have been used to crack the unity of the rents boycott. The Lekoa Town Council (LTC), having no teeth of its own, asked

management in the area to deduct the rents from workers' pay-packets.

They spoke to the Vaal Industries Association, the Vaal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Afrikaner Sakekamer.

But this brought in less than 10% of rent owed. The threat of mass worker action meant most employers soon decided to leave their workers pay packets alone.

The LTC's next threat was to forcibly evict people unless all back rent

was paid at once. This threat was rapidly withdrawn by Viljoen, for whom the implications of forcibly evicting 350 000 people from their homes were a little clearer than they were for the LTC.

Viljoen was so keen to prevent the mass uprising that nearly exploded when evictions were threatened, that he set up a commission which has resulted in an offer of decreased rents.

But the Vaal Civic Association says people will not pay until rent

and service charges are R30.

In Katlehong, rent increases have been suspended. Residents in Thadukukhanya, Thokozani and the Old Location, near Piet Retief, challenged the Eastern Transvaal Administration Board (ETAB) in court, and got ETAB to agree to accept whatever rents the residents could afford.

Residents held a meeting, and agreed to pay nothing. They are taking further court action to challenge ETAB's right to charge rent proportional to people's wages.

Atlantis civic formed to stop evictions

CIVIC ORGANISATION has taken off dramatically in the sprawling 'coloured' township of Atlantis, around the issue of high rents and evictions by the divisional council.

An interim committee has been drawn from the different areas of Atlantis to work towards the launching of an Atlantis residents association so that residents will have a voice in the future.

The rents conflict came to a head on February 25 when 700 residents marched to the divisional council offices, after hearing that 365 people were to be evicted.

They put their demands that evictions be halted and rents scales be reviewed to a council official, then moved on to restore an evicted family's belongings to their house.

Police dispersed the group with teargas, batons and rubber bullets. A number of people were taken to hospital as result. A bystander said: 'The residents did not start this violence'.

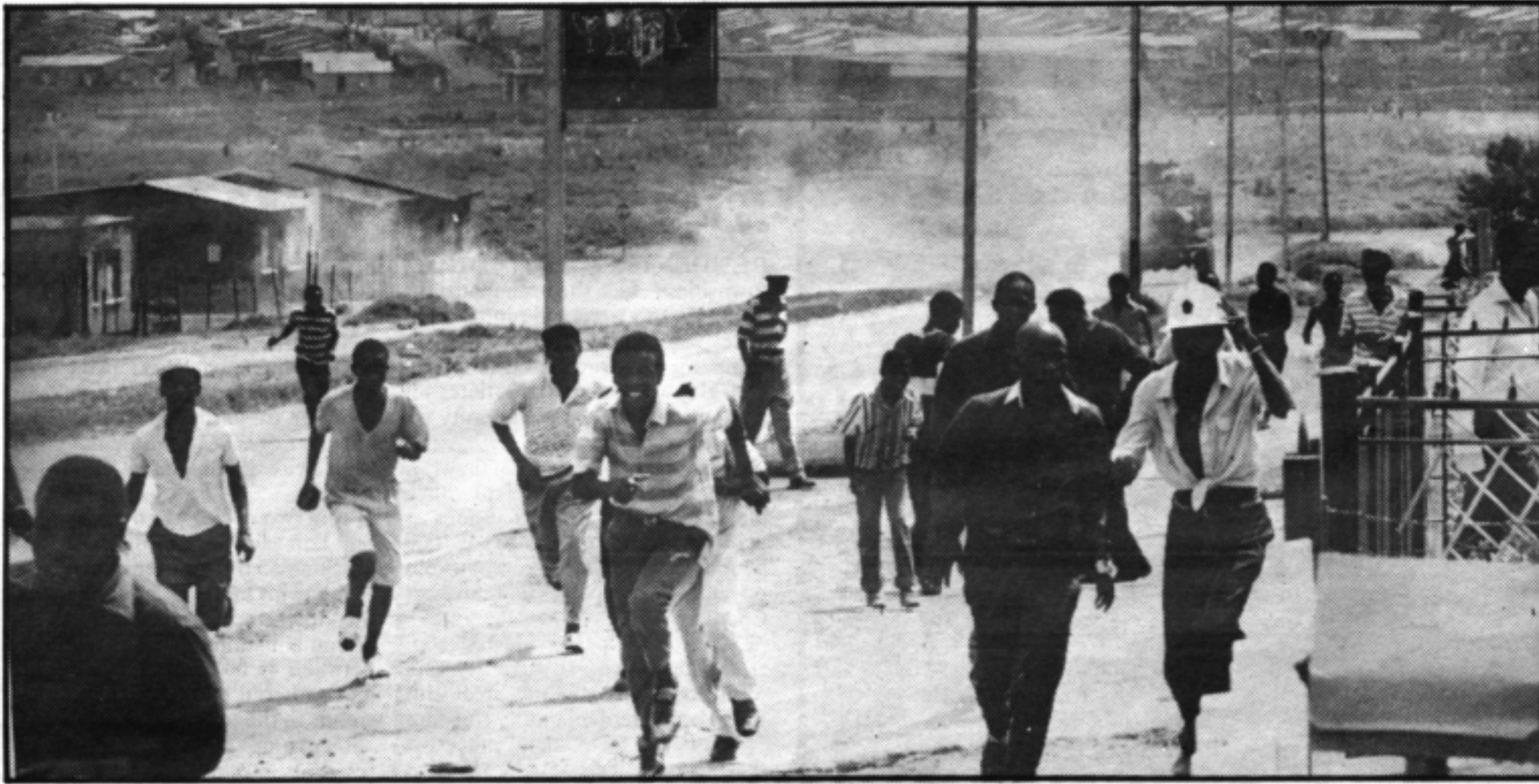
A spokesperson for the residents said they resorted to the march after much pain and suffering. She said there is no work in Atlantis, set up by the government ten years ago 40 kilometres north of Cape Town.

Busfares cost four rand a day to go seek work in Cape Town. Starvation is rife and many people are thousands of rands in arrears on their rent, she said.

'When people can't afford to pay the rent the divisional council cuts off their water and electricity and threatens evictions,' she said. People also complain of damp houses which cause chest infections.

Since the march no-one has been evicted. The management committee has tried to present the halt in evictions as its victory but people say it never listened to their problems before.

The interim committee is holding house meetings to explain the situation to people and to promote the idea of a residents association.



Duduza residents flee from a hippo

Duduza kicks the buckets and battles with the board

'THE BUCKET system stinks,' say residents of Duduza. 'The buckets are only collected twice a week. With eight people crammed into these two-bedroomed houses, this is very unhygienic.'

'There is a huge housing shortage, little security, and not much comfort in Duduza,' say residents. 2558 houses are needed. People are crammed into shacks and forced to share inadequate facilities.

'There is no electricity, the streets are eroded by rain, and one communal tap with no drain must serve a whole street.'

At a mass meeting of the Duduza Civic Association (DCA), people demanded the resignation of the community councillors, who had failed to solve these problems.

The mayor and other councillors handed their resignations to the civic and to Cosas. With only two councillors, the council is crippled,

and the East Rand Development Board (Eradebo) has taken over.

'People were very angry about the bucket system, and marched to Eradebo offices to dump their buckets there', said a Cosas member. Board police opened fire. Hostel inmates from nearby joined forces with the police, and a youth and a hostel inmate were stoned to death in the battle.

Students burnt down the hostel, and hostel inmates attacked residents' houses. 'We slept in fear that night', said Cosas members. But in the light of morning, the reasons for the hostel dwellers actions became clearer.

'These hostel dwellers work for Eradebo and have to collect the residents' buckets. The police threatened them with losing their jobs unless they fought the residents', explained a Cosas member.

'We were afraid to go and speak to

them. But a pamphlet was left at the hostel, calling for unity, because we all share a common oppression. When they read these, they regretted their actions.'

The houses of three Board policemen were burnt down. The next day 37 people were charged with public violence.

'Informers helped the police to track down seven people collecting money for bail. They were detained, and are still inside. But we got the 37 out on bail.'

Three members of the Parents' Committee were also detained. Students are refusing to attend school until they are released.

The DCA has been denied use of the community hall. 'But that hall is ours. We paid R4 a month to build it, and are still paying. But we are puzzled about where this money goes, because the hall has long been built', says a civic member. The

community is boycotting the hall until it can use it freely.

The funeral of Lucky Mkwana, killed in the unrest, was banned and set for a week-day. At a meeting, a worker said: 'The child who has died is a child of the community. He died in our struggle. We must all stay away from work on that day to honour and bury him.'

Thousands of workers joined the funeral procession. Afterwards, the crowd marched peacefully to the family's house for food. But police ruined the peace.

'It is customary after a funeral for all to wash their hands in a bath of water before eating together. The police turned over the bath, threw the food onto the ground, and fired teargas. A student ran with a bucket of water to drown the teargas canister. Police shot his body full of birdshot. He is in a critical condition', said a Cosas member.

No to high rents

NEW CROSSROADS residents have called on people and organisations in other areas to support them by 'taking forward the struggle in the same spirit as we are fighting here'.

Residents have resisted rent increases for two months. They say they can't afford the old rents — let alone the new ones.

'My pension can't even buy a handkerchief', said one aged lady. 'And now they want to take more than I get anyway'.

In 1981 they agreed to pay between R18 and R23, depending on income. But every year since then rents were put up by R6.

Over 200 women demonstrated outside the rent offices, demanding

that the increases be scrapped. Officials said they had to consult Pretoria and told the women to return the next Monday.

The next week, officials told residents to speak to the community councillors. When they were finally found and questioned the councillors promised to resign.

After hearing the rents would still be put up, over 1000 people gathered in a field to discuss the issue.

Police arrested 169 women, and then fired teargas and rubber bullets. Many people were injured.

That night five houses were burnt. Eleven people were arrested and six now face charges. Residents are still refusing to pay rent.



New Crossroads defiant

Bombay Heights won't pay

RESIDENTS IN Bombay Heights, Pietermaritzburg, have won a victory over the Pietermaritzburg City Council.

The council has been forced to suspend increases in the selling price and installment payments of houses. This follows weeks of mass action by Bombay Heights residents.

In January the City Council informed residents of an increase of R40 to R50 on their installments.

'We just cannot afford to pay. Over fifty percent of us live below the subsistence level', said Jaya Govander, secretary of the Bombay Heights Residents Association (BHRA). 1500 residents signed a petition

saying the increases were totally unreasonable, as they came at a time of high unemployment and high living costs.

Govander warned the City Council that 'frustration among the residents can lead to serious repercussions and we do not want what is happening in the Transvaal to happen here.'

At a mass meeting, residents resolved not to pay the increases. Angered that the Indian Local Affairs Committee (ILAC) had shown no interest, they went straight to the City Council.

The council agreed to suspend the increases and to meet the BHRA delegates in early March.

Dismissed workers say stay away from Spar shops

THE COMMERCIAL Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa) has called for a boycott of Spar stores after management refused to negotiate wages and recognition, and dismissed 143 workers.

The boycott has support in Natal, but Ccawusa is appealing to all progressive groups for backing, particularly as Spar has outlets all over the country.

The dispute began last year, just

when recognition talks between Ccawusa and Spar seemed to be going well. The union was informed that the company had been reorganised and Spar was now under the control of Browns Retail.

Browns management said Ccawusa organisers could no longer meet workers inside store premises. And further negotiations could only continue if the union allowed management to check its membership

Ccawusa felt this was unnecessary — membership lists had been checked twice before — but agreed so as to keep negotiations alive. But then management took the lists and started questioning individual workers about why they had joined the union.

Ccawusa called for an immediate halt to the questioning and talks reached a deadlock. Browns management refused to discuss workers' demand for an R80 wage increase.

And, say Spar workers, they were 'deliberately frustrating' recognition talks.

On December 7, 143 workers from four stores stopped work, demanding recognition of Ccawusa, an R80 wage increase, reinstatement of two dismissed workers, and a resolution of grievances in certain stores. Management dismissed them all.

Workers began picketing Spar stores and were arrested when store managers called the police. They

were later released, but one worker has charged police with assault.

In February workers decided to call a boycott. Within a week, Browns management met with Ccawusa's lawyers and offered to settle if the boycott and the pickets were called off. Spar workers want to hear what this 'settlement' involves before they decide.

Meanwhile the boycott continues despite workers' problems paying rent and school fees.

Three years on - Aggett's work lives and guides

NEIL AGGETT was the 46th person to die in detention. His death on February 5, 1982, highlighted South Africa's infamous security laws and the torture of solitary confinement.

Aggett was Transvaal regional secretary for the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU). His death sparked nationwide protest. 100 000 workers downed tools on February 11, in a half hour stoppage supported by a range of trade unions and some universities.

Aggett is remembered particularly for the leading role he played in building links between different unions in the Transvaal. 'In our union he fought against any tendency to separate the struggles we are fighting from the struggles of all workers', a 1982 FCWU tribute said.

This year FCWU commemorated Aggett's death at services in Cape Town, the Eastern Cape and a union rally in Johannesburg.

A FCWU statement said 'We remember Neil for his exceptional contribution to our union and the workers movement. Yet more important was the example he set workers, not to depend on the exceptional contribution of a few but for workers to organise one another. As a result our union in the Transvaal was able to grow from eight organised factories at the time of his death to more than 35 today'.

The statement noted that harassment of trade unions had not ceased — for example, on this anniversary the FCWU office in East London was set alight and destroyed by fire.



Circulars announcing fare increases get burnt

Thousands in Empangeni will not ride

RESIDENTS OF THREE townships in the Empangeni/Richards Bay area will not ride the buses. Not until the present bus company withdraws from the area, and a new company negotiates an agreement with the community on how to run the service.

Residents of Esikhawini, Ngwelezana and Enseleni have taken these and other decisions at mass meetings of up to 45 000 people during their two month-old boycott of Empangeni Transport Company (ETC) buses.

Each township has elected representatives, who sit together as a joint committee for the area. But the people are demanding constant report-backs from them and insist that decisions can only be taken at community meetings.

In December last year, residents were given pamphlets informing them of a ten percent increase in the busfares.

'Everyone, especially the workers, was fed up with the increase', said a Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) official. 'We were not consulted. The company just applied to the Transport Board for the increase, and then told the community when it had already been granted'.

'And in fact the increase is more than ten percent. On some routes fares have gone up by 25-30 percent — up to R1,50 was added on to the

price of some weekly tickets'.

On Monday January 14, the boycott began in Esikhawini and soon gathered overwhelming support in the area. Esikhawini residents mandated the local KwaZulu member of parliament to tell the manager of ETC, Mr Steenkamp to meet with them on the following day.

From two o'clock in the morning, on January 15, residents began blocking all the entrances to Esikhawini. Others moved round the township, urging people to attend a meeting. By nine o'clock, between 45 000 and 50 000 people had gathered in a field at the crossroads to the township.

Steenkamp did not arrive. The residents elected a Committee of Ten, including four union officials, which was mandated to look for other bus companies to operate in the area.

Enseleni and Ngwelezana residents also held meetings and elected local committees, consisting of unionists, officials from the KwaZulu government, tribal authorities and township residents.

South African and KwaZulu police were present at the start of the boycott, but events proceeded peacefully. 'We told them we are not fighting, we are looking for a solution to this problem,' said a community spokesperson.

But earlier in the day, three people were injured and one killed when a member of the KwaZulu police opened fire on a crowd of people. Residents retaliated by burning his house.

Transport minister Hendrik Schoeman has agreed to negotiate with the residents on all their demands.

The residents are not prepared to negotiate with the ETC, saying their complaints about dirty buses, broken windows and fare increases have been ignored in the past. They say their demands are clear:

- The ETC must withdraw, and the company which replaces it must negotiate fares with community representatives. Fares must not rise faster than the inflation rate;

- Residents will look at the standard of the service before agreeing to fare increases. They may decide to discontinue the company's service if they are not satisfied;

- The bus company must put some of its profits back into the community;

- Taxis must be allowed to operate on the route into Richards Bay.

'We want to push for an agreement', said a community spokesperson. 'People can boycott for six months and gain nothing. If we win an agreement which is binding, we will end up having something we have won.'

Employers are providing transport for their workers, but they say this will only continue for a limited time. Meanwhile, the boycott is continuing.

No end to forced removals in sight

ON FEBRUARY 1 the Minister of Co-operation, Development and Education, Gerrit Viljoen, announced the suspension of forced removals.

Well, almost. The government was reviewing forced removals, he said, but would continue to resettle communities whose leaders agreed to move, and would still not accept 'illegal squatting' in rural and urban areas.

Representatives of communities threatened with removal responded cautiously, pointing out that the minister's statement had certain loopholes. Recent conflicts in Tsakane on the East Rand show this to be the case — forced removals of urban people are continuing.

Lack of houses in this old Brakpan township forced residents to build their own shelters. The East Rand Development Board (Eradebo)



Forced removals continue in Tshakane. So does opposition

now wants them to move to a site-and-service scheme, where rents will be much higher.

Clashes began early one morning when Eradebo police began demolishing the shacks of people in arrears with rent. It seems Eradebo's main concern is to control unregistered residents. Registered residents who cannot afford

the new rents could be offered loans and other concessions.

Urban townships threatened with incorporation into bantustans are another site of conflict. In Valspan, north of Kimberley, people have been prevented from repairing their houses for 20 years, because they are supposed to move to Pampierstad, in Bophuthatswana.

Recently the government announced that Valspan would be redeveloped, but not extended. People who wanted to move would be given all possible assistance and encouragement. High rents in Valspan are tempting people to move — a house costing R500 costs only R200 in Pampierstad. But the hidden price of moving is loss of South African citizenship.

