

# ***LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE!***



**THIS IS THE YEAR OF  
MASS ACTION FOR THE  
TRANSFER OF POWER  
TO THE PEOPLE!**

## ***Negotiations and the struggle for a democratic South Africa***

**Department of Political Education • African National Congress • January 1991**







**Negotiations are for us a weapon and terrain of struggle, which we use in order to further our overall struggle to free our people and create a non-racial, nonsexist and democratic South Africa.**

**There are some of our members and supporters who believe that we show weakness by talking to the government. What needs to be remembered is that it is not the government who forced us into talks. It is we who forced them. It is through the people's struggles that the government was forced to meet the ANC and discuss ways of ending the conflict and moving towards a negotiated settlement.**

**This process has not gone as smoothly as we would have liked. The government is not meeting its commitments. This does not mean that it was wrong to talk. It means that we have to compel them to release all prisoners, allow the return of exiles and to repeal all repressive laws.**

**They must be made to understand that there can be no negotiations proper while these and other obstacles remain. It is the power of mass action that will make them understand! It is the people in the streets, the people mobilised and organised in support of all our demands, that will ensure our success.**

**Walter Sisulu**





**Comrades,  
we forced the  
government to  
meet us at  
the negotiating  
table.**

**1**

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**TALKING TO THE GOVERNMENT**

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**The ANC is  
calling for  
MASS ACTION  
for Peace and  
Freedom!**

VIVA  
ANC  
VIVA

**Wait  
-- I'm confused!  
I thought we are  
TALKING to the  
government now!**

*And I  
thought  
the  
struggle  
has been  
stopped!*

*Why should we talk,  
anyways? I live in a shack,  
and the police still knock it  
down. What can we talk to  
them about??*

**Well, I think we should  
talk if the government  
will . . . Our people  
are dying!**



That is right! We only began the armed struggle after years of marches and protests were met with only more violence by the government!



*If we can help create a new South Africa by talking with F.W. and company, let us do that thing!*

**If peaceful negotiations will result in the formation of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa we are not only willing but ready to enter into such negotiations.**

**- President OR Tambo**

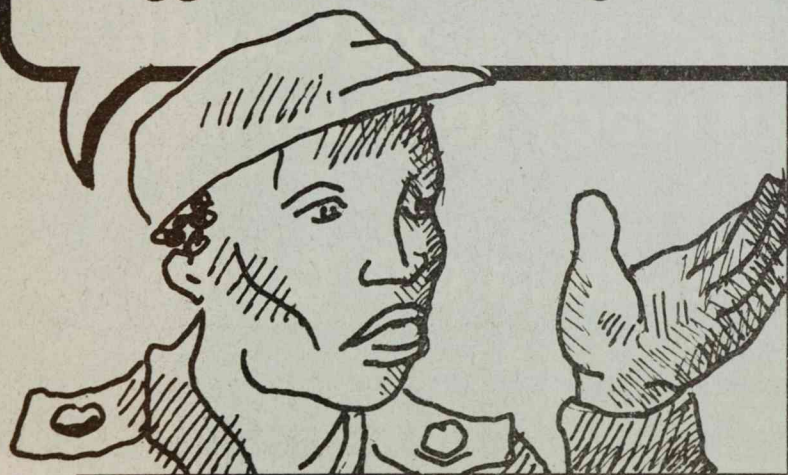


**We must see  
these TALKS and  
NEGOTIATIONS as  
ANOTHER STEP  
FORWARD in our  
struggle...**



**But before we start  
this new phase of  
struggle, we must  
know our own  
position, our  
strengths and  
weaknesses; also  
where the govern-  
ment stands....**

**We must remember that we  
forced F.W. to talk to us. Our  
struggle has been long...**

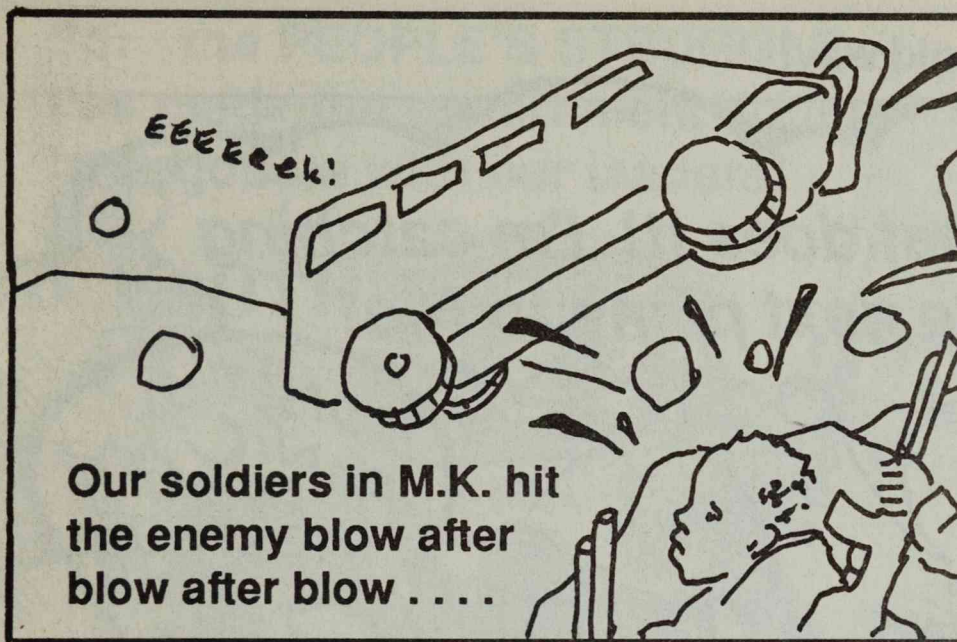


**We mobilised our people, in  
the civics, in youth  
organisations, in trade  
unions, in churches...**

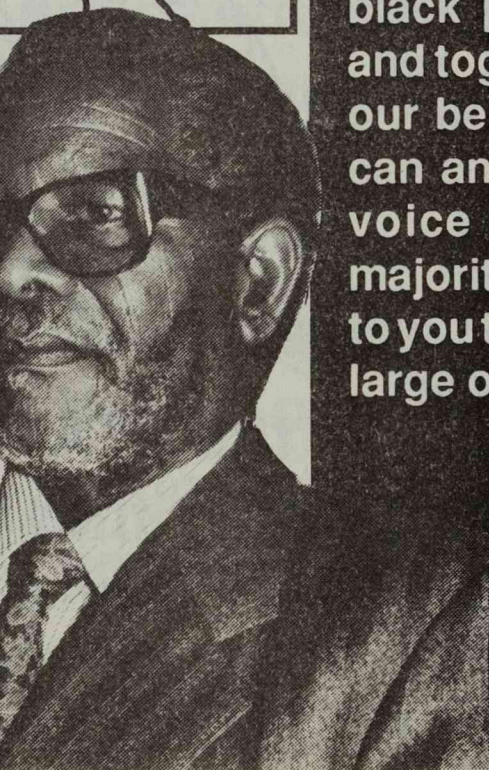


**We built our own  
organisation, even  
underground...**









I salute you, who have fought inside and outside the country under very difficult conditions. In the heroic traditions of your forebears, Shaka, Hintsha, Sekhukhuni, Moshoeshoe and others, you have demonstrated valour, boundless commitment and resilience in the face of impossible odds. It is thanks to you that today the dignity of a black person is being restored, and together with it, the dignity of our beloved country. No longer can anyone afford to ignore the voice of the overwhelming majority of our people. It is thanks to you that, at last, freedom looms large on the horizon.

**-President OR Tambo**



The government knew it could not survive in the old way!

One day in Pretoria . . . .

Today a police spokesman has denied that the major explosion in Pretoria was caused by **SABOTAGE**

*That does it! I'm catching the next plane to Rio!*

**DON'T PANIC!**

If the **STATE OF EMERGENCY** cannot **crush** these terrorists --- perhaps there are other ways! I suggest we try to **NEGOTIATE** with them instead!



**So: the PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE  
has made the government agree  
to negotiate with our leaders!**





**Compatriots, South Africa is at the cross roads. Our struggle, complemented by the efforts of the international community, has rendered apartheid unworkable. Thus, those who rule us without our consent, have been compelled to accept the humanity of a black person in this country. For the first time in a period of 70 years, the legitimate aspirations of the overwhelming majority of our people have possibilities of being realised.**

**- O.R. Tambo, Dec 1990**



**We have forced the  
government to talk to  
US--**

**Now we must  
make sure that  
these talks lead to:**

- \*An end to apartheid**
- \*and a unitary and  
democratic South  
Africa.**

**NOW we need to define our  
STRATEGY AND TACTICS for  
this new front of struggle -  
*negotiations.***

**That sounds  
good ... but  
HOW?**



**Our goal remains:  
THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN!**



**AS A LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
WE ARE THE CUSTODIANS OF  
THE PEOPLE'S ASPIRATIONS  
AND DEMANDS. OUR  
PROGRAMME, OUR STRATEGY  
AND OUR ACTIONS AT ALL TIMES  
ARE DESIGNED TO SERVE THE  
PEOPLE.**

**Nelson Mandela,  
December 1990**



**Therefore, our approach to  
talks stands on TWO feet.**

**First, every position and  
every leader must have a  
MANDATE FROM THE  
PEOPLE when they talk.**



Every position must be fully discussed, where ever we meet -- in branch meetings, in civics, in trade unions. All of our interests must be represented.

*For instance. . . .*

What happens to us **SQUATTERS** once the group areas act is gone?

