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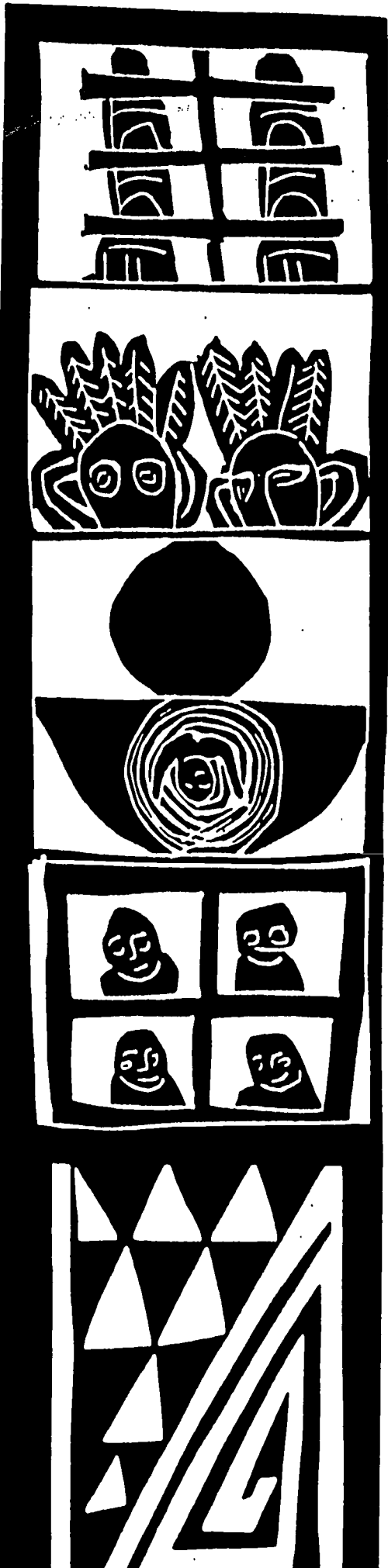
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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit is designed to allow students to evaluate the social, cultural, political, and economic changes occurring in South Africa. Specially prepared portfolios serve as mini-museums and historical archives for study. Examples of historical and contemporary popular culture are included. Numerous documents, activities and resources are offered, along with study questions and information for additional inquiry. (EH)

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# SOUTH AFRICA IN TRANSITION

Curriculum Units and Study Guide

Grades 6-8

Juana Tancig-Brown

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## Rationale

The strongest impressions South Africa left with me, were of the importance of individuals as agents of change in achieving a democratic society. I was just as impressed with how at every level of society the individual works with others for the good of the whole. Whether in small villages or in large urban areas, the importance of community was always evident. South African democracy is the product of the tireless commitment and effort of courageous individuals, but could not have been possible without these individuals joining together in order to achieve a common goal.

Sharing these impressions with my students became the impetus for developing my curriculum units on South Africa. I wanted to guide my students through a tour of the country similar to the one I had undertaken, helping them identify along the way the strands that make up this multicultural democratic society. I wanted the process of inquiry and discovery to be informed by my students curiosity and by student generated-questions which access to primary source material provided would spark. In order to allow the broadest perspectives to emerge I developed integrated curriculum units that draw on the arts, sciences and humanities as tools with which the students could undertake their journey.

This multidisciplinary perspective creates a more authentic learning environment, approximating how students would learn in the "real world". Students evaluate the social, cultural, political, and economic changes taking place in South Africa through the use of specially prepared portfolios which serve as mini-museums and historical archives. Cultural exhibits containing examples of Xhosa and Zulu traditions, as well as contemporary South African popular culture, are all included in this portfolio. Also included are historical documents, such as copies of the Constitution and the ANC charter. Using prior knowledge of changes in U.S. culture and society as the schema to help students organize and integrate this information, a more cohesive picture of South Africa's transition will begin to emerge.

This objective will also help the students draw connections between South Africa's road to democracy and the struggles in our own history, identifying parallels between our respective sociopolitical system, and between South Africa's rainbow nation and our own multicultural society. I would like students to assess the importance of individual social action and identify opportunities for social actions as a member of a community. In order to do this it is important that students acquire content knowledge in a context that allows the students to work in concert with others, thus reinforcing the objectives of democracy by allowing the inquiry process to be a democratic one as well.

I knew I wanted the students to read, evaluate, and analyze the many pieces that together make up the complex story of South Africa in transition, but I also wanted to create a context for this process that would allow students more than a cursory look at random facts and pictures. The process of change must be studied within a holistic framework. This framework centers on an integrated perspective as the thread with which students connect the many pieces that make up the South African cultural quilt. An essential part of this inquiry is to allow student groups to identify their own areas of interest and to generate their own set of content and organizational objectives. Giving students this ability empowers them to act as an autonomous micro community/society which must

engage in aspects of the democratic process. Students must take the initiative to organize themselves, to engage in spirited dialogue insuring that this process is inclusive of all group members. This process parallels the democratic process of our two democracies. Thus the democratic process is both the lesson's objective content knowledge as well as the methodology used to understand and analyze.

Traveling in South Africa allowed me to see the widespread reforms within all institutions and I admired the sort of effort that in place to improve and democratize education. The government is acutely aware that this next generation needs to be better prepared academically. They are also aware that education has to prepare students not only for jobs, but to assume the role of responsible citizens who can continue the work that others before them began. This is the role of education in all democracies and as such educators must accept the responsibility to democratize the classroom and the process of learning, for the good of our students and our society.

## Objectives

1. Understand the changes occurring in South Africa's institutions using primary source documents and visual documentation
2. Identify the important issues these institutions must address to remedy past inequities and create an inclusive democratic society.
3. Assess the role of the individual citizen as well as the role of community groups and organizations in effecting these changes and in achieving the stated goals.
4. Explain the role of geography, the environment and natural resources in the past and current historical transformations of South Africa.
5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of our own political, social and cultural institutions as vehicles for democratic ideals and action.
6. Understand the importance of negotiation, compromise and non-violent conflict resolution for the creation and maintenance of a democratic society, applying this process in a collaborative group setting to achieve a common goal.
6. Develop student generated mini-units for partner schools and elementary classes that feature knowledge of South Africa's historical, geographic, political and /or cultural changes.

## Strategies for Getting Started

Archives and Museum portfolios can be used in a variety of ways. Each quarter my students are divided into groups of fours and they work cooperatively on major projects for the theme units I have designed. Each group gets a set of portfolios. Teachers may decide to compile portfolios so each group receives portfolios which contain the same documents, this way all groups will be working simultaneously on similar activities and research. Another suggestion would be to give each group documentation on different aspects of South Africa's transition. Groups would then specialize in a specific area and become the area experts for the class, whether in the arts, economy, politics, and environmental arena..

It is important that however you choose to divide the classroom, that the students be allowed to be part of the decision process in what they will choose to focus on and in how they will demonstrate their knowledge. I like to start with a brainstorming session before we embark on our research. This can be as simple as a **mini-lesson** giving a brief overview of South Africa, followed by a **K-W-L chart**. I started my mini-lesson with a personal reflection of my trip to S.A. accompanied by some attention-grabbing slides. You need not have made a personal visit, however, you could start with overhead pictures of Nelson Mandela, the now famous Hector Peterson photo and others included in this packet. I also informed my students that we were going to all "travel" to South Africa and would have to do a little research for our trip. Following this mini-lesson students may work on the K-W-Ls, which allows them to identify prior knowledge, as well as what they would like to learn about this topic.

Once student are in their groups a good way to embark on the unit (or trip) is to begin with a look at the **geography** of the country. In order to travel there students must know the location and do some investigation on the costs of travel, the distance and time to get there, as well as the **weather** since they need to know what to pack! Because of the stark differences among provinces students needed to be informed on the specifics of the locations we would visit. My class trip followed my own, so I used my itinerary, but your class could design their own. We worked on such real-life details as securing travel documents, inoculations ( our itinerary included Kruger Park - a malaria area), and **calculating** the costs of the trip as well as the current dollar-to-rand conversion rates. We used a travel book to accomplish much of this leg work, but I also had the students call the State Department and **write letters** to the South African embassy for any available information.

### "In" South Africa

Each student arrived with an itinerary in hand which detailed where we were going . High on the list was a visit to Nelson Mandela, so we chose to fly into Johannesburg. We were careful when we selected our hotel, aware that the city has problem areas much like our own large cities. Although English is the most widely spoken language, there are 11 official languages, including Zulu and Xhosa. We decided as a class we wanted to learn some basic **vocabulary** so as to be able to greet people in their own tongue. We also brushed up on some basic **past and recent history**, after all we would have to be informed and articulate when we met several dignitaries and luminaries who were scheduled to see us. These important hosts would, of course, be some

of our students who had eagerly volunteered to role-play Mandela and others.

The necessary material for this would be included in the portfolios. Inside we had the **time-line**, which gave us an annotated but informative overview of South Africa's history. I had the students work on these along with the study sheets. These **questions and activities** would allow my students to **interpret** the information on the time-line, **infer** the meaning of events, begin to identify a **cause and effect** relationship between past and present history, as well as to provoke more questions for group research. It would also help in the **collaborative** process, as the students begin to **organize** the material, and themselves as a micro-community.

**Team members** have been asked to take on specific responsibilities within their groups. This both facilitates the process of inquiry as well as builds in the elements of **accountability** needed to complete and **assess** the work. Some of my students chose such professions/tasks as **historian, statistician, artist/picture editor, and resource librarian**. These are only possibilities and your students and you will have your own ideas of what is needed. must begin a democratic process of choosing which tasks will be performed by whom and what activities they will choose to work on. Doing this will require that all members be engaged: in **joint decision-making**; in **sharing ideas**; **actively compromising**; and in some form of **peaceful conflict-resolution**. This begins to mimic the steps through which South Africa emerged as a **democratic nation**. As teams become more involved in the projects, the difficulty of South Africa's task will take on a more personal dimension and be better understood.

This packet contains material intended to be used in a setting where students participate **interactively** in the learning process. Students are challenged to explore the contents of the archive/museum and trusted to make **choices** about what activities, in addition to the suggestions provided, they would like to use to further explore the material. It is important that classroom resources on South Africa are made available to supplement the materials in the portfolio. It is also important that students have access to **listening and art centers** to widen the possibilities for exploration. I have included a list of **packet resources**, a **bibliography**, and **addresses of resource centers**. I have also added an additional list of activities which my students have chosen to do during the course of the year.

You can spend anywhere from two weeks to two semesters on this theme, but don't be discouraged from teaching about the remarkable changes for lack of time. I hope you and your students enjoy your trip as much as mine did. Don't forget to drop a postcard!



## VOCABULARY

1. **Boycott** - An organized refusal to buy or use a product in order to express protest or to pressure a government, company or individual to take action.
2. **Embargo** - A ban on trade with another nation.
3. **Apartheid** - A series of policies begun in the 1940's intended to separate people of different races in order to protect the privileges of white South Africans.
4. **Segregation** - The separation of races.
5. **Parliament** - The law-making body in South Africa consisting of two houses - the National Assembly and the Senate. Headquartered in Cape Town, the parliamentary capital of South Africa.
6. **Coalition** - The joining together of various political parties in order to govern jointly.
7. **Khoisan** - South Africa's earliest inhabitants. The San, a nomadic group and the Khoi, cattle herders, lived in the western parts of South Africa.
8. **Xhosa** - Part of the Nguni cultural and linguistic group, they are recognized as one of South Africa's eleven official languages. Nelson Mandela was born a Xhosa prince.
9. **Zulu** - See Xhosa. Traditionally settled in parts of present day KwaZulu-Natal province. They have been recognized for their uniquely beautiful beadwork and as the tribe of such notable chiefs as Shaka Zulu.
10. **Afrikaaner** - The name given to descendants of Dutch, German, French settlers. The British would later call these people Boers, a word meaning farmers.
11. **Kraal** - A traditional Zulu village, it is usually constructed in a circular shape and surrounded with a wall of dead branches for defensive purposes.
12. **Homelands** - A term used by the white apartheid government for reservation-like areas where blacks were forced to resettle according to arbitrary tribal designation. Blacks were not allowed outside these areas without a pass and explicit permission.
13. **Difaqane** - The destruction and scattering of the Bantu-speaking people as a result of war.
14. **Braai** - Traditional South African barbecue .
15. **Mielies** - Corn. Used to make mieliemeal , a type of porridge resembling grits.
16. **Sawubona** - Hello . Used in Siswati, Isixhosa, and Isizulu with some variations.