Tsakane and other townships have united against government tactics which aim at causing division. But united opposition is difficult for farmworkers and labour tenants, who are also still threatened with removal.

These removals affect one or two families at a time, are difficult to monitor and seldom get publicity.

Dairy Maid boycott melts bosses, wins back jobs

THE BOYCOTT of Dairy Maid products is over — after workers at the Olifantsfontein factory won their year-long battle with management.

Dairy Maid has agreed to re-hire 80 workers dismissed last February, and pay them R70 000 in compensa-

tion. The company has also agreed to recognize the Food and Beverage Workers Union (FBWU), a CUSA union.

The dispute was sparked by an assault on a union member by a white supervisor. It brought many other complaints to the fore.

After four meetings of the Industrial Council failed to settle the dispute, workers decided to call a boycott of Dairy Maid products in January this year.

By February 14 Dairy Maid agreed to recognize FBWU, and reinstate the dismissed workers.

SASOL WORKERS dismissed after the stayaway last November have made a major breakthrough in their struggle to win back their jobs.

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) has won an agreement from Sasol management that guarantees 70 percent of the workers who reapply their jobs back. And Sasol has undertaken to consider the employment of the rest.

CWIU, an affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu), has also improved its bargaining position at Sasol.

Sasol had previously denied CWIU full recognition, which the union says contributed to 'the levels of tension in the plant'. Sasol management was particularly unwilling to recognise the workers elected shop stewards.

According to the agreement, shop stewards will now be recognised. A negotiating committee will be established and a program drawn up for further negotiations. Sasol has also agreed to give the union an office in the hostel.

'This is an important milestone in the Sasol workers' struggle', says CWIU general secretary, Rod Crompton. 'Now this struggle will take a new course. It will be fought in the plant.'

The campaign to win back the jobs of Sasol workers has been waged on many levels. Shop stewards from Fosatu and other unions were asked

Fired Sasol workers coming back strong

to get their employers to put pressure on Sasol.

'We wanted to create a sense of a national worker movement, a sense of identifying with the struggles of other workers', says Crompton.

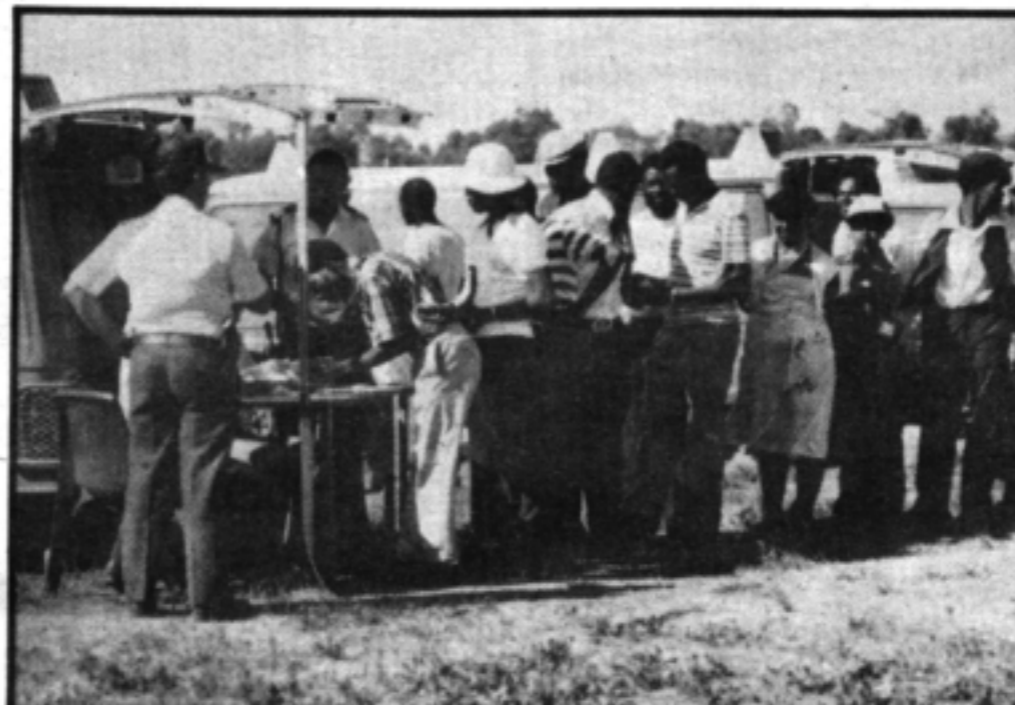
This was dramatically expressed in December, when 24 unions threatened Sasol, the government and all employers with a national strike if the Sasol workers were not reinstated.

Unions and other groups overseas wrote letters to Sasol and put pressure on companies that had business dealings with it.

Most important, organisation continued at Sasol itself. CWIU organised a majority in the coalmines attached to Sasol, and was helped in this by the sackings.

'Some miners joined because they could see they needed protection. Some felt outrage and anger, and wanted to be part of the struggle against Sasol', says Crompton.

Many dismissed workers set up informal groups in the homelands. They kept in contact with the union



Flashback. Sasol workers on the way out.

through phonecalls and occasional trips to the bantustans by shop stewards.

When Sasol started reemploying workers, CWIU encouraged workers to reapply. 'We knew it was important to rebuild organisation

inside the plant as rapidly as possible', says Crompton. 'We could not coordinate workers in ten different homelands. We couldn't even bring all the workers together to meet.'

In the face of these pressures, Sasol offered to talk. A 'half-peace'

was agreed on — Sasol would begin with re-employment, the national strike would be held off until the end of January, and negotiations would begin.

After a month of talks, CWIU called a special national Congress, to discuss the agreement offered by Sasol. After lengthy debate, the congress passed a resolution accepting it.

'We see this as a victory for the Sasol workers and for the wider South African struggle', says Crompton. 'When negotiations began, the union was in an appallingly weak position — the workers had not only been dismissed, but also bussed out and dispersed across ten homelands.'

They were faced with a major strategic industry, and one closely linked to the state. And a state body had never before made such a large attempt to wipe out a union.'

But CWIU is not claiming all the credit for the Sasol victory. 'Credit is also due to the organised working-class and the presence it now commands, in South Africa and overseas', says Crompton.

The workers' fight at Sasol is who have got their jobs back will need to exert pressure within the plant to get others back as well. We will have to work hard to rebuild organisation at Sasol', says Crompton.

New PE car corporation kills off jobs

AFTER MONTHS of negotiations, Ford and Amcar have told their workers that the two companies are merging, and 3000 of them will be without jobs.

'The whole exercise clearly indicates that these companies are only concerned with maximum profits — at the expense of those who will lose their jobs as a result', says Dennis Neer, a Motor Assemblers and Components Workers Union of SA (Macwusa) official.

The National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (Naawu) says the merger is in the interests of Ford and Amcar shareholders. It does not reflect the needs of the thousands who will lose their jobs, or the communities in which they live.

51 000 motor industry and component workers have lost their jobs in the last five years as major manufacturers cut back. In Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, two factories will soon be closed.

PE has been hardest hit. The motor industry is by far the largest employer in PE, and last year alone over 2 400 workers were retrenched. And, because there are so few jobs in the Eastern Cape, retrenchments will also hit the jobless who depend on the motor workers to stay alive.

Naawu and Macwusa are angry that they were not consulted about the merger and were not able to voice their feelings to management earlier.

They say they will be negotiating to see whether the new company is really serious about what it calls its 'responsibilities to its employees and the community'.

They have asked for a list of all shareholders in Ford and Anglo-American and say they will demand that retrenched workers are given jobs in other factories linked to these companies.

Ford, a huge American company, is the second largest car producer in South Africa. Amcar — which used to be Sigma until it was bought out by Anglo-American — is the third largest. Together, they expect to sell more than R1 billion worth of vehicles this year.

Samcor has said it is 'fully aware of the social and economic implications of the merger' and has committed itself to 'really addressing the situation'. But they have not yet spelled out what this really means.



Bakers national strike. 'A good experience of workers' unity'

Living wage victory for Sweet Food

ONE THOUSAND workers at the Isando and Pinetown plants of Bakers' Biscuits have stuck to their demands for a living wage. After four months of negotiations and a two week legal strike they have tasted victory.

The workers, all members of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union (SFAWU), have won a minimum wage of R96 a week, an increase of 16,5 percent. They had previously rejected management's

offer of a 12,5 percent increase.

'South African employers must know that workers will demand a living wage, even during a recession', says Bakers shop steward chairperson, Tom Dlamini. 'We will not carry the load of bad planning by the bosses and the government'.

The Bakers' dispute began last year when the National Industrial Council for the biscuit industry collapsed in the Transvaal and Natal.

SFAWU had majority membership in these areas and had forced employers to negotiate outside the council.

A new wage-negotiating forum was set up and SFAWU invited Food and Beverage Workers' Union (FBWU), and a Tucsa union to present a united front

After two meetings, FBWU and Tucsa accepted the 12,5 percent increase.

decided to press on for a living wage and declared a dispute with Bakers.

Workers continued to pressurise management in the Isando and Pinetown plants, but by February, when more than thirty days had passed without settlement, they decided to take legal strike action.

'Bakers' management was not moving though they agreed it is our right to strike', said Dlamini. 'They wanted to see how long we could survive and keep united. But we were also determined to win'.

'We tried to involve our whole families in our struggle, and called them to a big meeting where food was distributed. We had many other plans if the strike went on.'

The day after a mass meeting in Durban, management locked the workers out of the factory and said the increase would be withdrawn if they did not accept it and return to work. 'We continued to push and after almost 24 hours of negotiations, we reached settlement', says Dlamini.

'This struggle was important for us. For SFAWU it was the first national action and full of lessons', says Dlamini. 'And further, more than 200 Indian workers supported the strike. It was a good experience of workers' unity.'

Cape Textile strike shuts factory

A TWENTY-FOUR HOUR strike over wages by members of the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) in the Western Cape has boosted the union and resulted in an intransigent management facing losses of millions of rands.

The enormous and highly mechanised factory of the South African Nylon Spinners in Belville South, part of the AECI Group, experienced its first organised strike on February 21.

It was also the first legal strike by a Western Cape union.

The strike was called by NUTW after the workers' negotiating com-

mittee spent more than three months pursuing the official dispute procedure.

Western Cape branch secretary, Virginia Engel, said the workers were prepared to bring their wage demands down to a 12,5 percent increase in January and a further 7,5 percent in July.

'Yet management would not budge above a 10,5 percent increase. This would not even bring the workers' wages level with cost of living increases and so it does not even amount to an inflation wage adjustment,' she said.

The union is convinced that the factory's profitability has remained

high even in this recession.

The workers closed the factory for one day but it took more than a week for the highly sophisticated production process to be restored.

Management was not able to persuade enough of its 1200-strong workforce to keep the factory running, and the successful shutdown has strengthened the unity of the workforce.

But the bosses will still not increase their wage offer and instead seem determined to break the union.

NUTW, meanwhile, is evaluating the strike, while members decide what their next step will be.

Reject the violence of the apartheid system

'LET BOTHA show that he is different to Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd. Let him renounce violence'. With these words Nelson Mandela rejected PW Botha's offer of conditional release.

South Africa's rulers have never renounced violence. They cannot in honesty do this because the apartheid system they fight so bitterly to maintain cannot survive without it.

The government and ruling class in South Africa have a lot of power. It comes from their complete control over wealth, resources and institutions like parliament and the schools.

But with all their power they are missing one vital thing - support from the majority. And so, violence is used to keep the majority under control.

This violence goes further than just the physical force used by the army, police and prisons. There is also violence which reaches into every corner of South African life.

The rulers are violent

The government is violent when it drives people out of Crossroads, Tsakane and a dozen other places to face certain starvation in bantustans like the Ciskei and Khayelitsha.

The education system is violent because it aims to make students accept lives with no political rights and only the tiniest share of the country's wealth.

It is violent when a pass system regulates where people can live, work, sleep and eat and which puts three people in jail every five minutes.

Creating community councils which people don't want and charging rents they cannot afford is also violent.

There is violence in seizing 16 people who have fought for democracy, peace and friendship and charging them with treason.

There is daily violence in an economic system which gives the bosses power to pay workers poverty wages, and to throw them onto the streets when they get in the way of profit-making.

Political violence involves refusing people any say in the running of the country, forcing puppet bantustan governments onto them, and taking decisions for the majority against their wishes.

This is why people talk of creating peace through changing the fundamental basis of South Africa. The system is so fundamentally violent that no amount of reform will make it more peaceful. The government's reforms themselves contain violence — physical, political, economic, social and cultural.

The people defend themselves

The violence at the core of apartheid is reaching new heights. Eighteen people died defending their homes at Crossroads. Nearly three million people have no jobs. More teargas, shootings, and detentions than ever before are needed to maintain this system.

This will happen for as long as the people do not govern, and the wealth of the country is shared only by a few. But right now people have begun to defend themselves against the violence of apartheid.

Last year, South African democrats defeated the constitution and community councils. These campaigns were not only a rejection of government policies, but also a demand for fundamental change which would bring a lasting and just peace to our country.

Workers have organised to fight retrenchment and win living wages. Sasol workers have won back their jobs against all expectations. Bakers workers have stood their ground and won a living wage.

Students have strengthened their demands for democratic SRC's. They have defended themselves and their goals in the face of batons, teargas, arrests and government manipulation. They have protected and built their unity to include their parents.

Township residents are defending themselves against the violence of rents they cannot afford. They are refusing to pay them. They are forcing the councils which brought them in to collapse.

The people's defences against the violence of apartheid are spreading further all the time. The Northern Transvaal, the Eastern Cape, Southern Cape, Orange Free State and Northern Natal are all fighting back. Youth across the country are pooling their strengths against a system which offers them a violent future without jobs and without hope.

Peace only when the people govern

While the people defend themselves against apartheid's violence day after day, the demand for the people to govern and share in the country's wealth is alive and growing.

The Freedom Charter is thirty years old. This year, more than ever, democratic South Africans plan to hold the Charter up high as a set of demands which could bring real peace.

That is why Botha cannot expect Mandela and others to renounce violence. Botha first has to meet the basic demands of the people set out in the Freedom Charter thirty years ago.



Conditional freedom is not freedom at all say prisoners.

STATE PRESIDENT P.W. Botha was given an unconditional slap in the face when his offer of conditional release was rejected by Nelson Mandela and his fellow political prisoners in Polsmoor.

At a United Democratic Front mass rally in Soweto 6 000 people applauded as Nelson Mandela's daughter, Zinzi, read out her father's reply to the offer of conditional release.

It was the first public statement Mandela had been allowed to make since his imprisonment in 1964 in the Rivonia Treason Trial.

It reads: 'I and my comrades in Pollsmoor Prison send our greetings to you, the freedom loving people of this our tragic land in the full confidence that you will carry on the struggle for freedom.

'We wish to make this statement to you, the people, first. We are clear we are accountable to you and to you alone. And that you should hear our views directly and not through others.

'I speak not only for myself and for my comrades at Pollsmoor Prison, but I hope I also speak for all those in jail for their opposition to apartheid, for all those who are banished, for all those in exile, for all those who suffer under apartheid, for all those who are opponents of apartheid, and for all those who are oppressed and exploited.

'I am a member of the African National Congress. I have always been a member of the ANC and I will remain a member of the ANC until I die.

Armed struggle

'Oliver Tambo is much more than a brother to me. He is my greatest friend and comrade for nearly fifty years. If there is any one amongst you who cherishes my freedom Oliver Tambo cherishes it more and I know he would give his life to set me free. There is no difference between his views and mine.

'I am surprised at the conditions the government wants to impose on me. I am not a violent man. My colleagues and I wrote in 1952 to Malan (then Prime Minister) asking for a round-table conference to find a solution to the problems of our country. But that was ignored.

'When Strijdom was in power, we made the same offer. Again it was ignored. When Verwoerd was in power we asked for a national convention for all the people in South Africa to decide on their future. This too, was in vain.

'It was only when all other forms of resistance were no longer open to us that we turned to armed struggle.

'Let Botha show he is different to Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd.

'Let HIM renounce violence.

'Let him say he will dismantle apartheid.

'Let him unban the people's organisation, the African National Congress.

'Let him free all who have been imprisoned, banished or exiled for their opposition to apartheid.

'Let him guarantee free political activity so that the people may decide who will govern them.

'I cherish my own freedom dearly, but I care even more for YOUR freedom. 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 to their 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 cannot sell my birthright. Nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free. I am in prison as the representative of the people and of your organisation the African National Congress, which was banned.

'What freedom am I being offered when whilst the organisation of the people remains banned? What freedom am I being offered when I may be arrested on a pass offence? What freedom am I being offered to live my life as a family with my dear wife who remains in banishment in Brandfort? What freedom am I being offered when I must ask for permission to live in an urban area? What freedom am I being offered when I need a stamp in my pass to seek work? What freedom am I being offered when my very South African citizenship is not respected?

'I will return'

'Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts. Herman Toivo ja Toivo, when freed, never gave any undertaking, nor was he called upon to do so.

'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.'

Mandela's statement has been warmly welcomed by the United Democratic Front, the Release Mandela Committees and other groups. They rejected conditional offers and reiterated their call for the unconditional release of all political prisoners.

Four long-term Pan Africanist Congress members were released from Robben Island shortly after Botha's offer. They claimed, however, that they did not sign any undertakings.

Early this month Dennis Goldberg, one of the Rivonia trialists, was also released and flown immediately to Israel.

He told of his feelings about signing the conditional release: 'I know that my leaders, my senior commanders — Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu — have given a categorical 'no' to the offer by the State President. I wish I had been as strong as they are.

