

SPEAK

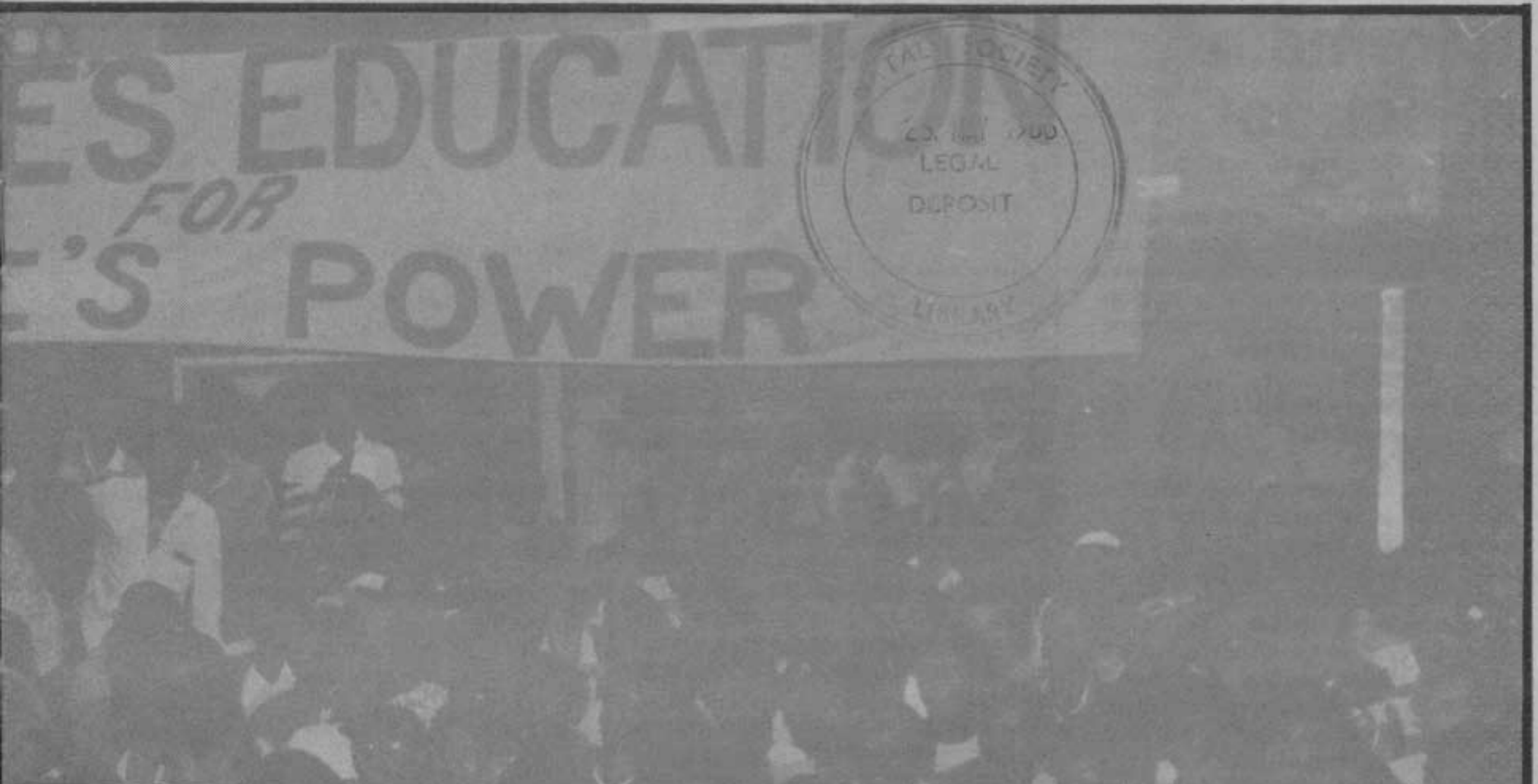
THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY



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PEOPLES'
EDUCATION
FOR
PEOPLES'
POWER

APRIL 1986

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Delegates from grassroots student, parent and teachers organisations discussed the education crisis at the second National Education Crisis Committee conference in Durban on 29 March

'Plan united action'

UNITED mass action on the education crisis by all communities and democratic organisations is the call to the whole of South Africa.

This call was made at the second National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) held in Durban over the Easter weekend.

The 1 200 delegates from grassroots organisations around the country urged all communities and democratic organisations to launch regional and national action campaigns by considering rent, consumer and other boycotts.

Students have decided to return to school. They will regroup and rebuild student organisations. The education struggle will be taken forward on this basis.

Delegates said community and education struggles could not be separated. A resolution said "increasing hardships were experienced by our people with respect to rents and the costs of other necessities".

The government had ignored the demands of the people for reduced rents and other charges. The government had ignored calls for general sales tax to be taken away, and had taken no notice of pleas for food prices to be lowered and kept from rising.

The conference also called on students nationally to join workers in COSATU and CUSA in celebrating the 100th anniversary of May Day.

All communities and organisations were urged to launch a national staya-

way on 16, 17, 18 June to commemorate student struggles in 1976. The conference declared 16 June the National Youth Day.

Delegates said this year marked the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings. "None of the demands for which thousands of our comrades have died have been met."

The conference declared Cosas unbanned. It called on all students to plan for united mass action to fulfill this decision.

The NECC said that students had every right to organise. Parents could not allow their children to be without leaders and organisations.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Peoples' Education for Peoples' Power!

Durban, 29/30 March '86



Students to remain at school

STUDENTS, parents, teachers and representatives of grassroots democratic organisations from all over South Africa decided that students should remain at school. This decision was made at the second National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) conference held in Durban on 29 March.

Student delegates agreed to return to school. But students said that sooner or later they would expect to be taught a true people's education.

Delegates said the demands set by the December conference had not been met by the government. The situation had been made worse by the government ignoring some of the demands, and closing down schools.

But the conference decided that all students should return to school. Where schools had been closed down, students should occupy them and demand the right to education.

Students organisations should use the presence of students at school to build and regroup student organisations. Alternative people's education programmes should be started at once.

The conference also said education struggles should more and more involve parents, teachers and students in democratic organisations. Delegates said new and creative tactics should be used to further education struggles.

"There are many forms of protest. The conference was looking for the best way of achieving community goals", said a conference organiser. He said the protests of the last year had resulted in the loss of many young lives.

He said demands made to the government at the first education conference held at the University of the Witwatersrand had not been "adequately" met.

The demands were the lifting of the state of emergency, the rebuilding of school buildings, the release of students in detention, the reinstatement of teachers, the provision of free books and stationary and the withdrawal of troops from the townships.



The conference called for the ANC and all other organisations to be unbanned...

From page 1

Conference calls for unity

Conference organisers said that although parents and students could negotiate with the government on education issues in certain cases, other negotiations should involve the real leaders of the people.

The conference called for the following demands to be met:

- Banning orders on all organisations including the ANC to be lifted.
- All political leaders and detainees to be released and all exiles allowed to return home.
- All treason trials to be stopped and charges in all other political trials withdrawn.
- The banning order on all meetings to be lifted.
- The unconditional release of the Sharpeville Six who have been sentenced to death.
- The complete dismantling of apartheid.

The conference decided to give the NECC the power to form a national action committee.

The action committee would be made up of representatives of all democratic organisations that agreed with the conference decisions.

The conference also set up a People's Education Committee (PEC) to investigate ways of planning a people's education. (See story on page 15.)

The conference said there was "an urgent need for a united, democratic

national teachers' organisation" and said "nobody should handicap the development of unity among teachers." It condemned repressive action against teachers such as dismissals.

The conference called for all foreign companies with investments and factories in South Africa to withdraw. It also asked countries which allowed South African Airways to land at their airports to ban South African aeroplanes from landing.

The conference said foreign companies who built factories and invested in South Africa supported apartheid.

The American government of President Reagan was accused of propping up apartheid.

The conference decided to "make it let known to the entire world that we consider the Reagan administration as accomplices in the crime of apartheid."

Women and childcare was another issue discussed at the conference. Delegates said many women were forced to work to support their families. There were very few creches in South Africa.

The conference demanded that the government should provide creches, nursery schools and after-school centres for all children. It also demanded that laws be passed giving women the right to job security and adequate maternity leave.

The UDF throws its weight behind education struggle

THE UDF publicity secretary, Murphy Morobe, talked to SPEAK about the decisions and implications of the Easter conference.

The UDF has always viewed education as an important site of struggle. COSAS, up to the time of its banning, and AZASO have been our leading student affiliates. They placed education struggles at the centre of all programmes and activities that the front has been engaged in.

As was the case with the 1985 Wits December Consultative Conference, the UDF put its full weight behind the recent National Education Crises Conference in Durban. The UDF believes that the struggle for a free, compulsory, non-racial and democratic education system is essentially a political struggle. Our enemies, like Buthelezi, will accuse us of concerning ourselves with politics and not with education.

The conference went ahead despite attempts by police and Inkatha to disrupt it. It owed its success to the determination and commitment of the delegates. Not only was it able to conclude its business but it also came up with resolutions to guide us in the future. Strategies by which the people can put pressure on the authorities were outlined.

Intense debates and arguments were evident throughout the conference. When delegates report back to their constituencies these will and must continue.

Four resolutions stand out from the others and have the full backing of the UDF. These refer to:

- the return of the students to school
- the necessity of building people's education
- the bankruptcy of Inkatha and
- the call for sanctions.

SCHOOL RETURN

The UDF has followed discussions on this issue very closely. It accepts the need for regional and local responses to issues affecting students. But it still believes that students should go back to school.

This must not be misunderstood. The UDF is NOT saying that students should stop fighting for their legitimate rights. For students to effectively challenge this backward education system, it is important that they do not abandon their bases. This is a principle which should be applied with flexibility. The different conditions in different areas must be taken into account.

But the schools remain the trenches for our struggle against Bantu Education. We have to battle to occupy them and to start changing them NOW. They will eventually become peoples' schools in which peoples' education will be taught.

It is important that students understand this. If they don't the education

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COSATU backs decisions

THE CONGRESS of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has come out in active support of the decisions taken at the national education conference over the Easter weekend.

A COSATU spokesperson said that the seriousness with which the federation viewed its participation in the education crisis was indicated by the attendance at the conference by both the national executive and worker leaders from various regions.

The spokesperson said the education conference was important because it allowed for the participation of democratic organisations, particularly youth, to plan the way forward in the education crisis.

"The resolutions taken allowed progressive organisations to plan a programme of action that will consolidate organisations at a local, regional and national level. It will allow us to advance the struggle of our people."

