



# SPEAK

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY



## INSIDE SPECIAL FOCUS ON 1983

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# Thousands to sign for democratic South Africa

THE United Democratic Front (UDF) is to embark on a Million Signature Campaign beginning on 22 January.

Thousands of people throughout the country are expected to sign a declaration, rejecting the Government's new constitution and Koornhof laws, and calling for a non-racial democratic South Africa.

The campaign was decided on at the UDF Conference in Port Elizabeth in December.

Delegates to the conference said the campaign would show yet again that the majority of South Africans rejected the Government's moves.

'The Government is forcing its plans on us against our will,' a member of a UDF affiliate said.

'The Rajbansi's, Hendrikse's and Tshabalala's do not speak for us. We are totally opposed to plans which will maintain apartheid and entrench white domination.'

The Million Signature Campaign is to run over a few months and will involve prominent individuals and hundreds of organisations.

UDF officials called on all peace loving South Africans and democratic organisations to actively support the campaign.

'Our opposition to the Government's initiatives assumes increasing importance each day,' Popo Molefe the UDF national secretary said.

'The times demand we take an active political stand. All of us, worker, student, housewife, religious person and sportsperson.'

Commenting on the Labour Party decision to ask the Government for an election to the tricameral Parliament, he said it was 'a desperate attempt to guarantee its treacherous decision at Eshowe.'

'They made their decision a long time ago, without consulting the people and against the wishes of our people.'

'Their opportunistic claim to leadership is further exposed,' he said.



FOR thousands around the country the future is uncertain. Magopa, Leandra, Ennerdale, Huhudi, Alexandra, Katlehong, Crossroads, Badplaas, Driefontein and Soweto are just some areas where people face shack demolitions and forced removals. Piet Koornhof's directive to the Soweto Town Council that no shacks be demolished until after the festive period was at best . . . sick. Rather than saving him from world wide condemnation, Koornhof's total disregard for people to have a right to a roof over their heads was confirmed.

## Councillors' must resign!

LOW polls throughout the country have proved that the new local authorities are as unpopular as the old community councils.

People are saying no to puppet, undemocratic bodies and Koornhof's so called new deal, a UDF press release said.

The UDF together with many of its affiliates such as the Soweto Civic Association, the Kagiso Residents Organisation and Anti-Community Council committees, waged a campaign urging people not to vote.

'The Government of

South Africa must realise that only democratic demands as enshrined in the UDF declaration can satisfy our people,' UDF called.

At a mass rally held at Regina Mundi, Zwelakhe Sisulu, Mwasa president said that those who vote for the new councils would be registering a no vote for Nelson Mandela, ANC leader serving life imprisonment.

No more than six percent of voters went to the polls in the Transvaal, and except for Soweto, the polls were lower than those in the 1979 com-

munity council elections the UDF said.

They say official percentages are distorted since many people who are eligible to vote were not on voting rolls.

In Kagiso, UDF points out, the official poll is 36 percent — one of the highest — yet only 1016 people voted, representing 3 percent of the population.

In some places as many as half the population were excluded from the voting rolls.

In Thokoza council candidates were so upset after learning that about

5 000 eligible voters were not on the role, they staged a walkout of the election.

Yet their protest was short lived as opportunism overtook their anger. They decided not to resign from the council when Erab told them there was no likelihood of the elections being held again.

Already mayors have been elected for the new councils.

When Mr Ephraim Tshabalala — who defeated Mr David Thebehali in Soweto — was inaugurated, he was

donated R5 000 by the chairman of Wrab, Mr John Knoetze, to use at his own discretion.

Mr Knoetze congratulated Mr Tshabala on his election as the true representative of the people and wished him success — 'we know you have the brains,' he said.

But for organisations, who reject these new bodies, the battle has only just begun.

Already, the Mothlakeng Civic Association has called on local councillors to resign in the wake of the low 10,4 percent poll in

the area.

Opposition to the new bodies will only increase as they realise how difficult it is to administer townships without government funds.

While some new councillors are making promises to set up businesses and industries in attempts to raise money, the people fear the money will come from increased rents and service charges.

No wonder the UDF calls: 'We see our hope and future in our own democratic organisations based on the will of the people'.

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# Alex families fight removals

What is the Alexandra Liaison Committee (ALC) trying to do, the people of Alexandra ask. They have become disillusioned with Rev. M Buti and his liaison committee's promises of houses.

Residents say their promises have only brought more hardships to the Alexandra people because their houses are now being demolished to make way for the building of new houses and so-called "redevelopment". The most recent people to add their voices of protest against the ALC are 5 families, whose old houses are being knocked down. They are being forced to stay either in old buses or in a disused B hospital.

And the families do not see themselves being able to return to the new houses once they are completed because it will be too expensive for most residents, as much as 35 000.

At the TB hospital conditions are bad. Six families share parts of a hall without partitions. The families have no privacy. There is also a lack of proper sanitary

facilities.

The families were promised by the ALC and the West Rand Administration Board (Wrab) that they would only have to live at the "TB resettlement camp" — as it has become to be called, — for three months. However three months have passed and they are still there.

Other families have refused to move there. Matters came to a head in September when 23 families, together with members of the Alexandra Youth Congress (Ayco), marched to Buti's house and staged a placard demonstration. "Hands of our property", "No to indecent resettlement" and "Buti, West Rand stop humiliating the people", read some of the placards.

Residents said they did not want to move because:

- The Juskei river is unsafe for children, especially after the heavy rains.
- The place is in a remote and isolated area, where they would feel unsafe especially at night.

The area is far from schools, transport and shops.

Residents held daily meetings to decide on action. Buti was called to one of the meetings where he eventually agreed not to allow the families to go to the TB hospital.

But their homes would continue to be demolished and they would be housed in corrugated iron shacks.

"Buti and his men had no alternative but to give in," a member of Ayco said. "The people won their mini-struggle because they fought in unity against their enemy."

"This is a sign to show Buti and the Government that people have stomached enough injustices and are no longer going to allow further injustices without showing a sign of resistance", he said.

Tension is still mounting in Alexandra over the actions of the ALC and Wrab.

Some residents who owned their homes and stands say they have not been adequately compensated. They refuse to



Old homes in Alexandra are demolished to make way for "redevelopment". Yet many residents say they will not be able to afford the new houses.

move until fully compensated and threaten to take Wrab to court.

There have been many heated exchanges between residents and the authorities as they moved in with their bulldozers

and trucks.

On one occasion a Wrab officer had a brick thrown at him.

"Buti's threatening stance and entire lack of sympathy is staggering," residents say.

Meanwhile families living in the old buses have begun attaching permanent structures to them.

They were initially told the buses were temporary, but many do not

believe they will be given alternative accommodation.

They say the new houses that are being built are no real alternative because they cost too much.

## Reiger Park demands resignation of CMC

MORE than 400 angry Reiger Park residents said no to the Coloured Management Committee, so to unjustified rent increases, no to the high electricity and water accounts, no to the deliberate housing shortage and no to untidy jumping lots at a public meeting recently.

The meeting, convened by the Tenants and Ratepayers Association of Reiger Park unanimously passed a vote of no confidence in the Coloured Management Committee and called for it to resign immediately or for the Boksburg Town Council to take steps to have it dissolved.

This is the fifth action

committee or residents association to reject the Coloured Management Committee system within a short period.

The Coloured Management Committee in Reiger Park is chaired by the Transvaal leader of the Labour Party and president of the Coloured and Indian Management Association, Mr Jac Rabie.

Mrs Ellen Lambert, executive member of the Tenants and Ratepayers Association and of the Transvaal Anti-PC Committee, chaired the meeting. She condemned the sudden rent increases.

"How are pensioners going to pay R40-36 for rent when they only

receive a R91 pension," she asked.

"If we want to build a future which our children and grandchildren could be proud of, then we must unite and form ourselves into a formidable force to be reckoned with", said another speaker, Mrs Vera du Plessis.

Criticising the high water and electricity accounts, she commented that "we must fight for what we believe to be our birthright". "Let us unite and raise our voices in unison," she called.

The meeting called on the Boksburg Town Council to make more stands available at Delmore. Presently houses are being built there by the United Building Society.



"We can't afford the rent increase", Mrs Ellen Lambert.

"Most people will never be able to raise R11 500 deposit and still pay R577 for installments at Delmore" said Mr R J Triegaardt, treasurer of the Tenants and Ratepayers Association.

Residents want to be able to buy and build their own houses at prices they can afford.

People at the meeting also complained that the Boksburg Town Council was not keeping the township clean, even though their service charges are frequently increased.

## FRA: Reprieve is not enough

OVER 750 Lenasia residents were recently granted a reprieve by the Peri-Urban Board (PUB) after being threatened with electricity cut-offs if they failed to pay outstanding accounts.

In a letter to residents the board said it was owed R30 000.

This development follows an ongoing struggle by residents under the Federation of Residents Association (FRA) against PUB control of their areas and its high rates.

When the PUB took control of four Lenasia extensions from the Johannesburg City

Council, the FRA warned of greater hardship for residents.

The residents in debt are all working class and cannot afford such high rates. Many have received accounts for over R200.

"How can we pay this when we're also faced with high rents, high transport and food costs, and low wages," one resident asked.

The FRA believes a reprieve is not enough.

A longer term solution is needed, they say. The four extensions must be administered together with the rest of Lenasia under a single authority.

## Unity at lab strike

MANAGEMENT at Van Drimmelen and Associates Pathologist Laboratory has reinstated all the workers who recently went on strike there over poor wages and bad working conditions.

The unity and persistence of the workers forced management to re-employ them.

60 workers went on strike after management fired 3 worker representatives who raised workers grievances.

The workers consulted the General and Allied Workers Union (Gawu) and demanded:

- the unconditional reinstatement of their fired representatives
- recognition of their representatives and the establishment of structures for negotiation
- a wage increment of R2 an hour across the board
- the dismissal of a Black supervisor who abused workers
- an end to forced overtime
- an end to the practice of paying for damaged company property and traffic fines by deducting from workers' pay
- the company provide burial loans

Management refused to recognise the workers grievances and negotiate their demands. Instead they considered the striking workers dismissed.

However all the workers, except one, were re-employed when they collected their benefits.

Management refused to give Joubert Mazibuko his job back because they

considered him an agitator.

But he too was finally re-instated when the union sought legal advice.

Although the workers' grievances have not been solved, they feel stronger after their united action.

"The unity that has been achieved through

our action is the hope for the future.

"The unity that has been achieved through our action is the hope for the future," one worker said.

"Meetings are being planned and when the next battle comes we will find ourselves stronger and better prepared."

## Hoe lank gaan ons suffer?

PENSIONERS were recently told they could draw disability grants only if they proved they were still disabled.

This they found out only when arriving at the Post Office to collect their pensions. Many were left without money for rent, food or electricity.

"Why didn't they tell us these things when they gave us our money the month before," one woman asked. "Now we have to borrow money to live."

Another 58 year old pensioner was told she was fit enough to look for work.

"Where is this poor old woman going to find work in the middle of a recession," a community leader asked.

This latest move by the government has left the community very angry.

One member of the Westbury Residents Action Committee (Wrac) told SPEAK just how he feels:

Die lanie praat van real changes.

Ek weet nie wat bedoel die lanie van changes nie.

Hulle vat ons laaste pensioen of dan vertel hulle ons: "Hoor hier, julle moet bewys dat julle disabled is." Hulle het nie eens vir ons kom sê: "Hoor hier mense, next month gaan julle nie pensioen kry nie."

Dan kom Hendrikse en Rabie nog om te sê: "Moenie worry nie my mense, oom Hendrikse sal vir julle praat."

Soos Rabie dreeds gesê het: "Eerwaarde Hendrikse is ou bra Moses wat ons die lig sal wys."

Dit lyk of our bra Moses vir P.W. Botha langs die pad gemeet en sommer besluit om 'n ander pad te vat.

"Moses, Moses," kom die stem van die pensioners, "Waar is ons geld? Waar gaan ons kos kry? Waar gaan ons die rentgeld kry? Moses waar is die lig? Die rent en die ligte en water is so hoog dat ons nie die lig sien nie. En nog praat julle van die promised land — Klipspruit West."

So mense, die changes lê nie by ons Moses nie. Dit is by ons. Unite and fight for pensioners rights!

## TOOLTECH

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THE Federation of Residents Association (FRA), recognised by the people of Lenasia as its true representative, has slammed the Lenasia Management Committee (LMC) for accepting new powers from the Johannesburg City Council.

"These powers are the first step towards autonomy and in line with the Government's proposals at local level. It is not in the interests of the community," the FRA said.

Powers delegated to the LMC include:

- Development of public halls, sports and recreation facilities, housing schemes, streets and pavements.
  - Leasing of council owned halls, shops and stalls.
  - Allocation of bursaries and grants
  - The naming of civic amenities.
- The LMC accepted these powers through a

# Autonomy will not benefit Lenz

single casting vote by its chairman, Mr Dennis Pillay. The six LMC members were equally split on whether or not to accept the powers.

An FRA statement said the LMC did not represent the people of Lenasia and had no right to take such a decision for the community.

"The LMC is a nominated body with no mandate from the people of Lenasia to make deci-

sions on issues which directly affect them," it said.

"Why has the LMC not called a public meeting to hear what the people feel.

FRA believes the delegation of powers is a move towards autonomy for Lenasia. Autonomy, it says, is not in the community's interests. FRA's reasons for rejecting autonomy include:

- Autonomy is the separation of the Lenasia Group Area from Johannesburg on racial lines which FRA rejects on principle
- There has been no direct and genuine consultation with the people themselves.
- Autonomy means Lenasia must finance itself. This can only further impoverish the community.
- Lenasia severely lacks

basic facilities and amenities because it is a Group Areas Act creation. Residents cannot be made to shoulder the burdens of Apartheid policy.

- Economically, the people of Lenasia are inextricably linked with the city of Johannesburg. The majority of people are economically active in Johannesburg and most spend their

money there. They have contributed to the development of the city and have a right to benefit equally.

- Lenasia is certain to grow even more. It will not be able to meet the financial and other demands of developing these areas.

FRA demands direct and equal representation on a single local authority for the whole of Johannesburg which is part of the central government.



Sam Buti Chair Alex town council

## Alex not happy with Buti's ALC

TENSION around the role of Rev. Sam Buti, chairperson of the Alexandra Liaison Committee (ALC) is mounting in Alexandra.

It reached a highpoint recently when an Ad-Hoc Committee was prevented from holding a meeting in protest of the Black Local Authorities Act. The meeting intended to set up a steering committee for a civic association.

The meeting was scheduled to take place at the Methodist Church in the township.

Ten minutes after the meeting began the Rev. Moleleki, Minister of the church said the church council had been told not to allow the meeting to go ahead.

Rev. Moleleki said that if the meeting proceeded, he would be stripped of his post, and the church bulldozed. The entire Alex congregation was apparently also threatened with eviction.

Member of the meeting decided to go to the nearby Kings Theatre where coloured residents, threatened with the demolition of a primary school were meeting to discuss the issue.

Buti was due to address the meeting, but members of the Ad-Hoc Committee persuaded the community not to allow him to do so.

