

BATCH #12 - 1 of 6

- one copy to committee
- one copy to "R"
- one copy for me

AWC

P11

25 August 1974

SOUTH AFRICA - REPORT

The following comments come from discussions with comrades at the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, some members of black unions, and some of the people who have been detained at various times during the past three months (eg university people):

- demonstrations, work stay-aways, marches have been continuously occurring at a steady high level since mid-June
- initial issue over use of Afrikaans was only the spark, not the crux, but key issues are apartheid, and an increasing level of unemployment
 - unemployment is seen as one issue around which students are mobilizing, eg, students know there are no jobs waiting for them when they get out of school next year
- what was surprising was that workers became rapidly and highly involved in actions.
 - speculations are that school children and very likely underground ANC are behind the mobilizations of workers.
 - pamphlets have been distributed throughout Soweto (I've seen some) by students and workers saying such things as "we won't ride the trains/buses" and calling on parents of students to support actions
 - recently, I've heard from one Soweto resident that his church has been calling on its members to stay away from work. But church role is difficult to assess as yet.

#12- 2 of 6

it is thought that students and ANC and ? are behind the present four-day work stay-aways in Johannesburg (began 23/8, due to end 26/8 - but will see)

- This strike has been extremely successful: industry and commerce in Johannesburg has been experiencing 80-100% absenteeism, trains have been derailed, on Tuesday (24/8) 20 suburban trains were cancelled between Soweto and Johannesburg as there were no passengers

- people are saying that the last time a strike was as successful as this one was in 1958, and that the 1960-1961 strikes were not as successful

- The role of the press has been particularly malicious: they are constantly posing a student-worker conflict, which though having some basis in the past (particularly in the early history of the BPC - Black People's Consciousness movement), has less so in the present situation. The papers say it's the students who are beating up those workers who refuse to stay out, and that most workers want to go to work but are intimidated.

At least one member of the Black Allied Metals Worker Union (8,000 members all over) says $\frac{2}{3}$ of the workers have been fully supportive of work stoppages and are trying to mobilize the other $\frac{1}{3}$. So it's workers mobilizing other workers, not students mobilizing workers

until last week, the vast majority of employers were saying they would pay workers despite absenteeism. Many are now saying they'll dock pay.

13.

The government has this week announced an Urban Home Ownership Scheme whereby Blacks could buy their homes over 30 yrs. - in Soweto and West Rand townships. Occupiers would get 1st option to buy. Many of the MNC's are jumping on the bandwagon, saying they will help (with loans) their workers get houses (eg Barclays Bank, IBM, Anglo-Am., S.A. Breweries, and others have already said this).

- This is regarded as the cooptation it's obviously intended to be.
- it also has potentially disastrous consequences, eg, just this morning 50,000 homes ^{in Soweto} were put up for sale immediately. If present occupants don't buy, homelessness can be further exacerbated as leases can be terminated fairly randomly if others want a house -

- Krueger (Minister of Justice) has just announced legislation will be introduced to prevent publication of names of people detained without trial under security laws. This announcement came just after a major listing in the daily papers of many people arrested who are ~~leaders~~ leaders in the various Black People's Consciousness Movements.

Black People's Consciousness (BPC) Movement

- many see the BPC as having taken several steps to the left.
- BPC grew up initially around black campuses (hence ^{aspiring} black petty bourgeoisie), was primarily concerned with black people's culture, was met with some resentment by workers
- now, BPC is considered to be taking a class analysis rather than "culture" perspective. It is perhaps significant that the majority of arrests and detentions have occurred among the leadership of the BPC.

4.

- it is perhaps also significant that these arrests have in no way led to a decrease of activism in the townships

ANC - SA

- the involvement of ANC in these actions is hard to assess. Comments from one black union were the following: many of the older black union leadership are former ANC people. The ANC is respected in the black community. Also, as ANC must operate underground, this particular person said there weren't many people who either concretely know, or would say if they did know, what the presence of the ANC actually looks like in the townships among workers. Everyone agrees they're a factor, but just how much of a factor is a question mark -

TRADE UNIONS

- during the past 2-3 yrs., all the leadership of the Black and Allied Workers Unions have been picked up. These people do not seem to be the main targets of recent arrests and detentions. Those unions which are nominally non-racial, though, have been ~~targeted~~ mobilizing around issues which relate to workers rather than issues relating only to Blacks. -

- There were some comments that there is little the trade unions can do as trade unions ^{publicly}, but what their covert actions might be is one area of speculation -

5.

DURBAN/BUTHELEZI

- Durban remains the one township area where Blacks have been quiet.

There's a variety of reasons given for this:

- (1) This is Buthelezi's area, and he has support among workers in Durban. Buthelezi has been attempting to play both sides, on one hand using his old ANC-nationalist background to give himself credibility, on the other hand coming out against work stoppages, saying if blacks want to go to work they should arm themselves with sticks, etc. against those who want to keep them out of work.

BLACK - WHITE

coming out of the BPC movements, there were feelings of "blacks will do it themselves." Some have said that occasionally this merges into an anti-white feeling. The papers, of course, have been exploiting this as much as possible. People's readings here is that there is not a general anti-white component in the present actions, but at the same time many progressive whites feel cut off from what's actually going on in the townships, and have a lot of questions about how to interpret ^{the} role of students, workers, unions, etc. One thing people are doing is to mobilize support for those in detention eg food, clothes, books, games. There is an attempt to do this in association with families of detainees, and bridge some of the gaps that way.

- Vorster is probably scared! There's a lot more going on here than the press, or government, is prepared to admit. And an increasing repression just isn't slowing it down. Instead, there's criticism from many sides of the National Party.

- Sorry - I haven't access to a typewriter. Hope this is useful. A LUTA CONTINUA! Your TCSAC Reporter

#12 - 6 of 6

6. This page can go just to R - I don't think it will make much sense to the committee.

Some recent news on detentions:

16 Aug. - Miriam Siphole detained for purposes of interrogation.
Sam Ndou detained - old SACTU

founder, Industrial
Aid Society

June detentions: 2 were mentioned in particular

June Rose Nala detained

Obed Zuma (cousin to Alfred Zuma)

- these were probably linked to the Pietermaritzburg trials

- and many warm greetings to the two of you from many comrades here!