

# On the Front Line: A Portrait of Civil War

*Paul Weinberg and Afrapix photographers  
Guy Tillim, Dave Hartman and  
Steve Hilton-Barber*

*Born in Pietermaritzburg in 1956, Paul Weinberg attended Natal University where he earned a B.A. in political science and economic history. In 1977 he obtained a certificate in photography from Natal Technikon.*

*In 1979 Weinberg taught photography at the Open School, a nonformal education program in Johannesburg. He has worked for the Institute of Race Relations as a media worker, and in 1980 and 1981 made two super-8 documentaries, one on Alexandra Township and one on Page View, an Indian community outside of Johannesburg which was systematically destroyed because of the Group Areas legislation.*

*Weinberg set up Afrascope, a community film project, and in 1982 was co-founder of Afrapix, a photographic collective. This photo-essay was compiled by Weinberg, using Afrapix photographers. He has worked as a free-lance photographer since 1983. His work can be seen in South Africa: The Cordoned Heart, edited by Omar Badsha and commissioned by the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa (Gallery Press, 1986) and in None But Ourselves, Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe, by Julie Frederikse (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982).*

*A photo-essay entirely by Weinberg, "A South African Photographer in Zimbabwe," begins on page 468.*

"I don't take sides. I take pictures" was Nick Nolte's classic throwaway line when confronted by a revolutionary when they land up in a police cell together.

South Africa is not Hollywood and the heroes that are laid to rest are almost never photographers. Yet as we find ourselves caught in the midst of a civil war the question begs itself with more pertinence than ever before.

This essay is presented at a time when the restrictions of press freedom have never been greater in our history. We are precluded by law from photographing unrest situations, illegal strikes, funerals, street-committee organizations, boycotts or strikes. It seems that the govern-

ment is intent on blotting out a phase of resistance politics in the struggle against apartheid.

The resistance that has taken place has transformed the country. We live in a state of emergency. Thousands have died in the unrest of the last two years and many thousands more have been detained. Just about all aspects of "normal" life have been affected—from transport to education. We have witnessed the emergence of a culture of resistance.

This collection of photographs in no way attempts to cover all areas of struggle but is an edited version of a greater picture we have not even seen. They are images from a collective called Afrapix.

—Paul Weinberg



Victoria Mxenge funeral, Durban, August 1985. Photograph by Paul Weinberg/Afrapix.



Squatters salvage their possessions at Crossroads Burns, June 1986. Photograph by Guy Tillim/Afrapix.



Soweto, July 1985. Photograph by Paul Weinberg/Afrapix.



May Day 1985, Khotso House, Johannesburg. Photograph by Paul Weinberg/Afrapix.



Daduza township, July 1985. Photograph by Paul Weinberg/Afrapix.



People build burning barricade, Belgravia Road, Athlone, Cape Town, November 1986. Photograph by Dave Hartman/Afrapix.



Vigilantes attack, in Leandra, February 1986. Photograph by Paul Weinberg/Afrapix.



"Comrades" defend themselves against a vigilante attack, in Leandra. February 1986. Photograph by Paul Weinberg/Afrapix.



Young boy shot, Eastern Cape, March 1986. Photograph by Steve Hilton-Barber/Afrapix.



Funeral, Eastern Cape. Photograph by Steve Hilton-Barber/Afrapix.



A pallbearer at a funeral for a squatter killed in Crossroads violence winces as the procession is teargassed by police. Crossroads, June 1986. Photograph by Guy Tillim/Afrapix.



Funeral for a squatter killed in Crossroads violence. Crossroads, June 1986. Photograph by Guy Tillim/Afrapix.



African National Congress flag at funeral of a person killed by police, Guguletu, December 1985. Photograph by Dave Hartman/Afrapix.