These actions follow a recent government announcement that the Alexandra Liaison Committee has been appointed unopposed as a Town Council in terms of the Black Local Authorities Act.

"Buti says the people are behind him, that is why he was elected unopposed," a member of the

Ad-Hoc committee said, "but if that's the case why does he need to ban opposition meetings".

He accused the ALC of trying to prevent democratic organisations from existing in the township. The Ad-Hoc Committee is calling on the ALC to compensate it for the money it spent on organising the meeting.

Buti is constantly condemned for his false promises.

"Firstly he rejects the community councils because he says they were designed by apartheid laws and would not benefit our people," a resident said. "However he is pleased with new councils set up by the Black Local Authorities Act".

"But these are not very different from the community councils. Koornhof will still be the person at the top to approve anything. Influx control is still in his hands and shack demolitions, forced removals and the housing shortage will still continue," he said.

Another action of the Alexandra Liaison Committee which angered residents was the 70th Anniversary celebrations.

"How can we celebrate while people in Alexandra are living in buses, when people in 6th and 7th avenue have been forced to move out of their houses and while the rest of the oppressed people are demonstrating their opposition to the new constitution", a member of the Alexandra Youth Congress asked.

He was referring to the UDF Peoples Weekend which co-incided with the 70th Anniversary celebrations.

# NO to PW's plans



Thousands at UDF People's Rally in Lenasia

"WE will put a stop to the constitutional proposals and Koornhof Bills — we have the power, the energy and the dedication."

This was the message that rung loud and clear during the "People's Weekend" called by the United Democratic Front.

Affiliate organisations countrywide participated in the People's Weekend through mass meetings, vigils, concerts, motorcades, demonstrations, and fetes.

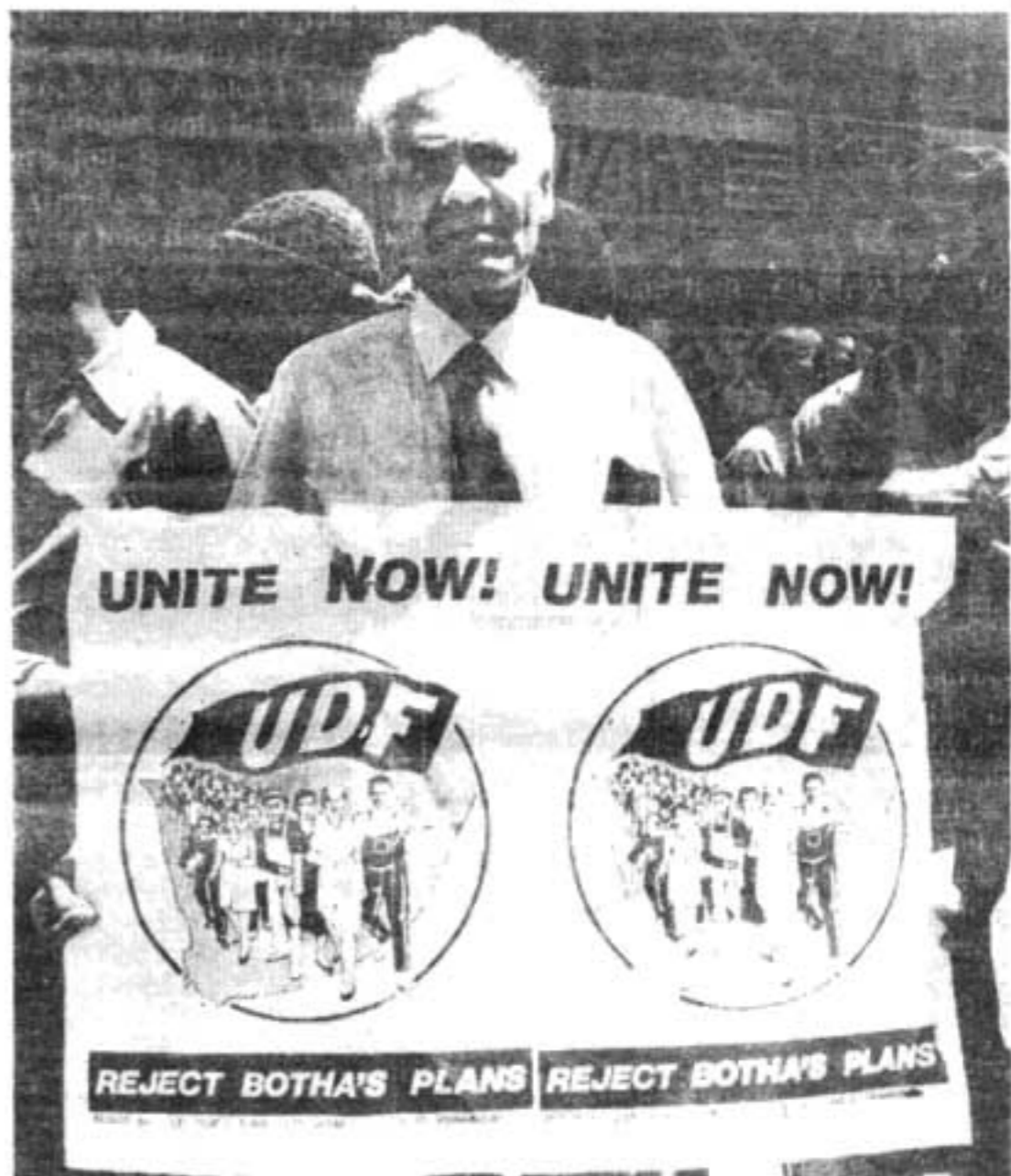
Placard demonstrations were held in Lenasia Soweto and central Johannesburg. Among the demonstration, prominent people like Helen Joseph, Mani Bhen Sita,

Aubrey Mokena, Ismail Mohammed.

At the People's Rally in Lenasia, 5 000 people filled two halls. Speakers rotated between the two venues and called on people to strengthen their organisations and help build the UDF to fight Botha's plans.

In a show of support for the People's Weekend 200 cricketers in Lenasia played with yellow arm-bands and stopped play for 15 minutes.

The People's Weekend climaxed the UDF Programme of Action to popularise and explain the UDF to many more people. Meetings and workshops were held in many communities around the Transvaal.



Prof Ismail Mohamed, Transvaal Anti-PC chairperson demonstrating in central Johannesburg during the People's Weekend

MARY Moodley, remains an inspiration to those involved in the struggle, said Mr George du Plessis UDF Vice President and executive member of the Transvaal Anit-PC — at the unveiling ceremony of her tombstone.

"Aunty Mary" as Mrs Moodley was affectionately known, was a former official of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) and the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw).

The ceremony, attended by about 500 people was held in Wattville near

Actonville where she lived.

Mrs Moodley was banned for 16 years and spent several months in detention in 1960. Her son and two daughters were forced to flee the country. Her son Bernard became a freedom fighter and was later killed on the Zimbabwean border.

"Aunty Mary's greatest achievement was bringing together and voicing the aspirations of ordinary people", said Mr du Plessis.

## Aunt Mary inspires

"Through our organisations like the Anti-PC Committee and the UDF, we, like Aunty Mary, are busy building a nation and way of life where colour, race, religion and tribe do not matter," he concluded.

Other speakers at the unveiling ceremony were Mrs Helen Joseph, veteran campaigner in the 1950's and close friend of Mrs Moodley and Mr Firoz Cachalia of the Transvaal Indian Congress.



## Health campaign finds poverty diseases

MORE than three hundred children from Western Township have been screened for health problems in a health screening campaign organised by the Westbury Residents Action Committee (Wrac). Many children were found to be suffering from diseases of poverty like malnutrition and infectious diseases.

Before the actual screening over two weekends in November, a lot of planning was done.

The campaign was explained to residents through housevisits and housemeetings. Posters and pamphlets advertising the screening were distributed. More than forty volunteers from the

area were recruited.

Organisations like the Health Workers Association (HWA), the National Medical and Dental Association, and Health Information Centre helped in the campaign.

Commenting on the high incidence of certain diseases, a Wrac spokesperson said:

"Ill-health is not caused just by germs and accidents. High rents and high electricity bills cause ill-health because it leaves people with very little money to buy food, low wages mean our children must brave the cold with very few cloths. Poor housing and overcrowding cause ill-health because they increase the

spread of diseases. Slums like Western cause ill-health because of the gangsterism and violence they generate."

"In fact when you consider that South Africa is a very rich country yet children die of malnutrition daily, you realise that our society is sick."

"We know that we will not be able to solve all our health problems in this screening campaign."

THE Johannesburg City Council is to proceed with the building of new houses in Western Township.

This move comes despite proposals by the Coloured Management Committee (CMC) that the building of new homes be stopped.

Residents should be sold their old homes to "improve at their own expense," the CMC said. It tried to prove the majority of residents wanted this through surveys and petitions.

But the majority of residents wanted new homes. They could not afford to buy their old slums and build them into decent homes.

The Westbury Residents Action Committee (Wrac), which has the support of most residents, said the puppet CMC was working against the interests of the majority of people.

Through its own survey, petitions and meetings, Wrac put for-

## Management Committee ignored Wrac forces city council to meet housing demands

ward demands for both those who wanted new homes and the few who could buy and build their own homes.

"This is because Wrac is a people's organisation which includes all the residents in Western/Westbury," a member of the steering committee said.

"A call had to be made for the council to continue building new homes, but to set aside a part of the township for those who want to buy and build."

"In this way Wrac as a people's organisation would satisfy all the people, but without compromising the demands of the majority of working people in our

township."

He said in a way Wrac was glad the CMC had behaved in such an obstructive manner.

"Our residents could see for themselves that the CMC does not work for the community, but for the City Council," he said.

"We will not easily forget how supporters of the Labour Party and the CMC threatened us to sign a petition saying we must buy these slum houses and rebuild them with our own money."

He said residents could now get back to "the real fight" which is against the City Council.

"Since our fight around this issue started in 1981, we have forced

the council to say that they will build proper homes for us."

"They say they will now build homes with ceilings, hot water, plastered walls and where the toilet is not in the kitchen."

Our task now is to ensure they do what they say. Also we have to fight for rents we can afford."

Wrac said it learned two important lessons from the fight for decent homes.

"Firstly we have learned that we must not forget the class divisions in our society."

"In 1981 the whole community was united in its rejection of the new houses built in Westbury Ext. 3 because these

houses were of poor quality. Yet in 1983 we find that same community divided."

"There is the minority who want to buy their old homes and rebuild them and the majority who want the council to build new homes."

"Basically this is a division between those who have a lot of money and those who don't have such money," he said.

"Most of the people in Western belong to the working class, however we found a section of the community with more money behaving in a selfish way."

"They wanted to buy and build their homes even at the expense of the majority who could not

afford it."

"Those in the Wrac steering committee who saw that this was wrong committed themselves to opposing it. It is important that the working class must lead our struggles. In practice this means we must never compromise the rights and demands of the workers."

He said this was important to understand because the majority of people are workers.

"They produce the wealth of the country yet only a minority reaps the benefits."

"This minority owns all the factories, mines, farms and very large shops and are only interested in making profits for themselves," he said.

"So the workers' demands for a better life must take first place, and we must encourage the professionals, small shop owners, teachers, nurses and priests to support the demands of the workers."

"It is only if the demands of the workers are met that we can achieve a better life for us all."

The second lesson, he said, was that Wrac's victory proved "once again that we can be successful if we work together".

"When the council decided to listen to the CMC instead of the majority of residents, the steering committee decided to act."

"Housemeetings were held in several streets, but not everyone attended. A mass meeting was held, but not everyone in the township came. A delegation went to the City Council office in town to tell them of our decision at the mass meeting, but not everyone who was at the meeting went."

"However, even though not everyone took part, we still won."

"Imagine what we can achieve if everyone in Western works together."

## Union exposes discrimination at Liberty Life

DESPITE unfavourable publicity, a boycott call and pressure from trade unions and other organisations, Liberty Life management has not given in to the demands of 106 striking workers at its head office in Braamfontein.

The workers are members of the Insurance and Allied Workers Union (Iawusa) which recently began organising at Liberty Life.

The dispute centres around the annual increases announced in August.

The black workers felt they have been unfairly treated. Liberty Life senior managers made numerous statements that the company was making phenomenal gains despite the recession, but workers were given meagre wage increases.

Workers complain that the starting salary for an African male matriculant is R320 per month while that of a white female matriculant is R650.

When Iawusa com-

plained, management refused to meet with them. They said it was a "racially based union".

"Liberty Life is a non-racial company which has succeeded in creating a lively non-racial atmosphere on its premises," they say.

The workers dispute this.

"How can Liberty Life be a non-racial company when certain job categories are reserved for blacks only," they ask.

The workers cite other examples of racial discrimination:

- Salary scales for the various racial groups differ.
- When whites are employed they are immediately trained while blacks have to wait three years until they are offered training opportunities.

The workers went on strike when management refused to negotiate with Iawusa. On the first day of the strike they staged a placard demonstration



Striking Iawusa workers demonstrate outside Liberty Life head office demanding non-discriminatory salary scales.

outside their offices.

Since then the striking workers have embarked on several campaigns to persuade Liberty Life to negotiate with their union.

Leaflets and stickers

have been distributed and solidarity meetings called on people to boycott Liberty Life insurance policies and Liberty Life subsidiaries such as the United Building Society and Sales House.

Resolutions supporting the workers came from many community organisations. These include the Ennerdale and Districts Civic Association and the Federation of Residents Association.

## Mgwusa calls for better conditions from municipality

DISSATISFACTION with the Johannesburg City Council dominated discussion at the annual congress of the Municipal and General Workers Union (Mgwusa) of South Africa.

The congress had to be postponed at the last meeting because the city council refused permission for the meeting at Nancefield Hostel which is municipal property.

Mgwusa was forced to hold it at the Dube YWCA, the following week although it is far from the hostels where many union members live.

Workers complained of being physically assaulted by white city council employees.

The council has done nothing to prevent these attacks the workers said. They accuse the council of in fact showing approval by victimising workers "who dared to fight back when attacked".

At least 15 have laid charges at several Johannesburg police stations. However they have

received letters from the Chief Prosecutor refusing to prosecute.

The workers felt they were no longer going to lay charges if nothing happened.

Leave pay and conditions of leave was another much discussed grievance. Workers are given four weeks leave but only two weeks paid.

"This practice of giving us two weeks unpaid leave is now obstructing us from securing (10)1(b)(2) rights from the West Rand Administration Board," workers said in a resolution passed at the Congress. They demanded four weeks pay for four week's leave.

The city council sometimes withholds workers pay cards when they go on leave and workers cannot find them when they return. Workers called for this practice to stop immediately and also rejected "being made to work for two to three weeks before being paid when we come back".

Other demands were:

- A minimum R10 per week wage increase. They reject a recent R2 pay rise saying that because of inflation it is in reality a drop in wages.
- That the city council stop trying to force workers to join another union "not of our choice under threat of not having our call-in cards renewed".

The workers have sent a letter to the council outlining their demands.

They resolved to "unite and strengthen ourselves in readiness of a possible rejection of our reasonable demands".

Workers also resolved to set up a shop stewards council. Gatsby Mazwai was re-elected president by the congress.

