

creative camera



Photo by Ian Berry.

**DRUM — SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACK
PICTURE MAGAZINE**

ALSO EBONY, ROOT, AFRAPIX

Paul Weinberg is one of the younger photojournalists in South Africa. He has contributed to 'Drum' and is now Executive Director of the agency Afrapix, a rather grand title for their present scale of operations as he describes himself in the following article. This is illustrated by a selection from his portfolio of pictures. It is possible that this multi-racial agency represents the modern successor to the multi-racial magazine that was and perhaps still is 'Drum'.

AFRAPIX — GOING BEYOND THE IMAGE

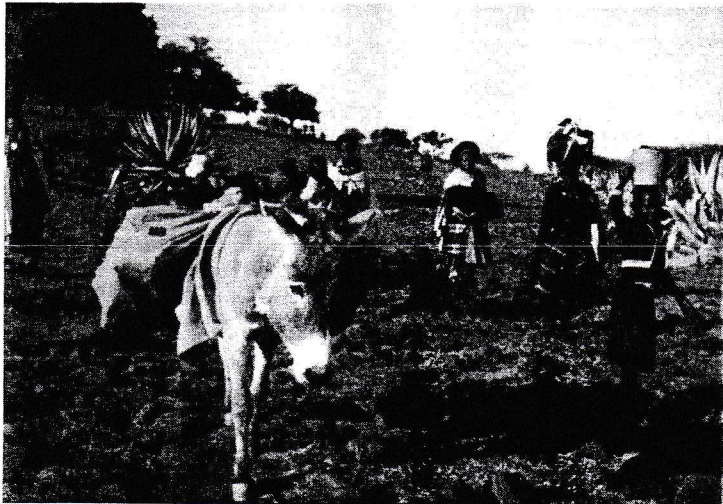
A Collective, an Alternative Agency, a Resource Centre; three photographers crammed into a tiny postage size office, and two other photographers in the big centres is one description of Afrapix that would fit. Another is an organisation committed to an alternative view of South Africa. "With the photographic image as its base and with the help of its media allies, Afrapix takes up its position in

the South African communications war."

As the apartheid machine rolls on, the control and the projection of its 'image' has become crucial for its survival, both locally and internationally. A cordial interaction with Margaret Thatcher, a brotherly handshake with Samora Machel, or a regal doff of the hat at a military march-past, all help to bolster the

saleable apartheid formula.

Yet behind this pomp and ceremony, there is another 'image' of South Africa — overcrowded squatter camps, unemployment queues, resettlement camps where 3 million people have been dispossessed and dumped, a war in Namibia. And out of all this yet another face — one of resistance, of which South Africa has no short history, an alive and spirited face, a

