

What's at the bottom of South Africa's crippling recession?

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# SASPU NATIONAL

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The Education Charter campaign aims to gather in the educational demands of students, workers and communities across the country. Eastern Cape students give it an enthusiastic launch

## Building people's education

**THE CAMPAIGN** to draw up an Education Charter which incorporates the educational demands of all South Africa's people has begun. Official launches of the campaign organised by the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) and the Azanian Students Organisation (Azaso) in the Eastern Cape, Transvaal and Natal have drawn together thousands of students and representatives of progressive organisations. The campaign aims to involve worker, youth, women, student and other organisations in drawing up an education blueprint for South Africa.

It comes at a time when student and parent rejection of the present education system has reached its highest point in recent years. Students were becoming increasingly angry and militant in the face of corporal punishment, the age limit law, lack of representation and scandalous deprivation at school, said Cosas vice president, Mpho Lekgoro at the Natal launch of the campaign in Durban. Past Azaso executive member, Aaron Motswaledi said the Charter should not be drawn up by a small group of academics.

'The Education Charter must be a document which reflects the true feelings and demands of our people. It must be our guiding beacon in our struggles for a non-racial, democratic education system in years to come. It must be a living document', said Cosas president, Lulu Johnson at the Transvaal launching of the Education Charter in Soweto. Azaso president, Simphiwe Mgoduso, told the Eastern Cape launch that education struggles went hand in hand with the demand for a government based on popular will. Speaker after speaker at the

launches emphasised the need for drafting an Education Charter based on the Freedom Charter. Cosas Eastern Cape regional organiser Mzukisi Meyane said the campaign would spell out the Freedom Charter demand 'the doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all'. The Education Charter would enshrine 'all the demands that our brothers and sisters have died for. Once it was drafted it would be non-negotiable', he said. Nusas president Kate Philip praised Cosas and Azaso for their courage in

the face of fierce harassment and appealed to university students to throw their weight behind the struggle for a non-racial democratic education. Border UDF president Steve Tshwete said the present education system was designed to perpetuate oppression and exploitation and an attack on it was a direct attack on Apartheid. 'Our education is besieged, that is why our students have played and are still playing a major role in our society'. He stressed the importance of solidarity between parents/workers and students. The Education Charter campaign would project people into a 'people's South Africa where education would be used not as a status symbol but to impart skills and knowledge for the sole purpose of improving the lot of mankind, where intellectual life would be one with manual activity'. Many trade unions, civics, youth, women's and other organisations have already backed the campaign. Speaking at the Natal Education Charter launch in Durban, a spokesperson for the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA), called on employers to make provision for schools in factories and to give workers time off to study subjects of their choice. A representative from the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union (SFAWU) said a new social and economic order was needed before there could be equal educational opportunities.

## UDF hits back at allegations and threats

'LONG LIVE the UDF. Ban Apartheid'. This was the UDF's message at a recent press conference called by its National Executive Committee (NEC). UDF representatives from all over the country gathered in Johannesburg to discuss their response to Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange's attacks on the UDF. A statement read by national president, Albertina Sisulu, said the minister was using 'veiled threats, innuendo, false conclusions and misinformation' to enable him to take repressive action against the UDF. 'His allegations of links between the UDF and the ANC are totally without foundation and cannot be substantiated' the statement said. 'We make no apologies for the fact

that parts of our leadership have been members of the ANC. Even the minister cannot deny that they have a proud history of struggle against this evil system and that they command the respect and support of the majority of our people'. The NEC also blamed 'the policies of the Botha regime' for the 'conflict and turmoil which is currently tearing our land apart'. 'In our country today students refuse to accept unequal education, which has been highlighted by massive stayaway campaigns'. 'The death and destruction prevalent in the Vaal triangle are a direct result of the people's inability to pay high rents, and a reflection of



UDF executive members respond to Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange's attacks

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**SASPU NATIONAL**

# The silent, the silenced and a popular voice

THERE HAS been a deafening silence from Hendrickse, Rajbansi and the 118 others who are supposed to be busy 'changing apartheid from the inside.'

Why? The apartheid system they promised to dismantle has been as busy as ever and the conflict of the past few months has grown more intense.

Thousands of students are standing firm on their demands for democratic representation in the schools and access to education for all. There is no peace in the Vaal townships as arrests continue, mourners at funerals are harassed, and the shadow of increased service charges hangs over residents' heads.

Plans to move thousands of Africans to Khayelitsha and tighten the grip on squatters are going ahead.

Mineworkers are fighting for living wages and paid a heavy price in lives and injuries. Workers at Grand Bazaars and Simba have been forced to call consumer boycotts to win back the jobs of their fellows, unfairly dismissed.

Not a word on all this from Hendrickse and friends. They can't say they haven't heard about it.

The voice of workers, students and township residents is loud and clear enough for those who want to hear it. It seems like those in power do not.

Detentions of United Democratic Front (UDF) leaders, students, residents and worker leaders continue. The army has been called in to patrol townships.

And now the UDF is being blamed for conflict which results from apartheid policies. The attacks on the UDF by Law and Order minister Louis le Grange leave many people fearing the worst.

Yet the voice of South Africa's majority needs to be listened to now more than ever. They are getting the worst of a recession that is swallowing up thousands of jobs and pushing prices out of reach of all but a few.

The government has very few solutions to this problem except to say it will cut down on its spending.

It is not talking about increasing spending on the things black people have always needed and need desperately now.

It is not talking about protecting workers from retrenchment and consumers from unnecessarily high prices.

There are some hopeful signs. Students in the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) and the Azanian Students Organisation (Azaso) are embarking on a campaign to draw up an Education Charter, a blueprint for an education system which will reflect the needs and aspirations of all.

This campaign wants the active involvement of students, parents, workers and others, in contrast to the present education system which has been imposed from above.

And after seven years of enforced silence, South Africans can once again hear the voice of Beyers Naude. His inspiration and spirit has remained with progressives throughout those seven years, but his full contribution to building a non-racial democratic society is welcome and overdue.

He should never have been silenced. Nor should Nelson Mandela, Terror Lekota, Billy Nair, Bongani Khumalo and many others. And nor should the UDF...

## Embassy six - support burns brightly

WIDESPREAD COMMUNITY solidarity with the Durban six reached a peak when 9 000 crammed into a support meeting at the University of Natal, Durban, in September.

This was followed a day later by massive support for a United Democratic Front (UDF) Natal Indian Congress (NIC) candlelight night when the community was called upon to switch off lights and light candles for an hour to show support for the six and to protest the opening of the new apartheid parliament.