## Club formed for workers

A WORKER club, the first of its kind in Transvaal, has been formed by workers in the Newclare — Western area and has already distributed its first newsletter.

"Since there is no place in the townships where workers can meet to discuss their problems, relax and enjoy some recreation games, we felt it necessary to form this club," one of the organisers said.

She said the Johannesburg Workers Club (JWC) is run by workers for workers and aims:

- to unite all workers
- to work together to find solutions to problems
- to learn about the problems experienced in the townships and at the work place
- to provide a place for workers to freely discuss their problems and get help or advice from other workers



- to provide entertainment for workers through films, chess, table tennis, cards etc. The club is open to all workers, whether employed or not, and hopes to look into issues like UIF, maternity benefits and retrenchment.

"We will also look into township problems like transport and housing," she said.

"We welcome any topic for discussion con-

cerning workers."

However this club will not be all talk, we have games and entertainment as well for some relaxation after a long days work."

Anyone interested in joining the club can attend meetings on Wednesday nights at 7.30 pm, and on Saturdays at 3 pm.

The meetings are held at the old St Barnabus College in Western township.

## Boards jail aged

OVER 400 people living on farms in the district of Ennerdale have been told by the Orange-Vaal Administration Board to leave.

The board claims the tenants are illegally in the area and have carried out frequent raids and arrested people.

Many have appeared in court on a charge of trespassing and sentenced to a fine of R100 or 90 days in jail. Among those serving jail sentences are old age pensioners.

The Ennerdale and Districts Civic Association (EDCA), Actstop, the Black Sash and the

Federation of Residents Association (FRA) are some of the organisations supporting the tenants.

Recently two members of Actstop met with Board officials to discuss the problem.

The board denied it was carrying out raids in an attempt to get the people out.

The Deputy director of the board said they would not leave people homeless. It would consider giving tenants an extension of time to move out, and for those who qualify to be in the area, accommodation would be provided in Sebokeng.

# Violent squatter' removals

THE Katlehong squatters and newsmen who were beaten up by East Rand Administration Board (Erab) officials in September during a raid on the squatter camp have laid criminal charges against the board.

Member of 82 families, made homeless after their shacks were destroyed, were brutally assaulted by Erab officials trying to force them to unknown places in the Bantustans.

Newsmen on the scene were also violently attacked.

Erab resorted to violence after trying victimisation, intimidation and false promises to break the unity and determination of the squatters.

But even this has not succeeded.

Erab's actions focussed national attention on the plight of the squatters and journalists took to the streets of Johannesburg in a placard demonstration against influx control and the attack on their colleagues.

Support for the squatters came from many people and organisations including Katlehong residents and hostel dwellers who experience similar problems with Erab.

"We need to coordinate our struggles against our common enemy,"

one resident said.

The squatters fight for homes and the right to remain in Katlehong began in August when Erab demolished their shacks.

Their initial protests and that of a support committee resulted in a temporary reprieve.

The support committee was made up of representatives from the Witwatersrand Council of Churches (WCC), the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), The East Rand Peoples Organisation (Erapo) and the Benoni Students Movement (BSM)

The squatters were housed in tents provided by the WCC in a coal yard bordering a cemetery.

Erab soon moved them to a place called Williams' Farm, saying there was water and sanitation there.

Erab's real intentions however were different. They were prepared to give the squatter's temporary accommodation until such time as they could separate the "legals" from the "il-legals" and deport those who did not have legal rights to be in white urban areas to the homelands.

It was at Williams Farm the ongoing battle with Erab began.

A Mr Snyman would regularly visit the farm and give instructions to the people.

On one occasion he told the women to tell their husbands not to go to work the following day. The squatters decided at a meeting that evening to ignore the instruction.

Snyman was met the following day by angry women who did not want to hear anything

Snyman threatened to take a unilateral decision about the removals since he was not getting co-operation, and two weeks later Erab raided the farm. Some were stopped from going to work.

One man, Johnson Tisani, was taken to the Wadeville Pass Office, allegedly beaten up and endorsed out of the area.

Mr Tisani's fellow squatters rallied to his support and told him to defy Erab's order.

Fearing the militancy and unity of the people, Erab changed its strategy from trying to move all the people at once to one of "divide and rule" by endorsing people out one by one.

The squatters saw through Erab's strategy and when Snyman arrived the women threw the endorsed passes at him.



Rev Begbie and Nkoane addressing squatters in Katlehong

"South Africa is our country too," the squatters said "we don't have any other home. We have a right to live wherever we want to."



Journalist protesting outside the Carlton Centre

With the people's determination at a high point, Erab moved into Williams Farm with sticks and batons.

The squatters were given refuge in a church hall where they are presently.

A request to pitch tents near the D.H. Williams hall was agreed to by Erab but refused by the "mayor" of Katlehong, Mr A.P. Khumalo.

## Committee condemns Govt. policy

A statement issued by the Katlehong Squatters Support Committee said "the naked brutality of Erab clearly exposes the Government's twin strategy of reform and repression."

"Should this action be done in the name of reform, then reform is a sham because we believe that people have a right not a privilege to stay where they want with their families and be able to make a living."

"We view the action of Erab as one of the ways in which the intentions of the Orderly Movement of Settlement of Black Persons Bill is being put into practice."

"The refusal by the so called 'mayor' of Katlehong, Mr A.P. Khumalo to allow the squatters to be accommodated at the D.H. Williams Hall is a total indication and confirmation of the naked and blatant way in which the Local Authorities Act is going to implement the vicious and intolerable laws that Koornhof is

implementing."

"We feel that the violent action of Erab is not a solution to the national housing problem. The housing problem is a creation of Koornhof and his Government, and until such time as this changes, the problem will stay."

The squatters meanwhile remain united and are awaiting a court case in January.

"It is only through being organised that we have been able to resist the attacks by Erab," one of the squatters said.

"The people realised that even the support committee could do nothing to stop our removal and that we and we alone could delay the day of reckoning and ultimate forced removal by Erab," he said.

HIGH water and electricity accounts was the theme of a public meeting called by the newly formed Alra Park Action Committee (Apac) in Nigel.

Many families have refused to pay the "abnormal" accounts since August and on the 15 October when the Nigel Town Council threatened to cut off their electricity, hundreds of women demonstrated and marched to the council offices.

The meeting elected two sub-committees to

## Apac fights Nigel council

organise the residents of Alra park and the older section, Cerutville to continue their campaign.

Mr George du Plessis, guest speaker from the Tenants and Residents Association of Reiger Park and a UDF vice-president called for unity and stressed the importance of organising and involving the entire township.

"We should unite and work together, because it is only through unity and solidarity that we will overcome," he said.

His call was echoed by Mrs Dorcas Landers, chairperson of Apac. She called on residents to assist Apac since, "our victory will be your victory, and our failure will be your failure — we will all have to pay the high

accounts."

Apac is drawing up a memorandum of residents grievances. Residents complain that there is:

- No street lights or tarred roads in Cerutville.
- No day hospital in Alra Park. Residents, especially pensioners have to travel long distances for medical assistance.
- The rent office is not open on Saturdays. Working people find it difficult to pay rent on weekdays.

## No to Maponya

WORKERS at Grand Bazaars in Rosettenville have called for a boycott of the store after being dismissed for striking in support of four retrenched colleagues.

The workers went on strike after management refused to talk to shop stewards of their decision to retrench the four workers.

In a widely distributed pamphlet, the workers call on all organisations and South Africans to support them by boycotting Grand Bazaars and a new store it is closely linked with in Dube, Soweto.

The Dube store is run by Mr Richard Maponya, a wealthy Soweto businessman.

"Richard Maponya is involved with Grand Bazaars in this new shop," the workers say in their pamphlet.

"By supporting Maponya you will be supporting Grand Bazaars."

If you support Grand Bazaars and Maponya's shop you will be against us."

The workers demand recognition of their union, the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Ccawusa), and reinstatement of all 59 workers.

## Newclare residents pledge unity at meeting

NEWCLARE residents have resolved not to pay the Johannesburg City Council's increase in service charges which came into effect last month.

At a mass meeting called by the Newclare Residents Action Committee (Newrac) to discuss what action to take, residents condemned the increase.

"For too long we have sat back and accepted the councils rent increases and bad or non-existent service," one resident said.

"Whether we can afford these increases or not, we must fight. If we accept this increase the council will more readily announce another increase in a year or even in a few months time," she said.

The increases come a year after the council last raised rents.

It met with such resistance then, the council was forced to postpone the increases. But the council has since tried to get its higher rents through an increase in service charges.

Service charges is calculated as part of rent,



and is a charge for things like rubbish removal, sewerage etc.

Residents say the increases are unjustified and are determined not to take it lying down.

One resident, referring to the community's unity in past struggles said: "Only by working

together in our action committees can we voice our dissatisfaction and work towards a better standard of living."

To this end residents resolved to consult each other through flat meetings and to actively involve themselves in Newrac.

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# SPEAK

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

## Build grassroots organisations

The low polls in the Black Local Authority elections is a clear statement by the African people that they will not be sidetracked from aspiring for full participation in a single Parliament for all South Africans in one non-racial, democratic country.

But despite the people's massive rejection, the Government will continue shoving this fraud down their throats.

Those like Thebehali who have been so carefully trained and brought up by Koornhof, will be replaced by new puppets. There will be no change for the better in people's lives.

But in communities throughout the country, people have formed their own democratic organisations.

It is only by relying on themselves and strengthening grassroots organisations outside the control of the Government that the oppressed can successfully oppose Apartheid and achieve their demands for democratic rights.

## Passing the buck

Consistent with the President's Council's proposals at local government level, management committees in Indian and Coloured areas are being given more "powers"

These powers however hand over greater problems, and is a move towards making impoverished Indian and Coloured Group Areas autonomous from "white cities".

It is a simple case of passing the buck.

No longer are the white City Councils going to be solely responsible for the high rents, high electricity accounts and poor health services our people face.

Their junior partners in the management committees are going to assume a share of that responsibility.

At the same time the autonomous local authorities will not be able to solve the day to day problems of the people.

In fact, they will further increase the burden on communities.



Speak In P.O. Box 261677 Excom Johannesburg 2023

## Bansi, remove your blinkers and resign!

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking SPEAK for the excellent news and advice articles, that it carries.

I also wish to express to other readers of SPEAK my utter disgust at the SAIC for their extravagant hosting of the Prime Minister, P W Botha, at a meeting in Durban on 14 November, 1983.

The Prime Minister succeeded in winning a 'yes' vote amongst whites for his new constitutional deal. Now he is desper-

ately looking for support from Indians and Coloureds.

He is surely aware of the very successful rallies held by the United Democratic Front (UDF) throughout the country. Thousands of people have said very strongly that we will NOT be fooled by the new constitutional proposals.

However, Rajbansi came to PW's rescue by organising a meeting between the Prime Minister and ± 2000 specially invited "guests" from the Indian community.

The SABC TV broadcast this farce in great detail. But alas — hidden from the eyes of the public (by SABC TV) was

a demonstration outside the meeting by peoples leaders! Why didn't SABC TV carry this? Police were in full force and arrested 43 people.

That same evening the NIC and TIC held the biggest mass meeting ever in Durban drawing well over 5000 people who strongly opposed the Prime Minister's constitutional proposals.

Of course Rajbansi (better known as Biryani) was too busy entertaining P.W. to realize what a fool he has made of himself.

The SAIC was forced upon us even though they were voted into power by miserably low percentage polls. How can the SAIC

even dream of accepting a proposal which will send our menfolk to fight on the border?

I say, remove those blinkers from your eyes Rajbansi, and resign immediately from the Biryani Brigade (SAIC)! Our problems are not going to be solved by you accepting PW's deal. If you want to see a bright future together with the majority of people of South Africa, you will have to quit the SAIC and join us on the winning side!!

V Chetty  
Laudium

## Red-tape frustrates Alex youth

I REGARD myself as part and parcel of the Alexandra community. But when it comes to our local political situation in the township, most of Ayco's members are being subjected to all sorts of harassment.

I was very shocked when I visited the Thabisong Community Centre to ask for a venue for Ayco.

When I entered, I im-

mediately felt the tense atmosphere. A lady asked me what I was looking for.

I hardly explained and she told me that it was private property and I don't have any right to enter the place unless I get the authority from above.

Now I wonder as to whether Thabisong is a so called community centre or gradually becoming a white elephant.

If that's the case the authorities in charge should please state it in black and white so that every member of our community knows.

The community will not allow this.  
Thabisong ithabisa mang

## Speak raises awareness

I like SPEAK since it makes us aware of the situation. It is talking about the people who are fighting for their rights. It is very interesting and it is important because it tells of our brothers and sisters who are conscious.

Peter Makume  
Sasolburg

## Victory for BAWU

The Baking and Allied Worker's Union, a Saawu affiliate, has signed a recognition agreement with Standard Bakery, a Fedback subsidiary.

Bawu is now formally recognised as the workers' representative on matters affecting them.

70% of the workers belong to the union.

Association (SCA) said the new council's were not fully fledged municipalities.

"We are interested in power," he said "not a platform just to air grievances."

"We want power to vote, to make the laws of this country and to administer this country."

Residents rejected the councils and said they could do nothing for the people.

Residents also decided to affiliate to the UDF.

## Ayco grows in strength

SINCE its launching in September, the Alexandra Youth Congress (Ayco) has fast grown.

Workshops, cultural evenings, tuition classes, and mass meetings are just some of the activities organised by the organisation.

Despite a mass meeting organised to express solidarity with detained Ayco member Vusi Vilakazi being banned Ayco members are confident their organisation will grow in strength.

All young people interested in Ayco are welcome to attend meetings every Saturday at 2pm at the Methodist Church in Alexandra.

## Vaal Civic body formed

1 200 Vaal residents recently formed the Vaal Civic Association to unite Vaal townships against high rents, bad housing, measly pensions and the Government's new community councils.

A guest speaker at the meeting to form the new organisation, Dr Motlana of the Soweto Civic

## Workers support colleague

ABOUT 50 Black and White workers recently went on strike at Checkers, Primrose in support of a white worker who was unfairly demoted.

The workers demanded their colleague be reinstated in her previous position and that the store manager be removed. They accused him of making them work overtime without following proper procedure, and for treating workers in a harsh and undignified manner.

The demoted worker was reinstated after talks between the workers, their union Ccawusa, and the Checkers Head Office.

Management however refused to remove the store manager.

The workers agreed to return to work after the store manager apologised for his behaviour and promised to change his attitude.

A union official said it was significant that black and white workers took joint action and presented a united stand to management.



## Power split in the CMC

The Johannesburg Coloured Management Committee is split over whether or not to accept delegated powers from the City Council.

Mr Don Mateman, Labour Party Management Committee member had a brief verbal clash with the committee chairperson and LP's national deputy leader, Mr Miles Richards on the issue.

Mateman argued for acceptance while Richards is against accepting the powers.

Community leaders said the CMC had no mandate to make decisions for the community.

"These powers are a move towards autonomy and in furtherance of the Government's proposals at a local level, one community spokesperson said. "It will only increase the already heavy burden on our communities."

## More rights for migrants

Hundreds more migrant workers may be able to receive city rights in terms of the Rikhotso judgement after a recent settlement with Wrab.

