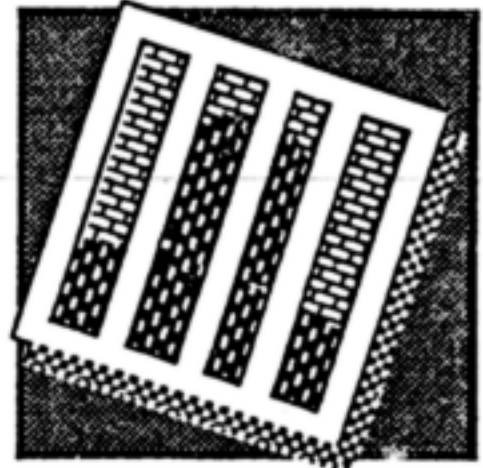


INSIDE:



●Page 2
The October local government elections



●Page 16
Mandela's speech from the dock



●Back page
The Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa

Pointers from the past predict election results

On October 26 1988, South Africans of all races will be expected to go to the polls to elect local government representatives. This is the first time in the country's history that these elections have been held on the same day.

But the elections remain racially segregated and the local government structures simply reflect the age-old Apartheid framework. Very little appears to have changed.

Some of the most candid pointers as to the significance of these forthcoming elections lie in the past history of black local government elections in South Africa.

The present Black Local Authorities (BLA) system in South Africa was brought into being by the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982. This was part of the constitutional "reform" package which was to typify the "total strategy" era of P.W. Botha's rule.

The BLA's replaced Community Councils. Government officials claimed that they extended to black urban South Africans a say in the running of their own separate communities. The town and village councils were introduced just one year before the new constitutional dispensation for the country - the Tricameral Parliament.

The tricameral system established three separate houses in parliament - one for whites and the other two for so-called coloured and Indian South Africans. The coloured and Indian houses were numerically subordinate

Past experience and aspirations for the future mean that township residents reject the black local authorities as puppet bodies of Apartheid. But government plans to strengthen Apartheid rule go further than the racially segregated October elections.



to the white house.

The most striking feature of the "new dispensation" was its complete exclusion of African black South Africans from any say in central government.

Government constitutional planners argued that Africans exercised their political say through the Bantustans and through the BLA's.

The "new dispensation" was therefore a constitutional conjuring act which, through the tricameral system and the BLAs attempted to provide short-cut political solutions to deep-rooted political and economic problems.

But few were fooled. The new constitution was widely rejected and a boycott of tricameral elections highly successful. Within just one year of being set up, the new BLAs had become a focal point of mass resistance on an unprecedented scale.

From the outset, the majority of black South Africans regarded the structures as an inadequate substitute for meaningful political rights in central government. As a legitimising exercise, the Black Local Authorities were doomed from the start.

On average, less than 7% of the urban black population turned up to vote for their new town and village councils in the first elections in August 1983. In some townships the percentage poll was as low as 0,4%.

Resistance to the new community councils did not stop at the electoral boycott. From July 1984 onwards,

beginning at Tumahole township outside Parys and moving quickly to the Vaal, black townships caught fire. Angry township residents across the country attacked the very community councils which had been designed to defuse political tensions and deflect them from the Apartheid government itself.

By mid-April 1985, the Minister of Co-operation and Development, Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, admitted in parliament that at least 147 community councillors had resigned and 12 had been killed in mounting township violence. By that stage, 33 mayors had also resigned, a further 109 councillors had been attacked by angry residents and 66 had had their homes burnt down. Barely a single functional community council was left intact country-wide.

Why did the community council system evoke such passionate sentiments from township residents and become a focal point of resistance from July 1984? Has anything been significantly altered since that time and what bearing does this have on the October 1988 elections?

For the majority of black South Africans, the councils represented the marriage of their experiences of political deprivation and economic impoverishment.

They were politically toothless institutions with only administrative authority. And they were completely subject to the overriding powers of the Minister, provincial administrators and



Graftiti In Tembisa spells out residents' rejection of puppets

central government. They basically served to administer housing and the provision of essential services - at the best of times, potentially politically volatile issues in the black ghettos.

To add insult to injury, township residents were also expected to pay for their own oppression. Financial self-sufficiency, government representatives claimed, was the key which guaranteed the "autonomy" and "self-determination" of the BLA's and signalled their equal status to white local authorities.

This self-financing priority was explained away by government officials in political terms, but was in fact as much the product of a growing fiscal crisis and a deepening economic recession in South Africa.

Under this guise, the government could shirk responsibility for upgrading township life and could dodge the long-standing problem of

unprofitable township government.

But it was ultimately the legacy of Apartheid which came back to haunt the very structures designed to disguise it.

Years of Apartheid rule had left a legacy of uneven development. Highly industrialised and wealthy "white" areas on one hand, and underdeveloped, economically impoverished "black" townships and rural areas on the other. Black townships adjacent to every white urban centre, had for years served as dormitory slums providing a reservoir of cheap black labour - African sojourners in "white" South Africa.

Part of this legacy was the historical failure to develop the infrastructure in the black townships to provide necessary services. So in addition to the administration of housing and the provision of basic services, the BLA's were also responsible for de-

veloping basic infrastructure and public amenities, such as roads, libraries and recreational facilities.

To do all this they needed finances. But there was no industrial development and no real wealth in the townships from which the BLA's could draw a tax income to finance themselves. The BLA's introduced in 1983 actually inherited huge debts from their predecessors, the white Township Administration Boards.

So the councils turned to the already impoverished township residents for their income. They raised rents and increased service charges for the provision of water, electricity and sewerage and refuse removal.

The period of angry township resistance from 1984 onwards witnessed precisely these price hikes imposed by community councils across the country.

The quality of life in African townships goes a long

way to explaining the volatile nature of these uprisings. Residents who were being paid poverty wages in the workplace, were being forced to give away more of their meagre wages to pay for sub-standard housing and poor services.

Residents were being asked to pay more for sewage removal where in many townships there was no water borne sewage system and where residents had for years endured an archaic bucket system.

Many residents were being charged for electricity even prior to the electrification of their townships.

Rents were going up by up to 100% for matchbox houses.

The majority of residents were already impoverished by the ravages of an ever-deepening economic recession. Now all these extra costs were being imposed on them by the illegitimate and unrepresentative BLA's.

In short, residents were being asked to pay for their own oppression under a revamped Apartheid system, in a context where their daily lives were a struggle for survival. The imposition of the "new" councils was therefore a catalyst in forging a new consciousness amongst township dwellers.

This new consciousness was forged in the process of a bitter struggle and was bred of an increasing interconnection between their experiences of political oppression and their economic exploitation. The BLA's therefore represented all that is unjust in the Apartheid system. For this reason they became the focal point of massive resistance.

In October this year, the Nationalist government intends to replace the structures rejected so firmly by the black residents they are supposed to represent. What, if anything, has changed?

The period of resistance since July 1984 has seen the imposition of a State of Emergency four times. The first was limited to certain areas of the country and was lifted after 7 months. The second, imposed on June 12 1986, covered the entire country and has subsequently simply been modified and re-promulgated annually. The Emergency is now effectively permanent.

The 1988 State of Emergency was modified to include a clause making it illegal to call for, or encourage, a boycott of the October municipal elections. The permanent State of Emergency reflects the repressive priorities of the Nationalist government in the wake of four years of resistance.

The period of resistance saw the massive growth of progressive democratic organisations, as well as the legal space within which they were operating. Today, the state's priority is to close down the space and eliminate by whatever means necessary



White Sofasonke Party supporter at 1983 Soweto council elections

these organisations and their leadership.

On February 24 1988, 17 leading organisations including the United Democratic Front (UDF), the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) were effectively banned, and the country's largest trade union federation, COSATU, was restricted in an attempt to prevent it from taking up political issues beyond the factory floor. Also included in the 17 organisations were leading ci

vic associations such as the Soweto Civic, the Vaal Civic and the Cape Housing Action Committee, and township based youth structures such as the Soweto Youth Congress and the Cape Youth Congress.

Civic associations had burgeoned in the period since the establishment of the BLA's and represented democratic alternatives to them. The very growth of mass organisations, including the militant youth organisations, was often rooted in their opposition to the

state imposed structures. In many cases grassroots support and organisation developed into street committees and other structures covering entire townships.

Local organisations also found expression and co-ordination in regional and national structures opposing Apartheid. In particular, the UDF played a central role in co-ordinating and harnessing the political energy that developed.

In the wake of heightened resistance the Nationalist government unleashed its repressive might. In a systematic attempt to destroy the the resistance movement, over 20 000 people were detained without trial under the emergency regulations.

In some townships, whole street committees were effectively removed, along with entire executives of local youth structures. As the leadership was replaced, so the next layer was detained. The process was much the same for the regional and national structures. Attempts to prevent any nationally co-ordinated opposition and leadership saw leaders detained and some put on trial for treason.