Our new government must ensure **HOUSES, SECURITY and COMFORT** for all!



**Second: Every leader must be ACCOUNTABLE to the people for every decision he or she makes!**

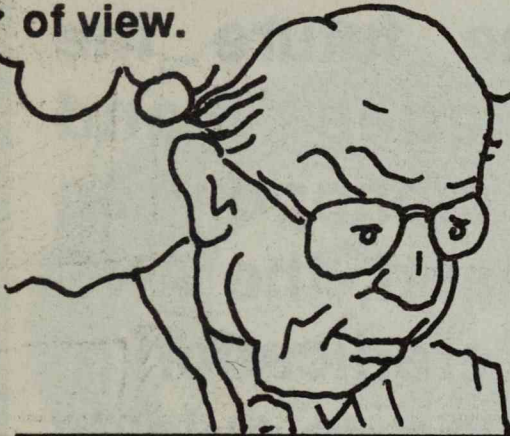
*Gulp!! You mean people are supposed to **VOTE** for me??!!!*





**But the Apartheid State does not see the negotiations process this way, at all . . . .**

Of course, we in government have a different point of view.

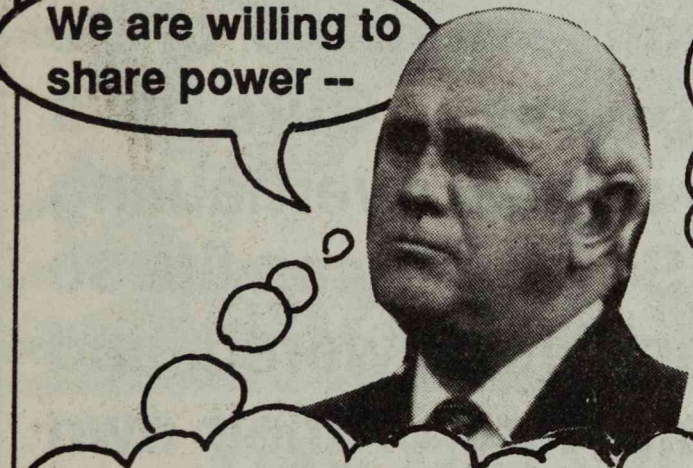


Blah Blah blah  
blah blah . . .



Government's power has in the past come from **REPRESSING** and **MANIPULATING** people . . . they want to keep the people **OUT** of the process of talking, as much as they can.

We are willing to share power --

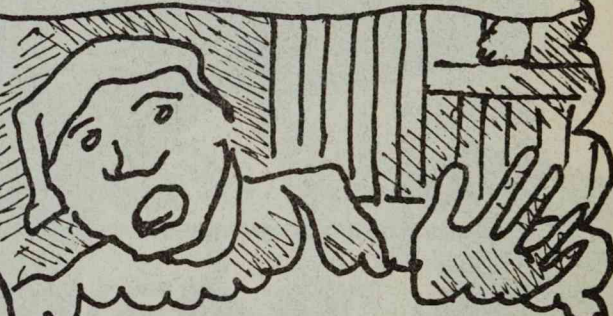


As long as we are still here in power, we can allow some others in with us!!

To do this, we will have to talk to some **REAL** leaders!



But we will have to *cut these leaders off* from the people they represent!\*



What has happened to our demands??!

\*This is called "CO-OPTING our leaders"





**The government's aim is to reform the apartheid system out of existence while carrying over into the future the accumulated privileges and advantages, the white monopoly on power. On the other hand, the ANC seeks to attain the total eradication of apartheid and to overcome as quickly as possible the consequences of its ravages on our people. Ours is a perspective of the radical overhauling of every aspect of South African life so that the people are empowered and can become the masters of their own destiny.**

**Nelson Mandela**



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***THE PEOPLE MUST DECIDE!***



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***THE PEOPLE MUST BE INVOLVED AT  
EVERY STAGE OF THE PEACE PROCESS!***

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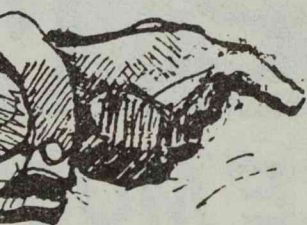




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**But what has  
happened so  
far in the talks  
has not been  
simple and  
clear. . . .**



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***THE STORY OF 1990***

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**We began to talk to the government. . . .**



**We've been talking for almost a year - and this looks like the same old South Africa to me!**

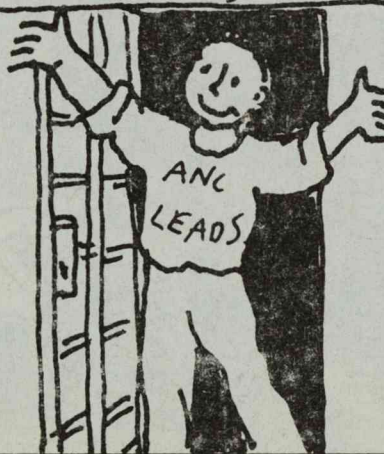
**So, what happened in 1990?**



**Before we agreed to meet with government, our movement insisted that the government had to create a climate in which talks were possible.**

**These conditions were stated in the Harare Declaration**

**Release all political prisoners unconditionally.**



**Unban our organisations.**



**End the state of emergency, and scrap all security legislation.**



**We said before we could negotiate, the government should:**





**NEXT, BOTH SIDES should STOP THE FIGHTING. . .**

**. . . agree how to REPLACE this Apartheid Government . . .**

**. . . we should decide what kind of government and constitution we need in future!**

**AND THEN MOVE FORWARD TO A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA!!!!**

**That sounds like a NICE THEORY!**

**Yes, but what happened in real life?**

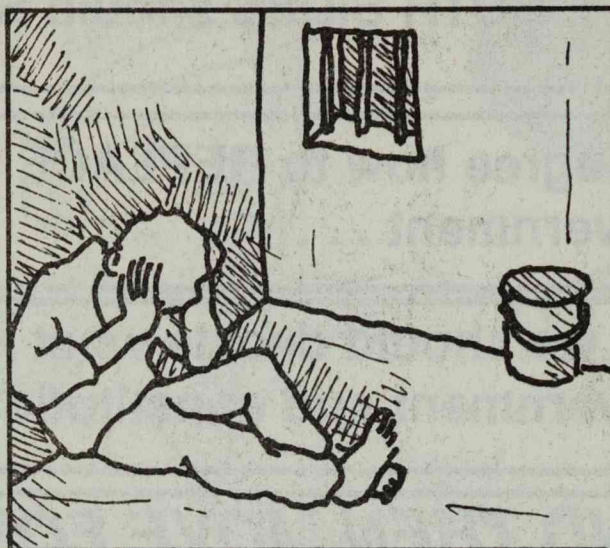
**Oh well, in practice it turned out a bit different. . .**



**In February 1990, FW announced HE WAS GOING TO TALK!**



**FW got international praise for releasing our MOST FAMOUS leaders ...**



**while 3 000 other political prisoners remained in apartheid's jails.**



**FW lifted the State of Emergency... leaving other security laws firmly in place.**



**He unbanned the ANC, PAC, and SACP .**



**Give FW some credit - he tried more than any other Nat leader ever did!**



It looked like the government was willing to make some changes to create a climate for talks, although they did not meet **ALL** our demands . . .

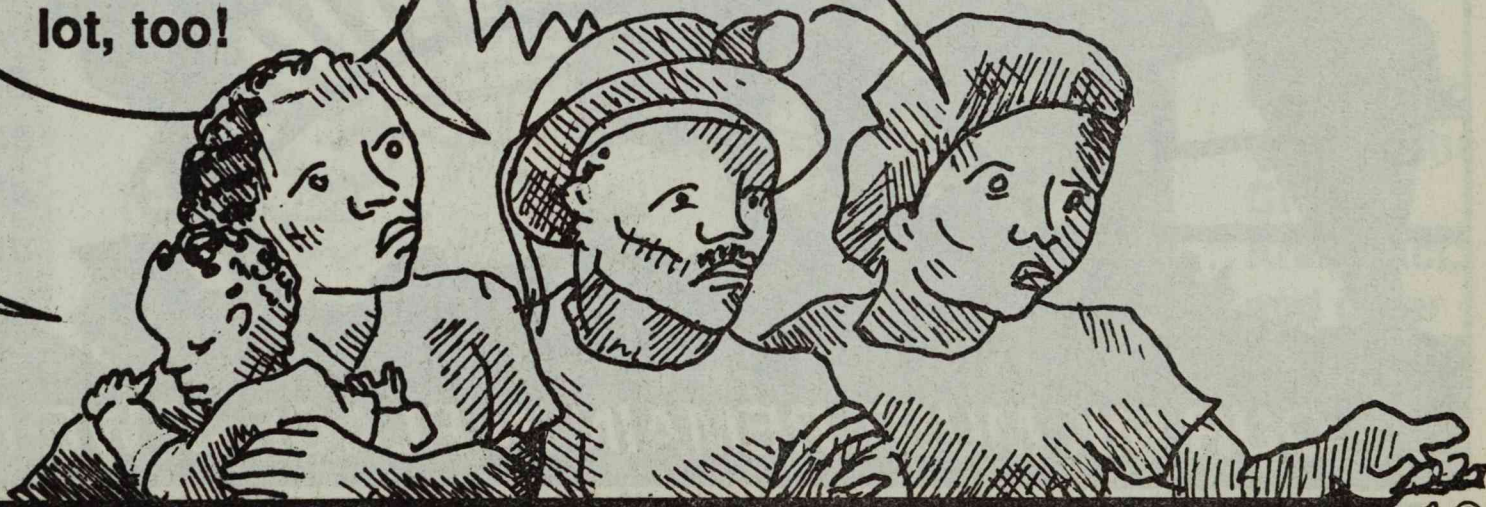


We got the government to agree to "TALKS ABOUT TALKS" - to clear the way to negotiations. We met them in Groote Schuur, and in Pretoria.

uh. . . didn't we agree to more than just TALKING?

