

**WORK** **12**  
**IN**  
**PROGRESS**



**APRIL** **'80**



ALLIED

STRIKE  
FACTORY



'politics' has a number of disturbing implications.

Firstly, the separation between work-place and community is one that arises out of capitalist production itself (see the article on Rents in this regard); but this separation is also maintained by the state as a mechanism of control. The effect is that while the townships may be ablaze, production in the factories continues; while workers boycott buses they still walk to the factories; while rent protests take place, the unions and management maintain wage agreements.

The second effect of this separation between work-place and community is that many issues are handed over to non-working class interests, which tend to mobilise the working class for ends that have precious little to do with workers. If this takes place, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as far as the 'point-of-productionists' are concerned: they decline involvement in non-factory floor issues, and then claim that such issues are led by the petty bourgeoisie for their own ends.

A third implication, in the South African context, is that the reality of colour discrimination (rather than colour as a factor in exploitation) is of necessity ignored as having nothing to do with the 'point of production'. This means that discrimination in the fields of education, health, housing, etc. are perceived to be of peripheral interest to workers' organisations.

A fourth implication is that members of the working class outside of the point of production (the unemployed) are placed in a position of conflict with employed workers. This weakens the position of workers in strikes and dismissal situations, as the unemployed end up competing with the employed for jobs.

The above points have particular relevance for the assessment of three important areas of conflict which the editors of WIP believe are developing. These relate to the questions of rents, transport, and black schooling. In each of these areas, activity is clearly increasing, and resistance to certain dynamics intensifying. While none of these are 'point-of-production' issues, they are of direct concern to the working class. The class basis of leadership and activity in these areas is of great importance: whether the demands made contain a working class or petty bourgeois content will crucially effect the outcome of struggle around these issues.

The editors of WIP request readers to contribute information, and their understanding of these important issues:

Rents: rents and service charges have rocketed in many townships in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Not all increases are covered in the newspapers, and when they are reported on it is frequently inadequate. We need to know where increases have taken place, or are planned; who is in charge of rents,

how are increases being justified, how are townships financed; what resistance has there been to rent increases in the past; what are the current responses, etc.

Transport: Bus fares have increased, or new increases are proposed right across South Africa. WIP has already drawn attention to some of these increases, and tried to analyse the events involved. However, we need much more information - especially on the communities involved (were they moved to their current area; where do the people work); who owns the bus companies; how many times and by how much have fares been increased in recent years, etc.

Schools: At present, 'coloured' pupils are protesting about the inferior quality of the education they are receiving, while many people believe that no real changes have occurred in the educational system for africans. Sporadic incidents of opposition to the system of education in the bantustans have also been reported on.

#### Political trials and Labour action:

In response to our last editorial, in which we expressed a desire to present more detailed information on these categories, we have received certain contributions which have been included in this issue. More information on specific trials and strikes is still needed, and readers are asked to contribute regularly in these areas.

-THE EDITORS.

# LABOUR ACTION

## THE ALLIED PUBLISHING DISPUTE

The Allied Publishing Company was set up during the 1970s to undertake the distribution of all Argus and SAAN newspapers, as well as distribution of a few independently owned papers. It is owned jointly by Argus, which has approximately 60% of the shares, SAAN which holds 20% of shares, and the Natal Mercury which owns the remainder of shares in the company.

DESPITE the fact that the dispute between Allied workers and management did not ultimately result in strike action (work stoppages were averted on a number of occasions), it did, nevertheless draw a fair amount of public attention.

Most Allied workers are migrants and have had to work under very trying conditions for extremely low wages: at the beginning of 1980 the minimum wage at the firm was R22-00 per week. The workers of Allied are no strangers to trade unionism and industrial action. During the early 1970s the Black Allied workers Union (BAWU) made an attempt to organise them, however, it appears that the Union was unable to assist the workers, and

BAWU contact with Allied workers eventually lapsed.

A number of strikes have occurred during the 1970s. In 1973 street vendors went on strike for higher wages. The nature of the industry is such that management has to make decisions quickly in the event of a work stoppage. After about an hour it was agreed that commission on newspapers sold would be increased slightly.

Early in 1976 drivers and street vendors struck for higher pay. Once again, management granted wage increases. This time the strike lasted almost a full day.

In 1978, before Allied workers began joining the Union, the street vendors went out on strike and refused to pay in their takings until a colleague, who had been dismissed, was reinstated. The man had been dismissed after his Area Supervisor had found him 'sitting down'. Again, management was forced to act quickly and an hour after the strike began, the man was reinstated.

Allied workers began organising themselves into the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) around mid 1978. Those involved included street-vendors, clerks, drivers, deliverymen and a number of others - mainly unskilled workers.

During the following twelve months, regular meetings were held at which grievances were discussed and shop stewards were elected to represent the various groups of workers.

Finally, during August 1979, when Union membership was considered to be sufficiently strong, it was decided that management should be approached with a view to resolving the workers' grievances. On 29th August a letter

was written asking management to meet with Union officials and the shop stewards committee to discuss these grievances, which included such matters as wages, hours of work, back-pay for unpaid overtime work, verbal and physical abuse by middle-management, deductions from wages of penalties for various 'offences', and a number of other issues.

On 12th September a reply was received from Allied informing the Union that all these grievances had been brought to management's attention by its various Liaison Committees. After consultation with the workers, the Union wrote back pointing out that the workers had joined the Union specifically because of their disillusionment with Liaison Committees, that a number of shop stewards were in fact ex-Liaison Committee members who had resigned from the Committees, and that due to this a number of the Committees had collapsed. Workers now wished the Union to act as their official mouthpiece.

Allied's response to this was to demand to know from CCAWUSA, "in order to get to know the Union better", whether it had, or intended to, register in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act, and also to ask a number of questions about the Union and its constitution.

The shop stewards committee and the executive committee of CCAWUSA were informed of this, and both formulated the same attitude towards it. Firstly, although the executive committee had decided to recommend to the next CCAWUSA annual general meeting that the Union apply for registration, it was felt that the issue was of no concern to Allied. Secondly, both committees agreed that the other details



wanted by Allied should not be communicated in writing. Instead, the firm should be told that CCAWUSA would be happy to supply the information at a meeting between management and worker representatives, which should be followed by discussion of the grievances. On 21st December a letter to this effect was sent to Allied.

The firm's reply to this left no doubt that it was their intention not to communicate further with the Union until their previous questions were answered in writing. At this point it was decided that further pressure be brought to bear on the company, and a press conference was held where shop stewards spoke of working conditions at the firm.

The day after the appearance of the press reports, CCAWUSA was contacted by Allied management who offered to meet with Union officials (alone) and suggested that Mr Sam van Coller, the acting director of the Institute for Industrial Relations (IIR), to which both CCAWUSA and Allied were affiliated, be asked to act as a neutral chairman and advisor to both sides. (The full role of the IIR in the dispute is discussed below).

Neither of these two proposals met with the approval of Union officials or shop stewards. Mr van Coller was, however, invited to meet them to discuss the arrangements. The shop stewards eventually reluctantly agreed that the first meeting could be held without their presence. But it was unanimously decided that Mr van Coller should not be allowed to chair the meeting, and if Allied insisted on his presence it should be on the understanding that he act as an advisor to them only.

The meeting took place over two days - the 20th and 22nd February. At the meeting, Union officials were informed that Allied would not consider granting full recognition to CCAWUSA until the Union had applied for registration, and various other conditions had been complied with. Until then, while the Union would have access to management to discuss individual worker's grievances, matters such as wages and working hours could not be negotiated. Management would be prepared to discuss less important grievances with elected worker representatives in the interim.

Management then circularised this information to all its employees, and told them to elect eight representatives to meet with them on 7th March.

At this point the CCAWUSA offices were inundated with a stream of Allied workers objecting to this development. A number of meetings were held with the shop stewards committee and it was decided to call a general meeting of Allied workers for 8th March.

Management's different attempts to revive its Johannesburg liaison committees failed dismally - they were totally boycotted. In contrast, over 120 workers attended the Union meeting the following day. Union officials were mandated to inform Allied management that workers would have nothing to do with liaison committees, and that they were giving "management one week" to agree to meet with their representatives - both union officials and shop stewards - to discuss grievances, primarily wages. A further general meeting was then planned for the following Saturday - 15th March - where, if there had been no

satisfactory response from management, a date for a strike would be decided on.

The day after management were informed of their employees' views, they contacted the Union and agreed to the workers' demand, and a meeting was planned for 19th March.

When workers were informed of this on 15th March, they formulated wage demands and decided that their decision to strike (which was timed for 10am on Friday 21st March) should stand, and would be called off only if their representatives were satisfied by management's reaction to their wage demands. The demands were something in the order of a 70% increase on the February 1980 wages.

The workers' representatives presented their demands on 19th March. After gauging management's response they decided to call off the planned strike, and agreed to give management two weeks to consider the demands, present them to the company's board of directors, and formulate a response.

An indication of the efficiency of the shop stewards, and degree of organisation amongst the workers is that although the meeting with management ended only just before midnight on the 19th March, by 10-00am the next morning the vast majority of Union members were fully informed of the outcome of the meeting.

A further meeting with management was held on 2nd April, and at a general meeting of Allied workers on 5th April, latest developments were discussed.

Finally, on 10th April agreement between the two parties was reached. Wage increases in the region of 30 - 60% for most workers came into effect on 13th April, together with the

introduction of a service allowance scheme. (These increases are over and above a 7 1/2% across-the-board increase granted by the company during March 1980). The agreement includes a provision that further wage increases be negotiated in one years time.

The agreement further provides for:

- i). a non-victimisation clause;
- ii). the Union's right to hold meetings on company premises after working hours;
- iii). a Union notice board at each depot;
- iv). the replacement of liaison committees by a shop steward system;
- v). reasonable time off with pay to be granted to shop stewards for trade union education;
- vi). a commitment by the Union not to "call upon or compel" Allied workers to participate in worker action which would disrupt normal operations except where it relates to the publishing trade.

#### The role of the Institute for Industrial Relations (IRR).

The first the Union heard of IRR involvement in the dispute was after the press conference late in January when Allied management was reported to have said that it had acted "strictly within the terms of the guidelines set down by the IRR". When CCAWUSA made enquiries from the IRR as to whether this was the case, an Institute spokesman proceeded to criticise what it perceived as CCAWUSA's uncooperative behaviour in its dealings with Allied up to that point.

As mentioned above, the acting director of the IRR was put forward as a neutral chairman at the first meeting between the Union and Allied, and that this suggestion was

rejected by the worker representatives.

Allied had further asked, and this was agreed to by CCAWUSA, that the IRR be requested to do an audit of Allied worker membership of the Union. However, when the job had been half-completed, CCAWUSA received a letter from the Institute saying that "it is clear....that the relationship between CCAWUSA and the Institute is such that there might be some doubt about the validity of the membership figures produced by the IRR. As this would defeat the purpose of the exercise we feel it necessary to advise you that we are unable to proceed with the exercise." (By the time the agreement was signed, the membership audit had not yet been completed).

Some days later, Ms Mashinini, the General Secretary of CCAWUSA, received a phone call from Mr van Coller saying that he was withdrawing from involvement in the dispute. However, the IRR wrote a letter to the Union during mid-March informing CCAWUSA that the Institute was engaged in providing courses for Allied management. These courses were to teach senior management "negotiating skills" and middle management "Industrial Relations".

At its March meeting, CCAWUSA's executive committee decided that in view of the IRR's role in the dispute the Union should disaffiliate from the organisation. In addition, Ms Mashinini, a member of the Institute's board of Trustees, has resigned from her position there.

A. Fine.

## THE KAROO MEAT EXCHANGE STRIKE

THE solidarity and determination of workers in the Cape Town meat industry was shown during the strike by 59 Karoo Meat Exchange workers in March this year.

Workers from 15 Cape Town meat factories gathered several times during the strike to show their support for the Karoo workers. And it is likely that if the workers' demands had not been met when they were, workers throughout the industry would have gone on strike - just before the Easter weekend, when the demand for meat is particularly high.

The Karoo strike began on Monday, March 24, when management allegedly dismissed an unregistered worker without consulting the workers' committee first.

Two points need to be made here:

1. The workers' committee is elected by the workers but its constitution has been accepted by management;
2. Management had agreed to consult the committee over the hiring and firing of workers. It was the fact that this principle had been broken that caused the workers to strike. This is particularly advanced in the context of South African labour relations.



There are altogether 80 workers at Karoo Meat. The 20 so-called coloured workers did not support the strike of their fellow african workers.

On the Friday after the strike had started, the workers agreed to return to work if all of them were unconditionally re-instated in their former positions. On the Wednesday night before this, over 100 representatives from 11 other meat firms had gathered at the offices of the union representing the workers, the Western Province General Workers' Union (WPGWU), to express their solidarity with the Karoo workers.

They drafted a letter to the general manager of Karoo Meat, Johan Louw, demanding the unconditional re-instatement of all the workers. They said the strike had come at a time when workers in the meat industry were particularly angry about their wages and working conditions. A copy of the letter was sent to bosses of all 11 meat firms represented at the meeting.

On Friday, March 28, the workers gathered at Karoo Meats' Maitland offices at 7 am. At about 8,30 am, members of the workers' committee were called into the office. Louw told them that all the workers would have to fill in application forms and the firm would decide during the weekend which workers they would re-employ.

This was firmly rejected by the workers who said they would not return to work until all of them were unconditionally re-instated, 'not through application forms and not one by one', they said.

The next day, a mass meeting of about

250 meat workers was held in Langa to discuss the Karoo strike. Support for the Karoo workers was re-affirmed and Karoo management was called on to accede to the workers' 'non-negotiable demands'. One of the representatives was elected by workers of each of the 15 firms represented at the meeting. It was decided that each representative should go to see his boss at 7 am on Monday morning and ask for permission to be present at a meeting between Karoo workers and management, which was to be held at 8 am on Monday.

At 7 am on Monday, March 30, all Karoo workers, WPGWU officials, and the press gathered at the factory. Within the next half hour workers from 11 other meat factories arrived. At about 7,30 am, the workers were called into the office. Union officials, the press and workers from the other factories remained outside.

Two hours later the workers emerged. They had won an outright victory. They had rejected management's request that each fill out an application form and insisted on unconditional re-instatement. This was eventually agreed to by management who further agreed to pay the workers a week's wages and to consult the workers' committee on all issues affecting the workers in the future.

The strike, which lasted exactly a week, confirmed the workers' right to be consulted on every issue affecting them. It also demonstrated to all workers in the meat industry that they can rely on industry-wide worker support for any struggle in the future.

BECAUSE of demands from our readership, some of whom found the service useful, we are reinstating the listing of strike and other labour action. There might be a few strikes reported at the end of 1979 that we have missed, but any Transvaal reported strikes during 1980 will have been covered, and will be listed during the rest of this year.

We do, however, ask our readers in other centres to send us information on any such strikes we might have missed, and especially on strikes by farm labourers.

WIP would still prefer to carry articles indicating trends and analysing labour action than to provide only a record of such action. To make this possible we ask for contributions from our readers.

79.12.24: An unnamed Vereeniging photographic processing laboratory did not pay workers a Christmas bonus - Michael Kellen, manager, said that profits had not been what was expected. Seven staff members walked out - one, Joey Ruelale, said that he had worked for the company for 9 years and had never received a bonus.

Kellen said that he would rather teach new staff during 1980 than pay bonuses.

Outcome unknown.

#### Fanny Farmers Bakery and Confectioners

(Lorentzville, Johannesburg): 11 workers resigned because of non-payment for overtime worked (RDM, 79.11.29). Management said that there were no problems as far as they were concerned.

A spokesperson for the workers said

that he had earned R17,00 a week. Two other workers earned R19,00 a week (after 17 months and 2 years in employment respectively).

Beacon Sweets (Herriotdale, Johannesburg): Eleven men said that they had had R1,00 deducted from their pay and 2 weeks later another R5,75, allegedly for 'sweets eaten by workers' (Post, 79.12.22). On Tuesday (20th November) they went to the Department of Manpower Utilisation and to the Industrial Council for the Sweetmaking Industry to complain about the treatment they had received. The next day they returned to work but refused to work until they had been refunded.

Management agreed to keep on 3 workers, but all refused to return. A director said that the Department had found that the deductions were justified. Workers were earning R28,00 a week in some cases.

The next day it was reported that the workers would not be reinstated and that the vacancies had been filled.

Bus Drivers (Mohlakeng Township): There was indirect mention of a strike by bus drivers on the route between Mohlakeng and Randfontein (Post, 79.11.14) in an article on alleged overcharging by members of the Mohlakeng Taxi Association during the strike.

'The bus drivers' strike went without any incidents last week and buses ran normally shortly after morning peak hours last Thursday' - was the extent of the coverage of the strike.

Florist Shop (Sanlam Building, Johannesburg): Two survivors of the Soweto highway bus crash

in which 18 people had died, were fired from their jobs at a florist shop after they had spent two weeks in hospital.

The Diepkloof Residents' Association, where the women live, said that 'It seems that some people are only interested in our labour and not our security' (Post, 79.11.09).

Unico Chemical Company (Springfield, Johannesburg): On 26th November, 1979, 37 African workers at this company went on strike because of complaints that they were grossly underpaid. The workers, who stayed outside the factory, had served with the company for up to 36 years in some cases. They said that they had been promised an increase but that nothing had materialised. They also complained about no end of year bonus, and that there was no workers' committee in the factory.

Four men with between 29 and 36 years service were earning R30,00 a week. Manager RJ Prinsloo refused to comment on the day of the strike. The next day the workers returned to work, having been granted wage increases ranging from 20 to 25 percent.

Vereeniging Refractories: Three members of the Building Construction and Allied Workers' Union were fired in November, 1979. The men believed that it was related to their trade union work. The reasons given by the firm on their Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) forms for firing them were 'refusing to go and work in another section' and 'loafing and being very cheeky with the boss-boy and the foreman'. The men had respectively 10, 14 and 2 years service

Frank Mohlala, a union organiser, said that he had had no explanation from the firm on the dismissals, and that the union was still struggling for recognition in the firm (Post, 79.11.06).

No further information available.

Southern African Society of Journalists: The SASJ, representing mainly white journalists employed by the English-language commercial press, demanded increases of 22,5% in December. Employers offered 11% and the matter has been referred to arbitration under Arthur Chaskelson SC, a Johannesburg lawyer.

The Writers' Association of South Africa (WASA), representing black journalists, was reported to have refused to join the SASJ (recognised union) in negotiations. WASA notified employers that it would seek a separate agreement. The history of the relationship between white and black journalists goes back some years, when the SASJ deregistered (in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act) in order to open its membership. WASA was formed in opposition to the SASJ and now includes most of the black journalists in its membership.

Witter SA (Pty) Ltd (Isipingo): A wage dispute was thought to be behind a 'sit-down protest' outside this floor-covering factory. Fifty workers were involved (Daily News, 79.11.22).

More information needed.

Trade Unionists: Johann Maree, a senior lecturer at UCT, was refused a passport to visit the USA on an international visitors'



programme. Maree is doing his PhD on trade unionism and was involved in a workers' advisory project in the Western Cape.

He believes that the refusal of a passport and of those for two FOSATU office-bearers was related to their contact with the labour movement.

Rainbow Chicken Processing Plant (Hammersdale, Natal): 55 workers arrested at a strike at this firm in August-September, 1979, were charged with 'public violence' (see WIP, 10).

At the end of October 54 workers (about half of them men) reappeared in the Camperdown magistrate's court and were each fined R10 (or 180 days), this time, reportedly, for 'attending an illegal gathering' and 'failing to heed a police warning to disperse' (Daily News, 79.10.30).

It was said that a 'riot squad' from Maritzburg had been called to the strike under Captain H Helkett, who had warned the crowd to disperse (in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act). When the crowd failed to do so teargas was fired. Some dispersed but 200 did not do so. 'Ringleaders and agitators' were then arrested.

1980

Aggenis Mine (north-west Cape): The mine, owned by Black Mountain Mineral Development Company, a subsidiary of Gold Fields of SA, a subsidiary of Consolidated Gold, of which Anglo-American has just managed to get a 25% share, is involved in exploiting silver, zinc and copper deposits. Two hundred workers at the mine were sacked in January,

1980, after demanding across the board wage increases.

The only report we have (RDM, 80.01.08) states that management were to have said that the 900 workers were given the ultimatum of either going back to work and making representations through the 'proper channels', or they 'could pack their bags and leave'.

Two hundred left (flown back to the Transkei bantustan), and were allegedly guilty of desertion, and had, therefore, not been given severance pay. Replacements were taken on.

Transvaal Dairies (Malvern East, Johannesburg):

A three-hour strike took place on 80.01.09, involving 270 milk delivery men employed by this firm. It appears that the issues had been long-standing dissatisfaction with the works' committee (failure to convey workers' grievances), and a request for a pay increase.

Management said that the pay issue would be discussed with the new works committee, to be 'elected' from 14 people nominated by workers (Star, 80.01.09).

Pipelok (Pty) Ltd (Germiston): Early this year two most mysterious reports appeared on a strike at this company. Sixty 'black employees' were said to have threatened to 'set fire to trucks leaving their factory' unless they were paid the wages of the previous week. The threats were made on Tuesday, 80.01.15, and the workers were meant to have been paid on the Friday before.

A white colleague of the workers said that they were 'sick and tired of waiting for wages ... Unless we get paid soon, we're

going to tear this place down'. Police attended.

The next day it was reported that a 'neighbouring pipe factory' had offered the workers jobs. An Industrial Council representative said that the owners of the factory could not be traced. Two men, recognised by workers as senior staff, denied any connection with Pipelok.

More information needed!

Nightwatchmen (Natal): A report appeared (Natal Mercury, 80.01.19) on the atrocious wages paid to security guards, allegedly by 'fly-by-night' security firms who were not members of the Natal Association of Security Guards. The wages were said to be in the region of R60 a month for a twelve hour shift, six day week.

Of some 22 firms said to be operating in this field, only 12 were registered; the others making use of the unemployment situation to depress wages and undercut Association members.

Unilever (Boksburg plant): Another foreign owned plant and supposed observer of a 'labour code' made the news over dismissal of a shop steward of the Food, Beverage and Allied Workers' Union, Paul Ntuli (for the actions of another such firm with state support, see our coverage of the Ford strike in WIP, 11)

Ntuli was fired after the union had sent the company a letter informing them of his election as shop steward. Unilever said that workers were happy with the existing liaison committee and that there was no need

for union activity by Paul Ntuli, as requested in the union letter.

The company denied victimisation, and also other complaints regarding advancement and canteen facilities - the latter were said to be non-racial, but that there was one canteen for 'managerial and salaried staff' and another for 'weekly-paid staff' (RDA, 80.01.15).

Skakes Sikhakhane, the union's general secretary, said that Paul Ntuli was the second shop steward to be fired. A month after Ntuli's dismissal on the 20th December the union was said to be taking legal action for victimisation unless Unilever conducted 'a full enquiry'.

No further information available.

Stratford Engineering Company (Ophirton):

Eleven workers asked for a standard rate for the job at this firm after one man had received an increase. The workers were earning about R33,00 per week.

It appears that the management considered what happened subsequently to be a walk-out, while the workers said that they had been ordered to bring their pass books so that they could be signed off. When the workers returned new women workers had already been taken on in their place.

The Urban Training Project was approached by the workers and said to have taken up their complaints (Post & Star, 80.01.31).

Sunripe Fruits (Wadeville): 28 senior truck drivers claimed that victimisation related to attempts to form a works committee led to their 'retrenchment'. The company denied

this, and also that the drivers had been replaced, but said that a 'seasonal drop in work' meant the sale of some trucks (RDM, 80.02.02).