Wrab agreed in an out-of-court settlement to grant rights to a worker, Mr S Maluleka who has worked for an employer for 10 years, but took unpaid leave during this period.

Previously Wrab had refused to grant workers Rikhotso rights if they took unpaid leave.

## Squatters harassed in Bekkersdal

Bekkersdal shack dwellers have become the most recent victims of Wrab front end loaders.

The West Rand Administration Board (Wrab) arrived at 3 am on 2 November 1983 to destroy the shacks of some 200 people.

The Witwatersrand Council of Churches came to the aid of these squatters providing them with tents and arranging a meeting with Wrab.

The chairperson of the

Bekkersdal Community Council Mr T M A Matla granted the squatters permission to pitch their tents on open space in the township.

Mr Matla said he made the land available because as a leader he was touched by the plight of the squatters.

Yet he and his community council were unable to prevent the demolitions or to provide housing for the shack dwellers.



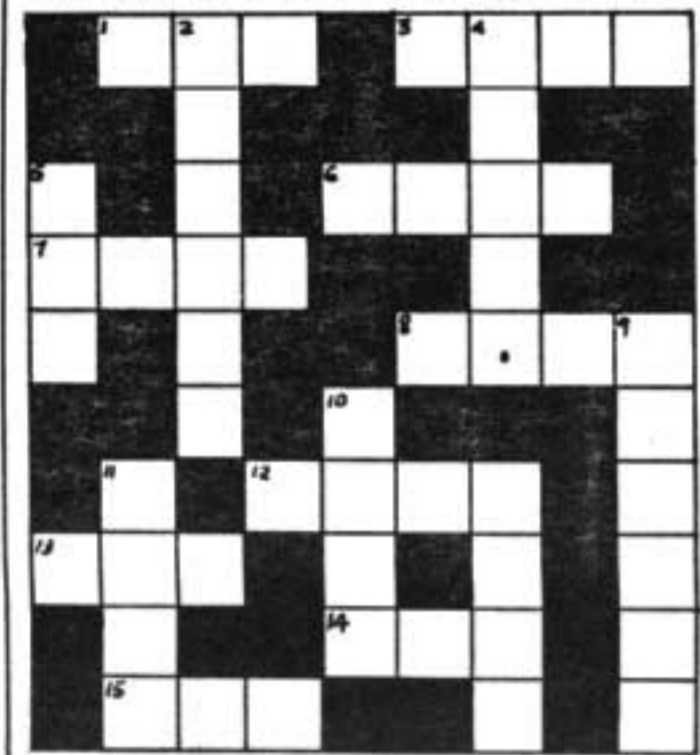
## UDF wins over residents

The opposition Evaton Ratepayers Association has resigned from the Evaton Community Council and joined the United Democratic Front.

"Apartheid institutions such as community councils have done nothing for the residents," an association spokesperson said.

The Ratepayers Association also said they were campaigning to boycott the local authority elections.

## CROSSWORD



- CLUES**
- ACROSS**
- 1 Old - - - pensioners in Ennerdale have been jailed.
  - 3 A new music group from Bosmont.
  - 6 Committee formed in Alra Park to take up residents problems
  - 7 Her gravestone was recently unveiled in Wattville
  - 8 He is very unpopular in Alexandra Township
  - 12 A health screening programme was run by this organisation
  - 13 Too much drinking is - - - for your health.
  - 14 People in Alexadra have to live in these because there are not enough houses.
- DOWN**
- 15 This organisation held a variety show
  - 2 The first name of an executive member of the Reiger Park Ratepayers and Tenants Association. Also a UDF Vice President.
  - 4 This union was banned by the Ciskei Government.
  - 5 Wrac succeeded in forcing the Johannesburg City Council to listen to them and not to the - - -
  - 9 The striking workers at Liberty Life belong to this union
  - 10 They are being charged for assaulting squatters in Kadehong
  - 11 A civic association was formed in this region recently.

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# No to divide and rule Yes to unity in action

WHEN hundreds of organisations representing close to two million people launched the United Democratic Front, 1983 was specifically marked for a prominent place in our history.

It is the year which delivered the greatest expression of our people's unity in over two decades, and is to become a significant reference point in our struggle for democracy.

But the importance of the year goes beyond just a single event on August 20.

1983 saw the Government feverishly laying the ground for its attempt at dividing and controlling the oppressed, taking the steps which would lead to implementation of the Constitution Act and Koornhof Bills.

Our people answered these moves with the Transvaal Indian Congress, the Anti-Community Councils Committee, the Transvaal Anti-PC and the United Democratic Front.

This organised rejection of the Government's intentions was a clear statement for the continued commitment to a non-racial, democratic South Africa based on the will of the people.

A statement for the unity of the oppressed and all democratic minded people against the Governments efforts to undermine that unity.

It exposed the Government's sweet talk and poisoned carrot.

We see that concessions are not being offered to ALL the people. Only certain people are being given concessions — and even these they are not being given equally.

Indian and coloured people are being offered second class representation in a tri-cameral parliament, while some Africans are being offered third-class town and village councils.

A few African people — mainly those who are regarded as 'permanent' urban residents' — are also being offered other third-class concessions. Such as the right to own a house, but not the land on which it is built.



The Government is in fact making a concerted effort to reduce the rights of most African people in "white" South Africa.

Only a few who have "approved" accommodation and jobs can stay in urban areas. The rest are to express their political rights in the Bantustans.

In carrying out these intentions, the Government is:

- demolishing shacks of people not "legally" in urban areas.
- increasing lodgers permits to try and weed out the poor and unemployed from townships.
- destroying rural towns like Huhudi, and moving residents to Bantustan townships where they will lose their Section 10 rights.

By granting such selective concessions, the Government is trying to sow division between the oppressed people.

Secondly, the Government gets MORE OUT OF giving some concessions to the people than the people.

At the same time as trying to gain credibil-



## Message from Rev Frank Chikane Vice President United Democratic Front

*Although every peace loving South African with a vision for a genuinely just society was concerned about the move to entrench Apartheid in the name of reform, no one could predict that we would be where we are today — with the United Democratic Front raging like wild fire throughout the country consuming any element of Apartheid on its way.*

*The formation of the UDF was one of the most significant developments of the year, bringing for the first time in decades all pockets of resistance throughout the country into one united front, and thus presenting the Government with the sum total of resistance reinforced and strengthened by "unity in action".*

*This was also a negation of the "divide and rule" tactics of the government.*

*After years of forced separation between White, Coloured, Indian and African, and in the last two decades between African on tribal lines, the government found all these people together at Mitchell's Plain saying a big NO to Apartheid.*

*Our task now is to make sure that we are not carried by the euphoria of the power of unity in action, but use this opportunity to strengthen our organisations, resuscitate those which are declining, and create new grassroots organisations where there are none.*

*This means that each organisation must reassess its position, programmes, strengths and weakness as this year ends.*

*Ask yourself these questions: What have we achieved this year? How are the structures of the organisation affected? Have we come out stronger or weaker? Have we been able to keep a balance between our short term and long term goals?*

*From here you can then say how you are going to heal the negative aspects of the year and venture into a new democratically agreed upon programme for the following year.*

*Consider the experiences of other affiliates in the UDF and see whether you cannot learn from others to improve your situation.*

*All this has to be done with our immediate goal kept in mind: to organise and mobilise the oppressed masses in South Africa, and create such structures and networks that will enable the liberation movement to break this system of Apartheid.*

*That shall be the time when it will not be the leaders calling people into action but the masses taking it up themselves.*

*That is a people's struggle towards a people's victory, giving birth to a people's government.*

ty by seeming to hand over power, they shift the responsibility for the financing and administration of housing, services, amenities and maintenance onto the community.

They save a lot of money by giving communities Black Local Authorities and autonomy.

They also aim to shift the focus of

resistance from themselves to new local authorities and management committees, who will have to carry out the unpopular tasks of raising rents, evicting people and policing the townships.

But the Government cannot keep control over millions of people at the same time as depriving them of their rights and making

their problems worse.

This strategy for keeping the Apartheid system under control has met with greater resistance.

For example it has not been able to remove its problems by forcing people to the Bantustans through shack demolitions and forced removals.

These moves have instead heightened op-

position and organisation, not destroyed it.

People have realised that real change will only come if they stand up and fight for it.



• More and MORE PEOPLE are building organisations and taking action against Government moves and towards a democratic future.

Everywhere it turns, the Government is faced with opposition — to their rent increases, their new constitution, their undemocratic education system, their use of force etc.

• MORE ORGANISATIONS have been formed through which people can fight for their rights. We now have schools, youth, women, civic, political and worker organisations all working in different ways to achieve the same aims.

• Organisation and action has taken place in MORE AREAS. The formation of a civic in Huhudi, a youth organisation in Kuruman and a women's organisation in Tzaneen are just some examples of increased activity in outlying areas. There is also widespread resistance to forced removals in distant "black spots".



• There is MORE UNITY. Organisations with common problems are uniting, making joint demands, waging joint campaigns or participating in co-ordinating structures.

• Organisations not directly affected by a particular problem, are increasingly GIVING EACH OTHER SUPPORT. For example:

Organisations on the East Rand came to the support of the Katlehong shack dwellers when their shacks were demolished. And when Saawu was banned in the Ciskei, other trade union, detainee and political organisations rallied to their support.

• Organisations and democratic ideas are REACHING OUT TO MORE PEOPLE. Despite the banning of meetings, intimidation and harassment, thousands of people are attending meetings reading pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers and posters.

• The people also have their OWN LEADERS — who represent the true aspirations and interests of the people. The Tshabalala's, Matanzima's, Mangope's, Hendrikse's and Rajbansi's are totally rejected.



These are some developments which show concrete gains being made in a direction of the democratic future.

A future where there is security and comfort, where wealth is shared equally, and where the people make the decisions affecting their lives.

Our people are showing they remain committed to the struggle which began so long ago and which has forced the Government to take new steps in protecting Apartheid and in 1983 the people took this struggle to new heights.

With the strengthening of organisations, constant contact and consultation, a growth in membership and participation, increased initiative, responsibility and commitment — 1983 could become a watershed in our struggle for democracy.

And as the new year begins, our immediate task is to assess the progress over the last year and map a course for the future.

# Protests, launchings, meetings and campaigns — opposition grew to government moves

## Events that made 1983

### Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee CONGRESS 1983

The Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee's congress held in the wake of the Labour Party's decision at Estowes, assumed a national significance beyond its immediate objectives. It was the first major gathering of anti-apartheid forces to totally reject the President's Council's proposals. The congress decided to revive the Transvaal Indian Congress, and Alan Boesak, supported by Thozama Gqowa and Essop Jassat, called for the formation of a United Democratic Front.

The tone for the year was set, and already the ground was being laid for events of momentous significance.

### Labour Party's false promises

The formation of the Transvaal Anti-PC, its commitment to the Freedom Charter, and protests at Labour party meetings, underlined the community's rightful place side by side with all democratic South Africans in the struggle for a non-racial South Africa based on the will of the people.

It marked a significant step in consolidating opposition to the Government's proposals and challenged the Labour Party's decision to participate in the Government's tri-cameral Parliament.

No longer can the Labour Party claim to represent the majority of the people, Dr Iqbal Mahomed, chairperson of the new organisation said.

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Much unrest was seen at university campuses this year. At Medunsa and Turfloop in the Transvaal, students engaged boycott action to back democratic demands. University administrations and the police adopted heavy-handed approaches to check democratic opposition and the growing strength of SAIC.



High school fees, bad teachers and principal's inadequate facilities and the apartheid law, prompted many scholars to demonstrate and boycott classes this year. Their very basic demands were met by strong handed police action and the closure of schools.

The protests show that education demands made in 1976 and 1980 have not yet been met. A few white schools like Pieter Colpoels and the De Lange Commission's proposals cannot meet the demands of students. Only a democratic education system in a non-racial and democratic South Africa can



Frequent increases in rents, service charges and water and electricity rates provoked widespread anger and became the focus of many community struggles.

Faced with a severe shortage of money because of its apartheid policy, the Government sees no alternative but to turn to the backs of the community — while continuing to spend thousands on defence and the police.

The Government's housing policy, its Black Local Authority Act, and plans to make Indian and Coloured townships autonomous, will further attack the community's living standards.



### DON'T VOTE FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS SUPPORT SCA

Following the formation of the Soweto Anti-Community Council's Committee, committees were formed in a number of townships.

At meetings in churches and houses, through leaflets, posters, stickers, and house visits, the committees explained the dangers of the Government's new Black Local Authorities.

2 000 people at a rally in Soweto's Regina Mundi said NO to the new councils a week before the elections, and thousands more rallied under the slogan — A vote for the council is a vote for Apartheid!

90% of Soweto did not vote and not less than an average of 80% boycotted the elections in other townships.

Only by uniting in struggle through our own democratic organisations can we achieve our demands for a better life, the people said.



With the intensification of political struggle, conservative union bodies like the Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tucsa) faced a growing challenge from its large black membership, and the independent trade union movement.

Tucsa has a closed shop agreement with many companies and workers have to belong to the union if they want their jobs.

Government workers fought to represent themselves early in the year, and municipal workers strengthened their challenge to a conservative leadership.

The Fosatu affiliated Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union had many conflicts with Tucsa's South African Typographical Union.

Workers say Tucsa does not represent their interests and demand independent democratic trade unions.



Drought made the headlines this year, but it has for five years now been afflicting thousands of people.

Little was said about the crisis being avoided if the Government had different priorities and had planned.

For poverty stricken people in the Barotse who struggle to survive in "normal times", the drought is devastating.

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Orlando East, Kaitshong, Daveyton and Bekkersdal were just some of the areas affected.

But resistance against the demolitions grew as squatters and shack dwellers united and formed committees to represent themselves.

Many more people and organisations not directly affected by the demolitions gave support and organised themselves into support committees.

### ALEXANDRA YOUTH CONGRESS

The rapid development of youth organisations harnessed the creative energy of the youth.

Through activity around its interests more and more young people are organising and also actively supporting the struggles of the community.

No doubt the most significant event of the year was the national launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) by 1 500 people in Cape Town.

Following Alan Boesak's call earlier in the year, the UDF is now truly on its way. The launch brought to a close a period of divergent and unco-ordinated mass struggles and marked the beginning of a phase of united action.

United workers, community, women, student and youth across class, race and geographical barriers, the UDF raises the struggle of the people to new heights.

As this unity born through struggle spreads and deepens, and as the call goes out for affiliate organisations to build UDF by embracing themselves, peoples' rights is obviously on the Government's agenda.

Four months after the Anti-Saic Committee's congress decided to revive the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), it was launched by 1 500 people in Lenasia.

For the Indian community another step forward was taken in its long history of resistance to minority rule.

This tradition of resistance found its continuity in the community's massive rejection of the South African Indian Council (SAIC) in 1981.

With the SAIC barred for all time, the community rose to meet the new demands posed by Botha's divisive strategies, and launched the TIC.

Through the Congress Alliance, the TIC activated the greatest amount of unity between the Indian and African people in the 1980's. In the same way, its revival was the community's statement for a common future with the African people in a democratic South Africa.

While the Government allowed only white people to decide on the future of this country through its referendum, the voice of the oppressed and freedom loving South Africans was heard across the country through the UDF People's Weekends.

