



ISOTROPE
MEDIA

the trantraal brothers CROSSROADS



PART 2 OF A 5 PART SERIES

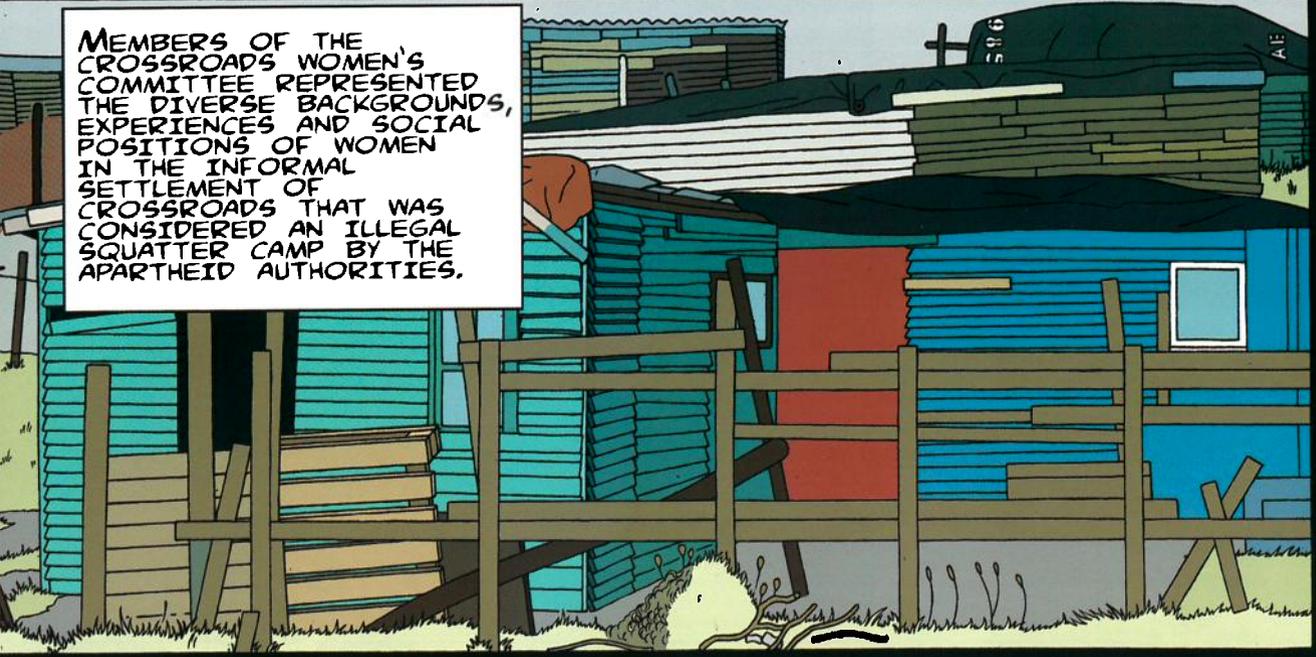
CROSSROADS

I took out the loudhailer



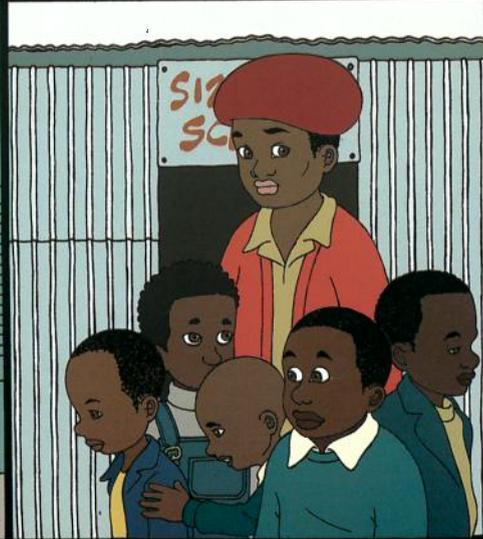
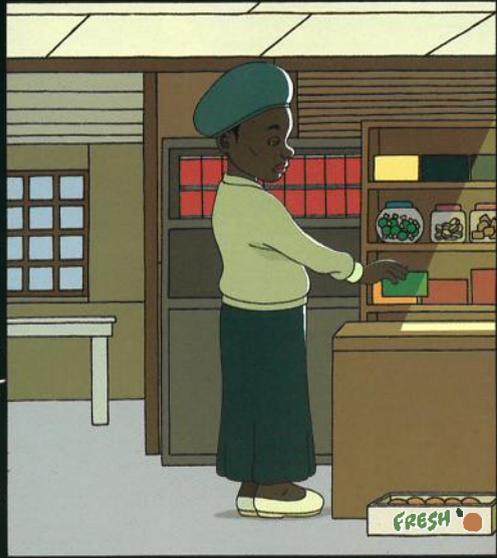
Koni Benson
Andre Trantraal
Nathan Trantraal
Ashley Marais

MEMBERS OF THE CROSSROADS WOMEN'S COMMITTEE REPRESENTED THE DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, EXPERIENCES AND SOCIAL POSITIONS OF WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT OF CROSSROADS THAT WAS CONSIDERED AN ILLEGAL SQUATTER CAMP BY THE APARTHEID AUTHORITIES.



SOME COMMITTEE WOMEN WERE WIDOWED, DIVORCED OR SINGLE MOTHERS; SOME WERE MARRIED WITH THEIR HUSBANDS INVOLVED IN POLITICS, SOME WITH PARTNERS WHO WERE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ROLES.

SOME WERE ARTICULATE AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS, SOME WERE OLDER WOMEN WHO COULD NOT READ OR WRITE AND SPOKE ALMOST NO ENGLISH AT ALL; SOME WERE ENTREPRENEURS AND SOME WERE YOUNG MOTHERS.



THEY USED A RANGE OF TERMS TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES: BUSINESSWOMEN; 'ILLITERATE', TEACHERS AND 'NEVER MIND YOU MARRIED OR NOT'.

THEY USED THEIR VOICES AS A SHARP WEAPON AGAINST APARTHEID INTERVENING IN A HISTORY AND ARTICULATING THE VISION OF THEIR STRUGGLE TO THE LOCAL PRESS AND THE INTERNATIONAL LEFT.

MRS. NTONGANA



TO BETTER ORGANIZE THE DEFENCE OF THE CAMP, THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE ELECTED A SECRETARY AND TREASURER.

MRS NTONGANA WAS ASKED TO GIVE UP HER JOB AT A RESTAURANT IN TOWN TO DEVOTE HERSELF FULL TIME TO THE COMMITTEE AND HOLD THE POSITION OF CHAIR.