Michael Mohatla, general secretary of the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, to which the drivers belong, said that the workers had asked management to allow them to form a works committee to take up grievances. Management said that they would nominate all members, a situation rejected by the workers.

CMGM (civil engineering contractor, Saldanha Bay): Following the dismissal of eight workers at the site at Saldanha Bay at the beginning of February, first 200 and ultimately 500 workers demanding their reinstatement were bused to Cape Town to be sent back to the Transkei.

Management agreed to reinstate seven of the workers, but this was rejected by their fellow workers who demanded that all be taken back.

The first worker fired was said to have threatened a foreman, an accusation denied by the workers. The other seven were the first to demand his reinstatement.

The Western Province General Workers' Union (WPGWU) took up the workers' case in Cape Town where they spent the first night. They were then taken to CMGM's Epping site on Wednesday (80.02.06) where management allowed the election of a workers' committee, one of the workers' early demands. The dismissed worker was one of those elected.

Non-resolution of the issue led to 280 being returned to the Transkei. The WPGWU

released a statement saying that management's attitude in 'escorting the workers to the station "with riot police and dogs" could "only be seen as an attempt to intimidate the workers in the most high-handed manner"' (RDM, 80.02.07).

Kilber Automotive Products (Booyse Reserve):

27 workers walked out on the 6th of February after protesting that their 'monthly bonuses' had not been paid. Management said that bonuses were paid if a target figure was reached and that it was not automatic.

A director, H Berman, did, however, admit that the bonus had been paid one month when the target had not been reached.

Nineteen of the 27 workers returned to work as 'new workers' after deadlock with the management.

Holiday Inn (Jan Smuts Airport):

Seven women were accused of stealing money from customers (R30 & R20). They were told by management that they had to contribute R25 each for this theft. They were told further that if they had not paid up by a certain set time they would have R50,00 (each) deducted from their pay. They felt humiliated by this accusation and immediately went on strike until 'the matter was resolved, and their names cleared' (Post, 80.02.14).

George Ryan, manager of the branch, instructed the women to return to work within five minutes. When they did not, they were dismissed, and told to return to collect their pay the following Tuesday. Hans Enderle, operations director of Holiday Inns, said



that 'every hotel employee's foremost duty is to serve guests and if the employees were unhappy they could have contacted their department's liaison committee representative'. Ryan would not deny or acknowledge the pay back claim.

Reliable Production Company (Steeldale):

Six night shift workers (seven, Post, 80.02.14) claimed to have been on time at a collection point to be taken to the factory on the night of 80.02.12. They asked the white driver of the truck to wait until the worst of the storm of that night abated, as they had to travel in the open truck.

In two reports of the events on 80.02.14 (RDM & Post) it is claimed that the driver refused to wait, driving off without them. When they tried to find out what had happened the next day they were dismissed for 'not turning up for work' and for 'production loss'. In a later report (Post, 80.02.18) EA Simon, managing director of the company, is quoted as saying that the 'night shift foreman waited 20 minutes later than usual to allow the rain storm to abate. He then had to leave to start the night shift'. The seven were replaced by men who were fetched from the labour bureau the following morning, sources within the company told Post. The workers had been with the company for between 3 weeks and 8 months.

South African Meat Supply (Eastgate, Johannesburg): Ten women lost their jobs at the butchery owned by SAMS and Derby-Lewis, Nationalist Party MPC for Edenvale, on 80.01.25 (RDM, 80.01.29). According to the

women, they were approached late on the Friday afternoon, just before they were to leave for home, and instructed to wash a machine. They queried this, noting that a man was already busy cleaning it; that it was not part of their job; and that ten of them could not wash it anyway.

They were fired by the daughter of Derby-Lewis for 'disobeying an instruction'.

According to Derby-Lewis on the other hand, the women refused to clean a sink they had been instructed to, saying it was a job for men. They then walked off the job, having been told by the manager that if they did not return to work by the next morning they would be seen as having resigned. He said that he had then informed the police of the incident 'in case there is any trouble'.

Fruit Growers' Cooperative (Ceres): 750 workers went on strike after a colleague, Klaas Markus had been asked to retire from the employ of the FGC, and his wages discontinued (RDM, 80.02.19). The workers saw the threatened dismissal as revenge because he was a delegate at wage negotiations recently held with the company's management.

They refused to return to work unless they were given reassurances that Markus would remain employed. By 80.02.21 (RDM), additional workers (labour recruits) had been hired to replace the striking workers. By 80.02.26 (RDM), one of the striking workers had been told he would be evicted from his company-owned house unless he returned to work. After two weeks 700 workers had decided to return (RDM, 80.02.29). A representative of the Food and Canning Workers'

Union said that assurances had been given that Klaas Markus would be reinstated. It is not known what happened to the remaining 50 workers.

African Gate and Fence (Elandsfontein):

21 workers were fired after a wage dispute (Post, 80.04.02; RDM, 80.04.02). The previous week 45 workers had sent representation to management, asking for pay increases. Management had replied that they would get a rise at various times during the year. That Friday, 24 of the 45 were given increases, with no explanation given to the remaining 21. They queried this, but were still given no explanation. (Later the personnel manager, JT Morrison, told Post that it was a merit payment and the 21 did not deserve a merit rise). Meanwhile, the 21 were selected out by foremen after being addressed by an official from the Department of Manpower Utilization. They were dismissed from their jobs. Morrison said this was because they had refused to work again. According to the workers, however, they did not refuse to work at any stage.

Kleenem Brushworks (Newlands, Johannesburg):

The reports from workers at this factory have all been denied by management in the person of Laurence 'Dave' Barrit.

A report on the conditions at this firm appeared after 29 workers had been dismissed for asking for a rise in pay 'en bloc instead of one at a time' (says Barrit) and for spending too much time in the toilets. He was also reported to have threatened workers with '6 000 blacks in Johannesburg

alone (who) were unemployed and would fill positions of lazy workers'.

The workers claimed that the owner dragged workers out of the toilets; tore up a doctor's certificate brought by one of the workers; and paid them wages of R15,00 and R18,00 for females and males respectively.

Coca-Cola Vase Bottlers (Transvaal): Early in March about 100 workers employed in the sales department of this company refused to work after deductions (for not clocking out one night they had worked late) had been made from their pay. They also demanded that the amount paid for each case handled (to the van helpers) be half a cent instead of quarter of a cent (74 of the strikers were van helpers); that they be given bonuses for the end of 1979; and they complained about assaults and that management sometimes takes up to 6 months to register workers.

This is the only report of this strike that has come to our notice. The outcome is not known.

Ultratex (Johannesburg): Eight women were dismissed by this company for supposedly being absent without leave for two days.

The women say that they had been instructed to stay at home for that period because of a slack in production. The women had been employed for between 5 and 22 years and were earning between R17,00 and R22 per week, and said that they had even had to work at unloading railway trucks. Florence Gama, who was injured while doing this type of work, said that she had never been paid out for the medical costs under

the Workmen's Compensation Act.

The manager had earlier fired a woman and said that he had mistaken their absence for a sympathy strike with the dismissed worker. (Post, 80.03.04).

African Shipping (Natal) Ltd (Durban):

During a pay dispute MJ van Vuuren, stores manager at this company, called workers 'baboons' and 'donkeys'. He subsequently had to apologise publicly to the workers after the South African Allied Workers Union threatened him with court action (Natal Mercury, January, 1980).

Elmar Underwear Company (Fordsburg, Johannes-

burg): On Friday, 22nd February, 200 women employed by Elmar went on strike in protest at an order by management that they no longer enter the factory with their bags. That day would have been the first on which they had to leave their bags with the security guard at the gate.

The report states that the situation was resolved by Sarah Chitja of the Garment Workers Union. It is not at all clear how this was done, but some reference was made to the 'agreement' between the union and management (Post, 80.02.25).

PUTCO (Wynberg, Johannesburg): Eleven punch operators went on strike just before knock off time on Friday, 22 February, were at work briefly on Monday and then stopped work again and left the depot.

They were asking for wage increases to match that paid to other punch operators at other firms, of about R350,00 per month

(this is on computers). The workers at PUTCO said that they earned less than R40,00 per week and had been with the firm for between 2 and 12 years. The workers wanted a R40,00 a week increase.

*On Tuesday (26th) the workers were fired 'because they liked rushing to newspapers'.* Operating executive at the depot, CT Bailey, said that the men had fired themselves by walking off the job while negotiations were in progress. It was said that the men had been replaced. (Post, 80.02.27).

Post newspaper (Johannesburg): A brief and cryptic report appeared on staff dissatisfaction on the newspaper with calls for the re-instatement of two colleagues who had recently resigned, and the dismissal of a reporter.

Sun City (BophuthaTswana): Cleaning staff at this luxury playground of the rich, situated in the poverty stricken BophuthaTswana bantustan, went on strike just before the Easter long weekend when the Hotel was expecting to be thronged with visitors.

It is believed that they demanded that their wages that stood in the region of R80,00 per month, be increased to R110,00 per month.

Management acceded to the request if the staff returned immediately to their tasks of cleaning the rooms. This they did.

Ford Motor Company (Port Elizabeth): Even the english-language commercial press joined in the chorus of condemnation of the banning orders served on the three civic and Ford



# INDEX

LABOUR The Allied Publishing  
ACTION: dispute.....page 1  
The Karoo Meat Exchange  
Strike..... page 3  
Other.....page 4

CONSUMER BOYCOTTS:  
an evaluation.....page 10

RENTS: paying for  
incorporation.....page 17

RURAL RESISTANCE:  
The Batlokwa.....page 24  
The Matlala.....page 27

THE PRESS.....page 30

AUTOMATION:  
control of worker  
and machine.....page 34

THE NATURE OF POLITICAL TRIALS.page 37

COURTS: Terrorism trials.....page 40  
Internal Security Act  
trials.....page 46  
Contraventions of  
banning orders.....page 46  
Appeal proceedings...page 47  
Trials in 'independ-  
dent' bantustans.....page 47  
General trials  
of interest.....page 47

'JO THE COW' COMES HOME.....page 49

ALEXANDRA A brief history.....page 50

TOWNSHIP: 'Uplift' or  
co-option?.....page 58

# subscription rates

## Rates in Southern Africa

Individuals: R5-00 per annum  
Organisations: R10-00 per annum  
Group distribution: 80c per copy.  
Reduced rates and/or a certain number  
of complimentary copies can be arranged  
on request.

## Rates elsewhere

### Western Europe and the United Kingdom:

Individuals: R12-50 per annum  
Organisations: R18-00 per annum

### North America and Canada:

Individuals: R15-00 per annum  
Organisations: R25-00 per annum  
(Rates include second class airmail  
postage)

For further details and subscriptions  
contact:

The Editors,  
PO Box 93174,  
Yeoville 2143,  
South Africa.

This issue of Work In Progress edited  
and published by an editorial collective,  
of 40 Jorissen Street, 2001 Braamfontein,  
and printed by Central Print Unit, of  
1 Jan Smuts Avenue,  
2001 Johannesburg.

Thanks to Paul for cover, and to  
contributors for articles.

## EDITORIAL ADDRESS:

PO Box 93174,  
2143 Yeoville,  
South Africa.

# EDITORIAL

WHAT sorts of issues are of direct concern  
to the working class in South Africa? This  
question has once more been raised in the  
columns of Work In Progress: directly in  
the article on rents, and implicitly in  
the material presented on consumer  
boycotts and the Alexandra township.

One approach argues that any issue  
which is not related to the 'point of  
production' is 'political', and therefore  
is of no concern to workers' organisations  
(trade unions). 'Point of production'  
refers to the factory, and 'point of  
production issues' appear to refer to  
the contractual relationship between  
workers and employers (wages, hours of  
work, bonuses, leave) and working  
conditions (clothing, safety, noise, etc).

According to this argument, 'political'  
concerns should remain outside of the  
ambit of trade unions; they should be  
taken up by political organisations which,  
in turn, should not involve themselves in  
point of production (factory) issues.

While the need for specifically  
workers' organisations is acknowledged,  
and while the legal constraints on trade  
unionism within South Africa are there  
for all to see, the maintenance of the  
separation that exists between 'point  
of production' and 'community' or

The nature of WIP, which is to stimulate  
debate and present controversial views,  
ensures that the opinions expressed do  
not necessarily reflect the views of  
the editorial collective.

worker leaders (Thozamile Botha, Phalo Tshume, Mono Badela and Dan Qeqe). For a fuller report on the strike and the events that led up to the bannings, see WIP 11.

But then, in typical fashion, the start of a liquor boycott called by PEBCO demanding the release of PEBCO leaders, and in support of other PEBCO demands, was reported on in the Transvaal newspapers, but then no further news appeared (see RDM, 80.03.04 and Star, 80.03.03).

Thozamile Botha has already heard that his application for a relaxation in the terms of his banning order that, for example, forbid him to enter any factory, has been refused. He and his family are finding themselves in the same position as so many other banned people of having to live off charity and contributions by relatives.

His wife, Fezeka, said that they were selling fruit outside a shop to earn something.

Nightwatchmen (Transvaal): FOSATU, the Legal Resources Centre and the Industrial Aid Society in the Transvaal are said to be taking up the plight of nightwatchmen in the Transvaal in preparation for a Wage Board determination currently probing the conditions of this employment group.

The present minimum wage for this group is said to be R103,00 per month for a maximum of 84 (!) hours per week (even the Wage Board determination for unskilled workers stipulates a 46 hour week for the same minimum wage. (RDM, 80.04.14).

The Minister of Manpower said in Parliament that during 1979 there were 54 strikes



Involving 16 075 workers.  
(RDM, 80.02.26)

---

## CONSUMER BOYCOTTS: an evaluation

The Fattis and Monis issue had made black people realise their economic power...I'm sure it is a weapon which will be extensively used in the future.

Mr Hassan Hova, SACOS  
President.

THE recent satisfactory conclusion of the Fattis & Monis dispute has given rise to a certain amount of discussion on the effectivity and validity of the use of the consumer boycotts. This article will look at the two most successful boycotts in South African history - the potato boycott of 1959 and the Fattis and Monis boycott of 1979.

Consumer boycotts cannot be regarded as a substitute for effective worker organisation at grass roots level. In the case of the potato boycott there was no unionisation of the workers involved. In the Fattis & Monis (F & M) case the Food and

Canning Workers' Union (FCWU) had been working hard to establish non-racial worker organisation in the Bellville plant.

What is significant is the structurally weak position of the workers involved in both disputes. In the F & M case the majority of workers who went on strike were contract workers who by their action in effect broke their contract of employment. This made them vulnerable to retaliation both from the state and from the management of F & M.

The position of the Bethal potato workers was much weaker. Some were contract workers, some were foreigners living illegally in South Africa, some were miners. The majority were so-called 'volunteers' who had been arrested for pass offences and had been offered a choice between prosecution and farm labour.

The importance of this structural weakness of a section of the working class is that it lacks bargaining power at the point of production. Farm workers have always been the weakest, most exploited section of the labour force in South Africa. The only attempt to unionise them by the ICU during the 20's failed. It seems that if workers are in a structurally weak position at the point of production then they need a certain support outside of the point of production if they are going to achieve an improvement of their position. This article will examine the role which a consumer boycott can play in providing this support and suggest the strengths and



weaknesses of this tactic.

Let us begin with a discussion of the potato boycott. At the ANC conference of May 1959 Robert Resha called for a boycott of potatoes as protest against the treatment of farm labourers in potato farms in Bethal in the Eastern Transvaal.

A series of articles in New Age and Drum magazine as well as several habeas corpus petitions filed in the Transvaal Supreme Court exposed a system of forced labour in the Eastern Transvaal.

From evidence led in court it became clear that in the late 1940's a scheme had been devised between the Native Affairs Department, the Secretary for Justice and the Commissioner of Police. This scheme was never officially gazetted. Petty offenders arrested under the pass laws were given the 'choice' between prosecution and 6-12 months on a white farm. Allegations were made that in fact men arrested in this way very often did not know that they had a choice in the matter. Those that did, often did not know that the maximum fine for these offences was only £1 or £2.

A general circular issued in 1954 (No. 23) explained in greater detail how the system worked:

"The Department of Justice and the South African Police and this department (Bantu Administration and Devt)...held consultations on the problem (of the number of Africans being arrested for technical offences) and have evolved a scheme the object of which is to induce unemployed natives now roaming about the streets in various urban areas to accept employment outside such urban areas."

Instead of facing immediate prosecution the circular stated that

"Natives arrested between 2pm on Sundays and 2pm on Fridays are not charged immediately after arrest, but merely detained by Police."

"Natives so detained are removed under escort to the district labour bureau and handed over to the employment officer....The Natives must be offered such employment as is available in non-prescribed (rural) areas. Priority should be given to farm labour in this connection."

In Johannesburg in 1958, 2337 people were placed in 'employment' on farms. During the first three months of 1959, 1025 men out of 4180 brought to the labour bureau accepted such employment.

This system was part of a wider system of labour allocation which began to be implemented in the 1950's. Its implications for weakening the working class are well-summed up in the following quote:

"Undoubtedly the pass is used by the authorities to control the movements of Africans in the urban areas in order to prevent the stabilisation of any community and in order to harness trade unionists and congress leaders. But the main function of the pass remains the direction of labour. This is borne out by the rash of new regulations recently, creating labour direction offices and by increasing the number of arrests under the pass laws, thus giving the government the power to send men to labour wherever they 'see fit'."

The especially weak position of farm

workers, both contract workers and volunteers, is emphasised here:

"Contracts signed at the bureaux are unique in legal procedure for not only does the African sign it under duress, but he may not break it even if the conditions are fulfilled. On the other hand in terms of the Native Labour Regulation Act, it is an offence for an African to 'neglect to perform any work or refuse to obey any lawful command or use insulting language to his employer', the most he can do is report the farmer to the nearest police station or Native Affairs department official. How much sympathy he would receive from either of these quarters depends on the individual concerned, but where there is so much hatred between black and white and where the farmer is probably on social terms with the official, most Africans would rather not take this course."

These are the structural conditions under which African workers in the Bethal district were selling their labour power. This structural weakness led to abuses within an already highly oppressive and exploitative situation: the system of 'volunteer' labour was only one, and possibly the most extreme form, of the highly exploitative farm labour system which was exposed in the Eastern Transvaal:

"Evidence was led to show that foreign Africans whose documents were alleged to be out of order were not allowed to return to their country of origin, even when they were willing and had the means to do so. Children

under 16, the age at which reference books must be carried, had been arrested and sent to farms, with no attempt made to inform their families. These minors had been forced to enter into contracts to serve with farmers, despite the fact that they were too young to enter unassisted into any contract.

The evidence to support claims of forced labour by the victims of the 'volunteer' scheme is plentiful. Some alleged that: People had been arrested in their homes, and not in the streets; that their relatives had been told untruths or refused information, when enquiring at police stations or labour bureaux.

It was alleged that in many cases arrested men did not know and were not at any time told by the police or employment officers that they had a choice between farm labour and appearance in court.

Once on the farms the treatment of workers worsened. Sworn affidavits and evidence in court told of guarded transport to take arrested africans from labour bureau to farms, of these labourers being locked up at night and at weekends, of their working under guard, of inadequate food and medical attention, inadequate housing and sanitation, and of assaults.

Jackson Mtembu claimed in his affidavit - 'I say that assaults were the most usual things and were committed by the bossboy and the foreman regularly and there was never one day which passed when an assault was not committed on someone. I am sure that many of the labourers still carry the scars of the wounds received as a result of these assaults.'

An example of the difficulty

experienced by these people in organising collectively to improve their conditions can be seen in the following account:

A serious case of ill-treatment of alleged petty offenders was reported in the press during August and September 1958. 32 Africans had been sent from the labour bureau to the farm of CLS Botha in the Heidelberg area, and following alleged thrashings, they decided to leave and report back to the authorities. As they walked along the road a van overtook them, warning shots were fired, and they were rounded up and taken back to the farm where they were cruelly beaten. Botha was later found guilty of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and was sentenced to 4 1/2 years imprisonment and 7 strokes with a cane. 2 of his Whites and 7 of his African staff received lesser sentences for participating in the assaults.

These conditions explain why organisation of these workers at the site of production was not possible. They indicate a situation where action beyond the workplace, in the community, becomes necessary.

One response to this situation was to argue that boycott of products was the only response possible to an oppressed people in such a situation.

The ANC and the Congress Alliance both took up the call for a potato boycott and organised its publicity through local branches. They organised demonstrations of men wearing potato sacks and carrying placards with slogans.

The boycott soon attracted widespread support from african consumers in Johannesburg and on the Reef. However, it was a nationwide boycott. One woman who lived in Natal at the time recounted:

One day when I was still a small child I was travelling on a bus when a man carrying a sack of potatoes climbed onto the bus. One of the women on the bus went to him and said: 'How can you buy potatoes? Don't you know potatoes are made with the flesh of our people?' She then took the sack from him and she and the other passengers threw the potatoes out of the windows of the bus.

Despite the fact that potatoes were one of the staple foods of africans in the Transvaal, the boycott became a great success. Another person described how at the Bree Street market the potato halls began filling up, 'and sacks of potatoes remained there going rotten, day after day'.

In 1959 the Potato Control Board bought 18 806 288 lbs of surplus potatoes from the markets of Johannesburg and Pretoria and 154 612 lbs from the producers, at a total cost of £116 044 (in 1958 the Potato Board bought up 100 050 lbs of surplus potatoes for £498). A quotation from the report of the Potato Board further emphasises this point:

"Owing to the accumulation of large quantities of potatoes on the Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town markets the Board, with ministerial approval, inaugurated the following special schemes for the purpose of relieving the market position

a) Stock Feed The Board purchased 5 024 737 lb and sold 3 650 550 lb as stock feed...

b) Dehydration A contract was concluded with a dehydration factory for the supply of potatoes."

Not only were potatoes boycotted at the market but African workers refused to buy chips for lunch and ordered fish and bread.



The boycott lasted for about two months. It was successful to the extent that people stopped buying potatoes and the government was forced to react. In late June the Minister suspended the 'volunteer scheme' and established a commission of enquiry. However the government refused to appoint a judicial commission of enquiry into the volunteer scheme. Instead it appointed 2 separate groups. The first was a departmental commission consisting entirely of officials of the Dept of Bantu Administration and Development under Mr B J Smithers, Principal Bantu Affairs, Commissioner, Johannesburg.

The other committee was known as the Committee of Inquiry into Farm Labour. Its terms of reference were to investigate all the methods of recruitment of farm labour including the 'volunteer scheme'; to investigate all irregularities and malpractices and to suggest reforms and modifications.

The members of the committee included nominees of the S.A. Agricultural Union, the Chief Bantu Commissioner, a deputy director of Bantu Agriculture and a representative of the police.

Commenting on the Commission of Enquiry the Black Sash said

"It is regrettable that requests for a judicial Commission of Enquiry were not acceded to, for without prejudging the report these gentlemen will make to the Minister, it is difficult to see how a committee made up of officials of the police, the Native Affairs Department and representatives of the farming community (all interested parties in

the scheme) can be completely impartial".

The committee was ordered to report directly to the Minister, and its findings were never published.

At this stage, what comments can one make on the tactic of consumer boycotts? In a capitalist society, a worker is exploited in the production process when he produces not just value for his employer, but also surplus value. However, it is one of the contradictions of capitalist production that while value and surplus value can only be created in the sphere of production, they can only be realised, or converted into profit, once they have been sold (ie in the sphere of circulation). Thus the motive of capitalist production of commodities, namely profit, can only be achieved when the commodity is sold.

