

## Searching for the mother of all cartoons



# FRED MOUTON

*Resident cartoonist of Die Burger*

**W**HAT is an ideal cartoon? Well, for starters, you must know what you want to say — then you need to understand how you are going to make that statement graphically. That's the difficult part. The drawing is the easy bit.

Thinking up a cartoon, particularly when you have to come up with the goods every day, is very, very difficult. I mean you have to beg your brain to come up with a worthwhile cartoon each day, and that's never easy. And, to think up a *really* smart cartoon — that's incredibly hard. But, of course, there is the rare occasion when you draw the *ideal* cartoon — perhaps one day even the mother of all cartoons.

But for the most part I try to create a reasonable cartoon each day and, in all modesty, now and then I come up with a smart one — not one that's all that funny, but rather “clever” or really “sharp”.

With time, you also develop a style of your own and thoughts of your own, although the editor has the final say. If you work in a thought or idea of your own, and it compliments the whole, editors will never complain.

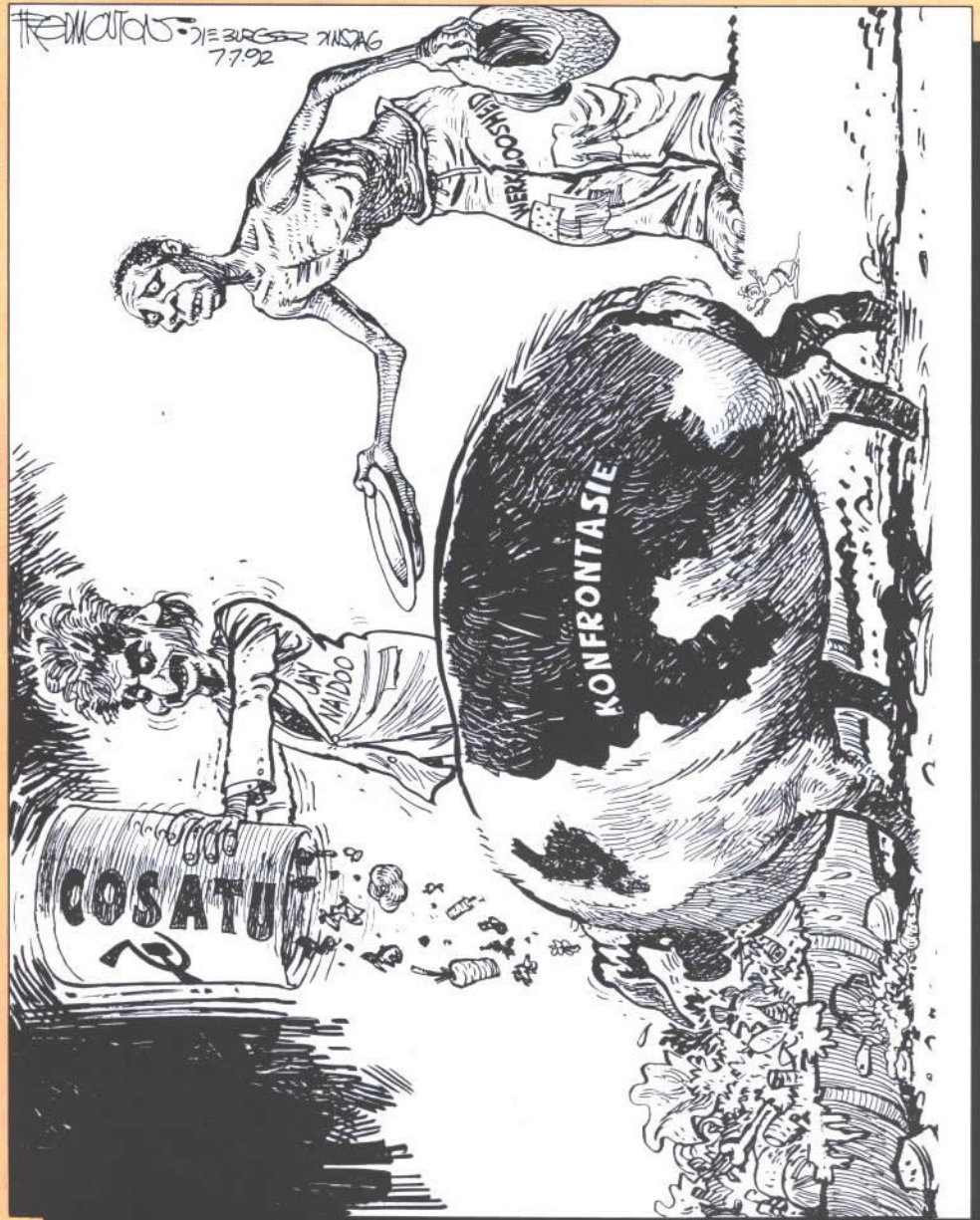
What effect do cartoons have on South African readers? I don't really know. There has never been any research into the matter, but I would like to believe that a good cartoon sometimes makes people think, widens their horizons or forces them to say to themselves: “Good grief, I never looked at it from that angle before.”

Every day I look at an idea, a story or an event from a different angle. It must never look like an illustration of a story or article. I always try to think up an idea that nobody else would think of — that's why it's so difficult. And, of course, when I think about what I am about to do, I always ask myself: “Will the people in the street understand what you're trying to convey?” — cartoonists always have to remember that readers do not sit in on the cartoon conference. So, whatever idea develops for the day's cartoon, readers always come first.

With experience you also learn to simplify your drawing so that there is no distraction from what you are trying to say, so there's no clutter around the essential message. And, if you can draw a cartoon without a word bubble, you're getting close to perfection. ●

PLEASE TURN OVER ➤

**“I would like to believe that  
occasionally a cartoon  
broadens peoples’ horizons”**



# REMOOTS!