Earlier that day UDF and NIC supporters lined several streets in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, holding placards which hit out at detentions and the inauguration of the new parliaments.

At the mass meeting the exuberant crowd cheered Dr Allan Boesak when he said South Africa was entering a new era of shame.

Both the British and the U.S. governments were condemned for collaborating with apartheid.

The candlelight night succeeded 90 percent in certain areas, such as Merebank in Durban. In most other areas the call received between 65 to 75 percent support, mainly because organisers were unable to reach all houses.

Organisers who went door to door said the issue has sparked a high level of awareness, not only of the consulate issue but also of detentions in general.



Using water against teargas fired during PE rent protests

## PE blocks rising rent

ANOTHER TOWN council is under pressure. The Kayamandi Town Council in Port Elizabeth has been forced to drop rent increases after massive rent protests.

After meetings called by the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (Pebco), thousands of residents staged placard demonstrations and distributed pamphlets calling for a boycott of deputy-mayor Tamsanqa Linda's shop. Demonstrators were forced to disperse when police fired teargas at them.

Pebco is gaining increasing support and thousands of residents have attended meetings in different townships to protest against rent increases, shack demolitions and the eviction by Linda of Veeplaas resident, Mrs Mavela.

Residents demanded that rent increases be scrapped, as people were already suffering because of high prices and increased GST.

The PE Youth Congress, Cosas, the PE Womens Organisation, the Eastern Cape UDF, the Motor Assembly and Component Workers Union (Macwusa) and General Workers Union of SA all joined the protests.

Meanwhile a six month ban on



Backing the boycott, from l-r: Paul Mosime, secretary, Simba Shop Stewards Committee; Walter Mbekela, chair person; Chris Dlamini, SFAWU and Fosatu president; Vuyo Nduna, Transport and General Workers Union organiser; Jay Naidoo, SFAWU general-secretary; David Magema, SFAWU Johannesburg branch secretary, and Elijah Masinga, Saawu organiser

# Fired Simba workers say drop those chips

THE SIMBA workers committee has called for a boycott of Simba-Quix products and is winning support from trade unions and community and student groups around the country.

In August, 474 workers at Simba's factory in Isando, Transvaal, were sacked after striking in support of three dismissed colleagues.

The dismissals were unfair, says the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union (SFAWU), which signed a recognition agreement with the company in 1982. Simba managing director, Mr JC Du Toit, denies this.

The dispute began in March. A worker in the off-loading section threw a potato at another worker to attract his attention. This worker threw the potato into a container and

was dismissed for 'damaging company property'.

In May, two SFAWU members, Hilda Mokuoba and Martha More were fired after refusing to collect boxes. They said this was not part of their job, which was to stamp the boxes.

On both occasions, SFAWU shop stewards appealed against the dismissals. Management refused to negotiate with them or union officials. Workers therefore decided to strike on Friday August 10.

Management ordered the workers to report back for work on Monday and said they would take action against the chair of the Shop Stewards Council. At 7.30 on Monday morning shop stewards were told they had one hour to report back to

union members. But at 8.25 management told workers they were dismissed.

In terms of the recognition agreement, dismissals can only take place after 72 hours of negotiations. Management claimed 72 hours had passed, but this included the weekend, when no negotiations had taken place.

SFAWU president, Chris Dlamini, tried to intervene and was told the workers had been replaced by coloured labourers as they were 'better equipped to communicate'.

Jay Naidoo, SFAWU secretary general, said the union was making urgent representations to the Minister of Manpower to appoint a conciliation board to resolve the dispute.

# No peace yet in Vaal townships as arrests continue

UNREST SPARKED a month ago by rent increases is still evident in the Vaal Triangle.

The Vaal Civic Association (VCA) and the Vaal Ministers Solidarity Group (VMSG) (formed after the unrest to co-ordinate relief work) have assisted residents to find out how many people died, trace missing relatives and friends, collect money for food, and provide clinics to treat the injured. They have raised R12 400 for relief work.

A clinic set up by the UDF in Evaton and run mainly by the Health Workers Association, treated about 100 casualties, many of them serious.

'People were scared to go to the Sebokeng clinic as police were allegedly arresting patients as soon as they recovered', one doctor said.

The VMSG has so far listed 78 people dead, including four councillors.

Continued police presence, especially at funerals, has not helped to defuse tension. Just two weeks after the rent protests began, over 40 000 mourners attended the funerals of 25 people in Evaton and Sharpeville.

In Evaton, police in 'hippo' vehicles chased mourners with sjamboks. More than 200 people were arrested.

In Sharpeville, police entered the cemetery, but retreated when the angered crowd surged towards them. 'We have just come to bury our dead with respect and dignity' one mourner said.

The following weekend, police used teargas and rubber bullets at funerals in Sebokeng, Bophelong, and Sharpeville. 900 mourners were arrested.

16 year old Jacob Moleleke was shot dead in a police van outside the Sebokeng police station. He was among a group of young people about to be released without charge after a week in jail. Police confirmed the shooting.

Most of those arrested have appeared in court. In Vanderbijlpark the cases were held in camera, and in Vereeniging the cases were postponed to October 15.

In Sebokeng 598 mourners only appeared in court two days after their arrest. Bail was refused and an appeal against this postponed indefinitely.

## Bazaars boycott strongly backed

FIFTY GRAND Bazaars warehouse workers on strike at Epping in the Western Cape are being backed by progressive organisations.

The dispute began when two leading members of the Retail and Allied Workers Union (Rawu) committee were dismissed for 'teasing' another employee.

Worker support for a strike grew. After an unsuccessful meeting with

management, the entire workforce was dismissed.

Calls for support from the striking workers have led to a Rawu call to boycott Grand Bazaars, a mass meeting attended by 500 people and demonstrations at Grand Bazaars outlets.

Grand Bazaars management has been hostile to settlement calls.



# South Cape countryside is rallying to the Front

EARLIER THIS year at a Karoo meeting of the Labour Party, the late Mr Solly Essop said, 'The rural areas must speak with one voice. Fortunately there are no disrupting influences here like in the cities, like the UDF'.

More than 2 000 people proved him wrong when they converged on the Karoo town of Oudtshoorn recently for the launch of the South Cape region of the UDF.

UDF has spread to other Cape rural areas.

Three contingents representing the Western Cape rural areas attended the UDF national launch in August. Since then West Cape UDF has made contact with residents of 20 outlying towns.