The site of exploitation in capitalist society is production. Therefore the main area of struggle against exploitation must be a struggle to change the nature (relations) of production. Obviously a consumer boycott, which operates in the sphere of circulation, cannot be regarded as a means to achieving this end.

Referring to the potato boycott, the following point was made:

"the boycott is a success.... consequently some people are beginning to commit the error of regarding the potato boycott as the main struggle against the Nationalists and it should go on indefinitely. This attitude is understandable but not correct".

This illustrates one of the problems with the mobilisation of the community around one particular issue. Very often its relationship to the wider problems of exploitation and oppression become obscured. To this author, the consumer boycott is a tactic to achieve a particular short-term goal in a particular situation. In the case of both the potato boycott and the Fattis & Monis boycott, this tactic was used to support a particular group of workers in their struggle to obtain better working conditions. If we are to evaluate this tactic we have to consider the specific material conditions in which it was held. It has already been suggested that the workers involved in both disputes were in a structurally weak position and needed the support of the community for this reason.

This raises the question of the types of class alliances into which the working class enters when it accepts support from the community. A basic principle of working class organisation is that the working class should only enter into alliances with other classes when it is in a strong enough position to do so on its own terms.

The reason for this is that alliances made with other classes can lead to the working class being 'sold down the river' should they not make these alliances on their own terms. While one obviously accepts this principle, it is incorrect to believe that community involvement in a working class struggle always means sub-

ordination to the petty bourgeoisie. It can mean this. On the other hand it can also mean the involvement and participation of a wider section of the working class than are actually affected by the particular issue involved.

Furthermore, the petty bourgeoisie are themselves an ambiguous class. At different times they offer their support to each of the major classes (workers and capitalists). In the late 1950s, 'apartheid' discriminated against both the African working class and the African petty bourgeoisie. It was for this reason that they entered into an alliance against oppression and exploitation of 'black' people. By the late 1970s, the position of the petty bourgeoisie became even more contradictory. Both the state and capital are attempting to break the cross class alliance between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie by offering the latter a material interest in supporting the status quo. At present it is too early to judge whether this strategy is succeeding. Either way, this will have important implications for future class alliances.

Since the late 1950s, the working class has itself become stronger and better organised. The Fattis & Monis workers all belonged to the FCWU which articulated their demands clearly and maintained solidarity amongst the workers against management. One of the weaknesses of the potato boycott as a tactic for improving farm workers' conditions was that no clearly laid out set of demands was articulated as a condition for the calling

off of the boycott. The potato workers were in no condition to articulate these demands themselves. The extreme structural weakness of the Bethal potato workers was part of a wider system of exploitation of farm workers in South Africa during the 1950s. This mitigated against their organisation. It also meant that the problem could not be dealt with by a consumer boycott, which is most effective when used for short term ends.

Let us examine in more detail the boycott of Fatti's & Monis. Before the strike in April 1979, the African Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCWU) had been involved in trying to obtain recognition at the Fatti's & Monis plant. The workers wanted a minimum wage of R40 per week, regular tea and lunch breaks and 3 weeks annual leave. Management ignored these demands and the FCWU applied for a Conciliation Board to force Fatti's & Monis to negotiate.

The following week 5 of the workers involved were dismissed after they had been previously warned that they would have to choose between the union and their jobs. 5 more workers who demanded reasons for the sacking of their fellow workers were also sacked. The following day, 78 workers in the milling section went on strike in support of those fired, claiming that they had been unfairly dismissed. The reaction of management was firstly to call on the Department of Labour to negotiate with the workers, and to try to frighten them into capitulation. This attempt failed. After that, management dismissed

all the African workers, who it claimed had broken their service contracts by going on strike, and tried to negotiate with the coloured workers. The workers refused to be divided, and the coloured workers refused offers of reinstatement.

Four days after the strike began the Western Cape Traders Association called for the management of Fattis & Monis to 'save an ugly situation' and to settle the dispute as soon as possible. It also threatened to boycott the firm's products if a settlement with all the workers was not reached. Both the WCTA and the Western Cape African Chamber of Commerce attempted to bring the two parties around a table to negotiate a settlement. The attempt failed.

At a mass meeting in May the students of the University of the Western Cape called a boycott of all Fattis & Monis' products. In June, after failing to help negotiate a settlement, the Western Cape African Chamber of Commerce and 2300 members of WCTA joined the boycott. When he joined the boycott Mr Kassim Allie of WCTA said that there was a lot of sympathy for the 88 workers. Mr Mavella of WEPCOC commented:

"A climate must be created for the workers to resume their work - and this is all we are trying to impress on the company - We are also trying to make them realise that it is important for them to treat these workers as people too. We support them not because they are black like us, but because they are people who spend money in our shops and are therefore entitled to



certain consideration too."

Support for the boycott spread and the initial organisers were soon joined by SACOS, students, school pupils, Inkatha and the 'Black Sash'.

The public attitude of Fattis & Monis was that they were not at all worried about the boycott and that they believed that they had considerable consumer sympathy. However, 3 days after shops in African and Coloured townships had stopped buying bread from Fattis & Monis, a representative from management went to see Mandla and asked him to meet with Fattis & Monis to negotiate the reinstatement of the workers. This reaction is no doubt related to reports which appeared in the Rand Daily Mail in June 1979 which described the tenuous financial position of Fattis & Monis even prior to the beginning of the boycott. It read

"Fattis & Monis is one of the smaller food companies and turning its wheat and maize via its mills hardly paid off last year. True, shareholders once again got their 12,5c a share dividend, but the dividend was not only not earned, but share earnings shrank between the first and second half of the year (1978)."

The article went on to say that in the last couple of years Fattis & Monis had been spending heavily on new equipment. The aim of this large capital investment was to maintain a competitive position in the food market. However the program was expensive and the company was in a somewhat difficult debt position.

Referring to the future prospects of

the industry the article said:

"While much remains to be done internally, it would appear that the future profitability of the group depends largely on the pattern of the S.A. Economy."

It would not be stretching the imagination too far to argue that in this situation any decrease in profit would put the company in a very vulnerable position.

A spokesman of Fattis & Monis said that in the period from January to July 1979, profits were R186 000 compared with R363 000 for the same period in 1978. This same gentleman claimed that this decrease in profits had nothing to do with the boycott. However, contrary to this apparent lack of concern Fattis & Monis increased promotions of their products: in Johannesburg they put out a series of products under a new brand name, salesmen were employed to tell people that the boycott was over and free Fattis & Monis T-shirts were given away at Malmesbury.

The financial position of Fattis & Monis at the time of the boycott explains why the company was eager to negotiate on its own terms and avoid recognising the union if possible. This has implications for the success of consumer boycotts as a tactic. It is possible to argue that in a period of monopolisation in manufacturing in South Africa, a small company like Fattis & Monis was very vulnerable to any vicissitudes in the sales of its products. A larger, more diversified company would probably not be as vulnerable and might not have been forced into negotiating. For

example a boycott of Eveready was announced at the same time as the boycott of Fattis & Monis. While it never attracted the public support of the Fattis & Monis boycott, the company was also never forced by the boycott to negotiate. One of the reasons could have been that a multi-national company like Eveready could withstand adverse publicity and a consumer boycott in a portion of its market.

Another reason could have been the nature of the product: bread and potatoes are staple foods of the working class. Eveready products are probably not priority commodities for the working class. For this reason a withdrawal of their purchasing power would not affect the company adversely.

Let us return to the Fattis & Monis boycott. We can accept that for the reasons discussed above, the company was forced to negotiate. However the company wanted to negotiate on its own terms and avoid recognising and accepting an alliance between African and Coloured workers. It is here that the role of the union in maintaining worker solidarity and articulating a set of grievances was crucially important.

The weak position of Fattis & Monis and the cohesive function played by the union represent the positive aspects of the boycott.

A settlement between the union and the management of Fattis & Monis was finally reached. In broad terms the settlement involved the following points:

1. All workers would be reinstated at their old wage rates and at their old jobs as

- soon as possible with no loss of seniority.
2. All the contracts would be renewed within two months.
  3. The union would actively assist in ending the boycott once the contracts had been renewed.

The union had received recognition within the factory and management had accepted that it could not negotiate separately with African or Coloured workers. Mr Moni said

"The boycott could have had a serious effect if we had allowed it to linger on. There is no doubt that these boycotts can be effective. We made the mistake of ignoring organised labour. I would advise other firms to negotiate directly with unions as soon as possible."

From the point of view of the use of consumer boycotts as a tactic, certain problems were revealed after the settlement was reached. Firstly Mr Hassan Howa, President of Sacos said he would not call off the boycott until he was satisfied with the agreement. Representations from the workers persuaded him that they were satisfied with the conditions of the settlement and that he should call off the boycott once the contracts had been received. He agreed to this. The significance of this event is that it represented an attempt to take control of the boycott and the conditions of the settlement - possibly for wider political aims. In this particular case the boycott was being used to achieve a particular short term goal - namely the improvement of working

conditions for Fattis & Monis workers and the recognition by management of the Food & Canning Workers Union. A boycott of this nature cannot be maintained indefinitely because it will lose its effectivity. In this particular case its extension by Sacos could have undermined the settlement reached with Fattis & Monis.

A second problem was revealed by the withdrawal of WCTA from the boycott before the contracts had been renewed. Mr Kassim Allie said

"We have now told our members that they can re-stock and sell the products of the company.

If the company does not implement any of the terms of the agreement we can always re-impose the boycott."

One wonders how easily the association will re-start the boycott once it has called it off. Furthermore the breathing space given to Fattis & Monis may well put it in a strong enough position to withstand another boycott should it decide not to renew the contracts of the workers.

The contradictions involved in a consumer boycott and the alliances with petty bourgeois retailers which this necessitates are revealed here. In a sense the co-operation of a retailing organisation like the WCTA was important in enforcing the boycott of Fattis & Monis product. Yet this group is not bound in any way to continue the boycott after the settlement, although the Food & Canning Workers Union stressed that

"We are confident that Fattis & Monis will speedily obtain the renewal of the contracts, only when this is done will

the dispute be satisfactorily concluded."

The importance of this condition is that it is the contract labour system which puts workers in a structurally weak position vis a vis factory floor organisation. This structural weakness means, as we have argued before, that support from outside the factory floor is necessary for such boycotts to have a chance to be effective. This is the importance of a consumer boycott. However, when its success depends on alliance with a petty bourgeois group, problems such as those discussed above can arise.





# RENTS: paying for incorporation

THE South African state, with a fair amount of pushing from the business community, has now apparently acknowledged that there is a permanent african population in the urban areas outside of the bantustans. Of course, the single biggest factor to have brought both capital and the state round to this point of view is the resistance shown by the dominated classes during the 1970s, manifesting itself in the events of June 1976 and thereafter (this is not to argue that strike action before that had not shaken state and capital previously).

But attempts are being made to turn defeat and retreat into an assault on the potential solidarity of the oppressed people, whether they be situated in rural or urban areas. The present strategy followed by the state, of attempted incorporation of a section of the dominated classes (mainly the urban-dwelling section of the african working class and the petty bourgeoisie - traders, officials, and professionals), takes place against the background of resistance within South Africa, massive unemployment (mainly exported to the bantustans), the need for a stable labour force and uninterrupted production by monopoly capital (the most important

form of capital since at least the second half of the 1960s), and the changing face of southern Africa.

It would be easy to give the impression that the strategy of incorporation is an easy one, running smoothly in the direction that is desired (in much the same way that the 'constellation of states' suggested by PW Botha seemed to be reality until the victory of the ZANU (PF) and the subsequent conference of southern African states without the presence of South Africa).

That is the way that it sometimes comes across in the press - as a smooth path to the existence of a 'black middle-class'. And no wonder - because the people who are 'newsworthy' are the individuals from groups that are most easily incorporated, the people who are subject to discrimination rather than exploitation. Let me take some examples - those who own businesses in the townships feel that they are not getting as good a deal as their white counterparts (and this is correct), but at the same time they are basically in agreement with the system as it exists at present - a more equal distribution of profits is what concerns them. Sure, they are discriminated against but the level of discrimination could change (if your income is high enough you are welcome in the Carlton Hotel or the Sun City shrine-to-insensitivity-and-capital, even if your skin is black). For these people apartheid is very much related to the level of discrimination (apartheid=unfair distribution of resources and access to resources). In other words, what is wrong is the system of apartheid. These are the

people who are immediately available for incorporation, people who would like to see change, but then mainly in terms of a change-over of office bearers.

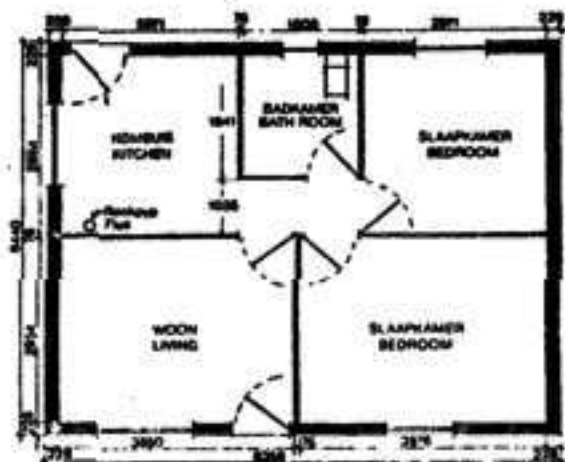
For these people the slogans are: 'Away with separate residential areas'; 'Ownership in urban areas'; 'Equal salaries within the medical and teaching professions'; 'Let us into the the central business district'; etc.

But there are other people who are exploited by the system, and would be exploited whether the office bearers of capital are white or black (in many cases they are black already). There are many obstacles in the way of incorporating these people, because the system of profit-making depends on the positions that they occupy at present; depends on the low wages; depends on the low quality housing and public facilities such as health and education and transport.

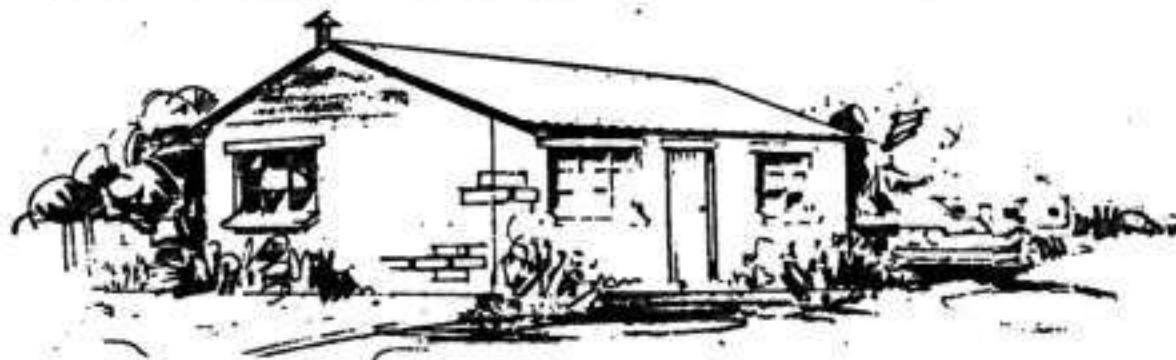
This article will look briefly at two issues: the first is that of who is going to pay for the incorporation of some (in the case being examined the issue of rents, and protest against the suggested increases); and secondly, who should be leading the protest. It is not possible to completely separate these two issues.

In a previous issue of Work in Progress (10) we published an article on bus boycotts, which looked at who was expected to pay for the system of placing large numbers of the working class within the bantustans, and, consequently, far from the place of work. In the cases that we looked at the working class was supposed to pay up to

### TIPE/TYPE 51/9



Veen/Living .....	11 334 m <sup>2</sup>
Kombu/Kitchen .....	8 732 m <sup>2</sup>
Bathamer/Bathroom .....	3 530 m <sup>2</sup>
Slaaphamer 1/Bedroom 1 .....	11 706 m <sup>2</sup>
Slaaphamer 2/Bedroom 2 .....	8 732 m <sup>2</sup>



allow 'reasonable profits' to the bus companies (in which the bantustan had a share) for transporting them from where they did not want to live to where they had to work. These moves to increase bus fares were resisted and are still being resisted.

At the moment attempts are once more being made to increase the transport fares both in urban and rural areas. But there are also attempts to increase rentals for houses in urban areas.

#### WHO PAYS?

The main sources of revenue for the financing of the townships within which africans have to live have been the following:

1. Registration and labour fees - paid by the employers;

2. Fines for certain offences;
3. A service levy paid by the employers who do not provide accommodation for workers;
4. Sale of liquor;
5. Rents (including fees for services) from the township residents.

Previously, while Soweto was administered by the Johannesburg Municipality (up to the creation of the Administration Boards, the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB), in this case, in 1973), it had to a certain extent received transfers from Municipal finances directly to supplement the income from the sources listed above. This stopped with the take-over by WRAB and the state's policy that the Administration Boards be self-sufficient (or in other words, that the

african population group pays for its own places of residence with no contribution from the wealth that they generate in industry).

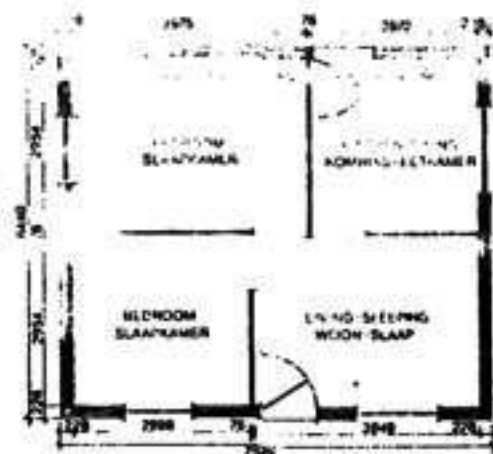
The most important source of income to the WRAB in its attempts to balance the books of Soweto had been the sale of liquor. But this source was drastically affected by the 1976 uprising and dropped from R38-m to R22-m.

Another important source is that of the labour levy paid by employers (R2,15 per month for an industrial worker in Johannesburg). These levies have formed an increasing percentage of total revenue in Soweto, standing at 15,8 percent in 1976-7. However, in evidence to the Riekert Commission, employers came out in strong opposition to the levies. Suggestions that the levies be increased to R4,15 were rejected by the state, and Riekert said that the Act under which the levies are made (Contributions in Respect of Black Labour Act, 1972) should at some stage be abolished. The Commission continued:

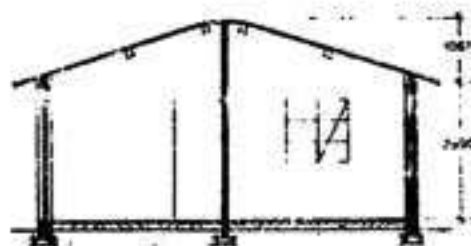
In principle it is desirable for black communities to bear to an increasing extent a greater part of the total burden in connection with the provision of services in their own communities ... (The Department (of Cooperation and Development), the administration boards, and community councils should initiate purposeful programmes of action in order to recover more and more of the cost of services from the black communities themselves.

The best way to implement these proposals will probably form part of the recommendations of the Broune Committee, investigating financing of services and housing (appointed after the 1977 protest





TYPE/TIPE 51/6



by students and other residents against increased rentals).

In the meantime, however, the community councils (successors to the scorned and thrown out Urban Bantu Councils - Useless Boys' Clubs or Urban Bantu Circuses as they were known) have been landed with the task of executing, if not drawing up, the balancing of Soweto's books. This they are once more trying to do by increasing rents. In other words, if the employers won't pay the suggested increases in the labour levies then increase the share to be paid by the working class.

And if they won't buy enough beer, then increase the rents.

As early as 1921 a certain Colonel Morris boasted to the Stallard Commission that in his area in Natal 'all native buildings were erected and paid for from a fund called the "native affairs fund" which was derived from the sale of kaffir beer'. In other words, the working class was indirectly paying an

additional amount towards housing. Today this is still the case.

What this means is that while wages are kept low because the amount that the working class is spending on rent seems to be low, in fact the amount spent on liquor should be added to the rent paid. When this indirect means of drawing rent from the people living in the townships fails, then rents paid directly as such, have to be increased.

And this is what is at issue today - the amount that the residents of Soweto and other townships are expected to pay for accommodation and services. And these increases come at a time when the price of brown bread has gone up by 25 percent and an increase in the price of milk has been announced to take effect from next month (May). By rents is covered house rent (to supposedly recover cost of building and maintenance); site rent (to cover cost of land purchase, access roads, drainage,

health and ambulance services, and administration costs); service charges (electricity, water, sewerage and refuse removal - it is the losses on this item that have been covered by WRAB's liquor profits); schools levy.

As the house rents component had reached the maximum permissible (set in relation to the costs to be recovered) it is being proposed that the other parts of 'rents' be increased - but the effect is, of course, the same: residents of Soweto and other townships are expected to pay more for the accommodation and services that they 'enjoy'.

According to the Soweto Development Guidance System, or Ecoplan, the township needs capital expenditure of R533-million (that is what it would have cost in 1979). This figure includes R126-m for housing, R101-m for electrification, and R70-m for transport, sewerage, etc. This last figure is especially important as the present sewerage disposal facilities are said to be adequate only for the present number of houses in the township.

WRAB, after it took over, tried to meet expenditure, and the need for self-sufficiency, by raising (doubling) site and service charges and by increasing liquor sales. In 1977 these increases were resisted (these protests at the increases will be covered in the next issue of Work in Progress). In 1978 the community council for Soweto was established, with a poll that was shockingly low, even within the history of the establishment of puppet organisations in South Africa and Namibia (the 'mayor', David Thebehali, received the grand total of 97 votes, and the council has been known as the 'six

percenters' for the six percent of residents who participated in the elections).

Later in 1978 the council fell into the trap of demanding more power, and being given power over the issues that the state (through WRAB) wants to be involved in less directly. They were given control over finances (see the Government Gazette 6511, 79.06.22).

The council had a choice: either to go ahead with necessary expenditure (such as repairs and staff replacement, or to cut back on expenditure. They chose the former and were, consequently, forced to increase rents. In August, 1979, it was announced that rents (service charges) would go up in three stages.

	Present	1.9.79	1.3.80	1.9.80
Beverage	1,44	2,78	2,78	2,78
Cleansing	1,20	2,14	3,81	3,81
School levy	,38	,38	1,00	1,00
Water	3,11	6,63	6,63	6,63
Electricity	,38	-	-	-
Roads	,49	,49	2,18	2,18
Admin.	5,93	5,93	5,93	10,41
Health	1,12	1,12	1,72	1,72
Comm. Dev.	,45	,45	1,42	1,42
Recreation	-	-	,25	1,67
Total site rent	14,50	19,92	25,72	31,62
House rent	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00
Total cost	19,50	24,92	30,72	36,62

Soweto's increases... but who should pay?

There was an immediate outcry against the proposals for rent increases.

The state was now in a position to say that the community council would have to decide on the matter. These proposed increases came after rent costs had increased by 225% between October, 1977, and May, 1978. What also occurred since 1978 was that the community council became responsible for collecting arrears in rent payment and ultimately ordering evictions.

In July, 1979, the headline in Post read: RENTS TO GO UP (79.07.22). This news came via the WRAB. It was confirmed early in August. Thebehali 'claimed the increases are the result of deficits inherited from WRAB, and would be introduced in three stages over the next year'.

Ntatho Motlana of the Committee of Ten responded by saying that 'If the whites want us to live 32km away from them, then they must pay for that privilege', and suggested that the state should make a grant to Soweto. He argued that Soweto residents spent their money in the Johannesburg central business district (CBD), and that the wealth produced by the people of Soweto was taxed in the industrial areas to which the workers commuted and not in Soweto where they lived. Nigel Mandy, of the CBD could not agree with this and passed the buck to another fraction of capital (namely capital operating in the production of commodities) and suggested that wages be increased so that the residents of Soweto would be able to pay the higher rents.