I thought we gave them a lot, too!

*Why DID we stop MK?*





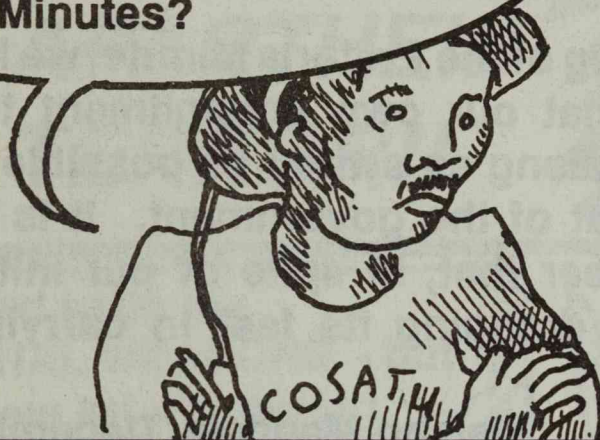
To keep the talks going, to get our political prisoners out of jail, and to allow our exiles to return home, we agreed to SUSPEND MK ATTACKS.

*Somewhere in South Africa. . .*

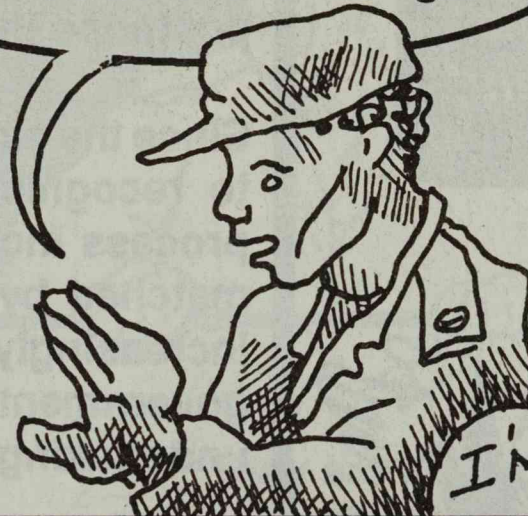




And the government? What **REAL CHANGES** did they agree to in the Pretoria and Groote Schuur Minutes?



In those minutes, they **PROMISED** a lot of things.

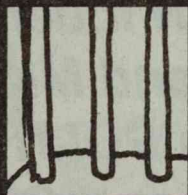


Groan!!



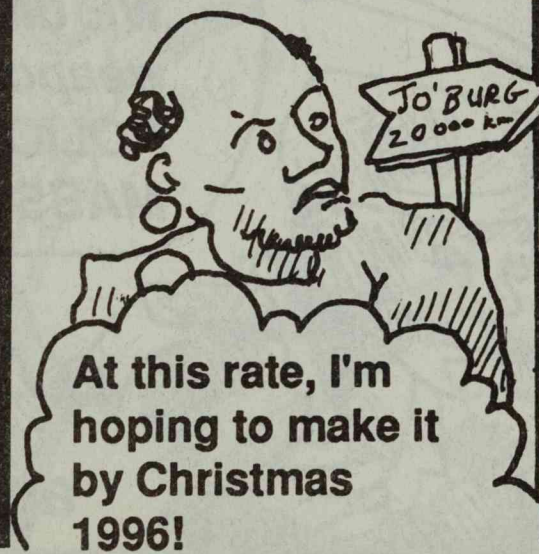
**I'M TIRED OF PROMISES!**

They promised to release **ALL** political prisoners. .



... and months later 250 out of 3 000 have been released.

They promised exiles would return home.



They promised they would look into the behavior of the **ARMY** and the **POLICE**...



*Only I think they forgot to tell the police that!*

And they promised that maybe in 1991 they would remove the Group Areas Act, and other apartheid laws.



*As a matter of fact, they  
like promises - they just  
do not like to keep them!.*

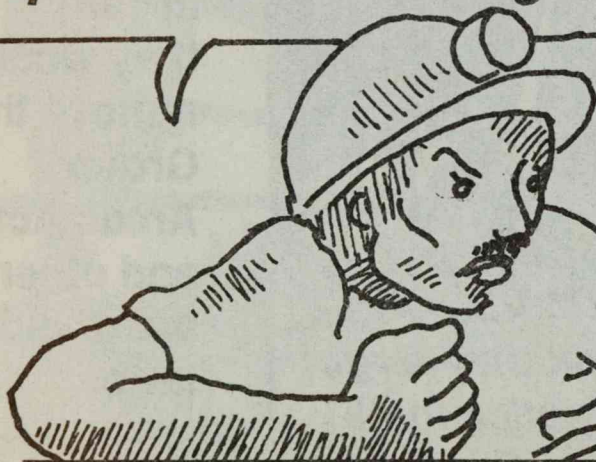


With the exception of the State of Emergency, many of the obstacles we set out to remove in May remain in place and the government seems determined to postpone their removal as long as possible.

Since the signing of the Pretoria Minute, we have come to recognise that our own commitment to see the process move along as swiftly as possible is not yet matched by that of the government. It is becoming increasingly clear that, in spite of our initiative, the government is dragging its feet in carrying out its undertakings.

Nelson Mandela December 1990

*Huh - this APARTHEID  
GOVERNMENT! First it fails to  
keep its side of the bargain. . .*



*and THEN it demands that  
WE disband MK, give our  
weapons POLITELY to the  
POLICE, and GIVE UP ALL  
MASS ACTION!*



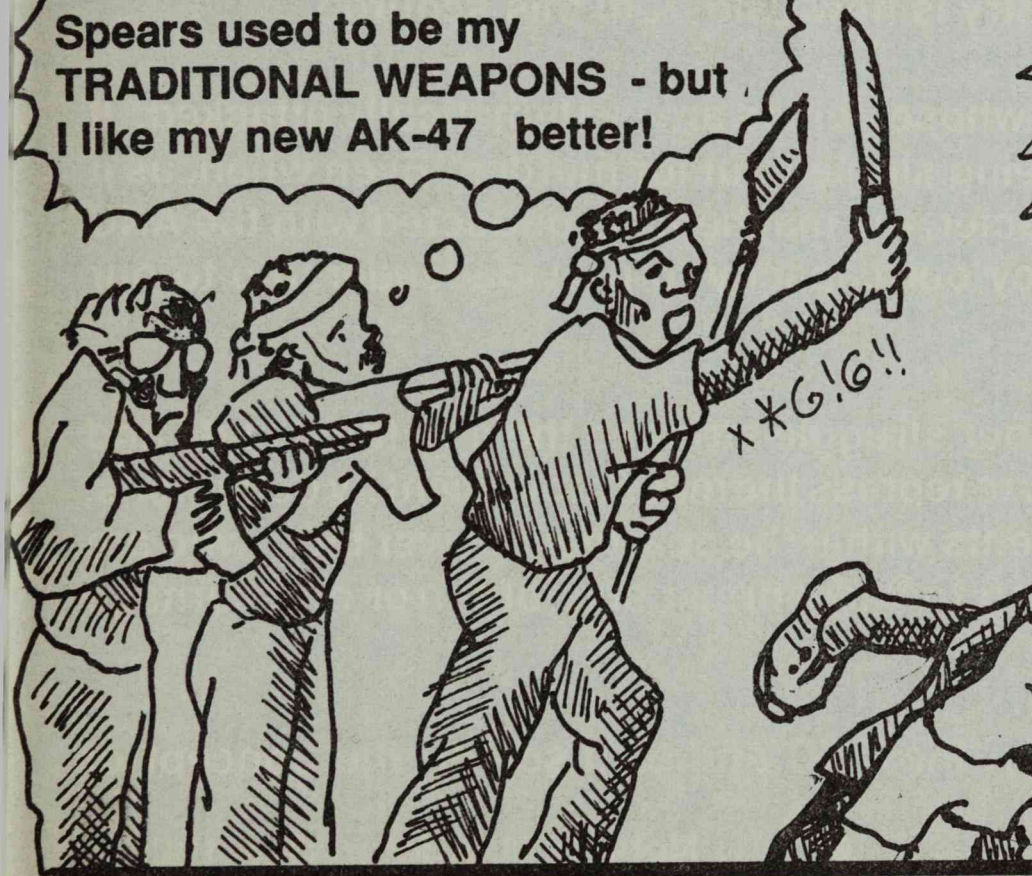
**We never  
agreed to that!**



And beyond that: with all those promises of reform in the air, our people on the ground met with. . . .

# **APARTHEID TERROR!!**

Spears used to be my  
**TRADITIONAL WEAPONS** - but  
I like my new AK-47 better!







**They are killing us!! Where are the police?**

***Police? They are standing right behind that mob, to stop us from FIGHTING BACK!***

**Some of those with guns look like BOERS to me - with their faces painted black!**



***Our people are being MURDERED!***



We have seen a plague of violence descend upon the PWV region and spread like wildfire in all directions, so that no part of our country is now safe from this scourge.

It is targeted at the ANC. It is our members whose homes are systematically attacked. It is our supporters who are systematically being singled out for murder. Even when, as it often does, assume an indiscriminate character, the mayhem is conducted with the ANC in its sights. Its clear purpose is to destroy our capacity to provide leadership to our people in struggle.