On the eve of the referendum — at rallies, concerts, placard demonstrations, motorcades, vigils and fetes — the voiceless majority rejected the Government's Constitution Act and Koomhof Bills, and called for an undivided, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The weekend culminated in a programme of action to educate people of the UDF and its opposition to the Government's plans. Such nationally co-ordinated activity has for a long time been unattainable in South Africa.



After a long time, mineworkers are being organised for better wages and safe working conditions.

Mineworkers have for a long time been unorganised. However the 1982 mass strikes on the mines changed the attitudes of both the bosses and the workers.

Frightened by the extent and power of the strikes, bosses changed their traditionally very hostile attitude to unions, and now seem very eager to try out their new approach.

Unlike the National Union of Mineworkers, the South African Mineworkers Union and the trade union federation, Fosatu are taking up mineworkers demands in the wake of the 1982 mass strikes.

Wage negotiations with NUM in July, brought increases not only for NUM members but for all black mineworkers.



With the introduction of new banning laws, all banned people were unbanned in July.

The Government did not unbanned them as a legal technicality.

The move was seen as an attempt to improve Britain and America's "constructive engagement" relationship with this country.

It formed part of the Government's strategy to create an impression of reform, while reality is that the state security laws have never been lifted, and state repression is on the increase.

The Department of Co-operation and Development is making heretofore more determined efforts to move as many black people as possible to the Bantustans, depriving them of having any rights and say in "white" South Africa.

Thousands in places like Ventersdorp and Driefontein, where community leader Saul Mkhize was shot dead — as being deprived of having any rights in "white" South Africa.

Township residents in Huhudi, Leandra and Graamers are also forcibly being moved to places inside the Bantustans.

The will to use their Section 10 rights and will have to commute long distances to work each day. But vigorous resistance to removals is also increasing. The Huhudi people formed a civic association to oppose the removals.





# Protests, launchings, meetings and campaigns — opposition grew to government moves

## Events that made 1983

### Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee CONGRESS 1983

The Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee's congress held in the wake of the Labour Party's decision at Estowes, assumed a national significance beyond its immediate objectives. It was the first major gathering of anti-apartheid forces to totally reject the President's Council's proposals. The congress decided to revive the Transvaal Indian Congress, and Alan Boesak, supported by Thozama Gqowa and Essop Jassat, called for the formation of a United Democratic Front.

The tone for the year was set, and already the ground was being laid for events of momentous significance.

### Labour Party's false promises

The formation of the Transvaal Anti-PC, its commitment to the Freedom Charter, and protests at Labour party meetings, underlined the community's rightful place side by side with all democratic South Africans in the struggle for a non-racial South Africa based on the will of the people.

It marked a significant step in consolidating opposition to the Government's proposals and challenged the Labour Party's decision to participate in the Government's tri-cameral Parliament.

No longer can the Labour Party claim to represent the majority of the people, Dr Iqbal Mahomed, chairperson of the new organisation said.

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The present Government cannot meet the demand for decent homes people can afford. The best it can do is use housing as a political tool.

For the community the weight becomes heavier. Those who cannot afford to buy their homes will face huge rent increases and eviction in 1984.

This year's housing struggles already give an indication of things to come — from Lenasia, Soweto, Makhlabeng and Western to Kaitshong, Daveyton and Actonville.



Drought made the headlines this year, but it has for five years now been afflicting thousands of people.

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Much unrest was seen at university campuses this year.

At Medunsa and Turfloop in the Transvaal, students engaged boycott action to back democratic demands.

University administrations and the police adopted heavy-handed approaches to check democratic opposition and the growing strength of SAAC.



High school fees, bad teachers and principal's inadequate facilities and the apartheid law, prompted many scholars to demonstrate and boycott classes this year.

Their very basic demands were met by strong handed police action and the closure of schools.

The protests show that education demands made in 1976 and 1980 have not yet been met. A few elite schools like Pieter Colpoys and the De Lange Commission's proposals cannot meet the demands of students.

Only a democratic education system in a non-racial and democratic South Africa can



Frequent increases in rents, service charges and water and electricity rates provoked widespread anger and became the focus of many community struggles.

Faced with a severe shortage of money because of its apartheid policy, the Government sees no alternative but to turn to the backs of the community — while continuing to spend thousands on defence and the police.

The Government's housing policy, its Black Local Authority Act, and plans to make Indian and Coloured townships autonomous, will further attack the community's living standards.

### DON'T VOTE FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS SUPPORT SCA

Following the formation of the Soweto Anti-Community Council's Committee, committees were formed in a number of townships.

At meetings in churches and houses, through leaflets, posters, stickers, and house visits, the committees explained the dangers of the Government's new Black Local Authorities.

2 000 people at a rally in Soweto's Regina Mundi said NO to the new councils a week before the elections, and thousands more rallied under the slogan — A vote for the council is a vote for Apartheid!

90% of Soweto did not vote and not less than an average of 80% boycotted the elections in other townships.

Only by uniting in struggle through our own democratic organisations can we achieve our demands for a better life, the people said.



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Through the Congress Alliance, the TIC activated the greatest amount of unity between the Indian and African people in the 1980's. In the same way, its revival was the community's statement for a common future with the African people in a democratic South Africa.



With the intensification of political struggle, conservative union bodies like the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUOSA) faced a growing challenge from its large black membership, and the independent trade union movement.

TUOSA has a closed shop agreement with many companies and workers have to belong to the union if they want their jobs.

Government workers fought to represent themselves early in the year, and municipal workers strengthened their challenge to a conservative leadership.

The Fosatu affiliated Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union had many conflicts with TUOSA's South African Typographical Union.

Workers say TUOSA does not represent their interests and demand independent democratic trade unions.

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**Organisations look at the year gone by and the year ahead**

# What it means for us

## Anti-Community Councils Committee

For the Anti-Community Councils Committee, one of the most active committees of the Soweto Civic Association (SCA), 1983 was the year in which we reached out to a maximum number of residents.

We succeeded in mobilising the greatest number of people against the Black Local Authorities Act elections.

The next major task is to organise the SCA into a mass based civic organisation, to be at the disposal of residents in their struggle for more and better houses at rents they can afford.

## FOSATU

Federation of South African Trade Unions



We have achieved many rights for our members — like better wages and better working conditions.

Because of this, Fosatu is growing from strength to strength. We fortunately rode out the recession that seriously affected other trade unions — this was largely because Fosatu successfully negotiated the issue of retrenchment procedures.

We expect Fosatu to grow to a position that controls the powers of multinational companies — this is our main objective as far as labour is concerned.

We advise our members to continue their efforts to secure jobs which will be, not only to their benefit but to the benefit of their children.

## Transvaal Anti-PC

The Labour Party decision at Eshowe to become party to implementing the racial and Apartheid constitution, and its attempt to sell this deal to the Coloured people led to massive opposition.

Even with massive police protection and the teargassing of crowds, the Labour Party had to abandon this program of public meetings.

The Transvaal Anti-PC was born out of these events and the campaign against co-option into the Apartheid Parliament and conscription into its army, will gain further momentum in the new year.

## AZASO

Azanian Students Organisation



The year saw Azaso strengthen its presence on over 14 campuses, technicians and colleges countrywide, and membership is still growing.

The formation of a Regional Committee for Transvaal marks the beginning of a process of greater co-ordination, consistency, consultation and sharing of resources and experience.

In order for Azaso to be strong and effectively represent student interests, local Azaso branches must ensure all students participate and actively support the organisation.

For students to play a meaningful role in society, they cannot work in isolation. Through the UDF, Azaso together with other organisations can bring about an equitable and just society.

## Federation of Residents Association (FRA)

Endless door-to-door campaigning was not rewarded with the removal of the Peri-Urban Board, but 1983 was a year when great strides in building a democratic grassroots organisation were taken.

New powers to the management committee, the Government's plans to enforce self government in local areas, the increase in bus fares and electricity rates, and the growing housing shortage are

some of the immediate challenges that face the community.

To this end the work of building a strong and united community must redouble.

Comradely greetings to all for 1984

## Transvaal Indian Congress



The TIC's intentions to voice the aspirations of the people was met by heavy-handed government action-like the banning of meetings to pay tribute to a people's leader, Dr Yusuf Dadoo.

At the same time sham overtures to woo the Indian people are coupled with Botha's threats of the options which face us.

The Government's coercive and repressive manouvers, calls for greater determination and commitment.

Through the active support of our people we will meet the challenges of the new year — expose Botha's plans and confirm the unity of the oppressed in its struggle for a democracy based on the Freedom Charter.

## Actonville Rents Action Committee (Arac)

Arac's second year has been marked by exceptional rent increases and rapidly worsening living conditions.

But these harsh circumstances have only served to build the people's organisation into a stronger and bigger committee than ever before.

Fierce opposition to the 1983 rent hikes and the untiring fight to reverse the increases sum up the most important activity of the organisation this year.

Unity in the struggle against spiralling rents and the growing housing shortage is our guarantee to continued success in the people's fight for better living conditions.

## Alexandra



## Youth Congress

Ayco is now just over two months old and was formed to unite all the youth in Alexandra.

It is now engaged in its programme of action by organising education seminars and workshops.

We hope for the new year to make remarkable efforts complying to the organisational skills we acquire.

## South African Allied Workers Union



Employers and the Government have been talking of the decline of the economy all year, workers however never stopped applying pressure.

Organisers concentrated on organising workers into Saawu, and today four offices are fully operating in the Transvaal.

We also saw our members participating fully in the UDF and anti-community council elections with good results.

It seems as if the ban on Saawu in Ciskei gave it momentum, because the organisation has increased its membership, with quite a number of recognition and wage agreements.

Bosses are forming federations and the Government is going to pass stricter laws by 1984, only unity in resistance will make us win our battles in the field of labour.



Soyco issues a message of gratitude to all its members and supporters, expressing best wishes for the new year.

We encourage all the youth of Soweto to as early as possible join the organisation and strengthen it from pillar to pillar.

The potential and capability shown by Soyco's 400 membership since its inception in July, should serve as an incentive to all peace and freedom loving youth.

Our comradely alliance with Cosas and Azaso should also be respected and strengthened to make young people a force to reckon with.

## Lenasia Youth League (LYL)



Working from the popularity and footing that the youth league established since its formation and the major Youth Festival '82, the year saw the beginning of many new and exciting activities.

A Netball Association, the Shakti Creative Arts Workshop, the Bursary Committee, an Operation Winterwarn campaign, Time-To-Learn, seminars, and the youth league's publication Contact, were some of the activities which laid a basis for consistent and on-going involvement of the youth around their needs and interests.

The formation of a branch in the Extension 2 area deserves special mention as the emergence of a fully fledged organisation capable of organising its own activities.

No doubt this consistency can be maintained and the new year will bring ample opportunity for fresh initiatives.

## Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Ccawusa)

1983 has been a year of progress for Ccawusa. The union has signed, or is busy negotiating recognition and other agreements with most major hotel and commercial companies.

1983 has also had the independent unions making progress towards unity at last.

For the new year Ccawusa aims to continue building a strong union and to continue working for unity between progressive unions.

This is vital if workers are to free themselves from oppression and exploitation.

## The Witwatersrand Council of Churches(WCC)

1983 has been a very trying time for the WCC as we were faced with a major problem with regard to the squatters on the Witwatersrand.

We were reminded again of the evil effects of the apartheid policy and its destructive nature on human beings.

We cannot escape this challenge and as a church should seek to identify ourselves for the suffering of God's people.

We call on all to make a renewed commitment to work for justice, peace and freedom in our land. This is God's will for us which He declared long ago when the angels announced "Peace on earth and goodwill towards all men."

# THE FIGHT FOR LIGHTS

IN our day and age electricity should be a right enjoyed by all, but in communities throughout the country people complain of not having electricity, and if they do, being faced with high bills, and an inadequate service.

Overcharging, faulty meters, too early payment dates, and frequent black outs are just some of the complaints.

Electricity contractors also damage houses when installing electricity and large trenches dug in the streets are a hazard to people and cars. Eight people have so far died in Soweto after falling into trenches.

The provision of electricity is not seen as a basic right by the Government but rather as a privilege which they can offer when they can get something out of it.

The Government makes sure white people have electricity because they have the vote. They also make sure big businesses have electricity to be able to produce more wealth.

Local authorities such as town councils make sure the rate-payers who own houses have electricity because they can vote for the municipality.

The voteless majority can only get their rights when they unite and struggle for it. The 1976 uprising gave the authorities such a fright, they decided to supply electricity to Soweto residents. But they also hoped that through providing something like electricity they could prevent further unrest in the townships.

The government hopes that by allowing community councils to promise electricity, it will give these bodies some credibility.

And at the same time the responsibility for electricity is shifted onto the people themselves.

The government and administration boards are also encouraged by firms that make electrical goods to introduce electrification. These firms would then be able to sell more kettles, irons and fridges and make larger profits.

However a recent survey found that the provision of electricity has not led to a boom in the sale of electrical goods. This is because people are not paid enough to afford these items.

## The people pay

Residents are not satisfied with the provision of electricity. The electricity is expensive, they are often overcharged and the service is bad. In African areas, residents have had to pay for the installation of electricity

In most countries the central or local Government covers the costs of digging trenches and laying cables. However in African townships, where the poorest sections of the community live, the



High electricity bills, bad service or no electricity are problems faced by many communities. SPEAK looks at the reasons for these problems and how people have organised to improve conditions.

people pay — for a bad and expensive service.

All residents, whether they have electricity or not, pay an electricity levy. In Soweto residents are charged R17 a month, in Katlehong the levy is R6 and in Tembisa it is R5.

Residents will have to pay these levies for as long as 30 years. The money goes towards paying back the loans of the community councils or administration boards for digging trenches and laying cables.

R200 million was borrowed by the Soweto, Diepmeadow and Dobsonville Councils for the laying of electricity cables. Initially they had difficulties raising money. By the time the electrification project actually began, the cost of installation had increased by 700%.

This is one of the reasons for the electricity levy in Soweto being higher than other townships.

The levy does not cover the cost of wiring peoples homes. While in Soweto, Wrab undertook to wire all the houses it owned,

the residents have to pay for the service themselves.

So far only 32 000 houses of the 70 000 houses in Soweto wired, have had their electricity connected.

## Overcharging

Residents constantly complain of high bills and overcharging. These complaints are often denied by the administration boards and local councils who sometimes even blame residents for wasting electricity.

In Soweto, meters which record the amount of electricity used is kept in locked boxes outside. Only Wrab has keys to the boxes and they do not allow residents to read their own meters.

In Alra Park near Nigel, residents' demands for an independent electrician to inspect the meters was turned down by the town council.

This means that if meter readers do not read meters or read them incorrectly, residents are unable to check up on them.

Many of the meters were hastily installed and

electricians did a shoddy job or installed faulty meters.

## High bills

In addition to overcharging, residents complain of the high cost of electricity and frequent increases.

Soweto residents pay more for electricity than people in Johannesburg. Soweto has to buy its electricity from Eskom while the electricity from the Orlando Power Station — in the middle of Soweto — is used by Johannesburg residents. Eskom sells its electricity at a higher price than the Johannesburg City Council which owns the Orlando Power Station. Eskom is to further raise its rates by 6%.