'I needed to be out of prison. I hope they will understand.'

Government violence

Goldberg pointed out that, although he had signed an undertaking not to use violence, he supported others who saw it as necessary.

He condemned the violence of the government: 'The terrorism in South Africa today is not of the people seeking their liberation, but of the armed might of the South African state.

'They don't hesitate to shoot. They shoot down children who want a decent education. People who want a place to live at Crossroads get shot down even though they are unarmed.

'If people respond with more effective defence and use their numbers against the armed might of the state, I think they are justified,' he said.

According to Botha, 17 others have signed the conditional release statement, but have not yet been released. The reason: they have not been in prison long enough to get remission.

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The Charter has the solution to problems apartheid can't solve

South Africa's rulers have got us all into an economic and political mess. But they can't solve it. The Charter can.

IT WAS a rough 1984.

There were over four strikes a week. More than 1 000 people were detained. At times up to a million pupils were boycotting classes. Townships which had become ungovernable were placed under martial law as the army and the police tried to bring the people back under control. The new community council system was demolished.

P.W.'s proud new constitution was thoroughly rejected and it is doubtful whether Rajbansi, Hendrickse, Botha and Malan will get much out of their tri-cameral parliament.

1985 doesn't look any better.

The recession is getting worse by the day. More and more companies are going bankrupt and thousands of workers have found themselves without jobs. Those still holding onto their jobs are being forced to work harder for lower wages. Prices keep rising faster than wages, and every month people can afford less and less.

There are no signs this will improve while apartheid remains.

The pass laws, housing controls, labour bureaux and resettlement cost the government and the people millions. So does indoctrination through the bantu education system and ethnic television and radio stations. The police, army and prison machinery cost billions of rand.

At the moment the government is forced to spend about 24 percent more money than it has. If it was a company it would be bankrupt.

One option for the government is to cut spending on defence and security. But it will not and cannot do this if it is to carry out its responsibilities to the bosses in keeping the population under control.

And so the government increases taxes, borrows and prints more money. This increases the amount of money in circulation, making it worth less.

The implications are clear. Conditions in the townships will get worse as the government makes less money available for housing and services. The already bankrupt community councils will try to increase rent and service charges.

Conditions in the schools will get worse as the government cuts spending on education. And tensions in the factories will grow as bosses try to hold down wages and push up productivity.

But organisation against oppression and exploitation is becoming stronger and more militant.

Some of the major issues of 1984 — such as bantu education, low wages, rents and high prices, are likely to get worse this year.

The people who took up those issues with such determination last year will do so again. Only now they're more highly organised and politicised. Having faced hippos, teargas, birdshot and bullets, without surrendering, they are unlikely to back down now.

Throughout the country we see groups of people rising up in resistance on a scale that makes it difficult for the government to monitor, let alone manage.

In many of the townships throughout the country community councils will never again carry out apartheid's dirty work. In hundreds of schools bantu education continues to be challenged. And in the factories of the key industrial centres, bosses are learning fast that they do not have total control on the factory floor.

1985 is likely to be the year in which workers, students, and residents try to consolidate, defend and advance the gains of 1984. Although there have been victories, those who govern will definitely

strike back.

All this means more work for the government which must defend its rule and protect profits. Government strategies will be evaluated and changed.

Already we have seen moves to confuse the forces of opposition by promising to release political prisoners and negotiate with political organisations if they reject violence.

The Department of Co-operation and Development is looking at new methods of control — methods that don't bring the bad publicity of forced removals.

Certain townships, especially where resistance has been fierce, will get concessions. They will be upgraded but will become so expensive that many of the people who wouldn't be bulldozed out will have to move anyway — because they cannot afford the accommodation in those areas.

Even the government's crudest tactics, like detention without trial, are being replaced by sophisticated legal manoeuvres. 15 key leaders of the progressive movement are likely to spend up to two years in jail on trial for treason. The government won't say what they are alleged to have done, but they will still be removed from progressive activity.

In the meantime, the bosses are gearing up to take more control of some areas of government work that have become so controversial and explosive. American experts

have flown in to preach the glories of free enterprise. They're suggesting that the private sector take over health and housing, play a greater role in education and even take over the railways.

If handled by the business community these resources and social services would be allocated strictly according to whether people can afford them. That is what 'self-help' housing schemes are all about. That is what free enterprise is all about — freedom to enjoy what you can afford.

And what you can afford obviously depends on where you fit into the hierarchy of ownership and control, of wealth and power.

Because the old apartheid controls no longer work the bosses want more effective and less controversial measures. And in some areas they think they could do better than the government.

Many of their new strategies are based on the experience of Western Europe and America, where meaningful opposition was subverted by dominant interests offering a greater slice of the capitalist cake.

But in South Africa, that is not a simple option. Capitalism as it has developed in this country relies heavily on the racial domination of the working class — to ensure that workers are cheap and vulnerable. And it is hard to imagine any other way of doing it.

By grabbing all the land and turning it over to large scale capitalist farmers, the owners have left mil-

ions of people without food or work. There will never be enough jobs in commerce and industry to absorb all these surplus people, and the only long term solution is to return the land to them.

That is why the Freedom Charter states clearly the land shall belong to those who work it.

At the same time the bosses and the government have limited houses in urban areas to those who have jobs, and whose labour they need. The surplus people are denied adequate housing and the right to live where they choose. That is why the Freedom Charter demands housing and security.

The government has used bantu education to mould the working class. The people demand that the doors of learning and culture shall be opened. Azaso, Cosas and Nusas have set about drawing up an education charter, to express their criticisms of the current education system, and to spell out proposals for a future democratic education.

Residents are explaining their struggle for houses and against high rents by drawing up a housing charter.

The fact that the demands of the Freedom Charter are as relevant today as they were thirty years ago, demonstrates that the system is unable to change itself. It has tried to adapt, it has tried to sophisticate its mechanisms of control, but the fundamentals remain unchanged. The demands of the Freedom Charter expose that quite clearly.

They touch on the key contradictions of the system at its local and national levels. More and more township youth, student, women's and factory groups are using its demands to draw links between their local struggles and the national political struggle for liberation.

Its relevance in the current situation stems directly from the fact that those demands have not, cannot, and will not be met by the bosses and their government. As the struggles continue in the schools and the factories and the townships, against an intransigent and brutal system, more and more people are insisting that these struggles will not be won before the people govern.

WHAT IS YOUR IDEA FREEDOM

'IF YOU COULD make the laws what would you do? How would you set about making South Africa a happy place for all the people who live in it?'

This was the question on the lips of hundreds of thousands of South Africans in the 18-month campaign leading up to the Congress of the People. We are still asking that question today.

But now, 30 years later, the democratic movement has the Freedom Charter to guide it.

The question asked in the Congress of the People campaign made people think about another question: 'How are we going to realise the aims which we set out?' As an answer, the Congress Alliance decided to use the campaign to strengthen organisation and spread it to every part of South Africa.

The Congress of the People Campaign was launched by the newly-formed Congress Alliance made up of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the South African Coloured People's Organisation (Sapco) and the South African Congress of Democrats (Sacod). Two other important 'spokes' in the Congress wheel were the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu), formed in March 1955, and the South African Peace Council.

The Sactu 'spoke' represented organised labour. It was a huge federation of trade unions, and many of its working class leaders were fully involved in the organizing committees.

On 15 August, 1953, Professor ZK Matthews, the Cape leader of the ANC addressed the Cape Provincial Congress in Queenstown: 'I wonder whether it is not time for the African National Congress to consider the question of convening a National Convention, a Congress of the People, representing all the people of this country irrespective of race or colour to draw up a Freedom Charter for the democratic South Africa of the future.'

In December, 1953 the ANC national conference accepted Professor Matthews' suggestion.

Campaign begins

In March, 1954 over 200 organisations attended a conference in Tongaat near Durban to plan the Congress of the People campaign. A National Action Council (NAC) was elected to run the campaign. The chairperson was Chief Albert Luthuli, and its secretariat was Walter Sisulu of the ANC, Yusuf Cachalia of the SAIC, Lionel Bernstein of COD and Stanley Lollan of SACPO. T E Tshunungwa from the ANC was made national organiser of the campaign.

A campaign plan was adopted: 'Never in South African history have the ordinary people of this country been able to take part in deciding their own fate and future. Elections have been restricted to a small minority of the population. There is a need to hear the voice of the ordinary citizen of this land proclaiming to the world his demand for freedom.'

'The Congress of the People will not be just another meeting or conference. It will be a mass assembly of delegates elected by the people of all races in every town, village, farm, factory, mine and kraal.'

The first NAC task was to make the whole country aware of the Congress of the People: 'This can only be done through the greatest possible campaign of printed propaganda material side by side with a string of hundreds of meetings, house to house canvases and group discussions.'

'Every demand made by the people at these gatherings, however small the matter, must be recorded and col-



A 'Freedom Volunteer' canvasses workers during the Congress of the People campaign

It took thousands of volunteers, an 18 month campaign and mass participation to pave the road to the Freedom Charter. Part one in the series: the Congress of the People campaign

lected for consideration by the Congress of the People for inclusion in the Freedom Charter. In this way it will become the charter of the People, the content of which has its source in their own homes, factories, mines and reserves.'

The NAC was given the task of creating a corps of Freedom Volunteers who would carry the Freedom message. These would be the core of the campaign, making themselves available to the organisers for any work in any place where they were needed. The NAC also aimed to establish Congress of the People Committees for each province and on a town, suburb, factory and street basis.

The campaign plan stressed the need to link the campaign 'with people's burning problems. When speaking to farm squatters the Congress of the People must be linked in their minds with their own struggle against ejection from their homes; to town workers, for the fight for trade union rights and for better wages.

Linking issues

'Every vital issue, whether it be eviction of the people from the Western Areas (to the new township of Soweto), the introduction of apartheid at the universities, expropriation of property under the Group Areas Act, or the removal of voting rights under the Separate Representation of Voters' Act, must be linked with all the propaganda for the Congress of the People.'

The Congress of the People was to be the highpoint of the campaign. But the campaign itself was just as important. Through it thousands could begin to see what kind of society they wanted to live in. They would also realise that the government and the

The shock brigade in the army of freedom

IN JUNE 1954, Chief Albert Luthuli, the banned President of the ANC called for 50 000 'Freedom Volunteers'. Thousands signed up. They were Congress activists who were to be the core of the campaign.

In a Congress of the People Bulletin the Freedom Volunteers were described as the 'shock brigade' in the 'army of freedom'. 'A volunteer is an organiser and leader of the people. He is an active worker for the Congress cause. He is one who gives up his spare time and leisure, evenings, weekends and holidays to do active work for the congress movement.'

'He is a leader of his people in the long hard struggles for freedom. Therefore, a volunteer must be a disciplined leader, ready to help others but also learn from them.'

'They will be the active organisers against the apartheid menace. They will be expected to carry the message of the Congress of the People, to gain support for it and to recruit new volunteers. They will bear in

mind that their foremost aim will be to strengthen the national organisations of the people. Volunteers should keep their eyes and ears open for every opportunity to strike a blow for Congress campaigns.'

'Freedom Volunteers will carry out their tasks with courage, discipline and utmost devotion, with the realisation that their tasks will end only when South Africa is free.' Volunteers were encouraged to join together in neighbourhood or factory groups, to plan together, and carry out tasks on a weekly schedule. 'volunteer is a freedom planner,' was their slogan.

Most important, however, was that a volunteer was teacher: A volunteer 'must teach people that the road to freedom lies through unity with their fellows in the struggle led by Congress. They must teach people to see in all their little struggles and campaigns, seeds of the great national struggle for freedom. Volunteers must spread among the people understanding and knowledge. But to do all this, the volunteer must study, learn and discuss.'

rich would not create this kind of society.

In his opening address to the first Natal Congress of the People conference in September, 1954, Chief Luthuli said: 'I invite all progressive people to rally to the cause of freedom. The ascendancy of the reactionary forces must be halted before they harm the true interests of our country. The time demands that we think courageously together, plan boldly together in an effort to bring freedom to all in our land.'

The campaign was certainly boldly planned. It was divided into three phases. The first aimed to 'make the C.O.P. known and understood throughout the country, draw in all possible organisations, recruit the first 5 000 volunteers and set up provincial committees.'

100 000 copies of the 'Call to the People of South Africa' (See Box) were distributed through congress supporters, shopstewards, teachers and others. Trips to the countryside were organised. Pamphlets, posters and stickers in all languages popularised the campaign at a mass level. A Congress of the People Bulletin was set up and sold by volunteers.

Congress education

The NAC met with organisations considering participation in the campaign, and local and provincial committees were open to all democratic groups. Mass meetings were organised to recruit Freedom volunteers and explain to them the tasks and aims of the campaign.

National sub-committees were set up to look into the conditions of mineworkers, farm labourers, domestic servants, bantustan dwellers, factory workers, and to present plans for mobilising them.

The education of the volunteers was of crucial importance. A series of written political lectures were given around the country to the Congress Teachers — all 575 of them. The teachers were selected from the ranks of the volunteers, and each teacher was expected to teach others.

The first lectures were entitled 'The world we live in'. The second, 'The country we live in', began with: 'The way of life of the people of South Africa has been shaped by imperialism. In the earliest days

OF



'There's a need to hear the voice of the ordinary citizens of this land proclaiming their freedom demands'

traders raided Africa. But later, a new kind of invader came to Africa — the imperialist. He searched not for slaves to capture, but for workers at low wages, to exploit the people and the natural riches of this land.

'The imperialists made South Africa a place where labour is cheap, a place where the natural riches of the country can be cheaply produced, a place where people are poor, oppressed and ruled by an iron hand.'

A second series of lectures entitled 'What are Trade Unions?' went through the reasons for forming unions, their limits and possibilities and a history of trade unions in South Africa. There was also an elementary course on politics and economics, which looked at capitalism as 'a system in which are found private ownership of the means of production, the employment of wage labour, and production for private profit.'

The lectures also dealt with the Charter campaign: 'At every stage democratic rights have had to be fought for against the will of the ruling class. Only when the people are organised, united and clear in their minds as to what they want can they throw off their chains. Freedom is

never given to people; it must be won through struggle.'

A unionist of the time explained this analysis of South Africa: 'It must never be forgotten that apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa has an aim far more important than discrimination itself: the aim is economic exploitation. The root and fruit of oppression and racial discrimination is profit.'

During this stage thousands of pamphlets were sent out and sold. The most important pamphlet was a demands form, and the most important question was: 'WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY FREEDOM?'

Building networks

The second phase of the campaign aimed to establish a network of 2 000 local Congresses of the People Committees, gather demands, in writing, for the Freedom Charter, increase the number of Freedom Volunteers and start preparing for the Congress. People across the country were also urged to elect their delegates to the Congress of the People.

The education work continued with a series of lectures called: 'What good volunteers know of freedom'. 50 000 copies were produced.

The campaign was helping to strengthen organisations, as a Sactu unionist describes: 'The workers responded with enthusiasm and were working day and night. The workers would bring their demands to the offices after work with papers from the different industries. We organised a committee of workers, not only for the Congress, but so that they could continue with the work of organising for the trade unions.'

'Some of workers problems were those of higher wages, better working conditions, and this can only be solved by having a union. So, this gave us a chance to organise workers and explain to them that some of these problems would not be solved by the Congress of the People. So this also brought us nearer to the workers.'

The Campaign for the Congress of the People was set back by bannings which removed layer after layer of leadership. Luthuli, was banned in 1952, and the ban renewed in 1954 and 1959. The ANC's Secretary General, Walter Sisulu, was banned in 1952 and again in 1955.

Oliver Tambo took over Sisulu's position, but he was banned in 1954 and 1959. So were the acting Cape President, J L Z Njongwe, the provincial secretaries of the Cape, Trans-

vaal and Natal and the President of the ANC Youth League. By November 1954 most of the Natal Indian Congress executive had been banned.

But the campaign went ahead, with thousands responding to Luthuli's call for Freedom Volunteers. The volunteer and education work had created new leadership which filled the places left by bannings and banishments.

Demands flood in

Repression at the time was so great that the NAC feared the Congress of the People would be banned. So it took precautions: the venue was privately owned and was announced at the last moment.

This was also why the campaign was so important. The NAC knew it could not rely on one single mass meeting for the success of the campaign.

On the eve of the Congress of the People, the NAC reported: 'For months the demands have been flooding in to COP headquarters, on sheets torn from school exercise books, on little dog-eared scraps of paper, on slips torn from COP leaflets.'

A journalist described the scene just before the Congress of the People:

THE CALL

We call the people of South Africa

Black and White — let us speak together of freedom

WE CALL THE FARMERS OF THE RESERVES AND TRUST LANDS.

Let us speak of the wide land, and the narrow strips on which we toil. Let us speak of brothers without land, and children without schooling. Let us speak of taxes and of cattle, and of famine.

LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE MINERS OF COAL, GOLD AND DIAMONDS.

Let us speak of the dark shafts, and the cold compounds far from our families. Let us speak of heavy labour and long hours, and of men sent home to die. Let us speak of rich masters and poor wages.

LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE WORKERS OF FARMS AND FORESTS.

Let us speak of the rich foods we grow, and the laws that keep us poor. Let us speak of harsh treatment and of children and women forced to work. Let us speak of private prisons, and beatings and of passes.

LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE WORKERS OF FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

Let us speak of the good things we make, and the bad conditions of our work. Let us speak of the many passes and the few jobs. Let us speak of foremen and of transport and of trade unions; of holidays and of houses.

LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PREACHERS.