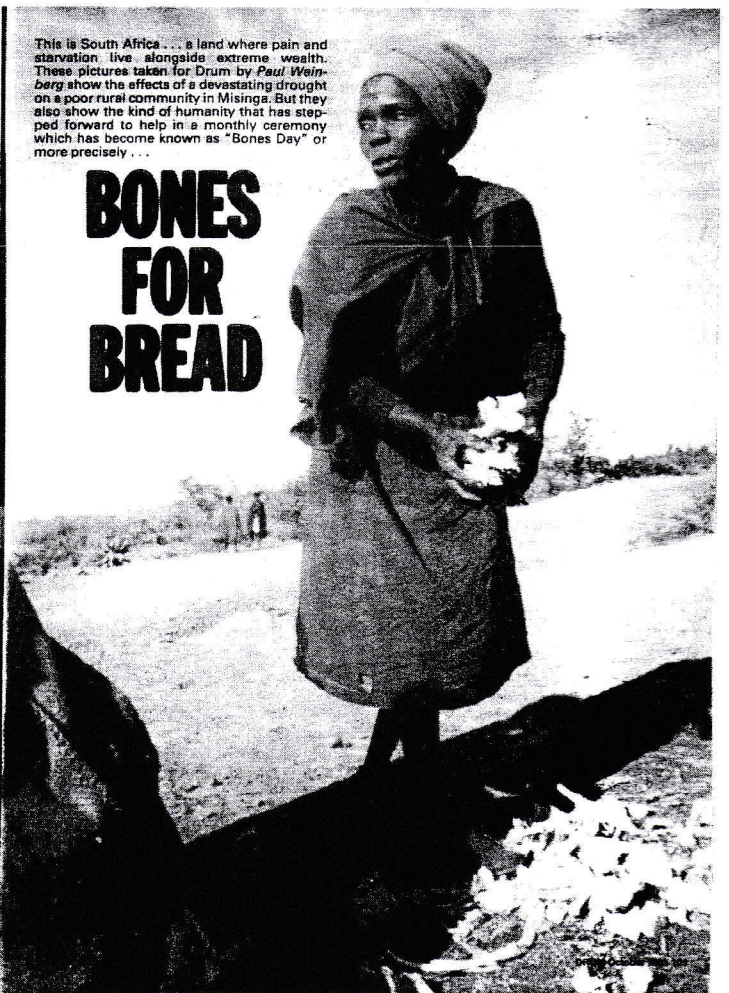


ABOVE: The 30km trek across arid wasteland begins for this community of Zwane whose survival depends on the sacks of bones they will swap for maize. The journey will take them a full day.
BELOW: Another day's wait as the bones are weighed and the people gather to swap news and gossip.



This is South Africa... a land where pain and starvation live alongside extreme wealth. These pictures taken for Drum by Paul Weinberg show the effects of a devastating drought on a poor rural community in Misinga. But they also show the kind of humanity that has stepped forward to help in a monthly ceremony which has become known as "Bones Day" or more precisely...

BONES FOR BREAD



Photos by Paul Weinberg from Drum October 1983.

symbol of strength, dignity and optimism for a new South Africa.

For a number of years the few social documentary photographers who have been around have been giving the 'Other' South Africa a voice, an identity and a character. Afrapix was born out of the idea of co-ordinating social documentary photography in the country and making it a more effective vehicle for social change. A few photographers agreed to make available their material and files to community and social change publications. An alternative image needs an alternative context and this context must be strong, important, or socially relevant. A photograph buried away in a filing cabinet is no good to anybody.

In June 1983 twenty-one social documentary photographers rallied together in the first joint social documentary exhibition of its kind in South Africa. Pioneers like David Goldblatt exhibited side by side with community photographers unknown outside their own townships. Black photographers and white reflected a wide range of skill, ability and potential. The exhibition was organised on two levels — through the established gallery network and also in conjunction with local cultural events and political meetings. The earliest

ever documentation and research project (Carnegie) into poverty and development provided Afrapix with an entry into investigative documentary photography which culminated in a massive exhibition covering topics from education to labour.

The search goes on for alternative vehicles — portable exhibitions in community, church halls and on the street are ideas we continue to explore. The growth of the labour movement, and the proliferation of community organisations, has seen the flourishing of alternative publications. This movement in itself has provided the outlet for Afrapix photographers and social documentation. It has given a depth and resonance to an unrecognised culture.

