

### ALEXANDRA SPECIAL EDITION

### FORWARD TO PEOPLES' POWER

15 May

# The people fight back

WAR has been declared against the unarmed residents of Alexandra. The massacre of residents in February left the international world shocked and the residents of Alexandra more determined.

Now there are more funerals. In the past two weeks at least twenty people have died. "Enough is enough", said one resident. People are tired of going to funerals to see their eighbours buried. The people of Alexandra are demanding that these killings come to an end.

They also want the soldiers and police to leave the townships. They want charges laid against Alexandra people to be withdrawn. They are demanding the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. After the attacks the people want missing corpses to be returned to the grieving families. And they demand compensation for damage done to property.

Today parents are afraid to send their children to the shops. Youths are no longer seen playing football in the dusty streets. Police and army vehicles patrol the streets day and night. It is real war against the unarmed residents of Alexandra. "Death — our game, Jail — our home" is what the angry youths in South African townships are saying today.

Buti and his councillors resigned after realising that they were in the enemy camp. Some policemen also resigned.

They now want to see themselves as part of the oppressed and fighting masses. Some joined the people's organisations.

Residents are no longer reporting cases to the police. Cases are being handled at the People's Courts.

To put more pressure on the remaining policemen, residents called for a total isolation campaign against them. Their children are not welcome at school. Their businesses are being boycotted. They are also isolated at social gatherings. Neighbours no longer talk to them, and their relatives stay away.

Progressive organisations were able to grow during the State of Emergency. The people were strong and united and the government had to lift the Emergency.

The government is showing weakness. Policemen and councillors are been seen as enemies.

#### STREET COMMITTEES

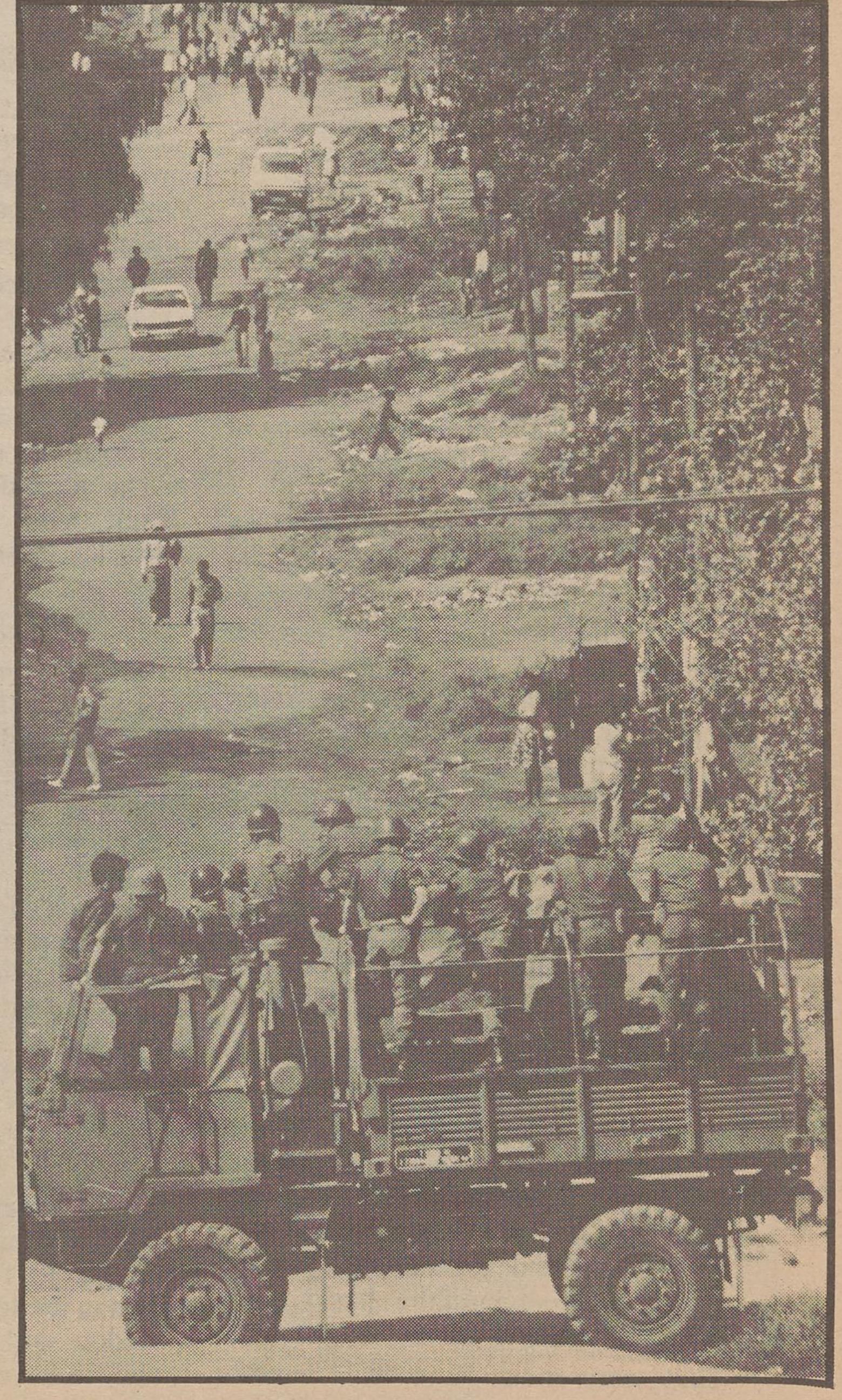
During the last year, it has become difficult for organisations to co-ordinate their activities. It is difficult for people to hold mass meetings.