In Lenasia, residents of some extensions were subject to sharp electricity rate increases when the administration of their extensions was taken over from the Johannesburg City Council by the Peri-Urban Board.

They saw no reason why their rates should increase and demanded a single water and electricity rate for the whole of Johannesburg.

Thus with electricity, as with the provision of so many other township services, the poor pay more for less.

## United action

What have people done about their grievances.

Individual residents have gone time and again to the council or administration board offices to complain about their high bills or inadequate service, but most times their complaints do not succeed. More and more residents are realising that they need to unite with other residents who face the same problem and take joint action.

## KwaThema

In KwaThema recently, about 50 residents, mostly women, staged a march to the offices of the East Rand Administration Board (Erab) in protest against the high water and electricity bills.

The group left the offices when it was clear that none of the Erab officials were prepared to meet them.

However the following day, a seven person dele-

gation representing the residents met with the township manager and another senior Erab official.

The official confirmed there were errors in the bills, caused when old water and electricity meters were replaced with new ones. They promised to investigate the residents claim. A limited action was achieved through united action.

## Alra Park

In Alra Park, residents stormed the town council in protest against sharp increases in electricity accounts.

They said their meters were faulty and demanded they be checked by the town council together with an independent electrician.

The council refused to give in to the demand for an independent electrician but undertook to check the meters.

The protest made people realise the need for an organisation which would bring them together to fight not only this issue but all other problems the residents face.

They formed the Alra

Park Residents Action Committee (Apac) and joined the Co-ordinating Residents Action Committee (Crac). Apac has thus been able to come into contact and learn from the experiences of other community organisations in the Transvaal.

## Lenasia

In Lenasia, residents refused to pay increased water and electricity rates after the Peri-Urban Board took control of four extensions from the Johannesburg City Council.

In January, the Peri-Urban Board (PUB) raised the electricity deposit for R50 to R130. However after strong protest and pressure from the residents, PUB agreed to reduce the deposit.

A few months later they increased the rates by 40%. Residents resolved not to pay the increased rates but to continue paying the old rates.

They argued that the higher tariff would mean less food and clothing and greater poverty and hardship for pensioners.

For the boycott of the new rates to be successful the participation of every single household was required. Thus numerous house meetings, house visits and mass meetings were held before the boycott decision was made. These meetings were initiated by the various residents associations in the extensions affiliated to the Federation of Residents Association (FRA)

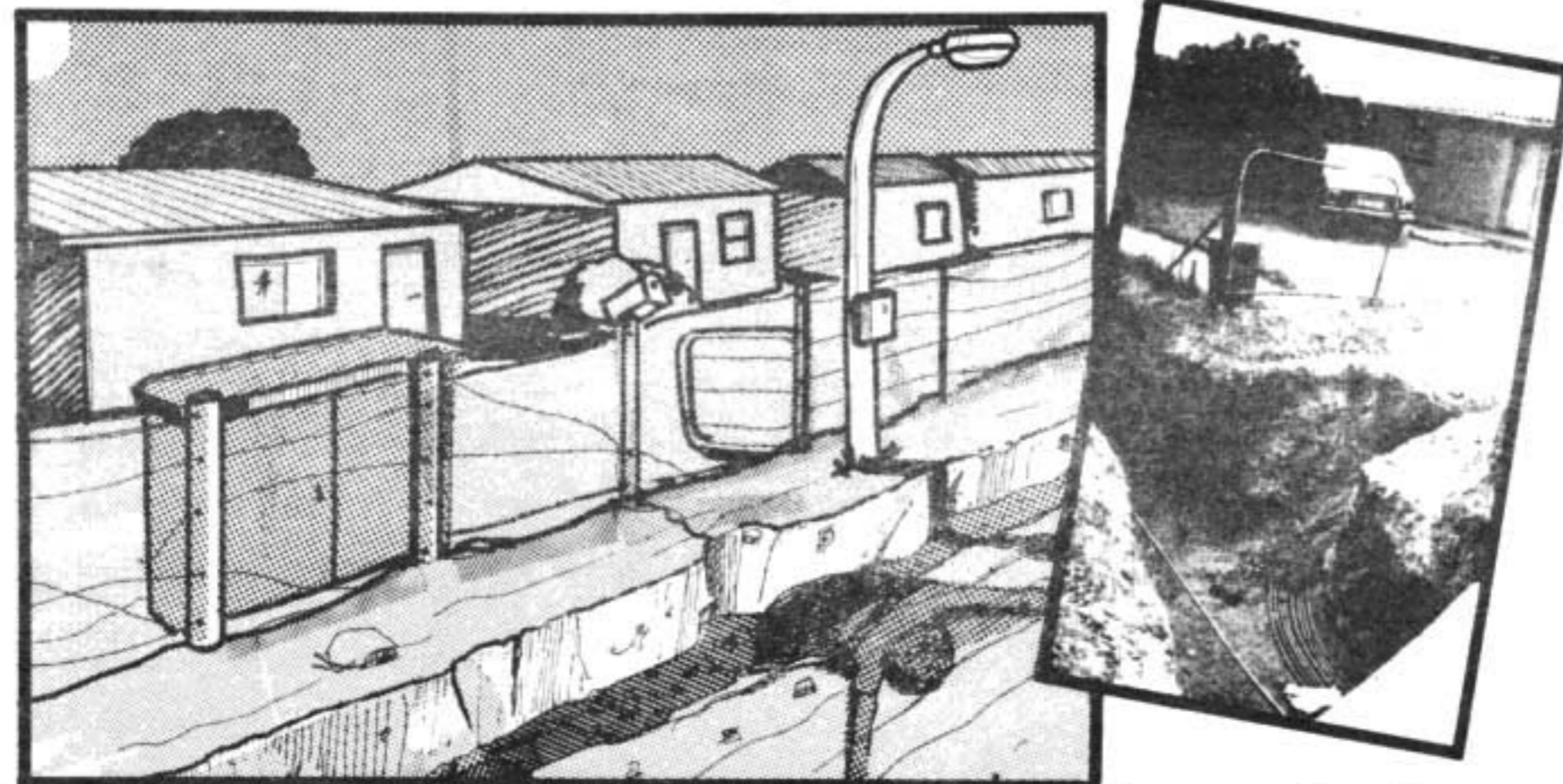
The boycott carried on for two months. It was called off after the PUB cut off the electricity supply to about 300 homes in the middle of winter and during the Ramadan fast, making it difficult for people to stay without electricity.

Residents linked up their demand for one electricity and water rate for the whole of Johannesburg, (of which Lenasia must form part of) to the demand for a single local authority for Johannesburg.

They condemned the division of Lenasia — some extensions administered by the Johannesburg City Council and others by the PUB. Saying this results in a duplication of services and that the PUB did not have the necessary funds and resources for a good service people could afford. Residents are then forced to pay the increased bills.

At the same time residents became aware of the role played by the consultative committee set up by PUB, who claimed to represent residents and took credit for reducing the deposit.

Residents rejected the Lenasia Management Committee (LMC) and the consultative committee, and called for the FRA to be recognised as the legitimate representative of the people of Lenasia.



Township electricity contractors are not concerned about the inconveniences and hazards they may cause for residents.

# We need our own organisations to fight for our rights

WE must build our own democratic organisations, the UDF and Anti-Community Councils Committee called in its campaign against the Black Local Authority elections.

It was a call for the democratic participation of the people in taking up their own problems — as the only way in which those problems will be solved.

"Since we are not directly represented in the Government's decision making process, it is only our united action which can force the authorities to take note of our demands."

In the past people often looked to prominent individuals to solve their problems for them. Others only asked lawyers and the courts to try and prevent increases or evictions.

Yet more and more people are realising that the most successful way of winning a battle is to mobilise the majority of the people directly affected by that problem to participate in united action.

For example, a bus company is forced to retract a fare rise if all commuters boycott the service.

Local authorities are forced to listen to people if they themselves act in unity against high rents or shack demolitions, as tenants and squatters.

People may not always win their immediate demands, but mass action can bring rewards in the long term.

For effective and united action, communities around the country have realised the need for organisations.

Through participation in organisations, people are able to respond to problems which directly affect them; decide what action to take and play a full part in carrying out that action.

Often organisations begin after rent increases, bus fare hikes, or threats of removal when the people who directly experience that particular issue see a need to come together.

In this way rents action committees, tenants associations, bus commuter committees and civic bodies have been formed.

The process of building these committees into strong active organisations capable of mass action has been a long and hard one.

Many people have been brought up to believe that either our problems are inevitable and can't be solved, or that we are incapable of solving our problems but other people can, or thirdly that we should act to solve our own problems but not concern ourselves with our neighbours who may have the same problems.

Many also believe that things are inherently unequal and that it is natural to feel inferior, inadequate or unconfident.

Thus people do not always think that the best way to solve their problems is to get together and act together. Nor do they feel they have the confidence or ability to do so.

It is only by working very closely with each and every member of a community that these feelings can be overcome, and people can be convinced to join organisations and actively participate in community actions.

Constant contact and consultation can happen through meeting people in their homes, and through door-to-door distribution of newsletters and pamphlets.

Many community organisations have street or area representative whose responsibility it is to keep constant contact with people in a limited area.

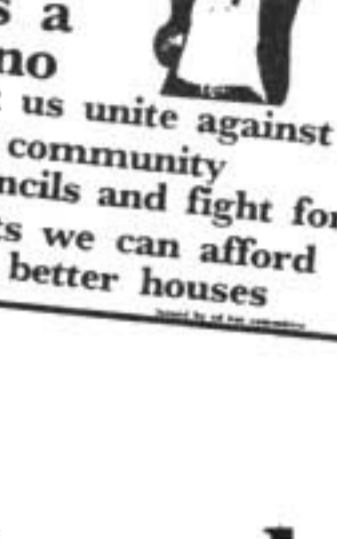
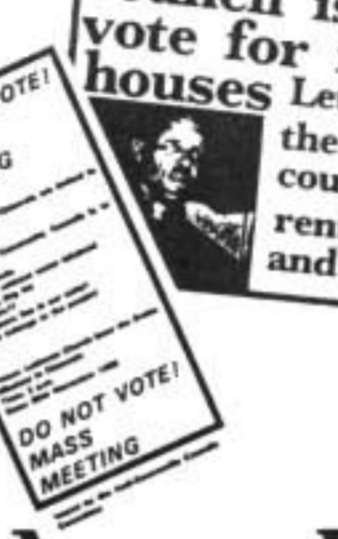
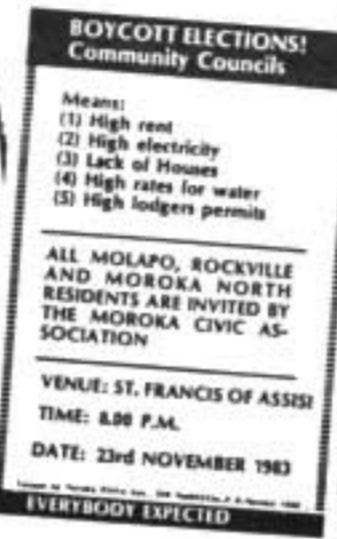
Community organisations have used many different methods to show the authorities that they have majority support and are a force to be reckoned with.

Petitions, boycotts, large meetings marches and placard demonstrations all bring peoples demands to the attention of the authorities and force them to act.

However before action is decided upon, the action is fully discussed by all the people affected. This is best done through small meetings where people are not afraid to make their real views known.

People must feel confident of the decision, especially when it comes to making personal sacrifices such as facing an eviction threat for failure to pay rent.

Active participation in decision making ensures that organisations are directed by the people. Not only is it democratic, but it reduces the possibility of ill-considered actions, and ensures support for the actions.



Placard demonstrations at the entrance to Soweto formed part of the campaign to reject the new councils.

Through active participation in organisations, people learn to run organisations and how to be successful. They begin to realise who their real enemy is. But most importantly they learn that their own unity is possible and united action leads to success.

They also realise the difference between their organisation and bodies such as the new community councils.

These bodies were set up and are controlled by the Government. They never consult with the people they are meant to represent nor do they make an effort to encourage their active participation.

Instead they make false promises about solving the people's problems for them, and take the matter out of the hands of the people.

Building strong democratic people's organisations capable of united mass action is a long process.

It requires dedication and daily work, but the need to build democratic mass based organisations is essential.

Not only because the united action of the majority is the most powerful vehicle for change, but also because the active participation of people is an essential prerequisite for building a new society.

## Hard work makes campaign succeed

AFRICAN townships witnessed an intense campaign calling for the rejection of Black Local Authority elections.

Posters, pamphlets, stickers, rallies and demonstrations marked the campaign of Anti-Community Council Committees in townships from Soweto, Kagiso and Alexandra to Wattville, Atteridgeville and Duduza.

It was the largest organised rejection of government bodies recently.

Some of the township's oldest residents discussed

the implications of the Government's new bodies at scores of little meetings in churches and homes.

Thousands of pamphlets were distributed as civic organisation and youth members went door to door explaining that the new councils only meant high rents, shack demolitions and service charge increases.

Don't Vote! said the eye-catching stickers and posters, and placard demonstrations on busy streets said "A vote for the council is a vote for Apartheid".

2 000 people rejected

the Black Local Authorities Act as a well organised rally in Soweto's Regina Mundi as Motlana, Mpetha and Chikane called on them to build democratic people's organisations.

"The Government's new laws to divide and weaken oppressed communities is only making us stronger," a member of the Anti-Community Council's Committee said.

"Our way forward is to build on the organisational gains achieved through the campaign."

## Councils will do apartheid's work

Elections for the Government's new community councils have taken place and in some areas like Alexandra these bodies have been set up without even elections.

While the candidates argue about voters rolls and percentage polls, the people think of how these councils will only be doing Apartheid's work.

The new town and village councils have no money. The Government says these bodies must raise money themselves and will not give them any.

The councils are already in debt. They have to pay back the loans of the old community councils.

Where will these new bodies get the money to run themselves?

The money will come from us, the people say. Through high rents, service charge increases, lodgers fees and license fees.

And when we tell the council we cannot pay the high rents, it is Koornhof who has the power to make sure they do their job and collect it. When still we cannot pay, it is the new councils which will evict us from our houses. They will now have their own blackjacks to do this.

When homeless, we join thousands more and put up shacks to live in, again it will be the new

councils which break them down.

And even when through our united action we force the council to stop doing Apartheid's dirty work, Koornhof can decide to close that council down and form another one — even though he tells us they were voted in by the people and represent the people.

How can the councillors who accept such bodies claim to be our leaders.

True leaders will never help do Apartheid's job, the people say.

These new councils are no better than the old councils. In fact they are worse.

But the people will continue to reject these new bodies and fight for a local authority which is part of a central government based on the will of the people.

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# WE MAKE THE WORLD

A page of music, dance, plays, films, books and poetry.

## Lenasia Youth League launches drama workshop

The Lenasia Youth League (LYL) has just formed its newest sub-committee, The Shakti Creative Arts Workshop. It was officially launched at a Variety Concert in Lenasia in October.

The L.Y.L. which has been in existence for just over a year has already undertaken many successful projects, like its Netball Association and the formation of a branch in Lenasia's Extension Two.