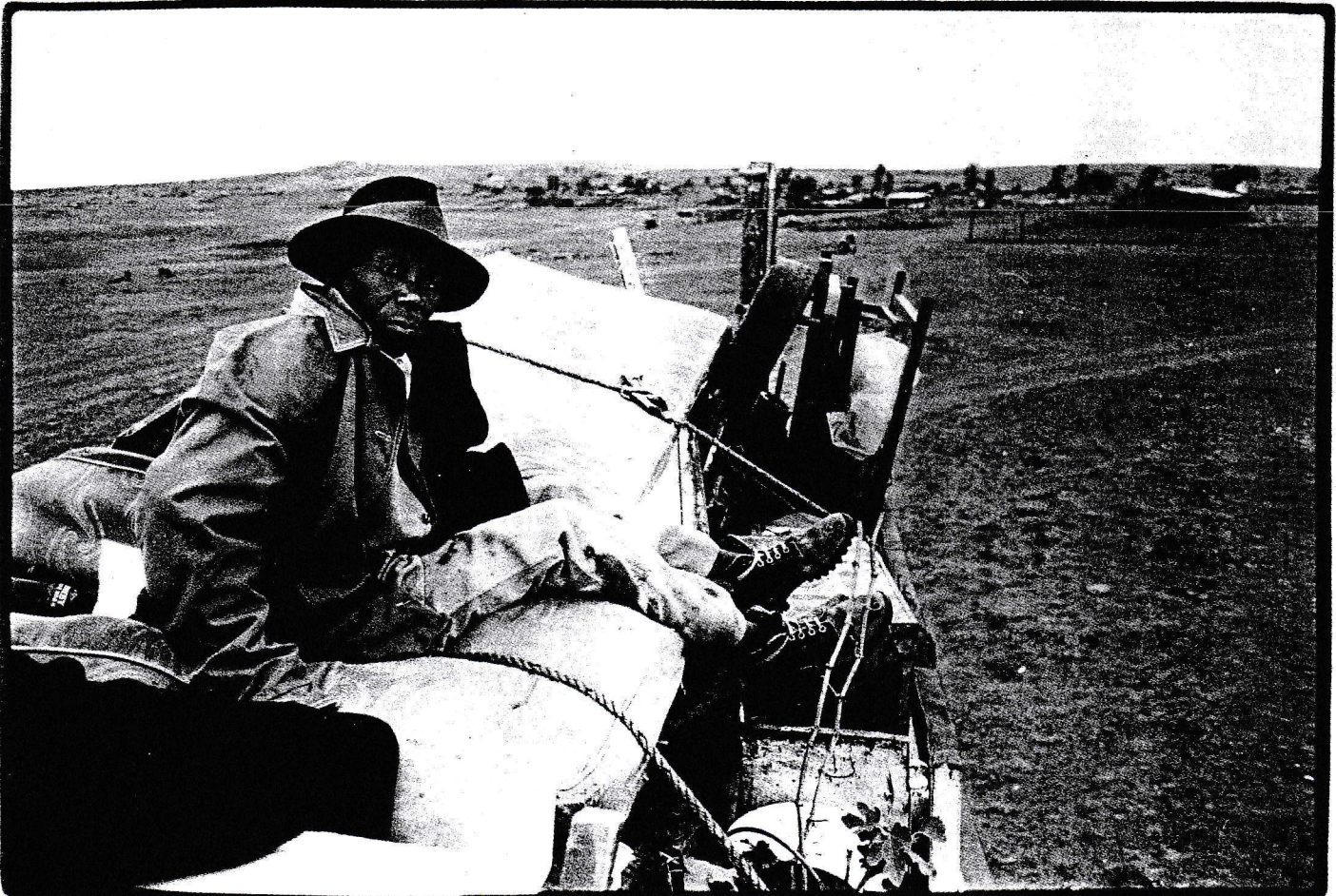
Through our photojournalist assignments, our choice of subject and presentation, we attempt to influence publications to take a more critical view of South Africa and to help an understanding of what 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' really mean.

We have explored through workshops a community approach to photography, dismantling romantic notions of technique and art. We provide people with an opportunity to explore and understand the reality of which the camera is purely an instrument. In an experimental

workshop for black and white high school students, photographs opened up new perceptions, and the development of a new consciousness. The lines of sub-economic ghetto houses of Soweto and the gardenised variety of white South African suburbia stimulated a dialectic in this process of social awareness. In the workshops we run we try to allow people to speak for themselves. No one can be more articulate than those who experience and understand their own situations.

In an attempt to go beyond the propagation of stereotypes and clichés, we have explored in-depth community documentation. Omar Badsha's series of the squatters of Inanda is a good example, looking at the finite, the detail, the subtle nuances that reflect a microcosm of our society, the vestiges of power; reflections of the contradictions of a traditional culture in a capitalist economy.

The search for our new aesthetic continues. One that defines, clarifies and encapsulates a struggling culture. Photographs that go beyond 'social realism' and 'the bizarre' as a manipulative tactic. Peculiar to South Africa is its own kind of struggle — race, class — a range of nuances, tone and colour; a struggle of which there is no end in sight.



PAUL WEINBERG





INANDA

by Omar Badsha

Inanda: a myriad of shacks pocketed in dry valleys some 30 kilometres north-west of Durban's city centre and home to upwards of a quarter of a million people. It is one of the many 'informal' settlements to have sprung up around the city in the last three or four decades — settlements whose growth is tied to the simultaneous decline in the carrying capacity of the meagre lands set aside for African use, and to the huge backlog in the provision of housing in urban areas.

There is a carefully maintained fiction in some circles that while men are away working in the industrial centres of South Africa, their wives, children, parents and other kin are surviving adequately in the Homelands on the fruits of the land, and it is only the recent drought which has disturbed this balance. Earlier in the century, perhaps, this was possible; some families in fact prospered. Nowadays, most families subsist on the pitiful remittance they receive from town. Often, these arrive with growing infrequency, the wage-earner either finding new orientations or finding himself unemployed. When they cease altogether, there is little option but to trek townwards in search of survival.