JOHNSON NGXOBONGWANA, LIKEWISE, WAS ALSO ASKED TO QUIT HIS JOB AND TO BECOME THE FULL TIME CHAIR OF ONE OF THE MEN'S COMMITTEES, THE NOXOLO SCHOOL COMMITTEE. HE WAS ARTICULATE AND A CRITICAL THINKER BUT HIS LEADERSHIP-STYLE WOULD GRADUALLY BECOME AUTOCRATIC.

THE WAYS IN WHICH THE COMMITTEES WORKED AND THE ISSUES THAT THEY FOCUSED ON WERE HIGHLY GENDERED.

THE MEN'S COMMITTEES FOCUSED ON SECURITY AND LAW AND ORDER, WHILE THE WOMEN FOCUSED ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, WATER SUPPLIES AND SANITATION.

THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE WOMEN WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT THE MEN READILY ACCEPTED.

ACCORDING TO MRS NTONGANA:

'THEY HAD THIS CUSTOM, THEY DIDN'T ACCEPT THAT A WOMAN SHOULD BE SO ACTIVE. THEY SOMETIMES TAKE IT BUT DID NOT LIKE IT, BECAUSE IT IS THE CUSTOM OF OUR PEOPLE THAT THE WOMEN STAYS IN THE KITCHEN. THE WOMEN CAN'T BE IN THE FRONTLINE. SOMETIMES IT WAS HURTING THEM, IT WAS NOT VERY NICE.'

DESPITE THESE CONFLICTS, AN INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE BETWEEN THE WOMEN'S AND THE NOXOLO AND SIZAMILE COMMITTEES WAS FORMED IN 1978 TO COORDINATE WITH OUTSIDE ALLIANCES AGAINST THE THREAT OF REMOVAL.

JOHNSON NGXOBONGWANA



←
COURTROOM
7

AS IS EVIDENT FROM THE START OF THE CROSSROADS STRUGGLE, IF NEW LAWS WERE NEEDED THEY WOULD BE MADE, THE OLD ONES WERE NOT SIMPLY CIRCUMVENTED.

ARRESTS AND COURT APPEARANCES WERE A ROUTINE PART OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE IN CROSSROADS.

THOUSANDS OF THREE MINUTE COURT CASES WREAKED HAVOC ON THE LIVES OF BLACK PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE CITY.

ONE OF THE MOST INTRIGUING ASPECTS OF THE APARTHEID REGIME WAS ITS COMMITMENT TO THE RULE OF LAW.