Community council opposition leader, the Sofasonke Party's Ephraim Tshabalala, called for more sites to be made available for people to build their own homes, and that the party opposed rent increases. Bishop Tutu also came out in opposition to the suggested rent increases.

The Sofasonke Party collected 5 000 signatures to be sent to Piet Koornhof.

On the 16th of August Thebehali announced that rents would not go up, and that R705-m had been granted as a loan by an unnamed US company. This announcement was greeted with justifiable scepticism by Motlana and caused

some confusion within the community council as not all the members seemed to know about the loan. The Committee of Ten went ahead with a meeting at which it was decided by the 1 000 people present that they would refuse to pay any increases.

It will be interesting to see how Motlana and others respond to the news that Soweto and other communities are to be given municipal status as this was one of the demands made at the meeting. And by the same standards, if enough people supported the Blackchain supermarket in Soweto this would meet the objection that residents are spending their money in the Johannesburg CBD.

Over the next few weeks the rents issue was an on-off affair. (Of course it must be kept in mind that the rent increases were proposed in many townships right through South Africa, and not only in Soweto).

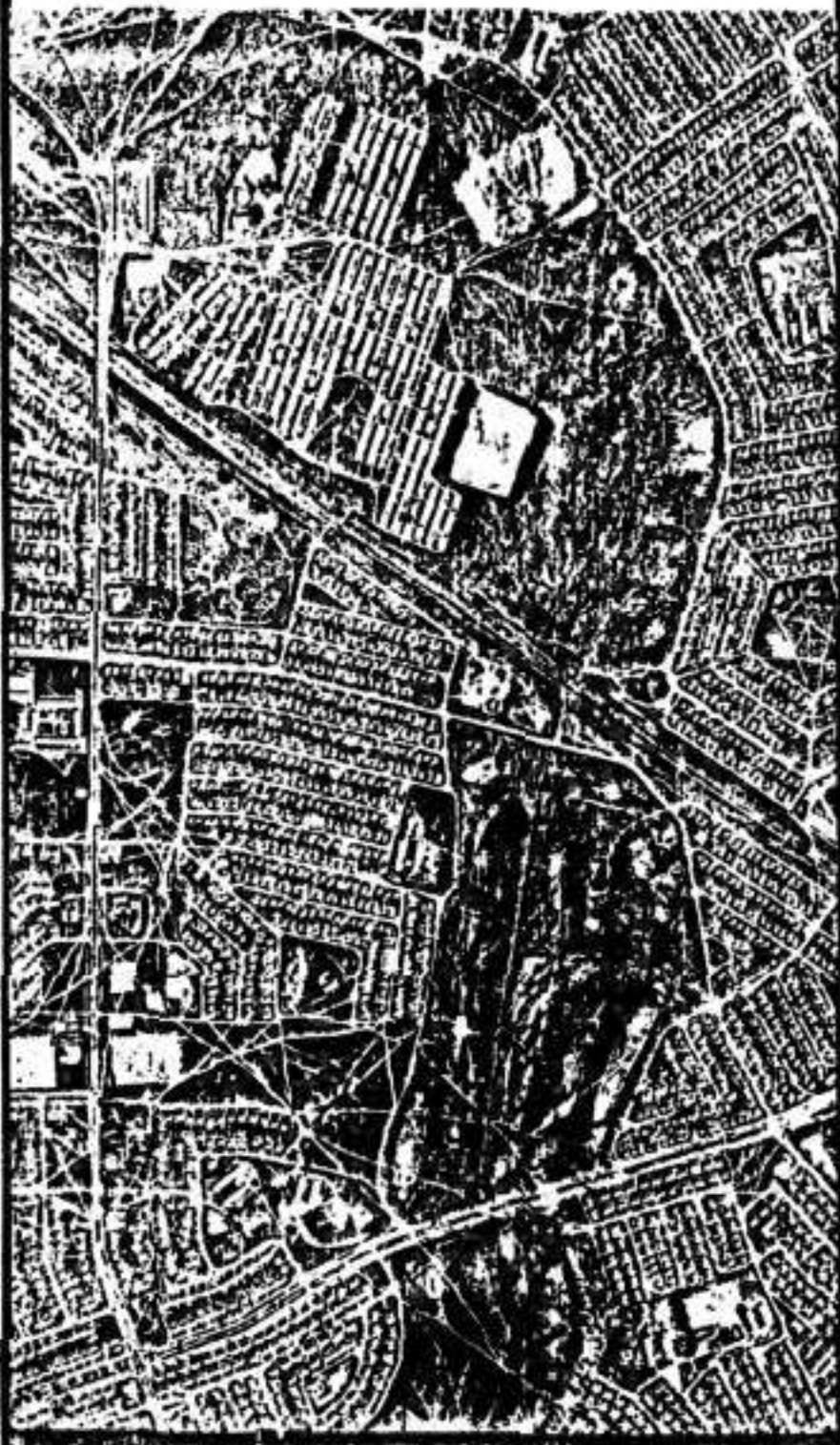
F8 du Randt, of the Department of Cooperation and Development retorted to the protests that the people would have to pay up; that they had called for autonomy and that they were now being given it; and that they should be proud of this responsibility.

Koornhof, in keeping with his style of operation that so many appear to be more than willing to believe in, said that rents would not go up but that means would have to be found to make Soweto self-sufficient.

The issue of rents, rather than the visit to Soweto by the Prime Minister, dominated the thoughts of residents during August and September, 1979. PW Botha did write off the debt of R9-million (Soweto's share of an accumulated deficit that the community council inherited from WRAB), but it has been pointed



out that this was done against an accumulated surplus of about R11-million left in the Bantu Services Levy, which WRAB had in turn inherited when it took over the administra-



tion of townships on the West Rand).

In September the Deputy Minister of Cooperation and Development told a delegation from Soweto that the decision to increase rent rested with the community council.

In Dobsonville the chairman of the local community council was nearly stabbed at a meeting to discuss the rents issue in that township. It was decided to suspend rent increases 'until the people decided that they wanted them' to pay for services. This happened in early September, 1979.

The Urban Council's Association (the umbrella body for community councils) met in September and with remarkable clarity said that the administration boards 'had waited for community councils to be introduced before "handing" them the responsibility of announcing rent increases'.

On the weekend of the 23rd September the Soweto Civic Association was formed under the auspices of the Committee of Ten and it was said that one of the first issues that the SCA would take up would be that of rents. Inkatha also said that that organisation would become involved.

In March, 1980, John Knoetze, chairperson of WRAB, told the SA Institute of Race Relations rents would have to be increased. He said that it was the only place in the world where people paid an average of 5 percent of their incomes on rent, and said that some people earning R1 000 per month were paying rents of R14,00. This brings me back to the question of 'WHO PAYS'.

Knoetze said that 'the trend throughout the world was that people spent at least 20 percent of their income on housing'. He also

said that the WRAB was 'subsidising' each house in Soweto to the tune of R30,00 per month (probably referring to the money gathered from indirect sources, such as employers and the sale of liquor). But we have already seen that 'rents' in the townships are paid both directly and indirectly by the inhabitants (mainly the working class).

Knoetze's various figures were refuted in a study reported on by Rapport newspaper (80.04.06). This study was done by the Bureau for Market Research at UNISA, and argued that in countries at a comparable level of economic development to that in South Africa people spent no more than 10 percent of their monthly income on rents, household fuel and light. After an increase of rents, as suggested by WRAB through the community councils, more than 50 percent of the households in Soweto would be spending more than 10 percent on these items - and this is taking the average income to be R400,00 per month for households (presumably all those occupying one house in this overcrowded city).

According to the director of the Bureau the relevant percentages for other countries would be: Tanzania, 8,2; Brazil, 9,5; Russia, 2,9; Zaire, 9,8.

Late in March it was announced that the rents would go up by R14,50 for site rental (in three stages of R6,00, R4,50, and R4,00). It was further suggested that there should be a levy of R5,00 per house; that refuse removal levy be increased from 39c to R2,45; sewerage charges to be increased from R2,48 to R5,48. What this would mean is that the amount paid per household would go up by R21,56 per month. This would bring total cost of rent, fuel and



lights to R45,56 per month, or 11,4 percent of a household income of approximately R400,00 per month. (In 1979 the Markinor market research organisation found that more than half the households in Soweto lived below the minimum living level for families which stood at R178,22 at that time, and that a fifth of Soweto's adults earned below R99,00 per month. These figures would paint an even worse picture than that of the Bureau for Market Research, and shows up the propaganda put out by Knoetze with his families earning R1 000 per month. Families earning this amount are not engaging in much protest activity about the issue of rents).

What this all shows is that while the state may have publicly recognised what was obvious to all, namely that there is a permanent african population outside of the bantustans, this is going to mean that greater demands are going to be placed on this section of the South African population. They are going to be expected to pay for that recognition, while it is going to be sold to them by capital and the state in the form of an 'improvement in the quality of life'; '99-year leasehold' (as though this is of any concern to 99 percent of the inhabitants of the townships); 'uplift' programmes and 'keep Soweto clean' campaigns; municipal 'autonomy'; etc.

#### WHOSE ISSUE?

With the development of production under capitalism (the capitalist mode of production) came the separation of the place of residence and the place where production takes place. No longer was it a case of agricultural production in the fields immediately around the

family or community homes, no longer weaving or woodwork within rooms that formed part of the household. Instead came the concentration of many producers within the same building - this was necessary because the means of production, the machinery used and the raw materials, were now in the possession of the capitalist and not of the people working with those materials or machinery. Control had to be kept over the working class, so that as little wastage as possible could take place and also so that the capitalist could exert direct control over the workers.

Moving production into one building did at the same time mean that the place of work could no longer be part of the community or household. There had to be residential areas and industrial areas (partly determined by infrastructural needs as well - it is cheaper to provide transport, electricity and water for a concentration of factories).

Several implications flow from this separation under the capitalist mode of production: it means that the issues that are deemed to be relevant to these 'separate' areas are believed to have no (or little) relevance to each other; that the organisations representing interests within the two areas should be separate organisations (community organisations/residents associations as against trade unions/employers organisations); and in the South African situation the complexity of the racial separation and racial controls that distinguish so much of what happens here, also entered into shaping the separation in a very specific way.

In South Africa not only the working

class, but also the other classes dominated because of their race, have been separated from the site of production and located in townships. What would otherwise have been a working class issue with greater clarity is, in South Africa, an issue that affects all the racially dominated classes. However, not all the dominated classes are affected in the same manner or to the same degree. Knoetze's families earning R1 000 per month are discriminated against because they are forced to live in the same suburbs as the working class and have other restrictions imposed on them (such as the fact that they cannot stay where they like, marry whom they like, or have their businesses where they like).





This means that there are more groups involved in the 'rents issue' and the protests against the increases than would have been the case in a township segregated purely according to class. And not all the groups who take up the rents issue do it with the same motivation or for the same personal reasons. What one has to look at when analysing the ways in which various organisations are taking up the protest, are the issues that are joined to rents in the protest - is it land-ownership; business rights; salaries for professionals. Or are the issues those of increased transport costs; low wages; the effects of general sales tax; school uniforms; etc.

What is most interesting in the South African situation is the extent to which worker organisations have largely accepted the division between place of work (and the issues that are defined as workplace issues: wages - but not the effects of low wages; working conditions; recognition of workers' organisations; etc), and place of residence. They may not all have accepted it without question or without questioning now and then, but may have been forced into believing that this separation is essential for survival. And there are enough cases to show that the state is not willing to accept the breaking down of the barriers set up by capitalism and maintained by the state.

For example, the banning of Thozamile Botha and other officials from the PEBCO after this community based organisation had of necessity become involved in the Ford strike (see WIP, 11); the warnings issued to the Inkatho movement to stay out of labour

matters (from as early as Barney Dladla's involvement in the strikes at Richards Bay in 1973, to more recent statements by Buthelezi); the blatant control measures contained in the Wiehahn recommendations and conditions for the registration of unions; etc.

It need, of course, not be trade unions that take up working class issues in the community. It will in nearly all cases be groups, individuals and organisations that have very little to do with workplace issues that take up community issues. These groups and organisations are as caught up in the ideas and measures that separate workplace from place of residence as the trade unions are. This means that the rent issue, which is primarily a working class issue can be hijacked by groups who wish to strengthen their own demands, and these 'secondary' demands may very well have nothing to do with the working class, and may in fact be against the interests of the working class.

These 'secondary' demands can also usually be fairly easily incorporated, whether they relate to ownership of property, business rights, autonomy. This is not to argue that these 'secondary' demands should not be taken up, but that they should be linked to more fundamental demands that relate to exploitation rather than discrimination.

---

This discussion on rents will be continued in the next issue of Work in Progress. Other contributions are welcome, especially if they relate to cases outside of the Transvaal.

A paper by John Kane-Berman ('Shoes without Laces?: the financing of urban black townships, with special reference to Soweto

and the Soweto community council') done for the SAIRR proved helpful in writing this paper. Also the honours dissertation by Barbara Creecy ('A Home for Total Strategy: the political economy of urban african housing in contemporary South Africa') and David Harvey's 'Labor, Capital and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies' (Politics and Society, 6, 1976). There are a number of papers and theses that deal with the financing of townships, the titles of which can be supplied to readers if they write to the editors.



# RURAL RESISTANCE: the Batlokwa

Statement issued by the Makgato families  
who resisted forced removal.

## FORCED REMOVALS OF THE MAKGATO FAMILIES

### 500 FAMILIES RENDERED HOMELESS BY THESE REMOVALS.

On 25 September 1979 Government officials started removing willing families to Kromhoek. Things ran smoothly up to 28 - 09 - 79 as only those who wished to be resettled were removed and unwilling families were made to believe that they would remain untroubled with.

On 01 - 10 - 79, however, the removals took a new turn. Families were forced to move. It was on this day that families who were opposed to removals sought shelter at the neighbouring villages. In the meantime these Government officials started breaking down houses and carrying the contents and roofing materials to Kromhoek. Even when the owner of the house was absent, they would carry a 12 year old child with his/her family's belongings. In the case where a woman was present she was carried away in the absence of her husband to Kromhoek. When the head of the family resisted the removals he was chased by a police van and police dogs, and if he was caught he was thrown into the removing truck and taken away together with his belongings. In such cases doors were broken open and in other cases they entered locked houses by removing the iron sheet from the roof, and would from within force the door to open.

From thatched roofed houses they took doors and windows away, together with what they found in the house. In many cases walls of rondavels were broken down and the thatched roof would eventually fall in and break. Where a teenage boy resisted the removals he was bitten by police dogs and when he surrendered he was removed with whatever belonged to his family. There are families whose properties were removed to Kromhoek in their absence.

Houses were carelessly broken down in these removals. Herds of cattle, sheep and goats were carried away whilst their owners remained behind. Amongst other things there are two tractors and a trailer that were taken away leaving the owner behind. We who remained behind received no compensation for all these losses.

### TRIBAL PROPERTIES TAKEN AWAY

- SCHOOLS :
- a. Roofing materials.
  - b. Door frames and window frames and doors.
  - c. Benches and desks.
  - d. Schools record books, viz
    - (i) Sesame books
    - (ii) Registers
    - (iii) Financial books etc.
- CLINIC :
- a. Roofing materials
  - b. Door frame and window frames and doors
- TRIBAL AUTHORITY :
- a. All equipment viz
    - (i) Roofing materials
    - (ii) Door frame and window frames and doors.
    - (iii) Benches, tables, chairs, water tanks and fencing materials.
  - b. The Tribal car.
  - c. 6 Afrikaner bulls belonging to the tribe.

The families who were willingly removed are less than one hundred, that is why we mention these tribal properties as the bulk of the tribe has remained behind.

OVER the past 8 months, there has been a huge outcry in the media about the fate of the 66 000 Batlokwa people - both those who have accepted, as well as those who have resisted government removal.

### BACKGROUND

THE Batlokwa people live in the Sekgosesa district of Lebowa, about 50 km north of Pietersburg. There are two tribal authorities in the area under Chief Machaka and Chief Romakgopa. The land on which the Batlokwa people live is their own. Apart from the tribal locations, there are collectively bought farms as well as trust farms granted to the people. The Batlokwa's right to the land, according to one of the tribal councillors, was 'guaranteed us by Paul Kruger'.

In about 1962 the Makgato tribe who were 'squatters' on a European owned farm at Munnik, south-west of Soekmekaar, were moved to the Trust Farm Klipplaatdrift (No 508) which adjoins the Matoks (Machaka) tribal area. It is this group of people who now, 18 years later, have once again accepted removal.

While the Batlokwa people have occupied their land since time immemorial, the recent attempts to move them have not been the first bureaucratic intervention in the Batlokwa's chosen way of life. The institution of agricultural planning, or betterment, has always meant considerable upheaval for the rural population of South Africa. This is because the division of



the land into rigidly demarcated residential, arable and grazing areas, means that in most cases, people have to move their houses into 'lines'. Under no circumstances is compensation given for houses that have to be pulled down and rebuilt, and this division has usually meant that the amount of land available to families for ploughing is severely restricted. The Batlokwa area, as were most of the farms in the northern Transvaal, was 'planned'. In 1954 the people from the more remote and scattered homesteads were brought nearer to the more densely populated areas, and in 1959 the entire area was 'planned'.

It must be recognised then, that for the Batlokwa, as well as for the Makgato people, removal is not new. Their experience with planning and 'squatter' removal has taught them exactly what resettlement means and why they should resist it. Their prior experience of having to break down houses, move their possessions and recreate their homes (even if only a couple of miles further), should be remembered when people try to understand their present militancy.

The reasons for the present removal are not entirely clear. It is said that in 1977 the area was excised from Lebowa. This meant that it became a 'black spot' in 'white' South Africa (and from then it was no longer shown in the maps as part of Lebowa) and the land could be expropriated and the people living on it moved so that the consolidation of the Lebowa 'homeland' could be completed. The measure was gazetted in August 1978 under Regulation

R217 (Government Gazette No 6139, 25th August 1978, page 2). This meant that the areas were excised from the jurisdiction of the legislative assembly of Lebowa and were thus 'black spots' under central government control. However, today it is still the Lebowa administration which is responsible for education in the area, for collection of taxes, stock counting, etc, and all that Proclamation R217 has done is to legally dispossess the population of their rights to the land.

The land belonging to the Batlokwa people is the only black area through which the road leading to the northern border passes. It is this which has prompted statements such as the following:

Their removal is viewed by (the tribes) as a provision for the so-called 'white corridor' for the security forces to the North (Star, 78.11.15).

It was only on the 28th September, 1978, that the chiefs of the area were summoned by the Chief Commissioner for the Northern Areas, and informed that they were to be resettled in the Kromhoek area near Vivo in the Bochum magisterial district (Star, 78.11.15).

Chiefs Machaka and Romakgopa were both determined not to move, and they tried to organise a meeting of their people to hear about the proposed removals when the whole tribe, including migrants, would be there. To have had the whole population together presumably meant that the meeting would have had to take place in December/January when most migrants were on holiday. How-

ever, this did not happen and on November 15, 1978, a meeting consisting mainly of women was addressed by the Deputy Secretary, Serfontein. The meeting was said to have been a stormy one, with protests, and people stating that they would not move (Star, 78.11.16).

In the meantime, the third chief in the area, Chief Makgato from the farm Klipplaatdrift, agreed to be moved. The two dissenting chiefs were summoned by the Chief Commissioner to attend a meeting shortly after this, but did not attend because 'no agenda was provided' (Voice, 79.05.22). The meeting was, however, attended by Chief Makgato and by the Lebowa MP for the area, Kobe. (The shop belonging to Kobe was boycotted by the people of the area, because of his said support for the removals. This caused his turnover to drop radically - from R400,00 to R5,00 a day. Eventually he was forced to close the shop (Post, 79.06.22)).

It was then decided that the resettlements would be discussed between the Lebowa Legislative Assembly and Dr Koornhof at Sheshego on July 4. The Minister was expected to outline the government plan for the removals. On the same day the Batlokwa people put forward a memorandum to Koornhof asking that Proclamation R217 be withdrawn, and that plans for the removals be halted. (As yet no official removal notice had been served on the chiefs and to date the houses have not yet been numbered. This means that people are still free to continue building).

On the 3rd October, 1979, the real drama started. The time had come for the people living under Chief Makgato to move. It was reported in the RDM (79.10.03) that hundreds of families at Dwars River fled when police with 30 trucks moved in to resettle them.

The homes of several people who refused to move were demolished and it was also reported several days later that some of the people who had been resettled at Kromhoek were returning to their old homes and discouraging their friends from leaving the area. By now the Makgato people who had stayed at Dwars River had abandoned their homes and were setting up a 'squatter' camp in the bush.

The response of the Chief Commissioner to the returning people was to state that '(t)he people who are already resettled there can't come back. If they do they'll be committing an offence. You must expect some resistance (against the removals) but once they are settled they will be happy' (Star, 79.10.30).

On the 9th October, 1979, another meeting of the chiefs was scheduled at the Northern Transvaal Commissioner's court where complaints by Chief Solomon Makgato were to be heard. He said that, 'They (Chiefs Ramakgopa and Machaka) had taken his people'. The chiefs rejected this allegation claiming that they 'had offered sanctuary to stranded people' (RDM, 79.10.11).

Initially only 78 out of 614 Makgato families accepted removal from Dwars River. This meant that the vast majority of 536

families had totally rejected the moves. Chief Makgato's reasons for moving were that he wanted to settle at Kromhoek because the village at Dwars River was scattered. The comments of his people about the removals show clearly that they did not share his attitude. People fleeing into the bush said that, 'We don't want to move so we are making sure that when they come to take us away we won't be here'.

Apart from police pressure to get people to move to Kromhoek, 8 people were arrested, 14 detained, a number of others assaulted, and at least one person bitten by a police dog (RDM, 79.10.03; Post, 79.10.04).

On the 25th October the RDM reported what was perhaps the worst tragedy of all: Mosima Sekole, a Batlokwa migrant who worked in Johannesburg, returned home to find that his wife and children had moved to Kromhoek leaving behind their home that had taken years to build. He was later found hanged.

The removal was also characterised by considerable intimidation of young people. According to a report in Post (79.10.06) 'Boys had taken to the hills for fear of police. They have been the main target of police patrols', and 'Only ten people have been detained according to Brigadier D Nothling, Divisional Chief of Police in the Northern Transvaal, but people in the area spoke of vans "coming and going" loaded with detainees, mainly students'. On the 15th October, 7 000 students from the schools in the area boycotted the lessons and staged a 20 km march protesting against the removals and particularly

about the fate of all the Makgato scholars who were now out of school. At Mokomene High School there was also considerable intimidation of students - some were banned from Lebowa schools altogether, while attempts were made to force the rest of the student body to fill in forms stating who the leaders of the strikes were (Post, 79.11.05).

Ultimately, the Makgato scholars were absorbed into the other Batlokwa schools; the teachers who had refused to move were transferred and the Makgato families who had stayed behind found refuge with friends and relatives. Yet the warning by a Catholic priest in the area that, 'Unless an acceptable and lasting solution to the problem of the displaced Makgato people can be found soon, real trouble lies ahead' (Post, 79.12.04) is an indication of the real problems. Speaking about the provision of food parcels and blankets he said, 'What we are doing here might ultimately prove dangerous because this is a temporary relief. These people need a permanent home which we cannot offer and unless an acceptable solution is found immediately real trouble with the possibility of violence lies ahead'.