"COSATU views the struggle of the students for their rights at schools in the same way that we view the struggle of the workers in the factories." The spokesperson said the demand for democratic SRCs was similar to the demand of workers for the recognition of trade unions.

He said at different levels of its organisation, particularly at the local shop stewards councils level,



COSATU had formed strong links between workers and students.

At a national level COSATU had called for the recognition of democratic SRCs, the unbanning of Cosas and an end to Bantu Education. "We have also urged workers as parents to support the demands of the students."

At its inaugural conference COSATU called for the recognition of 16 June as a day of our youth to commemorate the struggles of students.

He said COSATU would be celebrating May Day at rallies in all regions. The trade union federation issued a call for all progressive organisations to support May Day as issues raised would include one hundred years of exploitation, the 1946 miners' strike and the 1980 municipal strike, and a rejection of the Johannesburg centenary. The conference had resolved to ask all democratic organisations to support May Day.

From page 3

The UDF throws weight behind education struggle

struggle will not advance further. We must also achieve maximum unity between students and parents in order to move forward.

PEOPLES' EDUCATION

The UDFs' support for the development and introduction of peoples' education in our schools is based on a number of factors. Peoples' education must:

- destroy the backwardness of the present system
- be mass based
- reach out to all the people of this country, be they young or old, in farms, towns or cities.
- not serve the interests of the rich
- be based on the actual experiences of our people
- uncover the cultural heritage of our people
- unify the nation and
- pave the way for peoples' power

We do not have to wait for liberation day, we must begin to introduce some of these ideas under the present regime.

INKATHA

The conference had no choice but to declare Inkatha an enemy of the people. This shows how seriously the conference viewed Inkatha's thuggery.

While condemning Inkatha, the UDF realises that many of those belonging to Inkatha's impis are not aware that they are being

used against their own people. We hope to win them over to our side as the struggle continues.

The call for sanctions by the conference and by Bishop Tutu backed by COSATU and the UDF indicates how out of tune the anti-sanctions brigade is. Sanctions have become the dividing line between the haves and the have-nots. As expected those with vested economic interest in the present capitalist order are very nervous and angry. In public they say "blacks will suffer more". The UDF questions whether these people are sincere.

NECC condemns Inkatha attack

Every possible attempt was made to stop the education conference meeting in Durban. Obstacles were placed in the path of representatives of grassroots organisations of the people to prevent them meeting democratically on the education crisis. Venue after venue was forbidden to the organisers.

Cars were attacked and burnt. Finally the hall where unarmed conference delegates were registering was attacked by two busloads of heavily armed Inkatha supporters.

Two Inkatha members were killed. The NECC had done everything possible to prevent violence.

SPEAK condemns Moutse detentions

DELEGATES returning to Moutse from the Durban conference were detained as they got off the buses. SPEAK condemns the detention and demands the immediate release of the detainees.

UDF publicity secretary, Murphy Morobe said, "This kind of high handed harrasment by the security police can only worsen the already tense situation that exists in the area."

'Inkatha an enemy of the people'

THE NATIONAL Education Crisis Committee (NECC) extended sincere condolences to the families of the Inkatha members who lost their lives during the Inkatha attack on the NECC conference delegates.

"We are saddened by the fact that that innocent men were misled to their death by the Inkatha leadership bent on committing murder", said the NECC in a statement released a few days after the conference.

"What is disturbing to us is the kind of statement made by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi on the NECC and the vio-



The ugly face of Inkatha

lence in Durban", said an NECC spokesperson. He said that Chief Buthelezi's statement needed a clear response.

"Buthelezi said that the NECC did not concern itself with education." The NECC said it should be noted that the conference listened to two major papers on the subject of education.

The NECC said that all resolutions passed were concerned with efforts to resolve the education crisis.

Various press comments after the conference described it as a "significant education conference", said the NECC.

The NECC said the DET itself had regarded the conference as a commendable effort to solve the education crisis.

"These facts leave one with doubts about the intentions of Chief Buthelezi's distortions of the purpose of this conference.

Another point Chief Buthelezi had made was that the Natal Teachers Union members had been denied the right to attend the conference. The NECC said that the conference had been attended by a wide range of teacher organisation including ATASA, CPTA, UTASA and NEUSA. The Natal Teachers Union was an affiliate of ATASA, said the NECC.

Answering why the conference was held in Durban, the NECC said Buthelezi had an obsession that Durban was chosen as a venue in order to attack him on his home base.

"The truth is that he was never even an issue in the choice of venue." The NECC said the main reason for Durban as a conference venue was at the time of organisation it was the only suitable area outside the ambit of the state of emergency.

The NECC questioned whether they did not have a right to meet anywhere in South Africa. "Or is Natal no longer part of South Africa?"

The NECC said the statement of Buthelezi on violence should be based on facts which are not only self-evident, but should be accepted as truth:

● According to PUTCO officials Inkatha hired the buses.

● Official comment by the police said that Inkatha was behind the attack.

● People in the buses were not ordinary men and women on the street expressing their anger. According to them, they were brought to the hall under false pretences to protect the Inanda Polytechnic.



A blow by blow account...

How Inkatha tried to stop the conference

● Early in the evening of Good Friday, 28 March, three cars full of Inkatha supporters armed with spears and sticks smashed the cars of conference delegates in Congella. One delegate was injured.

● The second attack took place in the early hours of Saturday morning. A car in which a member of the SPCC has been travelling was petrol-bombed outside a place where delegates were sleeping.

● Another petrol bomb was planted between other two cars, but it did not explode. The police arrived at the scene long after the fire had been put out.

● On Saturday morning a combi being used by the conference organisers had its windows smashed by gunmen.

● That morning the NECC sent a delegation of Mr Vusi Khanyile, of the SPCC; Dr Beyers Naude; of the South African Council of Churches and an attorney, Mr Yunus Mohammed, to appeal to the police to restrain Inkatha whom they believed were going to try and disrupt the conference.

● At about 12.45 on Saturday morning two light blue Putco buses filled with Inkatha supporters armed with guns, sticks and knives arrived at Pioneer Hall, Congello. Conference delegates were eating lunch and registering.

An eye witness said "they were singing with jubilation, wielding their dangerous weapons as they advanced to attack innocent, unarmed delegates". Cars and buses were smashed.

Two Inkatha supporters was killed, and others were injured. Eight conference delegates were also hurt.

The police arrived at the scene later and ordered people who were delegates to get into their busses and leave the place. One delegate was arrested but later released.

● Delegates to the conference were disciplined throughout the weekend.

● The men on the buses were adults, fathers and husbands, and not the youth as claimed by Buthelezi.

The NECC said the facts clearly showed that the events were planned by Inkatha.

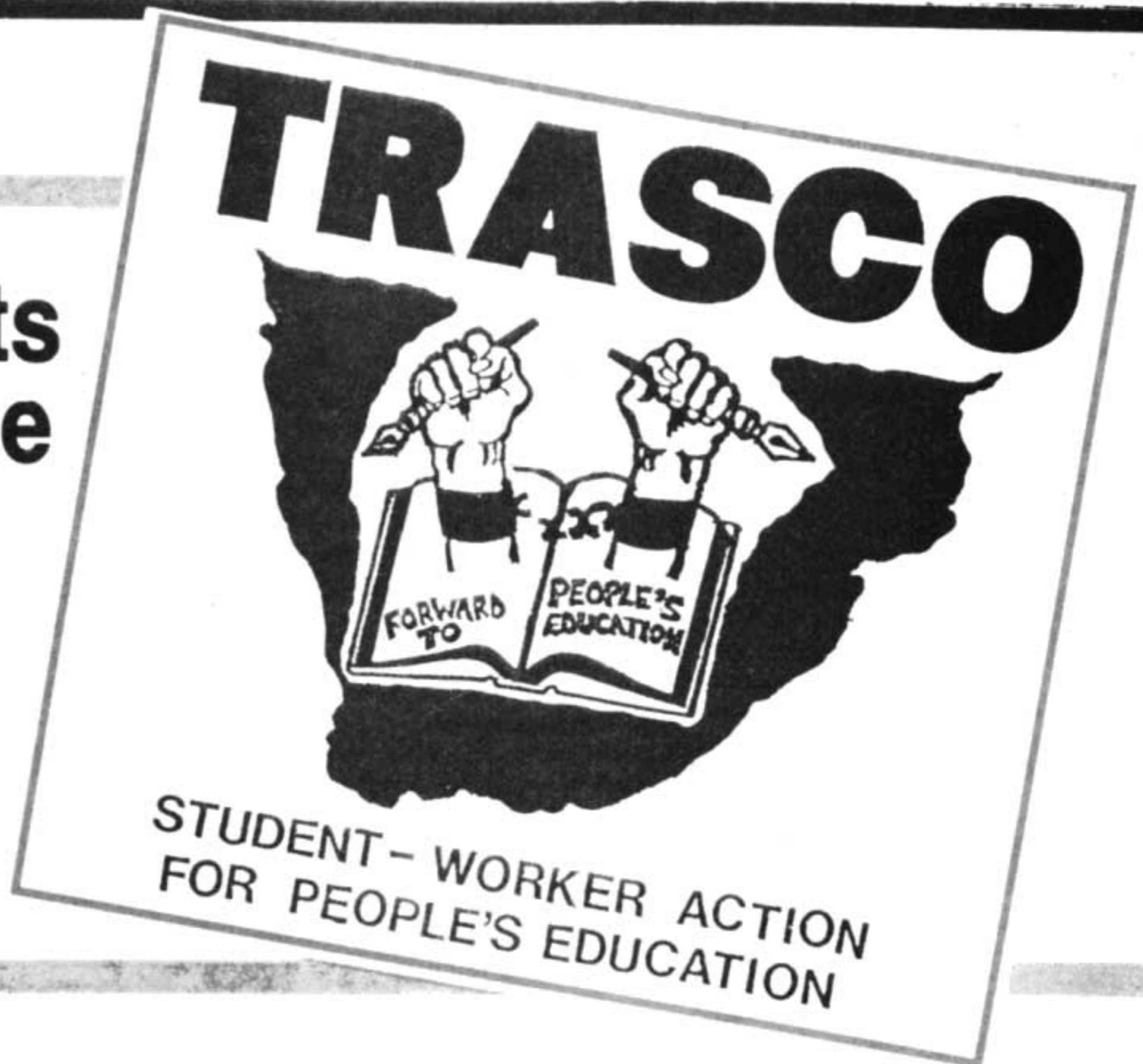
The NECC said it wished to repeat that the conference was an initiative by grassroots parents, teachers and student committees in order to resolve the education crisis.