A
TYPICAL
CASE

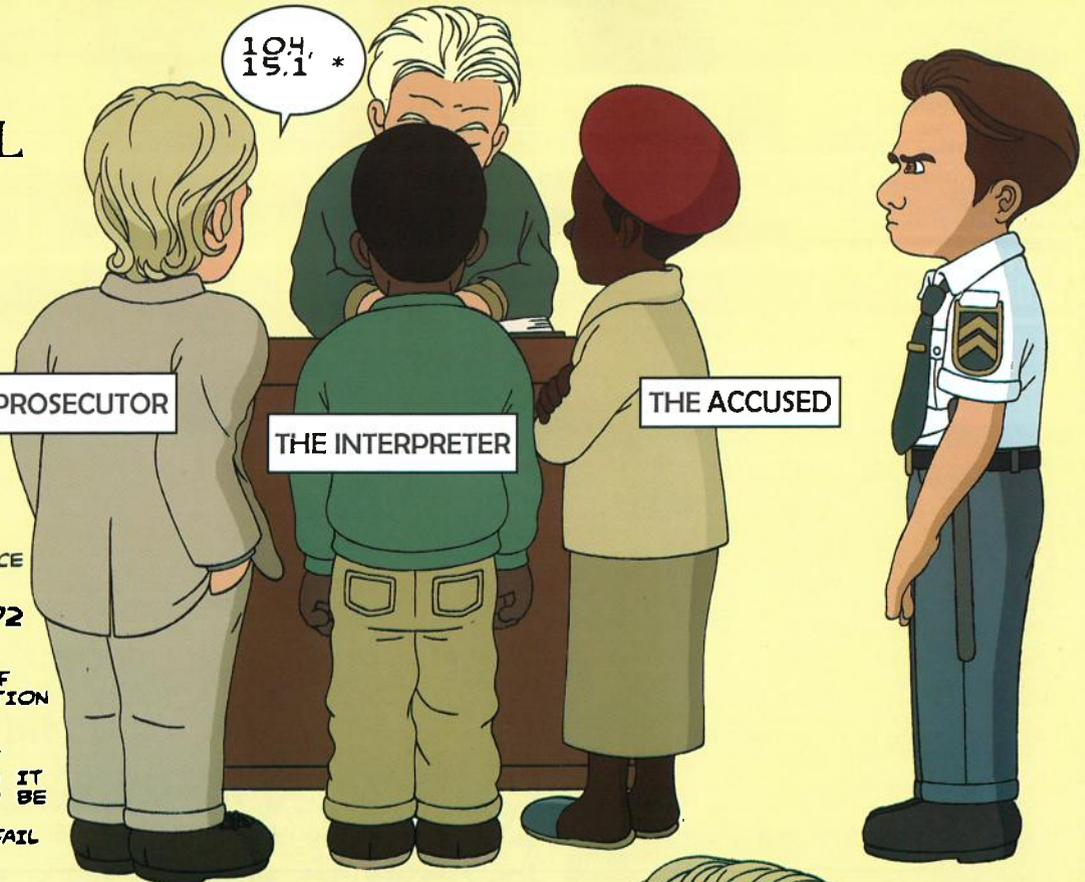
THE PROSECUTOR

THE INTERPRETER

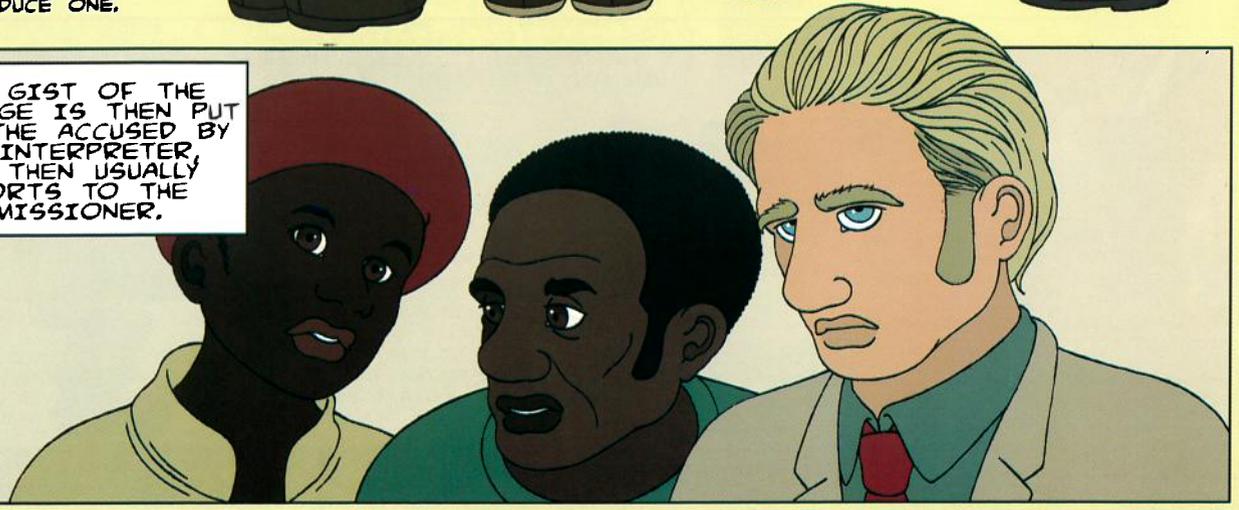
THE ACCUSED

104.
15.1 *

SECTION 10 (4) OF THE BLACK URBAN AREAS ACT OF 1954, WHICH MAKES IT AN OFFENCE TO BE IN THE PRESCRIBED AREA FOR LONGER THAN 72 HOURS WITHOUT PERMISSION AND SECTION 15 (1) OF THE BLACKS (ABOLITION OF PASSES AND COORDINATION OF DOCUMENTS) ACT OF 1952, WHICH MAKES IT AN OFFENCE NOT TO BE IN POSSESSION OF A PASS OR TO FAIL TO PRODUCE ONE.



THE GIST OF THE CHARGE IS THEN PUT TO THE ACCUSED BY THE INTERPRETER, WHO THEN USUALLY REPORTS TO THE COMMISSIONER.





GUILTY ON BOTH CHARGES, YOUR HONOUR.

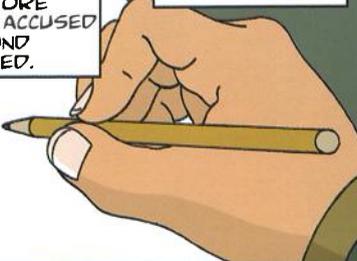
THE COMMISSIONER WRITES FOR A FEW MOMENTS THEN SAYS:



MITIGATION?

THIS IS AN INSTRUCTION TO THE INTERPRETER ASKING IF THE ACCUSED HAS ANYTHING TO SAY IN MITIGATION BEFORE SENTENCING, THE ACCUSED HAVING BEEN FOUND GUILTY AS CHARGED.

COMMISSIONERS ARE ADEPT AT PUTTING DOWN ANY EXCUSES.



HAVING RECORDED HIS SENTENCE, HE ANNOUNCES IT:

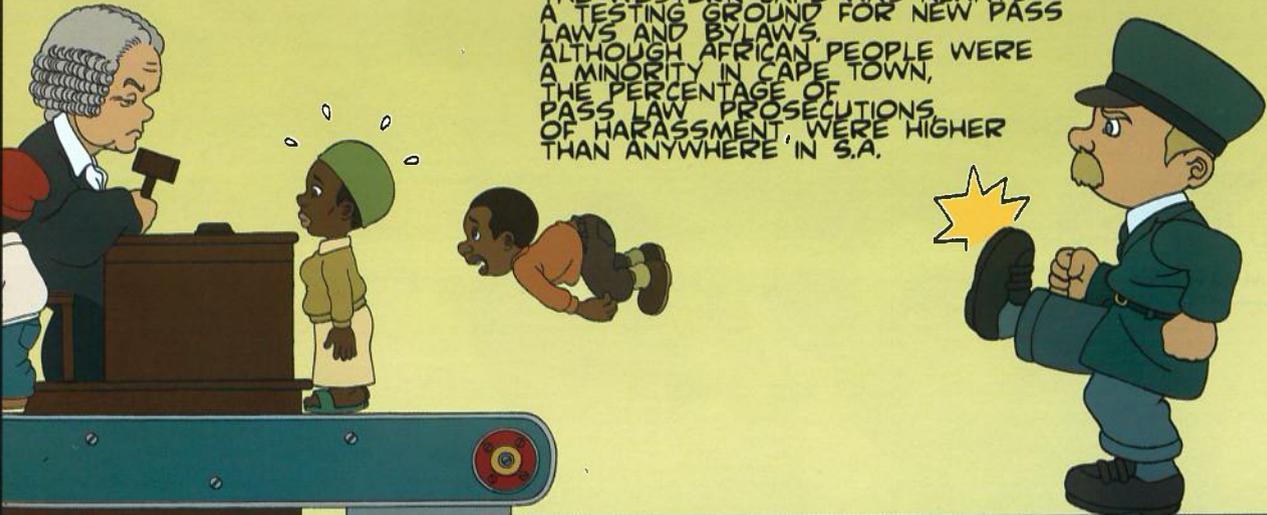
R60 OR 60 DAYS ON THE FIRST COUNT, R100 RAND OR 100 DAYS ON THE SECOND.

THE NAME OF THE NEXT ACCUSED IS USUALLY CALLED BEFORE SENTENCE IS PASSED AND A RAPID PROCESSION ENSUES. THE ACCUSED HAS A CHANCE TO PAY THE FINE IMMEDIATELY OTHERWISE THE PRISON SENTENCE BEGINS AT POLLSMOOR.

IN THE LATE 1970'S THE AVERAGE FINE OF R70 REPRESENTED APPROXIMATELY TWO TO THREE WEEKS WAGES FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS.

THE STATE COLLECTED AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF MONEY FROM PEOPLE WITHOUT MONEY, FROM A TOTAL OF R150 000 COLLECTED FROM PASS LAW FINES IN 1979, TO R283 576 IN 1981.

THE WESTERN CAPE WAS ALWAYS A TESTING GROUND FOR NEW PASS LAWS AND BYLAWS. ALTHOUGH AFRICAN PEOPLE WERE A MINORITY IN CAPE TOWN, THE PERCENTAGE OF PASS LAW PROSECUTIONS OF HARASSMENT, WERE HIGHER THAN ANYWHERE IN S.A.



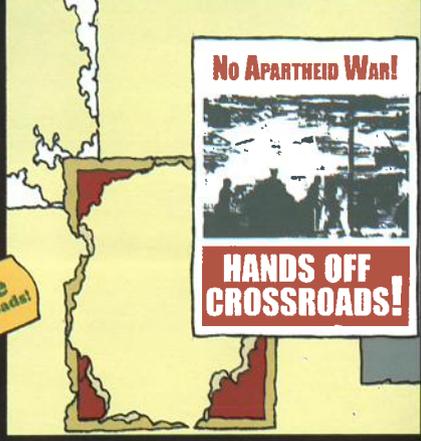


WORKING WITH
WHITE LIBERALS
WAS NOT NEW.

**SAVE
CROSSROADS!**



**SAVE
CROSSROADS**



No Apartheid War!