This is the precise point about the removals. Resettlement in whatever form it appears - whether as betterment schemes, slum clearance, 'black spot' removal is a violent and brutal process. It usually means that people's material conditions deteriorate. The amount of money they will have to spend on building a new house, on increased travelling expenses, means



impoverishment. The trauma and insecurity of resettlement likewise has severe effects on people. The division of tribe against tribe, brother against brother, husband against wife is an effect of any forced removal. The breakdown of communities of the unity and coherence which can only grow in a situation in which people are secure, has not yet been fully explored.

What is becoming more and more clear is that these are not incidental side-effects of removal but are integral to it. In other words, removal of people is not simply a physical act, it is part of a process and a strategy that seeks to push increasing numbers of South Africa's people into ever-more remote and inhospitable areas. Areas where these people, broken and fragmented by the experience of removal and all that it means, are left to exist under conditions of increasing apathy and powerlessness.

Chief Solomon Makgato and his people have already undergone one major resettlement. The enduring effects of this and the memories of it may well be one reason why he did not have the spirit to resist being moved yet again.

Today Chief Solomon Makgato and his people are settled at Kromhoek in the Bochum area. As yet they have not been allocated arable land and the fate of their stock is uncertain. Most of the people there have begun to build mud and even brick houses, but in late February some were still living in tents and in corrugated iron houses. There is one school that has been built, but the other is still a completely corrugated iron building. The numbers of

open plots - planted with mealies by those resident - is a testimony to the numbers of people who wouldn't move, as are the zinc latrines to be glimpsed through the bush. The people at Kromhoek are suspicious of strangers. At the same time they are completely defensive about the move, making such statements as: Things are better here, we have taps.

As yet, the rest of the Batlokwa people have not moved. They are still as determined as ever in their resolve not to move. It would also seem that the government has, in the face of this militancy, back tracked. The rest of the removals have been postponed until after the report of the Van der Walt Commission on land consolidation. In addition, it was reported in the Rand Daily Mail (80.04.09) that Koornhof, while addressing the Zionists at Moria in the Pietersburg area, had said that there would be no further removals in the area.

More realistically however, Koornhof's promises in the past have contained a sting in the tail, and the numbers of cut plots at Kromhoek indicate that rather than giving in, the government is stepping back and giving itself time to devise a new and probably more sophisticated strategy. It is this which the Batlokwa people should guard against, for their stand up to now has demonstrated with force that unity is strength. It is only the maintenance of this unity that will ultimately allow them to win their struggle.

## RURAL RESISTANCE: the Matlala

IT IS COMMON in South Africa that clashes between groups of blacks, for which no apparent explanations can be easily found, are termed 'faction fights'. The term carries with it connotations of irrationality, tribalism, and unreasoned violence. All too often, however, the use of the term 'faction fight' reveals, more than anything else, the ignorance and prejudice of the writer. This article attempts to reveal the logic and the history behind one of these so-called 'faction fights'.

The Post newspaper reported on 79.12.24. that the Lebowa police had detained 56 people after the petrol-bombing and stoning of Chief BK Matlala's home in the Northern Transvaal. The report stated that this was the second attack within a week and was the culmination of a long-standing feud. The group of people who attacked the chief's home, injured his guard and caused damage to the value of R25 000 are known as the Congress People. They comprise a group who have maintained an anti-government stand for more than 30 years. They have always refused to pay taxes, allow their cattle to be dipped, or move into demarcated areas. (Post 79.12.24).

The initial petrol-bombing on December 13th was in response to the rounding up of all unvaccinated stock, and their impounding at the Seshego pound; this led to a round of murders, arson and violence that lasted until the middle of February this year.

After the petrol-bombing, 72 people were charged with public violence, but the case was postponed until March 12th because a number of the accused were either in hospital or in detention. The accused were released on R20 bail, but on December 31st an appeal was made to the Supreme Court for an order restraining the supporters of the Chief from harassing the accused. This was after Matlov Erkelina Matlala, the alleged leader of the Congress People and a relative of the Chief, was dragged from her home and nearly killed (Post 79.12.31).

There seems to have been a lull in the violence - at least that reported in the Press - until the first week in February. On Monday 4th February the first recorded organised retaliation by the Chief's supporters took place (Post 80.02.07). One man died and seven were injured when houses were razed to the ground by pro-chief members of the Matlala tribe.

Sunday Post of 80.02.10. carried a horrific story about further events in the area. It seemed that the Chief's supporters had gone all out to finally control the Congress People and that "chanting mobs of Lebowa government supporters went on a four day rampage

against the Congress People". (Sunday Post 80.02.10).

By now, many of the Congress People had gone into hiding or had fled the area while their houses were looted and razed to the ground. The Sunday Post story is illustrated by two photographs: one is of a young man covered in blood after being attacked. One of the attackers is reported to have said when questioned that "This thing is a Congress. It refuses to die. We have been hitting it but it does not die."

The other photograph is of a young man, his trousers around his neck, being led off to be beaten by a group of young people (including small children) carrying kieres.

Meanwhile, the Lebowa Commissioner of Police, Brigadier W van Zyl, denied allegations of continuous burnings and assaults. Told of photographs of the events, he replied "The police cannot be everywhere all the time. It is possible that this is happening."

It should be realised that at the same time, police were staying in tents near the tribal office and road blocks were set up at the entrance to the area (Post 80.02.11). It was also said that it was mainly Congress People trying to return to their homes who were being arrested at the road-blocks.

Assuming that one rejects 'faction fight' as an adequate explanation for the events described above, numerous questions spring to mind. How do the Congress People get their name, why have

they refused to accept any governmental authority, why should such intense violence break out at this time? The rest of this article attempts to provide some answers to these questions.

The Matlala tribe comprise the second biggest tribal authority in the Seshego area. This area seems to be one of the first places where the measures envisaged to improve the productivity of the reserves were implemented. The 1936 Trust and Land Act was followed by a statement of policy made by the Secretary for Native Affairs in which he spoke of soil erosion, over-stocking and population pressure on the land as the main reasons for the low level of productivity in the reserves. The solution devised was not a political one addressing itself to questions of unequal land distribution and the effects of a migrant labour system on subsistence and peasant farming. It was rather a technical solution. The way that the reserve population was to support itself was through a reorganisation of the land. There was to be a rigid division of the area into residential, arable and grazing areas with crop-rotation and rotational grazing to be introduced. The most central element in these Betterment schemes (as they were officially called) was the limitation of stock in an area to a stipulated carrying capacity.

"Those who refused planning are those who didn't want to be ruled by the chieftaness after the death of their chief because they didn't want to be ruled by a woman. The other reason is that they didn't want their land to



be decreased because they wanted to keep their lands and more stock and plough as much as they want. Last month we had a fight and the opposers were forced to come into the area. 3 were killed, 17 badly injured and 260 houses were burned. They couldn't claim their damages because they were not recognised by the government, but things cooled down when they agreed to stay in the planned areas. What made us to force the opposers in the area is that they used to hold secret meetings outside, and bring troubles in the area. Then people said the better way of maintaining peace is to force them to come into the area so that they could see them when they held meetings. As they started to pay taxes they hope they will start to work together now."

(An account of the Matlala unrest by one of the members of the Matlala tribal authority).

These measures struck at the very foundations of what was left of the reserve economy. It is in the resistance to these and other measures that the roots of the present Matlala violence are to be found. For the technical solutions that planning proscribed could not solve any of the problems created by the wider economic and political situation.

The division of land into three areas meant that in the majority of cases people lost a substantial amount of land. The plot which families had ploughed around their homes was restricted to between 1 and 3 morgen in a large land bloc far away from people's homes. More important, and it is here that the most sustained resistance to betterment is to be found, is the resistance to cattle culling. Cattle culling once again is a technical solution to a political problem - that

of the lack of land in reserves, as well as the measures which stopped people grazing their stock on 'white' and on crown land. The attempts to cull cattle, often the only wealth accessible to people has throughout South Africa resulted in determined resistance. So too in the Matlala area.

However, before the present troubles can be put in a full context, there is another strand that must be examined. This is the effect of the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act on the people living in the reserves. It is probable that one of the factors motivating passage of this legislation which amongst other things enabled chiefs to be deposed or instated, was the need to control those chiefs who resisted government measures such as planning. This is obviously related to the main feature of the Act which through a variety of mechanisms turned the chiefs into salaried government officials. Resistance to Bantu Authorities and to betterment are closely related and the Matlala area is no exception.

While it has not been possible to gather any information as to the precise details of what happened in the past in the Matlala area, certain clues are available. Reports such as the following from the Department of Native Affairs show clearly that the resistance in the Matlala area has a long history, and that it is ultimately related to the implementation of Bantu Authorities and betterment schemes.

The 1949-50 report of the Department

of Native Affairs states that

"Acting Chief Joel Matlala was murdered by his own people. During October 1950 a lawless section of the Matlala tribe took the law into their own hands and stoned acting Chief Joel Matlala to death. Four ring-leaders were found guilty and sentenced to death."

Again, the 1950-51 Report of the Department of Native Affairs states that

"The unrest in the Matlala location, Pietersburg, has not yet completely abated. The tribe is still without an officially recognised chief, and instigators have been deported. The attitude of the people to the administration is fairly satisfactory. Opposition to control measures, stock limitation and rehabilitation schemes is still being encountered but is more passive than in the past."

The 1952 report once more referred to the Matlala area:

"In the Matlala district in Pietersburg, notwithstanding the appointment of an officially recognised chief, certain elements continue to cause trouble. Recourse had to be made to the Governor General's removal orders under Section 5 of the Native Administration Act and a number of the more troublesome tribesmen have had to be deported."

The above fragments are tantalisingly brief, but they do nevertheless indicate clearly that the politics of the Matlala area are related to control measures, to the Bantu Authorities Act and to betterment schemes.

The fact that the unrest at that time spanned at least 3 if not more years indicates that there is a likelihood that there must have been some organisation. This raises the question of organised

political involvement, and also of why the opposition group should now be referred to as the "Congress People". There is no written evidence to indicate that the ANC were active in the area, but as in the risings in Sekhukhuneland in 1957 the links on an overt organisational level may be tenuous, but a strong possibility exists that the ANC were involved in the area.

Lastly, the question arises as to why overt violence should have broken out again last year. The immediate answer of course lies in the attempts by rangers and officials to vaccinate stock. But this begs a further question - why should the Agricultural Department have intervened in an area that according to tribal councillors had not been touched for at least 25 years?

There is an unexplained report in the Rand Daily Mail of 28th August 1978. It states that 63 Matlala tribesmen who were convicted under a wrong proclamation had their convictions and sentences set aside in the Supreme Court. The convictions had been under the Riotous Assemblies Act. This might be the beginnings of the present unrest. It certainly relates to a renewed initiative by the Department of Agriculture from 1978 both to replan areas where the original planning had fallen away, and to plan areas that have thusfar remained unplanned. It is possible to tentatively suggest that the entrenchment on Bantustan ideology and the related devolution of functions of control from central government to 'homeland' administration is one

reason why planning is again being pushed. (As the contradictions relating to the 'homeland' system sharpen - as the various Bantustan administrations find themselves dumped with an ever-increasing population of unemployed, old and starving, the need for control becomes stronger. Planning is but one of the ways to secure control, and to stifle all opposition).

The resistance of the Congress People is grounded in the attempts to prevent the alienation of both land and cattle. The ultimate effect of the Bantu Authorities Act is to turn resistance directed against the central government into a situation where the divisions and splits that they have instituted mean that two groups who ultimately share the same oppression are fighting each other. In the case of the Matlala people, both those who have accepted and those who have rejected planning share a similar material situation. The issue has become one of power, and the conflict over the past 20 or 30 years has taken on a new dimension in that support for 'Lebowa' and its structures is an issue that is increasingly important.

Lastly, while it would seem that for the moment anyway, the Congress People have been crushed, the factors which caused them to resist dispossession for so long can only intensify. Increasing landlessness, unemployment, poverty and starvation must ultimately be the material factors that will break through the ideology of 'homeland independence' and reveal to the Matlala tribesmen that their struggle

is not against each other but against the structures which oppress them.

## THE PRESS

In an enslaved state the rulers form and supply the opinions of the people. This is the mark by which despotism is distinguished; for it is the power by which despotism is begun and continued... Among the most powerful advocates and auxiliaries of these abuses we must class...newspapers.

from Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
Prospectus for 'The Watchman'  
(1796)

I AM a white journalist working on a newspaper owned by one of the four major Press groups in South Africa. I have written this article not to offer solutions to the problems faced by myself and my colleagues in the commercial press, but to pose some of those problems. I hope by doing so to generate some kind of response from those whose function has become to mystify instead of to clarify. If my perception of those problems is at fault, perhaps that too will add to an understanding of them - I am, after all, the product of my background, and that, for my entire working life, has been the commercial press in this country.



Identifying the commercial press as allies of those who rule and the institutions which enable them to do so is not so much a radical critique of the press as a tautology. Newspaper owners and managers, who ultimately decide who decides what goes into our newspapers, are no different from the owners and managers of any other profit-oriented institutions; their interests are in maintaining the status quo or, at most, changing it to meet their interests. It would be ridiculous to expect anything else from them or from their appointees, their editors.

Extending the logic downwards, it would seem that editors are equally likely to appoint their ideological allies as reporters, sub-editors etc. But there is a myth surrounding the profession of journalism - a largely media-created myth - that journalists are seekers out of truth and exposers of exploitation and corruption, that journalists are the guardians of the rights of the people.

The result is that the profession attracts not only unintentional advocates of the dominant ideologies of our society, but those who forlornly hope to challenge them.

Unfortunately, and this is where the problems of myself and my colleagues in the latter group begin, they enter a work structure tuned, through long experience to giving the least offence to the greatest number, survival of the fittest, not of the filtest.

They enter institutions where frame-

works for judging 'newsworthiness' have not suddenly sprung to life in isolation, but have grown up in the societies in which the newspaper, and more importantly, those who write and produce them, function. Recruits to the profession are therefore taught the criteria of what constitutes news and what isn't important. Their 'news sense' grows in the newsroom. 'News judgement' is not something inborn and brought in from outside, but is a self-perpetuating set of value-judgements.

Because of the necessity of daily and weekly publication, newspapers have also grown to relate only to those events that are, time-wise, reportable. Situations or conditions in a society are not 'news', they don't happen at regular intervals. Events do.

Something that happens on Monday night is reportable in Tuesday morning's newspaper. The lifestyle of migrant labourers is not. At best it is 'background' until someone releases a study of that lifestyle on a Monday night.

Of course, that someone has to fit the description of a 'newsworthy person' a member of that elite best described here as 'quotees' - but more of that later.

All of which paints a fairly dismal picture of life in a newsroom which journalists themselves would vigorously reject. The feeling that one is 'doing something' by quoting a quotee opposed to apartheid does much to alleviate other feelings of alienation from one's commodity.

It is that 'something' that I and my

colleagues do at our typewriters and computer terminals every day, and the way in which that 'something' beams out a more conservative subliminal message than anything our editors with which I am concerned here. It would be pointless to examine here the grosser aspects of racism and sexism inherent in women's pages, extra editions, racial categorisation of those in the 'news' or girlie pictures. Most of these are part of the unchangeable framework fed to us as 'that's what our readers want'.

But it is conventional wisdom that we as journalists can decide what our readers think about, not how they think about it.

The Star's recent survey of black responses to the Silverton siege shows that despite the screaming headlines of 'killer terrorists' and 'innocent victims of terror', about 90 per cent of Sowetans had a positive response to the action.

Which seems to bear out the conventional wisdom. But a couple of other examples give the lie to it.

The recent attack on Booyens police station was described by police as unprofessional, and the fact that 150 bullets and three RPG rockets were fired without hitting anyone, seems to bear this out. Which feeds another media myth - guerillas in Africa are sent in with insufficient training. To put it in context: Only one bullet in 25 000 killed anyone during the Korean war, so the Booyens guerillas weren't too bad after all, but how many journalists or their readers

knew that? They accepted the 'unprofessional' label and all that it implied.

The second example

A second example is the murder of Dr Rick Turner. Because the murder was seen as an isolated event without any contextual background by the journalists reporting on it, they accepted the preposterous claim by an unidentified telephone caller that the murder was carried out by 'the ANC and Black Power Movement'. Durban security police described the claim as 'very interesting' - and a page one lead was born. That it was absolutely ridiculous to anyone with an ounce of logic mattered not at all to the writers, subeditors and night editors of South Africa. They obligingly fed their readers an obvious lie which intruded again and again in subsequent reports of the murder, and no doubt lives on in the minds of many South Africans as fact. The papers which featured the

ANC murder claim most prominently, subsequently refused to carry official ANC denials - on the dubious grounds that they could not legally quote the ANC, although they had had no problem quoting the 'ANC and Black Power Movement' spokesman on the night of the killing.

Another example: if a newspaper reader were to read of a mine management decision to condemn over 30 miners to death by sealing them in a mine in which a fire was raging, because to allow the fire to continue would have stopped production, the reader would obviously be

horrified. A mine was in fact sealed in the Western Transvaal in 1978 to kill a fire. More than 30 black miners were left to die inside. But because the press used the opinions of the mine management as fact and said the men were doomed even if the mine were not sealed, the matter was over in three days and nobody questioned the management's decision.

Our deafening silence and corresponding public complacency on the potential dangers of Koeberg is another case in point. As is the neat categorisation of strikes, demonstrations, and riots as illegal acts by using crime reporters to report on them.

Then there is the matter of the quotes. The people we quote, more than anything else we do, puts us solidly on the side of those who benefit from this society.

It is obviously important to get the views of those who rule us. But quoting the Official Opposition? Even the most enthusiastic PFP supporter must realise that it serves little function but to legitimate the idea of South African democracy. Harry Schwartz has no effect on military policy, but we quote him on all things military. Likewise Raw. Sure the men at either end of the SADF's rifles would be more relevant? Instead of quoting pass offenders on the horrors of pass laws, we quote Suzman and Motlana, who have never had to live through those horrors.

On the Silverton siege we quoted the Institute for the Study of Terrorism, the Freedom Foundation and almost anybody else

irrelevant we could find. Only The Citizen had the initiative to actually contact the men responsible for the story, the three guerrillas (they telexed the Volkshuis building).

The way we use our quotes tells our readers that there is a group of people who have an inherent 'newsworthiness', who just are important. Their views are the most valuable we can find. And the fact that none of these quotes are challenging any of the fundamentals of our society cannot pass unnoticed. The message is clear: the most valuable views we can find are saying that the structures of this society are correct. And those views accept the value systems imposed by the oppressors and exploiters, even when disagreeing with them.

We are trying to tell our readers that these people are important, in our objective view and what they are saying is the truth. What we should be telling them is that our quotes, our definers of issues, are merely the best we can find because many of the people who would otherwise be important are banned, in jail, in exile, or part of a social stratum with which we have no contact. We should also inform our readers that there are probably many 'leaders' among factory workers and farm labourers with whom we have never come into contact, because they are not, like Motlana, on the telephone. And that there are probably dozens of labour leaders



with far greater constituencies than our quotees, but we have never met them because we rarely report on labour matters except from an employer viewpoint, and then only when there is an event - a dispute.

And that we spend most of our time in town so we don't have much contact with rural response to the system.

Of course, we don't tell our readers any of that. We imply that what we are feeding them is a valid, broad spectrum of opinion. And because of deadlines, we don't have time to define our quotees for ourselves, we leave that to our rulers. So even if South African newspapers had not recognised the Muzorewa regime, the amount of space we devoted to his mouthings implied our recognition for us. QED: the bishop was as important as a real prime minister, we implied. QED: the interim regime was valid. QED: the internal election was valid and Mugabe and Nkomo were therefore anti-democratic and thus terrorists. Likewise with Namibia and South Africa. Armed clashes are isolated, unsituated events. Guerillas attack for no other reason than that they have guns. Which doesn't mean we have to include a list of all injustices ever perpetuated in South Africa in every story we write on guerilla conflict, but we could challenge our quotees to define what they say in slightly broader terms than: Mandela is guilty of high treason.

There is a presumption in what we write and the way we write it of support for liberal, democratic principles - unless our quotees specifically deny. If

we are to give our quotees credit for that belief, we have a duty to force them, through our questioning, to live up to that belief. To allow the Koornhofs and Oppenheimers free rein to say what they like about an issue and to allow them to define the terms in which they speak about it is to allow them space to propagandise their own ideologies. It is not balance or truth.

To allow a policeman to define the terms in which we report a demonstration or a strike, is to allow him to define police action as defence of liberal, democratic principles.

Our assumptions of liberal democratic principles have been outflanked by PW Botha's 'change or die', and the upsurge of propaganda advocating 'free' enterprise.

Our stories

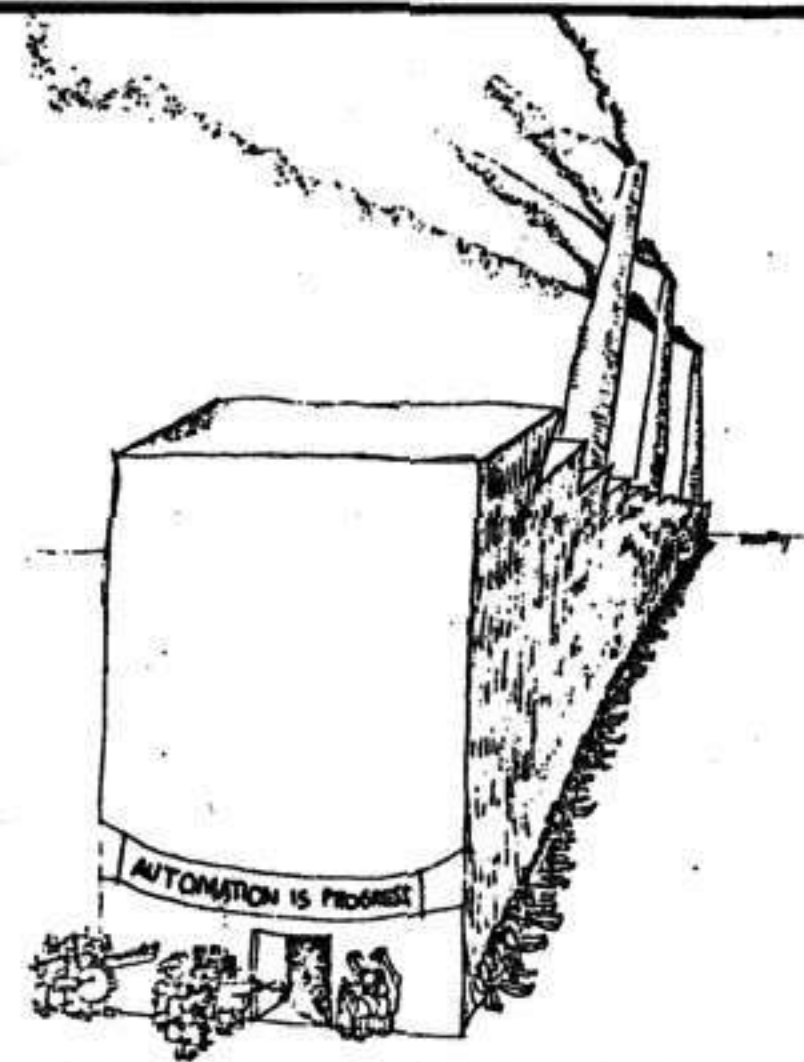
The subliminal message of our stories was that we wanted change and freedom. We've got them and we don't know how to respond to them.

We need to do more than find another, more acceptable quotee. We need to examine the presumptions inherent in everything we write or we will face the possibility in the coming years of becoming, as the journalists of Rhodesia did, active supporters of their rulers' repressive ideologies rather than what we are now, passive purveyors of those ideologies. They did not start off as Coleridge's 'advocates and auxiliaries' either, they were just journalists.