The government does not hesistate to ban every gathering including funerals and church meetings. When it is in crisis and weak, the government tries to crush the people's organisations. The government tries to stop people speaking about their problems.

But residents of Alexandra knew they were going to encounter such problems. This stage found them being prepared. The idea of street committees came into being after people realised the need of defending their gains.

In many townships in every part of South Africa every street has its executive committee. Most of the people, young and old, belong to the committees. Residents say since the establishment of the committees it has become easy to be informed and to share and discuss their problems.

Alex is one area where every resident is an organiser. Now the committees are looking forward to the formation of defence units. These defence units will see to it that residents are protected.



Resist and defend is what Alex residents say

# Anight of fear and flames

LATE IN in the afternoon on Tuesday, 22 April, the police and army closed off Alexandra.

Police patrolled the townships in groups with hippos - waiting for darkness to fall.

It was to be a night of flames and fear, ending in death for at least five Alexandra residents and in injuries for about 60.

First to be attacked were the taxi-drivers. The taxi-drivers and passenger were beaten by the "police bandits" with axes, pangas and guns.

As they were beaten, the taxi-drivers heard their attackers say: "You are the people who drove us out of the townships."

Then the men, dressed in powder blue shirts that were hanging out to look casual, typical police pants and brown boots went to the homes of Alexandra leaders, activists and comrades.

#### SHOOTING

The homes of ordinary residents were also set on fire. People were shot at to keep them off the streets as groups of forty to fifty men went about the streets followed by hippos.

A middle-aged woman resident of 7th Avenue told of the events of the night of 22 April: "Then bricks started breaking my windows. The men in powder blue shirts and dark blue trousers moved in that direction. We ran to our neighbour's house. When we got there, we found it was burning."

"We tried to get out through the windows. Then they started shooting at the windows."

"A hooter went off and the shooting stopped. We peeped outside and saw a hippo. The police in the hippo said that they did not want to see us and we must move from the area."

"When I returned to my house there were a lot of stones inside. The contents were scattered all over. A TV set, R220 and my curtains had been taken."

Another resident said: "They started shooting at the doors and windows....We ran to the back of the house and hid behind the shacks. They started laughing and searching for us.

They were about 40 to 50 in number and they were wearing brown boots,

light blue shirts and trousers. There were both black and white policeman."

