



# FACT SHEET

## CHILDREN UNDER APARTHEID

### **Background**

- \*\* Apartheid (pronounced apart hate) means "Apart" or "Separate." It is the system of legalized racism in South Africa.
- \*\* Under apartheid, Blacks are denied all political, economic, and social rights. By law they are denied the right to vote, to receive a decent education, or decent employment.
- \*\* The most fertile and mineral-rich land, 87% of the country, is set aside for the white minority, while 13% of the poorest land is left for Blacks.
- \*\* The South African Government forcibly removes Blacks from any area they decide to designate as a "white-only" area. The homes of those who resist these forced removals are bulldozed or burned.
- \*\* Children suffer greatly under this oppressive system.

### **The Destruction of Black Family Life**

- \*\* There are few jobs in the rural areas and the land is so poor and overpopulated that Blacks cannot support themselves by farming.
- \*\* Men must leave their homes and travel, often hundreds of miles, to find work. The women and children are left behind in the rural area and families may only be reunited for short periods when the men return from the cities.
- \*\* Women also are forced to leave their families to search for work. Children are left to care for the home and younger brothers and sisters.

### **Health**

- \*\* Half of the Black children in the rural areas die before the age of five.
- \*\* Deaths of Black children under the age of one year are 31 times higher than that for whites.
- \*\* One-third of Black children under the age of 14 have serious nutritional deficiencies, yet South Africa is a large exporter of food.
- \*\* In some areas, there is only one doctor for every 174,000 Africans. 60,000 Black doctors are needed, but in the last 25 years, only 300 have been trained.
- \*\* The Black township of Soweto has only one hospital for almost 2.5 million people.

## Education

- \*\* Education for Whites is free and compulsory. Blacks must pay for their education and children are not required to attend school.
- \*\* The money spent to educate a white child is \$960 per year whereas the money spent to educate a Black child is only \$145.
- \*\* Black teachers often only have an eighth to tenth grade education. One recent survey determined that 80% of Black secondary school teachers had themselves never received the equivalent of a highschool diploma.
- \*\* In 1981, 54% of all African school children left school without having completed the third grade.

## Repression

- \*\* In order to maintain their position of power and privilege, Whites in South Africa ruthlessly crush any form of dissent - even that of children.
- \*\* In 1976, students in Soweto protested against the government's insistence on using both English and Afrikaans as languages for teaching. The police responded to the students' peaceful protests by shooting and killing over 600 children, and wounding and jailing thousands more.
- \*\* In 1985, at least 209 children were killed through indiscriminate use of teargas, birdshot, metal-tipped whips, rubber bullets and live ammunition. In some cases, the whole school population was dragged into police vans, police opened fire on crowds of schoolchildren, or children were viciously beaten.
- \*\* Large numbers of children are rounded-up at random from the streets and then detained and beaten in the hope of eliciting information.
- \*\* The Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC) estimates that during the first five months of current emergency, 8,000 children under 18 years old have been detained--at a rate of 250 per week and reports numerous allegations of their having been brutalized and tortured while in custody. About 4,000 of these children are believed to be still in detention or are missing.
- \*\* In December 1986, the South African government acknowledged that 256 children under the age of 16 are being detained without charges, the youngest of whom is 11 years old and 115 of whom are aged 12 to 14. The Minister of Law and Order reported that more than 58,000 children were held in jail awaiting trial, in 1986.
- \*\* Parents are almost never informed of their child's detention or where he or she is being held.
- \*\* There have also been a number of recent reports of young children being detained by police as 'hostages' in order to compel wanted family members to turn themselves in for arrest.
- \*\* On April 11, 1987 the South African government made it illegal for any person to call for the release of detained children. It also prohibits acts of solidarity including the display of 'Free the Children' bumper stickers and t-shirts.