Let there be no mistake! We have through our struggle stripped the apartheid state and its repressive organs of their former capacity to repress the mass movement by detentions, jailings, and executions. In response, elements within the apartheid power bloc, who are opposed to the peace process, are resorting to widespread acts of terror and carnage against the people.

These killings have a dual aim: to weaken the ANC and to discredit the concept of disciplined mass action.

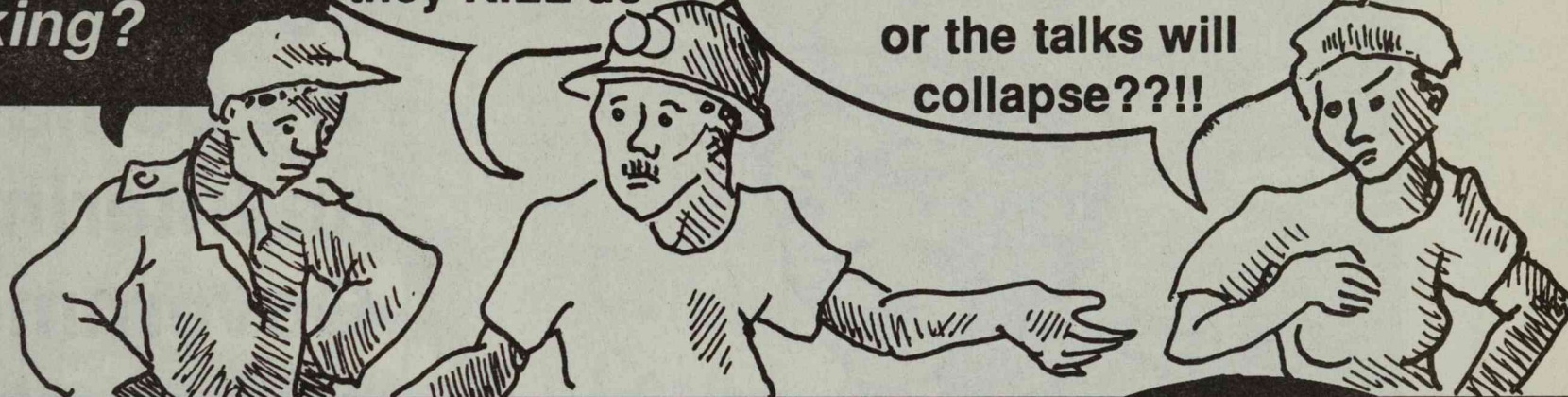
Nelson Mandela, Dec 1990



***With things so bad, how can we keep talking?***

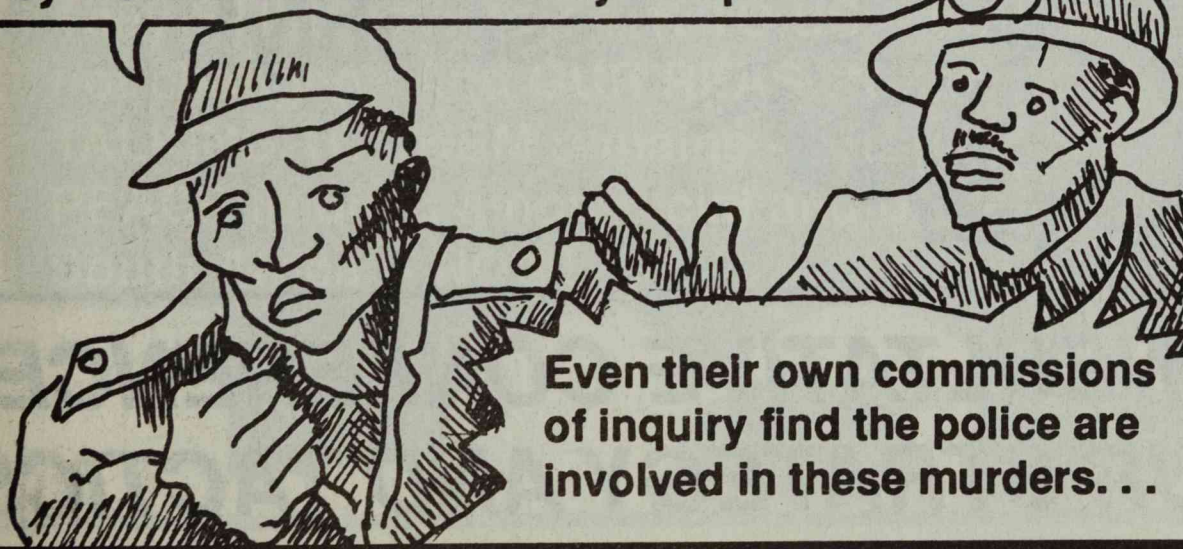
**Do we have to stand by while they KILL us --**

**And then they tell us we MUST NOT DEFEND OURSELVES or the talks will collapse??!**

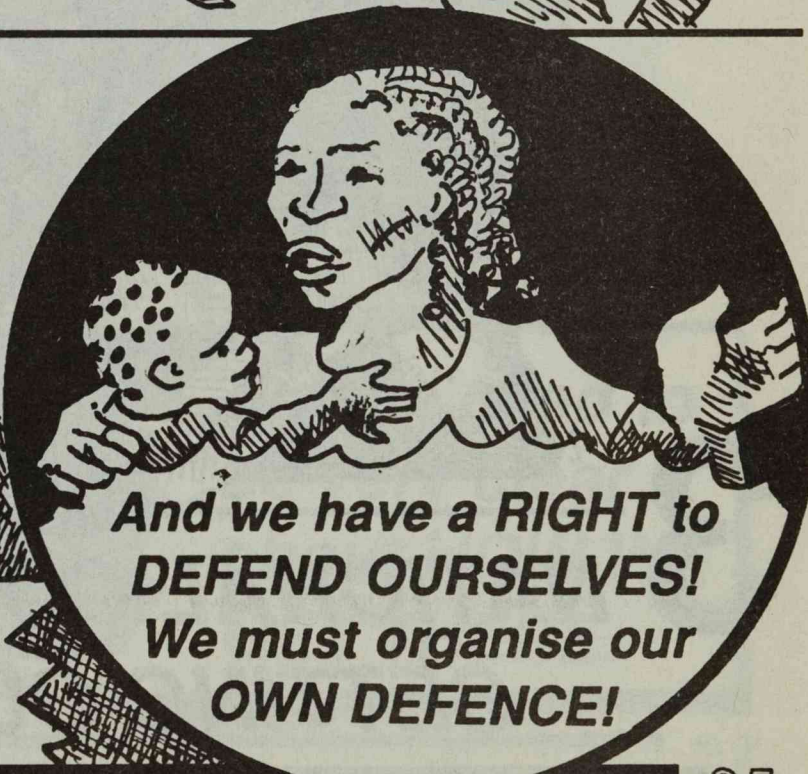


**We must demand that the government STOP this APARTHEID TERRORISM - ESPECIALLY by members of its own army and police!**

**Even their own commissions of inquiry find the police are involved in these murders...**



**And we have a RIGHT to DEFEND OURSELVES! We must organise our OWN DEFENCE!**







**What do we  
do now?  
We demand  
an Interim  
Government  
and an elected  
Constituent  
Assembly!**

**3**

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**NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE:  
SETTING OUR STRATEGY AND TACTICS**

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**In December 1990 the ANC held its first National Consultative Conference inside the country in 30 years, to discuss this new stage of struggle . . . .**



**They STILL have to TALK TO US -- this has not changed. And OUR REASON for TALKING TO THEM remains -- we want PEACE to build a non-racial and democratic South Africa -- NOW!**