The formation of the Shakti Creative Arts Workshop adds another on-going structure to the youth league's five established bodies. These are the Netball Associa-

tion, Time-to-Learn, the Lenasia Bursary Committee, its Publications Committee and the L.Y.L. Ext 2 Branch.

Realising that the youth have tremendous creative potential, the youth league staged a variety concert for their expression. The contribution of over 150 young people through plays, skits, classical dancing and song made the concert a success.

Plays and skits formed the major part of the programme. The high standard of the productions and the talent of the participants was enthusiastically appreciated by over 1 200 people.

The youth portrayed

scenes that confront us daily such as delinquency, police brutality, high rents and electricity, oppression and exploitation.

Shakti Creative Arts Workshop aims to cultivate the potential of young people, to give expression to reality as they experience it.

For the future, the workshop hopes to assist school pupils by dramatizing excerpts from plays and set works.

A major production of a full-scale play is also envisaged.

The Workshop hopes to expand its scope gradually to include not only poetry and drama but also art, music and dancing.

## POETS' CORNER

Poems from Angola — Selected and Translated by Michale Wolfers. AFRICAN WRITER SERIES (1979)

This book contains some very exciting poetry. The poets are of all colours and three decades of Angolan poems are represented here.

Some give one a feeling for the country, its people and the landscape. Others capture scenes, thoughts and ideas stemming from both the Angolan's struggle for freedom and their everyday life. Nearly everyone should find something to identify with in this book.

Speaking of poetry, readers are invited to send in their own poems for publication. Send your poems to SPEAK Poets Corner P.O. Box 2601677, Excom 2023. Our first poem received is by Mzwakhe of SOWETO.

Mzwakhe received standing ovations for his recitals at the UDF national launch in Cape Town and numerous rallies in the Transvaal.

He wrote the *THE SPEAR HAS FALLEN* in memory of Brian Mazibuko, a former Robben Island inmate who was recently killed in Soweto.



Mzwakhe Mbuli reading his poetry

# KLOPSE MUSIEK ? ISJA !

ISJA is an innovative group of young musicians from Bosmont. SPEAK spoke to them in the cluttered garage where they practise.

There are five members in the group, all self-taught musicians. Eirfaan who acts as the chief spokesperson both on stage and off, plays the saxophone and flute. The drummer is Ian. While at school he was forced to take piano lessons which he hated. Drumming he decided, is his thing. Moegamat, on the keyboards, taught himself to play on a piano bought by his father. He went out, bought a few books, and learnt from them. Shafiek plays the bass guitar he started playing while still at school. And the lead guitarist, is Solly, who is studying the classical guitar at university. Before he went there he took practical lessons for a year. At the moment, he is the only member of the group who reads music fluently. The others are learning to do so because they'd like to be able to write their music down.

Ian and Eirfaan have been playing together in Cape Town and Johannesburg as part of other groups. This has given them their valuable experience.

Except for Ian, the group members are related. Solly and Moegamat are brothers, Shafiek is a cousin and Eirfaan a brother-in-law.

Isja is a young group, only four months old,

with its roots in Klopse musik (Cape Malay music). They are developing the traditional rhythms into a more progressive form. Progressive in the sense that they are using electronics and promoting a sound that will be identifiable with Isja and distinctively Cape Malay in origin.

Jazz and Latin American music, as well as their daily experiences are additional influences.

They are keen that the community from which they come should recognise and value its own music and culture. By popularising a distinctive sound they hope that others in the community will be encouraged to produce their talent.

The group's name, a slang word, is a positive exclamation. As Ian explained,

"When we were rehearsing, before the group had a name, when someone did something that sounded right the rest of the guys said Isja!" According to Eirfaan they would like people to see the word as meaning "We understand but don't necessarily accept."

The group gets together on Sundays to practise and produce new songs. It is Eirfaan who most often composes the initial melody. This is then workshopped by the group, and as Eirfaan



ISAJA From left to right: Back; Ian, Shafiek, Eirfaan. Front; Solly, Moegamat

says: "It ends up sounding much better and portrays not my image or his (another member's) image but Isja's image."

They do not intend producing a specific image in terms of clothes and speech because to them "Music is a communication of sound." To date Isja has produced only instrumental music but are currently writing lyrics as well.

Stage experience is new to Isja. They have only

played in benefit concerts and at the recent arts festival in Bosmont. As yet they have not had any paying gigs.

Although the group thinks benefit concerts are worthwhile, both in terms of the cause for which they are held and the experience gained, they realise that they need to earn some money.

An immediate need is better equipment and in the future they hope to convert the garage into a

proper studio.

The next few months will be spent developing their music and writing new songs which they hope to use in paying gigs and concerts.

We hope that Isja overcomes its financial difficulties because they are popularising the people's music — music which is "happiness and sadness and a little bit political which is all part of our environment." ISJA!!!

## Book Review

RECONSTRUCTION — 90 years of Black Historical Literature. Compiled and edited by Mothobi Mutlootse. STAFFRIDER SERIES, RAVAN PRESS copyright ABI

Reconstruction covers 91 years of Black historical literature. It is an interesting book with some thing in it for everyone.

Each of the sections the book is divided into deals with a specific form of writing — poetry, stories (prose, articles and essays).

A tribute to Steve Biko, both inspiring and moving, forms an additional section.

The poems of the past, late 19th century to mid 20th, are written in 'ye olde English' style and remind us that problems which beset people so long ago, like forced removals and erosion of civil rights, are still with us today.

The stories include some real gems. One by Achmat Dangor is set in Newclare and another by Dugmore Boetie is about a man who resolves his past problems in an ironical and somewhat amusing way. There is also a story about Indian labour in Natal's canefields.

The journalism section carries a collection of articles on many topics. Some of these are, The Theory and Practice of Passive Resistance by M K Ghandi, the coming of Jazz to Johannesburg, forced removals, the experiences of a domestic worker and office block cleaners, and the early history of resistance in South Africa.

Finally, for the more intellectually inclined, essays on oral literature, black language arts, black Theology and apartheid should prove very interesting.

## THE SPEAR HAS FALLEN

God has given life unto man,  
And man has taken life unto man.  
Let me say no unto slavery and mutilation,  
Let me say yes unto victory and harmony.

God forgives I don't,  
For the heart of Africa is bleeding.  
Bleeding from the wounds knifed hollow,  
Brutally knifed alone in the night.

The forces of inhumanity and subjugation,  
Have arisen against the forces of change.  
Criminals hire criminals  
To assassinate and butcher comrades.  
Knives and swords are also weapons of war.

History demands that we succeed,  
Over atrocities and sadism,  
For the rays of freedom cannot be daunted.  
Brian disrupted the barbaric march of the people unto catastrophe,  
And redirected peace-loving people unto victory.

Yesteryear it was Griffiths Mxenge,  
Yesterday it was Msizi Dube,  
Today it is Brian Mbuli Mazibuko,  
And tomorrow it is you and I.  
Africa do something, for the spear has fallen.

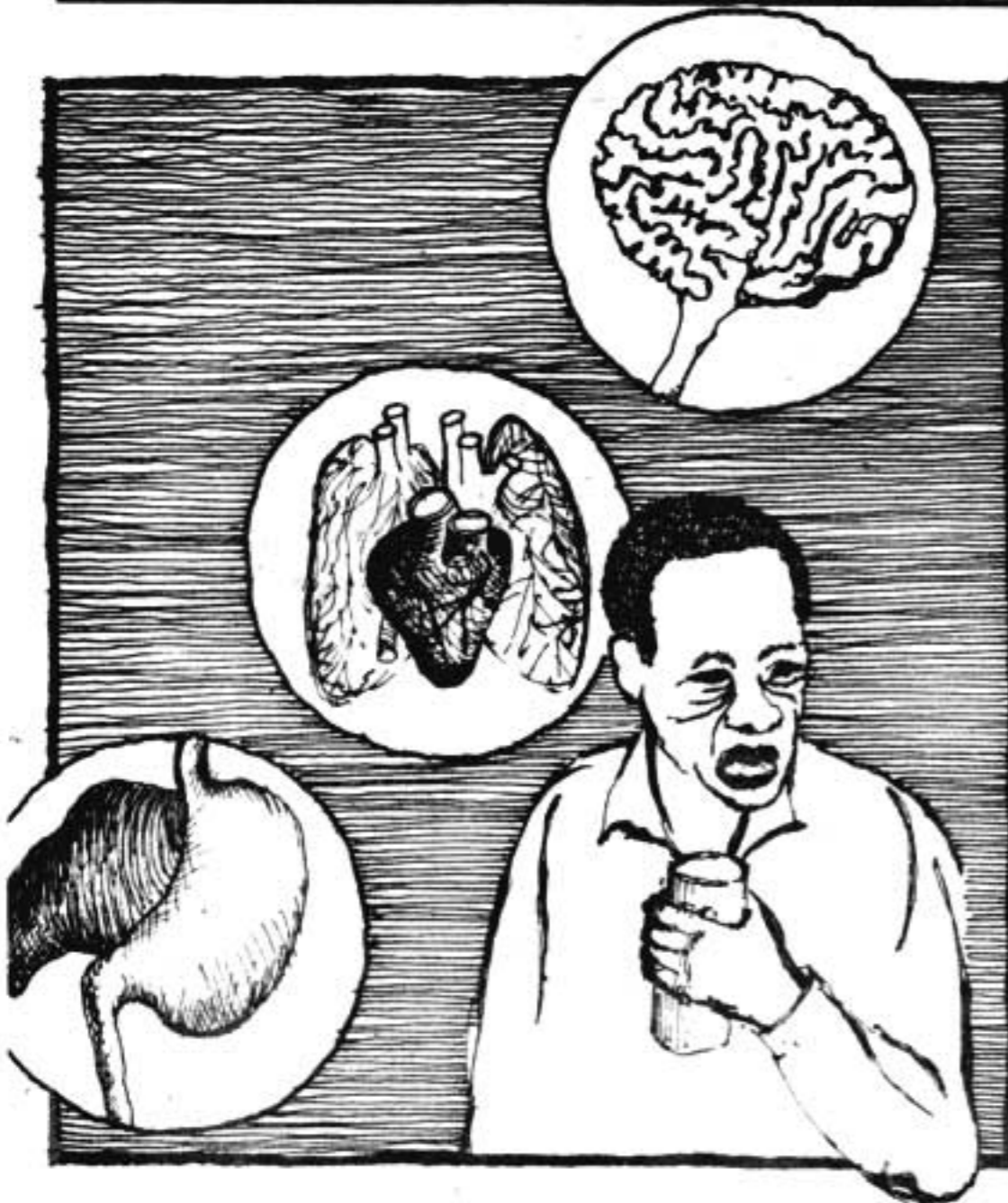
Modern cruelty overwhelmed Brian,  
His fall was stubborn and bloody.  
And like a warrior he died.

Africa the spear has fallen.  
Pick it up,  
And forward to the battle.  
Pick it up,  
Fight side by side for these freedoms  
Pick it up,  
Fight side by side for a democratic South Africa.

Mzwakhe Mbuli.

ADVICE

# Drink washes away health not problems



In South Africa more than one and a half million rands is spent on alcohol per year.

### Why do people drink so much alcohol?

- For some people alcohol taken in small amounts reduces tension and relaxes the mind.
- For most people however, alcohol allows them to 'escape' from the problems of poverty, unemployment and township life.

### The effects of too much alcohol.

Although alcohol might give temporary relaxation and relief from problems, in the long run alcohol only adds to people's problems.

Taken regularly over a long time, alcohol produces addiction. Once you find you cannot do without it, it becomes very difficult to give up.

- Alcohol increases violence  
Hundreds of people die every weekend through violence — stabbings, shootings and

beatings. Alcohol makes people behave in an uncaring way, and this together with the anger created by poverty, makes people take their anger out on people who are defenceless and poor, or makes people fight over small and unimportant things.

### ● Alcohol increases accidents

Those under the influence of alcohol are more likely to make mistakes. This is most dangerous when driving. Those people who drink and drive endanger not only their own lives, but also the lives of innocent people.

### ● Alcohol breaks up families

In South Africa, the Bantustans and pass laws do a lot to break down family-life.

And those people who drink a lot and do not care for their families only help complete the Government's job.

### ● Alcohol and diseases

Alcohol taken over a long time can also cause very serious diseases.

## Focus on Wrac Westbury Residents' Action Committee



"United we will win Organised we will conquer!"

**What is W.R.A.C.**  
It stand for the Westbury Residents' Action Committee

**When and where was it formed?**

W.R.A.C. was formed on 25 May 1981 at the Methodist Church in Western at a mass meeting called to protest against the bad houses in Westbury Ext. 3.

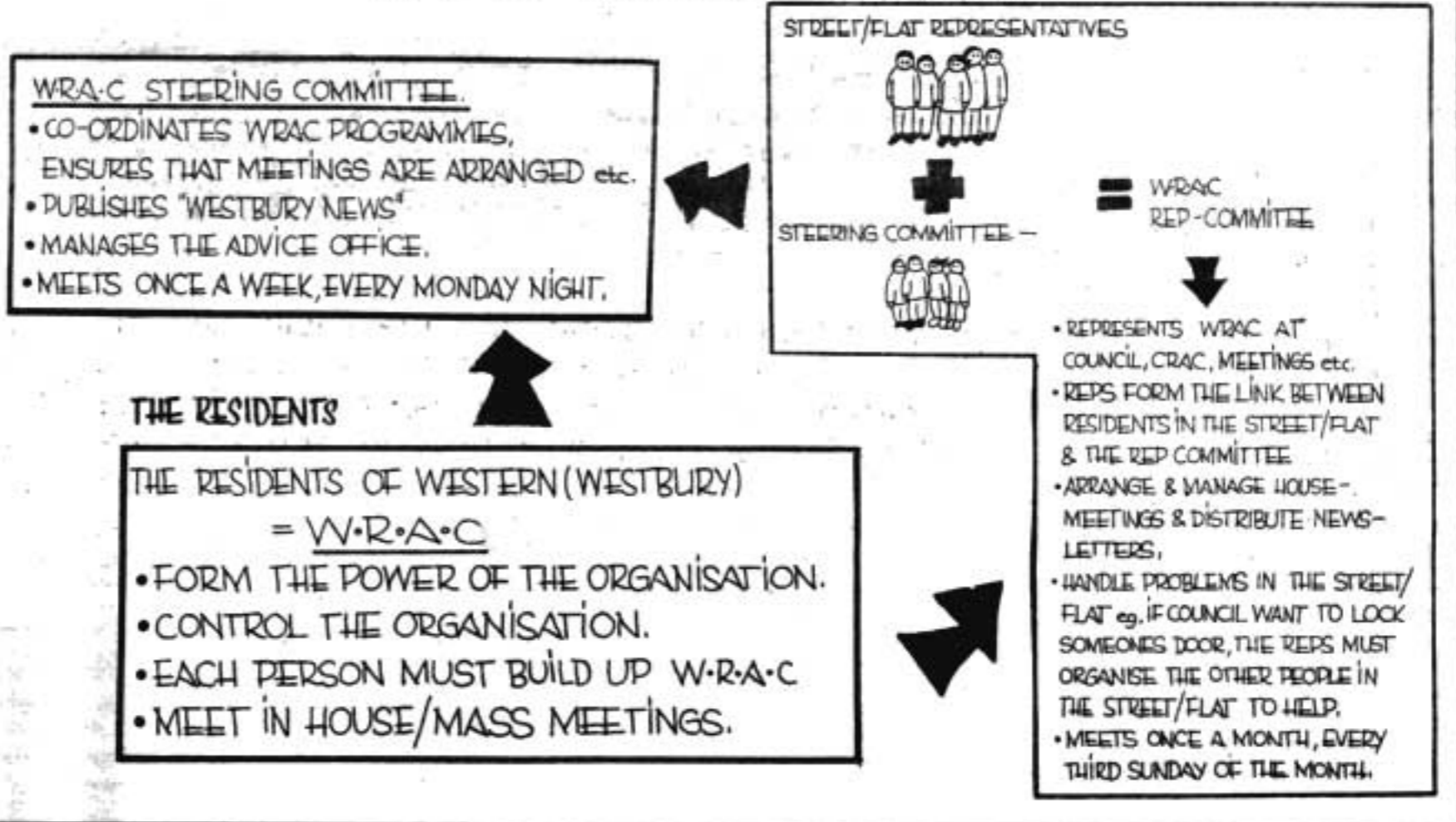
**Why was it formed?**

In the past we depended on "representatives" to fight for us.