In many towns anti-election activity laid the basis for the establishment of grassroots organisations, like the Middelburg Youth Congress, whose launch was attended by more than 200 young people.

## Banning cannot crush popular support - UDF

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the people's alienation from government-created structures', the statement said.

The NEC said the government was trying to divert attention from its own inability to govern by blaming the UDF for the present unrest. Banning the UDF would contribute nothing to the present crisis, and would in fact exacerbate it. It would show the government's determination to stifle all legitimate and peaceful opposition, the statement said.

'The government should try and ban the UDF, because they will be facing the will of the people and that can never be banned' said Trevor Manuel, acting national secretary.

Asked about the UDF's role now that the constitution was implemented, Western Cape publicity secretary, Jonathan de Vries, said the effects of the constitution's implementation would be felt and therefore UDF's work would be ongoing.

Border region president, Steve Tshwete, said UDF officials in the area suffered constant harassment and surveillance by security police. Recently the home of UDF supporter Andrew Hendrikse was attacked and live ammunition fired into the house, by unknown people.



Soweto schools came to a standstill as 6 000 students and Cosas supporters gathered to bury Bongani Trevor Khumalo, shot by police on September 14. Khumalo was Soweto branch secretary of Cosas. The funeral at Regina Mundi was conducted by a group of priests led by Reverend Teele. After the service mourners marched to Avalon cemetery, followed by a convoy of cars, trucks, private buses and combis

# Students firm on demands

CONFLICT continues between more than a quarter of a million boycotting students and education authorities and police with students gaining increasing support from parents in many areas.

Students say they will not return to classes as their demands have not been met. They have rejected the Department of Education and Training (DET) constitution for student representation announced by Minister Gerrit Viljoen recently because students were not consulted in its drafting.

A statement released by the national executive of the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) said students had clearly stated their demand for full participation in the drawing up of a Students Representative Council (SRC) constitution

and would not be fooled by DET moves to impose one on them.

The DET move was another attempt to co-opt and confuse people and must be seen in the light of the DET's refusal to meet nationally supported student demands, said the statement.

The statement demanded:

- the immediate unconditional release of all detained students
- an end to intimidation and harassment by police and school authorities
- resignation of town councillors because students have been killed in the Vaal and other areas under their control
- students and parents be allowed to decide when final exams are written
- no declaration need be signed when students return to school.

Students in Port Elizabeth,

Grahamstown, Soweto, the Vaal and other areas have demanded the withdrawal of police and the army from their schools and townships and have called on the DET to ensure this.

●In Grahamstown police fired teargas and rubber bullets and baton-charged more than 2 000 boycotting students from three secondary schools who were marching in support of their demand for an SRC.

●In Port Elizabeth there were boycotts at 26 schools and clashes with police. Students joined their parents call for the scrapping of rent increases and parents pledged support for students demands.

●More than 25 schools in Queenstown, King Williamstown, Graaf Reinet, Port Alfred, Cradock, Fort Beaufort, Uitenhage and Somerset

East are on boycott. And the Sebe Training College in the Ciskei has been closed after boycotts there.

●At Fort Hare university students boycotted classes demanding better quality food and that a course on campus for Ciskei police and public prosecutors be scrapped. Ciskei police attacked students protesting against an admin curfew.

●Ngoye university has been closed down and the University of the Transkei has come to a standstill after student boycotts and repeated invasions of the campus by Transkei police. All full-time students have been expelled, hundreds arrested, and the SRC has been forced into hiding.

●In Soweto boycotts and clashes with police continue at many of the 63 high schools in the area. At least three students have been killed, including Cosas Soweto branch secretary Bongani Khumalo. Eight Cosas leaders there have been detained.

●93 000 students in the Vaal, 20 000 secondary and 68 000 primary school students in East Rand townships (Daveyton, Katlehong, Thokoza, Tembisa, Vosloorus, Wattville, Tsakane 000 students in Alexandra, and 8 000 students in Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, and Soshanguve are on boycott.

Students have embarked on a campaign to forge unity with their parents and other workers. And at recent meetings in many of the boycotting areas parents pledged their full support for students demands.

## Khayelitsha - a growing threat

PW BOTHA'S recent announcement that the coloured labour preference policy in the Western Cape is to be abolished, has been condemned as 'divisive' by progressive organisations.

99-year leasehold rights are to be granted to certain areas, particularly Khayelitsha. According to Minister of Co-operation and Development, Gerrit Viljoen, all people in Crossroads, KTC and other squatter areas will move to Khayelitsha by early next year.

Only 'legal' squatters will receive core housing. 'Illegals' will be tem-

porarily relocated beyond Khayelitsha and their eventual destination is the homelands. So although original government policy to rid the Western Cape of Africans has been aborted, the new measures clearly aim to keep their presence to a minimum.

Khayelitsha's establishment will allow tight influx control. The government's 'squatter problem' will be solved by sweeping the 'legals' to a remote and tightly-controlled location, while despatching the illegal dwellers to their homelands. By doing so, embarrassing symbols of resistance will be removed.

The people affected oppose the move to Khayelitsha, saying that it is too far away, the houses too small and the expected costs too great. They demand houses for all, water, electricity and affordable public transport. People should live and work where they choose and participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

The Western Cape Civics, the United Women's Organisation and the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee have demanded that there be no division of 'legals' from 'illegals', and that phases 2 and 3 of the new Crossroads be built as originally promised.

# Mineworkers win wage increase, but the price is high

SOUTH AFRICA'S first legal strike by black mineworkers belonging to the National Union of Mineworkers (Num) was resolved by a last minute Anglo-American pay offer. But the legality of the strike and the settlement did not prevent violent clashes between workers, and police and management.

Num declared a dispute with the Chamber in July. When conciliation boards failed, Num general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa announced that workers at eight mines where the union was recognised had decided to strike.

Num held strike ballots, although not legally required to do so. They did this to 'indicate to the mine bosses that a large majority of workers intend to take strike action unless their reasonable demands are met' said Ramaphosa. Of the 43 271 who voted in the ballots, only 207 op-



Striking mineworkers. The Chamber's last-minute wage offer came too late to stop them downing tools

posed the strike. Just hours before the strike began, the Chamber offered a 2,3 percent increase in pay and fringe benefits. Unskilled workers were offered a holiday leave allowance equal to half their monthly pay.

By this time work had stopped at three Anglo mines. Goldfields issued pamphlets threatening workers with

dismissal, whether the strike was legal or not.