"We carried no weapons and had no intention of fighting anywhere."

"After the first attack on Friday evening at Pioneer Hall, where buses of delegates were attacked, the NECC sent a delegation to appeal to the police to restrain Inkatha whom we believed were going to return and mount an attack."

The NECC added they wished to commend the police for stating clearly that Inkatha was behind the attacks. The NECC called on the international community and all South Africans to know that Inkatha is an enemy of the people and a danger to the liberation struggle.

Students organise again after COSAS ban...



The government responded to the crisis in education by banning COSAS. After the banning, TRASCO (the Transvaal Students Congress) was set up to co-ordinate the continuing student struggle on a regional basis. Similar structures are being set up all over the country. SPEAK interviewed a TRASCO spokesperson about the students demands and their plans for the future.

SPEAK: Many of the resolutions drawn up at the December National Education Conference represented demands that students have been making for a long time. The conference set a deadline of three months for these demands to be met. Do you feel that the demands of the students have been met?

TRASCO: People at the conference set an ultimatum for the DET to meet the demands of the students. Right now problems such as students being forced to buy school uniforms, and students being forced to pay school fees are emerging and the DET still shows its unwillingness in resolving the student

crisis. There has been no clear response from the state so far.

SPEAK: If these demands are not met, what do you think will happen?

TRASCO: It is quite clear that with problems, such as student demands not been met, students are becoming more frustrated and angry. However, TRASCO cannot commit itself and say that students will do this or that.

...The anger of the students is rapidly increasing and one day it will explode

But the DET should bear one thing in mind, and that is that the anger of the students is rapidly increasing and one day it will explode.

communities have realised that the problems are created by the DET, and not COSAS or agitators. The masses are now convinced that the DET is the enemy of the people.

...Communities have realised that the problems are created by the DET and not COSAS or agitators

SPEAK: Trasco was represented at the December Conference. What were the speeches like and how was the attendance?

TRASCO: The speeches all said that the masses had a vital role to play in the education struggle. They also said that parents should help determine the future on education.

The attendance was also positive there was a mass of people. People came from different walks of life. People of all classes and sectors were represented through their structures. They came to listen, and more than that to decide on the future of their children at schools. The SPCC conference also showed the kind of relationships between the organisations and that the problems faced by these organisations are interwoven.

SPEAK: Trasco is a relatively new organisation. How is Trasco structured and what are its plans for the future?

TRASCO: Trasco is made up of student representatives from different student structures throughout the Transvaal region. It is presently working on SRCs. It also co-ordinates student activities. Trasco came as a student structure to take up problems affecting students after COSAS was banned. It has also involved itself in the campaign for the unbanning of COSAS. TRASCO believes that it is only through unity that our goals can be achieved.

SPEAK: What are your views on an alternative system of education?

TRASCO: This will be an education system without racial walls between the citizens of this country. It will be based on the peoples' interests. Everyone should have a say in the running of education.

SPEAK: What have students learnt from the 1976 uprisings?

TRASCO: We were able to expose Bantu Education and we also learned that apartheid education is evil. Students also became aware that:

They are not the vanguard of the struggle and that they won't win the fight for non-racial and democratic education if they wage it in isolation from other struggles—such as community struggles against rent or bus hikes, and the National Democratic struggle.

...Students became aware that they are not the vanguard of the struggle and that they won't win the fight for non—racial and democratic education if they wage it in isolation

It will only be through united action that apartheid education will be crushed.

The campaign against unequal education did not start in 1976. Since its implementation in 1954 it has been met by massive rejection. Demands for equal education are enshrined in the Freedom Charter. That the doors of learning and culture shall be opened ... is still a rallying point in our schools today.

Force will not stop the students, says Trasco council

STUDENT leaders from all over the Transvaal attended a three day TRASCO regional council from 21 to 23 March in Soweto.

About 42 student congresses from the urban and rural areas, and the "homelands" were represented.

Student representatives were very aware that the council started on 21 March — the day when 26 years ago 69 people were gunned down during a peaceful demonstration against pass laws at Sharpeville.

Opening the council a student leader condemned the banning of COSAS last year and said: "The continuous killings of our people and the banning of our beloved COSAS will not stop the fight against the colonial Bantu Education system in our country".

He said the banning of COSAS was a blow, but that the ideas and beliefs born out of practical experience would not be altered by any force acting against the wishes of the people.

Students resolved to intensify and popularise the campaign to unban

COSAS. Democratic organisations and the trade union movement would also be called upon to support the campaign. The council also decided to set up committees to work on this campaign.

Student leaders condemned victimisation and harrassment by the school authorities, the army and police, and vigilante groups. Two Northern Transvaal student leaders said that they were among many who had been refused admission to school on the grounds of their involvement in student struggles.

"Before we are students, we are members of the community", said a representative from Alexandra in motivating a resolution to take up community issues. The TRASCO council demanded a decrease in the bread price, and called on the government to increase its subsidy on bread.

Students also pledged to campaign against general sales tax as it was being used to "feed the fat stomachs of the town councillors" and to maintain the army which was terrorising residents in the townships.



TRASCO is campaigning for the unbanning of COSAS

SPEAK

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

Challenging apartheid and education

The National Education Crisis Conference held in Durban last week will take the struggle for a non-racial and democratic peoples' education to greater heights.

While delegates from all parts of the country were still making preparations to travel to Durban, conference organisers were engaged in a bitter struggle to save the conference. A last minute venue had to be found and attacks from Gatsha Buthelezi's fascist bandits had to be fended off. What happened at Pioneer Hall should give them cause for thought.

Activists were forced to defend their lives and defend the right to hold the conference in Durban. In the final instance it was a battle for the right to shape our own future.

Inkatha was finally exposed for what it is — a neo-facist, tribal organisation which collaborates with the Pretoria regime. This is what its backers have always tried to hide.

The conference itself took place under the most difficult conditions. SPEAK is shocked that Natal and Pietermaritzburg Universities did not allow the conference the use of their campuses. Their "concern" for black education is obviously paper thin.

The conference placed the ball firmly in the governments' court. The dismantling of Bantu Education and of apartheid generally is crucial for any long lasting solution to the education issue.

Building now

However, it is vital that the resolutions of the conference reach all levels of our structures. Given that there are different conditions in different areas, these will serve as clear guidelines for appropriate action.

The NECC has correctly stated that the crisis will not end when the pupils return to school. Peoples' education is a necessity. Even though it may not develop fully under the present regime, we must plant the seeds NOW. That is the challenge of the democratic movement today.

Teachers fight inferior education

Teachers today are becoming more militant. Their organisation NEUSA, the National Education Union of South Africa is making an important contribution to the education struggle.

With a strong organisation to represent them, progressive teachers are now joining the fight against inferior, oppressive education.

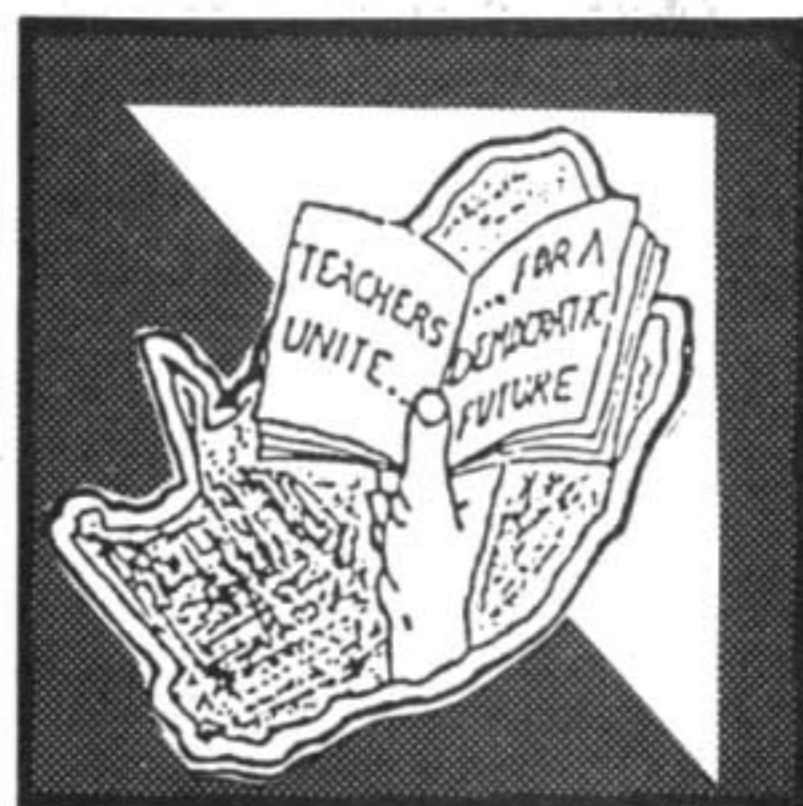
Teachers are realising that they have been lagging behind in the education struggle. Because they were unorganised they could be easily manipulated by the authorities. Often teachers were caught in the middle between the demands of the authorities and the demands of militant students. Students have accused teachers of being fence sitters.

But many teachers are no longer content to stand aside and watch. They are beginning to realise that their rightful role is in the struggle against inferior education.

To meet these challenges NEUSA has set out on a programme to organise teachers on a large scale. New branches of NEUSA are being set up all over the country particularly in the Eastern Cape. NEUSA has embarked on a programme of action which includes:

- A campaign around "The right to organise teachers". The Department of Education and Training, security police, conservative teachers organisations and principals have often victimised teachers who belong to NEUSA. Through this campaign NEUSA intends to win the right of teachers to belong to organisations of their choice.
- A campaign to build alliances with other progressive organisations. NEUSA is an affiliate of the UDF.
- A campaign to increase the membership of NEUSA.
- A campaign to promote an alternative, relevant education. This is part of "People's Education for People's Power", the slogan adopted at the SPCC conference in December.

At its Johannesburg office, NEUSA also provides resource material for teachers who want to make their courses more relevant. They hold workshops on the present education system and on new ideas for future education.



TIC supports education committees

THE TRANSVAAL Indian Congress (TIC) has pledged support for People's Education Committees (PEC) formed in Lenasia and Laudium soon after the December 1985 conference on education.

In a widely distributed pamphlet the TIC said it "fully and actively supports the PEC's struggle against ethnic and unequal education".

The education crisis, the TIC said, results from unequal education controlled by the DET, the House of Delegates and the House of Representatives. "Rajbansi's education is characterised by text-book shortages, inadequate sporting and recreational facilities, blacklisting of student teachers, and the sacking and transferring of teachers."

