

# SPEAK

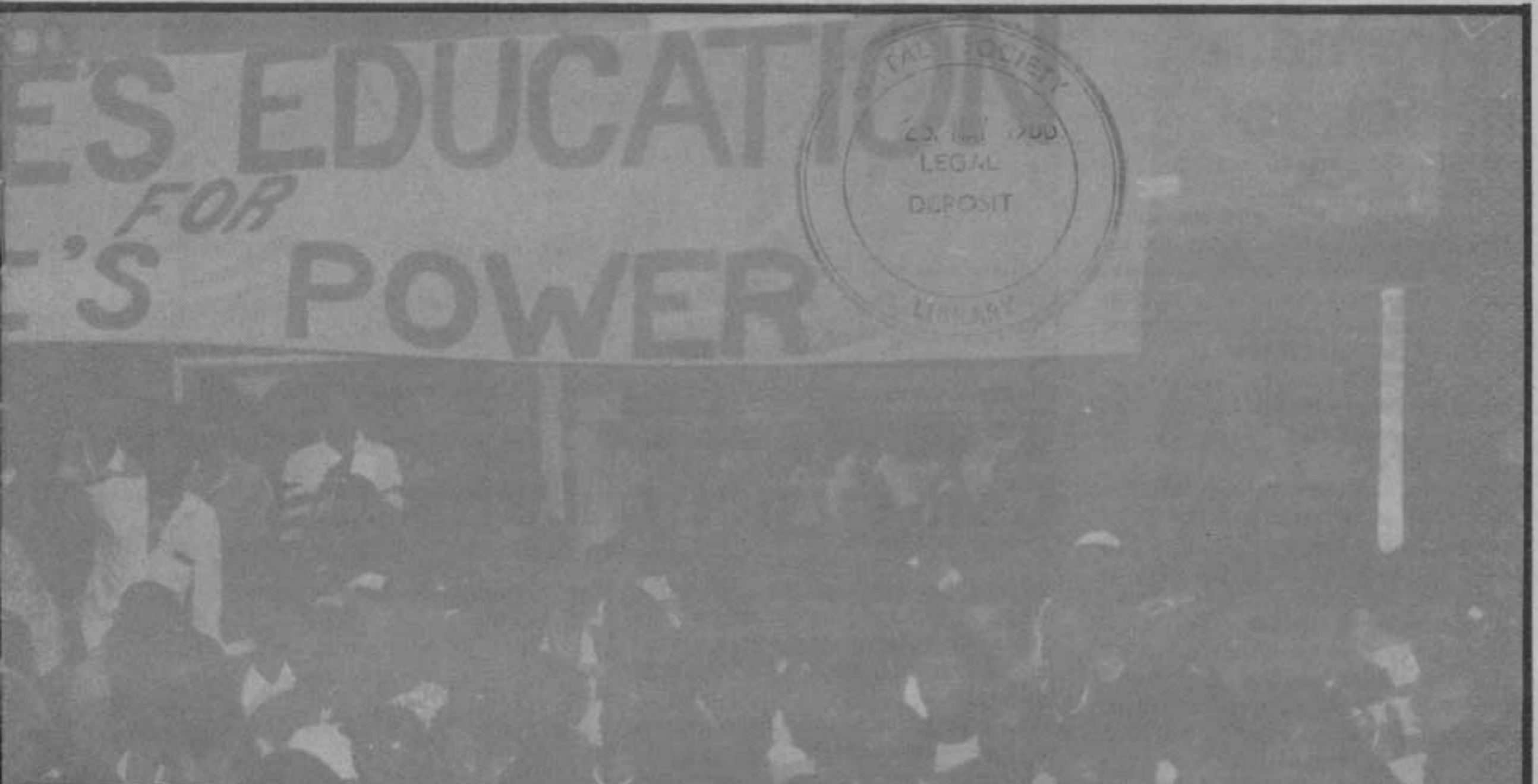
THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY



1602  
PEOPLES'  
EDUCATION  
FOR  
PEOPLES'  
POWER

APRIL 1986

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

## 'Plan united action'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Peoples' Education for Peoples' Power!

Durban, 29/30 March '86

# Students to remain at school

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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## Conference calls for unity

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

The conference called for the following demands to be met:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# The UDF throws its weight behind education struggle

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SCHOOL RETURN

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

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

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

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

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## COSATU backs decisions

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

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

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

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

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

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



COSATU had formed strong links between workers and students.

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

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

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

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## The UDF throws weight behind education struggle

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

## PEOPLES' EDUCATION

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

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

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

## INKATHA

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

While condemning Inkatha, the UDF realises that many of those belonging to Inkatha's impis are not aware that they are being used against their own people. We hope to win them over to our side as the struggle continues.

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

## NECC condemns Inkatha attack

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

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

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

## SPEAK condemns Moutse detentions

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

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

# 'Inkatha an enemy of the people'

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

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

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



The ugly face of Inkatha