"After that they fired a few bullets.
Then I heard them say: Where is the matches and petrol bomb?'. The house, garage and shacks were set on fire by them."

A 3O year old resident said: "On Tuesday night I was sitting with my girlfiend playing records....Then we heard bricks raining down on the roof, and against the windows...They were in a uniform used by police - powder blue shirts and navy blue trousers. My girlfriend jumped through the window."

### BEATINGS

"They beat her with a baseball bat. Then they stabbed her in the stomach with a dagger .... The men moved to another street and were followed by a hippo.

Mrs Rebecca Beea, the wife of the leader of the Alexandra Civic Association, Michael Beea said: "As soon as I opened the door they began to hit me...the people hitting me wore blue policemen's uniforms."

The next day residents stayed away from work in protest against the attacks. Buses and taxis did not operate.

### SELF DEFENCE

45 000 residents attended a mass meeting at the stadium to discuss the damage and to plan defensive action. Residents decided to continue not paying rent.

The mass meeting also resolved to strenghen the consumer boycott launched a few days before. The people also decided to promote their street and yard committees.

That afternoon a 17-year old youth was shot in the street by police. But a policemen, Constable G C Terblanche, was shot in the stomach by someone with an AK47 rifle firing from behind barricades.

The Transvaal vice-chairman of the UDF, Samson Ndou, called on the people to form self-defence committees in the townships and factories.

Ndou said: "We are being attacked and we have the right to defend ourse-



Mrs Rebecca Beea, the wife of Mike beea, was badly beaten

# A history of protest

ALEXANDRA has a long and proud history of resistance to government rule.

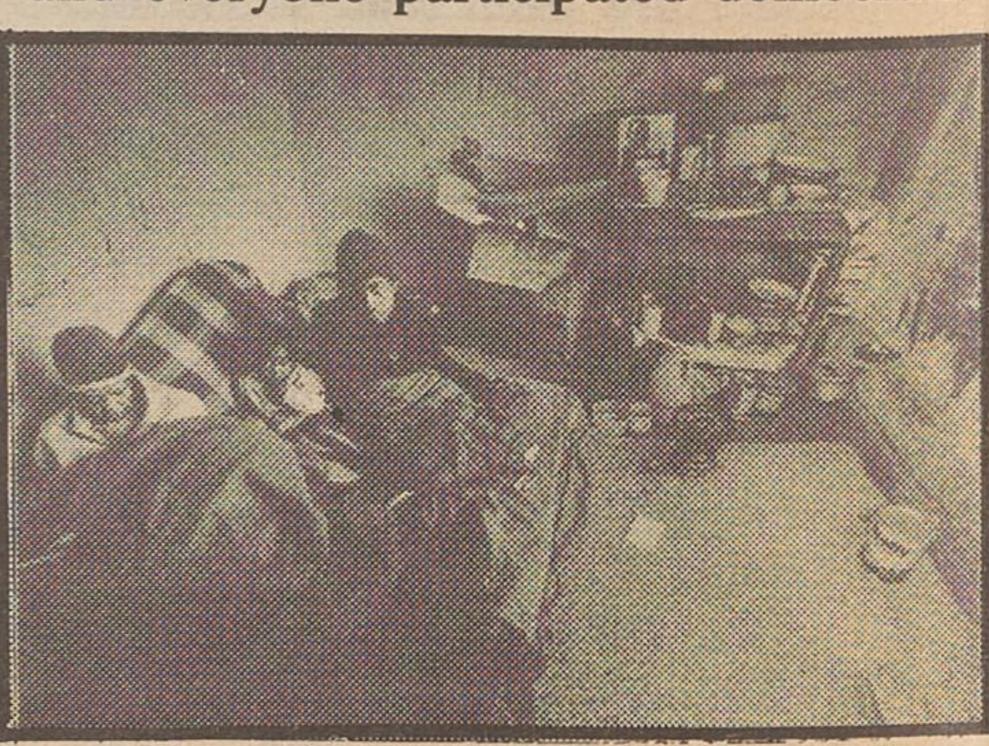
Because the township had freehold title rights — people could buy and sell their own stands, it always had more independence than many other townships.