***But we need to be very clear about HOW WE GET THERE.***



***This government  
must LIVE UP TO  
ITS PROMISES!***

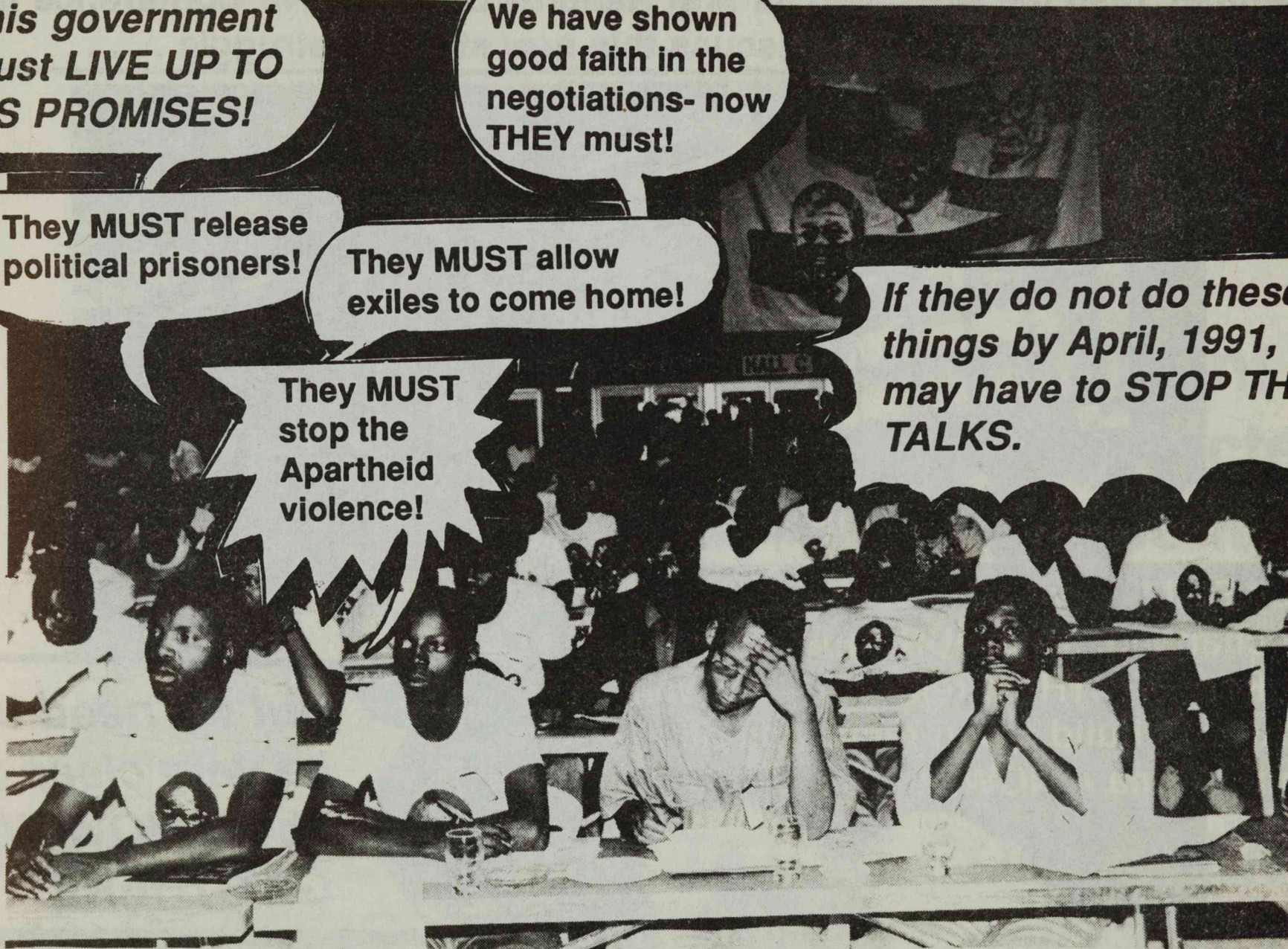
***We have shown  
good faith in the  
negotiations- now  
THEY must!***

***They MUST release  
political prisoners!***

***They MUST allow  
exiles to come home!***

***They MUST  
stop the  
Apartheid  
violence!***

***If they do not do these  
things by April, 1991, we  
may have to STOP THE  
TALKS.***

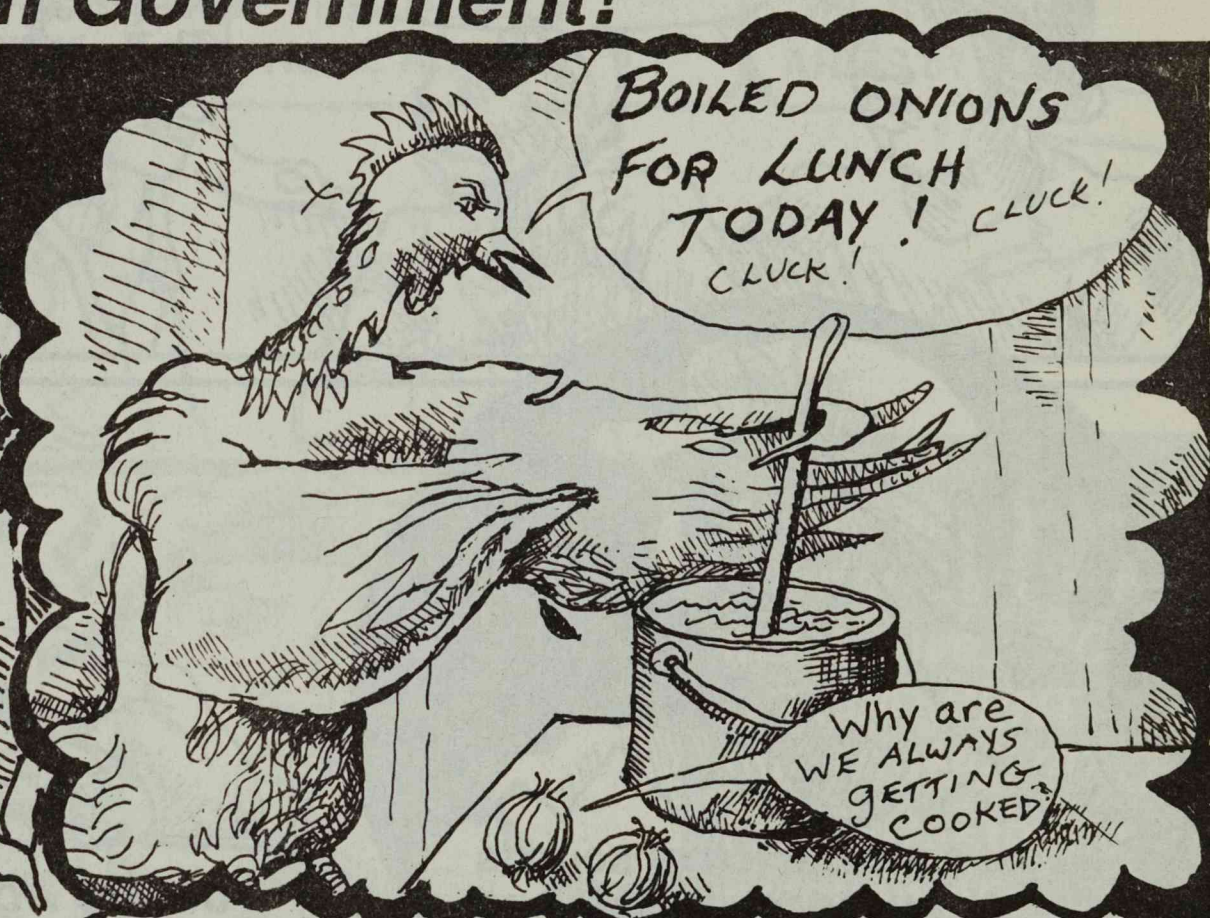




Conference agreed that the Apartheid regime cannot be left in charge during the period of transition to People's Power.

***We need an Interim Government!***

What! You mean you do NOT TRUST this government to supervise the change to democracy?



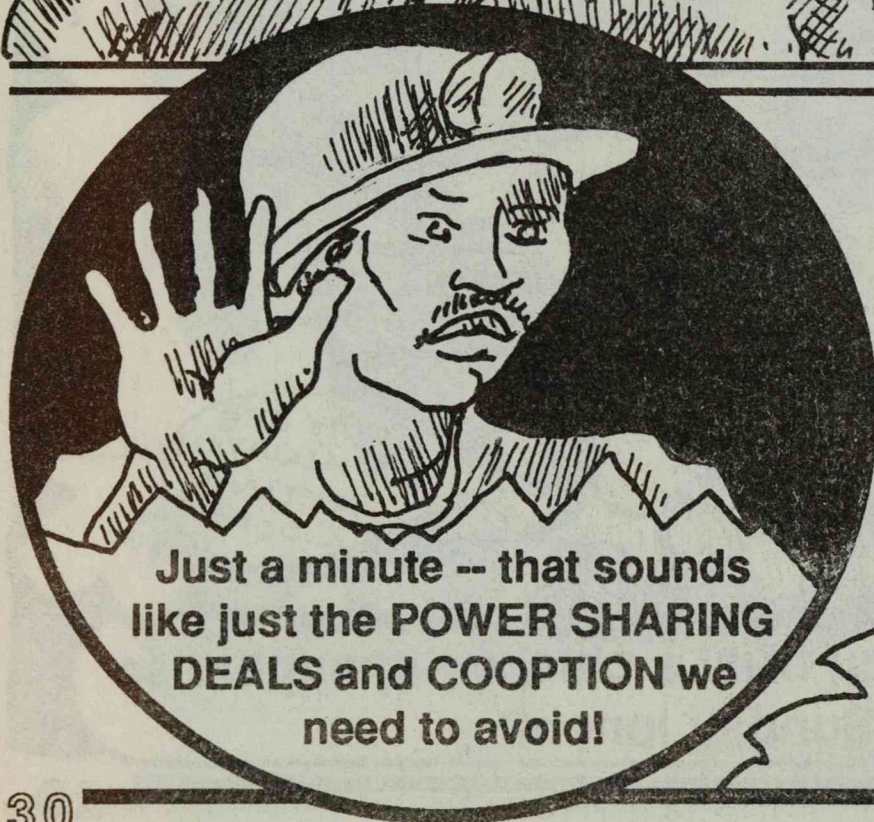
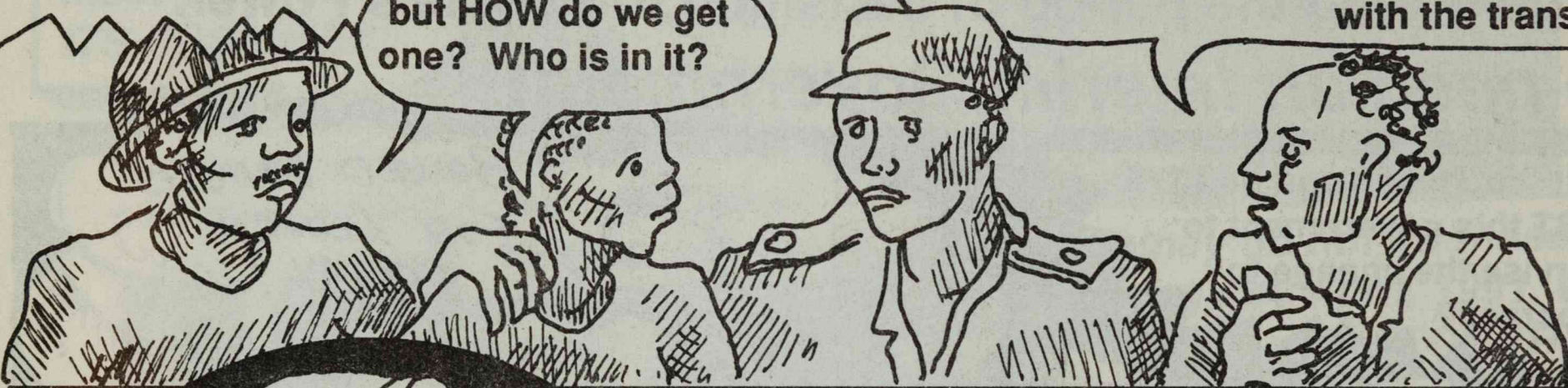
Would you trust a chicken to supervise cooking Sunday lunch?