## TIME LINE - HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA

- 40,000BC San people settle in South Africa
- 300AD Bantu people arrive in KwaZulu Natal
- 1487 Bartolomeu Dias sails around the Cape of Good Hope
- 1500 Sotho people settle in today's Lesotho
- 1652 Dutch settlement started in Table Bay, Cape Town
- 1688 French Huguenots arrive in the Cape
- 1690 Boers move inland
- 1750 Nguni people settle in Swaziland
- 1780 Dutch fight the Xhosa at Great Fish River
- 1795 British capture Cape Town from the Dutch
- 1815 Shaka Zulu captures power - beginning of the *difaqane*
- 1820 British settlers arrive in the Eastern Cape
- 1824 King Moshoeshoe begins to consolidate the Basutho people
- 1830's The Voortrekkers begin the Great Trek
- 1838 Boers defeat the Zulus at the battle of Blood River
- 1852 Boer Republic of Transvaal created
- 1858 British defeat Xhosa after disaster of Great Cattle Killing
- 1860's Indians arrive in Natal as indentured servants to work sugar plantations
- 1869 Diamonds found near Kimberly
- 1871 Gold discovered in the Eastern Transvaal
- 1877 British annex the Boer Republic of Transvaal
- 1881 Boers defeat British and Transvaal becomes the South African Republic
- 1886 Gold discovered in the Witwatersrand
- 1893 Mohandas Gandhi arrives in Natal
- 1897 Zululand annexed by Britain
- 1899-92 Anglo-Boer War
- 1905 Government commission recommends separate development for blacks, with inferior education
- 1910 Union of South Africa created, uniting the former British colonies and Boer republics  
Blacks denied the vote. Lesotho and Swaziland become British protectorates
- 1912 South African Native Council established, an early version of the ANC
- 1913 Natives Land Act restricts black ownership of land to 7 1/2 % of the country
- 1928 Communist party begins to work for full democracy
- 1948 National Party wins the elections and will remain in control until 1994.  
Apartheid laws, including the one making inter-racial marriages illegal passed.
- 1955 ANC adopts the Freedom Charter
- 1960 Sharpeville Massacre. ANC banned by the government
- 1961 South Africa leaves the Commonwealth of Nations and becomes a Republic
- 1963 Nelson Mandela indicted during the Rivonia Trial and sentenced to life imprisonment
- 1966-68 Lesotho and Swaziland gain independence from Britain
- 1975 South Africa invades Angola
- 1976 Soweto uprisings begin
- 1977 Steve Biko is murdered
- 1985 State of emergency is declared - official murder and torture by the state increases as does black resistance
- 1990 ANC ban lifted, Nelson Mandela freed

## History of South Africa - Time Line Study Questions

Use the abbreviated facts from your time line to identify, interpret, draw conclusions, and provide opinions to the following set of questions.

1. Provide plausible explanations for the migration of Europeans to South Africa in the 14th-17th century. What additional reasons can you conclude for 19th century migration?
2. What consequences did early European colonialization have on the native people of South Africa?
3. What geographical areas would you expect to have the largest concentration of population during the looking at the 18th and 19th century? Why?
4. What year(s) would you expect to see the policies of apartheid most strongly enforced? Explain why?
5. Identify the role each of the following may have played during the apartheid years of South Africa? The Nationalist Party, the Communist Party, the ANC.
6. The Natives Land Act restricted black (75% of the population) ownership of land to only 7 ½ percent of the country. How might this policy have been implemented? What possible consequences did this policy have on the country's black population?

### **Further Activities**

1. Using a Venn diagram compare and contrast the treatment by European colonialists on the native populations of South Africa and the Americas.
2. Using classroom resources and those found in your archive portfolio, construct a time line for the years 1990 to 1996.
3. Choose a given year and corresponding event in the time line. Research this event providing facts and historical details to create a more comprehensive explanation
4. Choose an event from the time line and "illustrate" it using any of the following - painting, drawing, collage, or assemblage. You may use realism or abstraction.

## Sacred Heart Elementary School

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Noviembre 8, 1996

Estimados Padres y Guardianes:

Yo quiero empezar este boletín dándoles las gracias a ustedes por venir a nuestra primera reunión de la ASOCIACIÓN DEL HOGAR Y ESCUELA el pasado 17 de Octubre. Nosotros estamos siempre contentos por verlos! Hubo muchos padres representando cada nivel de grado. MARAVILLOSO! GRACIAS! Cada grupo (con la excepción de una clase) tuvo la oportunidad de ver al maestro por grado de su hijo/a y organizarse. Esperamos que otros clubes de padres pueden verse antes de nuestro próxima reunión el 21 de Noviembre.

Los Padres de Kindergarten se reunieron el pasado 24 de Octubre y decidieron en una fiesta de Pizza del Día de Halloween como una manera para empezar a aumentar fondos para comprar sombras para las ventanas de las clases. Dios los bendiga. Esta es un maravilloso comienzo. Déjenos unir y continuar trabajando juntos para tomar un paso a la vez por el motivo de hacer la Escuela Sagrado Corazón la mejor en esta área. Amigos, se puede lograr!! Ustedes, juntos con el personal de la escuela pueden hacerlo. Súbanse las mangas y únense con nosotros. Hagan el sacrificio de asistir a las reuniones y dar de ustedes por el amor de los niños -- nuestros niños. Dios continuará bendiciendo nuestros esfuerzos y reforzando nuestros resolvimientos para avanzar más adelante.

Por favor acepten mi disculpa personal por la inconveniente muchos de ustedes experimentaron ayer debido a los cambios abruptos en el programa del calendario. Yo acepto total responsabilidad y haré todo lo posible por evitar tal problema en el futuro. Yo aprecio su paciencia y comprensión. También, yo agradezco a la Señora Brown, Señora Scott y el personal por avanzar tal como ellos lo hicieron bajo las circunstancias. Otro ejemplo del esfuerzo de buen equipo. Esto es algo por el cual estoy muy orgullosa aquí en el Sagrado Corazón. Nosotros de verdad tenemos un gran equipo!!

**RECAUDACION DE FONDOS VENTA DE DULCES:** Las barras de chocolates ya llegaron. Estos son un surtido de chocolate con leche, mantequilla de maní y arroz crujiente vendiéndose por un dolar cada uno. Nosotros estamos pidiendo a los padres que por favor se presenten a la oficina de la escuela a recoger un suplemento para vender. Gracias a ustedes esto ha sido una campaña de recaudación de fondos exitosa en el pasado. Yo sé que podemos hacerlo tal como este tiempo con su apoyo. Dios los bendiga.

**SEGURIDAD DE LA ESCUELA:** Este tema crece cada día. Nosotros hemos decidido instalar un Sistema de Alarma ADT como una medida de precaución. Otras medidas están bajo consideración. Por ahora, este nuevo Sistema de Alarma costará a la escuela \$2000 para instalar y veinticinco dólares mensuales para mantenerlo. Aquí también usted puede ayudarnos. Nosotros usaremos algo de nuestro dinero recaudado en la campaña de fondos para pagar por la instalación.

Mtutuzeli Matshoba  
**TO KILL A MAN'S PRIDE**

Every man is born with a certain amount of pride in his humanity. But I have come to believe that pride is only a mortal thing, and that there are many ways to destroy it. One sure way is to take a man and place him in a Soweto hostel.

At the mention of the word 'hostel' those who have never been near the Soweto version, or live in places where all people are treated as people, if there is any such place in the world, will immediately think of an establishment along Salvation Army lines. They would be infinitely far from the truth. A nearer comparison would be a Nazi concentration camp. North of our location lies our own Auschwitz. From its long grey structures the chimneys jut out of asbestos roofs into the sky; row upon monotonous row of low-built rough brick is packed into a triangular patch north of Mzimhlope and the adjacent Killarney, south east of Meadowlands. These three locations are separated from the hostel by one street on two sides; the third side faces the golden mine dunes across a rocky veld depression with an almost dry stream meandering in the middle from a small

dam, which is more like a swamp, in Florida.

The hostel is, by conservative estimate, the home of some twenty thousand migrant labourers from all parts of Southern Africa, some of whom begin the trek as far away as Malawi and Zambia. Since the Kiptown floods at the beginning of 'seventy-seven, the families whose shanties were swept away in the deluge have been 'located' in a section of the hostel complex near Meadowlands. (This section was evacuated in 'seventy-six after certain tragic events about which I shall find the opportunity one day to tell you.) There they waited, a family to a five by three metre cubicle, until the WRAB could figure out what to do with them. Opposite Killamey a space just big enough for two soccer fields side by side was left vacant when the hostel was built. That is all the whole complex can boast by way of recreation facilities. There was also a bottle store, a beer lounge for fifty people all seated around rusty metal tables, and a *mai-mai* (sorghum beer) beerhall, an open square with benches along the walls and under a sort of continuous verandah. Along a street off the Soweto highway were prospering shops where the hostel inmates used to buy food. Today, the ruins of these buildings are ghastly monuments of the day of fire in June 'seventy-six.

It was there, in room 413, that my friend Somdali stayed. We had met at work. I had just been hired and was still keeping to myself, working at the tedious paper guillotine impatiently, with repeated glances at the clock high up on the wall. Lunch-time was forty-five minutes away and it seemed to me that Detail Die-cut Limited worked to a different time scale. The minutes were crawling, and Pieters had just come to instruct me about something I knew, for the

thousandth time. Perhaps he underestimated my intelligence; but more likely he was 'breaking me in', measuring my tolerance. The die-cutting machines were whining incessantly and above their noise the maddening sound of Springbok Radio screeched out of a small home-made soundbox hanging from the whitewashed concrete roof which was supported by colossal, whitewashed cylindrical pillars. The walls too were whitewashed. The thirty or so factory 'girls' were working noisily at their tables behind me, chattering and giggling as if trying to outdo the machines and the radio.

Tea-break, my first there, had been an ordeal of eyes studying me from behind large mugs and the tins that were used as teacups. Fortunately, the 'girls' had their own tea-room, otherwise it would have been worse. There were sixteen 'boys', including myself, round the long unvarnished table. I was sitting at the far side, a pungent toilet door behind me — not the type that you sit on, but a hole in the floor for squatting over. I could never bring myself to use it during all the eight months I spent working there. The tea was the only thing the firm could offer. You bought your own bread and anything that you could afford to go with it. Since I hadn't known that, and hadn't had a cent in my pocket when I was taken on in the morning, I was not eating. After being tipped by a neighbour who worked next door to Detail that one 'boy' had severed his fingers with the guillotine and there might be a 'space', I had borrowed a twenty cent piece for the train ticket and rushed there. So now I sat at the end of the table, not knowing what to do with my hands and feeling like a specimen for human study and contemplation while the others were hurriedly eating their first meal of the day. The



'girls' were chatting at the tops of their voices in the other room. One of the 'boys' suggested that John had cut his fingers on purpose to get workers' insurance money. They talked about it until the buzzer sounded after fifteen minutes.

At lunch I had nowhere to go. I decided to familiarise myself with the neighbourhood. It was one of those rusty industrial outskirts of town where one sees no one but grease-stained overall-clad mechanics and handy-men. Nothing but trucks and vans off-loading semi-processed goods. Our firm was at the southern end of Mooi street, under a maze of highways, with Heidelberg road forming a T with Mooi street, and running into mine dunes. I followed Mooi street in the direction of Carlton Centre. I had an hour, a hungry hour to kill. Not that my empty stomach worried me; well, it worried me only because it was an uncomfortable sensation which could not be totally ignored. Someone was walking beside me. His tall shadow had fallen in line with mine. Both of us had our hands in our pockets. I moved aside to give him way to pass but he did not.

'Hawu, sawubona mfowethu.' He extended his massive hand to greet. It was one of the 'boys' from the firm; tall, receding forehead, smooth dark skin and one eye. In the one eye and the wide grin I could read recognition, although I had never seen the man myself. His Elmer skipper that was no longer its original white but brownish, and the flimsy dark trousers that came to just above his naked ankles, were worn without any thought of physical decoration, but only to cover the body. I gave him my hand.

'Seems you don't recognise me, but I know you. I have seen you at Mzimhlope.' He was telling the truth. I felt slightly embarrassed at not knowing a man

who knew me. It's always like that. Anyway he did not know me by name either. 'I can't even recognise you. Let alone place you,' I answered, also showing my teeth.

'My name is Somdali. I also stay at Mzimhlope,' he said by way of introduction.