The February bannings and other repressive measures were undoubtedly designed to pave the way towards the reimposition of the illegitimate local government structures.

But the repressive thrust to smash opposition is only a part of a broader and sometimes contradictory state strategy. "Reform" and repression are two sides of the same coin making up a complex and co-ordinated state strategy.

Government attempts to resuscitate co-optive local government structures goes beyond the BLA's. The myriad of local and regional government structures are reflected in the host of legislative measures enacted after the BLA's.

©The Promotion of Local

Government Affairs Act of 1983 established a council to co-ordinate the affairs of local government. The council acts as a think-tank for the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning.

②The Local Government Bodies Franchise Act of 1984 developed uniform franchise qualifications for whites, "coloureds" and Indians, including a weighting in favour of property owners.

③The Local Authority Loans Fund Act of 1984 expanded the borrowing power of local authorities, but centralised control over funding. This can be seen as a means of controlling policy implementation through financial means.

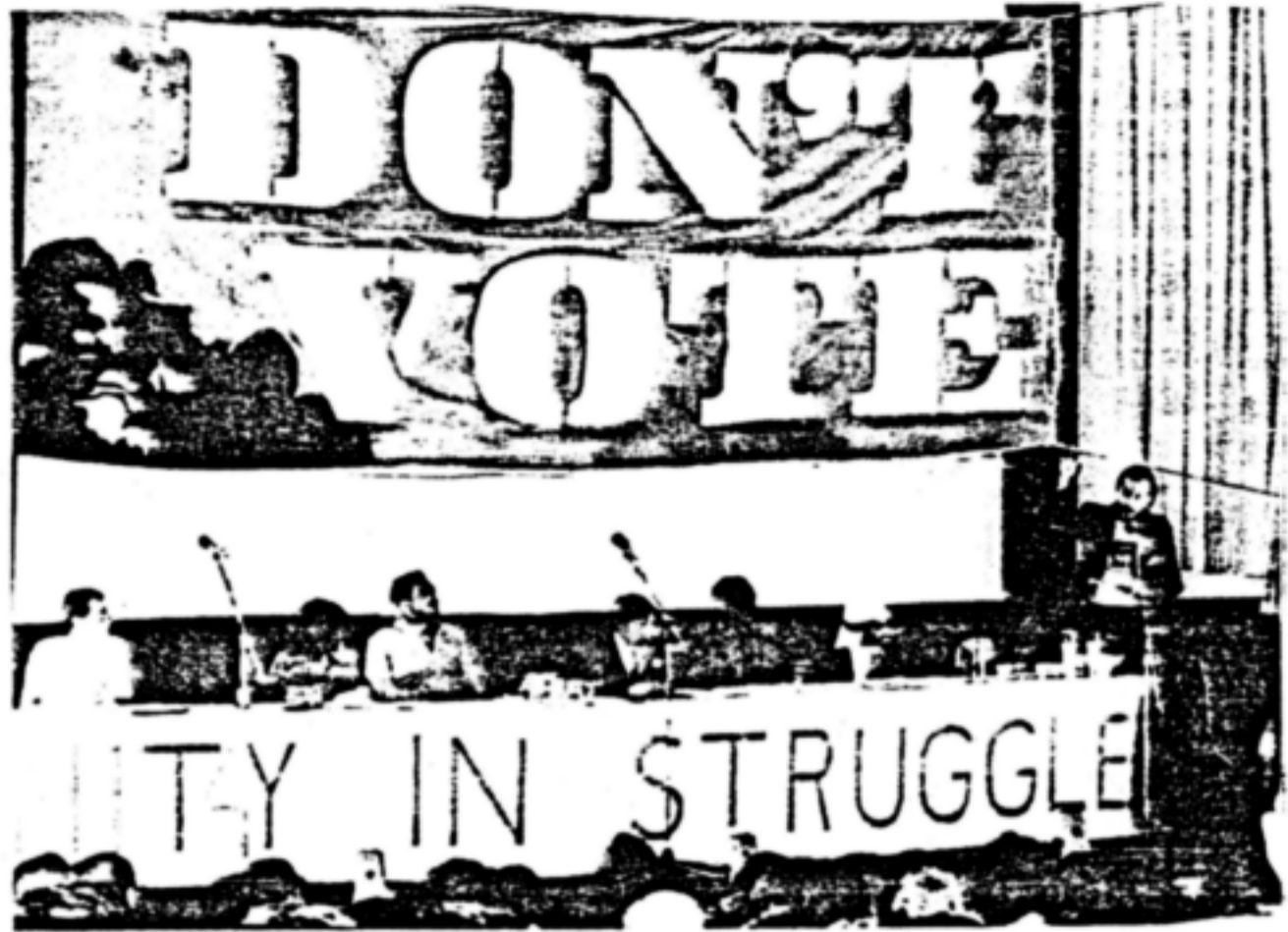
④Finally, the Regional Services Council Act of 1985 established the Regional Services Councils (RSCs) which will be discussed below.

As with repression, the foundations of the national reformist strategies are at a local level. The basic building blocks are the system of local government. Botha's much vaunted "Great Indaba" is one of the goals.

Attempts to reimpose state-designed local government structures are accompanied by the rhetoric of "devolution of power".

But repression of the 1984-86 uprising actually saw increased centralisation and tighter repressive control. This grip, and the security priorities of the state tightened rather than relaxed and this is reflected in the legislation referred to above.

Indeed, the government's co-optive concerns find expression not in the institutions of the BLAs alone, but in the myriad of more centralised local and regional structures. These are at best, appointed rather than elected, and at worst, are often entirely clandestine in their operations.



Meeting against tricameral parliament elections, 1984.

The formal political legitimacy of the reimposed local municipalities is not their sole purpose.

Rapid upgrading programmes in unrest-torn townships are key to present state strategy. They are part of an attempt to win credibility by dealing with the material grievances which underpinned the '84 - '86 rebellions.

This reflects the shift in state strategy from the early eighties. Instead of political conjuring acts and trying to win legitimacy through the local government ballot boxes, now there is an attempt to co-opt by meeting some of the material needs of township residents. It is hoped this will deconstruct the militant consciousness of the masses while enabling local authorities to take the credit for delivering the goods.

The local authorities remain bastions of the political buffer effect - drawing the flak and attention away from the central political issues and institutions. But real power is not vested in the municipalities or BLAs.

The Regional Services Council Act of 1985 gives

the newly-formed Regional Services Councils (RSCs) mandatory powers over local authorities.

In the wake of the uprisings, the government included the BLAs in the RSCs in an attempt to improve their legitimacy and financial viability.

Formally, the RSCs are supposed to rationalise the provision of services. So they are central to the state's strategy to improve services to the black townships.

The RSCs are supposed to broaden the tax base from a local to a regional level. State officials argue that the financial burden on underdeveloped townships would be reduced. And the funds drawn from more industrialised areas could be reallocated through the RSCs so as to provide services and infrastructure to the areas of greatest need.