Throughout the day Num informed workers of the Chamber's offer. However some 45 000 workers struck, and at Anglo's Welkom mines 250 workers were treated in hospital after clashes with police. By the following day, almost all the strikers were back. Labour observers praised

the mineworkers' control during the strike.

The settlement was overshadowed by 'illegal' spillover strikes. The worst clashes occurred at mines where Num is not recognised. Workers there struck in solidarity with other mines, demanding recognition of Num.

A total of 19 workers were killed,

hundreds injured and those who didn't return to work were sent back to the bantustans.

'If the Chamber had negotiated in good faith there would have been no need for the workers to take strike action,' said Ramaphosa. He blamed mine management for the violence.

'They invited police into situations which were capable of being controlled by our strike committee,' he said.

Num has announced that it intends suing the South African Police for action against the black mineworkers during strikes.

At present, conciliation boards are meeting over disputes Num has declared with three mines belonging to the Chamber of Mines. In addition, negotiations with The Employment Bureau of Africa (Teba) have deadlocked, but Num has not yet said whether it will pursue the legal strike it is now entitled to.



High prices, no jobs. Why? Quick answers like 'infla

# THE ECON

**R**ECSSION . . . most people may not know exactly what has caused it, but they know the recession is all around them and making them suffer. And fresh signs of this suffering are bursting into the open every day

'Asinamali!' - we have no money. We cannot pay. This cry is heard in a new township every week as rents rise beyond people's means or bus fares go up.

Food, which can only be bought after rent is paid and money put aside for bus fare to work, costs more and more. Mealie-meal up in July, bread and sugar increases this month, milk price rises expected before the year ends - not even basic foods are easy to afford.

'Awukho umsebenzi - sorry no jobs'. People, desperate to find work see this sign at factory after factory. Up to three million workers in South Africa are unemployed, most of them black.

And the numbers are growing. In 18 months 70 000 workers in the metal industry lost their jobs.

'The government can't be expected to pay ...'. The effects of cuts in government spending on things people need are felt everywhere. Hospital and clinic costs have doubled, the bread subsidy has dropped and the price risen, the gap between white and black pensions has widened.

These problems are dumped on unpopular rulers who cannot cope. Vaal Town Councils inherited a R3,5 million debt and a shortage of 11 000 houses. Hendrickse now has 180 000 homeless families for his 'own affair'. KwaZulu and Lebowa both closed new applications for pensions - no money left.

The recession is everywhere and growing. So is opposition. Rent protests are spreading — Rathanda, Sharpeville, New Brighton, to name just a few. In Alexandra, Lamontville, Mdantsane and Onverwacht, residents have boycotted buses.

There were 176 strikes in the first half of this year involving a record number of 50 000 workers. Most were sparked off by wages.

The political causes of this situation are clear. The majority of South Africans have no meaningful political rights, cannot live where they like, and are forced to accept inferior education, housing, health and welfare.

The economic roots are less obvious. The newspapers don't help much, talking about exchange and interest rates, balance of payments deficits, stagflation and fiscal drag as if every reader knows what all this means.

This is unacceptable because they are talking about the wealth produced by the majority of South Africans and the poverty of millions. The reasons for recession are complicated but they can be explained.

## How were profits made before? What's going wrong now?

Up to 4 500 motor workers will have lost their jobs by the end of this year. Does that mean all South Africans have adequate transport and no new vehicles are needed? 30 000 civil engineering workers have lost their jobs since 1982. Is that because houses, classrooms and good roads for all have now been built?

Motor car manufacturers, construction companies and others produce what is needed but only if they make a profit at the same time. To do this they have to get as much value out of their machines, materials and workers as possible.

In one day workers produce goods worth far more than the wages they receive. In spite of this employers try to keep wages as low as possible. It is easier to control the cost of labour power than to keep machinery and



## WHC

material costs down — these have to be bought from other profit-making companies.

South African employers have always used the migrant labour system and the pass-laws to keep wages down. Workers who qualify to work in urban areas still have the threat of expulsion to the bantustans hanging over their heads. This weakens their power to bargain and organise.

And employers have also avoided paying wages high enough to support migrant workers' families in the bantustans. They are expected to support themselves off the land.

Employers have used other tactics to keep profits up. Companies have tried to increase efficiency by taking over other firms or joining up with them.

A company which controls a large slice of any industry has a big say in what that product will cost. Tongaat-Hulett for example controls 70 percent of all sugar sales in South Africa.

Huge corporations have steadily taken over South African economic life — ten giant companies, including Barlow Rand and Anglo-American control 70 percent of the country's wealth.

These corporations don't just operate in one industry. Anglo for example owns gold mines, insurance companies, buildings for hire, steel mills, paper plants and farms.

One of Anglo's food companies, Tiger Oats, has interests in milling wheat and in baking. Because it supplies itself with flour it is able to keep the price of its raw materials down, and profits up.

But the most important means of keeping profits up is still getting as much work out of workers as possible, — as cheaply as possible.



tion' hide the real reasons. And they say nothing about who's hit hardest

# ECONOMIC SQUEEZE



harder and longer. Workers at CHT Manufacturing in Pretoria were fired for refusing to work excessive overtime. They were expected to work an extra 34 hours each week.

Machinery is constantly brought in to speed up production, costing many workers their jobs. A National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (Naawu) spokesperson criticised employers 'who look to increasing profit margins by using more productive machinery and techniques regardless of human costs'.

## And what is the government planning to do about this?

The government has been telling everyone to cut down on spending. Their reasons? If there is lots of money available to buy goods, the price of those goods will be pushed up.

Interest rates were pushed up to 23 percent in the hope that the supply of money would be cut down, competition for goods would diminish and prices would drop.

But the government itself has already spent more than it budgeted for this year, and is heavily in debt. As it is, R3 490 million had to be set aside in this year's budget to pay back money that was borrowed in previous years.

The government expects to overspend by R2,4 billion this year, but new finance minister Barend du Plessis called 80 important men to the Carlton Centre and promised to cut this amount to R1,8 billion.

In fact, cuts in government spending are nothing new. The cutting knife has fallen hard on things needed by working people for years. This year the budget for public passenger transport was cut by R68 million, and train fares went up. The subsidy on a loaf of brown bread was cut by six cents and the price went up.

There are of course areas of spending that cannot be cut too much: defence, up by R662 million this year to R3 755; the bantustan policy which got R1 650 million this year; subsidies and loans for farmers whose political support the government needs — by the end of 1983 they owed the government R5 000 million.

