

Educationists to decide on school crisis

By CASSANDRA MOODLEY

A REGIONAL education conference will be held in response to the government's failure to heed calls made by the National Education Crisis Committee at its national conference in December.

The conference, to be held tomorrow at Wits University, will be attended by education co-ordinating committees, teachers and service organisations from around the Transvaal.

The NECC conference held in Cape Town last year noted the deepening education crisis and planned to launch a "back to school campaign". It called on the Department of Education and Training to provide adequate educational facilities, to stop the retrenchments of teachers, to drop all age restrictions to admission and create the right climate for quality teaching and learning.

Representatives of the various education co-ordinating committees formed to implement the back to school campaign said at a press conference this week that the government was not responding to the challenge and was addressing the crisis only in areas like Soweto where people were actively challenging them on the issues.

Resolutions taken at the conference tomorrow "will be submitted to the DET to highlight awareness of their delaying tactics". The NECC is determined to expose the government's "negligence", especially if admission of all students is not met.

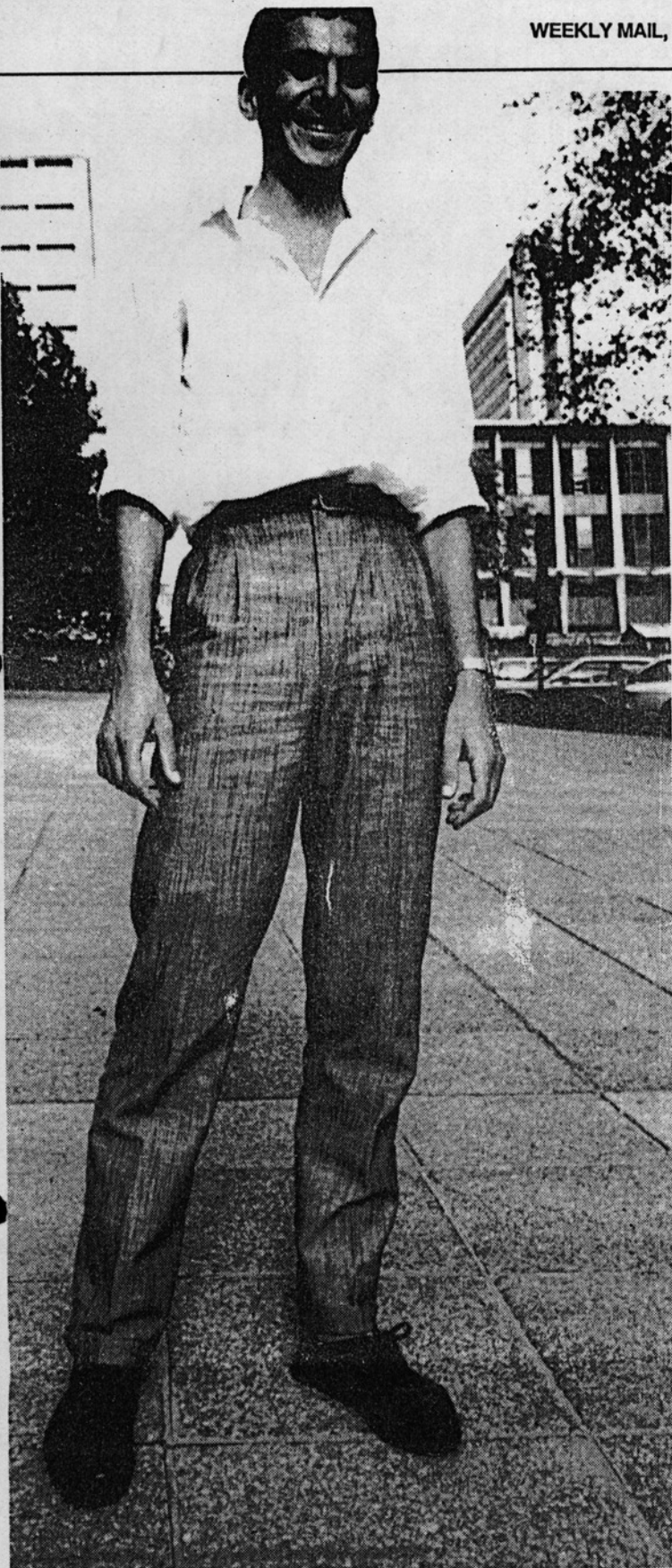
Representative Curtis Nkondo said that while 42 white schools in Johannesburg had been closed because of an insufficient number of pupils, the "doors of learning were completely closed to black children".

Black children, he said, are excluded from schools because of overcrowding and "political involvement".

He added that many black teachers who have degrees and diplomas are retrenched because they are "not qualified" and then white teachers are brought in to replace them. "Black teachers are also dismissed because they allegedly motivate students to form student representative councils."

While the government refused to address problems like overcrowding and exclusion of students in black schools, many idle, frustrated black children have resorted to mugging and hanging around shebeens.

The content of education — what is to be taught — is also an issue that



Happy to be free ... released conscientious objector Saul Batzofin
Picture: CEDRIC NUNN, Afrapix

decision. non-punitive system of alternative service.

"If, for example, an objector goes on hunger strike he could lose his right to remission."

Reacting to the announcement End Conscription Campaign representative Chris de Villiers said the movement welcomed the change but was concerned that the government had "passed the buck to the prison authorities".

He said the ECC would now step in to campaign for political and moral years in the Permanent Force was re-

On Monday Gary Rathbone, 28, lead guitarist with the group The Spectres, appeared in court for refusing to report for an army camp on December 18 last year.

Rathbone, who had completed four