Let us speak of the light that comes with learning, and the ways we are kept in darkness. Let us speak of great services we can render, and of the narrow ways that are open to us. Let us speak of laws, and government, and rights.

LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE HOUSEWIVES AND THE MOTHERS.

Let us speak of the fine children that we bear, and of their stunted lives. Let us speak of the many illnesses and deaths, and of the few clinics and schools. Let us speak of high prices, and of shanty towns.

LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

LET US SPEAK TOGETHER

ALL OF US TOGETHER — African and European, Indian and Coloured. Voter and voteless. Privileged and rightless. The happy and the homeless. All the people of South Africa; of the towns and of the countryside.

LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM. And of the happiness that can come to men and women if they live in a land that is free.

LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM. And of how to get it for ourselves, and for our children.

LET THE VOICES OF ALL THE PEOPLE BE HEARD. AND LET THE DEMANDS OF ALL THE PEOPLE FOR THE THINGS THAT WILL MAKE US FREE BE RECORDED. LET THE DEMANDS BE GATHERED TOGETHER IN A GREAT CHARTER OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL ON ALL GOOD MEN AND TRUE, to speak now of freedom, and to write their own demands into the Charter of Freedom. WE CALL ON ALL WHO LOVE LIBERTY to pledge their lives from here on to win the Freedoms set out in the Charter. WE CALL ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO PREPARE FOR: THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE — Where representatives of the people, everywhere in the land, will meet together in a great assembly, to discuss and adopt the Charter of Freedom.

Let us organise together for the Congress of the People. Let us speak together of Freedom. Let us work together for the Freedom Charter.

LET US GO FORWARD TOGETHER TO FREEDOM!

'And now, we are on the eve of the meeting of the Congress of the People where the Freedom Charter will be discussed and debated. All the signs now are that this will be far and away the greatest such gathering ever in our history.'

'Almost every group of people who got together to formulate their demands — neighbours in a suburb, workers in a shop or factory, farmhands on a white man's ranch, and peasants in a 'native reserve' — almost every such group, and many who have not yet sent their demands in — have been electing delegates to speak for them at the COP.'

'Just how many delegates there will be, no-one can say; for the delegates are coming from far and near, some of them organised by members of the four Congresses, but many of them sent by meetings called by people who have heard of the Freedom Charter and have gone home to do something about it on their own initiative.'

**PART TWO:
The greatest
gathering ever
in our history**



Students march for SRC's. Their demand has not yet been met

SRC battle continues

THE DEPARTMENT of education and Training Students Representative Councils (DET SRC) constitution has been called many things - Pretoria's Representative Councils, Puppet SRC's, prefects or PRC's.

But one thing is clear — millions of students and parents in the country totally reject it. Teachers and even some principals agree that it is unacceptable.

For years students have been demanding democratic SRC's.

They've tried pleading, sending delegations, boycotting classes, demonstrations, meetings, press statements, media, worker stay aways and parents' support — almost everything in their power.

But the government and the DET have stubbornly refused.

The Congress of South African Students (Cosas) drew up a draft

constitution as a guideline to assist students in different schools in forming their SRC's.

After the massive boycotts last year in support of the demand for SRC's the government realised students were determined to fight on.

Police were sent in, students expelled and schools closed. But even this didn't stop students.

So the government added a new approach to the repression.

'The DET understands what we are saying but they were not willing to give us proper SRC's, only some reforms', Cosas National Executive member, Jabu Khumalo told Saspu National.

Initially they said we are pupils not students and brought in the Pupils Representative Council (PRC). But they changed their minds and brought in the DET SRC constitution'.

'They started talking about students, using words like representation and democracy. But we reject the DET constitution because its the same as the prefect system'.

Parents committees which supported students were at this time springing up in most of the boycotting areas. They also rejected the DET constitution as undemocratic. Parents had never been consulted either, they said.

An ad-hoc National Coordinating Committee of Parents was set up at a meeting of parents committees from all over the country.

After consultation with teachers, students and parents organisations across the country, the national parents committee drew up an SRC constitution. It has won widespread support from students and parents alike.

Cosas has supported the constitu-

tion saying it has been democratically drawn up and is democratic in content.

'Nothing short of the democratic running of schools will resolve the deadlock in education', the committee said after presenting the SRC constitution to the DET.

The DET Deputy Minister said the department would suspend the DET SRC's and prefect system for six to eight weeks while they studied the constitution.

But Cosas says the prefect system and the DET constitution is still being enforced in many schools.

'The DET is still trying to control us — that is what Bantu Education is all about. And that is why it has been rejected since the 1950's. Now they are just trying to change its face,' said Khumalo.

'We are living in an undemocratic South Africa, and our struggle for SRC's is part of our struggle for democracy in the schools, and it is linked to the workers struggle for democratic factory floor structures, and struggles in the community. These are all part of our broader struggle for democracy'.

Parents committees have been set up in many areas including Duduza, Tsakane, Kwathema, Watville, Katlehong, Tembisa, Atteridgeville, Heidelberg, Daveyton, Imbali, Welkom, Paarl, Bloemfontein, Soweto, Leandra, Lamontville and Odendalsrus.

Boycott boosts student council power

STUDENTS AT Haythorne High School in Woodlands, Pietermaritzburg, have won more control over their Representative Council.

After a three-day boycott by 500 students, they were allowed to draw up their own constitution. The council will be able take up students grievances.

Earlier this year students were given a constitution drawn up by the principal. This was rejected as students said such a Representative Council would not work for their benefit, but would be controlled by school authorities.

The class boycott began after students' changes to the constitution were rejected.

Other students' demands agreed to were:

- an end to authoritarianism;
- allowing student representatives to meet without department heads;
- an end to abusive language by teachers;
- an end to harassment of politically aware students.

In Bloemfontein democracy begins at school

Students at Vulamasango High School in Bloemfontein are sick and tired of waiting for the government to give in to their demands for democratic Student Representative Councils (SRC's)

So they went ahead and formed the type of SRC they want — one which works democratically and represents their interests.

'But it didn't just happen overnight,' says SRC president and Cosas member, Mzwandile Silwana.

Last year students demanded a democratic SRC and the readmission of students.

After a boycott in which students won strong parent support the students were readmitted and the principal resigned. Students returned to classes and restated their SRC demand.

The new year began with a boycott over exam results and reports. Cosas members represented students demands and together with the Parents Action Committee

managed to solve the problems.

Students then decided to form an SRC to take up their demands in the school. The principal and staff agreed to elections after students discussed the importance of SRC's with them.

At the time the DET was trying to force students to accept its DET SRC constitution called 'Communication Structures'. Students totally rejected this, and decided to use the Cosas draft SRC constitution to guide them in setting up the SRC.

Every class then elected two representatives, who became part of a Working Committee to look into how the SRC could be structured.

The working committee is now a full SRC. There are 42 members - the two representatives from each class, plus eight students chosen to coordinate the subcommittees. The executive is elected from among these 42 students.

The executive sees to the daily running of the SRC. They represent the SRC and are accountable for its

progress.

Regular meetings of all students at the school are held so the SRC can report back, and for students to discuss major decisions, for example on the SRC constitution, policy, affiliating to Cosas etc. These ensure the democratic running of the SRC, said one SRC member. Where necessary meetings are held during school hours.

The subcommittees are:
● The Entertainment and Culture Committee organises concerts and disco's, not only for Vulamasango students, but for all youth in the community, 'so we can learn to be united with them,' said one SRC member.

This committee has also been creating a 'spirit of poetry' in the school by encouraging students to write their own poems. Then they have poetry readings and plays by students.

The Student Christian Movement (SCM) organises discussions and activities on religious issues as part

of this committee.

An SRC member said students used to get bored, especially over the weekends. Now many people are participating in entertainment and cultural activities and delinquency is decreasing.

● The Debating Committee organises debates where students can learn to express themselves in different languages. Debates are usually held in the study time and the whole school can attend.

A topic is chosen, one example was, 'The Group Areas Act is detrimental to the social being of man'. There are speakers — six on each side, from different classes. After the speakers, volunteers from the floor can have their say.

● The Education Committee organises extra-tuition classes and educational tours in the area. If a student has problems with Maths or Science, the committee will find someone to help.

● The Sports Committee is trying to involve every student, boys and

OFS victory

STUDENTS FROM Bultfontein in the Free State have won a victory over the expulsion of two Cosas members from their school.

The two had attended a Sunday funeral in Bloemfontein and were with some students from Vulamasango High School when they bumped into their principal.

He said he 'would deal with them on Monday' because of their contact with Vulamasango students who, he said, 'were involved in politics'.

The next day the two were expelled. But the principal was eventually pressurised into readmitting them after parents sent a delegation to him and students boycotted classes for three days.

Cape College expulsions

HUNDREDS of students at the Cape Teachers Training College in Fort Beaufort are out of classes after the expulsion of more than one hundred students, including two SRC members.

The entire student body boycotted classes after the two SRC members, Tango Lamani and Tsediso Lebelo were told to leave campus until the College Council had taken a final decision on their expulsion.

The College rector and the chairman of the College Council, Mr Merbold refused a student body request that the two be allowed to attend classes for the month before the council meeting a month later.

The college was closed down, students were given nine hours to leave campus and were told they could return in two weeks.

While at home students got letters saying 110 of them would not be allowed back to campus as their names had been taken off the college register.

Parents from PE, Cape Town, Grahamstown, Cradock, Alice, Mdantsane, Uitenhage and Graaff Reinet condemned the expulsions and formed parents committees.

A parents' delegation was told all parents and students should return to discuss the issue. But after a four hour meeting with the rector a week later they were told to wait another two weeks for Merbold or the College Council to make a decision.

Parents said they would wait but in the meantime would take up the issue with Minister of Education and Training Viljoen.

Hundreds of students who had been allowed to return boycotted classes in solidarity with the expelled students and were kicked off campus by police.

girls, in some type of exercise or training.

'Many students were unfit and this caused problems when the police attacked students, because many couldn't run well enough to escape,' said a student.

Before the school only had a soccer and a netball team. Now there is also running training, athletics and boxing.

● The Disciplinary Committee tries to solve problems of discipline in a constructive way, and not through brutal measures as were used before the SRC was started.

Students totally reject excessive corporal punishment, and say expulsion as a way of disciplining students is also unacceptable.

The SRC believes in developing self-discipline among students. When there is a problem the disciplinary committee will talk to the student to discuss why the problem exists and to work out some solution. Students say this has already worked well.

Turning youth energy into a powerful unified force

Youth are on the move. The International Youth Year and national youth organisation is making them march together

THE DAY Solomon Mahlangu was hanged has been set aside for the launch of a national youth organisation. This was decided at a Youth Conference in Durban in January.

Youth are on the march again, boosted by the militance and strength of student struggles, especially as many pupils are joining the ranks of the unemployed.

'A national youth organisation will bring youth together into a strong united force, able to develop their political direction,' says Deacon Mathe, who was elected Interim Coordinator of the national youth organisation.

A national youth organisation has been in the pipeline since 1982, when the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) stressed the need to organise school-leavers and unorganised youth.

At the Durban conference, the International Year of the Youth (IYY) was seen as a major focus for youth organisation. SOYCO activist Dan Monstisti was elected Interim IYY co-ordinator.

'We must put a progressive stamp on IYY and its theme, Participation, Development, Peace', says Lechesa Tsenoli, co-ordinator of the Natal IYY committee. 'Already, the state's IYY programme in the schools has started.'

'The goal of the IYY campaign is to reach out to the vast majority of youth, to organise in new areas, and to give young people the experience of coordinating local and regional activity.'

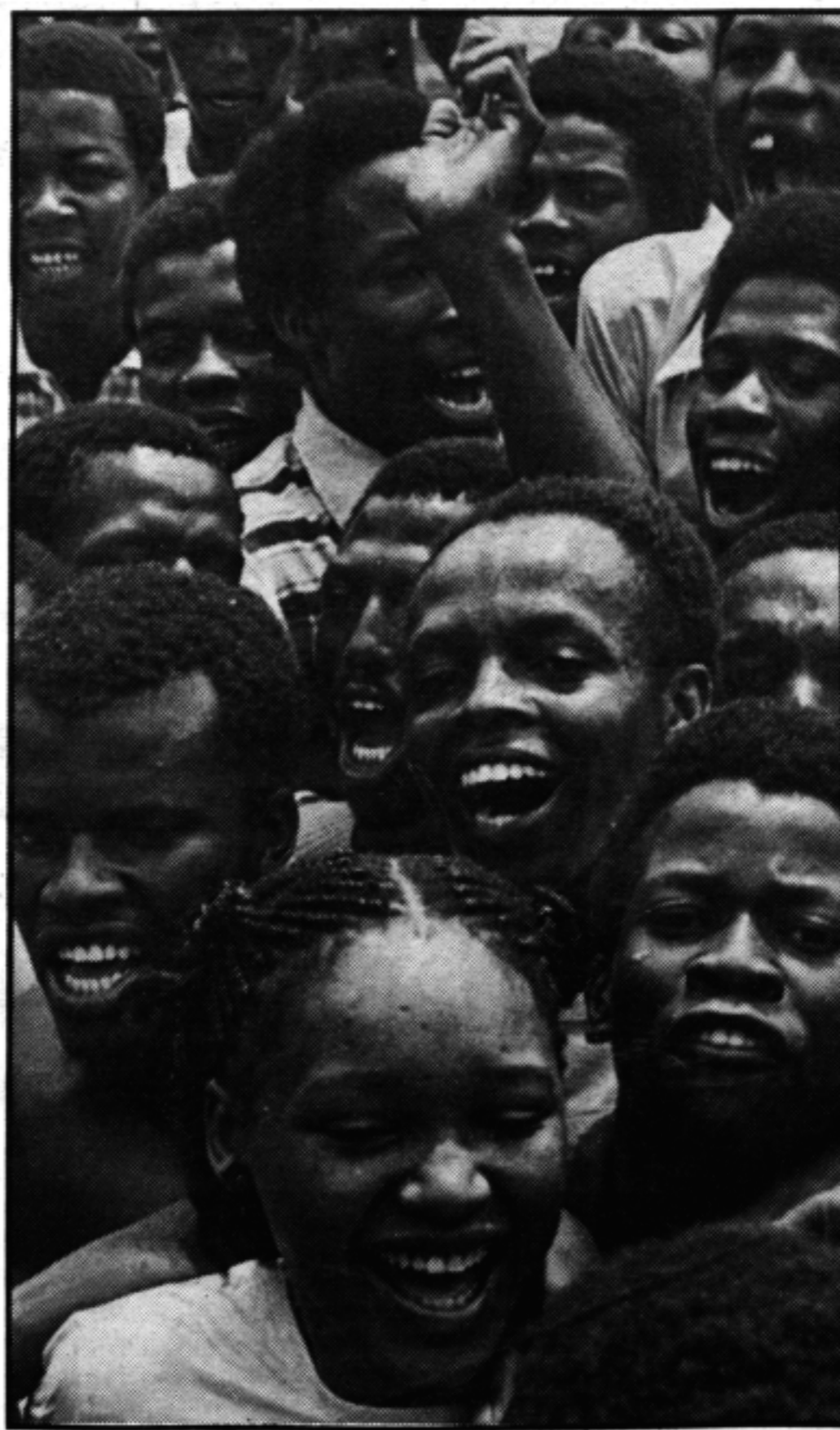
Youth make up more than 60 per cent of the community, and because of the recession, most are unemployed.

'Many of the leadership in the youth are unemployed,' says Jacob Mtshali, of the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO). 'Their work and commitment to organisation means they can live without feeling guilty for being unemployed, without feeling inferior to those who have found jobs.'

'Youth can play an instrumental role in organisation,' says Mathe. 'Their parents spend 18 hours in the factories, mines and kitchens so that the family can survive. But youth have the time and energy to organise, to go house to house and reach out to the people.'

'Youth are the spinal chord of the working class community. When the youth are well organised, with a clear political direction, they will contribute a lot to organising the whole community.'

Unemployment is a burning issue for youth organisation. AYCO planned a project to deal with it.

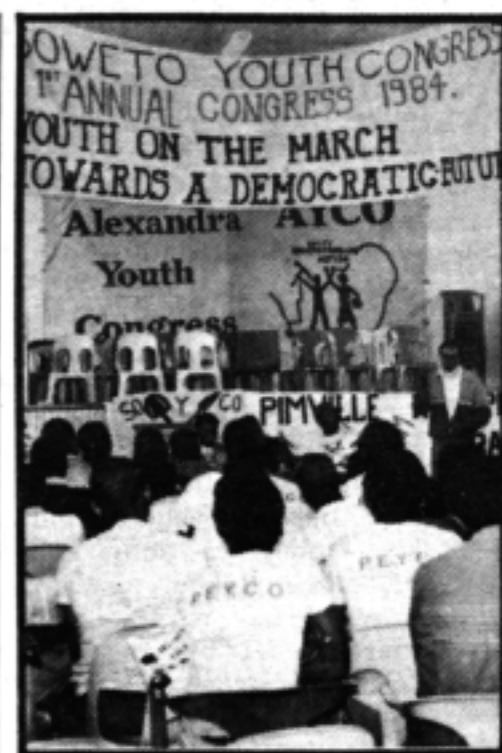


'Youth are the spinal chord'

'We managed to get a site donated, to build a youth centre. We planned to involve unemployed youth in making the bricks and mortar, and to build the centre ourselves. We planned to have an unemployment

advice office there too. But now the Town Council says the area is being rezoned and we can't build there.'

