

Blacks hit hardest by the downswing

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Africans, more than any other group in South Africa, are feeling the effects of the present economic depression hardest.

The unemployed, young and old, skilled and unskilled, are found all over the country. Depressing drought conditions aggravate the plight of the jobless and low income groups because prices of consumer goods have escalated. Basic food-stuffs such as white bread and milk have become out of reach.

The economic depression made it virtually impossible for students to obtain vacation jobs during the past festive season. University fees have escalated and unemployed parents cannot afford to finance the 10 per cent matriculants who have obtained university exemptions.

Can finance houses and industrialists urgently save the souls of at least 50 students who wish to go to university in 1983? The Star will supply the names of such candidates.

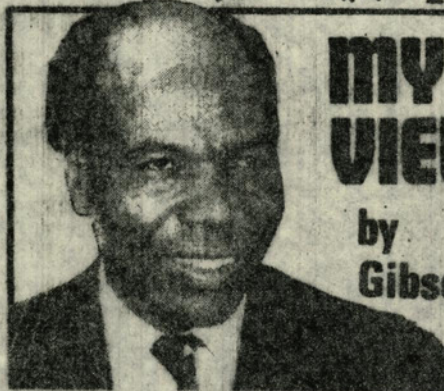
The unemployment position has reached such alarming proportions that employment even in the mining industry has become extremely difficult to obtain.

I hope that Mr Arrie Paulus and his Mine Workers' Union will not take it literally that the conservatives become more conservative during the hard times of economic depression; our people do need training for those mining jobs.

It is also equally true that during hard times which are experienced in the trenches of war, racial lines are blurred only to re-emerge at the demobilisation payout points for South African soldiers. When one views the plight of veterans of World War 2 then the racial problems become more vivid and painful.



A relative of Mr Thula's, Sergeant Read Mehlomakulu, photographed in the uniform of the SA Native Labour Corps, 1917.



MY VIEW

by **Gibson Thula**

As I write these lines I am looking at my uncle's father-in-law, Mr Read Mehlomakulu, who was in World War 1.

I am also looking at a photo of my father in army uniform taken in France during the 1939-45 war. Nine members of my mother's family also served in that war.

The saddest part came when, at demobilisation, most black soldiers were given peanuts in the form of a bicycle and a pittance of about 100 pounds.

Let us hope there will be no conventional war in 1983 because it will be hard to convince my people to die in defence of the status quo.

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Politics opened with a bang in 1983 when the Labour Party conference opted to participate in the gov-



The inscription on the back of this photograph says: "Two chaplains of the South African forces in the First World War, taken in France — the Rev Hlabangane and a white colleague." He is the grandfather of Zora Khumalo, the writer's secretary.

ernment's new constitutional proposals. Perhaps the party will tell us the difference between the rejected 1977 proposals and the deal it has just accepted.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Information pamphlet which is supposed to explain the new constitutional dispensation gives kwaZulu and Soweto as examples of black participation. These examples are not only irrelevant but are grossly provocative and misleading.

Africans desire political involvement and fulfilment not only at local or regional levels but at national level, in Cape Town and Pretoria.

The million-dollar question is how to achieve that without driving anybody out of South Africa.

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The year also began with the traditional opening of Parliament in Cape Town. Africans were once again conspicuous by their absence. Would it not be more plausible if all political organisations were unbanned in South Africa? Fortunately, Inkatha has just been unbanned in Transkei and people are already joining with great enthusiasm in that region.

Would it be too much to expect the South African Cabinet to take seriously the expected white papers of the Buthelezi Commission report?

Would it not be good to know that the South African Government is serious when it denies any destabilisation programme targeted at neighbouring states such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho?

Gibson Thula is chairman of strategy for the Inkatha movement and principal urban representative of the kwaZulu Government.