Sometimes, women close up their country homesteads for good to escape the strictures of rural life, or simply to try to re-establish some form of family life with husbands, who will readily escape from the oppressive, overcrowded conditions in the hostels.

Those motivated by such needs will congregate in places like Inanda. They will join others who have given up on the years-long waiting list for formal housing and those who have moved from other 'informal' areas, as well as those who have spent all their lives in Inanda shacks. There it is reasonably easy to find cheap accommodation and perhaps more importantly, there are few restrictions of a legal kind compared to being in town. In the regimented townships and hostels, housing is bound up with employment and both are linked to the cumbersome machinery of 'urban rights'. In Inanda, it is possible — though ever more precariously so — to skirt around these restrictions. That is why the state calls the people living there 'squatters', even though they may have entered into perfectly acceptable agreements with their landlords.

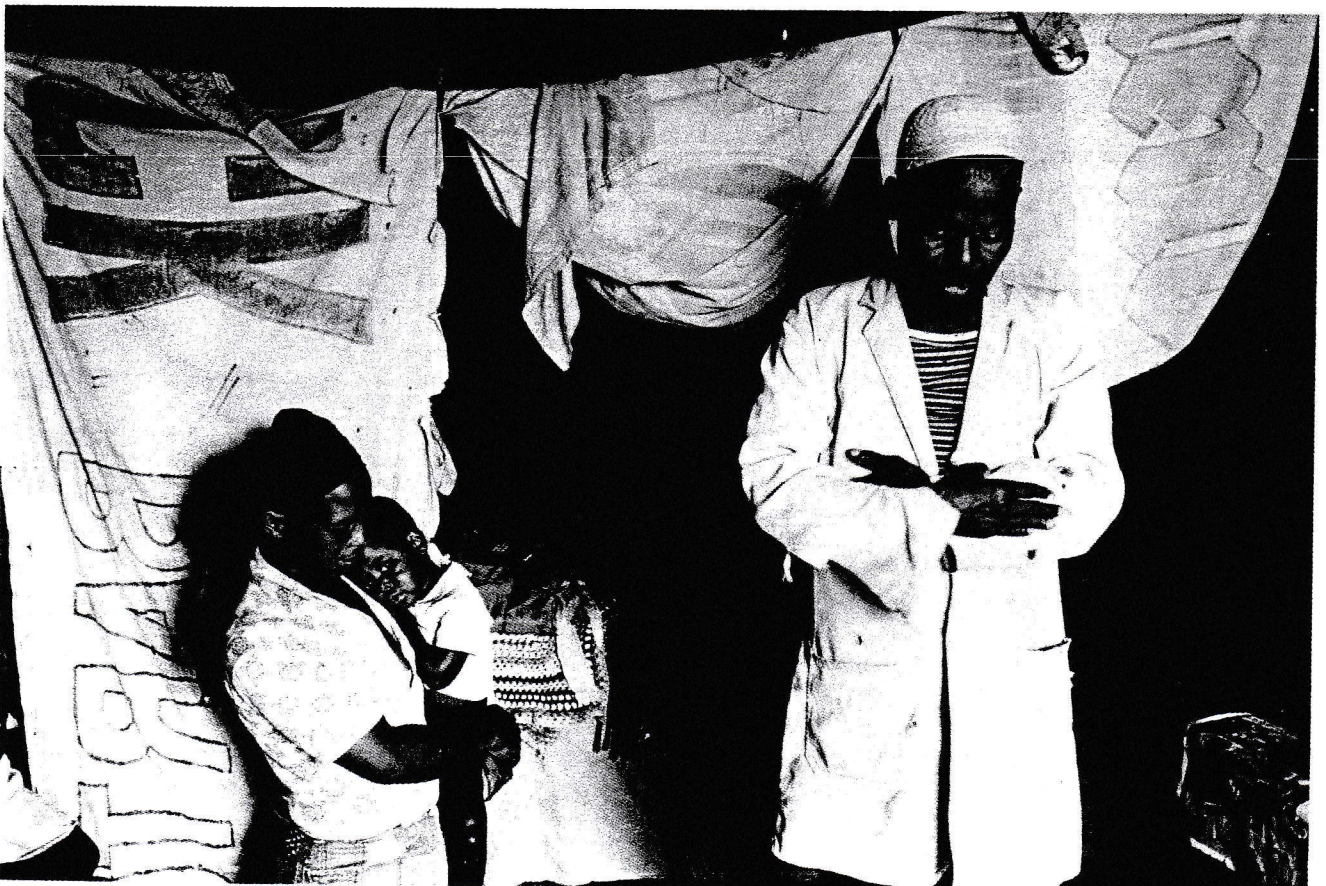
The reason that Inanda came to be at all must be traced back to the status of the land it now occupies. The names by which sections of this vast settlement are known to residents — Piesang River, Dube's Farm, Nhlungwane, Shembe's Village, Rattan's Farm and so on — tell something of that story.

