

NO BANNING or detention will deter the student movement from opposing the government. If anything, it will intensify the efforts of students to contribute to the fight against oppression, racism and exploitation.

This was the clear message that emerged from a mass meeting at Wits

The meeting, attended by over 1 500 students, was called to protest against the banning and the detention of national and Wits student leaders.

Acting Nusas President Jonty Joffe, recently elected to fill the gap created by the banning of Nusas President Andrew Boraine, said "the message should go out from this meeting that we are not scared, but we are angry. The very fact that we are here indicates our intention not only to continue, but to intensify our efforts to contribute to this fight against racism, exploitation and oppression."

Mr Joffe said it would be wrong to claim that the current wave of bannings was purely a result of anti-Republic Day activities.

We can however fairly accurately say that they represent an attack on the general democratic movement which was particularly strong during the "celebrations" and articulated the feelings and aspirations of the majority of South Africans."

He went on to say that a broad democratic front was emerging in South African politics. Its general features were that it "is based on the foundation of a commitment to a non-racial society in South Africa as well as on the participation of the majority in shaping their own lives. It operates under the guiding light of the Freedom Charter".

Also addressing the meeting was Wits Black Students Society, Chairperson David Johnson, who was detained for two weeks in the recent clampdown.

He accused the state of cowardice for the banning of Wits SRC President Sammy Adelman.

"By banning him, the state has shown us that it is scared of the growing non-racial student movement in this country, and of the ideas and aspirations of the oppressed majority. It is scared of leaders such as Nelson Mandela.

"Thus they revert to such inhuman measures as detentions and ban-

Banning won't stop us mass meeting vows



Above: Firoz and Azhar Cachalia, the two brothers from Wits' Black Students Society, both were banned on the same day. Above right: Sammy Adelman, Wits SRC President, was the first to get his banning order. Below right: Nusas President Andrew Boraine was banned after being released from detention.

nings, and are supported by lackeys of the state and political opportunists that talk of 'white so-called radicals such as one pipsqueak called Sammy Adelman'".

Mr Johnson recalled the time he met Firoz and Azhar Cachalia on the tenth floor of John Vorster Square where they were detained for a short time.

It was only later that he learnt they were to be banned.

"The only way I can do justice to my comrades is — while I can still talk — to pledge and dedicate my whole existence to the struggle and challenge the state to try and ban 20 million people," he said to cheers from the audience.

Mr Johnson spoke out angrily against right-wing informers on the

campus. We must stop talking to Nationalist thugs that masquerade as students on this campus, bargaining for peace and tranquility whilst they openly defy student government and declare publicly that there will be open warfare, and while it openly associates with the state."

Dr Alex Boraine, PFP MP for Pinelands and the father of Andrew Boraine, said that many white South Africans dismiss victims of bannings and detentions as misfits and troublemakers.

"But," said Dr Boraine, "if fitting into society means choosing the safe road, the sitting on the fence, the holding of privilege at the expense of others, then let us hope for more misfits in society."

"If taking a stand against injustice,

against exploitation, against inhumanity earns the title troublemaker, then let us work harder for more troublemakers in South African society."

Dr Boraine said that if one were to apply the logic of the South African government, then it was actually the Minister of Justice, the Prime Minister and all his cabinet who should be banned.

"It is this government which is the biggest threat to public order in South Africa. It is their laws and their actions which cause the law itself to be called into disrespect.

"Every time they transgress the rule of law, they encourage the opponents of their action to disrespect the law. That is why they have become a risk in our society and by their own logic, should be either de-



tained or banned, or both".

Dr Boraine added that constantly heartless and reckless actions were taking place, like the actions taken against residents at Nyahga and Langa recently.

On that basis economic exploitation, the Group Areas Act, pass laws, influx control, separate educational systems and race classification should all be banned.

"In short, the banning of any law or custom which degrades people on the grounds of race, colour, sex or class."

Mr Cachalia, father of the banned Azhar and Firoz and vice-chairperson of the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee, appealed to the youth of today to take up the struggle where the older generation left off.