Well, I can see **WHY** we need an Interim Government. . . .

but **HOW** do we get one? Who is in it?

Maybe De Klerk should appoint some of **OUR LEADERS** to join his cabinet and help with the transition?



Just a minute -- that sounds like just the **POWER SHARING DEALS** and **COOPTION** we need to avoid!



*You are right. These are problems we still need to work out. But we can see some clear points about how to go about it:*



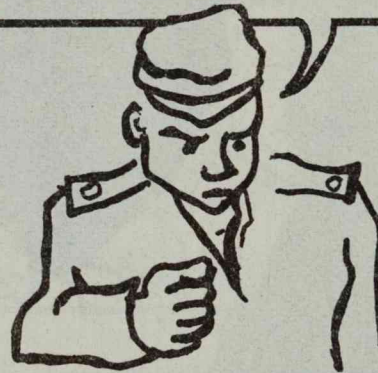
The purpose of an Interim Government is to **SUPERVISE** the transfer of power to the people. The present Government must go out!



The Interim Government must be the highest power. It is for a short time only. It won't be a power-sharing deal



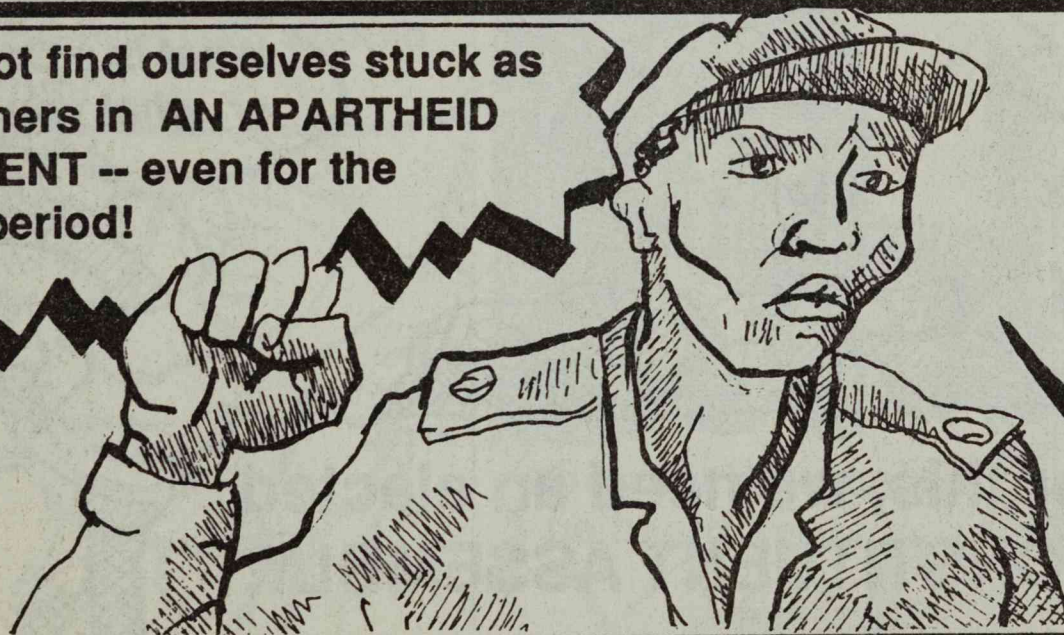
At the same time, it must have **POWER** to **ACT** - to **SMASH APARTHEID LAWS** and **MAKE SURE THERE IS TRUE FREEDOM OF POLITICAL ACTION**



That means the interim government must also control the army and police - the **STRIKING ARMS** of the state!



We must not find ourselves stuck as junior partners in **AN APARTHEID GOVERNMENT** -- even for the transition period!



*Above all, the Interim Government must have a **TOTAL COMMITMENT** to the **TRANSFER OF POWER** -- to the creation of a democratic and just South Africa!*



The Interim Government must work out a **DEMOCRATIC NEGOTIATING PROCESS**, not a **DEAL TO SHARE POWER!**

**FIRST: The new South Africa needs a CONSTITUTION MADE BY THE PEOPLE.**



That is, a constitution that **ALL OF US** have helped to create, reflecting **OUR** needs and demands!

Huh! That *WOULD* be something new in the Republic of South Africa.



For this, we need an elected **CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.**

What is a Constitu. . . er, what you said?



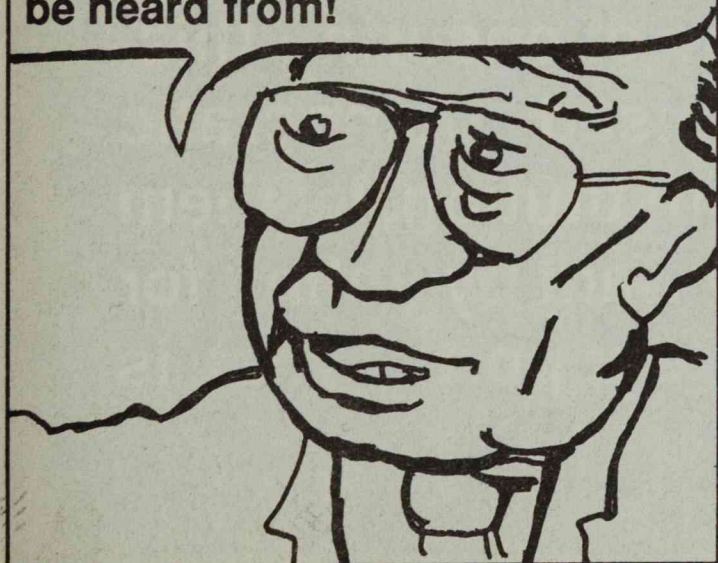


The Constituent Assembly is where we elect the people who will write the new constitution, using **ONE PERSON ONE VOTE!**



With a Constituent Assembly, we know that the people writing the constitution have a **MANDATE** from the people. The political parties with support from the people should **DECIDE** what the new South Africa should look like!

Stop right there! We say **ALL INTERESTED PARTIES** should be heard from!



*Squeek!* We want to be heard too!



We have heard from the puppets endlessly already - **THEY** may be interested, but we are **NOT!**

*Besides, they are mostly interested in **THEMSELVES!***



Why don't the ANC and the government just set up an interim government and write a new constitution together?

And then have a referendum to see if the people approve?

Look - anything would be better than the apartheid constitution we have now! But we want more than just an improvement: **WE WANT A GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE.**

*We are not here to rubber stamp a deal - The people must be involved from the **BEGINNING!***

**We want every South African to have a part in making this new Constitution. The best way of ensuring this, we believe, is to follow recognised democratic principles. If the people make the constitution, let them show what kind of constitution they want by voting for representatives whose ideas they support. That is democracy!**

**- Nelson Mandela**



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**Organise and  
mobilise  
for peace and  
freedom NOW!**



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***THE TASKS AHEAD***



*But . . . will  
this government  
allow  
itself to be  
replaced so  
easily?*



**The ANC began 19  
CONFERE  
A DEMOCR**

**This government is an  
APARTHEID STRUCTURE! It has  
no right to decide who should  
negotiate and who should  
not – and how they  
should meet!**





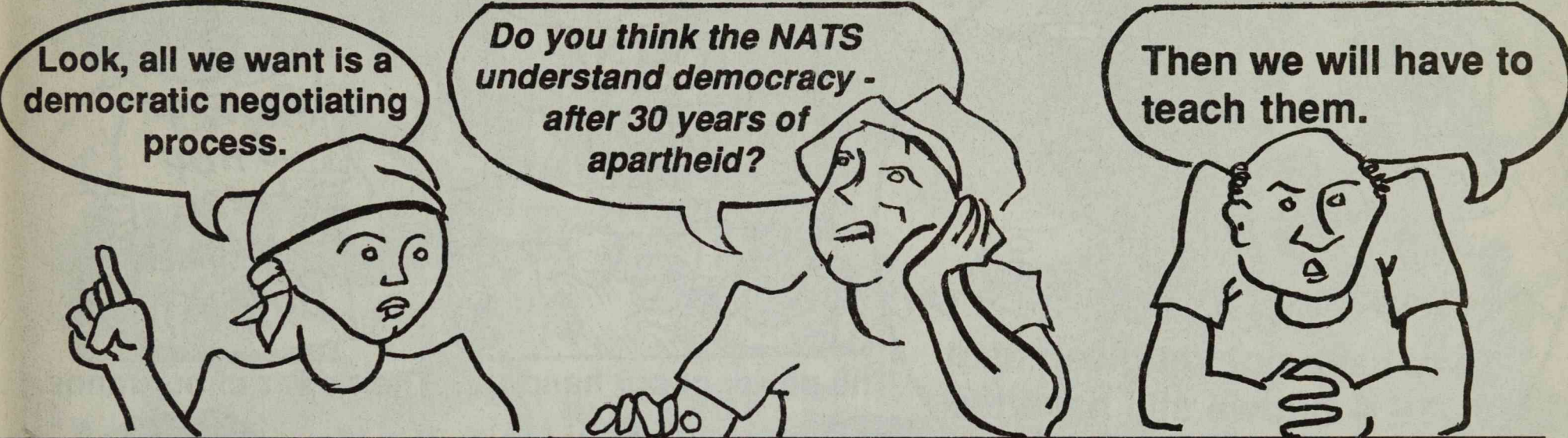
91 by calling for an **ALL PARTY**  
**CONFERENCE**, to discuss procedures for  
**DEMOCRATIC NEGOTIATING PROCESS!**



**An All Party  
Conference can  
discuss how to  
move towards  
an INTERIM  
GOVERNMENT  
and an  
ELECTED  
CONSTITUENT  
ASSEMBLY.**



**And we in the ANC call for mass action to make the government accept this:**



Look, all we want is a democratic negotiating process.