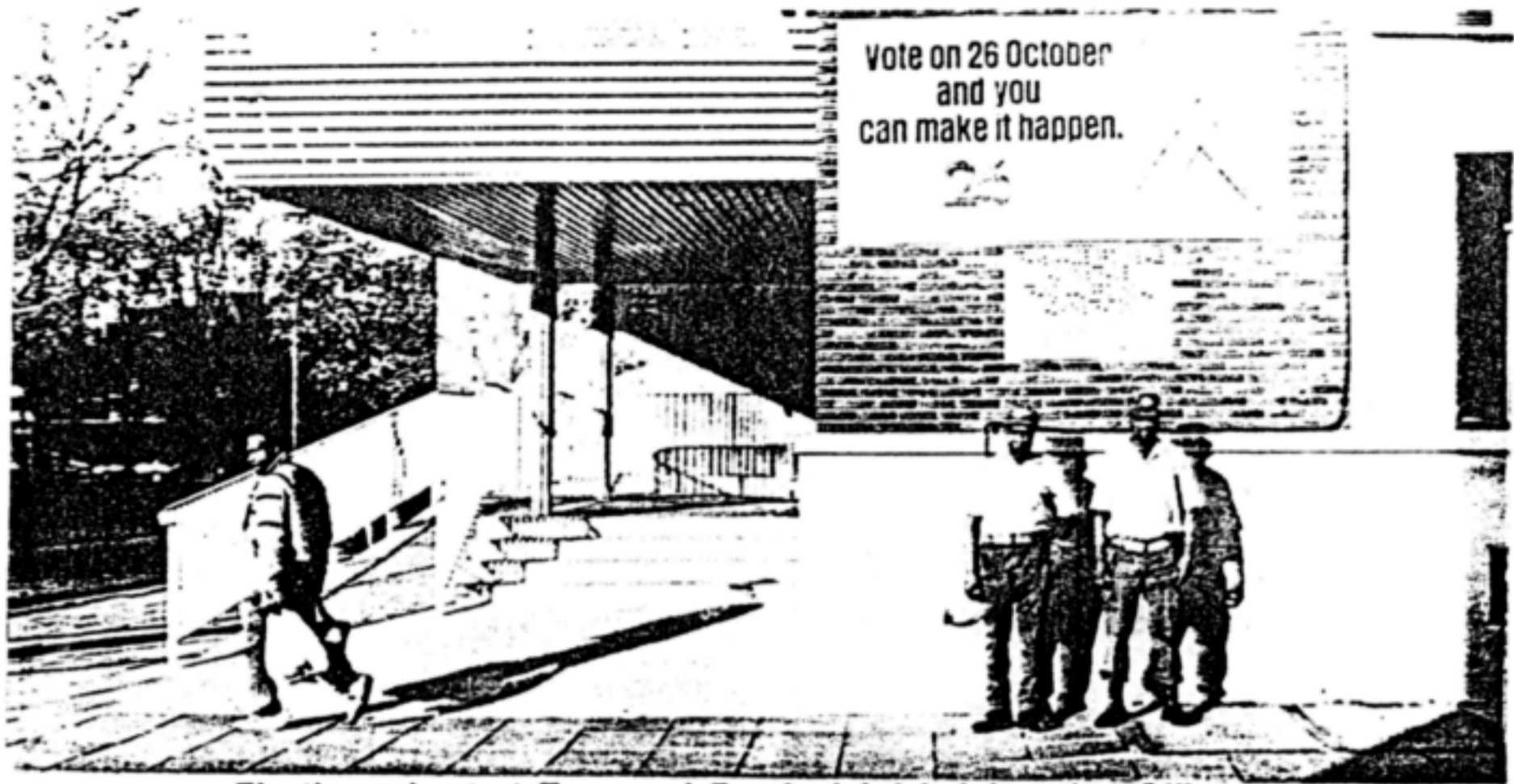
But taxation imposed by the RSCs threaten to make inflation and economic stagnation worse, hurting the poorer communities most.

⑤ The RSC levy on business' turnover will be a new cost which is passed on to the consumer, rather than being borne by businesses

themselves.

⑥ The RSC levy on company's payrolls will only encourage employers to keep wages as low as possible; will act as a negative influence on the creation of jobs. Employers will be eager to keep employment down to the bare minimum so as to minimise the RSC levy they have to pay. Ironically, it is the municipalities and Black Local Authorities which will be responsible for the collection of all the RSC levies in their areas. This RSC strategy viewed by state officials as central to resolving the political crisis of the pre-revolutionary period. Through the RSC strategy is argued that upgrading will be financed without imposing too heavily on the communities themselves: the RSCs are seen as an essential cog in the state strategy attempting to remove material grievances underpinning the militant political struggles of the period 1983.

But a high degree of administrative and bureaucratic coherence and confusion accompanied the introduction of the RSCs. This must create considerable doubt on w



Election advert at Transvaal Provincial Administration Offices

er they will be able to perform their designed tasks or redistributive functions.

There has been considerable opposition to the RSCs from conservative white municipal authorities. To them the RSCs mean a loss of income to black areas and less decision making powers - in the name of a "reform" process that they reject.

Aware of this opposition, government took steps to prevent their possible obstruction of the envisaged functions of the RSCs. This was done by ensuring central government's right to review decisions made by any RSC.

The RSCs are a perfect indicator of how "devolution of power" actually means greater centralisation of power. This centralisation of power is merely disguised by complicated tiers of government, through which power actually devolves upwards towards the State President.

RSC chairmen are, for example, appointed by provincial administrators who are themselves presidential appointees. Devolution is more a matter of functions than of real power.

But the RSC's do have fairly substantial functions.

They are effectively metropolitan "super-councils" responsible for providing up to 21 different types of services, ranging from water and power supply, to administration of museums and crematoria. Many of these services were previously the direct responsibility of the municipal authorities.

The RSCs therefore represent yet another tier of government interposed between the municipalities and the sources of real power in central government. City and town councils are no longer even entirely answerable to their own ratepayers and electorate for the provision of many of these services. The RSCs thus act as another buffer to defuse political tensions around local government.

The state sees it as a priority to tighten its grip on security. This is best demonstrated by the establishment and functioning of the Joint Management Centres (JMCs). The JMCs highlight the trend towards executive rule. They have enhanced the role of the State Security Council (SSC) in the decision making process.

The military is also integrated into regional govern-

ment, through the regional development advisory committees, seen as essential components of the RSCs.

The JMCs probably best reflect state strategy at a local level. They were first revealed to the public in March 1986 when Minister of Defence Magnus Malan acknowledged their existence.

In effect, the JMCs, sub-JMCs and mini-JMCs (as various components are known) are a decentralisation at a regional and local level of the State Security Council.

The JMC's show that the state's security concerns are central in the process of local government. And the state's local government strategy is central to its national political and economic concerns.

Ultimately, the government's concerns with township rule are rooted in the fact that local control and local government strategies are the foundations upon which rest their national political solutions are built.

It was somewhat surprising to many township residents that at the very time that local town councils were seen to be bankrupt be-

cause of ongoing rent boycotts, schemes to upgrade key townships involving millions of rands were launched.

It is somewhat less surprising that all these schemes were only started once thousands of activists in these townships had been detained under the emergency regulations. And all this coincided with the precise time that the JMCs became public knowledge as an integral part of the National Security Management System.

There are twelve JMCs country-wide, which almost coincide with the SADF regional commands and the RSCs. The Bureau of information has also organised itself into regions to coincide with the JMCs.

Below the 12 JMCs there are 60 sub-JMCs and about 600 mini-JMCs. The JMCs are made up by officials from various departments within regions. Their members are appointed by state departments and they are all chaired by police or senior members of the military.

Each JMC has sub-committees including a Joint Intelligence Committee, a Political, Economic and Sociological Committee and a

Communications Committee. Sub-JMCs also have a monitoring committee which meets daily.

The mini-JMCs have a "Community Liason Committee" which forms an interlink between the JMCs and the "representatives" of the community, usually including principals, teachers, businessmen, councillors, vigilante leaders and other professionals within the township community.

The various JMC structures have the powers to:

⊗Gather intelligence so as to combat resistance and to destroy the anti-Apartheid organisations and remove their activists;

⊗Engineer co-optive schemes to upgrade the townships thereby removing the material underpinnings to popular resistance through being seen to attend to things which would otherwise become a source of tension and thus a security risk; and

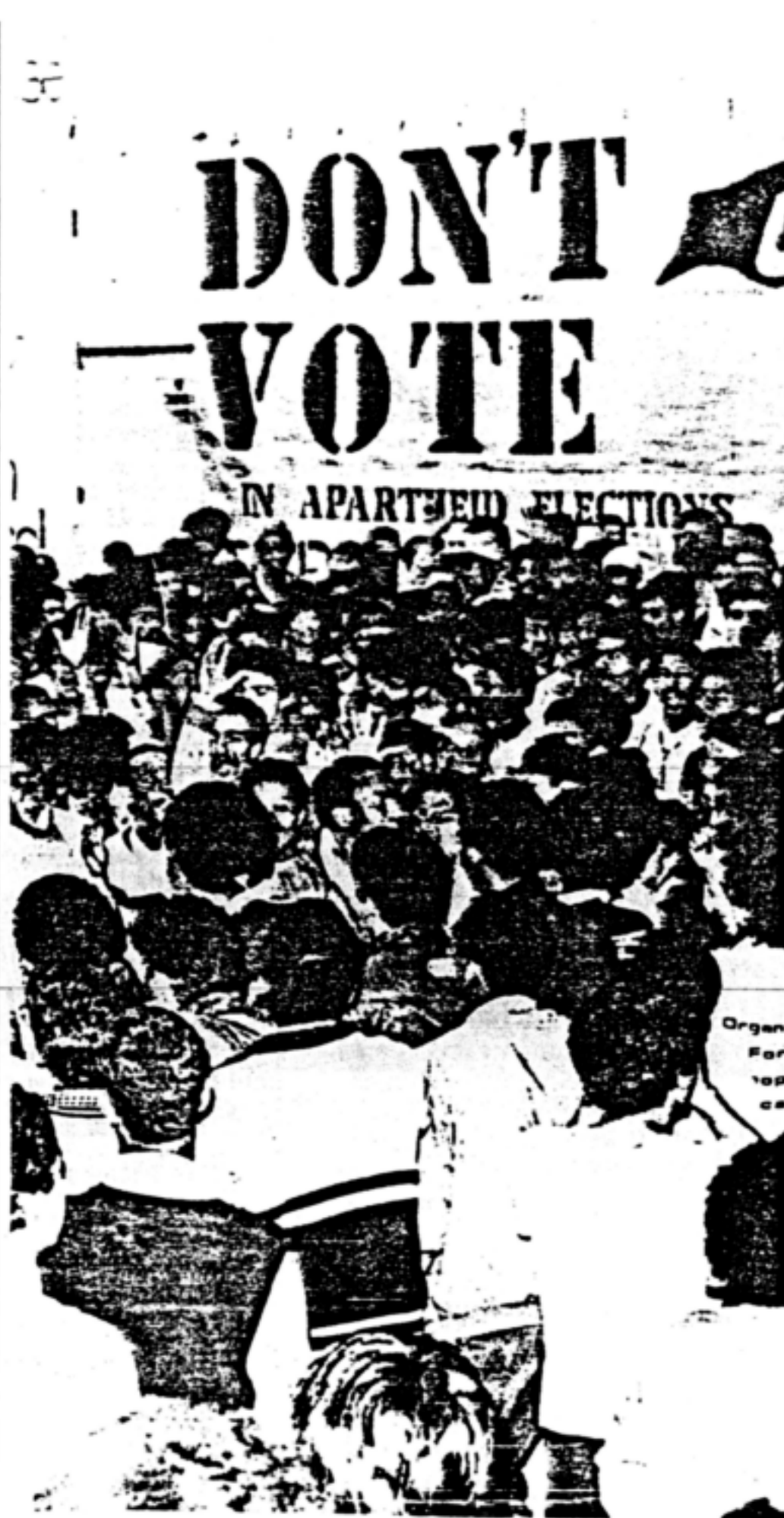
⊗Propagate propaganda so as to attempt to win hearts and minds at a local level.