**HANDS OFF
CROSSROADS!**

FROM EARLY ON THE ROLE OF THE BLACK SASH, THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, SURVEYS DONE THROUGH SALDRU, RESOURCES FOR THE SCHOOLS FROM VARIOUS CHURCH BODIES AND LEGAL AID IN DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE TO BE AT CROSSROADS HAD PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE CAMP'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY.

FROM FEBRUARY 1978 GROUPINGS OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS WITH HISTORICAL LINKS TO CROSSROADS SPEARHEADED THE SAVE CROSSROADS CAMPAIGN, AS IT WAS CALLED IN THE PRESS.



A 'TUESDAY' GROUP MET IN TOWN AND DID MOST OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE CAMPAIGN.

THIS COMMITTEE WAS COMPRISED OF A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS BLACK SASH, VPRU, VERITAS, THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS, QUAKERS, AND OTHER CHURCH BODIES, AS WELL AS A SMALL NUMBER FROM THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE.

THE 'FRIDAY' GROUP MET WEEKLY AT ST. SAVIOURS CHURCH IN CLAREMONT.



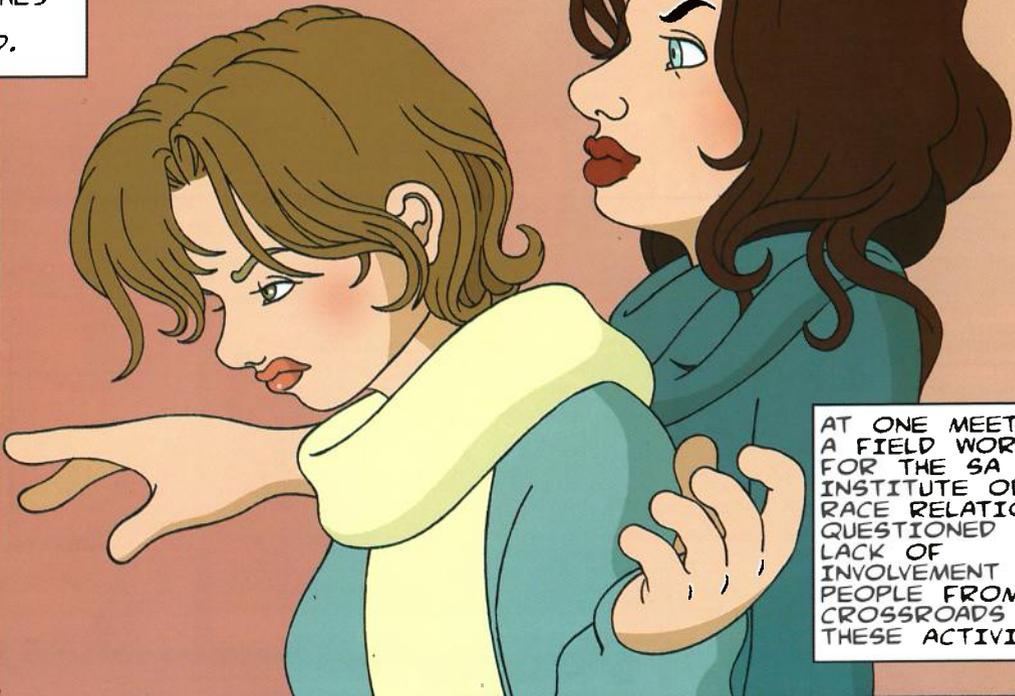
WHITE SUPPORTERS OF THE CROSSROADS CAUSE COORDINATED AND CARRIED OUT A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES TARGETING WHITE PEOPLE IN A SEGREGATED CITY.

THEY PRODUCED BUMPER STICKERS. THEY PUT 'SAVE CROSSROADS' STICKERS THE SIZE OF PRICE LABELS ON GOODS AT PICK 'N PAY SUPERMARKETS. THEY CREATED POSTER CAMPAIGNS. THEY HELD PHOTO EXHIBITIONS AT THE BAXTER THEATRE.

THEY HELD SLIDE SHOWS AND TALKS ON CROSSROADS IN PUBLIC PLACES, LIKE THE KENILWORTH CENTRE MALL, AS WELL AS IN SCHOOLS ACROSS THE PENINSULA.

A DAY OF PRAYER AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WAS CELEBRATED IN CROSSROADS AND IN CITIES AND CHURCHES ACROSS THE WORLD.

THE DIVISION OF LABOUR, HOWEVER, DID NOT GO UNQUESTIONED.

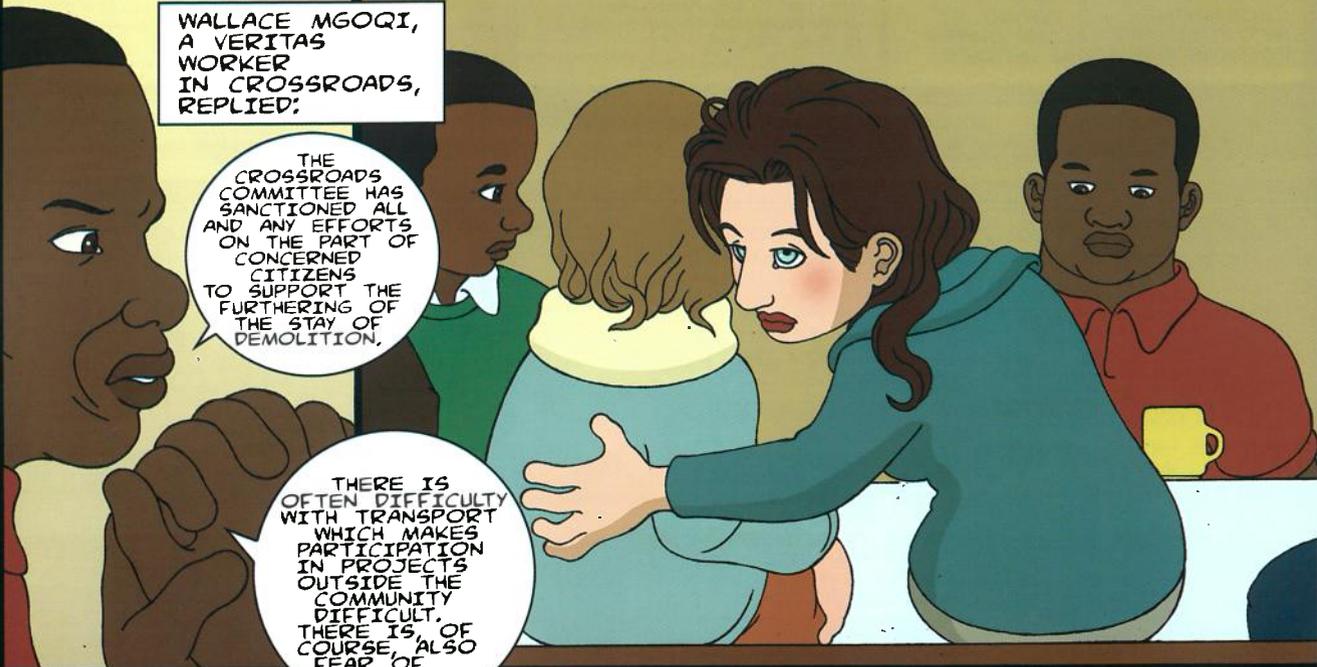


AT ONE MEETING A FIELD WORKER FOR THE SA INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS QUESTIONED THE LACK OF INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM CROSSROADS AT THESE ACTIVITIES.