"We demand that the people control their educational system", the TIC said.

Meetings have been invaded by the police, or banned. People at the meetings have been teargassed and sjambokked.

TIC condemned the police actions and demanded the right to discuss the education crisis in a "free and open manner".

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Organisations like the Soweto Students Congress (SOSCO), who attended the Durban conference, grow stronger by the day

In three months a lot can happen. At the Durban conference delegates from all over South Africa reported on what was going on in their areas...

Organising students, teachers and parents

COMMUNITIES from all over South Africa reported at the Durban conference on the education crisis and whether the demands of the first National Consultative Conference had been met.

In the Transvaal the situation differed from area to area. In some areas there is strong community and student organisation. The last few months have also seen the growth of progressive organisation in the 'homelands' and the rural areas.

The DET school committees no longer exist in the Eastern Cape. In other areas some still continue to function, but their role has been reduced to signing cheques.

Parents and teachers are starting to boycott these committees. In their place students, parents and teachers are forming Parent/Teacher/Student

Associations (PTSAs').

Teachers in their numbers are co-operating with parents and students. Many have joined NEUSA and other progressive organisations.

In the Lowveld some teachers who have joined organisations have had their cheques tampered with. In the Vaal teachers were warned by an inspector for having joined progressive organisations.

In the Pretoria region teachers are discussing dismantling TUATA, an affiliate of ATASA. In the Western Cape teachers belonging to the Democratic Western Cape Teachers Union (DWCTU) have taken up the issue of 90 permanent teachers who were charged with misconduct after having refused to administer examinations last year in support of students on boycott.

In the Western Cape and Border reg-

ion transferred teachers were called back but most of them have not yet received their salaries.

The police and army continue to occupy many townships. In Mamelodi and Atteridgeville the SADF patrols the streets daily. In the Eastern Transvaal schools have been turned into army camps.

Most of the detainees were released when the state of emergency regulations were lifted. But in the Northern Transvaal and parts of Bophuthatswana when a group of people are released, the following day others are picked up. People have been in detention since the state of emergency in the Free State.

The campaign for the unbanning of Cosas is still in its early stages. Different organisations of students, youth, workers, and residents have thrown their weight behind the campaign. However, the government has refused to meet this demand made at the first conference in December.

SRCs have been established in most schools. In Pretoria there are SRCs at all the high schools as in the Vaal and Eastern Transvaal. The police and the school authorities are attempting to prevent the formation of SRCs at schools in the Northern Transvaal.

Students and parents living in Johannesburg and Pretoria have refused to pay school fees. In the Vaal and Northern Transvaal people were told to pay school fees before they could receive books.

In the Northern Transvaal following the DET's announcement that school fees were not compulsory, students demanded that the money that they had paid over the years be returned to them.

In the Eastern Transvaal the school authorities are still insisting on the payment of school fees. In the Free State school authorities refunded students.

The DET has not yet met its responsibility of providing proper books. Many schools have not received textbooks although the DET promised to provide them after the December conference.

Parents are worried that although the DET has promised free textbooks in 1987, there has been no increase in the budget for books. In the Free State students burnt poor quality 'see-through' scribbles.

No books have been received by students in the Barberton area. In the Eastern Cape students have received 32 page exercise books but are dissatisfied with the content of the prescribed books. In Pretoria school principals agreed to use school fees to buy books.

SPCC - building national unity

● In the short time since its existence the Soweto Parent's Crisis Committee (SPCC) has managed to unite parents, teachers and students around the education crisis, has played a role in setting up national structures on education and has raised issues of community involvement and people's education. SPEAK interviewed a SPCC spokesperson on the eve of the important second National Consultative Conference in Durban in March.

SPEAK: Have meetings around the education conference been held in all areas?

SPCC: Many meetings have been held throughout the country. Scores of parents' crisis committees are taking up issues at all times in many parts of South Africa. This is a healthy process that indicates parental interest in student issues.

SPEAK: How is the recent release of emergency detainees viewed in the light of the demand made by the December conference for the release of those involved in the education struggle?

SPCC: Most detainees have been released. The SPCC is working closely with the school principals to check the numbers of those released and those still in detention. The same pattern should evolve in other parts of the country.

SPEAK: Have school fees for this year been paid?

SPCC: Fees have not been paid in almost all areas. A few principals have

subverted the Wits conference decision and thus risked creating unnecessary tension. The DET made it clear that school fees will not be demanded prior to registration of pupils. However, some principals either out of ignorance or arrogance have insisted on fees being paid.

SPEAK: Are textbooks and educational materials yet being provided free of charge?

SPCC: Not as yet. The DET has said that next year schools will receive free textbooks. A few schools may soon receive stationary.

SPEAK: Have there been any major advances in the struggle against bantustan education?

SPCC: Not from the SPCC's point of view. It must be remembered that the SPCC was initially a response from Soweto, which later became co-ordinated as shown by the first National Consultative Conference (NCC) at the University of the Witwatersrand in December.

It must be added, however, that from the Cape, there has been confrontation, particularly between teachers and the Ciskeian quislings.

SPEAK: How did the December conference see support for teachers in their struggles?

SPCC: In the first place, teachers must co-ordinate their own activities with those of the students, for example, teachers must help build up the SRCs network in the schools. Students need guidance on issues such as the democratic elections of students into SRCs.

SRCs imply a measure of student freedom in matters affecting them. Students choose or elect their own leadership people that they can trust and can mandate. This also implies some measure of education within the student body in that they need to come into contact with the democratic principles of popular struggle.

Any victimisation of teachers such as uncalled for transferences, or dismiss-



Rev. Molefe Tsele — chairperson of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee.

sals, should be campaigned against by students and parents.

SPEAK: Have teachers become more involved in community struggles since last year?

SPCC: During crisis points in Soweto, we saw members of ATASA, SPCC, AZASO, SOSCO and the SCA addressing schools, setting up SRCs and explaining the resolutions of the Wits Conference. This must be welcomed.

SPEAK: Are education programmes for teachers going to take place?

SPCC: Any education programmes for teachers can only come forth if spearheaded by the teachers themselves. This challenge is something that NEUSA or ATASA must take up. Academic education of teachers goes on but it is not backed by political education — this is a flaw.

SPEAK: Comment on the withdrawal of the 54 000 strong African teachers' association, ATASA, from DET committees and councils.

SPCC: The SPCC welcomes this move by ATASA. It is a progressive move flowing directly from one of the resolu-



The schools crisis started long before 1985. But after the State of Emergency things became worse. The Government declared war on the people by sending troops into their townships. They declared war on the students by banning COSAS. They stationed Casspirs outside every school. By the end of 1985 it was clear to everyone that the education crisis had become serious. Something had to be done...

tions of the December conference. It will enhance chances of meaningful discussions between ATASA and other teachers' organisations.

In the democratic struggle grey areas in which chaff is mixed with corn become clarified and differentiated. This process broadens the people's front as we gain more allies. There must be more meetings between ATASA and NEUSA and other progressive teachers' organisations.

SPEAK: Has any progress been made in setting up a single teachers' body?

SPCC: The SPCC is not aware of any such developments. Once again teachers' organisations must make such a move themselves. The coming congress must give a tentative date when all teacher organisations should converge for possible unity talks. If unions can do it in federations such as COSATU, why not teachers?

The SPCC is not blind to the different ideological positions within the teacher organisations. A federation does not altogether destroy autonomy, it enhances unity and discipline of action.

SPEAK: How has the campaign to unban COSAS progressed?

SPCC: The students, in alliance with the parents and teachers, are spearheading this campaign.

SPEAK: Have steps been taken to co-ordinate student struggles on a national level?

SPCC: There have been moves to co-ordinate student struggles on a national basis. Indications are that students will soon emerge with a national structure. The difference is that the new structure will be broadly based and will emerge from the ground up. The students within the progressive camp have emerged more experienced in terms of organising and mobilising students.

There is also a significant ideological and political growth within the activist student leadership, which is very healthy.

SPEAK: How has the intention to break down racial barriers seen to work in practise?

SPCC: The December conference was attended by a cross-section of the people of South Africa. Education crisis committees have been formed in

Lenasia, Bosmont and other places. Meetings have been consistently banned, or disrupted, in these areas.

The March conference will include various South African groupings. Students in the hard hit areas of South Africa should not move so far ahead that they leave other sectors far behind.

White students, particularly at the high school level, should be reached.

SPEAK: Has there been activity similar to that of the SPCC outside the Transvaal?

SPCC: A National Parents' Crisis Committee has been set up. Crisis committees have been established in areas outside the Transvaal. However, events are not all the same. Problems differ from area to area. In Johannesburg the media has concentrated on the SPCC and that has made quite a difference.

SPEAK: Has there been progress on the question of developing a people's education?

SPCC: There is a great need to co-ordinate this issue. Unfortunately some individuals and organisations have seen a chance to amass fortunes on the ticket of alternative education.

Programmes of alternative education must be democratically run and based on the communities they serve.

We hope that the Durban conference will set up a committee with powers to co-opt reputable educationalists and to recommend reputable service and educational organisations to help co-ordinate issues.

SPEAK: Please comment on how successful was the call for students to return to school on 28 January.

SPCC: The call was widely supported. In Soweto alone figures up to 94% attendance were recorded.

SPEAK: Will the March conference raise new points which have arisen since the December conference?

SPCC: It is difficult to foretell. Very few demands have been met by the government and the DET. The budget speech did not give any indication that extra funds would be allocated to education. That is negative.

Certain quarters of the people of South Africa want to wish away the crisis in education — to pretend that it is not happening.

The SPCC hopes that reason will prevail and that those who sign banning orders and prevent people from meeting will decide to do otherwise. Bans will never stop the desires of the freedom-loving people of South Africa.

'THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR ACTION'



Zwelakhe Sisulu



Vusi Khanyile

THE STRUGGLE advanced during the state of emergency and local issues were linked to national demands. This was said by Zwelakhe Sisulu, the son of Walter, a Rivonia trialist, and Albertina, a president of the UDF, in a keynote address to the Durban conference. "Where youth had previously waged the struggle alone, whole communities now involved themselves in united action against the regime", said Sisulu. He said the struggle had begun to be waged in all corners of the country and new organisations were springing up daily.

"We remain convinced people's education can only be achieved with the eradication of the apartheid system and the establishment of a democratic South Africa", said Sisulu.