The solution is not to get out of the commercial press. We are stuck, for

better or for worse, in it. The British labour movement has not been able, despite 50 years' effort to get an alternative national paper off the ground. The history of Spark, New Age, The Guardian etc. - and the slow death of The Voice demonstrate the futility of even considering it in South Africa

The 100-odd laws that limit what we write, and the conservatism of our editorial executives, make our task more difficult, but they do not prevent it.



# AUTOMATION: control of worker and machine

THIS article is an attempt to focus attention on changes occurring in the labour process (the manner in which machines and people combine to produce items) due to the 'third technological revolution'<sup>1</sup>, which is characterised by the control of machines and industrial processes by means of electronic apparatuses. The third technological revolution is the change from mechanised production to automated production, and represents the culmination of the metamorphoses of the means of production.<sup>2</sup> It is also referred to as the electronics revolution.

Three aspects of this revolution in the means of production will be considered: The effect on labour;  
Trends in South Africa;  
Examples.

## a) The effects on labour:

Automation of production is seen by the originator of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener, as a great liberating force, in that 'it gives the human race a new and most effective collection of mechanical slaves to perform its labours'.<sup>3</sup> However, technological advances only have a liberating effect if they free human labour from degrading and

dangerous occupations. If labour is forced to compete with the mechanical slaves created by advancing technology then it is also forced to accept the conditions of slave labour.

The industrial revolution, by introducing mechanisation, devalued the strength of human labour - no human could compete against steam or electric power. Many crafts survived and skilled artisans like carpenters, mechanics, etc, were initially not threatened because their skills were mental skills to a large extent.

With the advance of technology and increasingly through the use of automated machinery, it is not only the strength of living labour that is being devalued but also the mental skills. A skilled fitter and turner can be replaced by a numerically controlled machine (to quote a machine-tool supplier: 'Wherever you go people are wanting to replace older machines with more automated machinery so they can cut down the ever-increasing problem of labour' - see Times in Industry, supplement to the Sunday Times, March 30, 1980). Office routines are computerised and skilled clerks become slaves to a machine. The survivors of each technological revolution become fewer and fewer and the remaining employment opportunities requiring an understanding of the production process is reserved for an ever-decreasing technological and managerial elite.

In 1965, at the First National Conference on Automation and Computation, the Senior Vice-President of TUCSA, Tom Murray, said '... the implications of cybernation are causing little or no concern to the

average South African worker. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of the workers, the unskilled non-White labour force, are quite unaware of the evolution of machines that will, within a matter of decades, eliminate them from the workplace'. This echoes the concern expressed by Wiener.<sup>3</sup> He found that at the level of shop steward the trade union officials often did not have the broad training needed to enter into the larger political, technical, sociological and economic questions raised by the progress of automation.

The editorial of South African Labour Bulletin of November, 1978 (4,7) mentions two aspects of changes in the labour process brought about by technological progress: deskilling of occupations, and reduction in the size of the work force. Three studies examining trends in a general engineering firm, a dairy and the furniture industry are published in the same issue. The conclusion drawn is that:

The forces that erode skills are too powerful for organisations on a craft and race basis to provide lasting protection of existing skills and privileges. The real issues at stake for the trade unions is to be strong enough to be able to bargain and exert a degree of control over the whole labour process so as to try and benefit all workers.

To this may be added that future generations of workers should not be forgotten.

While it is important to be aware of the deskilling process brought about by increasing mechanisation and automation, it is not the skilled worker who will lose most. Due to the increasing concentration of production necessitated by more capital



intensive production, the economic base in rural areas and small communities will deteriorate. The people who stand to lose most are the young, the undereducated, the unskilled workers, the laid-off workers with outmoded skills and the unemployed in those areas where economic stagnation has resulted.

Employment requirements for automation in South Africa were predicted in 1969 by GA Harvey. According to him the requirements would be:

3 530 graduates (engineers)
6 730 technicians
3 650 non-matriculants

in the period 1968-73.

The expected shortfall for non-matriculants was 364, 5 410 for technicians and 2 250 for graduate engineers. This shows the expected trend as automation is increased, ie more skilled labour is required, and explains the continual demand for skilled labour by industry. This trend does not change as industrialisation progresses and in the EEC countries the rate of change of employment in the period 1969-73 had decreased to 0,72 while the rate of change in output was 5,39. This means that fewer people are required in production, but that at the same time more is being produced.

Linking this trend to the employment requirements listed above indicates that as automation is introduced the demand will be for skilled labour, but the skills required will be those needed to service and maintain the ever more complex machines. The skilled artisan who was in the frontline of production will be replaced by an automated production process under the control of an unskilled machine operator. Employment opportunities

will also show a relative decline as productivity is increased.

Often the skills required will be new skills making skills acquired previously obsolete.

b) Trends in South Africa:  
In order to compete on international markets and to attract investment capital, South African industries must manufacture according to international standards and at costs competitive with those of the advanced capitalist countries. To meet these requirements the local manufacturing techniques must be in line with those of the advanced countries.

Modern manufacturing techniques are increasingly being automated, the reasons for this being:

- i. To increase the control of management over the production process, and, therefore, over labour;
- ii. To eliminate the human element in manufacturing.

Increased control means better planning and the elimination of time-wasting and unproductive procedures.

By eliminating the human element in production higher and more consistent standards can be maintained. In short production runs the costly retaining of labour is eliminated.

Clearly modern industry is capital intensive and not labour intensive. For South African industry the drive to modernise appears to be a contradiction due to the large scale unemployment and availability of a cheap labour supply. The South African industrialist would hesitate before

modernising, as a labour-saving machine is only used if its cost is offset by the saving in labour costs and the increased productivity due to its use.

The South African state regards international trade links as strategically important and would encourage an increasing integration into international trade - this requires modernisation of South African industries. The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions represent some responses by the state. In particular the creation of the National Manpower Commission (NMC) can be seen in this light. Its principal functions will be:<sup>6</sup>

- i. to analyse the overall manpower situation by research into the design, planning and modernisation of manpower programmes;
- ii. to keep a close watch on developments on the international labour front;
- iii. continually to evaluate the application and effectiveness of labour legislation and practice.

In general the recommendations of the Commissions will have the following effects:

- i. create a stable urban labour force which will be in a privileged position relative to migrant labour;
- ii. encourage the training of labour to meet the demands of modernisation. For this to be viable a stable labour force is necessary. This would mean higher pay for those included in the overall plan, but productivity would be higher;
- iii. removal of the unemployed and under-employed from urban areas.

The state's response is to co-opt a section of the black labour force by sharing

the prosperity generated by increased productivity with them.

c) Examples:

Three main areas of automation can be identified:<sup>4</sup>

i. Electronic Data Processing (EDP)

In this area electronic computers are used for processing of information in the insurance, banking and other mainly clerical branches of occupation. Many clerical and secretarial functions, even in smaller businesses, are being taken over by mini-computers or electronically controlled machines.

The main benefit to management does not derive from automation of routine clerical duties but from the information processing capabilities of electronic computers. EDP provides management with a source of information enabling them to exercise greater control over their organisations, increasing efficiency and productivity.

ii. Process Control

This is used in direct control of the production process in industries like - petro-chemical (the most advanced application); pulp and paper industry - these have been increasingly automated and the expected expenditure on automation over the five years 1969-73 was R16,15-m; ore retrieval in mining, steel rolling mills and the metallurgical industries.

iii. Advanced mechanisation or small scale automation

In this field automation is being introduced into sectors which traditionally have been labour intensive.

Such industries are ones in which batch production has dominated over flow line production. Productivity has been low because of poor machine utilization. Two examples are the metalworking industry and the garment industry.

In metalworking numerically controlled machines are replacing skills held by skilled machine operators. The latest generation of these machines are extremely flexible and use micro-computers to control operations. These machines are less expensive today than their predecessors of ten years ago and are suited to batch production because of the greater flexibility inherent in computer control.

The clothing industry is characterised by low capital costs and high labour intensity. Changing fashions and the complexity of production have precluded the design of purpose built machines. The micro electronics revolution is changing this and self programming robot arms are being produced for use in cutting. Layout of patterns on the cloth to minimise wastage has been computerised (eg at the Edger's factory at Tongaat). In fact a visit to a multinational owned factory (eg Hang Ten) will show that in the garment industry the competitive edge is no longer labour costs but technology employed.

The introduction of automated production and control processes is based on the electronics revolution. Labour is not only effected in industries which are being automated but also in industries producing equipment for automation. A striking example is the manufacture of electronic

telephone exchanges. In the UK in changing over from electro-mechanical to electronic exchanges over 90% of the work force employed on the production of electro-mechanical exchanges was made redundant.

Wherever electronic circuits are used in equipment they are designed for ease of maintenance and repair. So-called skilled electronics 'engineers' or 'technicians' are often people with no more than a month or two's training. Their skills consist of using diagnostic aids to trace a possible fault to a particular sub-module (unit) which is replaced. The faulty module is either repaired by a small workshop staff, or else thrown away as scrap. A typical example of this is the television receiver repair business. This does mean that a country can use high technology techniques without ever building up the basic skills, and this leads to greater dependency on sources of these skills like multinational companies and expatriates.

Another example of skills being devalued through the use of electronic circuitry is in the watchmaking industry, or in South Africa, the watch repair industry. Digital electronic watches should last a lifetime with only periodic battery replacements required. Repairs are not worth the cost due to the ever decreasing prices. Watch *repairers could therefore be of ever less relevance.*

Further examples of automated production are briefly listed:

- computerised electronic weighing at SA Titan Products. 'This will not be an operatorless plant... It cuts down on the amount



of operator skill required to ensure smooth and efficient operation' (Pulse, August 1974).

- supervising control system at East Driefontein gold mine reduction plant. Computers accomplish the tasks of plant state sensing, status display, switching motors and providing the operator with access to the plant (Pulse magazine, December, 1974).
- control of a hot strip mill at ISCOR (Pulse, December, 1974).
- quarrying. Monegrove quarry in Port Elizabeth where computer controlled weigh-bridge is used to control invoicing and stores records as well as keeping a record of the truck fleets.

#### Conclusions:

The main aim of this article is to create an awareness of the implications of the electronics revolution.

Trade unions in South Africa should familiarise themselves with production trends in industries in the advanced countries as well as the response of trade unions in those countries to such changes.

SM

#### References:

- 1) E Mandel: Late Capital (Verso, 1978) page 120.
- 2) K Marx: Grundrisse (Penguin, 1973) page 692.
- 3) N Wiener: Cybernetics (MIT Press, 1961).
- 4) GA Harvey: 'Skilled Manpower Survey for Automation in South Africa' (Third National Conference SACAC, 1969).
- 5) S Jacobson: 'Microelectronics and the Third World' (Wireless World, March 1980).
- 6) South African Labour Bulletin, volume 5, numbers 2 & 4.

# THE NATURE OF POLITICAL TRIALS

DO 'political trials' take place in the courts of South Africa? State prosecutors deny it vehemently, claiming that trials involving people charged under 'security legislation' are criminal matters; government ministers have objected to the category 'political prisoners' being applied to people convicted in such trials, and at least one Supreme Court judge threatened to report an advocate to his Bar Council for referring to a trial as 'political'.

Yet a strong case can be made that, at very least, trials held under 'security' legislation (especially the Terrorism Act, Internal Security Act and 'Sabotage' Act) do have features which distinguish them from more conventional 'criminal' trials, eg. murder, theft, fraud and so on. A number of these features spring to mind fairly readily:

1. In the vast majority of 'security' trials, accused persons are held in police detention for lengthy periods of time prior to being charged and appearing in court. Provision for such detention is made in, inter alia, the General Laws Amendment Act of 1966 (14 days), the 180 detention clause, and section 6 of the Terrorism Act, which allows for indefinite

detention under virtually limitless police control of detention conditions.

Accordingly, accused persons in 'security trials' have usually been in police custody for a long time - often the whole duration of the investigation against them - before appearing in court. In criminal matters, evidence is usually gathered against a person prior to his or her arrest; on arrest, the accused is usually charged within 48 hours and even if not granted bail has access to friends, family and legal advisors.

In a situation of lengthy detention and interrogation, an accused person is under strong compulsion to assist the police in gathering evidence against him or her, as well as against others who may eventually be charged in court, or used as witnesses.

2. The next major feature distinguishing 'security' from 'criminal' trials is the question of evidence led in court against an accused. In almost all security cases, alleged accomplices of the accused are detained for lengthy periods, and placed in a position of helping the police to build up a case against the accused (a person may be detained until he or she has answered all questions to the satisfaction of the police). Once the accused has been charged, and it has been decided to use accomplices as witnesses, those accomplices may be, and usually are, held in custody on order of the attorney general. When such a witness is brought to court to give evidence against the accused, he or she arrives in court

directly from custody, and is effectively in police detention until the moment they enter the witness box.

Normally, a witness in a trial is not required to answer questions which incriminate him/her in the commission of an offence; if, however, the state requests the presiding judge or magistrate to warn such a witness as an accomplice of the accused, all questions put to the witness must be answered in full, including ones which incriminate the witness. If, at the conclusion of the trial, the presiding judge or magistrate is satisfied that the witness answered all questions fully and truthfully, the witness will be granted an indemnity against prosecution by the state in respect of the matters he or she testified on. This procedure can be called into use for state witnesses only, and excludes people giving evidence for the defence.

Accomplice evidence may be used in any trial, and indeed is used on occasion in non-security matters. However, the procedure is most commonly found in 'security' trials, primarily because of the manner of police investigation of such matters, ie detention of all suspects, as well as others who may possess information relevant to the trial.

The very scale and frequency of the use of accomplice evidence differentiates 'security' from 'criminal' trials.

3. Another fairly regular feature of security trials, which occurs much less frequently in criminal matters, is the tendering of 'confessions', made by accused

people while in police custody, as evidence. The number of people in security police custody who fully confess to serious offences, including the undergoing of military training outside of South Africa, possession of arms, explosives and ammunition, and membership of banned organisations, is remarkable. On occasion, police take people in their custody to magistrates to make these 'confessions'; other times, the statements are made directly to policemen. (The former procedure makes it slightly easier for the state to have such confessions admitted as evidence in court).

The scale and regularity of such confessions distinguish the 'security' and the 'criminal' trial. One can speculate that these confessions are made so regularly because of detention provisions which allow police such a large degree of control over a suspect; certainly allegations of assault, torture and maltreatment are more regular in 'security' matters than in 'criminal' cases where the power of the police over a suspect is more limited.

4. It is very unusual for a person charged with a security offence to be granted bail while awaiting trial. The attorney general of the province in which the trial is to be held is granted the power to refuse bail in any of these sorts of matters, and this is now done as a matter of course. The attorney general or his representative need not explain why bail is being refused; the mere handing in to court of a certificate signed by the attorney general

is sufficient to keep an awaiting trial person in custody.

In 'criminal' matters, accused people are usually granted bail, even in the case of serious charges like murder, rape and armed robbery. If the state wishes to oppose the granting of bail, it has to lead evidence showing why bail should not be granted; the accused may attempt to challenge this evidence, and show why bail should be granted. The presiding judicial officer then decides whether the accused should be released on bail or not. In the majority of cases, bail is granted, and the state often declines to oppose the granting of bail.

As explained above, the procedure is very different in the case of security trials.

5. Security laws themselves differ appreciably from criminal law. The Terrorism Act, for example, created offences retrospectively: while the act itself only became law in 1967, it was expressly made retrospective to 1962. In other words, acts committed between 1962 and 1967 which were lawful at the time can be charged as Terrorism in terms of the retrospective clause of that law.

The Terrorism Act, under which the vast majority of security trials take place, also differs from criminal law in that it covers acts committed outside of the borders of South Africa (it is extra-territorial), a prosecution can only be brought under this act with the express permission of an attorney general, and in certain circumstances, the onus of



proof is altered. Usually, the state is required to prove beyond reasonable doubt that an accused is guilty of an offence. Under the Terrorism Act, the state has to establish a case against the accused only on the face of things (*prima facie*), is superficially. Once this has been done, it is up to the accused to prove that what has been established is not an offence. (This is a complex section of the Terrorism Act, and has been deliberately oversimplified here).

Finally, both the Terrorism and 'Sabotage' Acts, as well as sections of the Internal Security and Explosive Acts, provide for minimum sentences if an accused is found guilty. In the case of the Terrorism and Sabotage Acts, this is 5 years, no part of which may be suspended.

The provision of minimum compulsory sentences is unusual in the case of criminal law, but common in security trials.

6. Trials held under security legislation differ from criminal matters in another important respect: that of evidence led by the state. It is common in security matters for state witnesses to give their evidence in camera, behind closed doors, with the public excluded and the press forbidden to disclose the names of certain witnesses. It appears that a sufficiently large section of the South African public considers that there is a stigma attached to the giving of state evidence in security trials for the state to be concerned about the safety of its witnesses. This is by no means the case in criminal trials,

which are generally fully open to the public and press.

7. Even once an accused has been found guilty in a 'security' trial, he or she is treated differently from people convicted in criminal matters. They are jailed separately from other prisoners (black men on Robben Island, black women at Potchefstroom or Kroonstad, white men in a special section of Pretoria Central). A person convicted of a criminal offence is liable for parole or remission of sentence, and it is unusual for such a prisoner to serve his or her sentence in full. Those convicted under security legislation serve their sentences in full to the day, and no parole or remission of sentence is considered.

Finally, it has recently been ruled that prisoners serving sentences under security legislation may not study beyond matriculation level unless special permission is granted. This is not a ruling applicable to other prisoners.

---

All of the features listed above show that a clear distinction exists between the 'criminal' and the 'security' trial; when one adds a further factor, namely that of the motivation of accused people, the distinction reaches its clearest.

As a general statement (to which there are of course exceptions), the individual criminal is motivated by personal interest - gain, revenge, profit and the like. (This motivation does not, however, establish the reason for crime itself,

which has to be looked for in the very structure of a class-divided society).

The person tried under security laws is, on the other hand, usually motivated by some sense of idealism, a vision of a new and better society, affiliation to a political movement, a strong sense of outrage or grievance, a programme aimed at changing society, or a combination of these factors. The political 'offender' is someone working to change reality according to a plan or programme, and utilising specific tactics or strategies.

The distinction between the 'criminal' trial and the 'political' trial - for such trials there are in South Africa - is then established. It should also be clear why the state wants to attach the label 'criminal' to the political trial. As a recent study argues,

"....we must take account of the role which criminalisation - the attachment of the criminal label to the activities of groups which the authorities deem it necessary to control - plays in legitimising the exercise of judicial control..... (T)here is something appealingly simple about the 'criminal label': it resolves ambiguities in public feeling.....Crime issues are clear cut; political conflicts are double edged.....Hence the 'criminalisation' of political and economic conflicts is a central aspect of the exercise of social control. It is often accompanied by heavy ideological 'work', required to shift labels about until they stick, extending and widening their reference or trying to win over one labelled section against another."  
(Policing the crisis: mugging, the state, and law and order. S Hall et al, MacMillan, 1978:189-190).

It is precisely this dynamic which is behind the ongoing conflict over what to call certain categories of political activists - 'terrorists', 'guerillas', or 'freedom fighters'. The state's attempt to label activity as 'terrorist', even when no act of violence is envisaged, or where violence is directed against state or strategic property, is part of the process of 'labelling' certain sorts of activity, and thereby giving it the atmosphere of the criminal, rather than the political.

Ultimately, the question of whether certain sets of trials in South Africa are 'criminal' or 'political' is not really a legal question, nor one of careful definition; the question rather directs one to realise that there are conflicting interests at play, adopting different labels in an attempt to legitimate their world views and programmes on how society should be reshaped, and who should be shaping it. These are the real issues behind the distinctions between the political and the criminal, the legitimate and the illegitimate.



# COURTS

## TERRORISM ACT TRIALS.

Ally Kholisile Lumkwane (22), David Dumisani Maduna (20), and Bonginkosi Patrick Maisela (24).

Charge: Three counts under the Terrorism Act.

Count 1 alleged that between September 1976 and June 1979, Lumkwane (accused number 1) underwent military training in Swaziland, Mocambique, Angola and/or the Soviet Union. Lumkwane was also alleged to have recruited Sydney Gumbi, his 2 co-accused (Maduna and Maisela), as well as three people listed as Alpheus, Biseau and Jack, for military training.

Maduna and Maisela were accused of undergoing military training in Mocambique during January/February 1979.

Count 2 dealt with the alleged activities of the accused, in co-operation with the ANC and/or its military wing, Umkonto we Sizwe.

Lumkwane was alleged to have trained various people, including Maduna and Maisela, for the purposes of guerilla warfare; all 3 accused were charged with planning to kill or injure people, and cause damage to government and private property. These allegations related inter alia to a planned attack on the Dobsonville police station, and a mission to Whittelsea in the Eastern Cape, where the local magistrate and police station were to be attacked.

Count 3 dealt with the possession of arms, explosives and ammunition, including TNT, plastic explosives, hand-grenades, SHE sub-machinegun and cartridges.

According to the summary of facts which the state intended to prove at the trial, Lumkwane left South Africa in September 1976 and joined Umkonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC. After having been trained, he agreed to recruit people in South Africa for military training, and to assist in their future training.

He crossed the South African/Swaziland border on various occasions between October 1978 and June 1979. On one of these occasions he brought explosives with him, and buried them at Jeppes Reef, which is a border post between the two countries.

During January/February 1979, Lumkwane recruited Maduna and Maisela for military training. The three travelled to Mocambique via Swaziland, where Maduna and Maisela underwent military training. Lumkwane assisted in their training.

They returned to South Africa in February 1979 in possession of arms and ammunition which they buried in a spruit near Mofolo, Soweto. Shortly afterwards, Lumkwane took another party of ANC recruits out of South Africa, returning on about June 22nd 1979.

He took up residence in an outbuilding of a Dube house in Soweto, and assumed the identity of Sydney Gumbi, who was one of the recruits he had taken out of South Africa for training. He carried false documentation in support of this false identity. He stored two handgrenades in a disused refrigerator in the outbuilding which he was occupying.

Lumkwane was arrested at this Dube house on June 28th 1979; after having been handcuffed he managed to escape, but was re-captured



after a chase.

After his arrest, Lumkwane pointed out a spot to police at Jeppes Reef, where explosives were found buried. Guns and ammunition were pointed out to police by all three accused in Soweto.

During July 1979, Lumkwane demonstrated the construction of a home-made explosive device to the police; in August, he demonstrated his familiarity with the assembly and operation of an anti-aircraft gun to an officer in the South African Defence Force.

The trial opened in the Kempton Park Supreme Court on 18th March 1980, before Justice van Dyk. Lumkwane, the first accused, pleaded guilty to undergoing military training, and possessing arms and explosives, but not guilty to recruiting people for military training, as well as all the allegations contained in count 2. Maduna pleaded guilty to undergoing military training, and possession of arms and ammunition, but not guilty to the allegations set out in count 2.

The state accepted the plea of Maduna and Maisela, including the not guilty plea tendered on count 2; Lumkwane's plea of not guilty relating to the recruitment of others, and the count 2 allegations, was not accepted by the state. The evidence led in the trial accordingly dealt only with those allegations which Lumkwane had pleaded not guilty to.

The first four witnesses called by the state were relatives or friends of the people allegedly recruited by Lumkwane. Their evidence was of a mainly formal nature, establishing that the people recruited had disappeared from

their homes suddenly, and had not subsequently been seen. In addition to this the father of Sydney Gumbi (whose identity Lumkwane assumed on returning to South Africa) testified that a reference (pass) book made out in the name of Sydney Gumbi contained an identity photograph of someone other than his son Sydney.