Alexandra is most famous in the history books for the bus boycotts during the 1940s and 1950s.

Several boycotts by the people had stopped fares from being raised from 4d to 5d a trip. But in 1957, PUTCO which was formed after the 1944 boycotts, announced that the fares were being raised again.

The residents responded by forming the Alexandra Peoples' Transport Action Committee. The ANC led antipass campaigns as well as the boycott

The boycott lasted because the people were strong. They held open mass meetings where decisions were made and everyone participated democrati-



No change in conditions

cally. The Alexandra branch of the African National Congress (ANC) was one of the largest in the country.

The township became a political threat to the government. In 1957 the Minister of Native Affairs said

Alexandra must be brought "under very strict control". He wanted the residents of Alexandra to be removed until they numbered only 30 000.

In 1959 a new system of Peri Urban administation was introduced. It was announced that the government lent R200 000 to this board but residents nor saw the money.

Most people thought through the Peri Urban the government was going to reduce slum conditions and improve services.

But as one old resident said: "We only discovered after a few weeks that by this system the government intended robbing us of our birth-right. It persuaded us until we sold our stands. People realised that while the Peri Urban Board gave with the one hand, it was taking with the other one."

People were then forced to move to areas such as Tembisa, Meadowlands and Diepkloof. The government plansto clean up Alex' were always met with strong resistance.

Alexandra had been one of the ANC's strongholds before the ANC's banning and its residents today are still talking about their long history of resistance under this brutal government.

## Council resignspeople's victory

THE ALEXANDRA town council finally bended to the wishes of the people and resigned two weeks ago.

In 1983 on 4 December the people protested against the Black Local Authorities Act. They gathered at all the polling stations and voted "no" against the town councils.

The government plans were defeated because about 93% of the people did not vote. Therefore, it made it clear to the government that the people under the banner of the UDF rejected the councillor's puppet system bodies.

### GOVERNMENT CONTROL

All those who were willing to be used by the system accepted to become councillors. People like Reverent Sam Buti was ordained a mayor of Alexandra.

The town councils were formed against the will of the people. Other councillors like Peter Pastor and Mr LC Khoza, had served in the town councils since 1983.

But nothing good was done for Alexandra. No improvements were made in spite of them claiming to be the mouthpiece of the people of Alexandra.

Alexandra is one of the poorest townships in the whole country. 90% of the people in the township still live in tin shacks, there are no proper toilets, the streets are untarred, and there is no electricity.

People paid rent with the hope that they would get better houses and the whole area would be improved. But instead rent was exchanged with many deaths, shootings, detentions, terror and harrassment.

#### NO IMPROVEMENTS

And that is what the town councils brought to Alexandra. The people of Alexandra did not fold their arms and wait to be saved, but they forced those councillors to resign.

Two weeks ago the remaining town councillors and their mayor resigned. They could not withstand the pressure that came from the people they had been misrepresenting.

These councillors were totally rejected by the people. Nobody bought from the councillors' shops, and their children were not allowed to study with other children at Alexandra schools.

The resignation of councillors is a victory for the people of Alexandra today. What the councillors did by resigning was paving the way for the people's alternative structures.

These structures like the civic, youth and student groups and street committees will serve the interests and aspirations of the people and involve them democratically from the grassroots. It is the duty of these structures to defend the victory of the people over the town council.



The people of Alexandra are angry

Better housing is a basic demand

# We will not pay rent,

"WE ARE going to use whatever weapons are at our disposal." This was the cry of Alexandra residents after the 17 February massacre in Alexandra.

The day after the funeral a total rent boycott in Alexandra began. The boycott is still 100% successful.

Residents have asked: "Why should we pay rent whilst we do not have sewerage systems and electricity?"

"Why should we pay rent whilst the government is not prepared to improve streets in our townships?"

"Where is rent money going to?"