*Do you think the NATS understand democracy - after 30 years of apartheid?*

Then we will have to teach them.

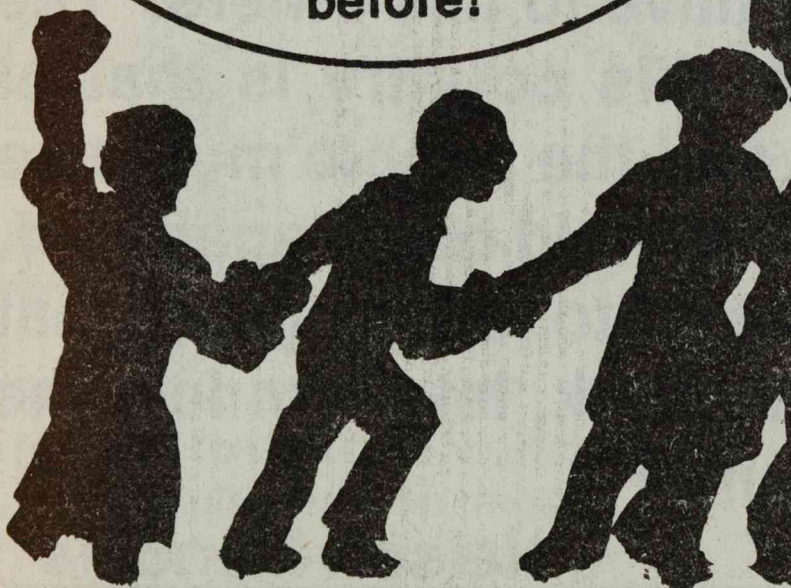
**When one form of language fails, we have to use others. The language that is best understood in this country is that of power, and our power is the people; and the people must use their power to shake those who want to hold on to apartheid. The reactionary forces must be made to understand that apartheid is doomed. If logic doesn't work, let them feel the power of a people unwilling to succumb!**

**- Nelson Mandela**

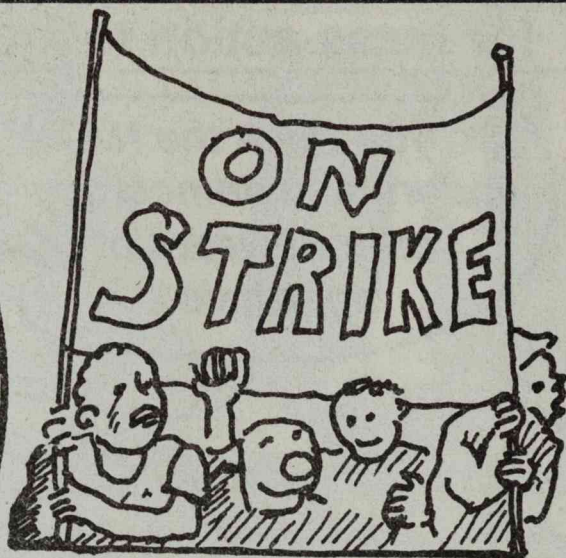




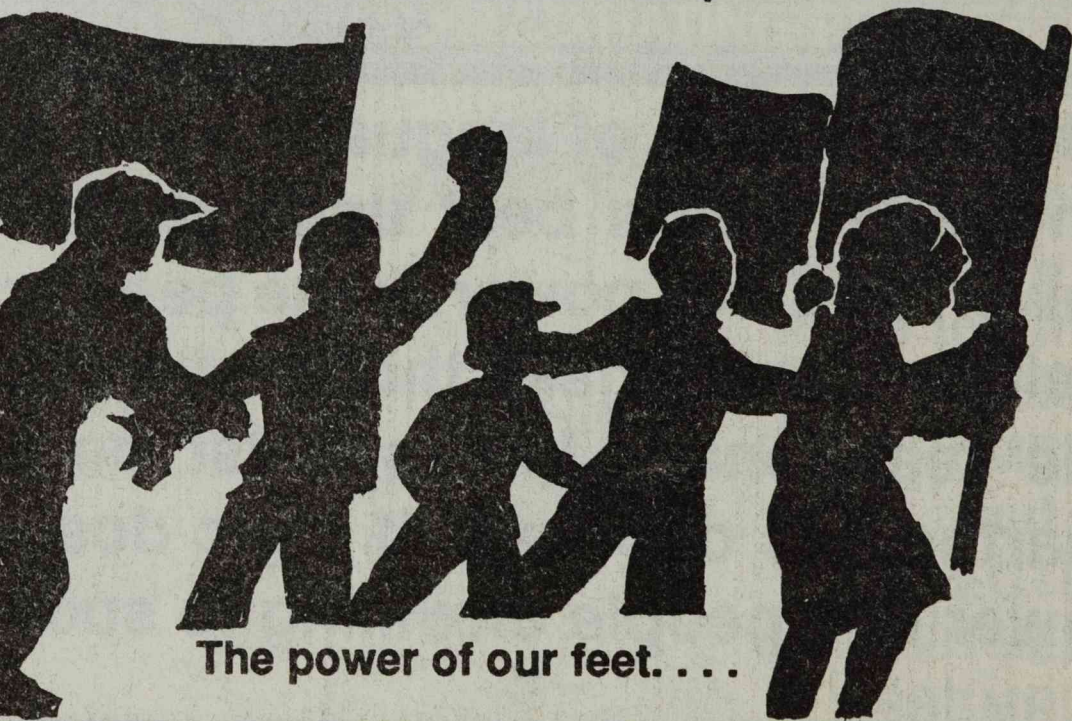
**They have not yet given us a  
VOTE -- but we still have the  
POWER we used  
before!**







The power of our hands. . . The power of our rands. . .




The power of our feet. . .



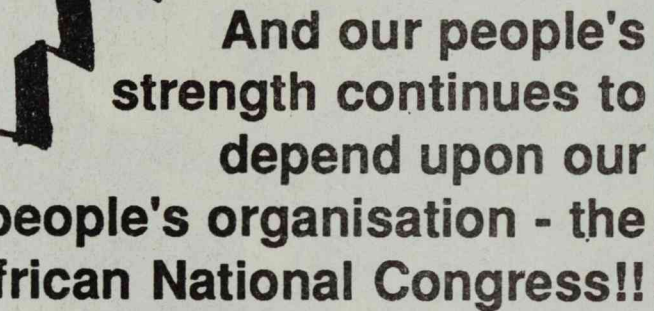


**IT IS NOT EXTREME OR UNREASONABLE TO SAY WE WILL HAVE TO FORCE THEM TO ACCEPT THESE DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS. WHAT IS REALLY EXTREME AND UNREASONABLE IS THAT ANY GOVERNMENT SHOULD RESIST SUCH DEMANDS IN 1991.**