"Despite the heavy blows against our leaders and organisations, there was a real strengthening of the democratic forces, the people's camp; and a weakening of the forces of apartheid, the enemy camp."

He said ever since the 1976 uprising the people had recognised that apartheid education could not be separated from apartheid in general. Sisulu said as the conference met, Cosas remained banned; students were still in detention; teachers continued to be dismissed and forcibly transferred; attempts were still being made to stop democratic SRCs from functioning;

government hoped the emergency would stop the advances of the democratic movement.

DECISIVE MOMENT

"In any struggle it is extremely important to recognise the critical moment, the time when decisive action can propel the struggle into a new phase", said Sisulu.

It was also important to understand that this moment would not last forever, that if we failed to take action that the time would be lost, he said.

The present state of the struggle was:

- the state has lost the initiative to the people. It is no longer in control of events.

- the masses recognise that the time is right, and are calling for action.

- the people are united around a set of basic demands. They are prepared to take action on these demands.

"The period of the emergency saw very important advances made by the people". In many cases, he said, our organisations matured and grew under the guns of the SADF.

The struggle developed in a national way, said Sisulu. The masses linked up local community issues with the question of political power.

Greater involvement of parents led to the formation of the SPCC and other organisations. The creation of Cosatu began a close relationship between trade unions and community organisations.

school buildings were unrepaired and the troops were still in the townships.

The government had not met most of the demands of the parents, students and teachers made at the December conference. "Any step the government has taken have been sideways steps", he said.

The government lifted the state of emergency because they were forced to do so, he said. They were afraid of the united mass action of the people which they knew would be coming after 31 March.

But he warned that the government would introduce a "permanent emergency" by increasing the powers of the army and police. "We must frustrate this scheme", he said.

Comrade Sisulu said the government had introduced the emergency because "it was losing political control." The

Naude: 'We need total political freedom'

PEOPLE'S education and freedom go together. This was said by Dr Beyers Naude, the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches in his opening address to the National Education Conference.

"We do not only need to liberate education from its fetters", he said, "but we need total political freedom". He said as long as there was "no democracy in South Africa we can never have a liberated education."

His message was that students, parents and teachers did not only want gutter education to be brought to the same standard as white education they wanted a fully democratic educational

system. "Every person should develop his or her talents to the greatest potential".

This conference was a crucial turning point after decades of repression. He said the conference decisions would give direction to the process of liberation.

Dr Naude said that every possible attempt had been made to stop the conference obstacles had been placed in the way of the congress organisers and venues were taken away from them.

He said it was not only black education that was in crisis. White education was also in crisis. White children were being indoctrinated into supporting the interests of a minority.

Comrade Sisulu said that ungovernability had not only been extended to far more areas but the people had actually to govern themselves in a number of townships.

People in a number of 'homeland' areas challenged the so-called tribal authorities, and sometimes even replaced these 'homeland' sell-outs with people's village councils.

"Students, parents and teachers now have democratic organisations through which we have begun to take some control over education."

"Areas which the enemy could previously rely on as zones of subservience and passivity were now being turned into zones of struggle", he said.

ADVANCES

He said the advances made by the people meant the old ways of state repression were no longer effective. "Detaining our leaders no longer frightens off our people or breaks our organisations", he said.

The government had now turned to new forms of repression. He said our people were being attacked by apartheid vigilante squads and by secret death squads. SADF and SAP hooligans were being allowed to kill and maim.

He paid tribute to all those who had died in the struggle for non-racial, free and democratic education. He singled out three people who had paid a "high and dear price".

They were Hector Peterson, who led the protesting students on 16 June 1976; Solomon Mahlangu, a typical product of Bantu Education; and Matthew Goniwe, "a teacher in the true sense of the word and a man of the people".

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He said the NECC had opened the way for people's power to be developed in our struggle for a free, democratic, compulsory and non-racial education. "Students, parents and teachers now have democratic organisations available through which we have some control over education", Sisulu said.

He emphasised that the education struggle is a political struggle in South Africa. South Africans were fighting for the right to self-determination in the education sphere as in all other spheres, he said.

"The struggle for people's education can only be won when we have won the struggle for people's power."

Our people are starting to take control over their own lives in different ways, he said. In some areas, he said, all the people young and old took part in committees from street level upwards.

"Another area where we are demonstrating the possibilities of people's power is through the school committees." He said that the statutory parents' committees had failed in many townships, and democratic people's committees had been formed and were starting to take control over the running of schools.



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Dr Naude received a standing ovation from the large crowd.

He said despite efforts of the government to frustrate and crush, hundreds of democratic SRCs had been formed.

Demonstrating the power of the people, he gave an example of a democratic teacher in the Eastern Cape who was employed by the people after having been fired. The people raised funds among themselves and sent the teacher back to school.

"People exercised power by starting to take control in areas such as crime, the cleaning of the townships and the creation of people's parks, the provision of first aid, and even in the schools."

He also saluted the decision taken by the traditionally conservative African Teachers Association of South Africa (Atasa) to withdraw from the structures of the DET. "The people have opened the way", he said. "It is up to the teachers and the teacher's organisations to ensure that teachers follow the path of the people, the path of democracy."

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Long live the struggle for democratic people's education!



Today control of the schools tomorrow the future is ours

Townships throughout the country will be remembering the education struggles of 1976. People will be discussing questions like what are the gains in education since 1976, and what are the losses?

They will be asking each other how the education struggle can be taken forward. Groups of students, parents and teachers will concentrate on how to build people's power and how to create people's education.

The first roots of people's power in the schools, communities and factories are starting to appear. In some townships street committees have been set up, while in schools in many areas SRCs and Parent-Teacher-Students Associations are being formed. These democratic structures are starting to replace the despised control of the apartheid state.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

When we talk about "people's education in society" we mean the programmes of education controlled by the people in their organisations. Trade unions, youth organisations, parent associations and civic associations must all educate themselves.

If we discuss "people's power in schools" it means that we must take control of the running of schools. The

syllabus, the way teachers teach, and the administration of schools should all fall under the democratic authority of our organisations.

The struggles of the past have shown very clearly what we are fighting against. Since the 1950s and in the growth of the education struggle since 1976, we have protested against exploitation in education and in society, Bantu Education and gutter education for Indian and coloured students, illiteracy and ignorance.

Our demands are also clear.

- We are struggling for an education programme that is democratic and non-racial.
- We want free, compulsory and progressive education.
- We want the education clause in the Freedom Charter to be put into practice. The Charter, adopted in 1955, calls

for the doors of learning and culture to be opened. There is also the Education Charter campaign which will be discussed in schools, universities and communities throughout the country.

- We want education that is not isolated from the struggles of the people and their everyday lives.

- We want new and alternative content for what is taught in our schools. Literature written by township writers needs to be taught at schools. Science and mathematics should teach us to serve the needs of all the people, rather than just a few businessmen. In a future South Africa geography students should learn to set up agriculture co-operatives, and history students should interview the elders about the past.

PARENTS HAVE A SAY

Teaching should stop being an authoritarian practice. Students must be able to discuss with their teachers what and why they learn. Teachers should be able to tell the department what they think of the syllabus. Parents must be allowed a say in what their children learn.

This year the education struggle will be led by the SRCs, Parents' Crisis Committees and teacher associations. They will come together in different associations to discuss and plan the implementation of "people's education for people's power".

Lulu Johnson on democratic schooling

"THE IDEA of People's education is crucial in the development of education struggles". Lulu Johnson, a past president of Cosas, said this at the first National Education Consultative conference at Wits in December.

Johnson said the overall system of education which people were striving for could not be achieved under apartheid terror.

The education system which we have, he said, "serves the interests of the rulers and capitalists."

"We must learn to transform the existing structures into what we want them to be with the long term goal of scrapping the entire education system and replacing it with another", he said.

"Making use of the apartheid structures to our favour is a burning question", he said.

Johnson said already some people were talking about the question of people's or alternative education. He said there were ideas from the changing of apartheid colonial education to its complete replacement with a new system.

People can start to control education now

IN THE education struggle we are moving from the stage of the total rejection of apartheid schooling to the stage of planning for a new type of education people's education.

This is what the Commission on People's Education reported at the Easter weekend's education conference.

The commission said the immediate task is for people themselves to take control and responsibility for education. Education for people's power will have to be put into practice everywhere — in schools, colleges, universities and also in the communities, factories and other workplaces. It will always be guided by what is in the interests of the people.

The commission also made suggestions to the NPCC about how people can start organising education differently and democratically. The suggestions were that:

There were other ideas of taking some control of the schools and having some periods spent on people's education. There were ideas of taking complete control of the schools.

A big question is, he said, "what resources have we got, who and how should these resources be distributed, and who shall see that there is democracy when dealing with these questions?"

Johnson said 1986 was the year in which the Education Charter Campaign would start taking place. He said the campaign should take account of "People's Education for People's Power."

Johnson said the government tried to cause divisions between students and parents in the UDF and other organisations. "We will never allow this", he said.

He said through democratic SRCs, the unbanning of Cosas and the start of democratic kinds of education, students would strive forward.

● A peoples education committee (PEC) be set up to promote and co-ordinate developments on the education front.

● Everyone, in all areas, be asked about their grievances and demands in the field of education.

● Experiments in democratic control and different syllabus's begin now.

● One subject, for example history, be taught in a different way from now onwards. This can be done if students boycott history classes and are taught an account of South African history from the point of view of the oppressed people. These classes can take place within or outside of the school buildings.

The commission hopes that the PEC will study the recommendations and come up with a plan to set the movement towards peoples' education in motion.

December demands made real by the people

SINCE the National Consultative Conference on Education held at the University of Witwatersrand in December, the organisations of the people have been hard at work putting the resolutions in practise.

The conference organised by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC) demanded the rebuilding of damaged school buildings; the postponement of exams until March 1986; the release of all students and teachers in detention; the reinstatement of dismissed, suspended or forcibly transferred teachers; the withdrawal of the SADF and SAP from the schools and townships; the unbanning of COSAS; the recognition of democratically elected SRCs and the lifting of the State of Emergency.

● Students demonstrated how well they were organised when up to 94% returned to school on 28 January, the date of return decided by the conference.

● A National Education Crisis Committee has been set up. In the Cape and Natal, as in the Transvaal, issues and problems are being tackled at a local level.

● Parents' crisis committees have been established throughout the country.

● A new national structure for student organisation will soon emerge as moves to co-ordinate activity at a national level continue.

● Teachers, students and civics have visited schools to talk about the education struggle and to explain the resolutions of the December conference.

● The African Teachers Association of South Africa (ATASA) has withdrawn from DET committees and councils.