Reaching out to unorganised youth is another priority. 'To do this, we need ongoing programmes,



Organisation brings youth together

such as sports and cultural activity, that appeal to unorganised youth', said Tsenoli. 'These activities can draw people in, and build the identity of the youth organisation in the community.'

The Saulsville-Atteridgeville Youth Congress (Sayo) are trying to reach unorganised youth in their area by organising around militarisation, which affects them directly.

'Many parents work at Voortrekkerhoogte. The SADF distributes a lot of propaganda pamphlets, saying they are friends of the people. But your friends do not arrive uninvited to your meetings in hippos, firing teargas and harrasing students', says a Sayo member.

Youth organisation faces different conditions in the rural areas. Frans Mohlala, from Mankweng Youth Organisation (Mayco) in Lebowa, says 'the main problem in the rural areas is resources. You are dealing with villages, where there are no venues, and no reading material — often not even newspapers'.

'The Warrior, a propaganda mouthpiece of the SADF, is often the only material apart from school books that the youth have read. Youth in these areas are also not exposed to the kind of organisation taking place in the urban townships. But they are open to organisation.'

How do you see the 1985 Nusas theme, "Student Action for Peace?" We intend to highlight the fact that there can be no peace in our country while there is Apartheid. Violence is caused by an undemocratic government imposing control against the will of the people. If peace is to become a reality rather than a distant hope and dream, then we have to fight for it, by fighting for a free SA.

By the end of last year, PW's reforms and his image were in shreds, and townships were exploding with violence. What was the response in the white community, and how did Nusas respond?

Many white liberals had been lulled into complacency by talk of reform. Then the tricameral elections showed the people's total rejection of PW's reforms, and the mass support for the United Democratic Front (UDF).

As school boycotts, rent protests and uprisings intensified, it was clear the government was increasingly unable to govern. When Hippos and troops moved into the townships, there was shocked fear that talk of civil war was not simply rhetoric. Then the stayaway brought Johannesburg to a standstill.

Despite widespread liberal criticism of the government, the PFP failed to give any clear direction to its followers. Nusas decided to give some progressive direction to this criticism in the white community.

At white schools, pamphlets were distributed comparing black and white education, and explaining the demands of COSAS. And Nusas called a public meeting, to explain the grievances behind the stayaway, and to protest at SADF presence in the townships.

How did the white liberal community respond to the SADF presence in the townships?

Nusas is fighting for peace and friendship

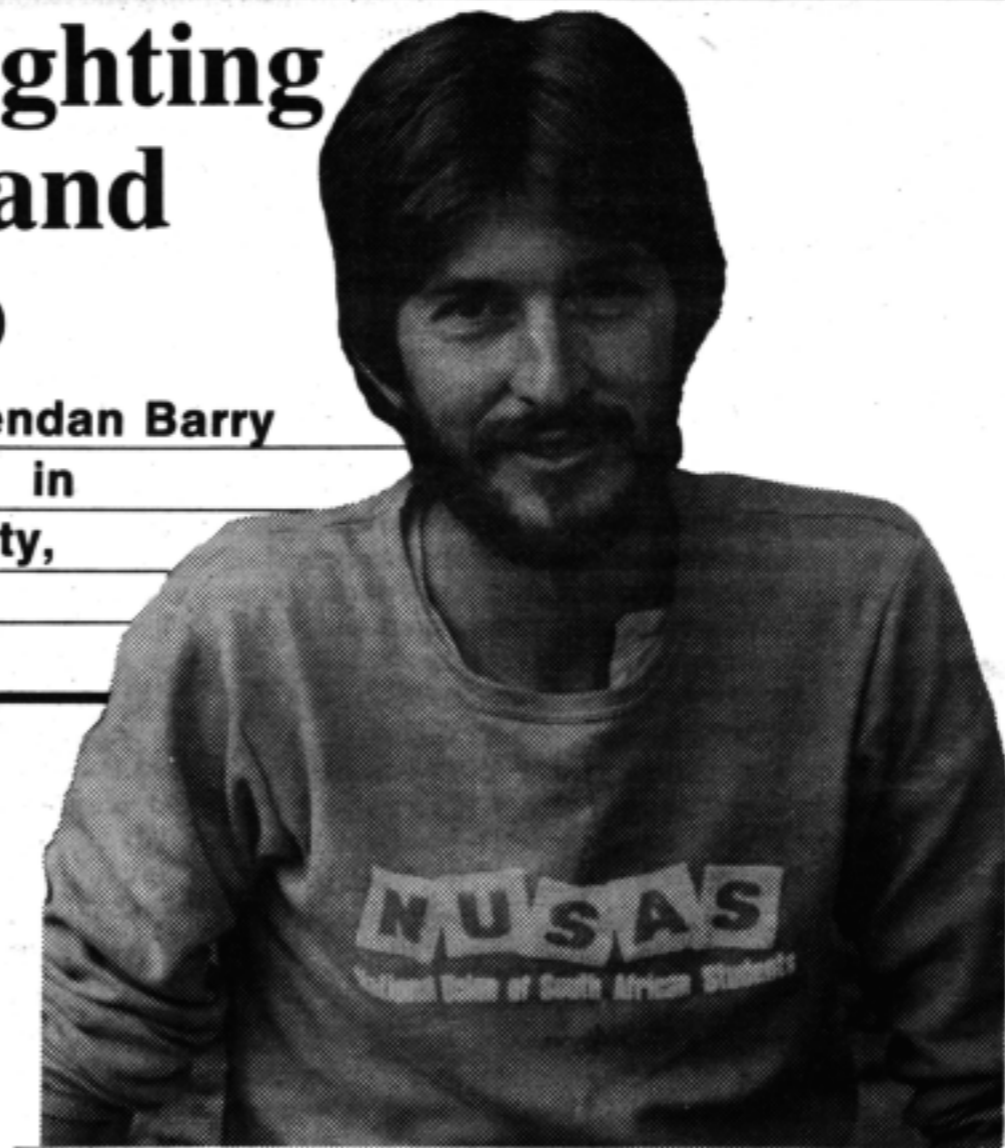
Nusas president Brendan Barry talks about politics in the white community, the Freedom Charter and conscription

People were shocked. The townships were burning with political anger, and conditions created by apartheid were clearly the cause of the unrest. The SADF's presence in the townships was only fuelling the anger, as a force which was there not to defend the people but to defend apartheid.

While the Defence Act prevents people from calling on others to resist their call-ups, individuals may legally explain their personal stand. When troops went into Sebokeng, you publically explained why you will not serve in the SADF. What was your stand?

I said I am not prepared to participate in the SADF as long as it defends the interests of apartheid. I am not prepared to aim a rifle at a fellow South African whose grievances are legitimate, and result from apartheid's inhuman policies.

I feel that I cannot be part of the struggle for peace and friendship, for a South Africa based on the terms in the Freedom Charter, and justify wearing the uniform of an army that is seen as the enemy of the people.



I also publically resigned the rank I had received during my period of initial compulsory "national service" in 1979 and 1980. I said that while I am quite prepared to fight and make sacrifices for my country, I choose to do so as part of democratic organisation, in the struggle for a free South Africa.

What made you reject the SADF's role and take this stand?

I come from a liberal background — my father tried the impossible by standing for election as a PFP candidate in Welkom, OFS — the heart of verkramptheid. So when I went in to the SADF after school, I strongly supported the PFP. Like

many others, I saw compulsory call-up as unpleasant but unavoidable.

It was only when I became a student at Wits that I was exposed to progressive ideas, through the work of NUSAS. Like others who had done their initial two years of service, I was still faced with compulsory month-long camps each year. But after doing a camp at the end of 1982, I decided that in terms of my growing commitment to struggle, I could no longer reconcile doing any service in the SADF with my political views.

At that point, I told the Nusas leadership that I would rather stand trial under the Defence Act and go

to prison for refusing to serve in the SADF, than do another SADF camp. I have not participated in the SADF since then.

As I became more high-profile in Nusas, the campus right-wing started to use this issue. They had a lot of information about the call-ups of Nusas activists, which we believed they could only have got from the SADF. They threatened to organise with the SADF that I got called up to a camp on the border.

Amongst Nusas people at Wits, we agreed to make it quite clear to the right wing that I would rather stand trial as a political conscientious objector than participate in the SADF.

NUSAS has clearly identified itself with the Freedom Charter. What do you see as the value of the Charter today?

For every clause in the Charter, there is a struggle today which shows that the Charter still captures the people's demands.

The Charter links local struggles, such as those around electricity, creches, and the right to unemployment benefits, to questions of political and economic control in SA.

The Charter highlights the way oppression and exploitation reach into every part of people's lives, in the schools, factories, communities, and the political sphere. It's only when the people have democratic control in all these spheres that we will be able to say, "the people govern."

The Charter defines freedom as more than simply the right to vote. In demanding the right to a democratic education system, to housing, security and comfort, and to a share in the country's wealth, the Charter sees beyond the question of winning formal political rights. It looks to the hard work and sweat of the people that will be needed to build these freedoms once political rights have been won.

IN 1981, AZASO broke away from Black Consciousness (BC), and adopted a non-racial policy with a class analysis as the basis for understanding the nature of the South African struggle.

When Azaso was formed in 1979, AZAPO sponsored the conference, which reflected Azaso's initial BC leanings.

Four years later, the organisation has advanced on all fronts. At this point, we need to consider the objective conditions we face, to assess our past achievements and shortcomings, and define strategies and tactics to take us forward.

While we have a broader role, the main content of our role as students remains the struggle for a democratic education. To make advances we need to concentrate on the weaknesses of the DET, as a wing of the government.

Cosas, our sister organisation, does this with the demand for democratic SRC's. This is a sore to the DET, who fears that through democratic representation, students will successfully oppose the aims of Bantu Education.

Bantu education is designed for ideological control, to make students docile and subservient. But if students become politicised, then as the workers of the future they are likely to become a class capable of interpreting its historic mission. This is indeed worrying to those in power.

History

The people of South Africa fought the dispossession of their land by the white colonialists, in militant battles such as the Eastern Cape Wars of Resistance, the Battle of Isandlwane, Battles of Thaba'Nchu and many more. The Bambata Rebellion of 1906 ended this phase of armed resistance.

The founding of the ANC on 8 January 1912 signalled a new era in the struggle for liberation. It marked a break with past methods of organising ethnically and fighting separately among Africans. And it laid a basis for the future where organisation and politicisation of the masses became a priority.

The people have constantly adapted their strategies to the conditions they face. Similarly, the government has constantly reviewed its strategies and tactics of racial oppression. This has taken many forms including the total dispossession of the land and the vigorous proletarianisation of Africans after 1913.

Race and Class

Racial stratification of our society has long been used by those in power to maintain their position of dominance.

The development of capitalism as

Azaso National Executive records its history

Power from past lessons in Azaso



the dominant economic system in SA has led to the rise of a small group within the colonial forces into positions of economic and thereby political control.

This small group of capitalists within the white minority have secured the loyalty of most whites by giving them economic privileges to complement the political rights denied to the black majority. These whites can be called on to defend their privileges if they are threatened.

Since the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960 the government has engaged in an increasing military build-up. This has been necessary for it to maintain power — it could not rely only on ideological control of Africans through education but had to arm itself on all fronts.

The political oppression of blacks varies both in form and content. This ranges from the naked use of brutal force by the police and the army, to various laws passed by the government to legitimise their rule. These laws are enforced by the police and the courts.

Ideological control remains one of the sophisticated ways in which blacks are made to think of themselves as inferior and incapable of challenging the status quo. Ideological control is exercised largely through TV, schools, the press etc. And its main purpose is to ensure we accept our domination and the legitimacy of the government.

Privileges for a black elite are also

Above, from L to R: Saso's Barney Pityana, and Azaso presidents Tom Nkoane (80-81), Joe Phaala (81-83), Tiego Moseneke (83-84), Simphiwe Mgoduso (84-85) Right: Saso in session



used to foster divisions between and within different racial groups.

Within the black population some are well-off and are being induced to become part of the middle class to act as a buffer between the masses and the government.

Decade of Protest

The seventies was a decade of protest politics. Beginning with the 100 000-strong Durban strike in 1973 the political consciousness of blacks was greatly heightened. This reached a climax in 1976 when students rose against the inferior education system.

At the forefront of protests was SASO (the South African Students' Organisation), with its allies the Black People's Convention (BPC) and the Black Community Project (BCP). These organisations rallied around the banner of BC. BC called on blacks to rally together, relying on their own strength to achieve psychological liberation from the inferiority complex imposed by apartheid values, which said that

whites had a god-given superiority to blacks.

SASO was the vanguard of the BC movement. It emerged out of the black students break-away from Nusas (National Union of South African Students). In 1967 Nusas had some support on black campuses such as Fort Hare.

During the 1967 Nusas congress the Minister of Bantu Education issued a decree forcing black and white students to eat separately. The failure of Nusas to challenge this decree, coupled with its unclear liberal ideology, caused resentment and raised discussion on the need for a black students' organisation.

This idea crystallised in 1969 when black students walked out of Nusas congress and formed SASO. Nusas was accused of being liberal, and doing nothing to advance the black man's struggle. 'Black man, you're on your own,' was SASO's BC battle cry.

The SASO break-away caused a reassessment of the relationship between black and white students in the struggle, and highlighted the different conditions faced by black

and white students.

SASO was the proponent of the rhetorical statements of BC, but its ideological position was riddled with contradictions. BC had no political analysis of class, nor of the interests of various classes in the liberation process. The BC movement remained shockingly and starkly aloof from the working class.

The potential of the black working class to end oppression and exploitation was not seriously analysed.

It was assumed that black students were the vanguard of the struggle, because of their intellectual skills. 1976 taught them a bitter lesson! The black working class in SA is fundamentally important to any advancement of our struggle.

They are the people who produce the wealth, yet have no share in it. Instead this wealth lines the pockets of the capitalists and maintains apartheid. The capitalists exploit the workers and support the government, the army, the police, the community councils etc.

BC also failed to organise at a grassroots level, or to develop community structures. The impetus of BC

IN THE COURTS

Botha's iron fist

This year, the offer to free Mandela received much publicity as a sign of the government's commitment to reform. But ongoing repression calls this commitment into question.

Last year, 'The year of Reform', 1149 people were detained, and several ex-detainees listed. Meetings were banned, and more than 200 people died in unrest — more than the civilian death toll in Namibia.

This trend seems to be continuing in 1985. Already this year 83 people have been detained, bringing the total in detention at present to 164. At least 43 people have died this year in township unrest, and a large number have been wounded in clashes with police.

The state seems to be using political trials to offset mounting criticism of detention without trial. This has led to forced inactivity for many activists while they sit for long periods as awaiting-trial prisoners. In 1984 there were 107 political

trials. According to the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC), last year's total will be exceeded by June this year. 27 political trials have been conducted this year, and a further 87 will be heard in the next few months.

Widely defined laws make many types of opposition illegal, and make peaceful opposition a criminal activity.

At present, 276 people face charges of public violence, most of them in the Transvaal.

Tzaneen

Shope gets three

NTOMBE SHOPE, 34, was sentenced in February to three years imprisonment. She was convicted on charges of recruiting members for the ANC, of setting up 'dead letter' drops for the exchange of messages and weapons, and for encouraging local women to give active support to ANC guerillas.

Shope, founder of the Pfunanj Women's Group in Nkawkawa,

near Tzaneen, comes from a family of activists.

Her father, Mark Shope, went into exile in 1963, and is currently serving on the ANC executive committee in Lusaka.

Beaufort West

Beaufort man slain

MANDLANKOSI TSHAKA KRATSHI, 25, was allegedly shot dead by police at his house on January 22.

According to the police, Kratshi was arrested after he incited people to throw stones at the police the week before. Kratshi was shot resisting arrest.

According to an eye witness four policemen entered Kratshi's house at 7.30 am on Tuesday, January 22, while he was busy feeding his seven year old son. They demanded to know why he had not reported to the police station as ordered.

Although the door was closed, bystanders heard a fight going on inside and smelt teargas. The police



Moses Mayekiso on his release on bail

MOSES MAYEKISO Metal and Allied Workers Union official, appeared in court last month on charges of subversion related to last year's Transvaal Stayaway. He was released on R2 000 bail.

Four accused did not appear. They are Thami Mali, Oupa Monareng, President of the Soweto Youth Congress, Themba Nontlantane, of the Municipal and General Workers Union and Tlou Makgoba.

Azaso is formed

After Azaso's launch in 1979, an interim executive was elected to draft a constitution. For three years, Azaso debated whether a BC or progressive direction should be taken.

In this period, the pace of political action was heightened. Cosas was formed in 1979. From the start, Cosas was non-racial, and clearly recognised the roles of the various classes in society. The student struggles for SRC's in 1980, the support for workers' struggles, the consumer boycott of Fattis and Monis, all taught Azaso valuable lessons.

Then in May 1981 there was a qualitatively new struggle against the Republic Day celebrations. Black and white students took part in protests throughout the country.

At the historic Azaso conference in July 1981, students were clear that the only meaningful direction to take was to relate their organisation to the struggle of the working class.

While students rally around problems faced daily at their places of learning, it was agreed that these issues should be related to the broader struggle for a South Africa free of oppression and exploitation.