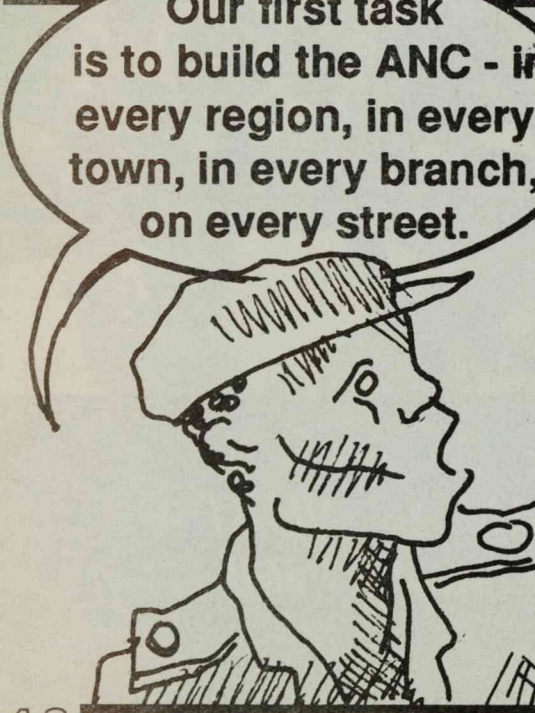




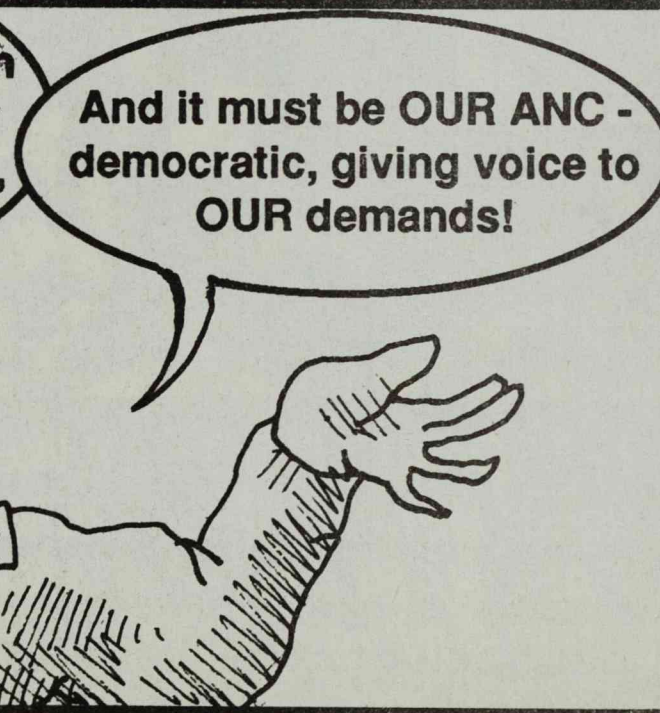
**Yes, the struggle continues....**



**And our people's strength continues to depend upon our people's organisation - the African National Congress!!**



**Our first task is to build the ANC - in every region, in every town, in every branch, on every street.**



**And it must be OUR ANC - democratic, giving voice to OUR demands!**

Let us therefore root ourselves amongst the people, live their experiences, share their trials and tribulations and, jointly with them, find ways and means to advance our cause at both local and national levels. As in the past, our cadres should be the first to rally to the defence of the people, and the last to seek rewards. In addition to drawing millions of our people into the struggle, we should observe democratic practices in all our structures....

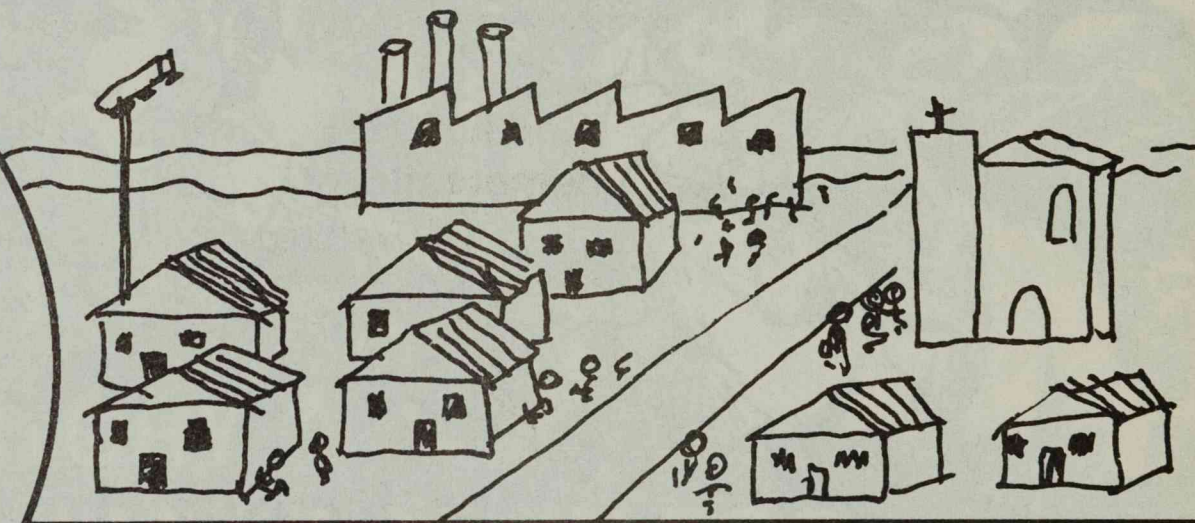
**President OR Tambo**



**We must continue  
to build our  
REVOLUTIONARY  
ALLIANCE - the  
ANC, COSATU, and  
the SACP!**



**From this base, we must  
organise and mobilise our  
ENTIRE COMMUNITY**



**In our workplaces, our schools, our churches, our  
civics, our homes - where ever the people of South  
Africa come together!**




We need to build **UNITY**  
among all people who love  
**PEACE** and **FREEDOM** in our  
country

*That is why we are  
trying to build a broad  
patriotic front of all the  
oppressed!*

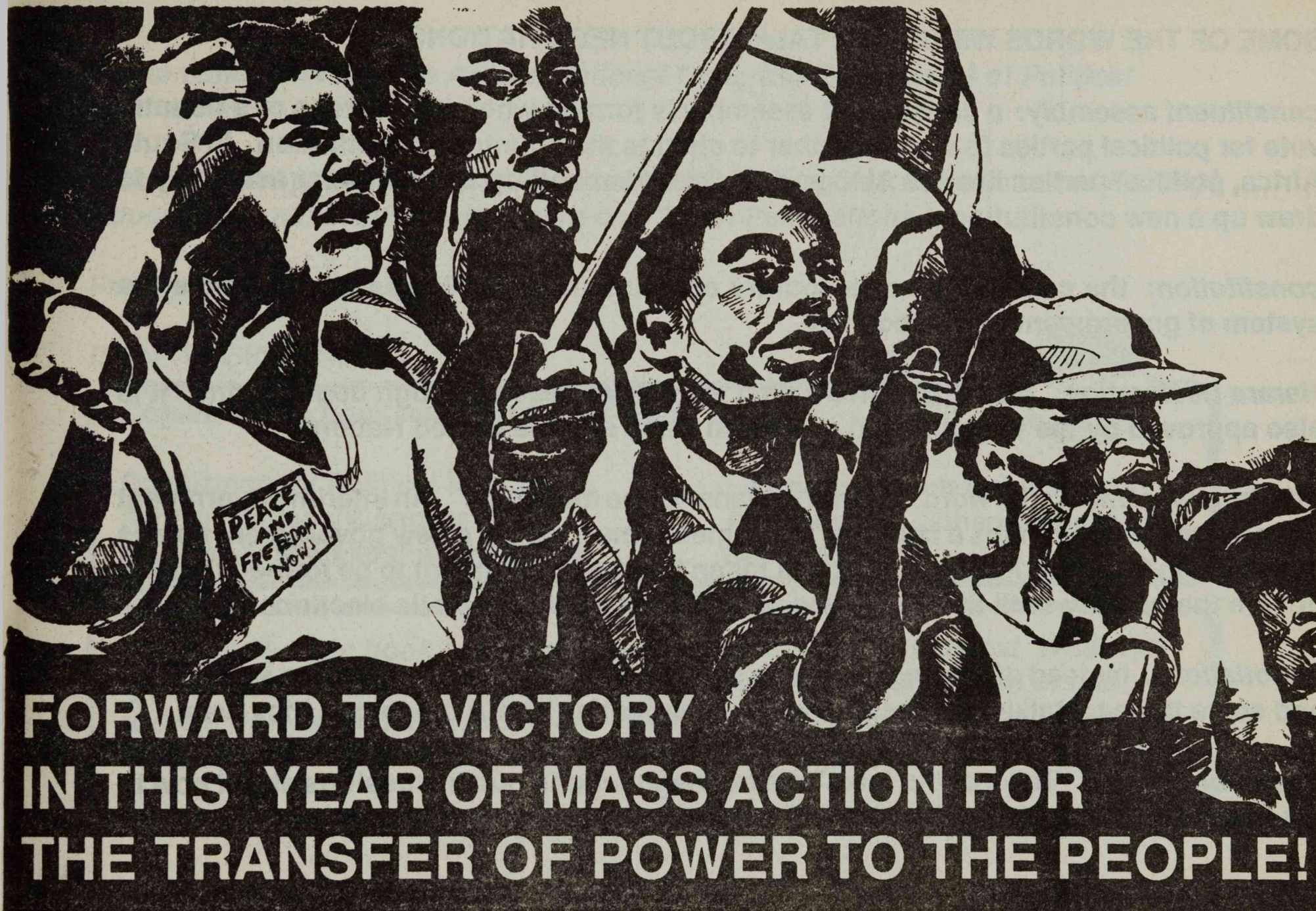
Only then can we truly  
wipe out that **CRIME**  
**AGAINST HUMANITY**  
called Apartheid

*And build a new,  
democratic and just  
South Africa!*



We know that then  
**THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN!**





**FORWARD TO VICTORY  
IN THIS YEAR OF MASS ACTION FOR  
THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE PEOPLE!**



## **SOME OF THE WORDS WE USE TO TALK ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS:**

***constituent assembly:*** a constituent assembly is formed when the citizens of a country vote for political parties to work together to change the country's constitution. In South Africa, political parties like the ANC and PAC are demanding a constituent assembly to draw up a new constitution.

***constitution:*** the constitution of a country contains the basic laws that determine the system of government of that country.

***Harare Declaration:*** This is the ANC's plan to achieve peace through negotiations. It is also approved by the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations.

***interim government:*** the word "interim" means "in the meantime". An interim government is a government that rules a country "in the meantime", before a new government comes to power. In South Africa, the demand is for an interim government to be formed that will govern the country until there is a new constitution and democratic elections.

***negotiations:*** instead of solving problems by violence, opposing parties can agree to try and solve them by talking to each other and negotiating about the things they want.

***Talks about talks:*** "Talks about talks" are not negotiations but discussions about how to get negotiations started.



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