It is clear that real power at a local level is vested in the JMCs. It is through the JMCs and the RSCs that the lives of township residents are regulated and controlled - not the Black Local Authorities.

The RSCs and the JMCs are essential elements in the state's attempt to reimpose the rejected BLAs - without making the state a focal point of local government. The strategy is premised on an ability to finance township upgrading programmes to remove potential "security threats" without overtaxing black residents in the process.

An alternative to state fiscal support has to be found to shift the focus. The RSCs are one mechanism for this. But perhaps more significant are moves to privatise local government services.

But the capacity to finance



Anti-election rally organised by Cosas and Azaso at UWC, 1984.

the upgrading is doubtful, especially because it is unlikely that the private sector will commit itself to the unprofitable business of township administration and development.

If services provided to the townships are privatised, there is a strong likelihood that, in the interests of prof-

itability, prices will once again rise, with all the political consequences government is so concerned to avert.

Whatever the case, whether directly or indirectly, it is the black working class residents of the townships of Apartheid who will themselves be called on to foot

the bills for the upgrading process.

As in the past, the local authority structures, seem doomed before they even start. Four years of bitter struggle against them can not be so easily wiped out of the consciousness of the oppressed majority. There exists a residual consciousness in which the issues of political oppression and economic exploitation are firmly enmeshed. The government's latest political manoeuvring will not eliminate this. Attempts at short-cut solutions to problems rooted in the very system of Apartheid, will not succeed.

Even the government's co-optive strategies, with the prerequisite of smashing democratic opposition organisations, are destined to fail in their objectives. To attack the economic factors contributing to "unrest and instability" without addressing the question of fundamental political rights for all is worse than shortsighted. It is a recipe for the ever-increasing militant resistance that the government is trying so desperately to control.

The reimposition of the BLAs in October 1988, in the wake of the systematic repression of the organisations of the people, once again represents the denial of political rights.

Ultimately, little has changed since the BLAs were introduced. If anything they have been proved to be less than useless to the people they are supposed to represent. Resistance to these structures is deeply entrenched in the consciousness of the masses. This will determine the outcome of the coming elections - regardless of government measures to prevent a boycott. No amount of political posturing or economic manipulation will bluff people who denied basic political rights.

It is widely believed that the State Security Council (SSC) has become the real centre of power in the state, making the white parliament and even the cabinet merely rubber-stamp bodies.

The SSC is supposed to advise the cabinet on security matters. But as the body at the top of the National Security Management System, its role is far more than an advisory one.

With the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1985, the SSC had the task of ensuring that the state regained control. To do this, it has built a hierarchy of secret committees called the Joint Management Centres (JMC's).

There are twelve JMC's nationally, with sub-JMC's and in each township, mini-JMC's. These mini-JMC's have Community Liaison Forums, which try to involve community 'leaders'. In Bonteheuwel, teachers, priests and school principals were invited to join this forum.

Each level of the NSMS has a number of sub-committees including a security committee, a constitutional, social and economic committee, and a communications committee.

An official from the State Security Council explains: "We divide things between welfare and security. If the people in the welfare area can prevent a crisis, it doesn't become a security matter. If they don't, invariably it will become a security matter. If we don't see that people have what they need to lead a decent life, obviously someone is going to riot."

JMC structures are chaired by security force personnel. They include representatives from all sectors of the security forces, as well as other key state officials. They are accountable to no-one but the SSC. Their role is to keep a finger on the pulse of

Secret rulers across the land

Under the National Management Security System power lies with the State State Security Council and its countrywide network of secret committees - the JMCs.

resistance, to monitor state strategies, and to make sure that the relevant government departments step in to address any burning issues that they believe may give rise to a 'security situation'.

The NSMS strategy

By declaring the State of Emergency in 1985, the state hoped to regain the political offensive it had briefly lost during the period of mass organisation. Through repression, mass organisations have been severely weakened.

But the repression of organisation is only Phase One of the state's current strategy in the townships. Phase Two involves extensive township upgrading, and Phase Three involves finding some form of political participation that black South Africans will accept, within the framework of white minority rule.

PW Botha has made it

quite clear that the State of Emergency won't be lifted until the state believes these phases have all been fulfilled.

This is because the state realises that it cannot rely on repression alone to stay in power. Magnus Malan has said that 80% of winning the battle in SA will rely on political, social and economic strategies, and only 20% on military might. More recently, Major General Wandrag of the SAP riot control said: "The outcome of this struggle will not be determined by weapons alone...The only way to render the enemy powerless is to nip revolution in the bud, by ensuring there is no fertile soil in which the seeds of revolution can germinate."

So while the state has no hesitation in using armed force to maintain its rule, its military strategists believe that this has to be coupled

with political, social and economic reforms.

In a seminar to business leaders, Major General Lloyd outlined the main priorities of the NSMS in the townships:

⊗ The security forces must 'protect the masses against intimidation', and 'eliminate' the revolutionary elements.

⊗ The NSMS must identify the grievances in the townships that the ANC is using to mobilise people, and counter these grievances by upgrading the townships.

⊗ The state must also communicate a realistic new future to the masses.

The struggles waged by mass organisations have changed the way the state sees the townships. They no longer see resistance as the work of agitators alone. Instead, they recognise that people in the townships have real material grievances, and see these as providing the basis for the ANC to 'foment' revolution.

By meeting key demands around local issues, the state hopes to undermine support for the ANC, and to undermine the demand for national political rights. As a State Security Council General explains:

"These people have their aspirations, of course, but they are really concerned about bread and butter issues - housing, schools, motor cars, 'the good life'. And if you want their support, you can buy it."

In the Border region, the state tried to buy the support of village committees in the area between Transkei and Ciskei, by offering to spend R12 million on upgrading.

Tribal authorities in the area had been destroyed, and the state gave a form of recognition to the village committees by dealing with them around issues such as pensions.

State officials invited the village committees to send representatives to sit on a



committee, to discuss how to allocate the money for upgrading in the area. The village committees decided that they needed boreholes and roads most urgently.

However, it became increasingly clear that the state had a hidden agenda in allowing the villages to allocate the money. They hoped to transform the village committees into local authority structures, and tried to woo them with an office and secretaries. But the upgrading had to be delayed because the state ran out of money. They told the village committees it had been used for flood relief.

The state's plans to 'buy' the people of SA with roads and sewerage systems are unlikely to succeed. Not only is the state likely to find that the people of SA are not so easily bought, but the big

question is also whether the state will be able to afford its own strategy. Upgrading costs money. But defending apartheid costs the state more than it can afford already. So upgrading may become just a lot of empty promises.

However, in townships where upgrading is going ahead - against the backdrop of repression - organisations are confronted with new issues and contradictions in their townships.

The NSMS has identified 34 townships around the country as 'oilspots'. These are the townships that posed the biggest threat to state control during the period of ungovernability.

The NSMS hopes that upgrading in these areas will have the same effect as oil on troubled waters - and that its effects will spread to oth-

er townships too.

The upgrading in Alexandra township has been held up as an example for mini-JMC's around the country. The mini-JMC first set about crushing democratic structures through large-scale security force action. There were mass detentions and many trials, house-to-house raids, road-blocks, and search lights at night. The security sub-committee of the mini-JMC in Alex meets every 24 hours to plan its next move.

Meanwhile, the welfare committee is spending R90 million on upgrading the township.