Spending on these areas won't be cut. It is expected to grow. The government will need other solutions to its money problems. One solution is to simply print more money for itself, even though this has precisely the inflationary effects which it wants to avoid. Another is to take out more loans.

And another is to increase taxes. This year, despite financial problems, the government is expecting R1,5 billion more revenue than it budgeted for. This comes from increased general sales tax, greater tax earnings from the high profits made by the gold mines and more efficient tax collection.

Over the years the weight of taxation has fallen more and more on individuals. In 1979, the government collected R7 988 million in tax. Twenty cents of every one rand collected came from income tax, 13 cents from gst, 19 cents from companies and 14 cents from the gold mines.

In 1984, tax amounted to R23500 million. Nearly 31 cents in every rand comes from income tax, 25 cents from GST, 16 cents from companies and 11 cents from gold mines.

In other words, people who are hit hardest by the recession will pay most for the government's attempts to solve it.

## BUDGET GETS SQUASHED?



Finance Minister, Barend du Plessis

Putting pressure on workers doesn't work completely in employers' favour. While it does make higher profits possible it also causes frustration and discontent among workers which is reflected in absenteeism, accidents at work, damage to property and strikes. All of these reduce productivity and profits.

But business needs to pressurise workers now more than ever because their costs are going up. The interest rate has been raised to 23 percent. This means that a factory owner who borrows R100 from a bank for one year to buy a new machine will have to pay back R123.

South African manufacturers are paying much more to borrow money than their competitors in other countries — the interest rate in the USA is 12,75 percent.

Most manufacturers buy their own materials and equipment with borrowed money, and hope to pay it back out of profits. Interest rates of 23 percent are discouraging investment and very little money is going into making the economy grow.



Increased transport costs - part of a growing burden

Meanwhile the cost of living has gone up by about 12 percent this year. In other words what you could buy for one rand in 1983 costs one rand and twelve cents in 1984. The rate of inflation has stayed above ten percent since 1974.

What causes this? The higher costs which manufacturers are facing are being dumped onto consumers in the form of higher prices. Monopoly control over industries is allowing a few companies to set prices as high as they like.

### Strong dollar, falling gold - what's that got to do with us?

Manufacturing is the main sector of the South African economy but has very little power in international markets. Factory owners rely on machinery imported from Europe and the United States which is very expensive. And because new machines are being developed all the time, machines used here are out of date compared to overseas.

This means South African-made goods are usually more expensive than the same products produced by foreign



companies and therefore difficult to sell overseas. The soaring value of the dollar has made this worse.

The US Federal Reserve Bank raised the interest rate and limited the amount of cash in the American economy. Anyone who wanted to borrow dollars to invest in machinery, property or whatever had to pay a high price for them.

International bankers and others sold their gold and bought dollars, which they knew could be lent out at high interest. The value of the dollar climbed, while gold fell.

The rand has also weakened against the dollar. In 1981 one rand was worth 130 US cents. At the beginning of 1984 it was worth 90 US cents. Now you would be lucky to get 60 US cents for your rand.

Manufacturers are now forced to pay higher prices for the machinery and materials they import, and higher prices locally because of inflation.

The money earned from exporting goods is used to pay for imports. South Africa's main exports are gold, other minerals like platinum, manganese and coal, and food products like maize.

Because of the drought, food, once a major export is now high on the list of imports. Exports of manufactured goods have also dropped. South Africa was therefore spending more money overseas than it was getting back.

The fall in the gold price has not necessarily set the gold price back. They sell gold in dollars. When they change these for rands they get more rands per dollar than ever before. Income from gold is expected to rise by 12,5 percent this year to R11,5 billion. And this has not helped manufacturers who need to raise their own capital.

The balance of payments has now improved, but at great cost. The value of our exports has not risen. Instead less machinery is being imported, which is contributing to the stagnation of the economy.

### Where are the jobs? Overtime? When some don't work at all?

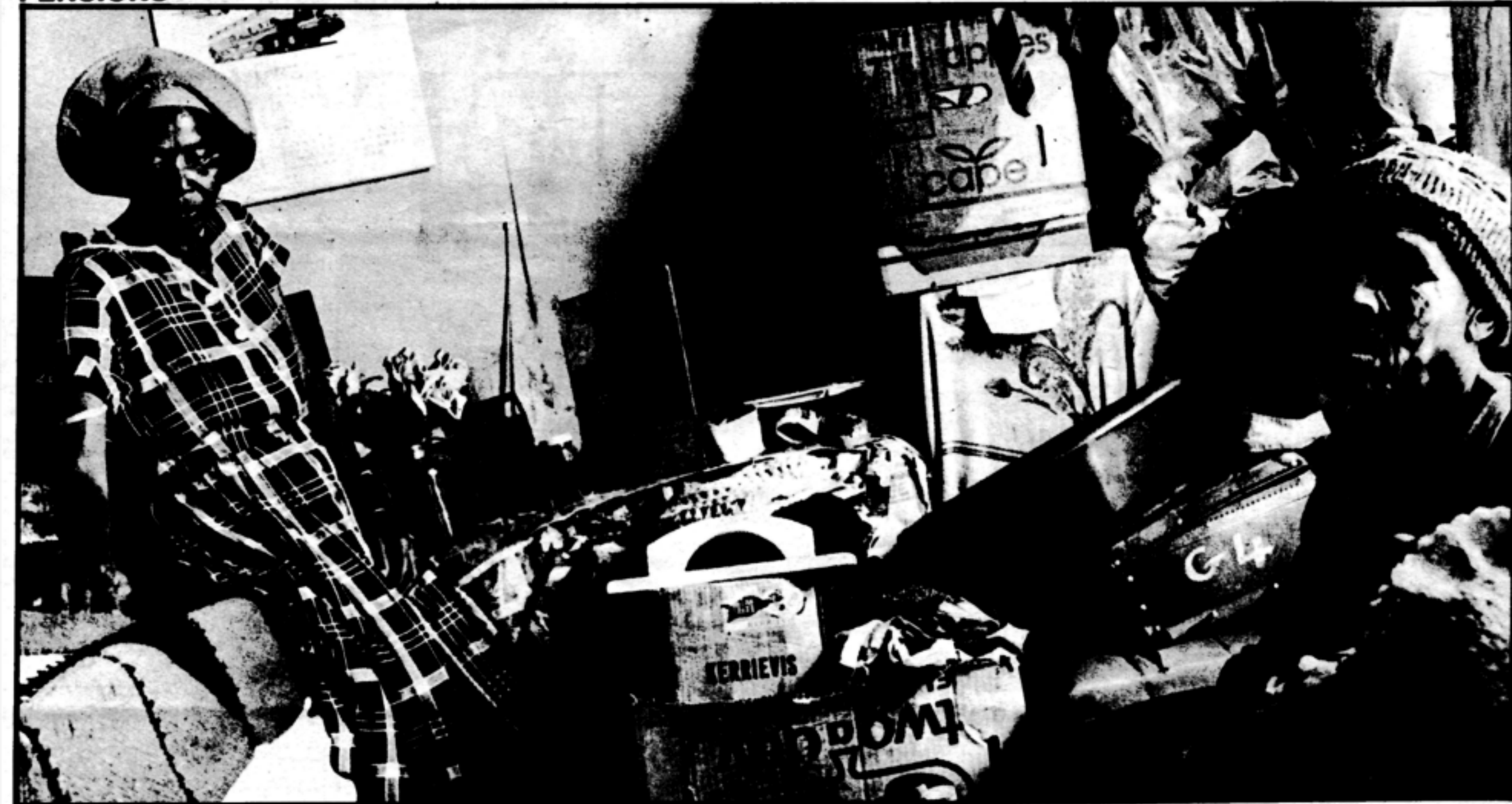
Stagnation means many are being retrenched and no new jobs are being created. But a growing economy would not in itself guarantee work for all.

