

# The total onslaught of propaganda in the veld

A NEW report has again branded veldschools run by the Transvaal Education Department (TED) as pure propaganda attempts.

In a report on the Schoemansdal veldschool, the Johannesburg College of Education (JCE) report says: 'Under the guise of environmental education the veldschools are guilty of using the isolation of the veld to propagate a particular, one-sided view of the South African situation.'

The report again underlines the falseness of repeated TED claims that veldschools are neutral and objective approach, and that there is no possibility of indoctrination.

The veldschools are generally seen as an extension of schools' Youth Preparedness (YP) programmes.

A teacher who went on one of the camps said children were far more racist when they returned from veldschools.

They are much more convinced of an undefined total onslaught against South Africa. They then understand why they are taught how to build bomb shelters in YP sessions.'

The JCE report found pupils were warned against certain teachers who were 'not Christian, failed to keep discipline in their classrooms and lived with their boyfriends.'

Lecturers told children these teachers were more likely to try to indoctrinate pupils with 'marxist ideas'.

The implication of this is that teachers who step slightly out of the strictures of Christian National Education are likely to be harassed by their pupils, because they are seen as 'Marxist', and thus a threat to the country.

The ideology of 'total onslaught' comes across very strongly at the camps.

The main themes of the total onslaught which 'has intensified violently in the last decade' are spelt out: 'military, economical, ideological, political, apartheid, racism, religion, colonialism'. The precise nature of each of these 'onslaughts' is not defined and children are presumably left to conclude that any criticism of any of the 'main themes' is inspired by an outside 'Marxist menace'.

All South Africa's problems are

located outside rather than inside the country.

One pupil, who had asked a question about cholera, was informed that: 'It comes from Mozambique, their standards have deteriorated so badly since independence that cholera is rife there, and now it is spreading across our borders.'

When the pupil challenged this answer by pointing out that rivers flowed from South Africa into Mozambique, and that therefore cholera was more likely to spread into Mozambique, she was told that it is in fact 'illegal immigrants from Maputo who bring it into South Africa'.

The lecturer then went on to indicate that the cholera epidemic was also a result of overpopulation — 'blacks having too many babies' — and the fact that blacks had not yet developed to the same stage as whites had.

The real problems of apartheid are denied, and instead the evil is sought outside South Africa, in African degeneration and a communist total onslaught.

Add the requisite racist ideology, and a recipe for the programmed indoctrination of young white South Africans emerges at the Veldschools.

The JCE report is particularly critical of the para-military nature of the Veldschools. At the Schoemansdal camp, pupils were put on obstacle courses, camouflage exercises and a 'nocturnal obstacle manoeuvre'.

The regimentation is continued in the set up at the camp — the blue group will eat while the green group washes and the red group tidies its bungalow, for example.

Army lecturers are frequently used at veldschools, 'to give a foretaste of army life', according to a TED document.

The 'moral' aspect of the Veldschools is possibly the most insidious.

At one camp, Std 8 pupils were told to hand in all pills and medicines they had with them.

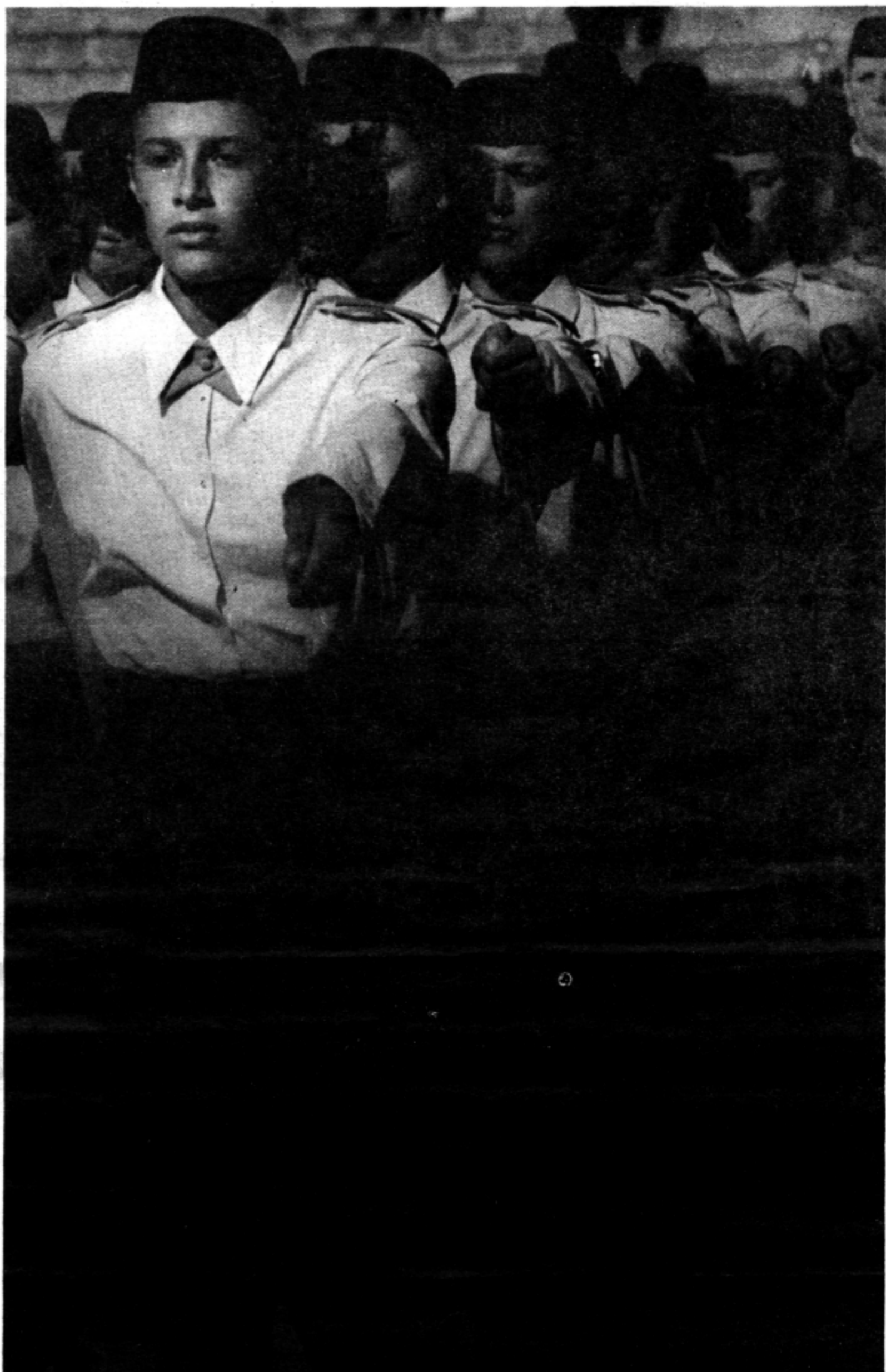
Later a search through pupil's lockers uncovered a pack of contraceptive pills in one woman's locker, which she had failed to hand