The following preamble to the constitution was therefore accepted:

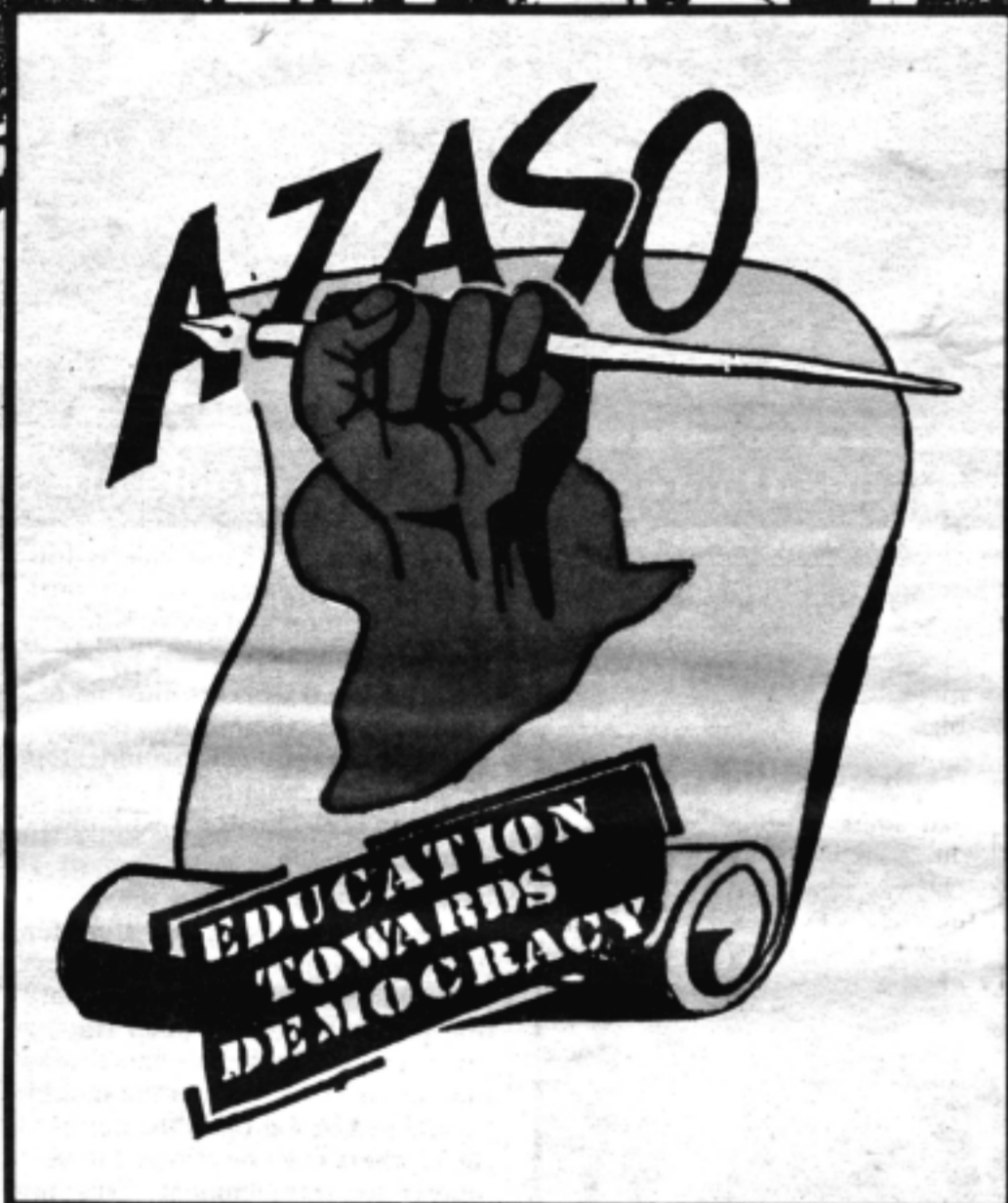
'Whereas we the black students of South Africa, realising that we are members of an oppressed community before we are students and committing ourselves to a non-racial and democratic society, free of exploitation and national oppression in which harmony among people will prevail, find it necessary to articulate the aspirations of the oppressed black people in a united and organised manner, are therefore determined:

Preamble

1. To organise students nationally so that they could take up their demands for a relevant role in society.
2. To also organise students so that they could play more meaningful roles in their community in general.

Azaso recognised the history of involvement of white democrats in the struggle, and adopted a non-racial policy. However, Azaso still saw the need to organise black and white students separately, because of the different conditions faced.

Within a year, Azaso had branches at every black university, and had fully committed itself to the principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter. Since then, Azaso has rallied students in many historic struggles.



To guard against mistakes, we need to deepen our analysis of SA and not be content with narrow analysis of blacks and whites. We must see the role of blacks in the struggle, always remembering the historic mission of the working class to end the machinery of exploitation and oppression.

But we must also see the contradiction of those black people who are tools of the minority regime, whose duty is to confuse and divide us further. And we must recognise the role of those white democrats who are committed to the struggle.

Lesson of history

Some examples from SASO's history show the danger of being without theory. Although SASO helped expose bantustan leaders, and attacked Buthelezi's position as chief minister of Kwazulu, Themba Sono, then vice-president of SASO, openly supported collaboration and 'working within the system' (of the government).

The Pearce commission into Zimbabwe was to test people's views on independence, and presented Muzorewa as the 'popular leader'. SASO passed a resolution which supported Muzorewa's leadership. He turned out to be a puppet. SASO was disappointed!

SASO's lack of clarity also allowed the government to cause confusion in the organisation. The govern-

ment allowed banned BC leaders to meet American Senator Dick Clark and attend the Afro-American Institute in Lesotho in 1976. Even those in detention were temporarily released to meet the Americans.

There were also American imperialist attempts to infiltrate and misdirect the BC organisations. This was also clear in that Anglo-American financed the BPC to the tune of thousands of rands.

The 1976 GSC of SASO looked squarely at these political misjudgements, and papers looking at class analysis and its relevance to the national liberation struggle were presented.

Attempts at correcting SASO's direction met with fierce opposition from those opposed to a scientific class analysis. They threatened to walk out, claiming SASO was turning red! When SASO was banned in 1977, its direction had started to change.

The process of any organisation's transition to a correct position reflects the social context. Given the nature of South African capitalism, coupled with ideological control through Bantu education, it was not surprising that SASO took a BC position in its formative stages.

This was not because of a lack of serious commitment on its part. There was a stark lack of access to progressive literature at the time.

This is the past from which Azaso emerged.

IN THE COURTS

also attempted to disperse onlookers with teargas.

Kratshi was pushed out the door, a shot was fired, and Kratshi 'fell face first into the ground and died.'

Police later denied the use of teargas and said the shooting occurred after Kratshi had attacked a policeman with a fork.

Pretoria

'He must not hang'

THE RELEASE Mandela Campaign committee (RMC) has called on the State President, P.W. Botha, to stop the hanging of convicted African National Congress guerrilla, Benjamin Moloise.

Moloise has been on Death Row awaiting execution since 1983.

An RMC statement noted that Botha recently stated a commitment to political reform and promised a better deal for blacks. He also offered to release Nelson Mandela and other long-term prisoners on condition they renounce violence.

dangerous. But we all have eyes to see that some blacks form part of the oppressive machinery — Gatsha Buthelezi, Sebe, Matanzima, Tshabalala are some examples.

If any organisation is to develop as part of the progressive movement, it must have the correct theory and a systematic analysis of the role and interests of the various classes in our struggle.

'If in the light of all this, Mr. Botha does not save Moloise from the gallows, it will be added proof that his commitment to reform lacks substance'.

The 'new deal' acknowledges that the majority have never had constitutional means of expressing their aspirations, 'which is why so many have turned to extra-parliamentary and extra-legal means' the statement said.

While the government regards Moloise as a criminal 'in the eyes of many he is a freedom fighter'.

Johannesburg

Hart suspended

MAXINE HART, 25, a social worker and Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee member, was convicted in January under the Internal Security Act for furthering the aims of the ANC. After spending four months in solitary confinement, she received a three year sentence, suspended for five years, and was released.

CLYDE JACOBS, detained in October at the same time as Hart, has also been charged with furthering the aims of the ANC. It is alleged that he distributed pamphlets on behalf of the ANC, calling for a boycott of the tri-cameral elections.

Harassment

Activists harassed

●UDF official in the Northern Cape, Jomo Kgusi was allegedly 'quite severely' assaulted by security police, and then threatened with death if he remained in Kimberley.

●Three people, including a one month old baby, were seriously injured in Thabong, near Welkom, on February 26 when the houses of two UDF members, Freddy Vanga and Itumeleng Mokobo, were petrol-bombed. The attack occurred during unrest in Thabong, sparked off when the DET closed two local high schools.

●Four men, claiming to be from the

National Intelligence Service, allegedly took UDF Transvaal organizer, Pat Lephunya, from his home in Naledi on February 28. They allegedly told him they could frame him as a police spy if he didn't co-operate with him, and offered him R1000 for information on UDF activities. They also allegedly threatened to ensure that his friend, Isobel Lethlake, remained in detention. The NIS has denied any involvement.

●A mosque in Lenasia was desecrated in late February with the head of a pig, shortly after a protest meeting was held there by the Transvaal Indian Congress.

●The homes of Cosas and Soweto Youth Congress activists in Soweto were stoned and petrol bombed

Turfloop

Turf men appeal

JEROME MAAKE and PETER MAKUBE, two Turfloop students jailed in 1983 for ANC activity, have been successful in their appeal

against their sentences — which totalled 18 years.

Maake's sentence was reduced to three years, suspended for five years, and Makoba's was reduced to a suspended sentence for the illegal possession of arms.

Durban

Hurley acquitted

ARCHBISHOP DENIS HURLEY was acquitted in February on charges under the Police Act. It was alleged that in 1982 he had made unfounded statements regarding the SAP's special counter-insurgency unit, Koevoet.

The prosecution dropped the case when they discovered Hurley had not made the statements on which the charge was based.

Hurley later said although he was relieved the trial was over, he regretted that it had not been possible to publicise the massive evidence of alleged Koevoet atrocities collected by his defence team.

The fight for

MILLIONS OF South Africans will never have jobs. Sounds unbelievable, but unless there are some big changes, that is the terrible future ahead of us.

There has never been work for all in South Africa, but lately, unemployment has been getting worse. 80 000 metal workers have lost their jobs. So have 13 000 workers in the textile industry, 37 000 in the South African Transport Services (SATS), and 51 000 in factories making cars and car parts.

These workers and many others have lost their jobs in the past three years. And each year about 350 000 youths leave school and start looking for work.

There are half a million jobless people in South Africa, says the government. Researchers, trade unionists and others say three million is more accurate. And that is not even counting 450 000 workers from neighbouring states like Malawi and Mozambique, retrenched between 1974 and 1981, who also helped to build the South African economy,

Workers won't go quietly

There are no jobs because the economy is weak and we are in a recession, say employers, government officials and some newspapers. But what does that tell us?

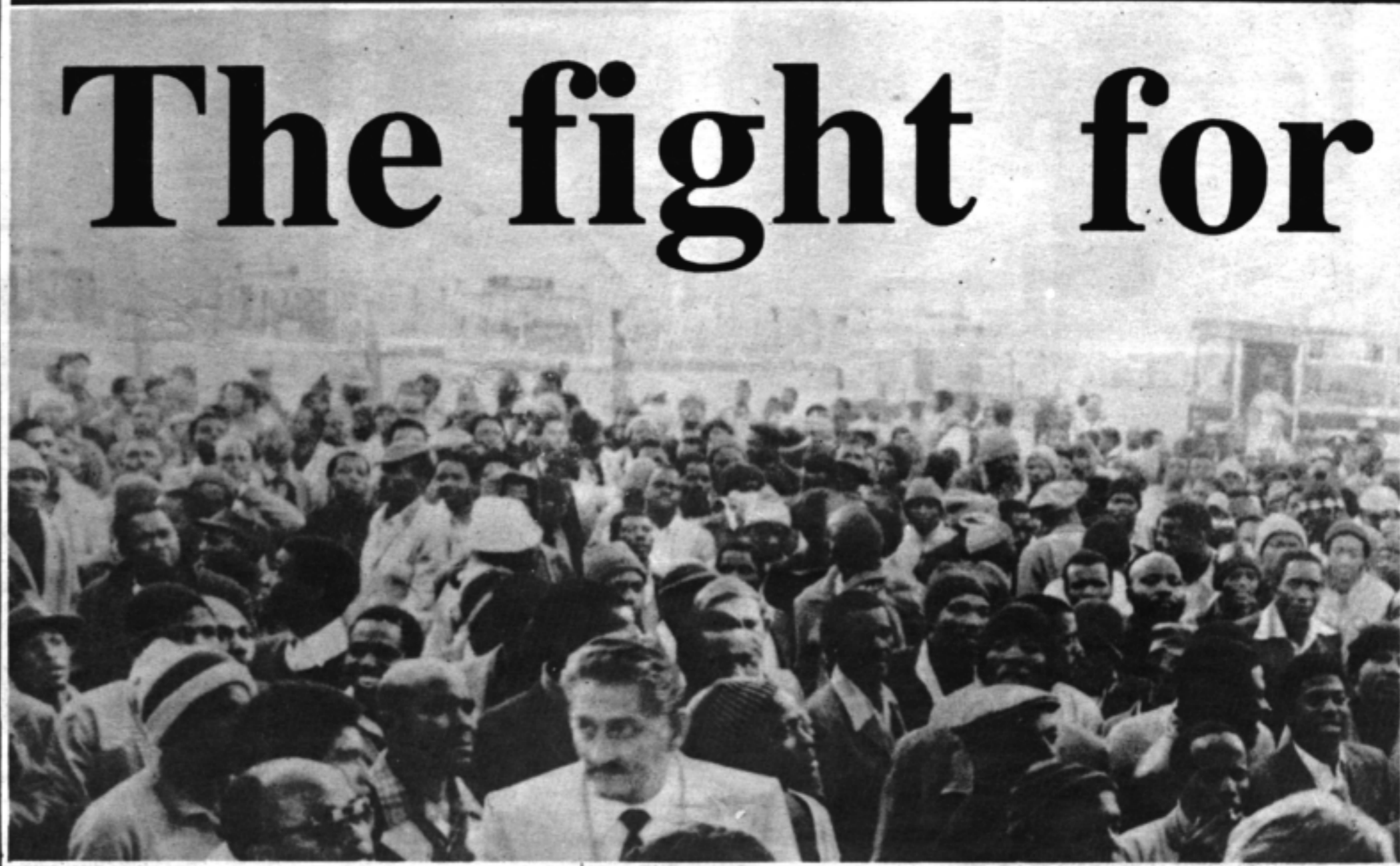
There is, without doubt, a serious recession. Last year 12 companies a day went out of business, and another 5 000 are expected to follow them this year.

But blaming unemployment on this recession alone ignores the most important fact that even when the economy has been strong and growing, there has never been enough work. In the 1960's the economy grew fast, but by 1970, 12 out of every 100 people were jobless. Between 1979 and 1981 the economy had another boom, but at the end of it, 20 out of every 100 workers were unemployed, two million people in all.

Some industries are still growing, but they are creating very few jobs. A new paper mill in Richards Bay cost R660 million to build, but will only provide 600 jobs. Huge amounts have been spent on machines which need few workers to operate them.

Bosses see workers as another cost, and not as people with families. If replacing workers with machines will bring greater profits, then they go ahead and do that. Besides, unemployment has many advantages for them.

Would Sasol have fired 6 500 workers if there weren't starving, jobless workers waiting to take their



Unemployment is worse than ever, but it's always been there — even when profits are

places? 'Employers know that the administration boards will just shake that big bantustan tree, and get them a lot of workers', says Moses Mayekiso, branch secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu), which lost over 2 000 members to retrenchments at the end of last year. 'When workers realise they can lose their jobs, it smartens and sharpens them up', says one businessman.

Employers also use retrenchments to their advantage. They get rid of workers who are old or sick. In one factory the company doctor was instructed to examine all the workers. When retrenchments came, those with illnesses, even minor ones, were the first to go.

Bosses also try to get rid of union members and militant workers. Independent trade unions have grown steadily recruiting new members, challenging management's power in the factories and slowly building factory-floor leadership. Bosses want to turn back these advances. 'When we start organising, they threaten to retrench', says Sisa Njikelana, general secretary of the South African Allied Workers' Union (Saawu). 'And sometimes they do.'



Migrant workers out of work, heading for bantustan poverty

But in the fight for jobs, unions and even some unorganised workers are not giving up.

Unions have demanded agreements which force bosses to follow certain procedures during retrenchments. This is the only protection workers get. The law gives bosses

the right to hire and fire workers as they please, and many do just that.

Retrenchment procedures usually include the following:

- Retrenchments should be based on the 'lifo' principle — 'last in, first out.' Workers who have been with the company longest must be

retrenched last. If this rule is followed, management cannot just pick on militant and active workers for retrenchment;

- Retrenched workers must be re-employed if their jobs become available again. This would stop bosses retrenching union members and then replacing them with unorganised workers;

- Retrenched workers must get severance pay as compensation for losing their jobs. Many employers are reluctant to give it. 'Where are the profits they have been ripping from the workers for years?' asks one unionist. 'For them the money would just be a drop in the ocean.'

- Workers must be allowed to volunteer for retrenchment. This has been used to protect migrant workers, since for them losing a job means loss of urban rights and banishment to bantustan poverty.

In 1983, members of the General Workers Union (GWU) in Cape Town decided that workers with permanent urban qualifications would sacrifice their jobs to protect migrants who were threatened with retrenchment.

Signing a retrenchment agreement does not guarantee that bosses will

WHY can't the South African economy provide enough jobs, even when companies are making large profits?

Employers take steps that threaten workers' interests and the society as a whole because profit is their only reason for being in business. That is how capitalism works. Driven by competition for profits and markets they replace workers with machines so as to increase the amount each worker produces.