This year, the motor industry expects to sell 12 000 more vehicles than last year. Workers productivity is at its highest in five years. Yet thousands are being retrenched, and those still employed are being forced to work three and four-day weeks.

And besides, unemployment allows employers to pick and choose out of three million unemployed and 11 million who have never had jobs. This weakens the power of those who are employed to bargain against the low wages and poor working conditions they are forced to accept.

While thousands are losing their jobs, those that remain are forced to work





# Pensions - uphill battle for rights

'BY THE time we receive our pension we have already borrowed so much that more than half goes immediately. We are like cripples unable to pay monthly rentals. Yet during our early days we contributed greatly to the country's economy...'

This letter from a Soweto pensioner describes a terrible fact — after working a lifetime in South Africa's mines, factories and farms, the majority of aged and disabled people cannot look forward to even simple comforts.

This year Africans will get a maximum pension of R65 a month, Indians and coloured people R103 and whites R166. Why? As one social worker commented, 'all pay the same for bread, coal, meat and other necessities of life. African and coloured people are also affected by rising costs, and have to pay the same sales tax.'

Men who have reached the age of 65 and women the age of 60 have a legal right to a pension. So do people who have a disability which will keep them from work for 12 months or more, and people who are blind.

But claiming these rights is an uphill battle. It starts when they apply to the District Pensions Officer — either Black Affairs Commissioners in the urban areas or magistrates in the bantustans. These are often far away — people in Ndwedwe, KwaZulu travel over 100 kilometres to the pension office.

Some pension officers say people can only apply on certain days, even though there is no law which says this. In Hammersdale, Natal, pension applications are only accepted on one day every two months — whites can apply on any weekday.

Applicants for an old age pension have to prove their age. Many Africans were never issued birth certificates and are at the mercy of officials who guess their age.

They either judge by appearance or by questioning people about important events like the Bambatha Rebellion (1906) or the Great Flu (1918). One woman in Natal was told she was too young to get a pension, and the pension clerk wrote 'born 1922' in her reference book. But she



## African pensioners fight long queues, tough laws and uncaring officials. All for R65 a month or less

had a marriage certificate dated 1932. She certainly didn't get married at the age of ten.

To get a disability pension people have to prove they are disabled. A district surgeon conducts examinations but will only do this if the district pensions officer requests it. Officials with absolutely no medical training have the power to decide whether African people are disabled enough to qualify for a pension.

Proof of disability and sickness is not the only hurdle to cross. Applicants also have to show they are poor enough. Africans who earn between R21 and R40 a month lose part of their pension. Africans who earn over R40 get nothing at all.

Pensioners who get past these obstacles could still wait a long time before any money arrives. One woman first applied for a pension in April 1978. She heard nothing and applied again in February 1979. Just over a year later she again went to the pension office and was told there was no record of her application.

White pensioners are paid for the time taken to process their applications. This used to happen with Africans but in 1977 the law was changed so they would only be paid once their application was approved. The longer the government takes to sort things out the more money it saves.

Once a pension is granted, it is still no easy task to collect it. Thousands of African pensioners stand in all-night queues to make sure they get

After a lifetime of work, black pensioners have little to look forward to

their pensions. Officials say it is unnecessary, but a Port Elizabeth pensioner disagrees: 'On three occasions they told me there was no more money after I had been in the queue the whole day. Now I stand there all night'.

Panic that money might run out has had tragic results. At Albany in the Eastern Cape, two pensioners were killed while waiting in pension queues, one of them trampled to death.

Sometimes pensions just aren't there. Cornelius Mjacu of Port Elizabeth, aged 105 years, walked 10 kilometres to collect his pension. On two occasions officials could not find his card, leaving him penniless for four months. An investigation revealed that his card had been filed in the wrong place under 'cancellations'.

On top of the bureaucratic bungling is the attitude of pension clerks. Complaints about rudeness are common. At Driefontein in the Transvaal, clerks told aged applicants to go away and get married. Corruption is often alleged and in some cases proved. A newspaper investigation revealed that 10 000 pensioners in the Lydenburg area had been underpaid for two years, sometimes by as much as R20 each time.



## Desolation for the aged in bantustan wastelands

AFRICAN PENSIONERS in urban areas suffer terribly. In the bantustans they are even worse off.

From June this year the Lebowa department of Health and Welfare refused to accept applications for pensions as they had run out of money. Thousands of people were left with no income for six months, maybe more.

Lebowa spends more than half its budget on pensions. To meet all the pension needs, they would need four times more money from Pretoria. That is not going to happen. Nor are the forced removals and pass laws which keep the bantustans overcrowded going to stop.

Kwazulu announced that 100 000 aged and disabled people who qualified for pensions could not be paid out. In future the number of new pensioners will be allowed to grow by five per cent each year. After that no more applications will be allowed, even if there are people who qualify.