'Mzimhlope? Which side?' I was asking with due regard for his feelings, not wishing to make him feel awkward. I had already placed him in 'Auschwitz' from his appearance and the way he spoke with a deep Zulu accent. People born and bred in Soweto speak every language in a characteristic way.

'The northern side of the station,' and seeing that he had finally to divulge the guarded domicile, he amassed enough courage to tell me, 'in the hostel.'

'Oh, I see. My name is Mtutu. I stay in . . . in the location.'

'Yes. I have seen you there, when I'm going to and from the station.' They hold a servitude, a right of way in the location and are hardly worth a second glance from the location residents, except maybe the dark night's children who never fail to collect the dues on Fridays and month-ends, or the fallen women who provide the hostellers with female company for sale.

I did not have anything to say. We went a few paces before he continued. 'You were lucky to arrive first. One guy cut his fingers with the guillotine yesterday. That thing needs to be operated with care, it's dangerous. You've filled that guy's space.' It did not comment. 'They're going to teach you the machines too.' I let him go on. 'But you won't be paid before you're registered. They first take a person on trial.'

That was interesting. 'How long is the trial?'

'Two, three weeks — Pieters decides. But ag, it's only a way to get free labour out of the people they employ before they register them. Pieters is the owner of the firm. He takes the good-looking girls away in his VW station wagon 'to clean his house' before he registers them. You should see him among the girls — acts like a bull that has been kept alone for months, when it is released among a herd of cows. Some of the girls are married. When their husbands want to talk to them on the phone, or come looking for them at lunch or after work, he refers to them as 'boyfriends'. Otherwise he has a little sense of humour when he has not got out on the wrong side of his bed in the morning. His assistant is aloof and has an affair with one of the two Indian girls in the office.'

'How much is the starting pay?'

'Twenty-five rand a week. Thirty for those who have been with the firm over three years. The women, I don't know.'

He told me a little more about himself, that he had come from Mondlo near Vryheid in Natal to work in Johannesburg with a forged pass eight years before, that he had been with Detail for two years and (he must have guessed I was curious to know) that he had lost his eye in a stick-fight competition when he was a teenager, an unfortunate accident for which no-one could be blamed. 'Your mouth is dry. You must be hungry.'

'I'm used to it, mfo. Don't worry,' I said politely.

'Say it again, mfowethu. We are all used to it at one time or another of our lives. But I have fifty cents here. Let's go buy some magewu.'

That was how I struck up a friendship with the man from the hostel. At the end of the first week he lent me money to buy a weekly ticket, gave me

cigarettes every day without being asked; we ate and talked together during lunch and entrained together at Mzimhlope and Faraday Stations.

Tell me — who could deny such a man friendship? I could see that people we met who knew me always wondered what I was up to with a 'country boy', but I knew better. However I never invited him home — what could I invite him for? To remind him that he also had a family he was denied? And it was not until after I had been registered that he invited me to the hostel 'just to see where I live'.

Registration for work is such an interesting example of a way of killing a man's pride that I cannot pass it by without mention. It was on Monday, after two weeks of unrewarded labour and perseverance, that Pieters gave me a letter which said I had been employed as a general labourer at his firm. I was to take the letter to the notorious 80 Albert Street. Monday is usually the busiest day there because everybody wakes up on this day determined to find a job. They end up dejected, crowding the labour office for 'piece' jobs.

That Monday I woke up elated, whistling all the way as I cleaned the coal stove, made fire to warm the house for those who were still asleep, and took my toothbrush and washing rags to the tap outside the toilet. The cold water was revivifying as I splashed it over my upper body. I greeted 'Star', also washing at the tap diagonally opposite my home. Then I took the washing basin, half-filled it with water and went into the lavatory to wash the rest of me. When I had finished washing and dressing I bade them goodbye at home and set out, swept into the torrent of workers



rushing to the station. Somdali had reached the station first and we waited for our trains with the hundreds already on the platform. The guys from the location prefer to wait for trains on the station bridge. Many of them looked like children who did not want to go to school. I did not sympathize with them. The little time my brothers have to themselves, Saturday and Sunday, some of them spend worshipping Bacchus.

The train schedule was geared to the morning rush hour. From four in the morning the trains had rumbled in with precarious frequency. If you stay near the road to the hostel you are woken up by the shuffle of a myriad footfalls long before the first train. I have seen these people on my way home when the nocturnal bug has bitten me. All I can say is that an endless flow of resolute men, hastening in the inky, misty morning down Mohale street to the station, is an awesome apparition.

I had arrived ten minutes early at the station. The 'ninety-five' to George Goch passed Mzimhlope while I was there. This train brought the free morning stuntman show. The daredevils ran along the roof of the train, a few centimetres from the naked cable carrying thousands of electric volts, and ducked under every pylon. One mistimed step, a slip — and reflex action would send his hand clasp for support. No comment from any of us at the station. The train shows have been going on since time immemorial and have lost their magic.

My train to Faraday arrived, bursting along the seams with its load. The spaces between the adjacent coaches were filled with people. So the only way I could get on the train was by wedging myself among those hanging on perilously by hooking their fingers into the narrow runnels along the tops of the coaches,

their feet on the door ledges. A slight wandering of the mind, a sudden swaying of the train as it switched lines, bringing the weight of the others on top of us, a lost grip — and another labour unit would be abruptly terminated. We hung on for dear life until Faraday.

In Pieters's office. Four automatic telephones, two scarlet and two orange coloured, two fancy ashtrays, a gilded ball-pen stand complete with gilded pen and chain, two flat plastic trays, the one on the left marked IN and the other one OUT, all displayed on the bland face of a large highly-polished desk. Under my feet a thick carpet that made me feel like a piece of dirt. On the soft opal green wall on my left a big framed 'Desiderata' and above me a ceiling of heavenly splendour. Behind the desk, wearing a short cream-white safari suit, leaning back in a regal flexible armchair, his hairy legs (the pale skin of which curiously made me think of a frog's ventral side) balanced on the edge of the desk in the manner of a sheriff in an old-fashioned western, blue-eyed, slightly bald, jackal-faced overlord.

'You've got your pass?'

'Yes, mister Pieters.' That one did not want to be called baas.

'Let me see it. I hope it's the right one. You got a permit to work in Johannesburg?'

'I was born here, mister Pieters.' My hands were respectfully behind me.

'It doesn't follow.' He removed his legs from the edge of the table and opened a drawer. Out of it he took a small bundle of typed papers. He signed one of them and handed it to me. 'Go to the pass office. Don't spend two days there. Otherwise you come back and I've taken somebody else in your place.'

He squinted his eyes at me and wagged his tongue,

trying to amuse me the way he would try to make a baby smile. That really amused me, his trying to amuse me the way he would a baby. I thought he had a baby's mind.

'Esibayeni'. Two storey red-brick building occupying a whole block. Address: 80 Albert street, or simply 'Pass Office'. Across the street, half the block (the remaining half a parking space and 'home' of the homeless methylated spirit drinkers of the city) taken up by another red-brick structure. Not offices this time, but 'Esibayeni' (at the kraal) itself. No question why it has been called that. The whole black population of Johannesburg above pass age knows that place.

Like I said, it was full on a Monday, full of wretched men with defeated eyes sitting along the gutters on both sides of Albert Street, others grouped where the sun's rays leaked through the skyscrapers, and the rest milling about. When a car driven by a white man went up the street pandemonium broke loose as men, I mean dirty slovenly men, trotted behind it and fought to give their passes first. If the white person had not come for that purpose they cursed him until he went out of sight. Occasionally a truck or van would come to pick up labourers for a piece job. The clerk would shout out the number of men that were wanted for such and such a job, say forty, and double the number would be all over the truck before you could say 'stop'. None of them would want to miss the cut, which caused quite some problems for the employer. A shrewd businessman would take all and simply divide the money he had laid out among the whole group, as it was left to him to decide how much to pay for a piece job. Every-body was satisfied in the end — the temporary

employer having his work done in half the time he had bargained for, and each of the labourers with enough for a ticket back to the pass-office the following day, and maybe ten cents worth of dish-water and bread from the oily restaurants in the neighbourhood, for three days. Those who were smart and familiar with the ways of the pass-office handed their passes in with twenty and/or fifty-cent pieces between the pages. This gave them first preference, and they could choose the better jobs.

The queue to 'Esibayeni' was moving slowly. It snaked about thirty metres around the corner of Polly street. It had taken me more than an hour to reach the door. Inside the ten-foot wall was an asphalt rectangle, longitudinal benches along the opposite wall in the shade of narrow tin ledges, filled with bored-looking men, toilets on the lower side of the rectangle, facing wide bustling doors. It would take me another three hours to reach the clerks. If I finished there just before lunch-time, it would mean that I would not be through with my registration by four in the afternoon when the pass office closed. Fortunately I had twenty cents and I knew that the blackjacks who worked there were nothing but starving leeches. One took me up the queue to four people who stood before a snarling white boy. Those whose places ahead of me in the queue had been usurped wasted their breath grumbling.

The man in front of me could not understand what was being bawled at him in Afrikaans. The clerk gave up explaining, not prepared to use any other language than his own. I felt that at his age, about twenty, he should be at RAU learning to speak other languages. That way he wouldn't burst a vein trying to explain everything in one tongue just because it was his. He

was either bone-headed or downright lazy or else impatient to 'rule the Bantus'.

He took a rubber stamp and banged it furiously on one of the pages of the man's pass, and threw the book into the man's face. 'Go to the other building, stupid!'

The man said, 'Thanks,' and elbowed his way to the door.

'Next! Wat soek jy?' he asked in a bellicose voice when my turn to be snarled at came. He had freckles all over his face, and a weak jaw.

I gave him the letter of employment and explained in Afrikaans that I wanted E and F cards. My use of his language eased some of the tension out of him. He asked for my pass in a slightly calmer manner. I gave it to him and he paged through. 'Good, you have permission to work in Johannesburg right enough.' He took two cards from a pile in front of him and laboriously wrote my pass numbers on them. Again I thought that he should still be at school, learning to write properly. He stamped the cards and told me to go to room six in the other block. There were about twelve other clerks growling at people from behind a continuous U-shaped desk, and the space in front of the desk was overcrowded with people who made it difficult to get to the door.

Another blackjack barred the entrance to the building across the street. 'Where do you think you're going?'

'Awu! What's wrong with you? I'm going to room six to be registered. You're wasting my time,' I answered in an equally unfriendly way. His eyes were bloodshot, as big as a cow's and as stupid, his breath was fouled with 'mai-mai', and his attitude was a long way from helpful.

He spat into his right hand, rubbed his palms together and grabbed a stick that was leaning against the wall near him. 'Go in,' he challenged, indicating with a tilt of his head, and dilating his gaping nostrils.

His behaviour perplexed me, more than angering or dismaying me. It might be that he was drunk; or was I supposed to produce something first, and was he so uncouth as not to tell me why he would not allow me to go in? Whatever the reason, I regretted that I could not kick some of the 'mai-mai' out of the sagging belly, and proceeded on my way. I turned to see if there was anyone else witnessing the unnecessary aggression.

'No, mfo. You've got to wait for others who are also going to room six,' explained a man with half his teeth missing, wearing a tattered overcoat and nothing to cover his large, parched feet. And, before I could say thanks: 'Say, mnumzane, have you got a cigarette on you? Y'know, I haven't had a single smoke since yesterday.'

I gave him the one shrivelled Lexington I had in my shirt-pocket. He indicated that he had no matches either. I searched myself and gave the box to him. His hands shook violently when he lit and shielded the flame. 'Ei! Babalaaz has me.'

'Ya, neh,' I said, for the sake of saying something. The man turned and walked away as if his feet were sore. I leaned against the wall and waited. When there were a good many of us waiting the gatekeeper grunted that we should follow him inside to another bustling 'kraal'. That was where the black clerks shouted out the jobs at fifty cents a piece or more, depending on whether they were permanent or temporary. The men in there were fighting like mad to reach the row of windows where they hand in their

passes. We followed the blackjack up a sloping cement way rising to a green double door.

There was nowhere it wasn't full at the pass-office. Here too it was full of the same miserable figures that were buzzing all over the place, but this time they stood in a series of queues at a long counter like the one across the street, only this one was L-shaped and the white clerks behind the brass grille wore ties. I decided that they were of a better class than the others, although there was no doubt that they also had the same rotten manners and arrogance. The blackjack left us with another one who told us which queues to join. Our cards were taken and handed to a lady filing clerk who went to look for our records.

I was right! The clerks were, at bottom, all the same. When I reached the counter I pushed my pass under the grille. The man who took it had cropped hair and a thin sharp face. He went through my pass checking it against a photostat record with my name scrawled on top in a handwriting that I did not know.