And the communications committee is trying to win hearts and minds. They distributed a cartoon pamphlet which shows the comrades as rats who are trying to stop Alex, the 'nice guy', from leading a decent life.

In Mamelodi, residents were bombarded with propaganda material and fake pamphlets, which activists believe the communications committee of the mini-JMC is responsible for. Fake Cosatu pamphlets were distributed, calling on workers to attend a Cosatu 'intimidation' conference, where workers would 'learn how to necklace fellow workers who don't participate in strikes.'

A member of the SSC thinks it is unlikely that that fake pamphlets come from the NSMS structures. "I suppose they can, but it would be damn risky. If you do things like that, it must be done covertly. And I have never heard of a committee doing something covertly," he said.

Mamelodi is also an 'oilspot', and the hand of the NSMS can be seen there

too. Over 200 activists were detained at the start of the Emergency, and a reward of R1 000 was offered for information leading to the arrest of a 'comrade.'

In Mamelodi, the town council is operating again, and is represented on the mini-JMC. But there is a question as to who is really running the township. The new housing projects, improvements to the roads, and the building of new schools were all proposed by the mini-JMC. There is also a R3.5 million park being built, with five swimming pools and a cable-car link to the top of the Magaliesberg.

A Mamelodi councillor explains the relationship between the council and the JMC: "All it does is deal with practical situations. It then makes recommendations to the council. But because these recommendations are of such a profitable nature, the council invariably accepts them."

A key part of the NSMS is to build the credibility of local authority structures. The state has realised that it can't afford the councils to be seen as parasites living off the community, and that the councils can't raise all the money they need from the residents, through rents and rates. So now they are pumping money into upgrading, which they want the councils to get the credit for.

In Bonteheuwel, in Cape Town, it is the Coloured Management Committee that takes the credit for street lights, trees, paved roads, drainage and sports facilities.

An old age home and a day care centre are being built too. These were specific demands that organisations mobilised around. But the mini-JMC in the area clearly believes that by meeting those demands, it is the Coloured Management Committee that will get credibility, rather than the democratic organisations.

Solving the housing crisis



Burning tyres and security forces in the streets during the uprisings

is a key part of NSMS upgrading strategies. But they want capital to take most of the responsibility for building housing. Firstly, this is because they want to depoliticise the issue of housing. The rent boycotts and the struggles around housing have been a nightmare for the state, and they have lost a fortune in the process.

Now they want capital to take the risks. They are trying to sell off council houses in many areas. They don't have the money to build all the houses that are needed. So instead, they want capital to build the houses, and then sell them at a profit. Both capital and the state hope that this will help get the economy going again too.

At first, capital was very keen. They were sure there were big profits to be made on housing, and were competing with each other to get the building contracts from the town councils.

In Mamelodi, several companies were involved in building 1 300 houses in a

new suburb called Mamelodi Gardens. The Town Council also made the contractors responsible for building the roads, the sewerage systems, and providing street lights. The cost of these has to be included in the cost of the houses.

The houses in Mamelodi Gardens are now so expensive that few can afford them. Residents are calling it 'Credit Gardens', because people living there are so badly in debt. The only people that can really afford to live there are government employees, who get housing loans. And Mamelodi Gardens hasn't really helped solve the housing crisis in Mamelodi. Many of the people who bought houses there are bantustan officials and businessmen from outside Mamelodi.

Now capital is also getting worried about whether township housing is really so profitable. The Building Societies called on the government to provide them with 'insurance' in case peo-

ple default on their housing payments.

So, the NSMS strategies in the townships confront organisations with new issues, and may also change the conditions in which activists have to organise. But this does not mean that the strategy is going to work.

Firstly, the state has a huge shortage of money. Defending apartheid is expensive. And although they have many tricks up their sleeve, there are limits to the supply of money, especially when the rand is dropping and the economy is under pressure. Secondly, the strategy is built on the mistaken belief that if some of people's basic needs are met - if they have water-borne sewerage, tarred roads, and a house, they will no longer notice the oppression and exploitation they face in their daily lives under apartheid, nor the security force presence in their schools and townships, and nor will they notice when activists are 'eliminated' or detained.

Labour Bill gets through despite firm opposition

The controversial Labour Amendment Bill became law on September 1 despite opposition to it from the labour movement and democratic movement as a whole.

Speculation that the Bill would be put on ice pending negotiations between the major trade unions and employers were squashed when Manpower Director-general Pietie van der Merwe announced that the Bill would be promulgated as planned.

The introduction of the Labour Relations Amendment Bill (LRAB) proved to Cosatu that the bosses and the government had openly declared war on the labour movement.

The bill was seen as a further attempt by the government to curtail the federation's activities and thereby retard the tremendous growth of a highly politicised working-class.

"The new Labour Relations Bill is a fundamental attack on the many rights that workers have won over the past ten years," says Cosatu. "Just a few years ago the bosses and the government were complaining that unions are going on too many illegal strikes. Now that unions are more and more going on legal strikes, they want to make it as difficult as possible for unions to strike legally."

Cosatu held a Special National Congress on May 14 and 15 in response to two

specific challenges:

⊗The government's February 24 restrictions. These attempted to limit Cosatu to narrow factory-floor trade unionism and effectively banned 17 other organisations, among them the UDF and SAYCO.

At Cosatu's last Congress, workers adopted the Freedom Charter and resolved to build close alliances with progressive organisations.

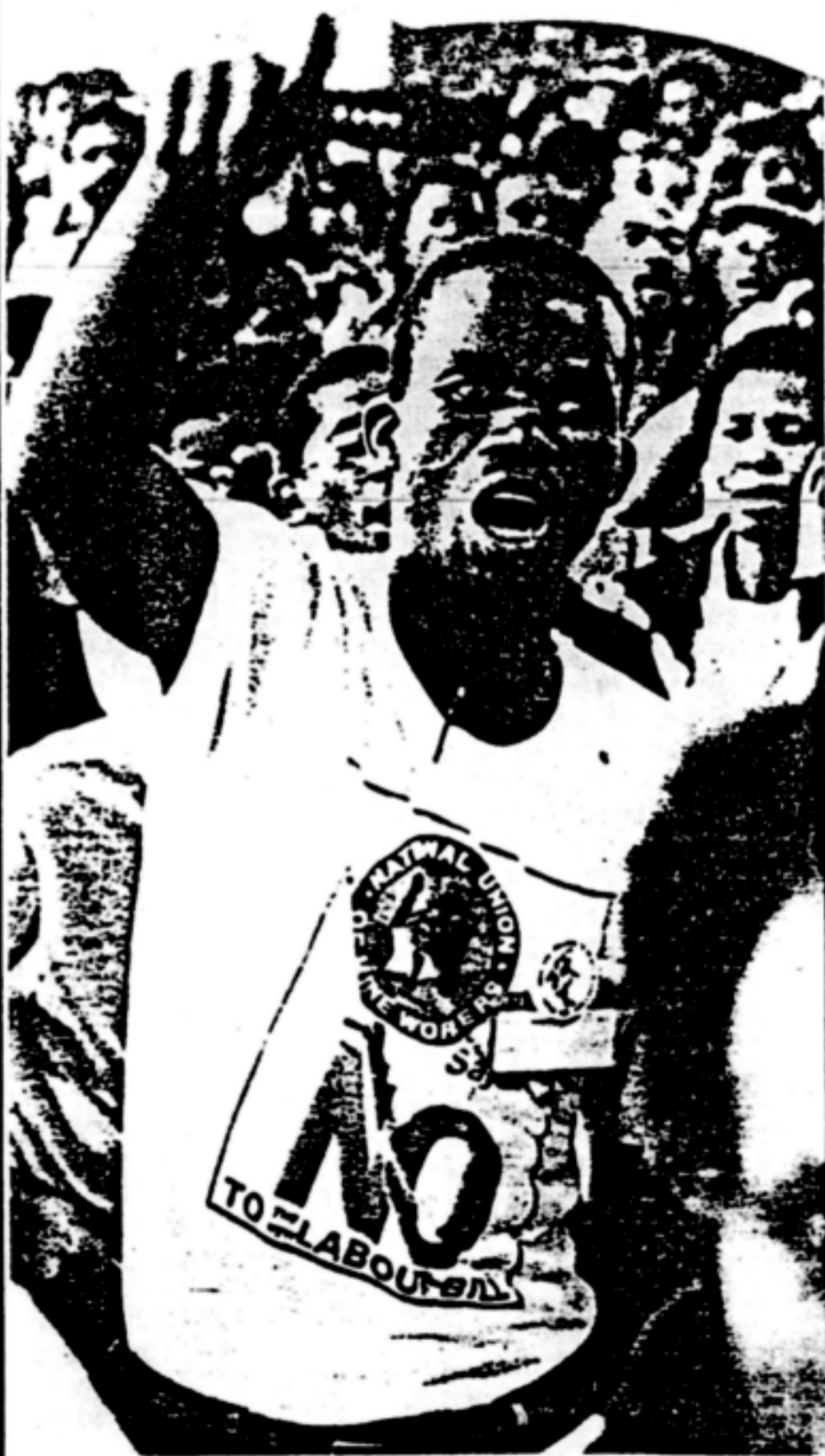
⊗The LRAB. The bill will substantially limit workers' right to strike, open trade unions to civil action for company losses incurred during strikes and other actions, and outlaw solidarity action in industrial disputes.