Inanda abuts the southern boundary

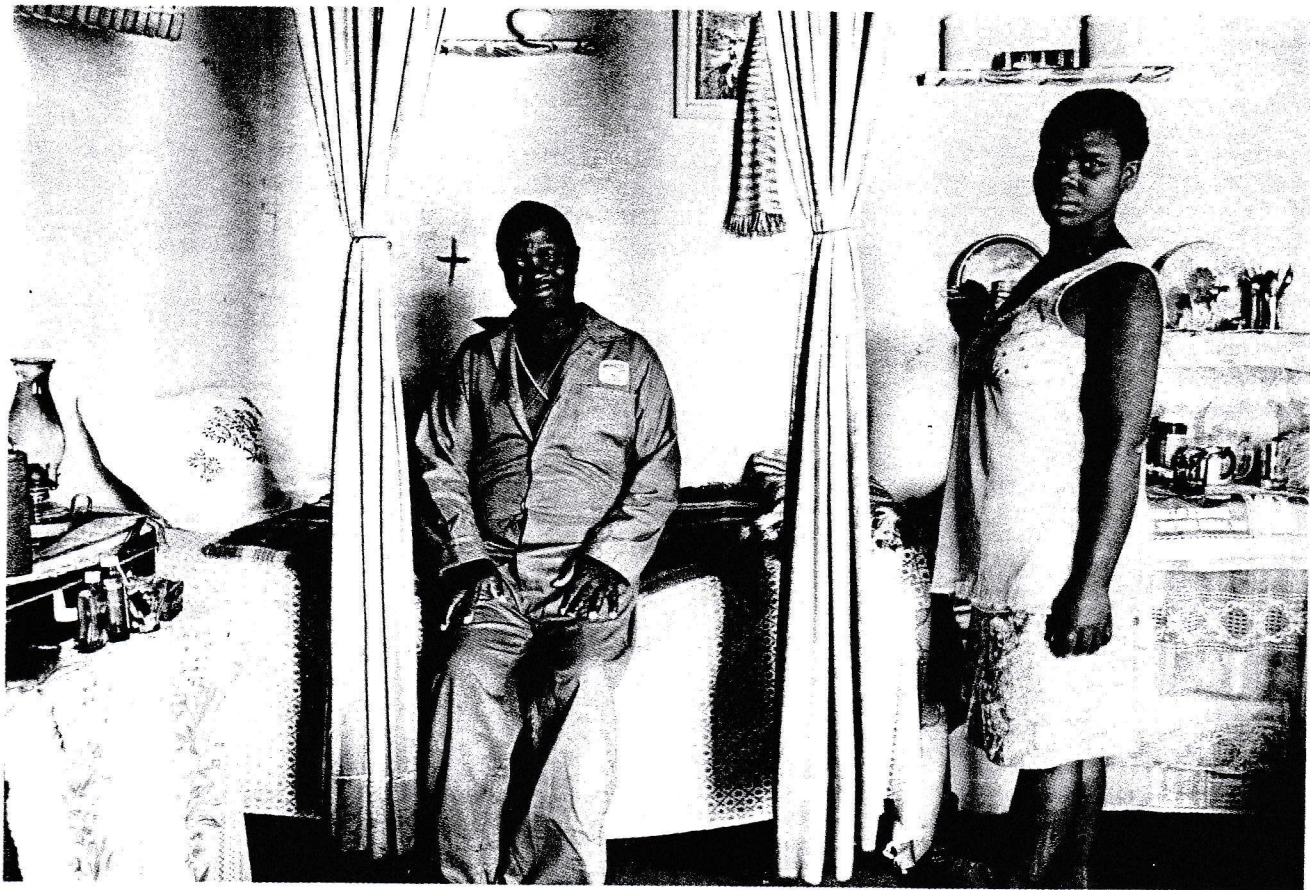
of the old Shepstonian Native Reserve one of several demarcated in the 1840s for Africans living in the Colony of Natal. (This Reserve has long been incorporated into KwaZulu.) The original inhabitants of this district were the Ngcobo people, speaking Lala, a language now extinct. To this day, the chiefly authority is a Ngcobo, as is one of the largest landowners, entrepreneurs and the KwaZulu MP for the area, Rogers Ngcobo.