The state's next witness was Lieutenant Adrian Pieter van Nieskerk, a member of the security police, John Vorster Square, and investigating officer in this case. He told the court that he had previously been involved in investigating the case against James Mange, an ANC guerilla who received the death sentence in the recently concluded Treason Trial held in Pietermaritzburg (see Work In Progress 10 and 11 for details of this trial).

On the night of 27th June 1979 he and a large number of police surrounded house 1840 Dube, in Soweto. They searched the outside rooms, and there found Lumkwane, who claimed that his name was Sydney Gumbi, and produced a reference book made out in that name to substantiate his claim. Lumkwane was arrested.

Van Nieskerk then continued to search the Dube house, but on hearing a noise, went outside. He realised that Lumkwane had attempted to escape, but was recaptured after police opened fire on him.

On taking Lumkwane to John Vorster Square, he admitted that his MK (Umkonto we Sizwe) name was Felix. Van Nieskerk knew of that name from his investigation of the James Mange case, where three people had planned an attack on the police station and magistrate's court at Whittelsea, Eastern Cape. Of the members of the group, Mange had been known as

David Mbale, Petrus Kwadi was known as Rasta, while the third member was Lumkwane (Felix).

The main evidence against Lumkwane was contained in 2 brief statements he made to a magistrate shortly after his arrest, and a longer statement made to the police some time later. In these statements, Lumkwane admitted inter alia that he had planned missions to attack the Dobeonville police station, and the local magistrate's court at Whittelsea.

On the basis of the evidence led, the pleas tendered by the accused, and the statements made by Lumkwane, all accused were found guilty under the Terrorism Act: in Lumkwane's case, this related to all 3 counts, while Maduna and Maisela were found guilty on two counts (undergoing military training, and possession of arms and ammunition).

After the defence had led evidence in mitigation of sentence, given by Professor B. Helm, director of the school of social work at the University of Cape Town, the following sentences were passed by Justice van Dyk:

Lumkwane received 6 years on each count, is and effective sentence of 18 years.  
Maduna and Maisela were sentenced to 5 years on each count, to run concurrently, is an effective sentence of 5 years.  
(Kempton Park Supreme Court, 80.03.28).

Jeremiah Kgokong Majatladi (23), Thami Gerald Mkwanzazi (38), Ronald Ephraim Mamoepa (18), Lebogang Christy Rokone (18), Petrus Karel Senabe (22), Andrew Moeti Phela (18), Deacon Sikibela Mathe (22), Cornelius Mapheti Leeuw (18), and a 16 year old youth.

Charge: Terrorism. Certain of the accused in this trial had been detained previously by security police; for example, Ronald Mamoepa was held in detention between May and July 1978, and again in May 1979 in connection with a petition to spare the life of ANC guerilla Solomon Mahlangu.

Christy Mokone and Petrus Senabe were detained in 1978, and in June of that year were charged with sabotage, together with Anancia Molepo and Lucas Bodiba. This trial dealt with a petrol-bomb attack on the home of an Atteridgeville school principal during February 1978, and it is thought to have been an anti-Bantu Education attack. All 4 were found guilty on alternate counts of arson and assault, and were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, and 6 lashes.

On June 1st 1979, police swooped on a number of people resident in the Atteridgeville township, just West of Pretoria. At least 5 youths and a journalist were detained in these raids: Thami Mkwanezi, attached to the Post newspaper was arrested while on a press assignment in Pretoria, while Andrew Phala, Khanda Masango, Petrus Senabe, Ronald Mamoepa and Christy Mokone were detained in Atteridgeville itself.

Mkwanezi, a senior member of the writers' Association of South Africa (WASA) at the time of his detention, had been arrested twice previously by BophuthaTswanan police; on one occasion he was charged with several others for attending a meeting convened by the Human Rights Congress (HRC), but was acquitted. Subsequently, the HRC was banned by the Mangope administration.

Early in 1979, while investigating wage

levels in the Babelegi industrial area, Mkwanezi was arrested by BophuthaTswanan police and charged with 2 other Post staff members; charges were eventually dropped.

Amanda Kwadi, Johannesburg social worker and fiancé of Mkwanezi was detained on June 4th, presumably in connection with this case. After 193 days in detention, she was released in mid-December, 1979.

While in detention, Mkwanezi was taken by security police to Post's Pretoria offices. There his desk was searched, and photographic negatives of a number of youths were confiscated. After some 30 days in police custody, Mkwanezi's family were permitted to send him clean clothing for the first time.

Prior to the appearance of the accused in court, Zwelakhe Sisulu, president of WASA, and a journalist on the Sunday Post, was subpoenaed in terms of section 205 of South Africa's Criminal Procedure Act. This section empowers a magistrate to question any person about information in their possession which relates to a possible offence.

Sisulu was, according to the subpoena, required to answer two questions relating to telephone conversations allegedly held with Mkwanezi. The first question dealt with a conversation held on 23rd May 1979, when Mkwanezi spoke to Sisulu about 7 black youths wanting to leave South Africa because they had become 'tired of the persecution'. Mkwanezi allegedly told Sisulu that the youths would leave a press statement and photographs behind in South Africa for publication after their departure.

The second telephone conversation allegedly took place 3 days later, on May 26th.

Here, it was claimed, Mkwanezi told Sisulu that the forthcoming boxing match between Kallie Knoetze and John Tate at Mmabatho, BophuthaTswana, would be disrupted. He referred to a 'contact' of his, who was the ex president of the banned (in BophuthaTswana) Human Rights Congress, and who would ensure that the mission would be carried out.

On 6th August 1979 Sisulu appeared in front of a Pretoria magistrate, but refused to answer the questions put to him. He was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment, but released on bail pending an appeal. At the time of writing, this appeal was still to be argued in the Supreme Court.

The 9 accused in this trial first appeared in court on 27th October 1979 - approximately 5 months after being detained. They all faced charges formulated under the Terrorism Act. The state alleged that they had recruited others to leave South Africa for military training with the intention of overthrowing the government by violent means; certain of the accused were also charged with conspiring to undergo military training themselves.

The trial began in the Pretoria Regional Court on 10th December 1979, before WF Krugel. A witness called by the state, Captain Frederick Nel of the security police, testified that the state was holding 9 witnesses in police custody, while a further 2 were not detained. One of those not held had been assaulted and threatened by several unknown youths. In trials of this nature, according to the witness, it was increasingly common for state witnesses to be threatened,



and on occasion even killed. The state accordingly applied for the case to be closed to the public, and requested that the names of witnesses be kept secret. This application was granted by the presiding magistrate.

One of the first witnesses called by the state testified that Majatladi (accused number 1) had told him that Mkwazi had said that there was a man in Ga-Rankua who organised for people to go for military training. Mkwazi had also asked youths intending to leave South Africa to pose for photographs which he hoped to publish once they had left the country.

Another state witness testified that the military training contemplated by the accused was to be organised by the ANC. He had been approached by Mamoepa (accused number 3) on 23rd May 1979 on the question of military training. He was then taken to the Post newspaper office at the Pretoria News building, where he found Mkwazi and 5 other youths. Mkwazi noted the names of the youths present, and told them that they should return the next day to have their pictures taken. He also told them that arrangements had been made for them to undergo military training.

After a 16-year old called by the state refused to give evidence, testimony was given by members of the security police on the tapping of the telephone of Post newspaper in Pretoria. Conversations between Mkwazi, Majatladi and others were placed before the court, dealing with people leaving the country for military training, photographing such people, and taking a statement from them to be publicised once they had safely left

South Africa.

Certain of the accused gave evidence in their defence. They denied that they had planned to leave the country for military training, but were rather attempting to avoid police detention. Police often detained students shortly before the June 16th anniversary, and they had feared detention. Mkwazi had photographed them so that, if they were detained, the press would be in a good position to run a protest story on detention without trial.

In judgement, the presiding magistrate rejected the defence version, and found that Majatladi and Mkwazi had conspired to arrange transport for a group of 18 people to leave the country for military training; the other accused were found guilty of either being recruited, or recruiting others.  
Sentence: Majatladi and Mkwazi - 7 years.  
The other 7 accused: - 5 years.  
(Pretoria Regional Court, 80.03.11).

Bhekizitha Oliver Nqubelani (28).

Charge: 4 counts of Terrorism. The trial of Nqubelani arose out of the planting of a bomb in the Cape Town Supreme Court during May 1979. A cleaner discovered the bomb, and took it to a foreman who, in handling it, set off the detonator but not the bomb itself.

The substance of the charges against Nqubelani were that  
+he left South Africa, joined the ANC, and underwent military training in Botswana and Angola;  
+in June 1978 he re-entered South Africa from Botswana armed with a Makarov pistol and ammunition;

+he left South Africa again between 9th and 12th April 1979, and travelled to Botswana where he received instructions from the ANC, and obtained explosives for the manufacture of a bomb;  
+on April 28th he returned to South Africa, reconnoitered the Cape Town Supreme Court building, made a bomb, and placed it in a toilet of the Supreme Court on 15th May 1979.  
+subsequent to his arrest, he distributed a letter to prisoners at Pollemoor Prison which encouraged them to join the ANC and undergo military training.

The trial opened in the Cape Town Supreme Court on 5th March 1980, before Justice Howard of the Natal Bench. Nqubelani pleaded guilty to all charges, except the one relating to the letter circulated in Pollemoor prison. However, the state requested that the trial proceed as if Nqubelani had pleaded not guilty, as a possible death sentence was envisaged, and his guilt should be proved in the normal manner.

Evidence led by the state claimed that the bomb placed in the Cape Town Supreme Court was capable of killing or severely injuring people in the immediate vicinity. It was also claimed that the ANC instructed its militarily-trained members to eliminate judges, magistrates, security policemen and state witnesses.

The state's most important witness, referred to as 'Mr X', was warned by the judge as an accomplice. He testified that in September 1976 he left South Africa, and travelled to Tanzania via Botswana and Zambia. In Tanzania he spent 8 months at a camp, where he underwent physical and political training.

Subsequently, he travelled to Angola,

where he spent a further 14 months in the Funda training camp. He met Nqubelani in this camp. After completing his training, he entered South Africa near Zeerust, but slipped away from the rest of his group and gave himself up to the police. He then led the police to the rest of the group, where a gun battle took place, and a guerilla was killed. (It is thought that one of the guerillas in this group, Tladitsagee Moses Molefe, escaped but was subsequently arrested, and appeared as the second accused in the Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial. At the conclusion of that trial, Molefe was sentenced to 18 years for Treason, plus a further 12 months for contempt of court. If this is the incident referred to by 'Mr X', then the guerilla killed was Richard Mapatla, alias Patrick Opa Tawa, and details of the clash appear on page 42 of Work In Progress number 10).

'Mr X' testified that the ANC had 4 training camps in Angola: Funda, the camp he and Nqubelani were in, housed between 500 and 600 ANC guerillas.

Verdict: Guilty on all counts, ie

1. Planting a bomb in the Supreme Court;
2. Undergoing military training;
3. Possession of explosives;
4. Circulation of a letter at Pollemoor prison encouraging others to undergo military training.

Sentence: The presiding judge accepted that Nqubelani had left the country in an emotionally vulnerable state, and that the trigger was the atmosphere at Fort Hare University after the death of Steve Biko. He had been moved by idealism in his decision

to involve himself in the activities of the ANC, and for these reasons, the judge decided that the death sentence was inappropriate. For placing the bomb, Nqubelani was sentenced to 12 years; undergoing military training - 8 years; possession of explosives - 8 years; Pollemoor letter - 5 years. Because certain sentences were ordered to run concurrently, the effective sentence was imprisonment for 20 years. (Cape Town Supreme Court, 80.03.10).

A 17-year old youth.

Charge: Terrorism. The accused is alleged to have recruited a person for military training, as well as undergoing training himself in Lesotho between March 1978 and January 1979; he is further alleged to have returned to South Africa after receiving training with the intention of endangering the maintenance of law and order.

An 18-year old former Orlando High School student testified that during May 1979 the accused asked him if he was interested in going to Lesotho for preparatory training, subsequently going on to West Germany for further military training.

The accused claimed that a statement made by him to a magistrate while in custody was the result of police torture. When he denied knowledge of firearms to the police at John Vorster Square, he was taken to a place known as the 'truth room' or 'waarkamer', and told to strip.

"When I was naked, one of the police officers brought in a bucket of water and

emptied it over my head. Then a wet grey balaclava was pulled over my face and some instruments were clipped to my ears.

"Someone switched on an electric current, and I thought my head was going to burst. I lost consciousness....."

The accused claimed that, after further torture, he was left for a night in a cell, and then told to make a statement to a magistrate. "A sergeant told me....that if I did not repeat to the magistrate what he was going to tell me, I would be subject to the same treatment (as before)...."

The statement made by the accused to the magistrate admitted that he had undergone military training while in Lesotho. When the trial continues, the presiding magistrate will rule on the admissibility of the accused's 'confession'. (Johannesburg Regional Court, 80.04.02).

Frederick B Phillips (27), Roger A Schroeder (25), James V Issel (45), and Clarence W Johnson (24).

Charge: Terrorism, alternatively arson. The state claimed that, by burning down a hall in Worcester during 1978, the accused endangered the maintenance of law and order in South Africa.

A member of the Coloured Representative Council (CRC) had hired the hall for a meeting to discuss the new constitutional proposals. According to the presiding magistrate, there were people opposed to these proposals, and they had formed themselves into an anti-CRC movement. The hall had been set on fire in an attempt to break up the meeting.

Phillips and Schroeder alleged that



statements they made to a Worcester magistrate shortly after their arrest were as a result of assaults by security police members. They were detained at 5pm on 19th June 1979, and made their 'confessions' in the early hours of the following morning.

A doctor who examined Schroeder found a bruise mark on his spine was likely to have been caused while he was in detention.

Verdict: Phillips and Schroeder guilty of arson;

Issel and Johnson not guilty.

Sentence: Phillips and Schroeder - 3 years. (Hermanus Regional Court, 80.03.13).

Kedibone Christopher Mathabe (21), Colin Makgalo Kotu (23), Simon Mashigo (19), and Elias Modiga (19).

Charge: Terrorism, with alternative charges of arson, public violence, attempted murder and malicious damage to property. The accused, all members of the Soweto Students League (SSL) are alleged to have set fire to a Soweto school on 16th August 1978; incited others to set fire to the house of a school principal in Sebokeng, near Vereeniging; and organised riotous activities at the funeral of Robben Island prisoner Johannes Matsobane.

Mathabe, the first accused, alleged that a statement he made to police shortly after his arrest was as a result of several assaults carried out by security police: on three occasions a wet canvass bag was pulled over his head and he was assaulted, kicked, punched and struck with an instrument like a sjambok. As a result of these assaults, he collapsed three times. A magistrate called as a witness by the defence testified that when Mathabe was

brought by police to him to make a statement, he told him that he had been assaulted with a sjambok. The magistrate said that he saw 6 weals on Mathabe's back, and his evidence was confirmed by a court interpreter who was present when Mathabe was taken to the magistrate.

The presiding judge, Justice DJH le Roux, ruled that Mathabe had lied to the court on the assaults, and that the magistrate was an unreliable witness. The statement taken from Mathabe was accordingly accepted as a confession, admissible against him as evidence.

Both state and defence have now closed their cases in this matter, and the court is currently adjourned for argument. (Kempston Park Supreme Court, 80.03.27).

Renfrew Leslie Christie (30).

Charge: 7 counts under the Terrorism Act, with alternative charges under the Atomic Energy Act, the Internal Security Act, and an allegation of theft of a document.

Christie, holder of a doctorate for a thesis on energy in Southern Africa, was detained in Cape Town on 23rd October 1979, and held under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act until his appearance in court on 3rd April 1980. It is alleged by the state that, during 1978 and 1979, Christie supplied information on South Africa's energy situation to the ANC, the International University Exchange Fund (IUEF), an ANC official named Frans Ginwala, and South African exile Horst Kleinschmidt.

The preamble to the charges levelled against Christie states that the African National Congress is an unlawful organisation committed to the overthrow of the South African state, and that Christie was an active supporter of the ANC. It is further stated that the International University Exchange Fund (IUEF) has, as one of its objects, the overthrow of lawful authority in South Africa. Christie, it is alleged, intended to make available information on all aspects of energy in South Africa to the IUEF, its director (Lars-Gunnar Eriksson), the ANC and one of its office-bearers (Frans Ginwala), and to Horst Kleinschmidt, an official of the International Defence and Aid Fund.

Specifically, it is claimed that Christie obtained information as to what regions the Atomic Energy Board regarded it as seismologically safe to explode nuclear devices within South Africa, and transmitted this information to Eriksson by letter during February 1978.

It is further alleged that Christie attempted to remove a drawing of the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station from the Electricity Supply Commission Library, as well as a report entitled "Public Reaction to the Introduction of Nuclear Power and the Influence of Public Relations Techniques", and attempted to send this material to one of the people or organisations named in the preamble to the indictment.

Further charges related to alleged inspections of the Duvha Power Station, near Witbank, and the Kriel Power Station near Bethal, with the intention of obtaining information to send to the ANC, IUEF and/or

its office-bearers, and the obtaining of drawings entitled "Flow diagram, Camden Power Station", and "Electrical Diagram, Camden Power Station".

It has been announced that Captain C Williamson, South African police spy who infiltrated the IUEF and became its deputy director, will be a state witness against Christie in his trial, which begins in the Pretoria Supreme Court on 19th May.

Wellington Vikile Gumenge (23), Paul Khumalo (32), Wandile Abila Dayile (24), Fikile Ernest Mohali (19), Vusumzi Kenneth Zibanda (18), Wandile Goodman Gcokazi (19), Lizo Zwelinzina Kula (18), and Aba Xhego Dayile (18).

Charge: Terrorism. The accused are alleged to have attempted to leave the country for military training, and to have robbed a van driver of R330.

During the trial, it emerged that police falsely told the family of Zibanda that he had been shot dead while trying to cross into Botswana, and that his body would only be released once they had made a satisfactory statement about him.

While in detention, Zibanda was taken to a magistrate to make a 'confession', but told the magistrate that he had been hit on the leg and stomach with a plank, and his head hit against a wall by a Constable Lokwe. (Port Elizabeth Regional Court, 80.03.13).

INTERNAL SECURITY ACT TRIALS.

Dupa Setenane Gerald Segone (21).

Charge: 2 counts under the Internal Security

Act. The accused, head prefect of Orlando West High School and matriculation student until his detention in September 1979, was charged with furthering the aims of the ANC, and recruiting members for the same organisation.

A confession made by the accused while in police custody was accepted as evidence against him by the presiding magistrate, although Segone claimed he had made it after being assaulted by security police at John Vorster Square.

Verdict: Guilty of being a member of the ANC, and furthering its aims.

Sentence: 3 years. (Johannesburg Regional Court, 80.03.12).

Anit Kupper (19), Gregory Zinn(19), Sue Myrdal (21), Chrispian Oliver (21), Sarah Cullinan (19), Claire Moore (19), Michelle Solomons, Gavin Edwards (19), Sarah Ward (19), Richard Goode (18), Vernon Katzopoulos (19), Chris Giffard (19), and a 17-year old.

Charge: Internal Security Act. The accused, all students at the University of Cape Town, were arrested while distributing pamphlets relating to the 'release Mandela' campaign. (Cape Town Magistrate's Court, 80.03.28).

Ncimbithi Johnson Lubisi (28), Petrus Teepo Mashigo (20), Naphtali Manana (24), Ikanyeng Moses Molebatsi (27), Hlollile Benjamin TaU (24), Phumulani Grant Shezi (24), Jeremiah Radebe (26), Boyce Johannes Bogale (26), and Thomas Mngadi (29).

Charge:The accused all face one count of High Treason, 2 counts of murder, 21 counts of attempted murder, and 1 of robbery with

aggravating circumstances. There are also 4 alternate counts formulated under the Terrorism Act. The accused, all allegedly guerillas of the African National Congress (ANC), are charged with responsibility for the siege at a Silverton Bank where two hostages were killed, and an attack on a police station at Soeknekaar earlier this year. It is not necessarily suggested that the accused were personally responsible for these two attacks, but that they are criminally responsible through conspiring with the African National Congress, and various of its members or supporters.

The accused are also alleged to have undergone military training under the auspices of the ANC.

The trial of the accused begins in the Pretoria Supreme Court on 2nd June 1980.

CONTRAVENTION OF BANNING ORDERS. (Internal Security Act).

Lawrence Ntlokos (22).

Charge: Contravention of his banning and house arrest order. Ntlokos, probably the youngest person to be restricted in South Africa, is confined to the Krugersdorp magisterial district. The state alleges that on 1st April 1980 he was arrested outside a cinema in Fordsburg, Johannesburg, thereby contravening his restriction order.

The matter is due to be heard in the Krugersdorp Regional Court on 18th May 1980.

Fr Patrick Smangaliso Mkhathwa (38).

Charge: Contravention of his banning and house arrest order. The state alleges that Mkhathwa,



who is confined to his house in Soshanguve between 6pm and 6am daily, accepted visitors at his house on two occasions during June 1979; this, it is alleged, constitutes a contravention of the accused's restriction order.

Mkhathwa was banned and house arrested at the beginning of May 1977; a Catholic priest, he is attached to the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference. (Pretoria Regional Court, 80.03.06).

Dan Qeqe.

Charge: Contravention of his banning order. Qeqe, an executive member of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) until he was banned at the end of February 1980, was restricted at the same time as Thozamile Botha, Phalo Tshume, and Post Journalist Mono Badela.

He has now been charged with leaving the Port Elizabeth magisterial district on 3rd March, thereby contravening his restriction order. (Port Elizabeth Magistrate's Court, 80.03.11).

Rev David Russell (40).

Charge: 11 counts of contravening his banning and house arrest order; possession of a banned book, namely 'Biko' by D. Woods; and distributing or publishing a document entitled "Crossroads residents personal accounts of conditions during the period of arrest following the September 1978 police raids".

The majority of the contraventions of his restriction order relate to Russell's decision to travel to Grahamstown to attend

the Anglican Synod meeting there.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: 4 1/2 years, of which 3 1/2 years were conditionally suspended for 5 years. This is an effective sentence of 1 year.

An appeal has been noted against sentence, and Russell is currently on bail. (Cape Town Regional Court, 80.02.28).

#### APPEAL PROCEEDINGS.

Nto Mitta Maphike (45).

As reported in WIP 8 (page 45), Mitta Maphike was convicted under the Terrorism Act, and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. In her trial, which took place in the Johannesburg Regional Court, she was found guilty of recruiting 5 people for military training during February 1978.

She appealed against conviction, and in December 1979, after serving 9 months of her sentence, the appeal was successful, and she was released. (Pretoria Supreme Court, 79.12.12).

#### TRIALS IN 'INDEPENDENT' BANTUSTANS.

Alpheus Mophi (23), Karabo Modibe (18), Alpheus Kungwane (20), Gerald Seabelo (20), and Emmanuel Madibe (29).

Charge: Contravention of BophuthaTswana's Internal Security Act. The accused are alleged to be members or supporters of the ANC, and to have possessed pamphlets which furthered the aims of the ANC. (Gdi Regional Court, 80.02.25).

Sabata Dalindyebo (51).

Charge: Transkei's Public Security Act. The accused is leader of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party in the Transkei. The charges related to a political meeting addressed by the accused on 30th July 1979, where he was alleged to have claimed +that he was superior to Kaiser Matanzima in tribal politics, and would therefore always be superior; +that Matanzima had accepted 'independence' on the terms of the 'white Boers'; +that Matanzima, the State President, was free, but his people were not; +that the Transkei was a pigsty.