The restrictions on Cosatu and the banning of organisations raised many questions among activists in the mass democratic movement. How do we continue our march towards a non-racial and democratic society? What is the way forward for the workers' struggle?

The Special Congress brought together 1500 delegates from all over the country to discuss the way forward. It was clear they were not going to take the government's attack lying down.

A National Protest, to be spread over a period of three days, was called. This was met with an overwhelming response from the broader democratic movement.

Communities throughout the country got to know



about the call. The word was spread through the residents' networks, many of them co-ordinated by civic associations. In areas where civics are still weak, the youth ensured the message got through to the people.

The three days, June 6, 7 and 8, saw the biggest and most extensive stay-away in South Africa's history.

The stay-away was a sober reminder to the government and the bosses that workers and their communities would not stand by idly and watch their hard earned gains eroded.

The widespread support for the protest action in the townships indicated that a groundswell of political militancy and determination still exists - despite the repression. The labour movement and the democratic movement generally, have been dealt heavy blows, but the spirit of the people remains unbroken.

According to one political analyst, politics in South Africa "are no longer about activists converging around a honeypot of militant action. Underlying layers of the community have clearly been drawn into the structures of resistance and this has clearly led to the widespread politicisation of sectors beyond organised workers and militant youth...The State of Emergency has weakened the organisational underpinnings of this movement but it is going to be unable to eliminate the political consciousness of the people."

Organisationally, the stay-away highlighted the importance of Cosatu's relationship with its democratic allies and the need to pull all anti-apartheid forces and organisations together in action. It also set the stage for the development of a more coherent programme of action which would enable more people to be drawn into mass action. The reali



sation of the strength it wields did not blind Cosatu to the stark realities of the bill. A few days after the massive show of force they opted to meet Manpower Minister Pietie du Plessis. Cosatu's Assistant general secretary Sydney Mafumadi explained that following the days of protest, the Minister claimed not to know what the federations' objections to the bill were. Cosatu took the opportunity to meet with Du Plessis and make sure that this time he knew what their objections were.

Cosatu opened another front of struggle when it challenged the government to seek the International Labour Organisation's opinion on the bill. Cosatu lodged a

complaint with the ILO and this presented the government with an unusual challenge - to defend its piece of legislation in an international forum.

The last time the government found itself in such a situation was in 1983 when two international trade union federations laid a complaint with the ILO over the dismissal of mineworkers in SA. The government accepted the ILO's intervention even though it was not a member of the organisation.

Cosatu's move caught Du Plessis on the wrong footing as he had repeatedly stated that he was willing to defend the bill and to discuss it with any interested party - in this case the workers and

their organisations.

Cosatu also submitted complaints to the Economic and Social Committee of United Nations. SA is not member of the ILO - since 1960 - but is a member of the UN. The Ecosoc was expected to approach the SA government to submit its own representation to the Fact Finding and Conciliation sub-committee of the ILO's Freedom of Association Committee.

Among Cosatu's complaints about the bill is that it is an infringement on freedom of association. The government seeks, through the bill, to give preference to racially constituted unions at the expense of the non-racial ones. Another complaint points out that the bill amounts to a fundamental abridgement of the right to strike.

The government seeks to add two further categories of strikes to the existing list of prohibited strikes. The one category is "sympathy" which includes industrial action by workers over issues that they are not directly involved in. One of the implications of this provision is that workers will not be able to strike over the unfair dismissal of a colleague. The other category deals with strikes over issues where workers have downed tools at any stage within the previous twelve months.

Cosatu argues that rather than encourage industrial peace, this provision is most likely to discourage workers from returning to work until a dispute is completely resolved.

The government is not the only one that has been taken to an international forum. The International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) has given the South African metal bosses until September to end all racial discrimination. If the deadline is not met the IMF will test the bosses anti-apartheid rhetoric.



Workers demand May 1

The government can't seem to make up its mind about May Day. Last year they announced that it would be on the first Friday of May. In September they declared the first Monday of May would be Workers' Day - starting next year.

Manpower Minister Pietie du Plessis said the change was made after representations from "various interest groups".

Millions of South African workers and their organisations have made their position loud and clear. May 1 is Workers' Day and they demand it be recognised as a paid public holiday.

May Day is a day of unity between workers in each country in their struggle for a better life. It is a symbol to workers everywhere that the working class of the world faces the same problems and needs: problems of low wages, long working hours, bad treatment, and lack of control over decisions that affect their lives.

The battle for recognition of May Day goes on all year round. And workers are still determined to win despite intransigence from the government and the bosses.

Above all, workers want to have a say in the production, distribution as well as the ownership of the wealth of their countries.

Workers in capitalist countries all over the world share the same problems of exploitation and oppression.

So, on May Day workers commit themselves to international solidarity against the system that exploits and oppresses all workers. On this day, workers unite around their slogan: "Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! You have a whole world to gain".

Over the years workers in South Africa have demanded recognition of May Day. And the pressure on the

bosses and the government is mounting.

In 1986 COSATU decided it would observe May Day as a holiday in defiance of the government. In a show of worker solidarity the wheels of industry and commerce ground to a halt when about 1,5 million workers across the country stayed away from work and celebrated May Day.

The following year the government declared the first Friday in May as "Workers Day". But, the workers have rejected this demanding that workers' day should fall on the first day of the month. Workers in COSATU said: "May Day belongs to us! Hundreds and thousands of workers won May Day as a paid holiday. Through CO-

SATU we built the unity and the strength to reject the "Labour Day" that Botha offered us, and to claim 1st May as our own.

"May Day belongs to the Workers of the World! May Day belongs to the Workers of South Africa! May Day is Ours."

This year, thousands of workers throughout the country commemorated May Day along with other workers of the world, giving the Government's own Workers' Day the thumbs down.

Coming in the wake of the second national State of Emergency, restrictions placed on COSATU, the banning of democratic organisations and the tabling of the Labour Relations Amendment Bill, workers resolved at these rallies to fight the bill and continue to put their demands forward.

The theme of COSATU's May Day rallies was opposition to the Labour Relations Amendment Bill, the State of Emergency, P.W. Botha's

Workers celebrate May Day all over the world

was a general strike throughout North America: 350 000 workers downed tools. Six workers were killed and four leaders hanged for "organising the strike."

Through this massive show of unity, many won

their demand - an eight-hour working day - and May Day was born.

Three years later, socialist leaders from around the world met in Paris to form an international organisation of workers.

They began to organise a worldwide demonstration for May 1, 1890.

It was celebrated in Europe and America. Workers put forward their demands and decided that from then on, no one would work on that day.

The international workers' day united the working class across national boundaries.

The bosses feared the strength of this, and tried to divide and co-opt workers.

In some countries, unions, worker protests and strikes were banned.

The call for an international workers' day began around the campaign for a shorter working day over a hundred years ago. It was not unusual then for workers to work over 16 hours a day.

The struggles which gave birth to May Day started in the United States in 1884 in the movement for the shorter working day.

At that time workers in the US were getting more militant and the number of strikes was doubling every year. On May 1 1886, there

new "Great Indaba" proposal, and existing discriminatory laws.

At a rally at the University of the Witwatersrand, COSATU President Elijah Barayi, warned the government and employers that the promulgation of the Bill would lead to "chaos and conflict."

He told more than 2 000 students and workers that if the Bill became law it would destroy the South African industrial relations system and lead to conflict and chaos on the factory floor.

He said the Bill sought to destroy the gains COSATU had made over the years.

"The bosses have been party to this bill. It attacks the right to strike. It allows employers to deal with minority unions over the heads of the majority who have democratically chosen their own union.

"It will grant managers power to sue unions for loss of production during strikes. It will stop unions from declaring a dispute over the same issue within a period of 15 months."

Barayi attacked the government's economic programme, including wage freeze, privatisation and deregulation, saying this would lead to higher profits for capital and the deterioration of living standards for black and white workers thus leaving the majority of the country's

people impoverished.

"The wage freeze will increase poverty, starvation and hunger. This will allow employers to further increase the record profits which they make each year.

The plan to sell off parastatal corporations means the loss of thousands of jobs. At the same time, capital views the essential services such as health, housing and electricity as more opportunities to make profit.

"We must continue to put forward our democratic and non-racial answer to the conflict and violence of apartheid to those outside our ranks. Only the democratic movement and a society based on the Freedom Charter can save us from the nightmare of an apartheid war."