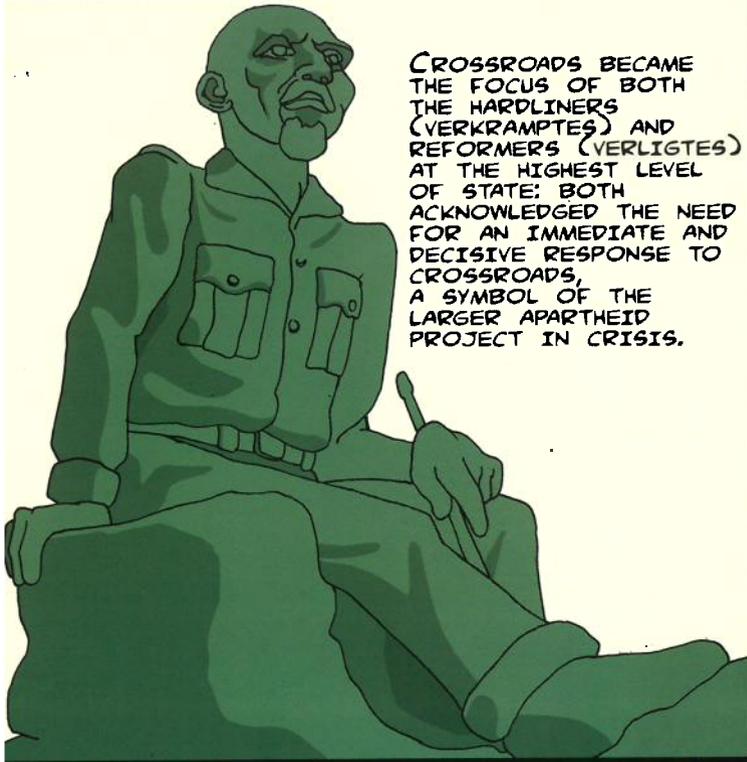
WALLACE MGOQI, A VERITAS WORKER IN CROSSROADS, REPLIED:

THE CROSSROADS COMMITTEE HAS SANCTIONED ALL AND ANY EFFORTS ON THE PART OF CONCERNED CITIZENS TO SUPPORT THE FURTHERING OF THE STAY OF DEMOLITION.

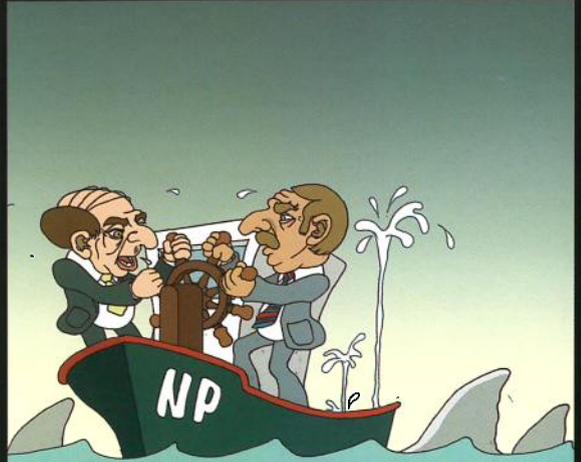
THERE IS OFTEN DIFFICULTY WITH TRANSPORT WHICH MAKES PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY DIFFICULT. THERE IS, OF COURSE, ALSO FEAR OF EXPOSURE.



ONE LETTER FROM CROSSROADS TO THIS NETWORK OF WHITE LIBERALS SAID: 'WE BLACK PEOPLE OF CROSSROADS APPEAL TO YOU WHITE PEOPLE TO TAKE UP OUR CASE WITH YOUR LEADERS, BECAUSE WE BLACK PEOPLE HAVE NO VOICES TO BE HEARD THERE.'



CROSSROADS BECAME THE FOCUS OF BOTH THE HARDLINERS (VERKRAMPTE) AND REFORMERS (VERLIGTES) AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF STATE: BOTH ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND DECISIVE RESPONSE TO CROSSROADS, A SYMBOL OF THE LARGER APARTHEID PROJECT IN CRISIS.



POWER POLITICS HAD COME TO A HEAD AND THE REFORMERS AND CONSERVATIVES WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARTY WERE VYING FOR AUTHORITY. CROSSROADS HAD COME TO SYMBOLIZE THE CONTROVERSIES AROUND LABOUR POLICIES IN THE CAPE.

IN A FINAL ATTEMPT BY CONSERVATIVES TO SHUT DOWN CROSSROADS, TWO RAIDS PRECEDING THE PLANNED DEMOLITION IN NOVEMBER WERE CARRIED OUT IN SEPTEMBER OF 1978.

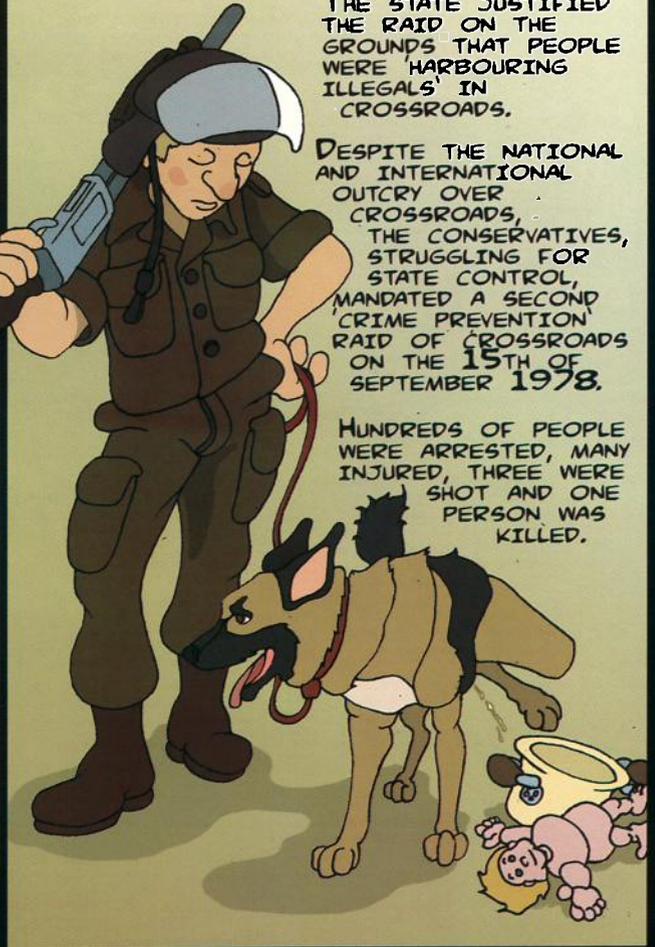
ON THE 6TH OF SEPTEMBER THE CAMP WAS SURROUNDED AND RAIDED, WITH OVER 450 ARRESTED AND 58 CHARGED.