'Where have you been from January until now, September?' he said in a cold voice, looking at me from behind the grille like a god about to admonish a sinner.

I have heard some funny tales, from many tellers, when it comes to answering that question. See if you recognise this one:

- CLERK: Heer, man. Waar was jy al die tyd, jong?  
(Lord, man. Where have you been all the time, jong?)
- MAN: I . . . I was mad, baas.
- CLERK: Mad! You think I'm your uncle, kaffer?

KAFFER: No baas, I was mad.

CLERK: Jy . . . jy dink . . . (and the white man's mouth drops open with no words coming out.)

KAFFER: (Coming to the rescue of the baas with an explanation) At home they tell me that I was mad all along, baas. 'Strue.

CLERK: Where are the doctor's papers? You must have been to hospital if you were mad! (With annoyance.)

KAFFER: I was treated by a witchdoctor, baas. Now I am better and have found a job.

Such answers serve them right. If it is their aim to harass the poor people with impossible questions, then they should expect equivalent answers. I did not, however, say something out of the way. I told the truth. 'Looking for work.'

'Looking for work, who?'

'Baas.'

'That's right. And what have you been living on all along?' he asked, like a god.

'Scrounging, and looking for work.' Perhaps he did not know that among us blacks a man is never thrown to the dogs.

'Stealing, huh? You should have been caught before you found this job. Do you know that you have contravened section two, nine, for nine months? Do you know that you would have gone to jail for two years if you had been caught, tsotsi? These policemen are not doing their job anymore,' he said, turning his attention to the stamps and papers in front of him.

I had wanted to tell him that if I had had a chance

to steal, I would not have hesitated to do so, but I stopped myself. It was the wise thing to act timid in the circumstances. He gave me the pass after stamping it. The blackjack told me which corridor to follow. I found men sitting on benches alongside one wall and stood at the end of the queue. The man in front of me shifted and I sat on the edge. This time the queue was reasonably fast. We moved forward on the seats of our pants. If you wanted to prevent them shining you had to stand up and sit, stand up and sit. You could not follow the line standing. The patrolling blackjack made you sit in an embarrassing way. Halfway to the door we were approaching, the man next to me removed his upper clothes. All the others nearer to the door had their clothes bundled under their armpits. I did the same.

We were all vaccinated in the first room and moved on to the next one where we were X-rayed by some impatient black technicians. The snaking line of black bodies reminded me of prisoners being searched. That was what 80 Albert Street was all about.

The last part of the medical examination was the most disgraceful. I don't know whether it was designed to save expense or on some other ground of expediency, but on me it had the effect of dishonour. After being X-rayed we could put on our shirts and cross the corridor to the doctor's cubicle. Outside were people of both sexes waiting to settle their own affairs. You passed them before entering the cubicle, inside which sat a fat white man in a white dust-coat with a face like an owl, behind a simple desk. The man who had gone in ahead of me was zipping up his fly. I unzipped mine and stood facing the owl behind the desk, holding my trousers with both hands. He tilted his fat face to the right and left twice or thrice.

'Ja. Your pass.'

I hitched my trousers up while he harried me to give him the pass before I could zip my trousers. I straightened myself at leisure, in spite of his 'Gou, gou, gou!' My pride had been hurt enough by exposing myself to him, with the man behind me preparing to do so and the one in front of me having done the same, a row of men of different ages parading themselves before a bored owl. When I finished dressing I gave him the pass. He put a little maroon stamp somewhere in amongst the last pages. It must have meant that I was fit to work.

The medical examination was over and the women on the benches outside pretended they did not know. The young white ladies clicking their heels up and down the passages showed you they knew. You held yourself together as best as you could until you vanished from their sight, and you never told anybody else about it.

'Maar, my friend. Why don't you come with me to the hostel one day? Just to see where I stay, and meet some of the guys who come from Natal with me. Are you afraid?' Somdali asked as we went through the barriers at Faraday station.

It was the third week after I had been to the pass office. I was even beginning to get used to the twenty-five rand and few cents in a brown envelope that the Indian lady bookkeepers in the office had given me, and which made me feel very ashamed each time I received it. I felt like a dupe when I had to go to the office to sign for chicken feed after working honestly for a whole week and taking Pieters's scorn without any complaint. He seemed to think that we, the



workers, depended on him for a living — and to forget that he, in turn, depended on our labour for his easy life. Maybe this was because he knew that the greater demand was for jobs, for work, not for labour. Everybody was at his mercy. Sordali had been right about the bull-like behaviour of our boss. He behaved like a sheikh in a harem. None of the women liked it, but they had to hide their disapproval as long as they wanted to remain working. We only gritted our teeth and let him continue.

I could not refuse Sordali's invitation. It was not an invitation to a cocktail party but it was an invitation right enough. Such are the invitations of the simple. Apart from the fact that he was my friend, in the evenings I usually had nothing to do at home but listen to the hysterical screams of my sisters' babies, while being asked to shift this way and that in the doll's house. And the hostel was no longer dangerous: seventy-six had come and gone. Before Sordali invited me there, the hostel was to me a place I knew of and didn't know about. I knew it must be hell to live there — family men without families, married men without wives. That was how I had seen it, and that was where my concern ended. But when it comes to the misery of life one has to partake to really understand. The deepest pangs of the man caught up in squalor are never really felt from a safe distance. Most people shrink from experiencing what it feels like to be down, licking the base of the drain. Sordali's invitation was my chance to get to the core of hostel life.

In order for you to understand why I had never cared about the hostel, I think a brief description of how I viewed the hostel from afar will be necessary. At first the security of the hostel was tight, with

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watchmen at every gate, preventing outsiders from entering the premises. Perhaps someone still had a little conscience, and wished to try and hide the shameful place. As time went on this security slackened until there was free traffic between the location and the hostel, although only men went there — it would have been sheer madness for a woman to go into that encampment of deprived men. Even then it was mainly the location drunks who went in after the poisonous brew of yeast, brown bread, brown sugar and water — mbamba, skokiaan and other variations of the same thing which they consumed there out of sight of the people of the location. We only went there to sell something — a watch maybe, the hostellers being ever prepared to 'snatch a bargain' — or to use the showers and quickly return to the location.

The few inmates with a venturesome spirit or having relatives 'outside', most of whom had been discovered there in the Golden City by the tracing of lineage, went out to mix with the location people. Black people seem to believe that they are all related to each other in this way. This way you can never be lost, wherever you go, because everybody with the same surname or clan-name as you is regarded as a relative and is obliged to you. Others formed bands who invaded the location at night solely to rape and kill, so that there was someone lying dead somewhere in the small location once in every week. This gave the hostel people a formidableness that made it difficult to befriend them or to sympathise with their terrible lot.

The bulk of the inmates chose to stay 'inside' at weekends, filling in the emptiness of their lives with alcohol and traditional song that brought them nostalgia for the places of their birth, the barren

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hopelessness of which had driven them to gather scraps in the human jungles of Johannesburg. Murder was also rife inside. Dehumanized people lose their concern for life: 'We live like hogs, wild dogs or any other neglected animals. The pets of abeLungu live better than we,' Somdali would say to me on a day when he was in a really depressed mood. Normally he never complained.

'Okay Somdali, I'll go with you today. It's still early,' I said and saw that he was pleased.

At the station a man named Joe, who was already quite familiar with Somdali from dice games in the hostel, joined us. Somdali and Joe were friends, only that was rather costly to the former. What kept them going was that Somdali provided beers. Innocent Somdali was not aware of the exploitation and derived great satisfaction from living with amajita, as he would say. There was no need to wise him up. I could not help laughing inside when I heard Joe promising to get Somdali a woman and to lead the latter to a 'spot'. The expeditions always ended up with both of them drunk and Somdali claiming that he had been pickpocketed at the 'spot', but not sore about it, perhaps considering it as part of the sacrifice of learning to live Soweto-style. The three of us went up Mohale street with the wave of countless people, turned down Carr street and fifty metres later crossed the new Soweto highway where it started skirting Mzimhlope.

We entered the first 'street' to our left. It was the first time that I had been to the hostel to visit someone (I had gone there on impersonal matters) and naturally my senses were sharp. The first thing that told you you were in a different place was the smell hanging in the air, the stench of rotting rubbish,

urine, dirty water and neglected toilets, an unhygienic mucky atmosphere that almost made you puke. If you've ever been near a pigsty, then you have the right idea. Not that I rate the location much better, but at least the location smells of life, not neglect. As we went deeper into the hostel I was disgusted to think that it was humans who let other humans live like that, in the lowest state of dereliction: and yet their sweat fuelled the economy of the country to keep it going. The so-called last bastion against roving Marxism; a bastion of men scraping small sooty enamel pots to cook the tomatoes, onions and mealie meal they had in plastic carriers. A bastion of men wasting away on skokiaan, a bastion of men washing overalls in the water-troughs; a bastion of men walking in the open in their underpants. Don't count me in, and count Somdali out too.

The first dormitory was fifty short paces long. Three doors. A gap. Another pile of brownish, greyish bricks and undulating asbestos on top; this time the toilets. Six basins in a row in an enclosure with no door and the wall going only halfway up so that a passerby could see a person sitting inside. Adjacent to this: high narrow troughs, apparently to wash dishes in. Behind this: low, deep cement troughs for washing clothes in. The longitudinal half of this place an empty room with eight showers. A man was vigorously rubbing soap on his naked glistening body under one of them. The long dormitories alternated with the toilets. A man obeying the call of nature in the middle of the night had to walk outside for not less than fifteen paces - well, like in the location. The wise thing to do was to be armed when going to the toilet.

There had been an attempt to make the place

homely, maybe when it was still new. Peach trees lined our way on both sides and through the gaps between the buildings I saw that there were garden patches with wilting plants, mostly maize and potatoes. The grass behind and between the buildings grew waist high. The stench was unbearable.

At length, after jumping and stepping around the puddles, we came to where Somdali stayed. He pushed the metal door inwards without knocking. The noise it made put our teeth on edge. He went in ahead and as we followed, my foot sank into stagnant water just in front of the door. There was a buzz of agitated insects.

When you go into a place where people are living, you expect to find something, at least, which indicates that this is so. But in the hostel you are utterly disheartened. The door opened into a medium-sized room. The floor was bare, dust-laden cement. Near the wall facing the door, which had two squares cut into it for windows that had never been cleaned since the hostel was built, were two tables made of cement slabs on metal stilts coming out of the floor. The benches on opposite sides of the tables were also made of cement slabs resting on sewerage pipes. Two old men in denim overalls sat at one table talking in a dull murmur and apparently drinking from a plastic container between them. They did not even raise their eyes to see who was coming in. Against the side walls were long steel cabinets from which the green paint had peeled long ago and which rust now covered almost completely. They extended from the front wall half the length of the side walls to two openings on the left and right. The walls were not plastered and the asbestos roof rested on rafters that were coated with thick layers of soot and spider-webs.

The soot might have come from a brazier during winter.

We followed Somdali to the opening on the right, into a closet for four people sleeping in the corners. The first opening led to another, into a closet exactly the same as the one we had passed, except that it was the last and had only one opening to it. Eight men on either side of the central room, which meant sixteen men to one door and, there being three doors in the long dormitories, forty-eight men to one unit fifty paces long. There is absolutely no privacy there. You sleep in your corner of the closet, on the door-like lid of a brick kist in which you are supposed to keep your possessions, a metre from the man next to you and the men below you.

The last closet was full of men huddled around a small one-plate stove hardly a foot high from which a thin battered chimney pipe rose to a small hole in the roof. The sun was setting and it was cold in the 'house', although the middle of summer was not long gone. Worn, dirty shreds and blankets were heaped on the wooden lids and from the smutty rafters hung all sorts of dust-covered rags, jackets, overcoats, jerseys and whatever you may care to name. There was even a bicycle suspended with a wire, and two electric guitars. A smell of rotting food, sweat and the coal-smoke from the miniature stove stifled the air. Suddenly the naked bulb blinked alive and shed a light that made the room eerie, casting darkness in the corners.

'This is my bed, majita, make yourselves at home,' Somdali said and took off his jacket which he added to the clothes hanging near his 'bed'. We sat on the kist, Joe settling down beside me without showing any sign of surprise at the unspeakable living con-



ditions. As I said, he was used to personal visits to the hostel. As for me, I was shocked.

After hanging his coat Somdali turned to greet the others. When we had come in they had just glanced at us and resumed their conversation. The African way of entering the company of others is for the newcomer to announce himself by greeting first. It is the 'umthakathi' (wizard) who arrives unseen. 'Sonibonani ekhaya (Good evening at home).'