● School fees have not been paid in almost all areas.

● The DET has promised that next year free text-books, and stationary will be available in some schools. The struggle to win this basic demand in all schools continues.

Learning democracy through student action

When Cosas was formed in 1979, representatives of the Atteridgeville students were present. At the launching conference they learnt that the problems which they were experiencing in their own schools were affecting other students everywhere. Most schools lacked books, classrooms were overcrowded, many teachers were poorly qualified and nearly everywhere the cane was used too often and too harshly.

When they returned from the conference these students and their comrades concentrated on building a strong Cosas branch in their area. Organising committees were set up in all schools and extra-tuition classes were run.

There were always problems because the students leaders were harassed and often detained, and the school authorities and the self-appointed town councillors did not recognise Cosas.

BOYCOTT

When serious issues arose the students learnt to use the boycott as a weapon. They used it to gain publicity and to force the DET to take action to remedy a situation. The students also learnt that a boycott was not effective when they were badly organised.

In 1983 students became angry when a group of student leaders at Flavius Mareka High School were each given 74 lashes with a cane by a teacher. The students knew that so many lashes were illegal as they had a copy of the DET regulations on punishment which said that students could not be given more than four lashes a day.

The local branch of Cosas took up the issue. Students began a boycott of classes over the issue of corporal punishment. The boycott was not well coordinated, but students in growing numbers began to support Cosas.

From the beginning of 1984 there was trouble in Atteridgeville. The results of the DET matric exams had been very poor. Both parents and students were angry.

They blamed apartheid and poorly qualified teachers for the bad results. There were also reports that white high school pupils or university students were marking papers.

Then students at Saulsridge found some unmarked examination papers in a classroom. A boycott was called.

EMMA Sathekge was run over by a police landrover in the grounds of her school in Atteridgeville at the beginning of 1984.

To the students, the death of Emma was a tragedy. But to the police who detained, teargassed and shot the students with rubber bullets — she was just another casualty.

1984 was the fifth year of active student organisation since the revolt of 1976. It was also the fifth year of police attempts to crush the students and to muzzle the protests against inferior education.

This SPEAK report describes the struggles of the students in Atteridgeville, Pretoria. A struggle similar in many ways to those that took place in hundreds of large and small towns throughout South Africa.



After the banning of COSAS students were left angry and frustrated.

When the other schools joined in, the demands mounted up.

The students wanted:

- Free textbooks.
- The scrapping of the age limit.
- Democratic SRCs.

Student action was met by police violence. After Emma Sathekge was killed, the parents, teachers and the United Democratic Front became involved. As in other parts of the country, the government closed down the schools instead of attending to the grievances of the students.

But the students were not deterred. From various centres in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape the boycott spread until it was national. At the same time students, parents and workers launched joint campaigns to have the schools reopened and the demands of the students met.

In August 1985, the government banned Cosas. The students were left angry and frustrated. One student said:

“When you speak of Cosas, you are speaking of the students. How can they ban the students?”

BAN ON COSAS

Still, the ban did not break the back of student organisations as the government had intended. In Atteridgeville, students have formed ASSCO (Atteridgeville-Saulsville Students Congress) which is affiliated to TRASCO. Today the students of Atteridgeville are involved in the campaign to get Cosas unbanned, are building strong SRCs and are starting to discuss questions of a people's education.

The struggles of the last two years have brought parents closer to the students, and the community is being to take up problems as one. Students have consistently supported the protests of the Atteridgeville-Saulsville Residents Organisation (ASRO), and have worked together with Pretoria youth congresses taking up the problems of the youth and unemployed.

The DET wants prefects. But the students demand democratic SRCs...



Students have resolved to intensify and popularise the campaign to unban COSAS.

“We want a say in matters which concern us”

Before Cosas was banned the organisation campaigned for democratic SRCs. Now the new student organisations being formed all over the country are making the same demand. Every student will participate in the election of representatives and have a right to raise his or her viewpoint...

AT HOFMEYER High School in Pretoria, students believed that their lunch break should be extended. But students were afraid to meet the principal as this could lead to victimisation and possible expulsion.

Students asked prefects to negotiate with the principal. However, prefects were equally afraid to meet with the principal.

Hofmeyer High School students realised how toothless the imposed leaders were as they represented the authorities and not the students.

One student said: “It is unfair that the school authorities choose leaders for us. We all know each other, and we know the best people to lead us.”

Every year when classes start students have prefects imposed on them by the principals. Principals tend to choose the tallest and strongest students as

prefects. The reason is so that prefects can bully other students and assist the school staff in maintaining discipline.

The duties of prefects are to report students who are not in school uniforms. Another duty is to keep control in the classrooms when teachers do not feel like teaching, and do not report for duty and spend the day in the staff room.

Prefects hand out books and make sure that students read. Those students who are concerned about their studies, and ask where the teacher is are punished. This has angered many students.

Although many principals and teachers are not satisfied with the prefect system they do not have any option. The DET forces them to appoint prefects, and many principals were taught the prefect system at college.

Students were not consulted when the DET constitution for “pupils representative councils” was drawn up. Parents, who pay heavily for education, were also not consulted.

A student leader from Tembisa said: “We want a say in matters which concern us. People cannot just meet in the DET offices and decide on matters in our absence.”

Democratic Student Representative Councils (SRCs) will act as representatives of their fellow students in all matters connected to education. SRCs will also act as a channel of communication between students and staff, and students and the DET.

Every student of a school will actively participate in the election of representatives and have a right to raise his or her viewpoint.

Organisations grow in spite of police and vigilantes

People all over the Transvaal are taking up the education struggle. In the townships and in rural schools, organisations have been trying to put into practice the resolutions taken at the Wits conference.

In some places there is progress. Within the three month deadline set by the SPCC and other organisations at the conference, people have managed to win concessions from the state.

But in others, the government and its agents the DET and security police made it difficult for communities to address the education crisis. Student leaders, parents and teachers were detained. Meetings were banned. And everyone became more and more angry as the government refused to compromise.

But the government's time has run out. The three month deadline is now over. There will be new resolutions from the Durban conference to put into practice.

SPEAK takes a look at how organisations shaped up to the education crisis and at what was achieved during the three months.

Mamelodi

● Organisation is growing. The Mamelodi Student Congress, Mamelodi Youth Congress and the People's Committee have been formed in this area.

● Mamelodi students refused to write exams last month.

● Parents are refusing to pay school fees.

● Many Mamelodi students are still in detention.

Eldorado Park

● An Eldos Action Committee has been formed.

● The House of Representatives has banned SRCs in all schools in this area.

● SACOS supporters are being victimised.

● Eldorado Park students are demanding the removal of asbestos structures; free and sufficient

textbooks; the removal of soldier-teachers from their schools.

Orkney

● Residents of Orkney are demanding that all detained students be released.

● Parents are also refusing to pay school fees. They have written letters to the churches informing them of this decision.

● Meetings, in this area, to discuss the education crisis have been banned.

Tembisa

● A parents' body was formed in Tembisa in 1984.

● People, here, are refusing to pay school fees.

● Nineteen students and two members of the parents' body were detained by security police.

● People are addressing the problem of tsotsis who are harrasing members of their community.

Bosmont

● About 15 teachers, 20 parents and 15 students have come together to form a Parent Teacher Student Association.

Tzaneen

● Three people were shot while marching to the circuit office.

● 300 students were detained.

● The SAP and the ZCC hijacked the funeral of a ten-year-old child in the area.

Soekmekaar and Northern Transvaal

● Organisation is difficult in this large rural area in Gazankulu, students are not allowed to form SRCs; and during the Emergency over 1000 people from the Northern Transvaal were detained.

Klerksdorp

● Schools have been closed down.

● There is only one SRC in one school.

Atteridgeville

● Atteridgeville students are starting to take control of their own education. After school, the students together with other people hold workshops on the Freedom Charter.

Soshanguve

● Administration authorities at the Teachers College of Education have expelled student activists. They are now refusing to admit new students who have been involved in politics.

Tsakane

- Both students and teachers are boycotting in Tsakane.
- Residents have decided not to pay school fees.
- A Parents Crisis Committee was formed. The committee called a meeting and addressed the students.

Kagiso

- Kagiso parents are refusing to pay school fees. This is in response to the

call made by the SPCC that no fees for 1986 be paid to the DET.

- Students in Kagiso have started forming SRCs in their high schools.