"Are we paying rent for our children to be killed every second of the day, are we paying rent to fill the tanks of hippos and the stomachs of policemen and the SADF to attack people and every home?"

These are the hardships faced by the residents of Alexandra. The resolve of the people to continue the rent boycott has been resolved by another Alexandra massacre.

The people of Alexandra will not pay rent until their demands are met:

- Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners to be released unconditionally
- All the peoples' organisations must be unbanned
- All those in exile must be able to return to their country
- Troops and police must withdraw from the townships
- Charges must be withdrawn against Alexandra activists
- There must be compensation paid to those who lostfamily members and ha their properties destroyed during the attacks by police
- Corpses which are missing must be returned.

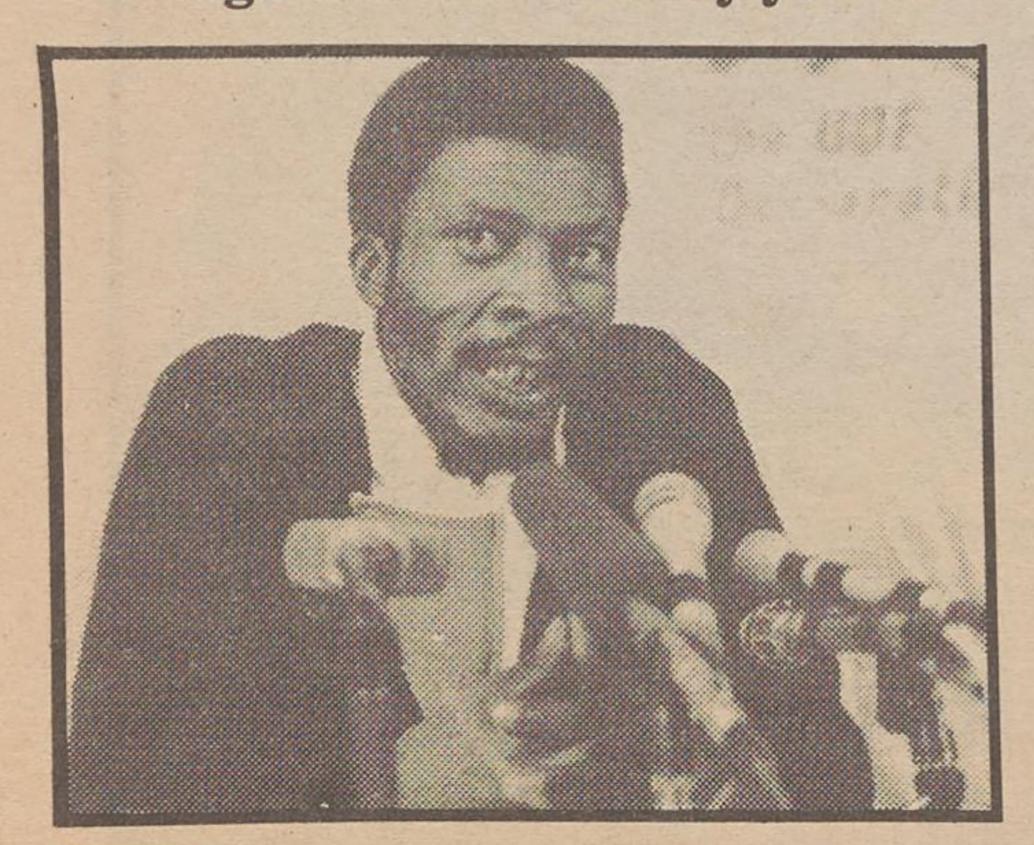
The people of Alexandra are angry. They have said the recent deaths won't go unchallenged. "They shall be avenged, the people are determined and the people shall win the battle."

### ACA says

THE ALEXANDRA Civic Association (ACA) calls on the Alexandra people to stick together as they demonstrated during the first massacre.

We call on the people to show unity and solidarity now more then ever—and now that the town council has collapsed.