Companies which cannot compete go out of business, and their workers are thrown onto the streets. Others move in and take over their share. The South African economy is now dominated by giant corporations like Anglo American and Barlow Rand.

But even these monopolies are forced to compete with each other and with manufacturers in other countries. Replacing workers with machines continues, more than ever, because giant companies can afford to spend a lot on machines. As workers lose their jobs, and the

When profits mean more than people

The bosses only reason for being in business is to make profit. Workers create those profits. But when business is bad, they get thrown onto the streets. Many starve.

chase for profit pushes prices up, people do not have enough money to buy the goods which are produced. Profits fall, more people lose their jobs and the economy slides deeper into recession. Every industry produces more goods than it can sell, yet thousands are too poor to buy them.

Even if a recession is followed by a period of growth, things are never the same again. During the recession companies brought in more machines to save themselves, or got rid of workers to keep their costs down. Monopolies grew fatter on

the companies that failed. Retrenched workers cannot be sure of getting their jobs back.

'Companies always retrench more workers than they need to,' says Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PWAU) organiser Jerry Baskin. 'They then try and get more work out of the remaining workers, using overtime, stricter supervision and new machines. When business returns to normal, the company never brings employment to the old levels.'

Employers and government officials have called on people to



'tighten their belts', because times are bad for everyone. Some even blame workers for the recession. Low productivity and high wages are the cause of inflation, says Dr Jan Visser, head of the National

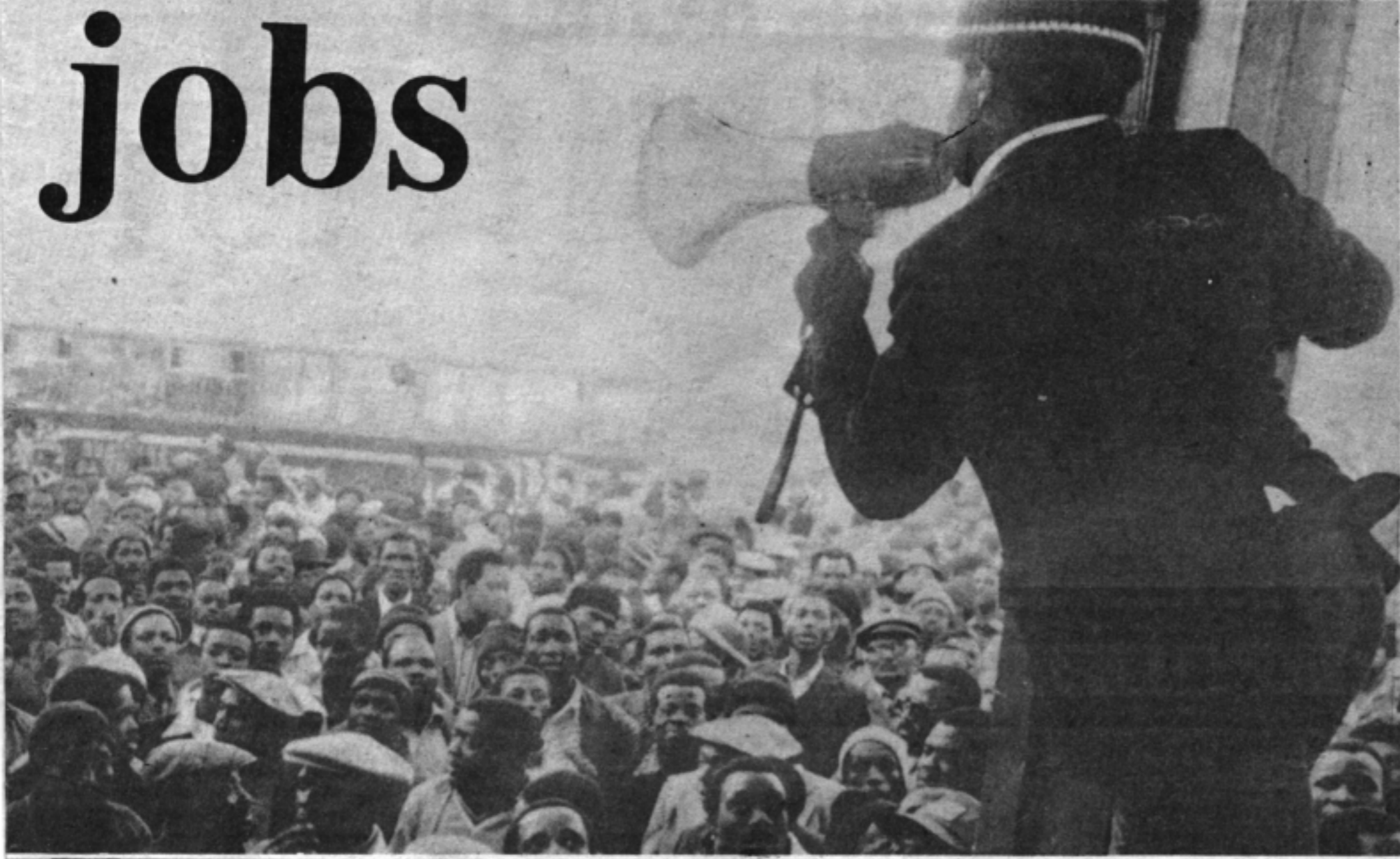
Finance Minister du Plessis - blaming workers for the recession

Productivity Institute. 'South African workers earn too much for the amount they produce', says Finance Minister Barend du Plessis.

A retrenched Cape Town worker sees things differently: 'The bosses say to us that there is no work and they must lay off people. But why must we suffer this thing when we worked overtime to meet orders, and made them profits when the business was good?'

'Only a certain section of society suffers in a capitalist recession', says Moses Mayekiso, branch secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). 'The section that suffers, the workers, is the very section that produces the wealth. Bosses profits may be threatened, but not their very lives.'

jobs



high, there are never enough jobs. That's why winning work for all is a long, hard fight.

stick to it. 'We try to push them before the retrenchment comes, because when it starts they become hard and reluctant', says Mayekiso. Some unions have successfully used the Industrial Court to enforce agreements.

In 1983 the court ordered Braitec, a Springs textile firm, to reinstate 71 retrenched members of the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) and pay them R40 000. Braitec retrenched without consulting NUTW, and without giving severance pay. Management must discuss retrenchments with the union, the court ruled.

But in October last year, the Industrial Court knocked a big hole in the defences unions had built up for migrant workers. In December 1982, 140 Mawu members at Screenex Wire Weaving stopped work after management refused to renew the contracts of ten migrant workers. The entire workforce was dismissed.

Mawu took Screenex to the Industrial Court — and waited two years for the decision. The court ruled that the workers' strike was illegal and management alone had the right to decide if it wanted to renew migrants contracts. If it did

Retrenchment does threaten the very lives of some people as a jobless metal worker in Kwazulu describes: 'The union managed to get us R500, but now it is all used up. Now the family is starving. We did not get anything from the fields this year as there was no rain. The little one has already died of sores in the stomach. We have eaten all the chicken and I must sell a cow soon. There are many of us waiting for work.'

Jobless people are also made to feel they are useless: 'Any real man can support his family. I used to be a real man, now I am worth less than a loaf of bread. Bread is more use to them than me', said one retrenched worker.

These feelings of despair can have damaging political effects. One union member who was fired from Hyperama after a strike explains: 'Always when my family is short of mealie-meal or sugar, they remind me of my trade union activities, which led to my becoming unemployed. If I got another job, I might fear involvement again'.

not, cancelling the contracts would not be considered retrenchment.

This means that even if a retrenchment agreement has been negotiated, bosses can now get rid of migrant workers at the end of their contracts, without any negotiations and without giving the workers severance pay.

Unions stress that main purpose of agreements is to fight for jobs. 'We

must protect our right to work now — or we may not have any work to protect at all later', says a Federation of South African Trade Unions booklet.

Bosses can use agreements to smooth out the retrenchment process. 'Good offers of severance pay, for example, could be used to persuade workers not to fight the retrenchment', says Paper Wood

and Allied Workers Union (PWAU) organiser Jerry Baskin. 'But the main issue is always the jobs'.

Some unions demand one month's notice of coming retrenchments, and information about what is causing them. 'If management is bringing in new machines, they must discuss them with the union before they arrive and not when they are about to be installed,' says Baskin.

'New technology is another enemy of the workers when it should in fact help them. If we are given notice in time, we demand that management trains workers who are already there to fit those new machines,' says Mayekiso.

Some unions demand to see the company's books so they can judge for themselves whether there really is too little money to keep people employed. Most bosses refuse. Njikelana points out that workers are suspicious: 'They do the books all year, they have the expertise to crook around'.

Accurate figures about overtime are also important. Retrenching workers when others are doing overtime is hard to justify, but this happens in many factories. At one chemical factory, 100 Saawu members were suddenly retrenched after workers had been doing overtime for six months.

Unions have forced employers to accept alternatives to retrenchment. In the motor industry, the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union pushed for a shorter working week as a way of saving jobs.

Organising to save jobs

In January this year, the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) forced OK Bazaars to negotiate over the retrenchment of 1 500 workers. CCAWUSA successfully demanded that only workers who wanted an early retirement should be retrenched. The rest should be laid off until early August, and then get their jobs back.

This allows management to save money and workers to save their jobs. It also gives migrant workers a vital second chance. If they lose



No work in sight for South Africa's jobless

their jobs altogether, they also lose their urban rights.

Laid-off workers and workers on short-time still face a hard battle. They have to survive on less money when most of them were struggling to do this on full pay. 'We would have preferred to keep the OK workers in their jobs, and let comrades share the work between them,' says CCAWUSA's Emma Mashinini.

In spite of retrenchments and recession, union membership has continued to grow. 'As retrenchments tighten, workers feel the need for organisation', says Jan Theron, general-secretary of the Food and Canning Workers Union. But battles in the factories are tougher to win. The huge reserve army of unemployed people gives management a wide choice of workers.

Defensive but not defeated

Is this making workers less militant? 'Unions are in a defensive position and some of the militancy has been killed', says Mayekiso. 'But we certainly haven't lost. Union membership hasn't dropped. Workers now assess their chances, learning when to attack and when to retreat.'

'It depends on the strength of organisation in that factory,' says Njikelana. 'In factories with strong shop-floor organisation, militancy grows. The pressure is on workers to defend what they have gained. They see it slipping away through their hands.'

Unions can save jobs and stop retrenchments being used to victimise workers and weaken organisation. But there are limits to this. Employers are showing resistance to signing agreements, and in the end, retrenchments are caused by forces which workers (and even some bosses) cannot control.

PWAU members at two Johannesburg companies were retrenched when the owners decided to move the factories — one to Bophuthatswana, and one to the Ciskei. There wages are low, workers are often unorganised and bantustan laws ban 'South African' trade unions. 'Bosses can just go ahead and do this because workers have no control over what is produced and how money is invested,' says a union official.

'Progressive organisations should develop schemes like self-help with unemployed workers,' says Mayekiso. Once workers have been retrenched, it is difficult for the union to keep in touch with them, especially if they are migrants.

A Kwazulu labour officer describes the situation: 'Each week more migrants return home saying they have been retrenched or dismissed. Then they just go and sit in their huts and wait — if they leave for the cities they are illegal and could get arrested. There is nothing we can do. We watch them starve and if they come to register for work we take their names. The files are already full.'

More than 3 000 motor industry workers in Port Elizabeth will soon be out of work.

Each of those workers has a family to support — food, rent, transport, school fees. They will spend all their savings struggling to stay alive. Most of them were already stretching their incomes to breaking point helping jobless friends.

In Port Elizabeth, there are over 50 000 people out of work. The loss of 3 000 jobs is not just a blow to those workers or even their families. It is a blow to the heart of an entire community.

In your next Saspu National Part 2 youth, communities and unions, organising the unemployed.

ON DECEMBER 3 1984, the New National Party (NNP) won a landslide victory in Grenada's general elections. Most people had never heard of Grenada until October 1983, when US president Ronald Reagan ordered his troops to invade this tiny island. Many never heard of it again.

The elections didn't make front page news, but for America's rulers, they served the same purpose as the invasion — to undermine and overthrow a revolution that was becoming a model for socialist development in the Caribbean, and to turn Grenada into just another island in America's backyard.

Grenada's revolution began in 1979, when a coup which cost only three lives brought the New Jewel Movement (NJM) under Maurice Bishop into power. This brought to an end the corrupt and brutal rule of Sir Eric Gairy, who had taken power when Britain gave Grenada independence in 1974.

Gairy used beatings, shootings, arrests and bribery to regain control of Grenada, and that was how he continued to rule. When the NJM took over, and Gairy fled to the United States, Grenada's people began to hope once again.

The People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) which was set up to govern the island inherited huge problems. Grenada was completely dependent on the export of three agricultural products - cocoa, nutmeg and bananas. Nearly 50 percent of the people were unemployed. Most adults were illiterate, and only one out of ten students reached high school.

The PRG knew that they depended heavily on the US for their exports and imports. Their decision to break out of this dependence was a brave one. Since the beginning of the century, the US had made 135 direct military interventions in Caribbean and Latin American countries — Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1961, the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, which claimed 3 000 lives, to name a few.

When Grenada approached both capitalist and socialist countries for aid, the US and Britain withdrew their support. But other assistance was forthcoming, from Cuba, various Arab countries, and the European Economic Community (EEC).

The PRG put a strong emphasis on industrial development, and within three years, unemployment was cut from 49 percent to 14. Education and health care improved dramatically. Even the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an imperialist-dominated body, publicly congratulated Grenada on its performance.

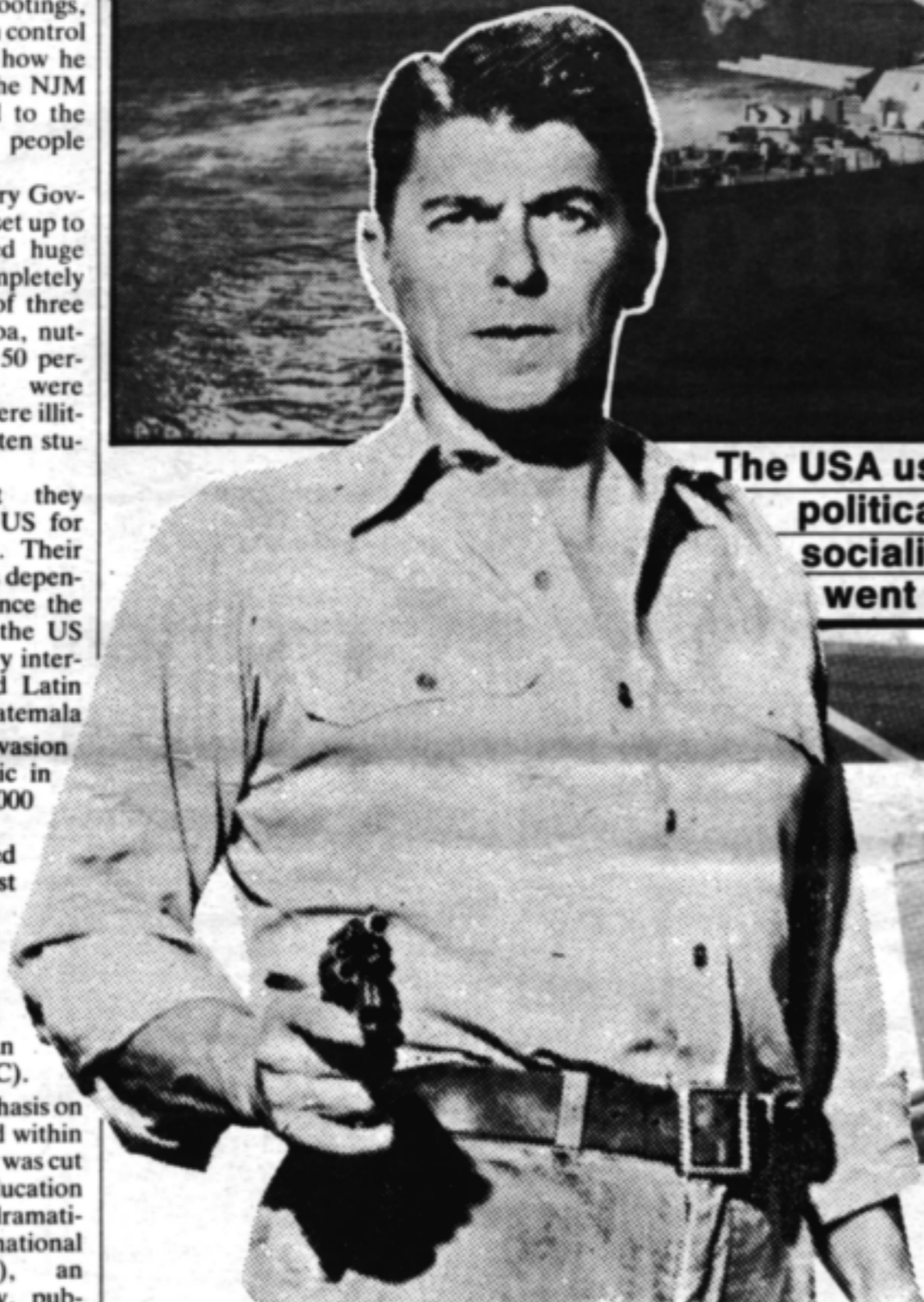
Politically, Grenada strove to establish grassroots democracy, based on Parish Workers' Councils, Zonal Councils, and Women, Youth and Farmers' Councils. Legislation and even Grenada's budget were discussed and criticised in meetings of these mass organisations.