Through bitter experience we learnt that our living conditions were not improved in this way. The Coloured Management Committee (CMC) agreed that the Council should build sub-economic houses in Ext 3 — these houses have no hot water, no ceilings, no plastering and the toilet is in the kitchen.

This is why we formed Wrac. We realised that as the residents of Western/Westbury we must all work together to improve our township. We must fight our own battles!

### HOW WRAC WORKS



### How is Wrac different from the Coloured Management Committee(CMC)

	WRAC	CMC		WRAC	CMC
● Established by whom?	By the residents of Western/Westbury. W.R.A.C. is a "people's organisation".	By the City Council and the Government as part of Apartheid (that is why it is called the "Coloured" Management Committee) "C.M.C. is a tool of the Council."	● What are the aims of the committee?	● W.R.A.C. defends rights for decent housing and rents we can afford. ● Initiates programmes eg. bulk-buying scheme, advice office, creche. ● To educate ourselves we must learn that it is not "an act of God" that we are poor, but that a minority of selfish people have planned that we should be poor and that we should remain so. ● Through W.R.A.C. we can unite with other black people in Lenz and Soweto. The Council oppresses us by using divide and rule tactics. In W.R.A.C. we believe that we must unite and win.	● To fool us into thinking we have a say. The C.M.C. is allowed to do small things eg. prune trees in Western every five years and put up road signs. But big decisions are taken by the whites. This is part of the reform strategy which says: "Give them a little, divide them a lot." ● The C.M.C. promotes apartheid, teaching people that they are "Coloureds" who must get 2nd class houses, transport, education, pension etc.
● Who are the members?	All the thousands of people in the township (except those who work against unity in the community).	Eight (8) "representatives" from the "coloured" townships in Jhb. Only one member is from Western.			
● Do the people who work on the committee get paid?	Everyone in W.R.A.C. works as a volunteer in the interest of the community.	Each C.M.C. member is paid a monthly salary by the Council. "Paid servants of the devil."			
● What power does the committee have?	W.R.A.C. exists because of the POWER OF THE PEOPLE. The thousands of residents in our township have the power to say "Yes" or "No" to Council IF WE STAND UNITED!	The C.M.C. is like a toothless bulldog, not supported by the people. It can only make "recommendations". THE WHITE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MAKES ALL THE DECISIONS.			

# SOLIDARITY WITH SAAWU AND THE PEOPLE OF CISKEI



Johannesburg meeting in solidarity with Saawu and the people of the Border region

FOR more than three months the people of East London's Mdantsane township have boycotted buses and used trains to get to work in East London.

Residents decided to boycott the buses of the Ciskei Transport Company after the company raised fares by 50c on a weekly ticket.

Each day residents walk several kilometers to Mdantsane's five stations. Some people have to walk as far as 30 km a day.

Although Mdantsane township is only 30 km outside East London, it is part of the Bantustan. Mdantsane's residents work mainly in East London, but are Ciskei citizens.

Prime Minister Lennox Sebe of the Ciskei has done all in his power to end the boycott. He recruited vigilantes from the rural areas to set up roadblocks in the township to stop workers travelling by taxi.

Sebe's vigilantes have been responsible for assaulting many people with sjamboks and kirries at these road blocks.

They have also detained people in the Sisa Dukashe sports stadium where they are tortured.

On 4 August Sebe's police opened fire on commuters trying to catch the trains to work. Over 90 people were killed and hundreds were injured.

Sebe has also:

- Detained over 1000 people
- Banned the South African Allied Workers Union in the Ciskei
- Detained eight members of the Committee of Ten elected by the community to organise the boycott
- Detained almost the entire executive of Saawu.

But all this intimidation has not weakened the people of Mdantsane. As one resident said: "The buses smell of detention and blood, we will never use them again."

The story of how the boycott began is told by a member of the Committee of Ten, elected by the people of Mdantsane to organise the boycott:

"When we heard about the fare increases the community held a meeting. People from

Mdantsane elected ten of us to be their representatives and to speak to the managers of the bus company. We were called the Committee of Ten.

The community said they could not afford the fare increases because they have a lot of family members to support. They sometimes have as many as five children who must catch the buses to school. They cannot afford to pay increased fares for all the children.

There are also many people unemployed in Mdantsane. These people cannot afford to pay the increased fares. The people of Mdantsane live far from East London that is why fares are so high.

But we did not chose to live so far away. The Government moved the people to Mdantsane. If they want us to live there, then they must keep the bus fares low.

The manager of Ciskei Transport Company refused to meet us because he said he had already spoken to the representatives of the community, by this he meant the Ciskei Government.

He said he did not recognise us, we told him he must learn to recognise those who are using his transport. We also tried to get half fares for scholars, but they refused this as well.



Thozamile Gqweta, Saawu president, forced into hiding by the Ciskei Security police.

We held a second meeting with the community and they said we must try to negotiate again.

We tried a second time to meet with the manager, but he still refused to see us. We then called a third meeting of the community.

It was at this meeting that the people decided to boycott the buses."

### The shootings at Mount Ruth

Sebe's police tried everything to end the boycott. Two weeks after

## "The buses smell of detention and blood"



The unity of the people of Mdantsane against bus fare increases and the brutal Ciskei Government, serves as an example to us all. Here residents talk about the boycott, the violence of the Ciskei police, and the unity of the people.

the boycott started, Sebe's police surrounded Mdantsane's five stations. They tried to stop people catching the trains.

When they did not succeed they started shooting the commuters. The police and the Ciskei Government say only five people were killed.

But eyewitnesses say as many as 90 people were killed.

This is what one passenger saw:

"The soldiers were all armed with rifles and were lined up along the railway line. When the people came to get onto the trains they were told to go and use the buses. The people refused and moved towards the trains. A shot was fired and they all ran. The soldiers kept shooting while they were running away"

Another person said: "The commuters shouted that they were not at war and wanted to get to work. The police drew fire arms and fired without warning at the commuters. I saw an old man fall to the ground holding his leg which was bleeding. I went past a young man lying on his back, the vigilantes approached him and beat him."

### Sisa Dukashe

Many residents were arrested by the vigilantes at roadblocks and taken to the Sisa Dukashe stadium where they were tortured. Here is one story of what happened at the stadium:

"My sister was shot by the police at the station on the 4th August. A day after the funeral of my sister, at 2 am in the morning, the vigilantes came to my house. They knocked on the doors and windows and said I must go with them.



Assaulted for not catching the buses

They said I was using a white Golf to transport workers who were boycotting the buses. In fact I have no car at all. They took me to the

Sisa Dukashe stadium where I was assaulted. I was suspended while handcuffed, and whipped on my body and feet for several hours with sjamboks and sticks.

They left me in a change room with 35 other people. I was left there for three days. During that time many other people were assaulted by the vigilantes.

We were given no food and water. There was no toilet in the room. There was no running water and we had to go to the toilet right there in the room.

By the third day there were 80 people in the room. At one stage the vigilantes took a young woman out of the room. They raped her in the change room next door. On the Tuesday they took me to the police station and handed me over to the police. On the Thursday I was taken to court.

I had no idea what charge I had to face. There was no charge sheet in court. So I was taken back to my cell.

The next day I was taken to court and charged with public violence. They say I committed a crime in Mdantsane at the time when I was actually in prison in the Sisa Dukashe Stadium."

### Gqweta

Six weeks after the boycott began, Thozamile Gqweta, president of the South African Allied Workers Union, the biggest union in the Eastern Cape area, offered to end the boycott.

He said commuters would agree to negotiate if the Ciskei Government agreed to:

- Release all eight detained members of the Committee of Ten.
- Compensate families of people killed and injured.
- Withdraw CTC buses from Mdantsane while negotiations take place.

Sebe's Government did not respond to this offer of negotiation.

However the CTC bus company has been very badly hit by the boycott and it has lost R2 million so far.

Two months after the boycott started Sebe lowered the increase by half. However he did not want it to look like a victory for the commuters, so he said that he had lowered the fares because of the drop in the price of petrol.

### The people remain united

After three months of walking to work and facing constant threats to their lives, the people of Mdantsane are still solidly behind the boycott.



The trains have become places for people to meet, pass on information and keep their spirits up.

"When we decided to begin the boycott, we were not sure if the community would stand united. But Sebe's decision to crush the boycott at all costs swung the outcome. It brought the community behind the boycott."

In solidarity with their parents, school students in Mdantsane and Duncan Village have been boycotting classes.

No one rides CTC buses anymore and the bus company has had to

retrench drivers and withdraw part of the service from the township.

As one resident said: "Sebe certainly knows how to unite the people, even his former supporters are so shocked by what they have seen that they have thrown away their Ciskei National Independence, party cards and are now walking to the stations with everyone else."

### Sebe blames Saawu

Sebe believes that the South African Allied Workers Union is behind the boycott.

"He does not understand that the community themselves took the decision to boycott the buses because they cannot afford the fare increases," a member of the union said.

In an effort to stop the boycott, Sebe banned Saawu. He detained the whole Saawu executive and sent his vigilantes to detain, and assault anyone found with Saawu membership cards and T-shirts.

But Sebe's actions have not destroyed Saawu. Instead Saawu membership has grown as never before.

Workers discuss the union on the train and from work. Union members encourage their fellow passengers to join unions. It is not just their own union they promote. It is the cause of unions in general and the benefit of worker organisations.

### The trains

All public meetings are banned in Mdantsane. So the people use the trains as a meeting place to discuss issues and pass on information.

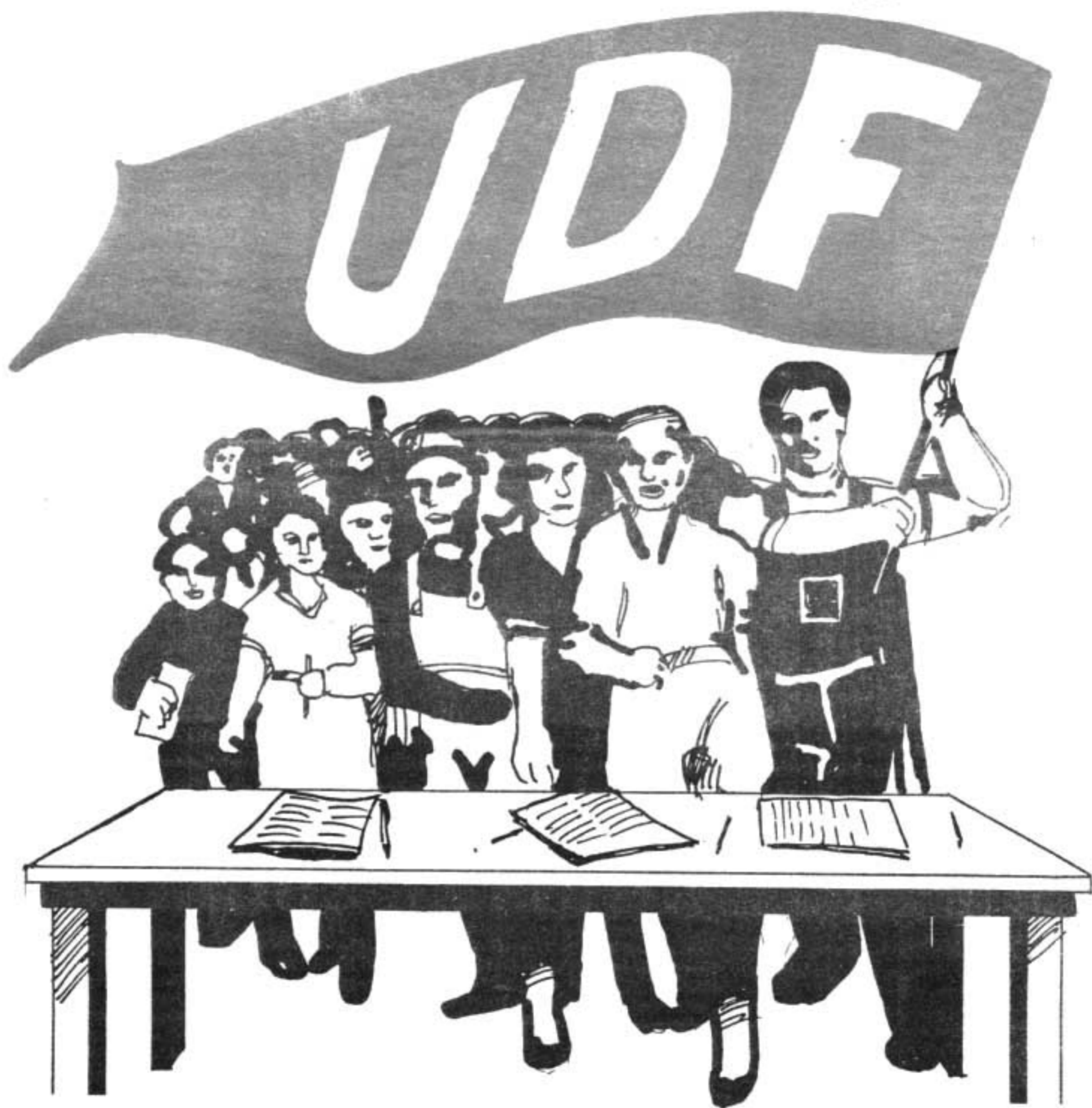
The trains have become important places for the community to meet and keep up their spirits.

This is how one commuter described what happens on the trains: "People also sing freedom songs on the trains. They start singing when the train leaves the station. They keep singing until the train reaches East London.

Passengers discuss the latest news in the trains, as well as the progress of the bus boycott. They also tell each other about the latest deaths, detentions and releases.

Sebe supporters are not allowed on the trains. If the passengers find vigilantes or Sebe supporters on the trains, they are thrown out."

# Million Signature Campaign



Beginning 22 January 1984

**No to the new constitution  
No to Koornhof's laws  
Yes to the UDF Yes to Freedom**