'Awu, Somdali! You are back from esiLungwini. Athin'ama Bhunu? (What do the Boers say?)' They greeted him enthusiastically, as if they were noticing Somdali for the first time.

'What can they say, but continue to give us the scorpion's bite? Er, madoda, I have brought you a friend of mine that I work with . . . ' and he introduced me, starting with my first name and inserting the possessive preposition 'ka' before my surname. 'Well, this skelm Joe you know.'

One man held my hand and introduced himself. The others followed suit. I counted eight of them. Somdali came to sit next to me. 'You seem not to be at ease, my friend. Relax. You must be shocked by this stable when you see it for the first time. You'll get used to it, mfowethu.'

'Let's hope I will. But I doubt it,' I replied.

'This is our reward for working for the whites. They don't care how you live, as long as you turn up for work the following day,' said Somdali bitterly.

'They don't know. Otherwise they'd be ashamed of themselves,' I answered, thinking that no normal human being could consciously tolerate other people living that way.

'You think so?' Somdali seemed to disagree. 'What do you say of the very idea of building such a place

of removing men from their families after taking their livestock and what little land they had, and burying them in filth? Is that not meant to kill a man's pride in himself?

I understood what Somdali meant. Before I could make that known in so many words he went on, with gall in his voice, 'If you take a man, a married man, from his wife it's tantamount to castrating him. A bullock is castrated to make it strong for labour purposes.'

'Yes, Somdali is right, ndodana (son).' It was old Khuzwayo, the grey-head sexagenarian Somdali had told me was like a father to them in their labour camp dens. 'Come nearer boy, I want to see you when I talk to you. Fana, sit yourself somewhere.' Fana stood up from the tin of paint he was sitting on. I replaced him beside the old man. The little stove was beginning to glow on the sides, a solitary pot filling its whole face and boiling furiously. The heat-wave was too much for me, so I shifted a little backward. The old man also positioned himself to look directly into my face. His Bushman-like features were attractive.

'Ya, ndodana ka . . . ? (Yes, son of?)' I answered him by finishing his greeting with my name. I did this twice before he heard me well. 'You defend abeLungu by saying they do not know? Now, my boy, tell me this: is this — the way we live, all of us blacks — our rightful legacy from the ancestors, or from Tixo who made heaven and earth?' He paused, looking at me. 'Or is it an apportionment that our conquerors think fit for us?'

'It is the latter, baba,' I replied without certainty, as I did not know what old Khuzwayo was getting around to. Everybody was listening. Doubtless they

were all sensitive about the question of their status in the social stratification. They knew that a man could not sink lower down than they were, and the only way they could let off steam was by damning the system that degraded them. To them every white man stood for the forces that held them down with their faces in the muck of the hostel. In other words, their hopelessness bred a volcanic racism.

'That is right, my boy. You are following my words well. You see, they have laid claim to everything that you can turn your eyes to see. If everything had gone according to their desires they would have owned even us black people, to till the soil for them until the end of the world. But one human being cannot be owned by another. And since they are unable to own us, all they lack is a way to justify genocide. You can remove a man from the face of a piece of paper, scratch his name out and pretend that he does not exist, but you cannot remove him physically from the face of the earth without murdering him. For he is born here and so he dies here, fighting perhaps for the one square metre he owns in the world. For man was created by Nkulunkulu so that he might avail himself of that which umhlaba (earth) was made to give. Man was not created to divide for others that which is bad and to keep that which is good for himself. We all die in the end and leave everything as we found it when we were born.'

'Ya. The old man is right, mfowethu. No man is ordained to determine the fate of another. If he has, by some vile means, usurped the other's right to self-determination, then peace is disturbed. When peace is disturbed it is always a sign that someone who is dissatisfied is trying to get his rightful share from the world.' So said the man who had introduced himself

as Bongani. I had tried to vindicate their oppressors and they assailed me from all directions.

I attempted to manoeuvre out of the spot I was in by explaining exactly what I had meant. 'What I intended to say was that the majority of whites do not know how you live because the whole rotten situation is camouflaged. The harsh enforcement of the inhumane laws that result in such conditions produces a calm of sorts, and this deceives them into thinking that everybody is satisfied except a few anarchists and agitators who must be weeded out. I think that the people are very apt when they refer to the police as "the camouflage," these days, because they camouflage black vexations with brute violence — and whenever there is a marked "calm" the whites are made to believe that all is peaceful. Whatever the cause of strife was, it has been settled and things are under control. The means by which this has been brought about are made light of, or deliberately and unscrupulously suppressed. A counterfeit peace is produced for them. They don't know what is going on "in their own backyard". That's what I meant.'

They seemed satisfied with my clarification, for no one attacked me after that.

Old Khuzwayo had taken to me. He slapped my shoulder amicably. 'You know, my son, you know. For a moment I thought that you were lost. Your explanation takes my mind back to the end of the Second World War. When the time came to ask the German nation why they had allowed people to be decimated in front of their eyes, they shamefully claimed that they had not known what was taking place until it was too late to do anything about it but stand up in defence of the sovereignty of their country. It did not help them any because everybody

was against them. Their country was divided among their enemies because they allowed some fanatics to control their destiny. Blind obedience and gullibility are suicidal.

I stayed longer than I had intended with Somdali and his mates. Bongani, who had been cooking — boiling an assortment of old vegetables into a thick soup — cut our topic short by announcing supper. Each man dived to where he kept his spoon and, at the drop of an eyelid, I was alone in front of the small stove. Even Khuzwayo had been surprisingly swift for his age. Joe came from the shadows to sit on the old man's plastic milk crate.

I saw why they had been so fast in their reactions to Bongani's call. They all ate together from the steaming pot. Three loaves of bread were placed on a sheet of paper that was spread on the dusty floor. They broke pieces from the loaves and scooped from the pot with their spoons. You could see that they were racing, each wanting to down more soup and pieces of bread than the next man. I don't wish to insult those brothers of ours, but have you ever seen the deadly excitement of a predator after making a killing? They even fought over space.

'Damn it, Fana, don't push!' snarled one of them.

'Give me space. How do you think I'll reach the pot?' retorted Fana with a full mouth.

'You're cheeky, you Fana. One day I'll beat it out of you,' the other one threatened.

Old Khuzwayo ruled for peace. 'Aww, don't fight over food like puppies, boys. You're spoiling everybody's meal. And while you're busy fighting, the food is getting finished.'

Supper over, Somdali sent Fana to buy him 'mai-mai' from the opposite dormitory. Bongani went to

wash the pot and the spoons in the sink outside. Another one took a broom to sweep where they had been eating. 'No, boy. You'll sweep tomorrow morning. The dust will take time to settle down,' said Somdali, preventing him. He collected only the crumbs they had made. There was a certain organisation in the way they lived. The young ones did the chores.

When Bongani returned he removed the guitars from their perches and gave one to Fana. They connected the guitars to an amplifier with a PM 10 and strummed for some seconds. Then, with extraordinary dexterity, they played a moving 'mbaqanga' (a fast African beat that is still a favourite with country people). The sound of an electric guitar in that gloomy lair, with the men sitting around the small stove and listening sorrowfully to the melodious twangs, the overhanging dust-covered rags, the bicycle, the shadows cast by the dim, stained light bulb, mesmerised me in a way which I fail to find words to describe. Somdali was drinking his beer in slow sips. He passed the can to the next man, who took a few draughts and also passed it on. If you did not want to drink you gave the can to the man beside you. The music paused while Bongani and Fana drank. They started another song immediately after that.

'What's the time, Somdali?' I asked, thinking that at home they would be wondering why I had not returned from work. I was three hours late already.

'I don't know, my friend. You want to go now? Madoda, any of you got a watch?' None had, so one of the younger men had to go and ask the time in the opposite house, and bring another can of beer.

'Yes, ndoda, I should be running away before my people decide to go looking for me at the police-

## TO KILL A MAN'S PRIDE

who hoped for world peace at this point in time were building castles in the air.

It would not be the last time I visited Søndali. Something about the dirt and the desolation of the hostel attracted me strongly towards the place. Instead of going there for vice, like many of the location people, I went there out of sympathy with my friends and maybe that is why I felt so strongly about the way they lived. What's more, sharing the emptiness of the life of Søndali and his comrades filled, for me, the listless evenings on street corners, outside the shops and at the station. Every day we gave vent to our feelings and it was amazing how therapeutic the exercise was for me. It gave me the satisfaction of knowing much more about life than those who prefer the escapism of artificiality.

As I continued going there, I discovered that song was the only solace of those lonely people. At least two days a week they sang traditional choral music. After supper they would assemble in the adjoining closet and start singing with the conscientiousness of a stage group rehearsing for a fête. Hearing this, Mboobo and others would come from the opposite house and join in the singing. Some of the songs were performed with graceful dances, so elegantly carried out that I wondered where they could all have learnt the same paces. When they sang, it was from the core of their souls, their eyes glazed with memories of where they had first sung those lyrics; and interruptions were not tolerated. Sometimes I was so moved by their music that I yearned to join them, and because I did not know the songs I sailed away in my mind for paradises that I conjured up, where people sang their troubles away. After an evening of invigorating talk and untainted African traditional

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## TO KILL A MAN'S PRIDE

stations.' It was after nine. I bade everybody good-night and stood to go. Joe did the same. Søndali took us out. 'So you've seen where I stay, my friend. Hope you come by yourself when you've got time. So long.'

'Sweet, Søndali. See you tomorrow morning,' I said, and we parted.

As we came out of the gaping fence onto the highway, I remarked about our visit to Joe.

'You know, Joe, I've never spent such a long time in the hostel. Jesus, man, these people live like animals. To travel the whole distance from where they come from to stay like this!'

'Ya. It's bad, sonny. Think of the many other such places in Soweto alone. How many are there? Let's see — it's this one, Dube, Nhlazane, Merafe, Nancefield,' counted Joe.

'And Diepkloof. All about the same size. Hundreds of thousands of disgruntled men, leaving hundreds of thousands of starving families in the so-called homelands. That's not counting us location people, because we're not much better off than the hostel residents except in that we are allowed a temporary sojourn with our families.'

'Not counting the rest of South Africa either. It's not only Johannesburg. All over the country there are people who have uprooted from normal family life to slave in the cities. Take Søndali's bitterness and multiply it about twenty million times and see if you don't arrive at a very sad and volcanic state of affairs,' said Joe, and I silently agreed with him.

At home I thought about the hostel before I dozed off. The more I recalled all the details of my visit the more I felt depressed. My last thought was that the world was still too far from perfection and that those

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song I went away feeling as if I had found treasure in a graveyard. Those men might be buried there in the labour camps, but they are still people and, because they live in the throes of debasement, human adaptability has given them a most simple and practical approach to life, and none of the illusions of people who live comfortable lives or strive only for that throughout their time on earth, never achieving it but ending up drowning their frustrations in the pleasures of the flesh, half-immersed in intoxicants and half out of their minds half the time, until their humanity rots inside them. I would rather depend on a poor man for help, because a rich man, never having known hunger himself, will let you go away with an empty stomach.

The weekends were most exciting. They made me think of words I heard from a friend (I don't know where he picked them up). He would look at some of the people we worked with, who came from the rural areas and say, 'You can take the man out of the rural country, but you can never take the country out of the man.' On Friday the dreariness was stirred by a din that reached a crescendo on Sunday afternoon.

A typical weekend went like this: after looking in at home on Friday, I would go up to the hostel in the company of Joe or some of the guys who went there to augment their scanty paypackets with Soweto's favourite game of chance, shooting craps (dice). Somdali was a loyal worshipper of Bacchus. I would find him sitting like a lord in the shadows of his kist with two or three bottles of beer between his legs, the rest of a whole crate inside the multi-purpose 'bed'. When I came in he would greet me like a long-lost friend, as if we had not been together only an hour or so before.

'Aah, son of my mother! You came just in time. Borrow a mug from one of our brothers here and let us drink to our ancestors. Bongani, give him something to drink with.'

'Here, Somdali. You're drinking the sweat of your brow? Is this what you have been working for, the whole week?' I would reply jokingly, and accept the mug that Bongani handed to me.

'Of course — what do you think? It's Friday today; everybody drinks white man's beer and feels rich. Come on, use your mouth for what it should be used now, not for preaching.'

When Joe was with me, he did not wait to be invited, but took a container and gulped down as much as he could before Somdali protested that he was drinking as if it was his last day on earth.