Handing over control of pensions to bantustan governments has caused more suffering. The first time 'independent' Bophuthatswana paid out pensions in GaRankuwa, an official arrived and said, 'The pension vouchers have not yet arrived from Mafeking. Come back on Monday. If they are not here on Monday, come back on Tuesday. If they are not here on Tuesday we will give you the next dates when you can come to collect your pensions'.

Bantustan officials have tried to use pensions to increase their power and control, always at pensioners' expense. The Black Sash documented 767 cases where 'non-Tswanas' living in Bophuthatswana were refused pensions despite an agreement that this would not happen. Some who applied were told to go to 'their own homelands' while others were given forms to fill out which were actually applications for Bophuthatswana citizenship.

Iranskei minister of Social Welfare and Pensions, Chief DDP Ndamase admitted that chiefs and headmen were refusing to support the applications of people who were unable or unwilling to offer them bribes.

What is the government planning to do about this situation? The gap between white and African pensions is getting wider — it was R95 a month in 1983 and R101 in 1984. But the government is saying the same things about pensions that it says about housing and health care.

South Africa was not a welfare state where the government would accept the greatest responsibility for welfare services, said the Minister of Social Welfare. The 'whole community' must take care of the aged and not just the government.

The government has tried to evade its responsibility for African pensions. It has introduced laws to encourage employers and workers to provide for pensions by holding back part of the workers' wages and putting it in a fund.

It has also made bantustan governments responsible for pensions of people living in areas under their control. But Pretoria controls their budgets and they don't have the money to provide enough pensions or any other services.

These policies have not solved pensioners' problems. Instead, their purpose is to solve the government's problems and make Africans pay for as many of their own needs as possible.



# Dub's militant poets - rhythm, the street and a potent message



**The dub poets of Jamaica and Britain - making music from people's daily struggles, giving them a voice. And working tirelessly to create a powerful cultural weapon...**

IN JAMAICA, reggae developed as a form of folk music, telling of the day-to-day lives and hardships of ordinary people. As reggae became commercialized, people throughout the world came into contact with it, and identified with its lyrics. But commercialism also meant that a lot of less-meaningful reggae was produced.

Now, a new generation of 'dub poets' has emerged, who see the words of the songs as most important, and are producing some stunning comments on their society.

Working closely with Britain's Linton Kwesi Johnson, Jamaican poets such as Mutabaruka, Michael Smith and Oku Onuora have developed a style of writing known as the 'dub poem'. They not only use the speech-patterns and word rhythms of ghetto people, but are also committed to using their music and poetry as a powerful means of communication.

Mutabaruka is probably the best-known and most travelled of the poets. Unlike the somewhat less modest Peter Tosh, Mutabaruka's militancy is backed up by tireless work promoting the growth of a people's poetry: 'Now I can't deal with poetry as some high-art form existing for the beauty of itself — no, mon, it must enlighten, it must be a means to emphasize experience. In my case, the experience is one of revolutionary struggle'.

Not withstanding his Rastafarian belief in Repatriation to Africa ('it nuh good fi stay ina witeman country too long'), Muta is clear that the oppressed people of the world will have to stand together to fight for their freedom. For the time being, Mutabaruka is prepared to concentrate his energies on cultural action — confronting, challenging, and provoking.

## 'Aid travels with a bomb'

His song 'Angola Invasion' describes the United States role in South Africa's military incursion into Angola:

*'Dem invade Angola again, mi friend,  
Dem invade Angola again.  
Just when mi thought America was friend,  
Dem invade Angola again...  
'An thousands die an you ask yourself why  
Nations still buy, the diamonds and gold,  
The rubies an the pearls,  
them uphold Apartheid System...'*

Initially the dub poets stood aside from mainstream reggae. As poets, they had rejected the colonial legacy offered them, and were starting to write in Jamaican slang, rather than standard British English. Relying on street talk, slang and parts of old rhymes and riddles, the first dub poetry had a 'built in' rhythm.

As the dub poets became more popular, they started using acoustic backing, such as congo drums or guitars to back up their recital and mime. They were wary of using electronic instruments, as they felt that would prevent them from performing in many parts of the community.

Now, they do use electric instruments when there is electricity at hand: Tomlin Ellis, Poets in Unity founder, explains: 'We started out using guitar and drums... then we were being called to perform at other venues, with other artists, and the guitar and drum couldn't stand up to the other people. At that time, reggae poetry was becoming more popular, so we felt we could move with the times, and introduce electronic instruments. We haven't regretted that step.'

In fact, what it meant was that the poets started working with young musicians, creating, producing and recording their own styles and sounds. They put extra effort into recording in such a way that the words could be understood, the 'message' came across clearly.

So what is the content of their work? Obviously they are better heard than read, but most dub poetry

covers topics close to the heart of working-class Caribbean people and the Third World. In 'Aid travels with a bomb', Jean Breese describes the profiteering and trickery behind foreign aid policy:

*'Aid for countries in despair  
aid for countries that have no share...*

*Aid travels with a bomb,  
look out! ...*

*They buy your land  
to dump nuclear waste  
You sell it so that food your  
Children can taste.  
They love your country  
they want to invest  
But your country don't get  
when it come to the test  
Dem gone home wid all di profit  
Your government left  
upholding a racket.  
they exploit and rob you  
of your own  
Then send it back  
in a foreign loan  
Interest is on it  
Regulations too  
They will also decide your  
Policy for you...*

## 'Set di prisoners free'

In a piece called 'set di prisoners free', Mutabaruka asks why it is that people are sitting in jail, why people steal:

*'If I build a fence 'round a coconut tree  
Dat would cause yu to steal from me!'*

Muta says that people now fight and steal to survive because people

**'Just when mi thought American was friend, dem invade Angola again' - Mutabaruka on stage**

were moved off their land and separated from their source of livelihood. 'We want more control over the land', he argues.

The articulate voice of this new breed of reggae poets has met with resistance from the Jamaican middle class. Back in 1976, Bob Marley was wounded in an assassination attempt, probably provoked by his quiet support for socialist premier Michael Manley's Peoples National Party.

Manley won the 1976 elections, but with increased CIA destabilization of the economy, Edward Seaga (nicknamed 'CIAga') and his right-wing Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) came to power in 1980 after a violent election.

It was JLP members who reportedly stoned dub poet Mikey Smith to death after he had asked questions at

their party meeting last year. The killing of the 22-year-old Smith was widely reported — the poet's 'Mi cyaan believe it' album was receiving popular acclaim at the time.