We are again calling on people to rally behind the peoples' progressive organisations. We say you have



Mike Beea...Chair of ACA

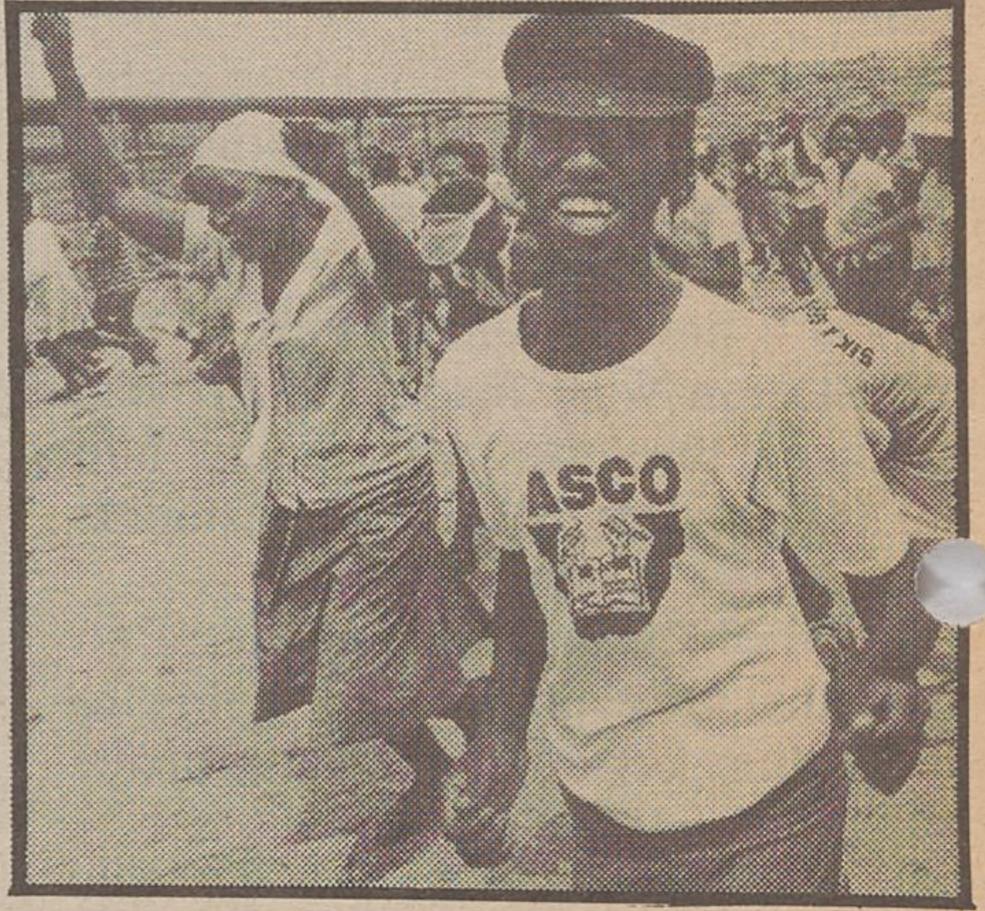
demonstrated your power by dismantling that corrupt government institution called council. And we say let us come together and structure the peoples' alternative administration. VIVA THE CIVIC!

### AYCO says

WE CALL upon the youth to unite under the banner of the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO), and strengthen their street committees and groupings.

The theme of AYCO for 1986 is "United in disciplined Action". We therefore call upon the youth of Alexandra to work within the accepted discipline of the Congress. The youth must get their constitutions and membership cards from the AYCO general secretary and continue with their unity in action for a better future.

We commit ourselves to the struggle for a non-racial South Africa which is based on the ideals of the Freedom Charter. VIVA AYCO!



### ASCO says

LOOKING AT the present situation for which we hold the state responsible - on behalf of the students in Alexandra we condemn vehemently the brutalities committed by the government to innocent people.

More than ever before let us unite under the banner of the Alexandra Students' Congress (ASCO). And march forward to a non-racial and democratic education in a people's government. VIVA ASCO!