In terms of the codification of indigenous law in colonial times, private ownership of land within the reserves was impossible. But, prior to the 1913 Land Act (which made it equally impossible for Africans to purchase land outside them) several prominent families acquired land in what is now Inanda, among them the Dubes, Mkhizes and Champions. Though their creeds were different, what united theologian educationalist Dube, the religious visionary Shembe and also Mahatma Gandhi was their conviction that fulfillment — spiritual as well as worldly — could be attained by applying rigorous moral principles to all that one did.

In 1936, most of Inanda was excised from 'white' South Africa (the government in its curious way called it 'released') and destined for eventual incorporation into KwaZulu. Since then, its official designation has been Released Area 33. The state began buying up what land it could — not, it seems, with much determination. By the 1960s Inanda was no longer a



Muslim family, Amanti, Inanda, 1982.



Couple, Amanti, Inanda, 1981.

country district. Durban's sprawling townships were reaching out in its direction and it was being drawn more closely into the metropolitan economy. As growing numbers of its tenants travelled daily to work in Durban, so the bus service (virtually the only service) extended its network there.

Otherwise, Inanda was ignored. For water, people drew from streams and collected rain in drums. Some of the more established inhabitants had sunk boreholes. The few general dealers among the shacks sold daily commodities, although it was cheaper to buy in town. Those with a bit of space grew maize and kept chickens. Other needs were catered for by shack businesses offering watch, radio and shoe repairs, panel beating, dry cleaning, fruit, vegetables and meat and so on. Some community-sponsored schools were built, though children were considered luckier if they could find places in nearby township schools. The forces of 'law and order' were represented by one police station in upper Inanda, near the Seminary. Apart from the clinic functioning in the Gandhi settlement, there was no health service.

Politically, Inanda was suspended in its 'released' limbo. Save for an ad hoc administration from the Verulam magistrate's office, no local authority existed for Inanda. The settlement was dismissed as a temporary problem: squatters were, after all, by definition impermanent, at least as far as the relation to city life went.

Infrastructural developments like sewerage, rubbish removal and lighting were therefore unnecessary. In any case, the people were living on private land, so the state could argue it had no responsibility towards them.

Then came the drought. There had been harsh years before, notably in 1905 and 1946. But in 1979, Inanda was ill-prepared to cope with 'natural disaster'. Long years of neglect had produced a fragility easily upset by drought, as all the hairline cracks — of rank, race and ecological balance — were forcibly widened. As streams dried up and extra pressure was exerted on the available supplies, a typhoid epidemic spread through the shacks in early 1980. Fearing the effects on 'white' Durban, numerous bodies (the army, the Urban Foundation, the Department of Health and Co-operation and Development, the Verulam Commissioner) organised emergency water supplies to some 20 collection points. The long, hot hours of queueing, now part of the daily routine, began. Three years later, tankers supplying the water points remain the only source of fresh water for the vast majority of Inanda people.