In Natal, about 3 000 workers attended rallies in Durban and another 600 converged to the University of Natal where police confiscated pamphlets and pictures and detained one student.

Addressing a rally at Umhlangeni in Durban, COSATU's assistant general secretary Sydney Mafumadi said May Day was being celebrated in South Africa in honour of all those who had laid down their lives in the struggle for freedom, trade union rights, peace and social progress.

"We are honouring our brothers and sisters in exile and our brothers and sisters in Pietermaritzburg who have been trying to defend themselves against crimes by agents of apartheid."

He challenged the State President and said that if his government really wanted peace then it should accept COSATU as a reality.

In the Cape, about 3 000 workers and students attended a rally at the University of Western Cape and another one took place at New Brighton in Port Elizabeth.

A big crowd turned out at a rally held in Welkom in the Free State. The rally scheduled to take place in Bloemfontein did not take place because permission for the use of venue was refused.

COSATU had also unsuccessfully applied to hold open air rallies in Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Secunda, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

May Day in South Africa

May Day was first taken up in South Africa in 1904 when a group of socialists came together in Johannesburg to call for the rights of workers.

But it was some time before May Day was seen as a yearly day of celebration. The International Socialist League (ISL), formed in

1916, pledged to build up worker solidarity in South Africa. And, for the first time, the ISL began to work to unite all workers non-racially.

In 1921, the ISL dissolved and the Communist Party of South Africa, which included African and coloured workers and aimed to strengthen worker unity, was formed.

But the bosses were trying to destroy worker unity. They were replacing expensive white workers with cheaper black workers. White workers felt threatened by this. But, instead of uniting with black workers to fight the mine bosses jointly, they turned against black workers. They went on strike and demanded that the mine bosses protect "white jobs" from blacks. Job reservation was introduced.

Despite this racist approach, all workers' fight for May Day as a paid public holiday, grew.

The government was forced in 1926 to introduce a Bill in Parliament proposing a public holiday. But instead of May 1, the Bill proposed the first Monday in May. Workers rejected this and the Bill was later dropped when the government refused to grant May 1.

As the African working class grew in size and strength, so did their participation in the May Day celebrations.

In the early 1930's, May Day was celebrated in different ways. The all-white registered unions supported solidarity with workers in other parts of the world, but turning their backs on their fellow South African black workers.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, held militant mass meetings. Police disrupted these, attacking the African workers present. Despite police harassment, there were more attempts to organise non-racial May Day celebrations.

In 1931, a non-racial May Day Committee was set up to organise May Day celebrations following the expulsion of blacks from the United May Day Committee.

At this time, a new enemy of workers emerged: fascism. It was growing in Italy, Germany and South Africa and working class organisations were coming under attack. Workers' support for struggles against imperialism were emphasised, and workers' international solidarity strengthened during May Day activities in

the 1930's.

In the 1940's the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) played a big role in making May Day more popular. CNETU united workers under the slogans "We Want Bread" and "Work for Wages".

Political developments in 1948 - when the Nationalist Party came to power - smashed what remained of white-black worker unity. Most white unions supported the Nationalist Party and its right wing, racist, anti-communist and anti-working class politics.

1950 saw the most important May Day event in South African history until then. Progressive organisations declared May 1, 1950, a Freedom Day strike.

CNETU, the ANC and other Congress organisations called for a general stayaway and demonstration to fight the Suppression of Communism Bill and to support demands for higher wages and better working conditions.

After 1950, May Day activities declined because of growing state repression.

However the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the Congress movement struggled to keep the tradition of May Day celebrations alive.

Worker leaders were banned, detained, banished, imprisoned and shot. Few May Day meetings were called, and SACTU used the day for small group discussions on the "Pound a Day" wage campaign, and the right to organise.

After the government clampdown of the early 1960's the next ten years was a decade of silence. May Day left the streets, along with the organisations that had been unable to withstand the government and the bosses' violent attacks.

SACTU was driven into exile, along with the ANC. Unionists were jailed and others banished by the government.

In the 1960's there was a massive growth in size of the working class. Huge monopoly businesses grew and factories got bigger.

This growth was the start of a new wave of worker organisation. The 1970's saw

the re-emergence of the trade union movement with the 1973 Durban strikes, when 100 000 workers took to the streets to demand wage increases and better working conditions.

Trade Union organisation grew. This included the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and a number of trade unions such as the SA Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) that later affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF).

After the mass worker-student stayaways of 1976 and 1977, workers began forming links with community organisations on issues beyond the factory floor. Increasingly trade union activists saw the links between the problems they face at work and those in the community. This was shown by the success of the stayaway in the Transvaal in November 1984.

In 1985, trade unions came together in united action to organise May Day celebrations. International Workers' Day was celebrated in all major centres throughout the country.

Today, the tradition of May Day has now been firmly revived under the banner of the workers' federation, COSATU.

Cosatu president Barayi carried shoulder-high at Cosatu rally.



Press speculation that Nelson Mandela will be released has intensified once again. This follows PW Botha's visit to Zaire in October where the issue was discussed.

The call for Mandela's release gained impetus at home and abroad with celebrations to mark his 70th birthday in July. Mandela, a symbol of courage, sacrifice and dedication in the struggle against Apartheid colonialism, has spent the past 26 years of his life as a political prisoner on the Robben Island until his transfer in the early 80's to Pollsmoor prison. He is presently being held at a clinic in Cape Town.

His birthday, celebrated internationally, focused the world's attention on the struggle of the people of South Africa against the Apartheid system. The Soviet Union, West Germany, New Zealand, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Nigeria, East Germany, Ireland and Australia all added their best wishes to Mandela and reiterated their call for the release of this people's leader and other politi-



Singing and dancing in the streets after a church service marking

MANDELA FROM

cal prisoners.

Mandela was awarded "Isithalandwe", the highest honour of the ANC for dedication in the struggle for liberation, along with fellow Rivonia Trialists - Kathrada, Motsoaledi, Mhlaba and Mlangeni.

Much has been said about Mandela, but his own words are not always heard. At the Rivonia Trial in 1964

when he was sentenced to life imprisonment, Mandela made a historic speech from the dock. An edited text of the speech follows.
ON NON-VIOLENCE

"The ANC was formed in 1912 to defend the rights of the African people which had been seriously curtailed by the South Africa Act, and which were then being threatened by the Native Land Act.

For 37 years - that is until 1949 - the ANC adhered strictly to a constitutional struggle. It put forward demands and resolutions; it sent delegations to the government in the belief that African grievances could be settled through peaceful discussions and that Africans could advance gradually to full political rights.

But White Governments remained unmoved, and the rights of Africans became



Mandela's 70th birthday, in Langa, Cape Town

THE DOCK

less instead of becoming greater.

As Chief Albert Luthuli, President of the ANC, said: "who will deny that 30 years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately, and modestly at a closed and barred door? What have been the fruits of moderation? The past 30 years have seen the greatest number of laws restricting our rights and progress, until today we have reached a stage

where we have almost no rights at all."

Even after 1949, the ANC remained determined to avoid violence. At this time, however, there was a change from the strictly constitutional means of protest which had been employed in the past. The change was embodied in a decision which was taken to protest against apartheid legislation by peaceful, but unlawful, demonstrations against cer-

tain laws. Pursuant to this policy the ANC launched the Defiance Campaign in which I was placed in charge of volunteers. This campaign was based on the principles of passive resistance. More than 8500 people defied the laws and went to jail. Yet there was not a single instance of violence in the course of this campaign on the part of any defier. I and 19 colleagues were convicted for the role which we played in organising the campaign, but our sentences were suspended mainly because the Judge found that discipline and non violence had been stressed throughout.

During the Defiance Campaign, the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act were passed. These Statutes provided harsher penalties for offences committed by way of protests against laws. Despite these the ANC adhered to its policy of non violence. In 1956, 156 leading members of the Congress Alliance, including myself, were arrested on a charge of high treason and charges under the Suppression of Communism Act. The non violent policy of the ANC was put in issue by the State, but when the court gave judgement some five years later, it found that the ANC did not have a policy of violence. We were acquitted on

all counts, which included count that the ANC sought to set up a Communist state in place of the existing regime.

ON THE GOVERNMENT'S INTRANSIGENCY

In 1960 the government held a referendum which led to the establishment of the Republic. Africans who constituted approximately 70 percent of the population of South Africa, were not entitled to vote, and were not even consulted about the proposed constitutional change.

All of us were apprehensive of our future under the proposed White Republic and a resolution was taken to hold an ALL- IN African Conference to call for a National Convention, and to organise mass demonstrations on the eve of the unwanted Republic, if the government failed to call the Convention. The conference was attended by Africans of various political persuasions. I was the Secretary of the conference and undertook to be responsible for organising the national stay home which was subsequently called to coincide with the declaration of the Republic.