Meanwhile, the game would be warming up in the main room. 'Five I do, five I do . . . Eê, pop! Eê, six three!' we would hear them singing out with great gusto. On that evening the stove would burn itself to ashes with no one tending it. Fridays they did not dine together. Everyone ate an almost substantial meal in one of the city 'chesanyamas' and returned to the hostel replete. Old Khuzwayo never returned at weekends because of the boisterousness, which was too much for his aged nerves. He slept in the sky slums on the roof of the Golden City. When we felt that the game was hot enough, we went in for the gambit. Sometimes we won and at other times we lost, but mostly we lost. The foolish lost their whole pay envelopes there and it was such a pity to watch them begging to be advanced more money, only to lose that as well. Depending on the amount of money involved, it was possible for the game to last the whole night. The winners never hung around the



game long, but went off to drink their crumpled scoops in one of the countless haunts of vice. When you are poor there is no form of entertainment that you can afford to drown your misfortunes in besides over-indulgence of one kind or another.

At Msomi's you got everything: cigarettes, dagga, any concoction you wanted, and the profligate women whose sole source of income was peddling themselves to the famished hostel men. The latter were only too eager to part with a little hard-earned cash for the company of anything in skirts, no matter what she was like. Msomi's traffic in vice was booming and there was no fear of interference from the police, any sign of whom in the hostel invoked among the inhabitants a primordial bloodlust. Stoning and hacking to death of 'sellout intruders', as they referred to them, occurred from time to time.

When it got late I went home or somewhere else in the location. The difference was striking. In the location the presence of womenfolk and children contributed a certain amount of warmth and a reason for living; a man's delight is a loving woman and growing children.

Saturday morning was always a drab spectacle. Many woke up with a whole day to themselves. Before the beerhall was destroyed, everybody swarmed there to sink what had remained of their Friday earnings in beer. There was nothing else they could do. When the bar went up in flames the Msomis saw a chance to go into business supplying their hostel mates with debauchery. However, even before that, as soon as the sun surfaced in the east on Saturdays, everybody came out of their lairs to soak up the mild morning beams. They made me think of a plague-stricken concentration camp although I had never seen

one. That is why when I learnt of Auschwitz, the Nazi camp in Poland, I simply dubbed the hostel 'our Auschwitz'. Grim-looking men sat or stood against the wall drinking from tins at every house. Some did their washing at the troughs and others clustered together playing dice. Door-to-door merchants had their colourful goods draped over their shoulders and arms with the rest of their stocks in bulging paper bags. The clothing they sold ranged from men's underwear to overcoats, and even female garments which were bought and locked away until such time as the buyer took them home to present to his family. The street vendors would be preparing their makeshift shops to start selling everything from sheep entrails to chicken pieces that hummed with green flies, while the rib-cages of mongrels kept themselves at a safe salivating distance. As the day got older, the tempo would increase to a fast drunken frenzy until the night came to cover it all up.

Then, on Sunday, a sleeping social consciousness, underlined by a strong traditional inclination, showed itself. The men drank together according to their places of origin. Don't mistake this for a reflection of tribalism. It was only their recollection of how they used to spend their Sundays in the different country areas they came from — not necessarily Sundays, but those days that were traditionally set aside for social gatherings where the young and nimble entertained their elders with dances to the sound of tom-toms and songs which were sung by the great-grandfathers and handed down from father to son.

Sunday morning was no different from a Saturday except that you could see that something important was being prepared for. The few converts wore their 'Zionist' uniforms of blue on snow-white and clutch-

ed their staffs and bibles to join other worshippers in the locations. Groups of dancers wearing distinctive garb left the hostel singing, whistling, waving their dancing sticks and pausing at every busy street corner to treat the location people to some dancing and singing. The disappointing part was that many location people regarded it as backwardness. 'You'll never see whites doing such things where they stay,' they would say. Why should the whites do them? Mos they're not black like I am. And who told you that your whites are the measuring standard of right and wrong? I wanted to ask the critics but chose not to because I knew their minds had been stolen from them in order to 'civilize' them. Other groups came from other hostels to ours in the same fashion, their sorrows forgotten for a while.

At two in the afternoon, after preparing themselves, the groups went out to the 'market-place' (an open space near where the beerhall used to be and where most of the vendors sold their assortments of goods). The first sound of the tom-tom and the flutes of the Pedi brought people to watch from all corners of the hostel.

The baPedi formed a line and swayed gracefully from side to side, blowing their flutes in typical fashion while others played the drums of diminishing size, the biggest of them made out of paraffin drums and the smallest the size of a gallon of paint.

A most exciting entertainment was provided by the foot-stomping Zulus. They dressed in traditional attire and danced to the sound of a single drum with amazing rhythm. They sat or knelt in formations of four, five or six, according to the size of the competing groups, clapping hands in unison with the drum and singing or humming in high spirits. They kept them-

selves going with long draughts from a big black clay vessel which was refilled from large plastic containers. The competitors took the 'stage' like waves, those in front vigorously stomping the ground with their tyre sandals until you thought you could feel it vibrating. Their feet rose above their heads and came down thunderously. Endurance and physical fitness is basic to the African 'ballet', and a weakling does not waste his time going on the stage. As I say, the dance was performed with superb rhythm. If you missed a step you were penalized by having to leave the stage to await your partners, and your group lost points for that.

The drum, the clapping hands, the songs, shouts of 'Usuthu!' and the rising and falling legs went on and on, the muscular and wiry black bodies glistening with sweat until sunset, when the sun would lie on Meadowlands like a glowing half-circle, and the smoke from the chimneys would blanket the slumbering Soweto.

**“To Kill A Man’s Pride” - Study Questions and Activities**

1. This story is told from the point of view of the narrator, Mtutu, who has a very different life from his friend, Somdali. Rewrite the narrative from the point-of-view of Somdali, making sure to include descriptive details that create a strong picture of what his life is like.
  
2. Construct a chronology of events Mtutu had to go through in order to secure a full-time, paid job. You may choose to incorporate illustrations to accompany your narrative.
  
3. Mtutu more than once in the story compares the conditions in the hostels to the conditions in the concentration camps at Auschwitz. Do you feel this is a legitimate comparison? Why or why not? Support your opinion by alluding to Mtutu's descriptions of the conditions in the hostel and from your knowledge of the camps.
  
4. The story’s title is illustrated throughout the story with accounts of the indignities the men were subjected to every day of their lives. Using the cause and effect diagram connect these indignities to the apartheid laws which caused them to exist. (Hint: use your portfolio references to help you make the connections)

LAW (CAUSE)	EFFECT ON THE MEN
The Act of Union	
The Land Act	
Group Areas Act	
Bantu Education Act	
Pass Laws	

5. The men find relief from their difficult lives by playing and listening to listening *mbaqanga*. On occasion they also get to watch the Zulu dancing competitions. Using one of your music tapes from the portfolio listen to the music (check out a tape player from the listening center) How does the music make you feel? Describe the instruments you hear. What about this music would cheer the men up? Using this information provide a definition of *mbaqanga*.



## SEVEN STEPS TO DEMOCRACY - STUDY GUIDE

One of the factors contributing to the success of peaceful transition in South Africa was the commitment to negotiation between key players in DeKlerk's government and the ANC. These negotiations came as a result of organized resistance in the form of boycotts, work-stoppages, and international pressure. Beginning in 1987 Nelson Mandela met with the apartheid government representatives in his prison cell. These talks would begin a series of further discussions which finally resulted in action by the DeKlerk government. The ANC was unbanned in 1990, and with this gesture the ANC gave up the tactics of armed struggle in favor of discussions and negotiation.

The representatives agreed on basic terms which included an open election where all citizens could vote, as well as the writing and adapting of a new Constitution which would guarantee the rights of all South Africans. This process is examined more closely in this pamphlet included in the student portfolio.

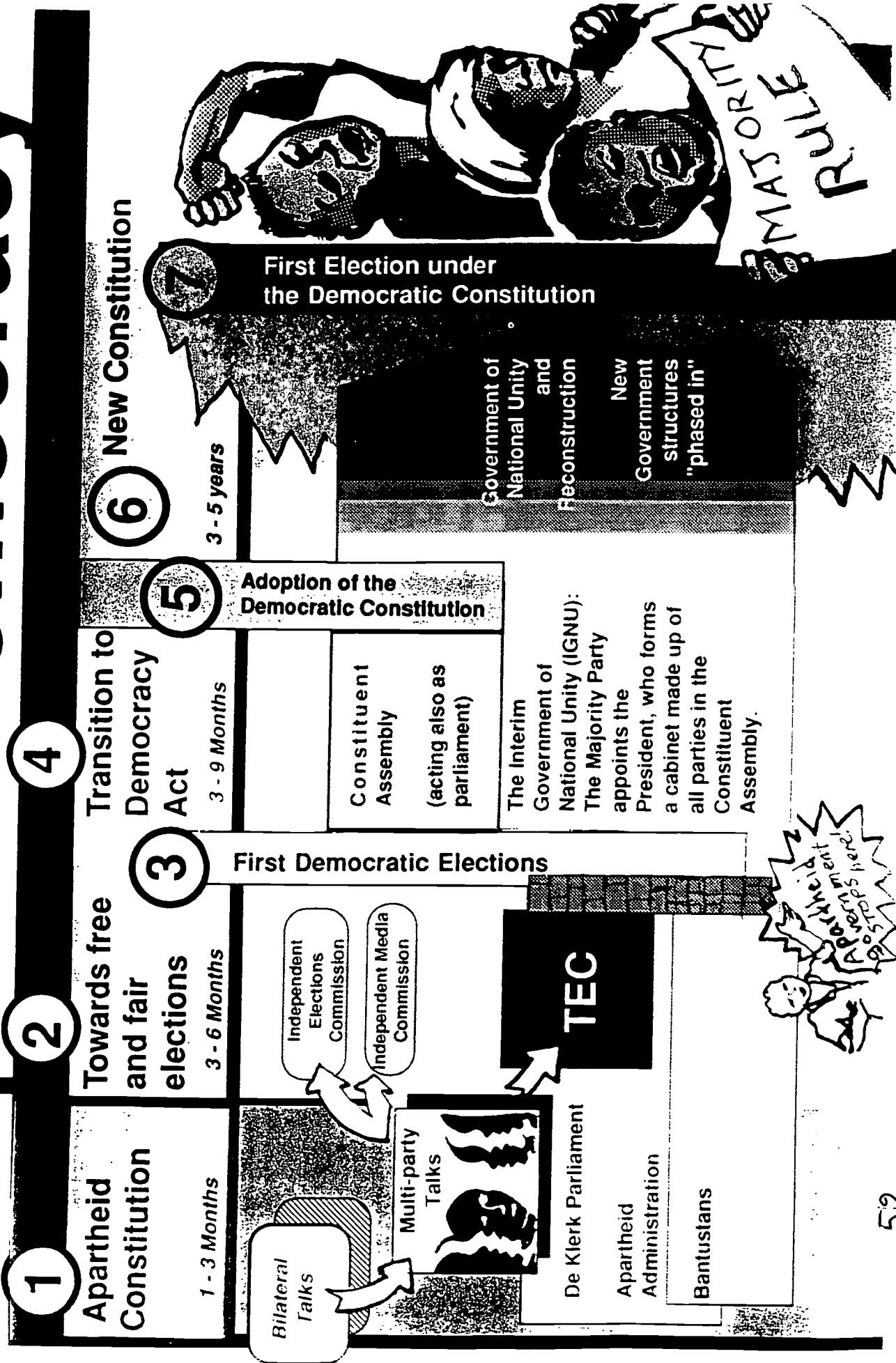
Using this pamphlet and classroom resources complete the following questions/activities.

### Activities

1. What groups were involved in the multiparty talks ?
2. What activities were initiated in order to educate and mobilize potential voters.
3. Describe the type of safeguards that were implemented to insure that the ruling party complied with the changes mandated by the election. (Remember: the ruling party still controlled the army, as well as the executive and legislative branches of government).
4. Explain why the new government was called the Government of National Unity? Also explain why this structure did not last.

**Activity** - Imagine that your group is entrusted with writing the Constitution for the New South Africa. What freedoms and provisions would you insure are included. You may use the U.S. Constitution as well as the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights to help provoke ideas. Remember you represent the people and their

# Steps to Democracy



1

**Apartheid Constitution**

1 - 3 Months

Bilateral Talks

Multi-party Talks

De Klerk Parliament

Apartheid Administration

Bantustans

2

**Towards free and fair elections**

3 - 6 Months

Independent Elections Commission

Independent Media Commission

TEC

4

**Transition to Democracy Act**

3 - 9 Months

Constituent Assembly (acting also as parliament)

The Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU): The Majority Party appoints the President, who forms a cabinet made up of all parties in the Constituent Assembly.