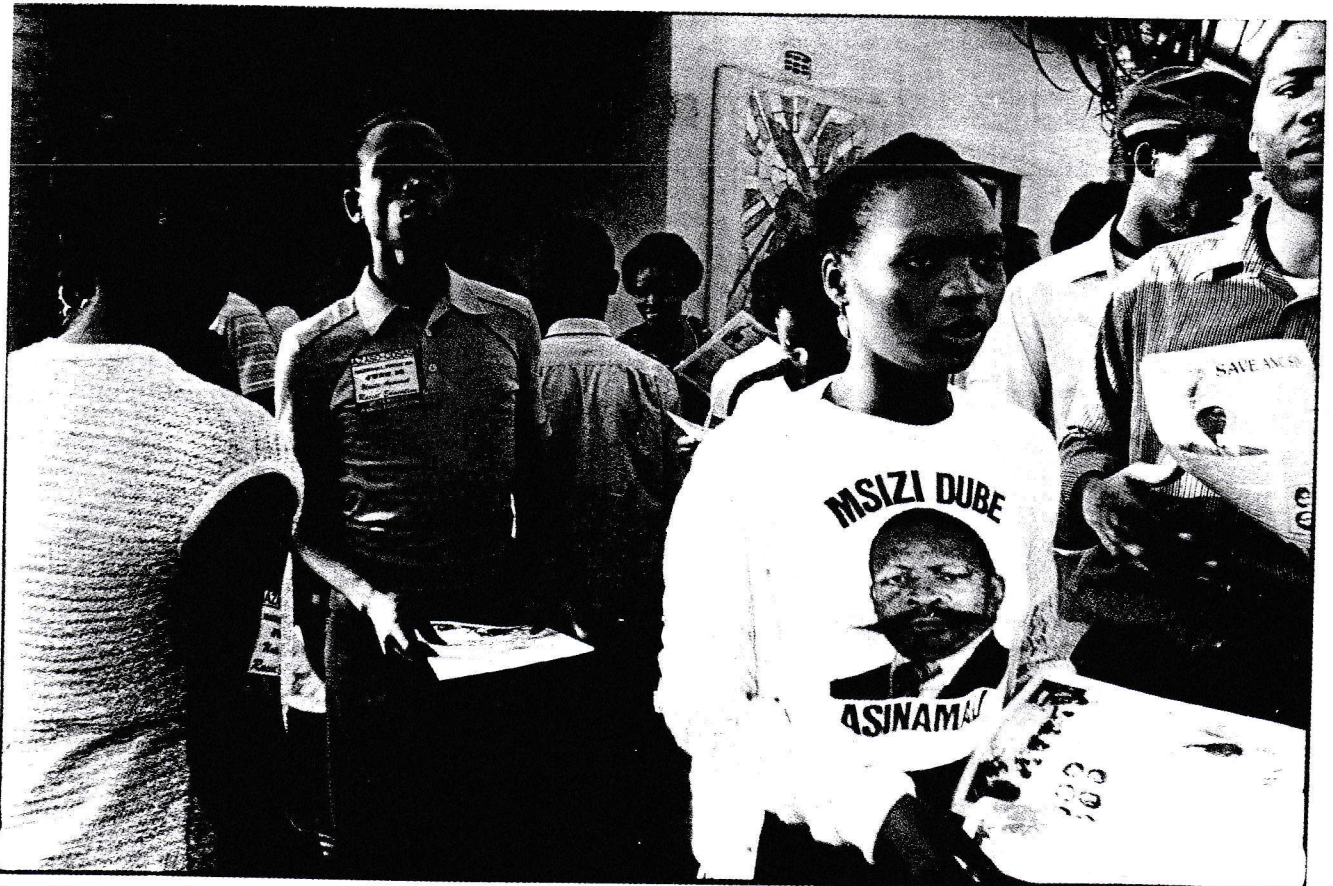
The drought has played out its effects on landowners in a quite different way. Here, Indian landlords have been worse off than their African counterparts. They have been pressured by the Department of Health — prompted, no doubt, by other departments also interested in using the drought to 'clear' Inanda — to

evict tenants on their land on the grounds that their living conditions are unhygienic. The alternative offered to the landlords by officialdom is for them to take it upon themselves to install the necessary services — water and sewerage. Sandwiched between state and tenants, some have issued eviction notices. Others have stood firm, claiming in court that they would feel uneasy chasing people off their land. Tenants living on land belonging to the South African Development Trust — in which state-owned land is vested — are in an even more vulnerable position. Although those charged with illegal occupation over the last two years have mostly won their cases because of bungling in the state hierarchy and other technicalities, the future is fraught with uncertainty.

In such conditions, community organisation is difficult: the air of insecurity is not conducive to unity. Yet some attempts have worked, and clusters of tenants have managed to stand together in pressing their demands. Meetings and vigils have been held, women have started poster protests outside the Verulam magistrate's court on the days of trials. Yet there is a very long way still to go, and it will be a hard journey. The exact implications of the state's new 'structure plan' for Inanda are difficult to measure, and this factor, coupled with the cumulative effects of neglect, renders the creation of a strong, grassroots community organisation an awesome task.



Shebeen owner (sells liquor illegally), Amanti, Inanda.



June 16 meeting, Phoenix settlement (founded by Gandhi), 1983.



Water Point, Amanti, Inanda.



Protest meeting against Removals, Inanda, 1982.