education in corrugated iron schools. This does not mean that we prefer corrugated iron schools in the society we envisage.

We strongly feel that all student organisations should come together and formulate the type of education they want in terms of short and long term demands which can become our programme of action — a national democratic programme for a democratic, universal education for all.

It should not only focus on the controls of education at present but also how we want to change them. Our broader aim is to struggle for a free, democratic, compulsory and non-racial education for all in a new society.

In this regard we can learn from the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter is a valid and accepted document not only because it embodies democratic demands and objectives but because it was democratically formulated and adopted.



South African youth are kept in line through Youth Preparedness and veldschools

over. She received an angry lecture on the evils and immorality of pre-marital sex, and was held up to her bungalow-mates as a bad example.

When the pupil in question protested that this was not the case, but that she had been prescribed the pill for medical reasons, she was accused by the lecturer of being a liar.

There is a great deal in a veldschool programme emphasising the sanctity of marriage, the evils of

pre-marital sex, the importance of only one sexual partner throughout life, and the like.

One of the most typical responses to veldschools has come recently from groups such as the PFP who have condemned veldschools for pushing National Party propaganda.

However, this response is inadequate. In fact, veldschools only put the cherry on the top of the total

indoctrination and socialization of the ideas of South Africa's ruling group.

As one teacher put it: 'Veldschools work, and they work because most of the children enjoy them, and find them reasonable.'

This blind acceptance cannot be combatted by condemning Veldschools. It must be understood as the outcome of the broad socialization of white South Africans.

## Cosas interview continued

Presently the government is embarking on cosmetic changes in the educational field to counteract progressive organisations and to put into effect its total strategy. This to many people is not obvious. Thus it is very necessary to formulate basic and fundamental demands of a democratic and universal education that student organisations are fighting for. An education charter can play this role.

If this is not done, the system will succeed in winning the students onto their side by some of the half hearted and in fact meaningless forced concessions they are making. For instance they are now building double story schools.

We need to expose the inefficiency of the system — why we have unqualified teachers in the schools. Rather than learning inferior education in modern schools, we would prefer a democratic and a better

So for an education charter to be accepted by all, it has to be democratically consisted.

**Q: Do you think only students should decide what type of education they want?**

**A:** We do not want to come out as students only, and say we want this kind of education. We want our parents as workers to be there when we determine the kind of education we want.

We feel that emphasis should be laid on a link between formal and informal education and the fact that education does not end at school. Education continues outside of school, like adult education and education in a broader sense.

**Q: At its last Congress, Cosas made provision for a youth organisation to cater for pupils who have had to leave school. Could you expand on the reasons for such an**

**organisation?**

**A:** Due to repressive measures and conditions in the townships, many students are forced to leave school. These students are accommodated in some areas but in most areas there are no youth organisations. So, Cosas set up a committee to look into the practical ways of involving the youth in an autonomous structure.

Youth who leave school are generally inactive. Some get frustrated and vent their frustrations by resorting to undesirable activity. We feel that if we can provide the youth with a structure, they will be able to make a more meaningful contribution to the process of change.

In addition many activists have been expelled from school and they become disorganised and disillusioned with the struggle. We should also cater for students who have completed their studies and who have the same aims as Cosas.

They have certain skills to serve the community.

**Q: How has Cosas been affected by state repression?**

**A:** In the last decade we have seen an increase in state repression of democratic organisations. Cosas has been one of the most hard hit. In 1979, almost the whole national executive was detained. The first president of Cosas, Ephraim Mogaie is now serving a jail sentence.

State repression affects the progress of Cosas. Students stay away from Cosas because they fear detention. More subtle repression like the age limit also affects us but we do not foresee a situation where it will stop Cosas from growing.

Nobody can silence the forces of justice and democracy. State repression has not been able to stop our determination to achieve our goals.