But for the other poets, work has gone on. As they reach out to a wider audience, their works remain rooted in the people's experience. They don't want to be held up as 'Poets' or superstars. As Oku Onuora writes:

*I am no poet  
no poet  
I am just a voice  
I echo the people's  
thought  
laughter  
cry  
sigh...  
I am no poet  
no poet  
I am just a voice...*

# Pensions problems for sale, but the workers won't buy

PERSUADING African workers to save up for their own pensions has not been easy. There are too many things about the system they don't like.

●African pensioners who received a private pension of just R40 a month would not get a cent from the government.

●Employers and insurance companies invest pension money in things like office blocks and hotels to make profit. But most workers only get between two and five percent interest on their contributions.

●The government has the power to put 53 per cent of all pension money into areas like bantustan govern-



1980 - workers strike to stop 'Preservation Bill'

ments, the defence and armaments board, Iscor and Sasol.

●Funds do not let workers retire before 65. Statistics show that only 39 out of every 100 African men reach

the age of 65.

In 1980 the government tried to pass a law preventing workers withdrawing money from pension funds before retirement age. It did so

to stop them from relying on a government pension.

They ignored the fact that workers withdrew pension money because they needed it, especially during times of unemployment when unemployment insurance could not be relied on.

About 20 000 workers across the country went on strike and the government was forced to drop the bill.

Three years later, progressive unions are starting to work out solutions to pension problems.

In the sugar industry workers at Tongaat-Hullets have won the right to join a newly-negotiated benefit

fund. The benefits it offers include:

●Workers can retire at the age of 55.

●If a worker is partially or wholly disabled, the company will pay between 18 months and three years wages, refund all contributions and also pay workmens' compensation.

●If workers are retrenched, they get a total refund.

●Each worker contributes five per cent of his/her wages. The company contributes the same amount and pays the full cost of death, funeral and disablement benefits.

Workers have also won representation on the board controlling the Metal Industries Group Pension Fund.





Hendrickse



Botha



Rajbansi

MR MD ARENDSE is a member of the (coloured) House of Representatives for the Tafelberg constituency in Cape Town. This position entitles him to a house, free air and rail transportation and a salary of over R43 000 per year.

Mr Arendse may also buy a luxury car, using a special low-interest parliamentary loan. His meals in parliament are subsidised, and a whole new world of perks and benefits have opened up to him, such as a free crate of expensive export-only KWV wine and brandies every year, and membership of the exclusive Fernwood Parliamentarians Club — with tennis courts, swimming pool, bowling green and reception area.

Mr Arendse receives all this and much more on the basis of getting a grand total of 118 votes on August 22, a mere 1,4 per cent of eligible voters in his constituency.

His case is not unique. He's one of the 80 members of the House of Representatives who decided to get their 'feet in the door' and 'change apartheid from the inside'.

In the Cape Peninsula only 4,9 percent of eligible voters supported this strategy. Nevertheless, Mr Arendse and his 79 colleagues joined by a further five M P's appointed by courtesy of P W Botha, have decided to press ahead and 'represent the people', whether the people like it or not.

Starting at the top, there is P W Botha, Prime Minister and President rolled into one. Now Mr Botha as Minister for Coloured Affairs in the sixties was responsible for the forced removal of over 200 000 coloured people from their homes under the Group Areas Act. As Minister of Defence in the seventies he ordered frequent raids into neighbouring states which caused great devastation.

Still, the Labour Party and the National People's Party (NPP) voted unanimously to elect P W Botha as their president.

They then proceeded to accompany such dubious dignitaries as Jonas Savimbi, South African-backed Unita leader, to the inauguration of the State President on the Grand Parade in Cape Town, where they were cheered by 2 000 white schoolchildren bused in for the occasion.

The powers of the new State President are so enormous they would make any good South American dictator blush. P W Botha is not an elected member of parliament, nor is he responsible to parliament. Instead parliament is responsible to him and he can dissolve it any time.

P W Botha, as head of the armed forces, can declare war without the consent of parliament. He's also head of the State Security Council, considered by most political observers in South Africa to be the top decision-making body within the rul-

# Meet the team! A few of us have real power, some just new toys. We all keep apartheid going

ing apartheid elite.

P W Botha also handpicks his own executive cabinet, which conducts the day-to-day affairs of the government. Both Mr Hendrickse and Mr Rajbansi have managed to get their feet in this door and are new cabinet ministers without portfolios, earning upwards of R75 000 per year.

This means they bear joint responsibility for the recent decision to move a minimum of 100 000 African people living in Cape Town to Khayelitsha against their will. They are also responsible for the recent detention of UDF and other leaders.

Their position in the cabinet is obviously not taken very seriously. Mr Hendrickse has recently revealed that the decision not to send four alleged gun smugglers back to Britain to face trial was not taken at Cabinet level, but somewhere 'higher up'. But the implication of their position is quite clear.

When Mr van Zyl Slabbert, leader of the opposition in the white House of Assembly introduces his Motion of No Confidence in the government at the opening of parliament next year, Hendrickse and Rajbansi won't be able to vote with him. The reason for this is simple. They are not the opposition to the government. As majority parties they ARE the government.

Those participating in the new structures have argued that they will be in charge of their 'own affairs', and as such will be able to begin changing apartheid.

Each separate house (White, Indian and Coloured) does have ministers in charge of 'Own Affairs' portfolios — education, local government, health and welfare and culture and recreation. But there are two catches to this.

If the House of Representatives decides to challenge apartheid by opening coloured schools to all races, this aspect of education would no longer be an own affair, but a general affair.

It would therefore have to be debated by all three houses, and could then be vetoed by the white house with its 4:2:1 built-in majority. Or if it was passed on to the President's Council it could be vetoed again by the same majority there.

Second catch...finance is a general affair. The budget for the Department of Coloured Education is subject to the same conditions and therefore the same white veto, as a debate over integrating schools would be. Ultimately the white house will decide on finance for the other two houses. Good behaviour will be rewarded.

So much for changing apartheid from within. But one wonders whether any of the parties participating (Labour Party, People's Congress Party, National People's Party, and Solidarity) would really change apartheid even if the opportunity was there.

While people were dying in the Vaal Triangle, Hendrickse and the Labour Party were rushing around creating a false opposition party in order to get an extra person onto the president's council. Little concern was shown over the waves of detentions, the deaths of mineworkers, the continuing demands of school pupils.

Instead the newly elected M P's showed more interest in the low-interest loan schemes they could use to purchase new motor cars.

If anything, the silence over the past month from those participating in the apartheid structures further proves that the point made by the massive boycott of the polls in August was correct.

