



Within days spontaneous rioting had broken out in every major area of the country. The South African blacks launched a vicious attack on apartheid, commodities and state power. The original grievance was quickly superseded, not because it was insignificant, but because the extremity of the insurrection put everything else in question along with it.

By August 1976, the white state was being forced to retreat on all fronts.

- Almost all schools had been attacked and many had been burnt down. The students were in almost daily confrontation with the police.
- Almost every beerhall in the black townships had been razed to the ground.
- Collaborators within the townships had been severely attacked. Not a single “respectable” black community figure was able to come forward as mediator.
- High school students and young “ex-thugs” prevented workers from going to work in Johannesburg, threatening taxi-drivers, blocking trains and sabotaging railroads. Workers quickly responded, and even after coercion had abated, strikes in Johannesburg and in Cape Town were 80 – 100% effective. Some of the workers who went to work went, not because they were intimidated by the system, but in order to sabotage white-owned technology and commodities.
- Coloureds and Indians had been drawn into the struggle, thus bridging an historical gap among the oppressed that had existed for generations.
- The Bophutatswana (a government-created black “homeland”) houses of parliament had been razed to the ground. All government appointed black leaders were in danger of losing their lives. Many lost their houses.
- Numerous black policemen had fled the townships. Several were killed. After nightfall one-time “lumpen criminals” joined with students and workers to attend to community needs.
- The worker stay-aways drew the adult population into the struggle. Before then they would leave to work in the white cities in the early morning and return after nightfall, while the students squared off against the state. During the stay-aways, the workers were drawn into the confrontation, being forced by the sheer magnitude of the bitter struggle to join the youth in their battle against the system.

For the remainder of 1976 and through to June of 1977, violence continued across