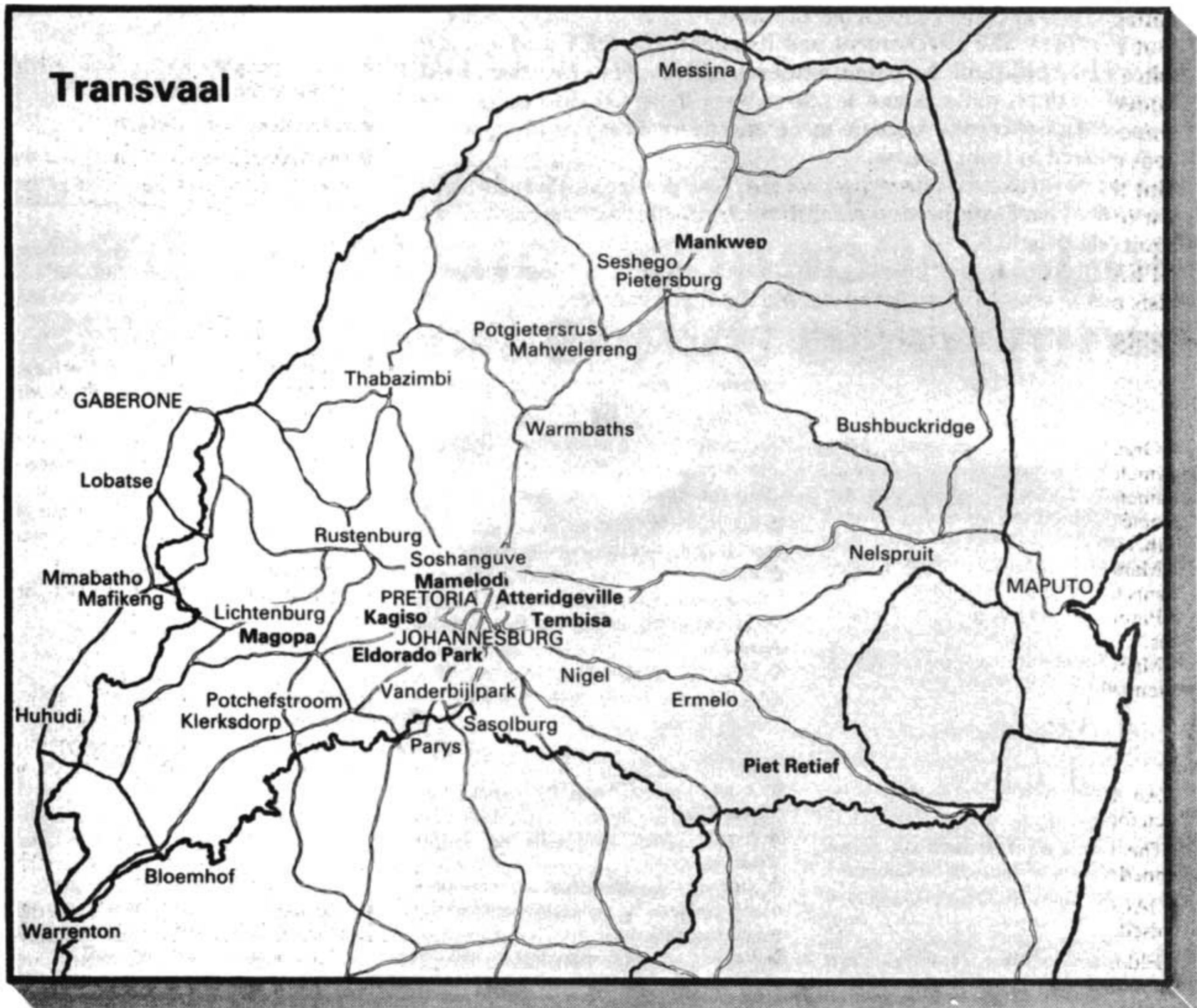
Mabopane and Winterveld

- Members of the Parents Crisis Committee have gone missing in this area. The Bophutswana police are said to be responsible.
- Primary and high schools have been closed.

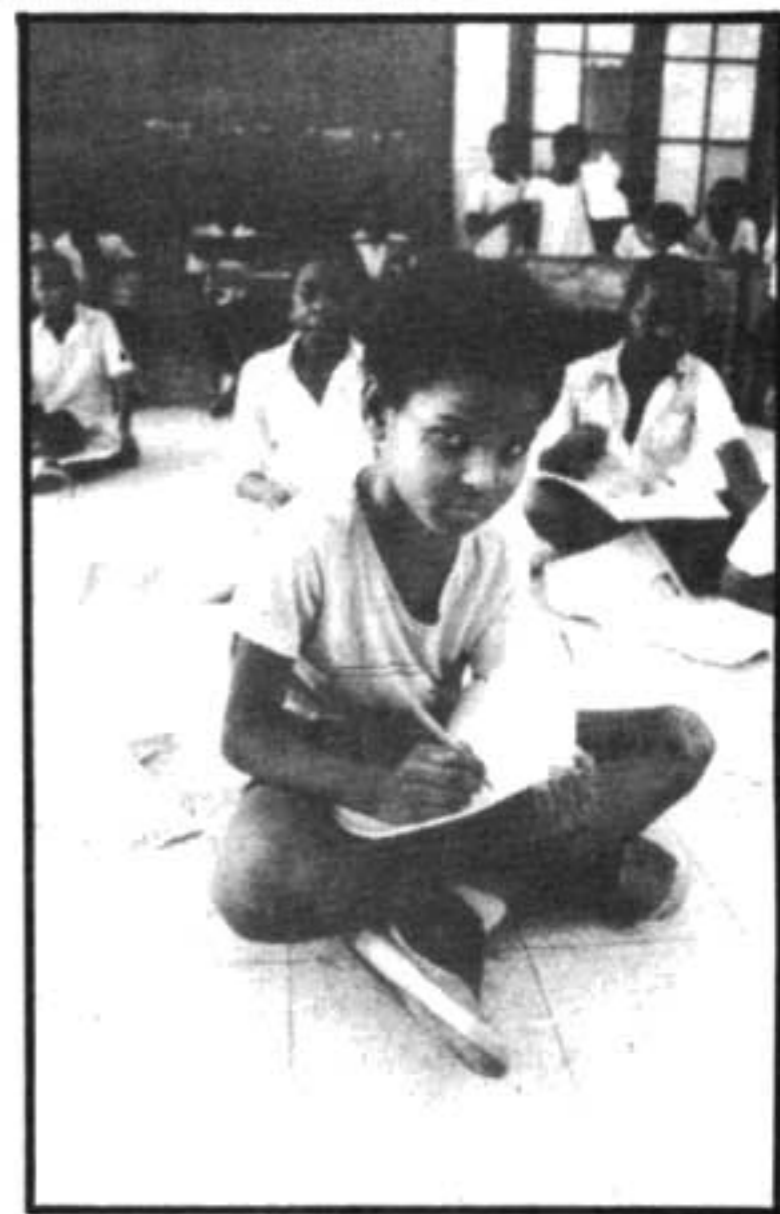
- The Bophutswana government has declared a curfew.

Bethal

- The Youth Congress has taken a responsibility for forming a Parent Crisis Committee.
- The government is doing everything to crush student resistance in this region. The DET has closed the Bethal school and about 200 students from Ermelo, Breyton, and Carolina were detained.



“Alternative education, Peoples’ Education...” These are the slogans that everyone is talking about. But what do they mean and how can we put them into practice? We can learn by looking at examples in other countries that have tried to find new ways of educating their citizens



LESSONS FROM MOZAMBIQUE

Independence brought freedom to do things for ourselves

Every student knows that it is easier to learn by using examples. There is a very good example of “alternative education” just across the border.

In Mozambique, FRELIMO has set up a new kind of school where students are prepared for the new society in which they live.

In South Africa, students teachers and parents are going to have to work out new strategies for future education. In the meantime though there are lessons to be learnt from Mozambique.

BUILDING

Like students in South Africa who have rejected Bantu Education, people in Mozambique rejected the schooling forced on them by the Portuguese colonialists. Mozambique’s leader, Samora Machel, said at a conference on post-colonial education: **“The truth is that we know very well what we do not want: oppression, exploitation, humiliation. But as to what we want and how we get it, our ideas are necessarily still vague. They are born of practice. corrected by practice.”**

Even before FRELIMO had won freedom for the country, schools were set up in the liberated provinces to test out new theories of education.

Today, in Mozambique, education is seen as a tool for building a new order and developing a new culture. Students are prepared for future jobs that will help the country overcome the problems of colonialism.

A NEW CULTURE

For a start, students learn about democracy. They are taught to work together to solve problems in a democratic way. Each school has an SRC which meets often to discuss how the school is run.

Lesson two is history. Mozambican students are taught about their own country and the rest of Africa, and about the struggle to win freedom from the colonialists. Students no longer have to learn Portuguese history and Portuguese geography.

Lesson three is practice and all students know that **“Practice changes things”** a popular FRELIMO education slogan. Students learn things which are useful in changing their own society.

They learn to reject the colonial way of seeing themselves. Part of the colonial system was to teach people that they themselves were powerless that the “authorities” made decisions for them. One of the lessons students learn in the new schools is that freedom means the

power of people to do things for themselves.

With this new confidence students have taken the skills that they have learnt in class to the community. This is lesson four learning that school cannot be isolated from the community around it.

Students are encouraged to participate in community projects. They help out at literacy centres teaching older people. In colonial times 98 percent of the people never learnt to read and write.

A LUTA CONTINUA

Lesson five is learning that the struggle is still continuing **“a luta continua”**. Mozambique is still a developing country. It still faces many problems bandits, poverty, illiteracy and disease. Disciplined students understand that when they leave school, they will have to help sort out these problems.

But Mozambican students have much to be grateful for. They understand the long, hard battle FRELIMO fought to establish a new education.

As Samora Machel says: **“Our schools, our syllabi, our independence ... are the fruits of sacrifice, of the struggle of generations of our ancestors, of our parents and our grandparents. They are the fruits of the revolution.”**

LESSONS FROM TANZANIA

Educating for liberation — exiled students at school

For most Soweto students, school has never been easy.

When students have chosen to attend, they have had to put up with inferior education. And when they have chosen to boycott they have had to endure harassment, detention and even death.

So for most students it might be difficult to imagine an exciting and progressive school system. Many South African students would find it hard to imagine a classroom decorated with posters of Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela.

They would find it equally hard to imagine a school syllabus with political studies high on the agenda, or a school with a science laboratory, a library and hundreds of books.

If this is the distant dream of students in the occupied townships, it is the reality on an old sisal farm in Mazimba, Tanzania.

At the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, a new kind of education is being formed. The college was established by the ANC to cater for the South African exiled student community.