THE STATE JUSTIFIED THE RAID ON THE GROUNDS THAT PEOPLE WERE HARBOURING ILLEGALS' IN CROSSROADS.

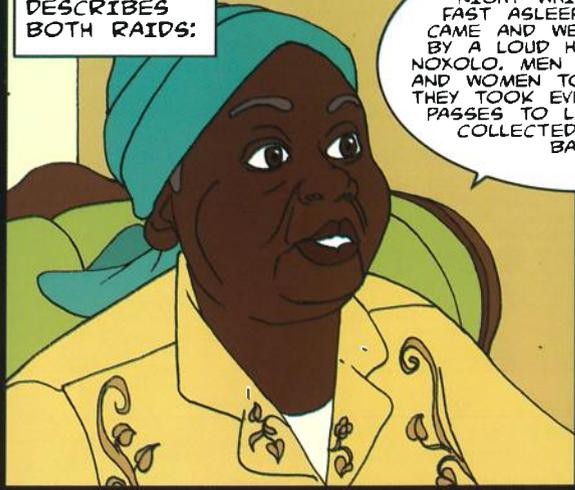
DESPITE THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY OVER CROSSROADS, THE CONSERVATIVES, STRUGGLING FOR STATE CONTROL, MANDATED A SECOND 'CRIME PREVENTION' RAID OF CROSSROADS ON THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER 1978.

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED, MANY INJURED, THREE WERE SHOT AND ONE PERSON WAS KILLED.



HERE MAMA SIGWELA DESCRIBES BOTH RAIDS:

I REMEMBER ONE NIGHT WHILE WE WERE FAST ASLEEP THE BOERS CAME AND WE WERE CALLED BY A LOUD HAILER TO GO TO NOXOLO. MEN WERE ARRESTED AND WOMEN TOO AND THEN THEY TOOK EVERYONE WITHOUT PASSES TO LANGA AND WE COLLECTED MONEY TO BAIL THEM.



'AFTER A WEEK WE WERE ASKED TO GO TO NOXOLO AGAIN, UNAWARE THAT THE AUTHORITIES WERE THERE WITH THEIR DOGS. IT WAS A DEADLY DAY AND I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER.'



'BLACK PEOPLE WERE BEATEN BY WHITE MEN, WHITE MEN WITHOUT MERCY. THEY BEAT NGXOBONGWANA UNTIL HIS RIBS WERE BROKEN, AND (REVEREND) CURREN, AND THEY ARRESTED THEM.'



'I HAD A BABY ON MY BACK, THE DOGS WERE SURROUNDING US AND BITING US, THERE WAS NO CLEAR REASON WHY THEY BEAT US, MAYBE THEY DID IT BECAUSE WE STAYED IN CROSSROADS.'

RUMOURS OF THE RAIDS REACHED CROSSROADS SUPPORTERS WHO WARNED THE RESIDENTS.

NOMANGEZI MBOBOSI:

'THERE WERE RUMOURS THAT WE WERE GOING TO BE EVACUATED (AND THE HOUSES DEMOLISHED)...SO WE REMAINED VIGILANT, BUT NOTHING HAPPENED.'

'THE 14TH OF SEPTEMBER WAS A BIG DAY. I HAD SPIES AND ONE OF MY SPIES CAME AND TOLD ME THAT THE MEETING WAS HELD IN THE CASTLE AND HE WAS POSITIVELY SURE THAT WE WERE GOING TO BE EVACUATED THAT NIGHT.'

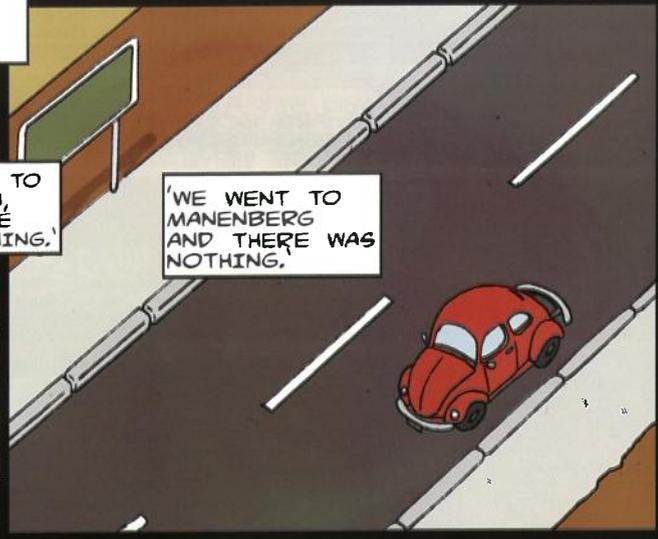
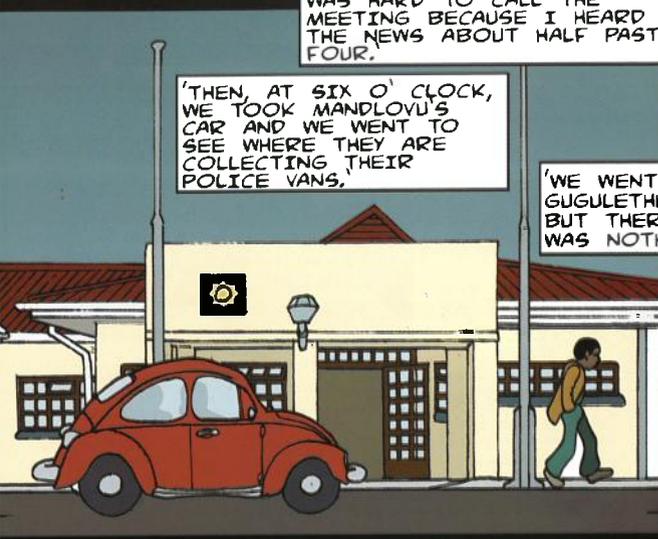
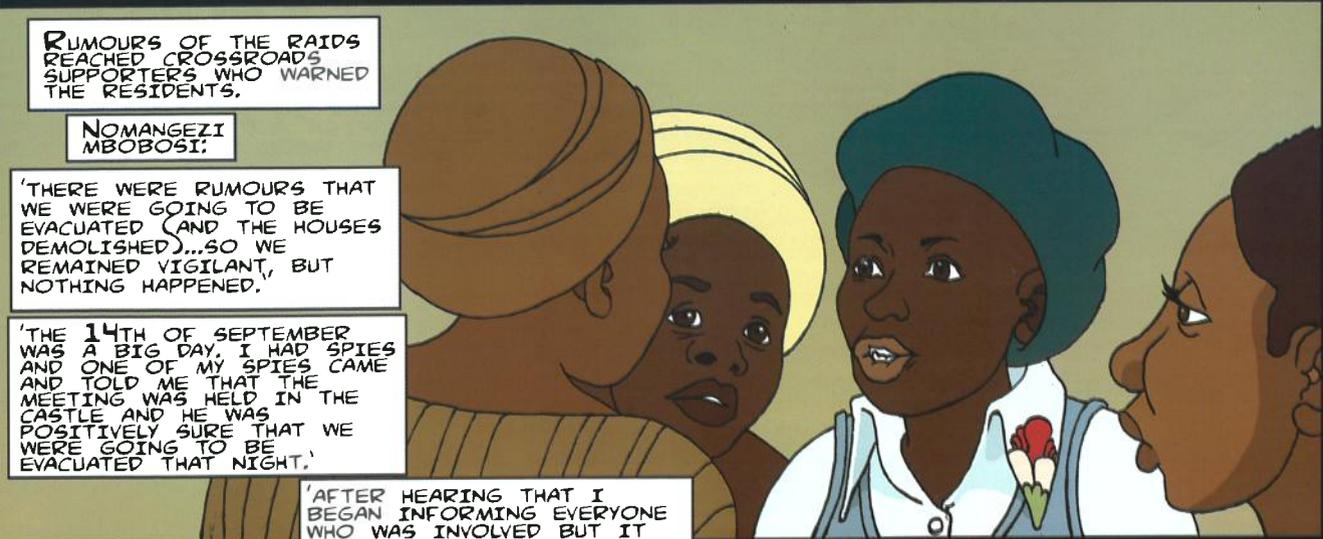
'AFTER HEARING THAT I BEGAN INFORMING EVERYONE WHO WAS INVOLVED BUT IT WAS HARD TO CALL THE MEETING BECAUSE I HEARD THE NEWS ABOUT HALF PAST FOUR.'