The stay at home, in accordance with ANC policy, was to be a peaceful demonstration. Careful instructions were given to organisers and

members to avoid any recourse to violence. The government's answer was to introduce new and harsher laws, to mobilise its armed forces, and to send saracens, armed vehicles, and soldiers into the townships in a massive show of force designed to intimidate the people. This was an indication that the Government had decided to rule by force alone, and this decision was a milestone on the road to Umkhonto.

ON THE USE OF FORCE BY THE STATE

It must not be forgotten that by this time violence had in fact, become the feature of the South African political scene. There had been violence in 1957 when the women of Zeerust were ordered to carry passes; there was violence in 1958 with the enforcement of cattle culling in Sekhukhuneland; there was violence in 1959 when the people of Cato Manor protested against pass raids; there was violence in 1960 when the government attempted to impose Bantu Authorities in Pondoland. Thirty nine Africans died in these disturbances. In 1961 there had been riots in Warmbaths, and all this time Transkei had been a seething mass of unrest. Each disturbance pointed clearly to the inevitable growth among Af-

ricans of the belief that violence was the only way out-it showed that a government which uses force to maintain its rule teaches the oppressed to use force to oppose it. People had died even before then. In 1920 when the famous leader, Masabala, was held in a Port Elizabeth jail, twenty four of a group of Africans who had gathered to demand his release were killed by the police and White civilians. In 1921, more than one hundred Africans died in the Bulhoek affair. In 1924 over two hundred Africans were killed when the Administrator of South West Africa led a force against a group which had rebelled against the imposition of dog tax. On May 1 1950, 18 Africans died as a result of police shootings during the strike. On 21 March 1960, sixty nine unarmed Africans died at Sharpeville.

How many more Sharpevilles would there be in the history of our country? And how many more Sharpevilles could the country stand without violence and terror becoming the order of the day?

ON OPTING FOR VIOLENCE

What were we, the leaders of our people, to do? Were we to give in to the show of force and the implied threat against future action, or

were we to fight it and, if so, how?

We had no doubt that we had to continue the fight. Anything else would have been abject surrender. Our problem was not whether to fight, but was how to continue the fight.

We of the ANC had always stood for a non-racial democracy, and we shrank from any action which might drive the races further apart than they already were. But the hard facts were that 50 years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights.

When some of us discussed this in May and June of 1961 it could not be denied that our policy to achieve a non-racial State by non-violence had achieved nothing, and that our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism.

At the beginning of June 1961 after a long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, I, and some colleagues, came to the conclusion that as violence in this country was inevitable, it would be unrealistic and wrong for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the government met our peaceful demands with force.

ON UMKHONTO

I was one of the persons who helped to form Umkhonto. I and the others who started the organisation, did so for two reasons.

Firstly, we believed that as a result of government policy, violence by the African people had become inevitable, and that unless responsible leadership was given to canalize and control the feelings of our people, there would be outbreaks of terrorism which would produce an intensity of bitterness and hostility between the various races of this country, which is not produced even by war. Secondly, we felt that without violence there would be no way open to the African people to succeed in their struggle against the principle of White supremacy. All lawful modes of expressing opposition to this principle had been closed by legislation, and we were placed in a position in which we had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the government. We chose to defy the law.

But the violence which we chose to adopt was not terrorism. We who formed Umkhonto were all members of the ANC and had behind us the ANC tradition of non-violence and negotiation as a means of solving political disputes.

We believe that SA be-

longed to all the people who live in it, and not to one group be it Black or White.

In the Manifesto of Umkhonto published on 16 December 1961, we said:

"The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices - submit or fight. That time has now come to SA. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our people, our future, and our freedom."

We of Umkhonto we Sizwe have always sought to achieve liberation without bloodshed and civil clash. We hope even at this late hour, that our actions will awaken everyone to the realisation of the disastrous situation to which the Nationalist policy is leading. We hope that we will bring the government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that the government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war."

ON THE COMMUNIST PARTY

As far as the Communist Party is concerned, and if I understand its policy correctly, it stands for the establishment of a state based on the principles of Marxism. Although it is prepared to work for the Freedom Charter, as a short-term solution

to the problems created by White supremacy, it regards the Freedom Charter as the beginning and not the end, of its programme.

The Communist Party's main aim, on the other hand was to remove the capitalists and to replace them with a working-class government.

It is true that there has often been close co-operation between the ANC and the Communist Party. But co-operation is merely proof of a common goal - in this case the removal of White supremacy - and is not proof of a complete community of interests.

Shortly after Umkhonto was constituted, I was informed by some of its members that the Communist Party would support Umkhonto, and this then occurred. At a later stage the support was made openly.

I believe that communists have always played an active role in the fight by colonial countries for their freedom, because the short term objects of communism would always correspond with the long-term objects of freedom movements.

This pattern of co-operation between communists and non-communists has been repeated in the National Liberation Movement of SA. Prior to the banning of the Communist Party, joint campaigns involving

the Communist Party and the Congress movements were accepted practice.

African communists could, and did, become members of the ANC, and some served on the National, provincial, and local committees.

It is perhaps difficult for White South Africans with an ingrained prejudice against communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences is a luxury we cannot afford at this stage.

What is more, for many decades communists were the only political group in SA who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals; who were prepared to eat with us; talk with us; live with us, and work with us. They were the only political group which was prepared to work with the Africans for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. Because of this there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism.

ON POLITICAL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Above all we want equal political rights, because without them our disabilities will be permanent. I know this sounds revolutionary to the Whites in this

country, because the majority of voters will be Africans. This makes the White man fear democracy.

But this fear cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the only solution which will guarantee racial harmony and freedom for all. It is not true that the enfranchisement of all will result in racial domination.

Political division, based on colour, is entirely artificial and, when it disappears, so will the domination of one colour group by another. The ANC has spent half a century fighting against racialism. When it triumphs it will not change that policy.

This then is what the ANC is fighting. Their struggle is a truly national one. It is a struggle of the African people inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. It is a struggle for the right to live.

CONCLUSION

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against White domination, and have fought against Black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

After 33 years the Charter is still with the people

The South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), representing over 600000 youths engaged in a fight against oppression and exploitation has declared: "Every Campaign, Every Action we take, is guided by our understanding of the Freedom Charter."

After 33 years the charter is still seen as a rallying point which enjoys mass support among the oppressed and exploited.

Workers organised under the banner of COSATU have also adopted the charter saying it is "a political weapon in the struggle for national liberation and socialism."

"The charter encompasses the minimum demands of the democratic majority which lay the basis for the building of a non-exploitative society.

"It is a guiding document which reflects the views and aspirations of the majority

of the oppressed and exploited in our struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation" said COSATU.

The Birth of the Freedom Charter

In August 1953, Cape leader of the ANC, Professor Z.K. Matthews, called for a Congress of the People at which national demands and proposals of the people would be put forward about a future South Africa free of discrimination and oppression.

The Cape Congress adopted Professor Matthews' proposal at a provincial congress held at Cradock. This was later adopted by the national congress at the annual conference held in Queenstown in December 1953.

Over a thousand volunteers went out throughout the country to collect the demands of the people to be

included in the draft that would produce a Charter of the People.

The volunteers went out to towns, villages, rural areas, places of work including factories, farms and mines, and this set the stage for the convening of the Congress of the People at Kliptown on 25 and 26 June 1955.

The Congress itself was remarkable for its size, the preparations made for housing and feeding delegates, and the discipline of those present in the face of police intimidation.

Many delegates traveled long distances, usually by bus or truck. In some cases they were stopped en route for a check of their papers or vehicles, and about two hundred were prevented from reaching Johannesburg.

At the Congress itself, it was announced that 2884 delegates were present. "Freedom Volunteers", wearing armbands with the ANC colours met delegates, arranged for their accommodation and served as ushers and aids at the meeting.

"It was the first really representative gathering in South African history," wrote Chief Albert Luthuli.

Detectives from the Special Branch were present from the beginning, making notes of everything being said and taking photographs of the proceedings. This did not deter the people from making

The tradition of "Freedom Day" celebrations is still firmly upheld by progressive organisations throughout the country even after the charter was adopted 33 years ago.

Adopted in 1955 at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, the Freedom Charter is the only document that represents the ideals and aspirations of all South Africa's people.

June 26 is marked as "Freedom Day" by hundreds of thousands of people. Despite untold repression, 3 years of a state of emergency and mass detentions, the demands of the Charter are still echoed by millions of oppressed and exploited people of this country.

Said an ANC veteran of the 1950's: "The fact that the demands of the charter have not been met 33 years after they were so clearly spelt out should serve as an inspiration to all freedom loving people to redouble our efforts until we have won our liberation.

"The Freedom Charter reflects the demands or visions of a future society, filtered upwards from the mass of common men and women."

Today the charter is taking its rightful place among the people and numerous progressive organisations and trade unions have adopted it as their guiding document in the struggle for a non-racial and democratic South Africa.