5

**Adoption of the Democratic Constitution**

6

**New Constitution**

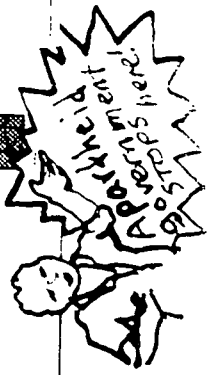
3 - 5 years

Government of National Unity and Reconstruction

New Government structures "phased in"

7

**First Election under the Democratic Constitution**



## SOUTH AFRICAN ART

The portfolio contains several examples of traditional and contemporary art in several mediums. There are postcards of Zulu and Xhosa beadwork, of both traditional and more contemporary designs. There are examples of woodcuts using traditional tribal motifs. Included also are pictures of Ndebele geometric painted houses, with their startling colors and beauty.

Contemporary art in South Africa can be as diverse as the people who create it. Compare and contrast the protest art of murals and posters with the telephone wire basket made by settlers at a squatters camp just outside of Durban. Each piece is uniquely rich with a story that conveys meaning, yet each is very distinct in how it speaks a story.

Many traditional people infuse everyday objects with artistry and craftsmanship. Try these projects with your group.

### Activities

#### Zulu love letters

There is a lovely history behind this unique form of correspondence. As you know, one of the effects of apartheid was to separate men from their families and friends. In "To Kill A Man's Pride" Somdali tells his friend Mtutu how much his heart aches to be away from home. The only way families could communicate with loved ones was through writing. Many families, either because they could not afford the postage, or because they did not write, would send messages through men who would come to the villages briefly and return to the gold mines or where they were employed. Some brought back an ingenious "letter", consisting of colored beads strung together, with each color of bead symbolic of a feeling or idea. Red was passion, while green was jealousy, black meant anger, while white was peace or comfort. Depending on the pattern and color a letter could say "Come home soon, miss you" or say "You are my friend".

You will colored beads, fishing wire, and a large safety pin. Using the model "write" your own Zulu letter to a friend or loved one.

#### Traditional Designs

You may choose to do woodcuts using a potato instead of the wood to cut out your design. Another option is to cut out a template from the designs provided in your portfolio. Once you do this either brush the tempera on the potato or over your potato. Regardless of which you use you may print your design on the paper or on the cotton cloth provided. Many of the traditional prints are white on black, but you may be as creative as you choose.

Art can be a wonderful vehicle to draw attention to a social ill that a nation or community must come to grips with. It can express anger a wrong that must be made right, and it can also express a hope for the future. The Art of Apartheid, the photographs of the conditions in Soweto's shanty towns, the women's march posters all carry a strong, loud message, although no words are spoken. In our own culture we have the powerful message of the Aids Quilt which stirs deep emotions in those who see it.

Choose a theme, idea, or message you would like to convey. For some of us it may be the issue of homelessness, child abuse, the anti-immigrant backlash, or the thread of racism that still lurks in our own society. Once your group has settled on an issue, choose whether you will use a photo collage or an acrylic painting. Plan out your design or ideas on paper before starting your project. Remember, your painting/photos will convey your message to your audience.

### Interpreting a Painting

Carefully look at Valente Ngwenya Malangatana's painting titled *Apartheid*.

1. Who are the figures in the painting meant to represent?
2. Interpret the symbolic meaning of the talons and the fish.
3. Why do you think the painter chose the color red? Why does he bring in a small amount of green into the top left corner?
4. On a separate 8x10 card provide a short narrative that discusses the meaning of your own artwork. List the group member's names (or you name if you chose to work alone), the title of you piece, the year it was created, and the medium you used ( ex. Acrylic on canvas). After this information write your narrative.



**Valente Ngwenya Malangatana**

Born: Mozambique, 1936

*Apartheid*, 1982

oil on canvas  
123 x 102 cm

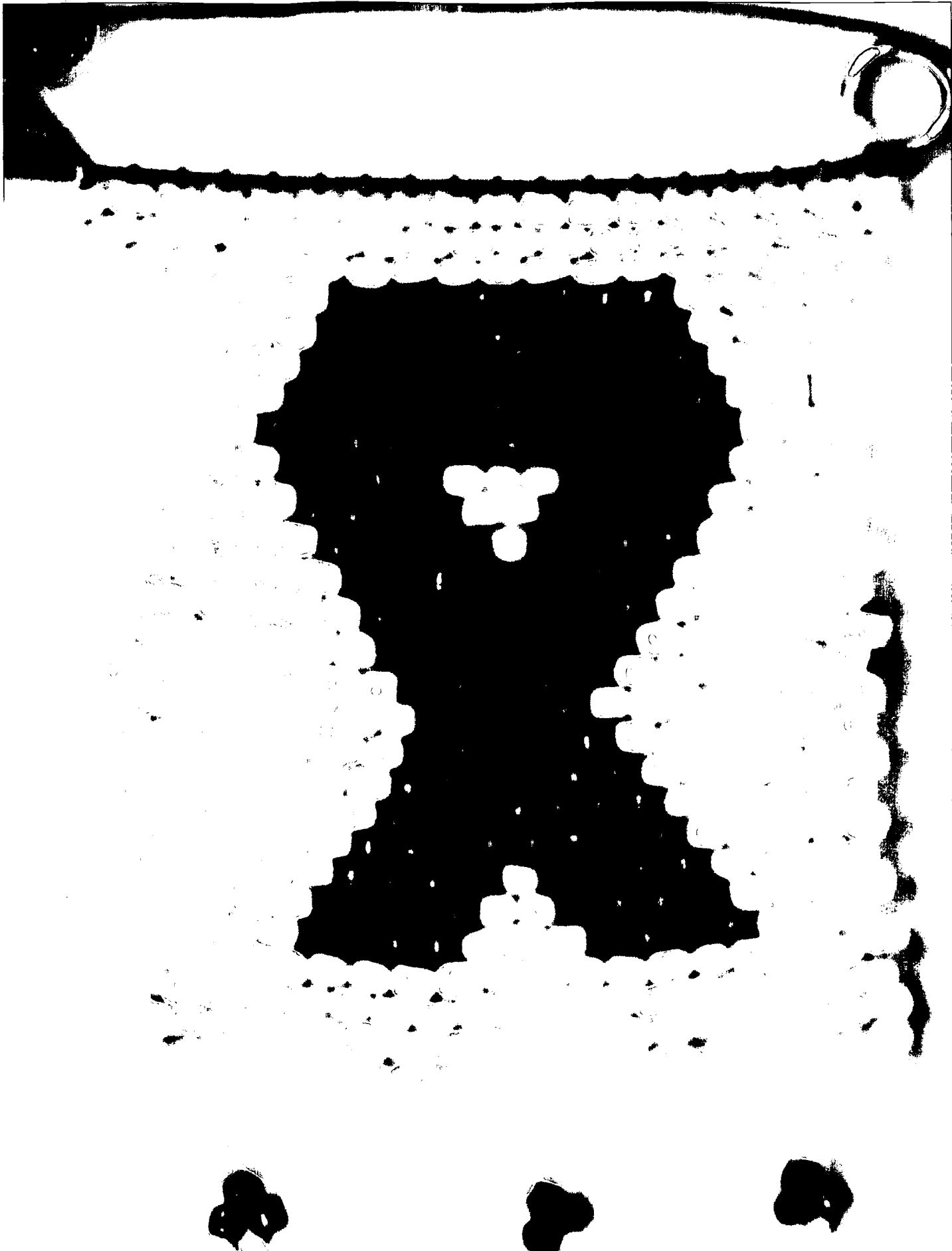
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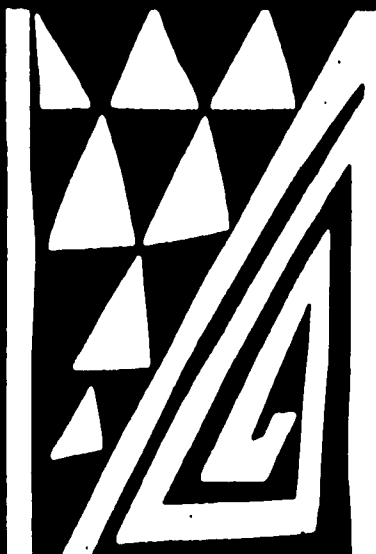
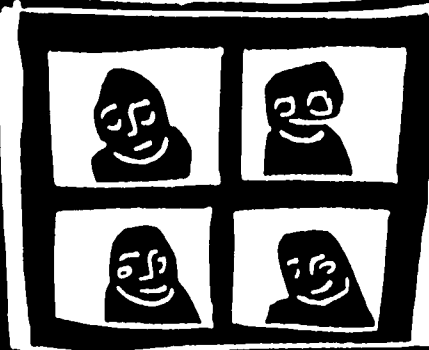
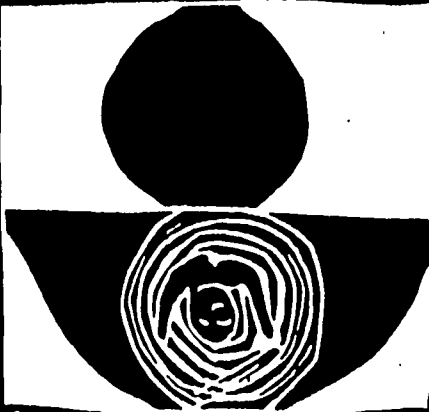
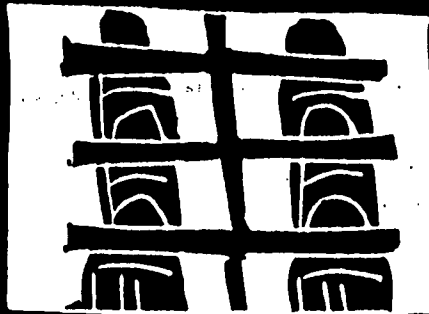
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# NDÉBÉLÉ ARTIST NATION











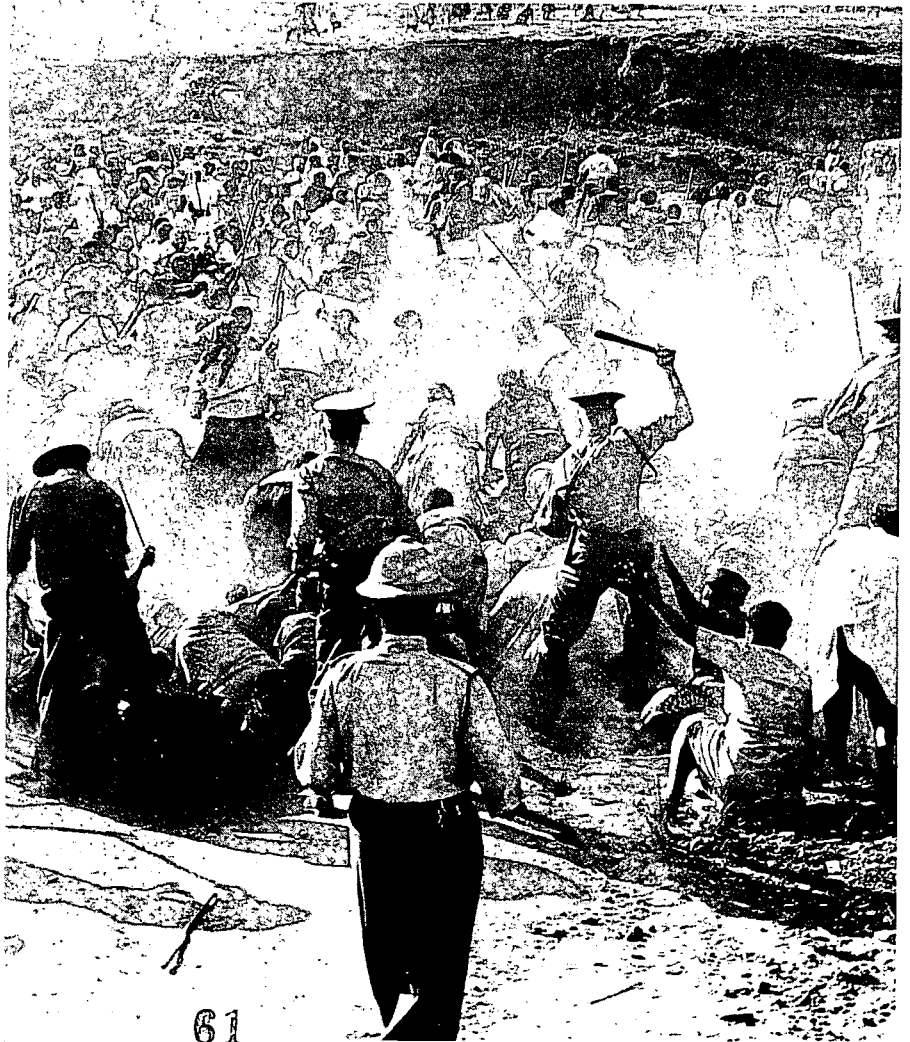
In 1955 the government announced that women must carry passes. A huge campaign was mounted by women, countrywide. Women also led a militant campaign against municipal beerhalls. According to the law it was illegal for women to brew traditional beer. Police raided homes and destroyed home brewed liquor so that men would use municipal beerhalls. In response, women attacked the beerhalls and destroyed equipment and buildings. The women also organised a highly successful boycott of the beerhalls.