America's fears

Compared to the massive unemployment, political frustration and total dependence on the US of other Caribbean islands, Grenada's path seemed to offer success and hope. Jamaica, which Reagan described as a 'capitalist miracle', had a falling growth rate, 30 percent unemployment and soaring food prices, despite a \$698 million IMF loan arranged by the US government.

Grenada's growing status in the Caribbean explains why the US took such extreme action against an island ten miles long and twenty miles wide, and a population of 100 000. The US has always been mortally afraid of revolutionary processes, said Bishop. 'The people of the region may begin to press their own governments for a similar process to start in their own countries', he said.

It's dangerous living in Reagan's backyard



The USA uses bribes, bombs and political manipulation to stop socialism. So, when Grenada went socialist...



Defiant answer to destabilisation

'popular democracy' based on a belief in 'the power of the masses.' A group around deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard argued for 'democratic centralism', and more defined roles for leadership.

In September 1983, the Central Committee decided the two men should act as joint leaders. This was a drop in status for Bishop and rumours began that he feared assassination by Coard. The Central Committee accused Bishop of spreading the rumours himself, and placed him under house arrest.

Crisis and invasion

This was a fatal mistake. Within days, students occupied the airport, chanting 'no Bishop, no school' and a general strike began soon afterwards.

On 18 October, several thousand Bishop supporters marched to his house and set him free. They then marched to Fort Rupert where they clashed with troops. Bishop and others surrendered, and were taken inside the fort and executed. Two days later, NJM Central Committee member Hudson Austin announced that a Revolutionary Military Council would take over Grenada.

In this general crisis, the US decided to move. On October 25, 1 900 US troops landed on Grenada. When they met stiff resistance, more were brought in, supported by air attacks. The battle continued for three more days until Coard and

Grenada had also broken America's unwritten rule that Cuba must be isolated, but its leaders defended their actions strongly: 'No one, no matter how mighty and powerful they are, will be permitted to dictate to the people and government of Grenada who we can have friendly relations with. We are not in anybody's backyard, and we are definitely not for sale.'

The Carter Administration's attitude was 'wait-and-see', but relations began to worsen as Grenada's ties with Cuba grew. Then Reagan took over, with promises to 'roll back communism'. Along with Cuba and Nicaragua, Grenada was labelled a source of regional unrest and an 'exporter of revolution.' Despite having an army 2 350 times larger than Grenada's, and an economy 27 520 times wealthier, the US made no real effort at peaceful coexistence.

Dirty tricks

Instead it began an active campaign of destabilising Grenada. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided backing for Grenadian counter-revolutionaries, who planted a bomb at a crowded Heroes Day rally, killing three people and wounding 90. Acts of terror like this were meant to scare

Grenadians and undermine confidence in the revolutionary leadership.

There was also economic destabilisation. In 1981, the US offered the Caribbean Development Bank a four million dollar loan on condition that Grenada was excluded from benefits.

In the same year, 250 ships, 1 000 aircraft and 120 000 troops entered the Caribbean for a naval exercise, which included practising an invasion of a small island. In later exercises, huge US warships sailed to within six miles of Grenada.

From the time they came to power, the People's Revolutionary Government campaigned against destabilisation, educating people about it and urging them to join the Militia. 'Destabilisation can only work when it goes unrecognised, like a thief in the night,' said Bishop. After the Heroes Day bombing, 20 000 people took to the streets in a defiant demonstration of unity and confidence in their country.

A serious crack in this unity gave Reagan his chance. While there was general agreement within the NJM on foreign policy and economic priorities, there were differing views on questions of leadership. Bishop and others argued for a

Austin were taken prisoner. The victims of the invasion included 30 patients in a mental hospital which was bombed to rubble.

The reasons America offered the world for this act of aggression were hard to believe. Reagan claimed 800 American medical students on the island were in danger and had to be rescued. A poll among students before the invasion showed that 90 percent of them wanted to stay on the island.

Reagan also claimed that the Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS) had 'invited' the US to restore order on Grenada. But such a call would have gone directly against the OECS charter, which calls for 'collective security arrangements' and not the involvement of foreign powers.

Choking socialism

The US claim that Grenada was a 'Soviet-Cuban colony being readied to export terror and undermine democracy', was the most ridiculous of all. There was no Cuban taskforce preparing to take over the island, just 636 construction workers helping to build Grenada's airport. The airport, allegedly designed for Soviet military purposes, had none of the features necessary for military use.

The real reasons for the invasion soon became clear. US Army Intelligence detained hundreds in barbed-wire enclosures and interrogated them about 'their political activities and their potential threat to a pro-western government in Grenada.' The streets were plastered with posters showing Coard and others blindfolded and dressed only in underwear, and saying: 'These criminals attempted to sell Grenada to the communists. Now they have surrendered.'

Aid denied to Grenada before now began to flow in — \$15 million to equip and train a new police force and army, and \$20 million for 'development'. The development plan included removing price controls on basic foods, eliminating state-controlled industry and 'offering incentives to private foreign investment'.

The US broke off Grenada's links with Cuba, Libya and the Soviet Union. The next step was to restore 'democracy' to the island. An interim government was set up and political parties were given one year to prepare for elections.

Enter the puppets

The NJM never really had a chance. There was an initial ban on all political activity, which allowed the interim government to praise the US invasion, and condemn the NJM and the revolution. And the events of 1983 had left the movement bitterly divided.

Coard's group were nearly all in jail, while Bishop's group were disorganised by the loss of their leaders. Those who remained formed the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM) which distanced itself from the revolution. This only confused people.

A bigger threat to US plans was the return of Gairy to Grenada. Although Gairy was an ardent admirer of the US, a return to corrupt, repressive rule would make it difficult to create a stable, pro-US order in Grenada. As in other countries, the US looked for a moderate alternative.

Existing moderate parties were grouped together as the New National Party (NNP) under the leadership of lawyer and former civil servant, Herbert Blaize. Reagan's Republican party provided the NNP with money, fund raisers and organisers, and these massive resources swept the NNP into power.

It had taken the US one year to drag Grenada back under imperialist control. In that time, unemployment rose to 25 percent. Perhaps a progressive movement will rise again out of these basic conflicts. If so, destabilisation will begin. And if it fails, ships and helicopters, filled with US soldiers will never be too far away.



'Organising women in their own communities is political. We've got to organise around day to day issues.'

Fedtraw lifts the load

The Federation of Transvaal Women talks to Saspu National about women's load and the struggle to lift it.

Why is a women's organisation necessary?

Women need to develop their organisational skills if they are to improve their position in South Africa.

Women's organisations are needed so that we can learn from each other, develop confidence and be able to take leadership roles.

Through women's organisations we can discuss the special problems facing us as women and how to deal with them.

What problems do you face organising women?

Many women just don't have the time for meetings, after working in the factories for nine and a half hours a day.

For a long time women have been seen as tools in the home. And so if you organise a meeting at seven in the evening, a woman will tell you: "That's good, but I have to cook for the children, and I have to do the washing, and because I work during the day, I have to clean the house at night. So I can't come."

Some men see women's role in political organisations like Fedtraw as a threat to themselves. They will say: "If my wife goes off to fight about rents and water and electricity and education, who is going to do the cooking at home? I'm a man. I'm not going to do that." Even among progressive activists, men and women, you find those same attitudes.

These are some of the things we have to look at practically when we organise women. At the same time, we can't demand that women confront all these issues at once. It's a long and difficult process.

In the rural areas these attitudes about women are even stronger.

But organising women in these areas is not easy, particularly in the bantustans. Although we see South Africa and the bantustans as one country, undivided, on a practical level we have problems because homeland leaders dislike any type of progressive activity

What is your approach to organising women?

Our programmes aim to appeal to all women, whether in urban or rural areas. We've got to organise



A triple burden of sexual, political and economic oppression

around the day to day issues that affect every woman in the street.

Our programme of action, adopted at our December conference, emphasises local activity.

Our four organisers for the Transvaal will work in the different areas, get to know the problems and how the women themselves can solve them.

We see the rural areas as a priority. Here our approach is not to be too ambitious, but to start with practical issues.

For example, the women in Driefontein had no market to sell the things they made, so our conference decided it was a priority to help them sell their things in the urban area.

What campaigns will you be involved in this year?

Because this year is the 30th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, we included it in our programme of action. It includes clauses of the Women's Charter, and the issues raised in it make it possible to organise women around issues like health, maternity benefits, equal wages and education — all issues

affecting us as women.

Our conference also resolved to work with the youth on the International Year of the Youth campaign and to endorse and popularize the Education Charter. We have thought deeply about issues like sexual harassment at schools, and unequal education, and we believe the Education Charter reinforces the demands of the Women's Charter and the Freedom Charter.

How do you see the link between high profile campaigns which are explicitly political, and day to day issues?

We see organising women in their own communities as political. Day to day issues create a climate for people to become involved in campaigns.

This work around practical issues will help us build a solid base. At the same time this serves a broader political function for women — they mustn't take a step back in the struggle, but must be alongside the men.

What are some of the plans for local activities?

There are quite a few ideas for prac-

tical projects. Tembisa women want to establish a first aid training project and other women want to start child minding and literacy programmes.

Then there are issues women want to know more about, like the new marriages act.

In Soweto a burning issue is the high tariffs at Baragwanath Hospital and the fact that the dispensary closes at 6 o'clock. It was felt Soweto women would have to initiate some action jointly with other groups and work out a campaign around this.

Activists in women's organisations have in the past experienced a tension between strengthening their own organisation and being involved in other sectors. How do you see this?

This has been a problem, because when we give time to our women's groups, our other activities come to a standstill.

We need to duplicate ourselves as activists — to develop more women activists who will be able to do what we are doing now.

But this is a long process, and this aspect of our struggle is still young.

But one major point in our favour is that Fedtraw has a very healthy relationship with other organisations working for change in South Africa.

And it is good we are not separating ourselves from the mainstream of opposition by only looking at issues that involve women.

Generally speaking, how do you see the relationship between a women's organisation and a civic?

Fedtraw has a higher political profile than a civic, so some women prefer to join the civic. Here their involvement will build them — and they can be drawn into Fedtraw.

It is also a question of where women feel more comfortable participating. In our experience, women find it difficult to express themselves in a large forum. If you discuss issues in a women's organisation, you are not only looking at the economic aspect, but also the personal pressures.

The civic will look at things like the action part, and the women's group will look at resolving the issue from a personal and an active viewpoint. That's one of our strengths.

In many civic issues women are in the forefront, for example when you speak about rent. But with high political profile things they take the back seat.

How do you see Fedtraw's relations with the church?

There is healthy communication between Fedtraw and church-based organisations, like the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT). We are there, drawing in the mothers and then trying to reread the bible in the context of today's life.

Also, in the Interdenominational Women's League, people are starting to ask political questions. They are now saying there is a need for something more than just what they are doing.

Our relationship with the church is important, because for many women the church is their main activity.

Will you be taking up the issue of unemployment?

This is a key issue affecting women especially. They are the ones who get fired first when there's a recession and are the last to get jobs.

A suggestion for dealing with unemployment is to establish self-help projects or bulk buying schemes. While these don't solve the problem, they do help in mobilising people, keeping them together, teaching people that they have common problems.

'ORGANISE OR STARVE'

Thirty years ago the South African Congress of Trade Unions put a spanner in the works for the bosses and a powerful spoke in the wheel of the Congress Alliance.

ON MONDAY, January 7 1957, 50 000 Alexandra residents refused to board PUTCO buses. For the next three months, 70 000 people walked to work in the heat and rain of the Transvaal summer. They refused to pay the penny increase in bus fares. They could not afford to.

The boycott brought into sharp focus the starvation wages paid to workers, and the urgent need for major increases. Within weeks, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) launched what was to be its most important campaign: the demand for a living wage of one pound a day.

'One pound a day for the factory worker who cannot buy what he makes. One pound a day for the miner who earns his phthisis and goes home broken to die. One pound a day for the builder of mansions who lives in a shack. Workers! You know your wages are too little. Your children are hungry. Prices are too high. You have no money for food, for rents, for transport. Workers, only unity can help us. When we stand together, we can make our voices heard. If all workers join with SACTU, we can win these demands.' This was how Sactu urged people to join the campaign.

SACTU had been formed two years before, in 1955. But its roots lay in the progressive trade union federations of earlier years. The most important of these was the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) formed in 1941 at a time of widespread worker militancy. By 1945, it claimed 158 000 members, in 119 unions covering a broad spectrum of industries including the mines.

1946 saw the largest single strike in South Africa's history, when 90 000 mineworkers, largely migrants, struck for better wages and working conditions. The police responded brutally, killing and injuring many and arresting union officials.

In 1950 the state passed the Suppression of Communism Act, aimed largely at crushing the influence of progressive trade union leaders. Soon afterwards restrictive labour laws like the Industrial Conciliation Act were passed.

The government believed that if black trade unions were not recognised, and left outside formal bargaining structures, they would be 'vulnerable to irresponsible leadership'. The Act set up liaison committees which would meet with management. Trade union representatives would be barred from these meetings and only unions organised along strictly racial lines could participate.

Conservative unions accepted the act and joined the new Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tucsa) where they were strictly controlled to protect the jobs and privileges of white workers.

But many refused. In March 1955, 30 years ago, representatives of 19 unions met to form a new, united trade union movement and Sactu was born.

The major unions which joined at this point were the Food and Canning Workers Union, the Textile Workers Industrial Union, and the National Union of Laundry, Cleaning and Dyeing Workers. And, sig-



S.A. CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

The Sactu logo: 'An injury to one is an injury to all' was the slogan adopted at its founding conference

nificantly for Sactu's policy of non-racialism, the laundry workers included 400 white members.

Congress

The word 'Congress' in Sactu's name was no coincidence. It showed a firm identification with the national movement. Sactu had been formed only three months before the Congress of the People at Kliptown in June 1955. Many worker leaders were fully involved in organising the Congress and collecting demands from people in factories and townships.

At the congress, it was two Sactu members, Billy Nair and Ben Turok who proposed the Freedom Charter clause 'The people shall share in the country's wealth'. Shortly after this, Sactu formally joined the Congress Alliance, with full representation on the National Co-ordinating Committee.

Sactu firmly believed that a trade union federation could not restrict itself to factory floor issues. As Chief Luthuli said: 'There is a Zulu saying that if you are pricked by a

thorn, you have to use a thorn to get it out. Workers are oppressed by political action; they must take political action in reply.'

At first, Sactu concentrated its activity on the Rand but soon spread, setting up local committees in most of the main industrial centres.

Where there was no union for workers in a particular industry, workers signed on as general Sactu members until one was formed. In Durban, Sactu recruited 17 000 workers between 1957 and 1958. These workers were first placed in a General Workers Union and then divided up when dockworkers and railway workers formed their own unions. Sactu also organised jobless workers into an unemployed workers union.

Education

In all its work, Sactu emphasised thorough discussion on all issues and the building of democratic worker committees. Special attention was given to worker education. Thousands of workers met weekly

to discuss trade union and other issues

SACTU's call for a Pound a Day campaign received full Congress support. Before the campaign was launched on Freedom Day, June 26 1957, meetings were held throughout the country, and people were urged to participate. In Johannesburg and PE, Sactu shop stewards called on workers to stay away from work for the day.

Pound-a-Day

The protest was a great success. There were mass demonstrations, meetings and torchlight processions in many cities. And in Johannesburg and PE, hundreds of thousands of workers stayed away from work.

Sactu followed up this show of strength. Whenever the Wage Board met to discuss wage levels, Sactu representatives were there to speak for the workers. Pound a Day campaign committees in each main centre popularised Sactu's call for a national minimum wage. This had a significant effect, and wage levels

slowly began to rise.

Another way of making workers' grievances felt was through consumer boycotts. In 1959, the brutal working conditions on potato farms in the Bethal area were exposed. Sactu immediately called for a potato boycott.

Shops which sold potatoes, and even cafes selling fish and chips were boycotted. Potatoes rotted in the shops and, because no-one would buy them, prices fell. The government was forced to call on farmers to treat their workers better.

Goods made by firms that clearly supported the government were also boycotted. One worker said: 'You attack me and degrade me in a thousand ways. You force my wages down and then increase my taxes. You deny my children education and force my wife to carry a pass. Why should I buy Nationalist cigarettes and jams?'

This tactic forced at least one major firm, Langeberge Ko-op into direct negotiations with union representatives. This was a time when bosses felt worker militancy as never before and strikes reached record levels.

But the bosses and the government began to hit back. In Benoni, police were called in to 'sort out' a dispute at Amato Textile, a Sactu stronghold. They baton-charged workers, injuring 40 and the entire workforce of 4000 workers was dismissed.

In other factories, union members were victimised, and officials detained. The long Treason Trial removed 23 key Sactu leaders from

organisational work. In April 1960 the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) were banned. But the government felt uneasy about banning a trade union federation, and instead detained Sactu leaders, 146 in all.

Sactu still continued to organise and educate workers and by 1961 it claimed 51 affiliates, representing 53 000 workers of all races.

In April 1961, a stayaway was called to pressurise the government for a National Convention of all political leaders to work out an alternative to the 'whites only' republic. Hundreds of thousands responded, especially in areas where workers were organised in Sactu-affiliated unions.

When the government refused yet again to listen to the call for peaceful negotiation and detained over 10 000 people, many felt the time had come to change tactics and turn to armed resistance. Many Sactu members joined those who went underground.

By March 1964, 45 Sactu officials and members had been banned, and many arrested. Union offices were raided regularly. By 1965 it was impossible to sustain organisation.

In the years that followed, unions fought for their survival, slowly rebuilding and reorganising. Sactu did not die, although people no longer organised openly under its banner. In the late 1970s, several people went to prison for Sactu work.