'THEN, AT SIX O' CLOCK, WE TOOK MANDLOVU'S CAR AND WE WENT TO SEE WHERE THEY ARE COLLECTING THEIR POLICE VANS.'

'WE WENT TO GUGULETHU, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING.'

'WE WENT TO MANENBERG AND THERE WAS NOTHING.'

'WE WENT TO GOODWOOD AND WE SAW ALL THEIR POLICE VANS. THERE WERE ABOUT 150 VANS AND BIG TRUCKS.'



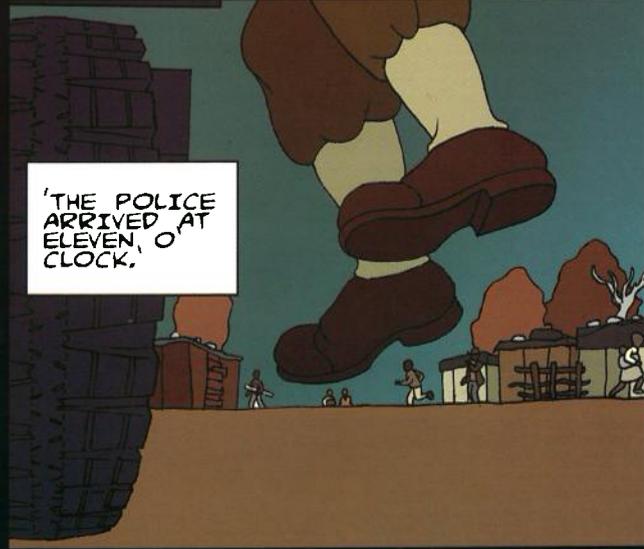


'THE PEOPLE WERE ALSO THERE AND IT WAS EASY FOR US TO CONFIRM THAT THEY WERE REALLY COMING FOR US TODAY. LUCKILY, I HAD A LOUDHAILER IN THE CAR. MRS MAPISA AND I AND MANDLOVU WERE IN THE CAR (BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER EVERYONE). I TOOK OUT THE LOUDHAILER AND I TOLD PEOPLE TO BE ON ALERT BECAUSE THE POLICE WERE COMING.'

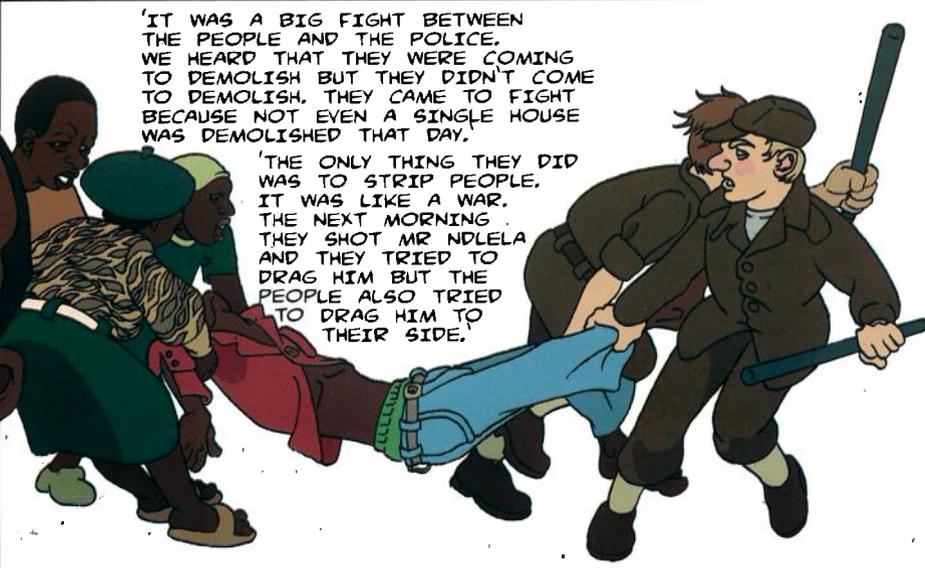
'I WENT BACK AND CALLED FOR ALL WOMEN TO COME TO MY HOUSE.'



'WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT TODAY... BECAUSE WE'VE GOT NOWHERE TO GO.'