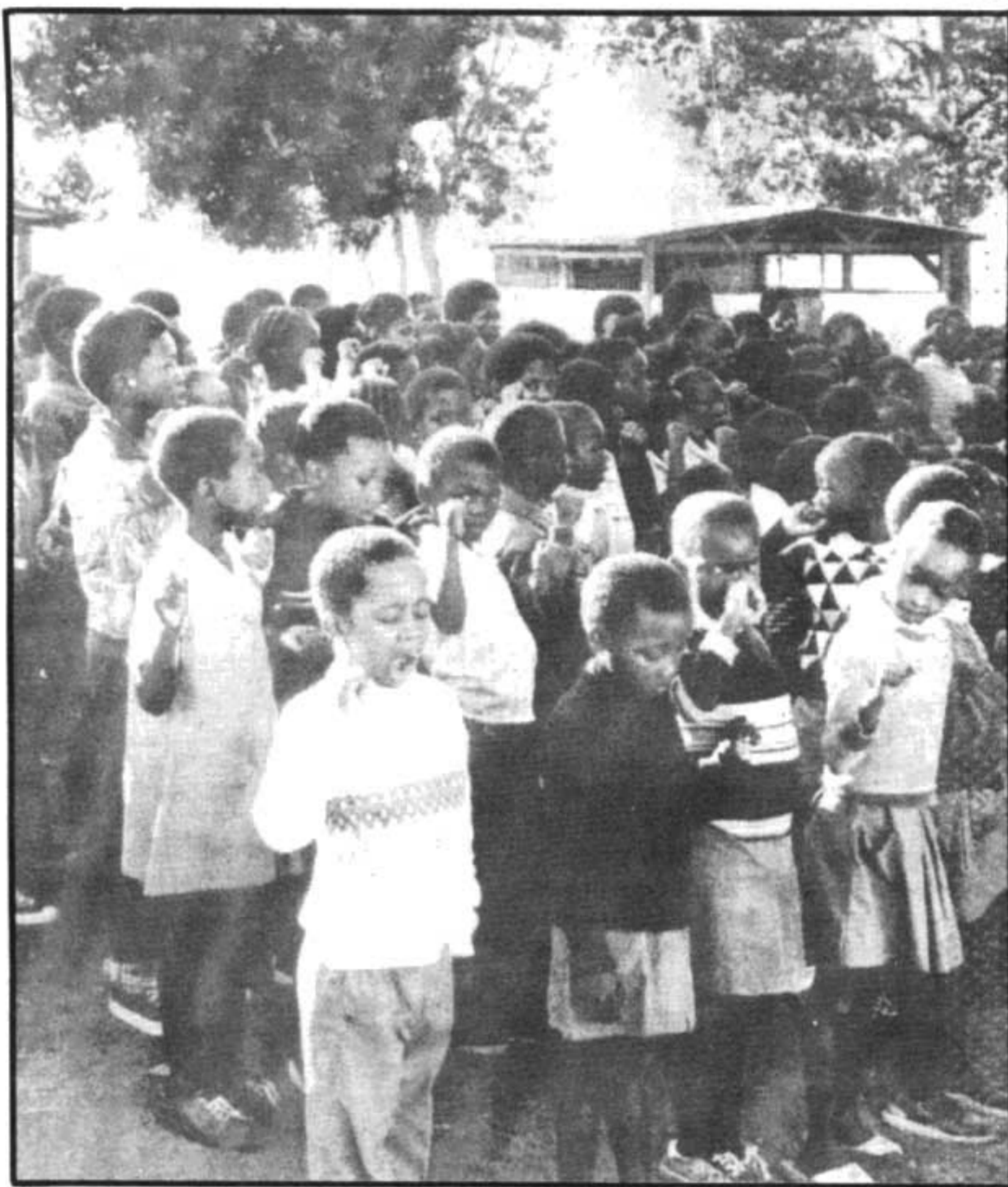
DISCUSSION

Students learn history, English, geography, the development of societies and music. There is special emphasis on mathematics and science, because according to a teacher these are weak areas for South African students. But they also spend two days each week on political discussion.

"Of course we teach politics. Politics is the science of living", says Mr Tim Maseko, the headmaster of the school. "But I would not say that we take any particular line we let the students decide."

Student decision-making and participation is important at the college. Every evening senior students help prepare a "news bulletin" based on radio news programmes from all over the world. At 9 pm each night this news bulletin is broadcast and forms the basis for political discussions.

Teachers are also expected to participate. They involve themselves in stu-



Assembly under the trees. Primary school pupils at Solomon Mahlangu College gather together to sing the National Anthem...

dent projects and join in work around the school with the pupils.

At the moment there are over three hundred high school students studying forms one to five.

PRODUCTION

There are also 200 children at primary school. Many are the children of ANC exiles. In the primary school, teachers emphasise "education with production".

The students do woodwork, cooking

and participate in a gardening project. They learn that education must be useful.

There is also a day care centre to look after children between three and six, so that ANC mothers are free to carry on their work.

Everything and everybody is cared for and the atmosphere is right for learning. For students, teachers and parents, trying to create a new kind of education in South Africa, the Solomon Mahlangu College is a good example of how dreams can be turned into reality.



“Trust the children” – congress clubs

The Congress schools and cultural clubs of the 1950s were the first attempts at a programme of alternative education to Bantu Education. Children were taught through methods of songs and stories subjects such as mathematics and history. And the Freedom Charter, with its clause “The doors of learning and culture shall be opened” was the basis.

THE Minister of Native Affairs, H F Verwoerd, designed Bantu Education with the intention of turning the African majority into perpetual slaves in their country.

Verwoerd said “there is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour” He saw the majority of the people as being nothing more than hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The Bantu Education Act, passed in 1953, gave the Native Affairs Department total control over the schools. All schools were to be registered, and all teachers were to be trained by the government. Its aim was to promote the National Party ideology of racism and tribalism.

RESISTANCE PLANS

The Act made the running of any unregistered African schools, including night schools, or the conducting of any unregistered class for Africans, a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment. The Act was also aimed at the eventual elimination of the mission schools.

Almost immediately over 200 African teachers met at Queenstown to discuss ways of resisting Bantu Education.

The decision to oppose Bantu Education was taken shortly after the passing of the Act, when the ANC announced the launching of a ‘Resist Apartheid Campaign’ in May 1955.

The ANC called for free, non-racial and democratic education. Today thousands of students are still calling for this. Thirty years later the government has not met this demand.

Concrete plans for resistance emerged at the ANC’s annual conference held in Durban in December 1953. The national executive of the ANC established a national council which made provision for a network of alternative classes providing informal education.

It was also decided that organisation for a boycott, timed to begin in April, the date for the administrative transfer of the schools, should be placed in the hands of the womens’ and youth clubs.

On Tuesday 12 April 1955 students stayed away from school in Benoni, Germiston, Brakpan and Alexandra after the ANC Youth League, volunteers and mothers visited the schools. All students stayed at home in Germiston until the Congress branch announced that they had opened independent schools.

The boycott spread to Soweto, the

Western Native townships and other areas on the Rand. On 16 April it was reported that on the East Rand 5,500 children were “out”. On 21 April over 10,000 children were not attending school.

The ANC said that 1 700 students were staying away in Port Elizabeth alone. The boycott involved 2 500 students from Uitenhage, New Brighton, Korsten and Walmer location.

Verwoerd then declared a “lock-out” and announced that all children who did not return soon would be struck off the rolls.

CULTURAL CLUBS

The Congress branches introduced the independent schools and started inviting students. Students attended in great numbers.

The African Education Movement (AEM) worked closely with the ANC. The aims of the AEM were to establish private schools, to assist the cultural clubs and to set up a home education programme.

But the attempts at alternative education were frustrated by police action. The government did not recognise the schools and called them unlawful.

The organisers attempted to avoid the law by calling the schools “cultural clubs”. The police raided the cultural clubs.

If the children were discovered reading or writing, or if the blackboards or chalk were found, the teachers were arrested and charged with breaking the law.

Children were taught through progressive education: “Trust the children — let them take responsibility for themselves.”

Decades of resistance

RESISTANCE to the schooling system in South Africa has a long history. June 1976, the 1980 school boycotts and what has happened since 1984 are part of in a long line of protests, boycotts and opposition to unequal education.

Long before the National Party came into power in 1948 there was a system of racially-divided and unequal education in South Africa. Education for whites was free and compulsory, while education for Africans was ignored.

In 1912, the first president of the ANC, the Rev John Dube, said the government did not give the African people their full rights. He said the government gave a "mere pittance" for the education of the majority of the people.

CONTROL

In 1944, in its document "African Claims" the ANC called for control of schools to fall "more and more largely into the hands of Africans themselves." A minimum demand made by the ANC was free compulsory primary education. It also said there should be an increase in secondary and university education.

"African Claims" reflected old ideals, but it was firmly supported by the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). The ANCYL was formed on Easter Monday, 1944, by a group of young men who were to go down in history. The executive included Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Ashby Mda.

They drew up a "programme of action" which was adopted that year at the ANC annual congress.

The coming to power of the National Party in 1948 brought great changes in education

The National Party saw education as an important part of its plan for South Africa.

The growth of factories during the 1950s meant that there was a demand for workers who were skilled and semi-skilled. The government and business needed workers who could read and write a little, understand commands, and be able to do simple mathematics. The government decided that Africans would have to be taught to do these simple things, but would not be taught anything more.

The government also wanted educa-



tion firmly under its control so that it could stop the rise of African nationalism and unity.

The strategy of the government, supported by business, was to cause division. It wanted to try and breakdown nationalism by pushing people into different language groups and cultures. Its strategy was to try and "re-tribalise" people.

The government attempted to stop the calls for political rights by creating homelands. What Bantu Education was intended to do was to prepare people in their heads for second-rate homeland citizenship.

MASS PROTESTS

In June 1976 hundreds of thousands of Soweto students took to the streets to protest against Afrikaans and the whole Bantu Education system. But students soon learnt that the education struggle could not be fought in isolation. In 1976 and 1977 students tried to broaden their struggle to include the community — workers and parents — as well.

Some of the demands of the students were not only about education. At the beginning of August 1976 the students called on workers to stay away from work.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Soweto residents supported four stay-aways from August to November.

In April 1980 the schools in Cape Town were the first to start boycotting. In some places "coloured", Indian and DET schools were closed down. The

boycott was supported by 140 000 students in the Cape, the Transvaal and also Natal.

Students who had learnt from the experiences of 1976 saw the need to link their demands with the whole apartheid system.

There is a long history of community involvement in education struggles. In 1944 mothers stood outside a school in Brakpan and told children to return home after the education department had fired a teacher active in politics.

In 1952 a parents organised a boycott of Orlando High School to protest against the firing of three teachers who had spoken out against inferior education. The parents started a "people's school" for their boycotting children.

ALTERNATIVE

But there were many attempts to educate people outside the school system. In 1925 the Communist Party in Johannesburg set up night schools. Pupils learnt about politics as they learnt to read and write.

In 1939 a group of university students founded the African College in Johannesburg. Students flocked to the college and many had to sit and work on the floor.

The ANC began a shack school in Newclare to teach children who had been refused admission to overcrowded schools.

The ANC said education was the birthright of every individual.

The ANC also said that the conditions of service for African teachers should be improved.

PEOPLES'
POWER
FOR
PEOPLES'
EDUCATION

SPEAK

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY



SPECIAL REPORT ON THE EDUCATION CRISIS

Delegates make people's demands...

THEY came in fast and slow cars, in buses and by foot. Delegates to the National Education Crisis conference knew that they might face hostile attacks or arrest.

But still they came. In the end there were nearly 2000 people at the Rajput Hall in Chatsworth, near Durban. Of these 1 200 were delegates. They had come from all corners of South Africa — places people had never heard of before.

But their struggles were similar.

Experiences of inferior education, police and army repression, high rents and low wages brought people together.

Young militant students stood side by side with conservative teachers in the food queues for tasty meat and rice. Smartly dressed youth congress members spoke to old women who had never travelled so far before — even for funerals.

But the delegates, who constituted all sections of the people, shared courage

and the desire to solve the education crisis.

Everywhere, inside the Rajput hall, and on mattresses outside people were talking. The many marshalls, scattered all over Chatsworth were talking. They were discussing people's education and the way forward to people's power.

Many languages were heard. English, Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu and Afrikaans voices were heard making friends, raising points, arguing tactics and singing together in harmony.