The highpoint of the women's campaign against passes was the march on the Union Buildings in Pretoria by 20,000 women. Their message was clear: *Wathint abafazi, wathint imbokodo. Uzokufa!* (You have struck the women, You have struck a rock. You will be crushed!)



ANC Women's League leaders (l-r) Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Amina Cachalia and Sophie Williams with the petitions protesting against passes for women, Pretoria, 9th August 1956

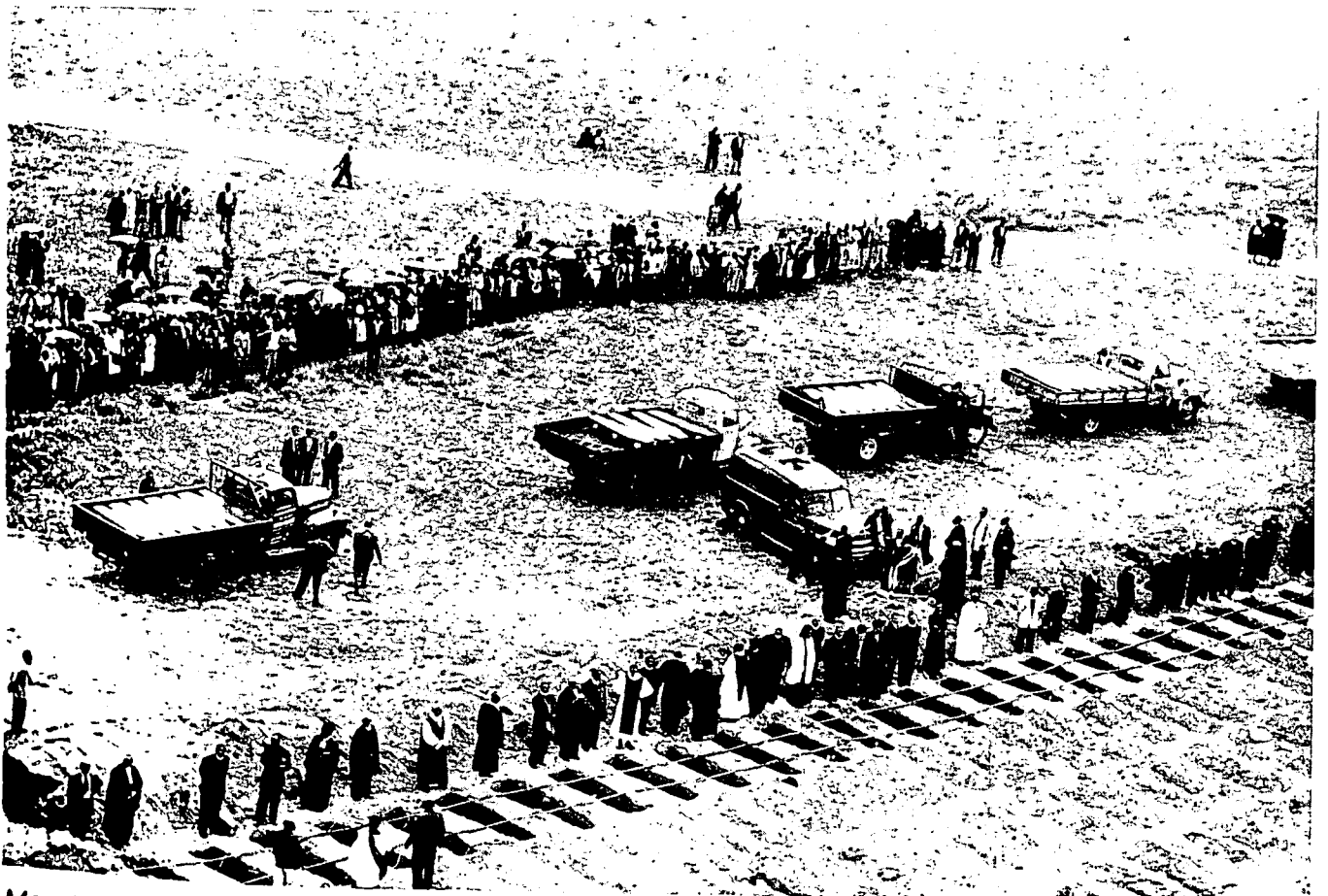


Police attack women demonstrating at Cato Manor, Natal, 1959. The previous night women attacked beerhalls and drove out the men





*Dead and dying lie in the street after the Sharpeville shootings, March 21st 1960*



*Mass burial of Sharpeville victims, March 1960*





...pted coup by members of the Bophu-

3



A resident with a homemade firearm stands guard defending his home and community from attack by Inkatha impis, Inanda, Natal 1990



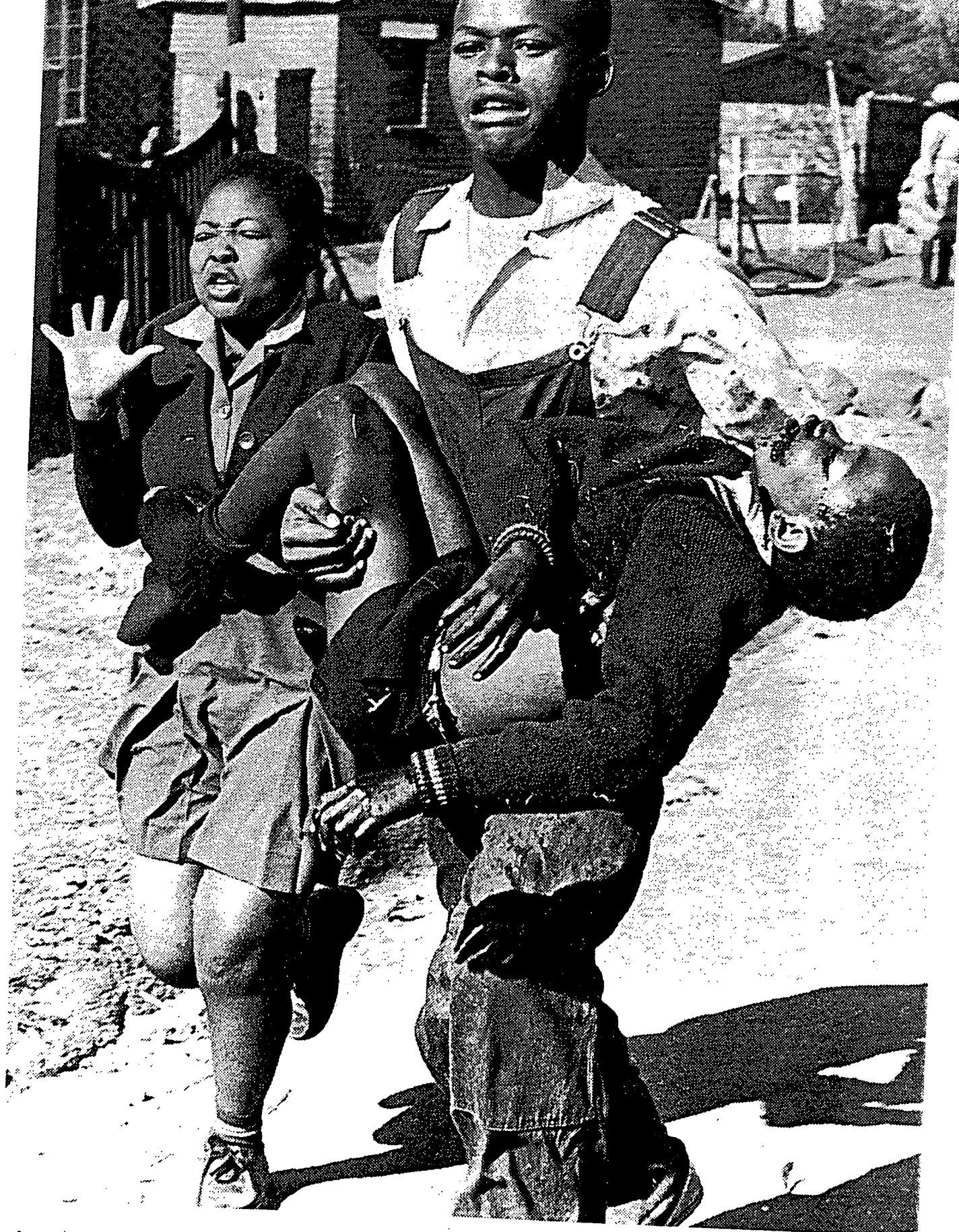
Police with Inkatha supporters



a meeting to protest their incorporation



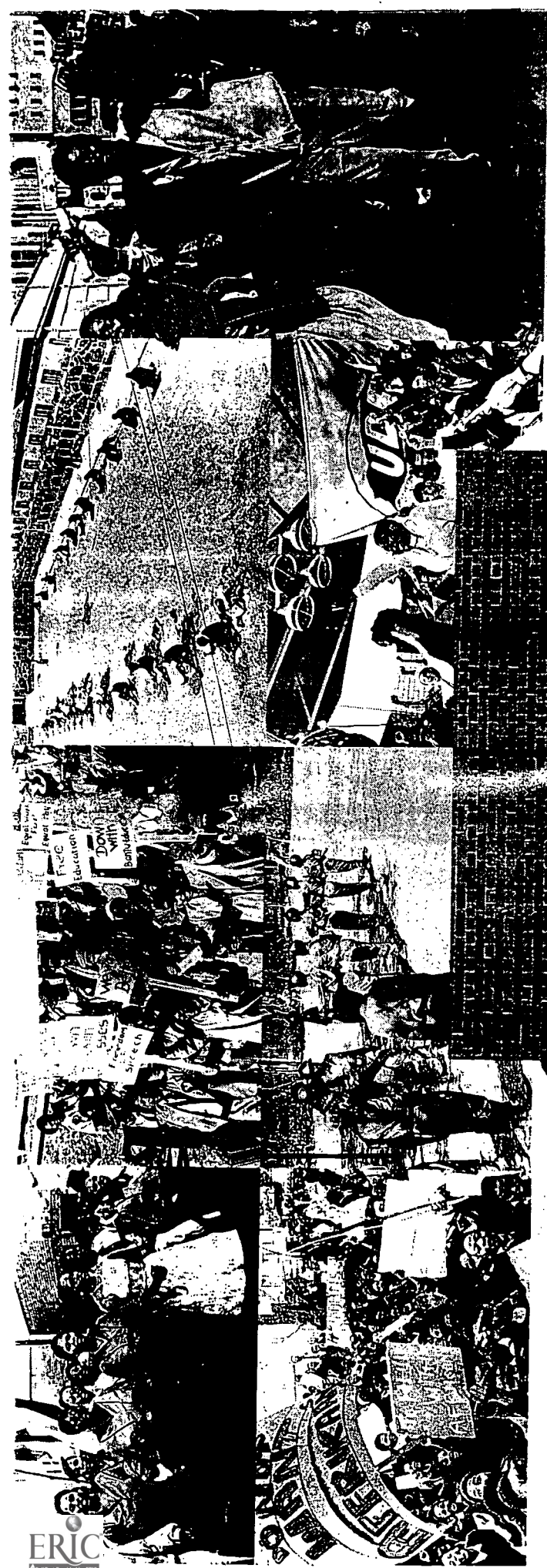
Funeral for two UDF youth who were abducted by Inkatha and killed while returning from the funeral of a TGWU bus driver, also killed in the violence, Mpophomeni township, Natal 1987



*A youth carries the body of Hector Peterson,  
the first casualty in the 1976 uprising*

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