He said bannings had no place in a country based upon the will of the people and upon true democracy.

"Law in South Africa is blatantly and unashamedly an instrument for the consolidation of white minority rule. The law has been emptied of all principles, all substance. All that remains is the outer shell of Apartheid, of white political supremacy."

Ever since laws geared to the interests of the few had been passed there had been resistance in South Africa.

"We did not accept those impositions without resisting because we are people and lay claim to all the achievements of human civilization", he emphasised.

"From Sharpeville to the 1976 uprising, the elements of people's resistance and government brutality have been inextricably mixed. This is the context in which our young people, dedicated to a new South Africa and a better life for its people, have been motivated. And for that life, they are being forced to suffer bannings and detentions."

Mr Cachalia concluded his speech by quoting the timeless words of Nehru, a past Prime Minister of India who said "There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountaintops of our desires".

Police shoot teargas at protesting squatters

POLICE fired teargas from close range at a crowd of over 1000 protesting squatters who gathered outside a court in Langa last week. The crowd — consisting mainly of women — were protesting the arrest of nearly 1000 people at a squatter camp near Crossroads.

The arrested squatters were charged with living in the Cape Peninsular for more than 72 hours and failing to produce documents on demand.

At the Langa court where they were to be tried 300 squatters who had not been arrested in the raids gathered on a field nearby.

The crowd, consisting of the relatives of the men and women on trial, moved to the court and demanded to speak to police officials.

They demanded to be arrested and sent to Polsmoor with the others, but the only police answer was to tell them to disperse.

After dispersing for a short time the crowd — which had grown considerably — walked back and repeated their demands. Again they

were told to disperse. By the time they gathered outside the courts for the third time more than 1000 people were present.

Extra police arrived and stood in a line between the crowd and the court. The people again demanded to be arrested or that the squatters on trial be released.

As the crowd grew in size police activity became more frantic. While negotiations between police and the crowd were underway, teargas was fired at close range. A cordon was formed around the court and the crowd gradually dispersed.

It was after a raid by Western Cape Administration Board officials in the early hours of the morning that the squatters were picked up and taken to the police cells.

Two courts at Langa were hastily convened and another special court set up at the Mannenburg police station. The public prosecutor was operating at the Mannenburg court and to cope with the large number of accused, policeman acted as prosecutors at the two courts.

At Langa the courts were

packed, with hundreds more waiting outside. Most of the charged were not represented.

A plea of guilty gave them sixty days or R60. A plea of not guilty meant a week long remand to Pollsmoor prison and a further appearance.

Despite the protests the regularity of the court appearances was not disrupted.

At the end of the day's proceedings the protesting squatters returned to the bushes and their plastic shelters. Most of them had been camping near crossroads for several months but were forced to leave Langa when removals were stepped up at the beginning of the year. Migrant workers staying in single sex hostels were evicted at the same time and no alternative homes were provided.

The women, who came to Cape Town because they were not prepared to face starvation in the bantustans, were staying with their husbands illegally. Life for an 'illegal' in Cape Town is one of endless harassment. As one woman put it: "We risk jail, fines and being sent

back to the homelands if we are caught".

And just last week many were caught and face the dangers of being in the Peninsular 'illegally'.

Factories who employed migrants in the Langa area had been instructed to provide housing for them but it was not economical to do so. At the same time a utility company which was empowered to enter into a 60 year lease agreement with the Administration Board and Community Council was established. It provides 7.5 million to prospective home owners with section 10 rights. Many of the homes they moved into were the old single quarters which had been renovated.

The states low cost housing policy has cut down its cost by millions. Another effect is that it provides services for a stabilised Petit bourgeois workforce. Those who are employed are useful to the state and so housing is provided for them.

The unemployed, illegal and the rightless need to be controlled and removed from the urban areas.

The raids against the squatters near Crossroads are another in the long line of attempts to control the population. The arrested face possible deportation to the homelands. But this has not deterred the people from returning in the past. The risk of arrest is not to much of an alternative to the prospect of starving.