

fall under Bophuthatswana. Because of unemployment, a lot of people from these surrounding villages go to Vryburg searching for work. Men are employed on the farms, working for a bag of mealies a month.

In 1983 these areas were also affected by Mangope's rage against donkeys which extended to areas like Kuruman, Ganyesa, Tlaskgameng and others. Opposition in Kuruman was fierce. Seoposengwe Democratic Party and Kuruman Youth Unity spearheaded this opposition.

For many years before the formation of Huco and Huyo the people of Huhudi endured apartheid in silence. When Huyo was formed it involved itself fully in the problems of the community and the whole community was inspired by this new spirit of the youth. As a result Huco was formed, including Huhudi Detainees Parents Support Committee and a branch of Gawu and Cosas.

UDF

All these organisations are affiliated to the UDF. The people support the UDF because they know what it stands for. The people have a high regard for the African National Congress as a fighting organisation and their vanguard but there is little of its literature in the area. This is due to the lack of a strong ANC underground presence in the area.

People are ready to take part in both legal and illegal methods of struggle. If the ANC can make itself more felt in the area, the trucks and lorries of the racist army en route to Namibia will be decreased in Vryburg.

THE DONK NORTHE

THE RESISTANCE against the killing of donkeys is a landmark in the history of political resistance in the Northern Cape. The student schools boycott, workers strikes, community actions and resistance against forced removals are some of the few events which have pushed the tiny semi-rural areas of Mothibestad, Sishen, Huhudi and Kuruman into the limelight of political activity.

Largely the Northern Cape is a dry region within the Karoo. Economic activity centres around cattle breeding, agricultural farming, mining and a few light industries. About thirty asbestos mines are found around Kuruman and Priska and lung cancer resulting from asbestos mining affects about 270 miners in every thousand.

Many towns and neighbouring villages are heavily polluted with the lethal blue asbestos dust. Mesothelioma — the cancer of the leural lining of the lungs and abdomen — kills hundreds of African miners every year.

The dust lingers in every corner of Priska, and elsewhere in the Northern Cape, including buildings, vegetable gardens, residential areas and play grounds. Five centimetres thick blue asbestos dust on roof beams in schools is a common sight. Many mines still do not provide protective respiratory gear for the many miners who toil to their death for a pittance.

The Northern Cape is made of traditional village type settlements. The difference here, unlike in traditional villa-

STRUGGLE IN THE CAPE

ges, politics is not the monopoly of the elite; doctors, teachers, nurses and social workers, but the whole community.

DONKEY STRUGGLE

The donkey has for years been the main means of transport. It is used for drawing water, fetching wood, ploughing and as an emergency transport to hospital.

The great day came when Mangope ordered more than 2 500 tractors from Austria to holster up agriculture in his stan. The tractors were put up for hire at exorbitant prices. The ordinary people with no source of income stuck to their old form of transport — the donkey.

Faced with this tight market competition with a humble animal, Mangope decided to outlaw the entire donkey population. About 60 000 donkeys were sentenced to death for being responsible for the severe drought that had ravaged the stan for close to three years.

The decree allowed each family to own not more than four stallions. All mares were condemned to death. The carcasses were shipped to Israel while others became lion feed at Kruger National Park. Bophuthatswana Defence Force launched its assassination mission nearby Kuruman.

One of the first victims of these squads was an old couple returning from the fields with wood and water on a wagon drawn by six donkeys. The donkey murder squad ordered the death of two mares but the couple refused.

Despite protest, the first donkey fell under heavy hail of bullets. However, there was little time to do the same to the second mare. The old man was overcome with rage and he buried a pick in the back of one soldier, killing him instantly.

The single incident kindled the tiny scattered villages into a furnace of resistance. Open clashes ensued between soldiers and villagers in defence of their only form of transport — the donkey. As one old man summed up the people's mood, charging at Mangope: "*You yourself were brought up by a donkey.*"

POLLUTION

Donkeys were hunted down throughout the stan, shot and killed. Some were ambushed at rivers and drinking dams where they were shot while drinking water and in several cases were left to rot in the water. The pollution of the rivers and dams brought into the fore another thriving business, a water market, where white farmers sold a litre for forty cents to villagers and even to their employees.

While the donkey was capturing headlines in bus conversations and on the fields, a shadow of forced removals still loomed as a threat to many families. The reasons behind the removal are to separate Tswana speaking people from so-called Coloureds. But this was not possible without breaking up families and family relations established through years of intermarriage and living together. The people resisted the removals.

The promised land — Pudimoe — is fifty kilometres away from Vryburg, on the edges of the Transvaal and the North-western Cape. There are no industries in Pudimoe, but just an arid



Huhudi, Vryburg: some people have worked hard to keep their houses in top condition, hoping this will be a strong argument against the removal, 1981.

plain of scattered desert bushes. Prospects of work are in Potchefstroom as migrant labourers, about 200 kilometres away.

The North-western Cape Administration Board, unable to withstand the people's anger, collapsed. With the Board, the Seopasengwe Opposition Party in Bophuthatswana, which was a pillar of this puppet body, also suffered an ironical death at the same time.

The racist regime responded to the death of its institutions by closing shops, clinics and increasing rents. At the same time new clinics were opened in Pudimoe with no patients, shops with no customers, while rents were also brought down with no tenants to let.

Nevertheless, in the face of all these pressures, the people stood firm resisting the forced removals. The Huhudi Civic

Association was born under the chairmanship of Galeng. Other Black communities; Vryburg, Kimberley and Kuruman registered their support to the people of Huhudi.

SCHOOLS

While the racist regime was still contemplating these developments, planning new strategies, three schools in Huhudi took to the streets, demonstrating. Their grievances were the:

- overcrowding in the schools;
- arrogance of teachers;
- shortage of textbooks; and
- demand for the Students Representative Council (SRC).

The school disturbances led to the arrest of many students. On the other hand the students had realised the power behind unity and a branch of the Congress of South African Students was formed. A



Huhudi, Vryburg: the Administration Board has let township facilities decline, pressurising the people to move voluntarily to Pudimoe, 50 km away in Bophuthatswana, 1981.

branch of the Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC) was also formed at about the same time. These organisations were also followed by the Huhudi Youth Organisation (HUYO). In Kuruman the Kuruman Youth Unit was born, so was the Kimberley Civic League, the Taung Youth Organisation and the Kimberley DPSC.

These popular political protest meetings, rallies and gatherings were and are organised to fight for the plight of donkeys and the threatened goats (Mangope's next target), forced removals to the stan and encouraging the already forcefully resettled communities to return to their ancestral lands.

The machinery to co-ordinate this resistance has been formed in the Transvaal. It is called the Transvaal Rural Committee (TRC). Many already resettled communities have joined the resistance. And people are on the march. Victory is ours!

Due to this level of organisation, the Huhudi community was able to circulate a petition rejecting puppet administration boards. Local chiefs and clan leaders also wrote a strong letter to racist Piet Koornhof. It was punctuated with these lines:

If we are forced to move that will only lead to bloodshed!