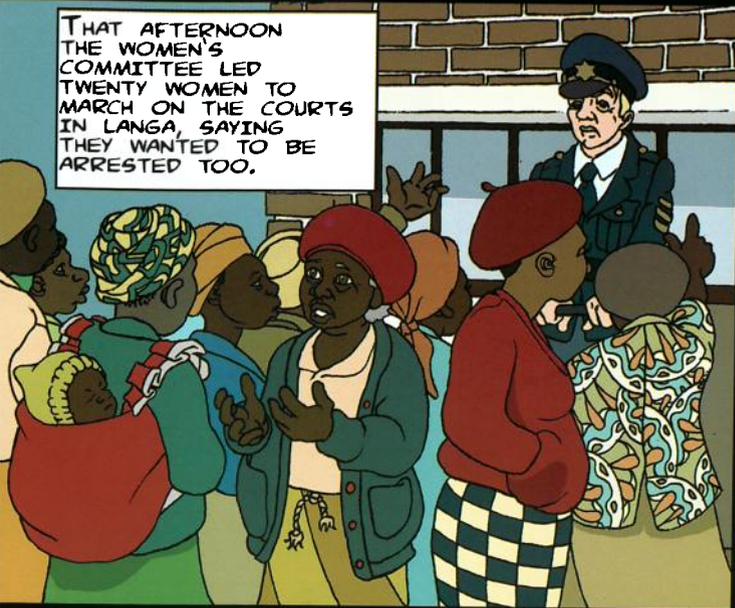
'THE POLICE ARRIVED AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.'



'IT WAS A BIG FIGHT BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE POLICE. WE HEARD THAT THEY WERE COMING TO DEMOLISH BUT THEY DIDN'T COME TO DEMOLISH. THEY CAME TO FIGHT BECAUSE NOT EVEN A SINGLE HOUSE WAS DEMOLISHED THAT DAY.'

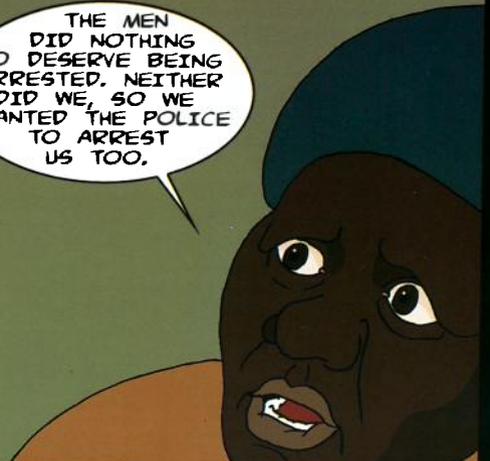
'THE ONLY THING THEY DID WAS TO STRIP PEOPLE. IT WAS LIKE A WAR. THE NEXT MORNING THEY SHOT MR NDLELA AND THEY TRIED TO DRAG HIM BUT THE PEOPLE ALSO TRIED TO DRAG HIM TO THEIR SIDE.'

THAT AFTERNOON THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE LED TWENTY WOMEN TO MARCH ON THE COURTS IN LANGA, SAYING THEY WANTED TO BE ARRESTED TOO.



MAMA NTONGANA:

THE MEN DID NOTHING TO DESERVE BEING ARRESTED. NEITHER DID WE, SO WE WANTED THE POLICE TO ARREST US TOO.



THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE PUT OUT A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON 15TH SEPTEMBER AND TWO DAYS LATER THE JOINT COMMITTEE PUBLICIZED THEIR STATEMENT TO THE POLICE COMMISSIONER.



A FEW DAYS AFTER THE RAID TWENTY-TWO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES APPEALED TO PRESIDENT CARTER TO INTERVENE DIPLOMATICALLY TO DISCOURAGE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FROM ATTACKING CROSSROADS.

POLITICAL LEVEL DISPUTES PEAKED IN THE MEDIA FOLLOWING THE RAID:

20 SEPTEMBER 1978

The Washington Post

BY AUTHORIZING THE POLICE RAIDS ON CROSSROADS, PRIME MINISTER VORSTER IS CLEARLY TELLING THE WORLD THAT HE HAS LITTLE REGARD FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF MILLIONS OF SOUTH AFRICANS UNDER THE RULE OF APARTHEID.

SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER OF POLICE, JIMMY KRUGER: 'THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT REACTED VERY QUICKLY WHEN THE RHODESIAN VISCOUNT WAS SHOT DOWN BY A TERRORIST RECENTLY, BUT LET A SOUTH AFRICAN POLICEMAN DRAW HIS BATON AND A HULLABALOO IS CREATED OVERSEAS.'

28 SEPTEMBER 1978

CAPE TIMES

THE CAPE TIMES EDITOR, TONY HEARD: CROSSROADS HIGHLIGHTS EVERY ONE OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FEATURES OF A SOUTH AFRICAN WAY OF LIFE THAT HAS LEFT THIS COUNTRY FRIENDLESS, DISLIKED AND DISTRUSTED, FACING MOUNTING ANIMOSITY BEYOND OUR BORDERS AND A GROWING HOSTILITY FROM THE VOTELESS 20 MILLION.

MORE THAN JUST A QUESTION OF MORALITY, CROSSROADS FED INTO INTERNATIONAL DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGNS, WHICH HAD A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY AND PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN REFORMERS' DECISION TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT WITH THE VOTELESS IN CROSSROADS.

MONOPOLY CAPITAL HAD TAKEN AN INTEREST IN THE CROSSROADS SITUATION FOR SOME TIME AND IN 1978 THE URBAN FOUNDATION INTERVENED DIRECTLY WITH THE AIM OF FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE CROSSROADS CONFLICT.

THE URBAN FOUNDATION WAS FORMED IN 1977 UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF 150 BUSINESSES AND REPRESENTED LOCAL CAPITAL THAT SAW CROSSROADS AND ANTI-APARTHEID RESISTANCE AS A MAJOR THREAT TO ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF U.S.AID, LOCAL CAPITAL DECIDED TO INVEST IN THE WINNING HORSE AND BEGAN TO LOOK TO STEER THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE AWAY FROM SOCIALISM.

IN THE LATE 1970s CALLS FOR MARKET LIBERALIZATION WERE ON THE RISE AS A CAPITALIST SOLUTION TO SAVE A SYSTEM IN CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO THE EXPLOITATION OF THE MARKET FORCES WAS THE GOAL OF THE URBAN FOUNDATION AND DEPOLITICIZING MEASURES OF CONTROL WERE KEY.

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED THAT THE DEPOLITICIZATION OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING POVERTY, URBANIZATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS IN GENERAL REFLECTED A WIDER ESTABLISHMENT CONSENSUS AND HAD MORE TO DO WITH SAVING CAPITALISM AND LITTLE TO DO WITH GIVING UP APARTHEID OR NOT.

TO BE CONTINUED





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(p.1-6, outside front cover and back cover)

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crossroads

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Check <http://crossroads-project.eu.pn/>
for further reading and references