Verdict: Guilty on one count, ie violating the dignity or injuring the reputation of the 'President' of the Transkei by saying that +the President visited Pretoria and accepted independence on terms dictated to him; +the President had an abundance of the necessities of life while his people lived on excreta; +the President maltreated his people. Sentence: R700 (or 18 months), of which R200 (or 6 months) was conditionally suspended. (Port St. Johns Supreme Court, 80.04.01).

#### GENERAL TRIALS OF INTEREST.

Dorothy Clemishaw (57).

Charge: Possession of banned publications. The accused, secretary to banned priest David Russell, was alleged to have possessed "I write what I like" by Steve Biko, and the "Rioter's Digest", produced by students at the University of Cape Town, both publications being banned for possession. The publications

were found in her house during the course of a security police raid.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: R100, or 1 month. Mrs Cleminshaw declined to pay the fine, and was taken into custody. Subsequently, friends paid the fine, and she was released.

(Perow Regional Court, 80.03.28).

Sibongile Susan Mthembu, Feziwe Bookhalane, Elizabeth Nhlapo and Dorothy Nyembe.

Charge: The accused, all political prisoners held at Potchefstroom Female Prison, have been charged with disobeying prison regulations. According to the charge sheet, when ordered to go to cells by a wardress on 1st March 1980, they refused to do so.

Bookhalane, Nhlapo and Nyembe are serving sentences under the Terrorism Act, while Mthembu was convicted of sedition.

Stanley Vilakazi, Moses Mhlangu, Paulus Mhlangu, Jacob Mhlangu, Miempie Vilakazi, Thembe Nonyane, Hilda Vilakazi, and Willem Mhlangu.

Charge: Public Violence. The charges emerge from a series of clashes between a 200-strong crowd and police near Hendrina, Eastern Transvaal, on 29th December 1979.

Evidence led is that the clashes broke out after police drove into an old man after breaking up a gambling game. The crowd, enraged at the incident, attacked police, who responded by opening fire, wounding one of the accused (Stanley Vilakazi).

(Ermelo Regional Court, 80.03.24).

Andrew Borraine, Richard Goode, Andre Krask, Chris Russell and Andrew Thompson.  
Charge: Production of undesirable publications. The accused, either officials of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), or students at the University of Cape Town, are alleged to have produced or published publications which were subsequently declared undesirable by the Publications Board. The publications involved are, inter alia, "SRC NEWS", "National Student", and "Bona Fide".

Bishop AK Shembe.

Charge: Contravention of the Riotous Assemblies Act. The accused, leader of the 200 000-strong Shembe church in South Africa, was charged after a gathering held at Inanda, Natal, on 17th January 1979. The state alleged that he had attended, addressed and convened a meeting prohibited in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act.

Verdict: Not Guilty.

(Verulam Magistrate's Court, 80.03.12).

Terence Charles William Meehan (45).

Charge: Official Secrets Act. The accused is a British citizen and ex-employee of the Atlas Aircraft Corporation. The charge related to theft of documents, and removal of military documents from a prohibited area without permission.

Meehan was arrested and charged attempting to leave Jan Smuts Airport in November 1979, when documents were discovered in his suitcase.

The trial was held in camera, and no further details of charges are able to be

reported.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: R1 500, or 300 days.

(Kempton Park Regional Court, 80.02.28).





# 'Jo the Cow' comes home



EARLY in April, it was reported that Jordan Ngubane, ex ANC and Liberal Party member, had returned to South Africa from exile and joined Inkatha as editor of its newspaper, The Nation. His return to South Africa was apparently negotiated by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, who told the press that it had taken almost 3 years to persuade Ngubane to return home, where he had previously been declared a prohibited immigrant.

"He is going to be very valuable in the days ahead now that we are beginning to see the beginning of real talks in this country" said Buthelezi.

"It is wonderful to have him back. He will be a concrete demonstration of a link between the founding fathers of the African Liberation movements and our own efforts in Inkatha."

The return to South Africa of Ngubane is indeed an event of some interest, and

needs to be contextualised in terms of his history of involvement in South African political movements.

Born in 1917, he initially established his reputation as a journalist on Ilanga lase Natal, often writing under the pseudonym 'Jo the Cow', and subsequently working on the Bantu World and Inkundla ya Bantu.

Influential in the founding of the ANC Youth League together with Anton Lembede and AP Mda, he co-authored the Congress Youth League Manifesto of 1944.

Fiercely anti-communist, Ngubane strongly resisted what he saw as a communist influence on the ANC, and Luthuli's willingness to accommodate the left wing of the ANC led to a bitter conflict between the two men.

Increasingly Ngubane moved away from the ANC, and in the mid 1950s joined the Liberal Party, eventually being elected national vice chairman. In April 1959 he attended the inaugural convention of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and thereafter was believed to be a supporter of the PAC, rather than the ANC.

Arrested in 1961, he was charged under the Unlawful Organisations Act, but acquitted. During 1963, Ngubane fled to Swaziland, moving to the United States in 1969.

Ngubane's career is an interesting one, spanning the formation of the ANC Youth League, the Africanist conflict in the ANC over the role of whites and communists in the liberation struggle, the formation of the Liberal Party and the PAC, exile, and now his return to South

Africa, and involvement in Inkatha activity.

Generally perceived as an Africanist, and fiercely anti-communist, Ngubane's membership and active involvement in the Liberal Party is interesting. There are, of course, certain similarities between the Africanist position, and that of liberalism - especially the tendency to ignore or dismiss the question of class divisions in capitalist society, coupled with a thorough-going anti-communism. It is perhaps these factors which led Ngubane to seek a home in the Liberal Party, and subsequently associate himself with PAC, rather than ANC policies.

Ngubane's latest book, "Conflict of Minds" bears certain similarities to one tendency in the black consciousness position: he perceives conflict in South Africa as between the Afrikaner 'collective mind' and the African collectivity, with he sees as uniform, cohesive and part of a collective consciousness. It is these elements of black consciousness ideology which Ngubane embraces which make his association with Inkatha so interesting, given the conflict between Inkatha and the organised elements of the black consciousness position.

No doubt, Inkatha supporters will argue that Ngubane's membership of Inkatha shows that black consciousness as an ideology is compatible with Inkatha. That may or may not be the case. It can however not be claimed, as the Star newspaper of April 7th does, that Ngubane is a "Senior ANC Man", nor has he been so for several decades.

# ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP: a brief history

alexandra  
your sons are exiled  
to boxhouses  
of diepkloof  
meadowlands  
tembisa  
but always  
they return  
to your guttered streets  
to your squeezed yards...  
(from Back to Mama by M Gwala)

ALEXANDRA was originally conceived as a 'European' township, but in 1912 the Alexandra Township Company Ltd decided to resurvey the land and lay it out for Africans and Coloureds. It was established as a 'Non-European' township where blacks could acquire freehold. During the next 75 years blacks lost all their rights as urban dwellers and so by 1963 Alexandra was the only township in the so-called white areas where blacks could acquire land in freehold.

The first attempt to abolish Alexandra came in the form of a resolution of the Johannesburg City Council, passed in January, 1943. They regarded Alexandra as a slum, as a refuge for criminals and a menace to health. Besides, Alexandra was rather close to some white areas. However, the City Council did not have the power to remove Alexandra.

Until 1958, Alexandra had been administered by an Alexandra Health Committee, which put it in a rather unique position of self-

government. This Committee was an agency of the Transvaal Provincial Council and had, at one stage, as its chairman, Abraham Fisher, the Communist Party leader. But in 1958 the Peri-Urban Health Board took over.

By 1958 Alexandra had a population of 98 000. The Peri-Urban Health Board planned to create a township of 30 000 families and 15 000 (mainly males) living in hostels. There was no suggestion of interference with the rights of standholders.

After 1958, however, pass and influx control laws were strictly enforced. A census was taken - people who had lived in Alexandra since 1950 or before were given permits to remain. Those who came after 1950 were allowed to remain for as long as they were employed. People who were temporarily away, lost their rights to live in Alexandra. Many however continued to live in Alexandra illegally.

The world of Alexandra came crashing down in March, 1962, when the state announced that family accommodation was to be eliminated and 8 hostels housing 2 500 people each were to be built. 'Single' men and women living in Randburg, Sandton, and in the 'locations in the sky' (servants' quarters on top of blocks of flats) would be accommodated in the hostels. Families were rehoused in Meadowlands, Diepkloof, and Tembisa as well as being endorsed out if they were unemployed. During 1963 and 1964 more than half the population of Alexandra was moved out.

The announcement by the state to change Alexandra into a hostel town immediately preceded the passage of the Better Administration of Designated Areas Act of 1962. This

Act, which was first applied to Alexandra, gave greater powers of control to the state to administer the township.<sup>1</sup> Gone was the autonomy of the 1940s and 1950s (as we have seen recently in the case of Crossroads, a community free from restricting Acts is able to develop strong local organisation capable of resisting the authorities).

After the initial spate of removals, fewer removals occurred in Alexandra in the next decade. The 'illegal' population continued to increase as life was made progressively more difficult for them in other Rand townships.

## RESISTANCE

WHEN considering the removals in Alexandra there are two questions which have to be asked. Firstly, why were the removals not as systematic and conclusive as for example, in Sophiatown, and, secondly, what kind of resistance did the people of Alexandra offer to the removals and how effective was this resistance?

Successful bus boycotts and active participation in ANC political activity in the 1940s and 1950s, and the PAC in the later period, give us some indication that Alexandra had been a strong and united community. The bus boycotts were able to elicit support from all classes in the community and were true models of community political action. The power of the boycott movements can be explained by the complexity of the community and the absence of outside control. Like the bus boycotts the threat of removals also provided an area of collaboration between different classes within the black community. Thus it was important for the state, if the removals were not to be



resisted, that local organisation be inhibited and control increased.

When the removals began in 1962 the major black political organisations, the ANC and the PAC, had been banned and their leaders detained or silenced. The state had shown its power and intolerance to opposition at Sharpeville and subsequently. This would partly explain why a campaign similar to that organised by the ANC to oppose the Sophiatown removals did not occur.

In other ways too, the capacity for Alexandra as a community to resist state action was declining. Control was increasing and the cohesiveness of the community was on the decrease. Some pointers are given: In 1958, Alexandra was taken over by the Alexandra Peri-Urban Health Board, who had greater powers than did its predecessor, and by 1962 control had increased even more. The passage of the Better Administration of Designated Areas Act introduced Alexandra to all the features of control that characterised other black townships.

The number of migrants relative to the number of families living in Alexandra was also increasing every year. Migrants were not only housed in hostels but also in rooms in and among family housing. Probably regarding themselves as temporary sojourners, they were relatively unconcerned about the future of Alexandra, and acted at least as a non-unifying factor, and at worst as a source of friction. Furthermore, especially after 1965, the families living there were mostly 'illegals'. Some did, perhaps, not regard themselves as permanent residents, but rather

regarded Alexandra as a stop-off place until they could find alternative accommodation.

However, many did not move on.

When the Resettlement Board demolished houses they did it in such a way that it could have made mass resistance difficult to organise. They did not demolish houses, or remove people, block by block or within a specified time period. Because of incompetence, shortage of funds, and lack of alternative accommodation, the complete demolition of Alexandra was constantly delayed and, instead, the township became more and more overcrowded. The insecurity felt by some of the inhabitants must have been immense and so probably little hope or determination, necessary for resistance, existed. This insecurity was perpetuated through frequent raids. In addition, since basic services were not carried out and since many families lived in one or two rooms, some people would probably have preferred to have been moved to a three or four roomed house in another area.

However, this did not mean that resistance did not occur. The newspapers reported numerous incidents of individuals or families who fought the authorities for the right to live where they choose. Many more incidents were probably not regarded as newsworthy by the press,<sup>2</sup>

Individual acts of resistance may have stalled removals to an extent, but there were other factors that help to explain the delay in implementation. Firstly, there were reports of inadequate funds for compensation landowners as well as to finance the demolition and transportation of the people. Secondly, one must look at the demand for labour from Alexandra.

Industry had expanded rapidly in the last 15 to 20 years in Wynberg, precisely because of the close proximity of cheap labour. Workers did not have to undertake long and expensive bus or train journeys. So while people in the nearby white residential areas may have been resentful towards the 'black spot', there was little determined pressure from them to get Alexandra removed. Industrial interest favoured the idea of their workers living in Alexandra, as did the expanding commercial world in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Thirdly, ever since the 1960s, there has been an acute housing shortage for Africans on the Witwatersrand, and while this factor may not have worried the authorities very much, it did not make the task of removing people easier. Alexandra was like a permanent squatter camp - within each yard illegal tin shanties had been erected which only made things more complicated for the authorities.

HOSTELS

THE original plan for Alexandra, mooted in 1962, was to demolish all family housing and to build 12 single-sex hostels having a total of 32 000 beds. Seven of the hostels would be for men and five for women. Each hostel would house 2 500 people. Hostels were not a new idea in the history of government thinking on how to house their labour force, but a whole city of hostels was.

The first two hostels opened on the 1st August, 1972. The men's hostel had 2 600 beds and the women's 2 800.<sup>3</sup> In 1966 the state had passed policy to get rid of the 'locations in the sky'. Those south of the Houghton Ridge were removed to Diepkloof Hostel and those

north of the Ridge were expected to fill the Alexandra hostels.<sup>4</sup>

Hostels are repressive institutions designed specifically to house workers at the lowest cost and with the highest possible control. They hardly take into account the needs of the 'inmates' and so it goes without saying that dissatisfaction and discontent existed. Resistance to hostel accommodation and conditions was manifested in at least two ways.

Firstly, women, especially, were reluctant to become hostel dwellers. They tried by every means possible to find alternative accommodation in other townships, illegally in Alexandra, or in white Johannesburg. Consequently the women's hostel was never filled. Women were less prepared to enter the hostels than men since they often had children to support in Johannesburg and so were not necessarily temporary sojourners in the urban areas. Some women who did enter the hostel would frequent the shebeens in Alexandra in an attempt to pick up non-hostel males to escape hostel life. So desperate were some women for a roof over their heads together with their children (children could not stay at the hostels) that they would stay illegally in Alexandra and repeatedly pay admission of guilt fines when raided by the police. Others remained in houses about to be demolished and would move on again and again when the bulldozers came.

Secondly, in March, 1973, the hostel women sent a deputation to Dr Browde (City Councillor in Johannesburg) to complain about hostel conditions.<sup>5</sup>

The removals to the hostels did not go

without a public outcry, especially as many of the people affected were domestic servants. A Citizen Hostel Action Committee, which had originally been formed to fight the removal of domestic servants from white Johannesburg, was resuscitated and held a public meeting. Its members consisted of people from the churches, the Progressive Party and from the Black Sash. The Committee tried to inform the public about the disasters of hostel living and seemed to have caused enough of a public outcry to evoke government promises about heating and recreational facilities. They also organised a petition and a deputation to the Minister of Bantu Affairs and Development.

The inadequacy of heating facilities was a major complaint that featured every winter for about three years. In 1974 Dr Browde formed a 'Friends of Alexandra Hostel Fund' which campaigned for heaters and money from the public, as well as asking the authorities to supply heaters. In response to noises made by the public, P Janson, Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, acknowledged that mistakes had been made in the establishment of the Alexandra hostels. However, a month earlier he had also said that hostels were a 1 500 % improvement on the Alexandra slum.

While it is admirable that the citizens of Johannesburg formed a Citizen Action Committee or contributed to the Friends of Alexandra Hostel Fund, a word should be said about the effect on political action or resistance when liberal groups pick up worker issues. These groups focussed on issues such as insufficient heating or the lack of

recreational facilities in isolation, instead of posing first and foremost a challenge to the whole hostel system. Because of this they were implicitly accepting the hostels as acceptable institutions and would regard their cause as won if heating was provided or the Minister had ceded a point or two. They functioned not to challenge the existing structure of labour supply, but rather to iron out difficulties between employers and the government. After all, worker productivity can only be low if they froze the night before, and there is no way of knowing what mischievous activities workers could get involved in if recreational facilities were not provided. So hostel dweller resistance was co-opted to become a secondary conflict between employers and the state, rather than a fundamental conflict between workers and the state as representative of the interests of capital in general.

#### REMOVALS IN THE 1970s

DURING 1973, the now renamed Board for the Development of Peri-Urban Areas started once more to move families out of Alexandra and to demolish their houses. Only families who 'qualified' legally were being rehoused.<sup>6</sup> However, many families did not qualify. Many husbands and wives held single permits instead of family permits, while others were not registered at all. The Black Sash have alleged that the authorities issued wives and husbands with single permits as a device to prevent them from qualifying for family housing. If a child's name was not included on his/her mother's permit, he/she had no official existence. The authorities would



also refuse to include the child's name.

If both husband and wife were in legal employment but were holding single permits, they were told to separate and stay in sexually segregated hostels. To wives who were unemployed, with or without dependents, the state ultimatum was - go to the homelands and take your dependents with you. To a woman who did have employment but did not qualify for a house (eg, single women, widows and divorcees) the state said, 'live singly in the hostels in Alexandra and send your children to the homelands or go with your children to the homelands'. Three quarters of so-called 'single women' in the Alexandra hostel had children. Many of the women no longer had ties with the 'homeland' areas, and there was no official reply to the women's question: 'Where must we send our kids?'.<sup>7</sup> When the children were sent away they lost their rights as urban dwellers and would become migrant labourers. If they remained in Alexandra or moved to another urban township they would be regarded as 'illegal' or 'undesirable' when they grew up and would experience immense difficulties in getting jobs. They would also be subject to constant police harassment when they turned 16 since they would not be able to get a reference book.

FREEHOLD title owners have always been a minority in Alexandra but at one time there were 2 500 freehold title owners. Since 1963 the number has been decreasing due to expropriation by the state. However, expropriation was slow until 1974. The authorities (now the West Rand Administration Board - WRAB) ordered all stand owners to

vacate their properties by the beginning of 1975. They were allowed to remain tenants until WRAB could find them alternative accommodation. WRAB made little attempt to do so. There were many complaints from landowners that they had to wait months for compensation and that when compensation was paid it was insufficient. WRAB officials also raided houses and deposited furniture on the street, but after an appeal to the Supreme Court this was halted. With the tactic of eviction denied to them, WRAB began to demand that rentals from sub-tenants be paid not to the owners but to them. They also moved people out of rooms let by standowners. By doing this they deprived owners of their livelihood and they were forced, through economic necessity, to sell their land to the WRAB.

1976

PLANS for a reconstructed Alexandra were again 'formalized' in August, 1976. This had become a necessity because the shortage of accommodation for migrant labourers was becoming acute and even employers were being affected. In 1975, WRAB had given permission to at least 16 private companies to erect prefab hostels in Alexandra. The conditions in these prefabs were as bad or worse than in the WRAB hostels. They were regarded as temporary constructions until new hostels were built.

However, for more hostels to be built, more people would have to be moved. In September, 1976, WRAB announced that about 3 000 single permit holders would have to move to City Deep Hostels. Their present accommodation would be demolished and new hostels

would be built for them. The move would be for about two years. All family permit holders would be moved to Soweto and coloured families to Evaton. About 2 500 families would be affected. Removals began again in November.

Two major problems arose for the people affected by the forced removals. Firstly, most worked near Alexandra and were no longer able to get to their places of work cheaply and quickly. Secondly, it had been official policy for the last decade not to issue family permits. Married couples who applied for family permits were issued with single permits. In addition, due to the housing shortage, many married couples lived in single quarters. Consequently many married men were moved to City Deep Hostel. While the authorities continually denied that the removals were disturbing family life, when Rev S Buti and the Alexandra Students' League opened a bureau they had soon tabled 1 000 cases of affected families. After a meeting on the 12th December, between Buti and WRAB officials, all removals and demolitions were suspended for one month. During this period families were given the opportunity to establish their status with the necessary documentation.

The situation worsened when the conditions at City Deep Hostel were exposed. The City Health Department declared this accommodation unfit for human habitation, and WRAB moved the men to Lefaleng Hostel in Soweto. This was even further away from their place of work. Many men went back to their families or went to live illegally in the white suburbs.

Removals and demolitions were planned to start again in January, 1977, and WRAB promised that no more families would be split.

However, one wonders how many families could provide the necessary documentation to prove that they were married. 'Illegal' families were still told to split and the unemployed women told to return to the 'homelands'.

When a house was vacated it was demolished. However, at the end of February, it was reported that WRAB had started repairing partly demolished houses to accommodate families who had been left homeless, ie those who had been registered on single permits although they could prove they were families. This rather absurd, but also tragic act, can perhaps be understood by a look at the contradictions that WRAB was faced with. Government policy said demolish, remove and create a hostel town. Yet there was nowhere on the else on the Rand that the residents of Alexandra could move to. Houses were no longer being built at a rapid rate in Soweto and Tembisa, and the waiting lists in these areas were also lengthy. The same situation existed in the Alexandra coloured community. After floods in 1976, coloured people from the flooded Kliptown moved into houses in Evaton which had been earmarked for Alexandra families.

The dogmatic removals of people who already have houses is a feature of the more irrational quality of apartheid. However, in recent years there have been attempts made to streamline the apartheid policy, and it was only to be a matter of time before Alexandra too would be reconsidered.

1979

THE year 1979 seemed to be the year of doom for Alexandra. In March, Vosloo, Deputy Minister of Plural Relations, announced

that the remaining 4 000 families in Alexandra would be moved as soon as funds became available.<sup>9</sup>

Since 1976 there had been an increase in political activity in the townships. Initiated by the students during the 1976 uprisings, some of the initiative had been taken over by churchmen and other leaders in the community. However, students remained active - for example, in 1977 the Alexandra Students' League, together with Sam Buti, set up a bureau to help people affected by removals, and also ran a survey. The involvement of students on issues such as housing points to the importance of material issues for all sectors of a particularly deprived population. In October, 1978, an Alexandra Residents' Liaison Committee was set up. Prominent on the committee was Rev Sam Buti.<sup>10</sup> Understandably, the first issue to concern the Liaison Committee was housing; they appealed for family housing and suggested that flats, similar to those at Mitchell's Plain in the Cape, be built.

The Alexandra Residents' Liaison Committee (ARLC) had talks with Vosloo in February and he agreed that the committee should become formalized. He also agreed to elections in April, which would be similar to those for the Soweto Community Council. They had more meetings with Vosloo, and even submitted plans for the redevelopment of Alexandra together with the results of the socio-economic survey they had conducted in the township.<sup>11</sup>

On the 7th May, 1979, it was announced that elections would be held on the 16th of that month. However, a more important announcement was made the following day in

Parliament. Vosloo announced that Alexandra families would not be moved out and that the township would become an urban area for families. WRAB would be instructed to conduct a survey of all residents to establish which families would qualify to stay in the redeveloped township - the ominous implications of this will be discussed later.

There was, according to the press, general jubilation. There was talk of a R200-million plan of turning the area into a high-density suburb with duplex flats, shopping centres and a giant sport stadium. Organisations such as the Urban Foundation promised financial assistance.

Due partly to the reprieve there was a relatively large amount of interest in the Liaison Committee elections than had been the case in other townships. The election was for 6 seats - another 4 seats would be nominated by the Department of Co-operation and Development. Two parties contested the election - the Save Alexandra Party and the Save Alexandra Residents and Tenants Party. The differences between them did not seem great. The SAR&TP wanted the hostels changed into flats for occupation by families, while the SAP wanted to retain the hostels for the meantime. Perhaps more significant were the personalities involved in the election. Rev Buti, leader of the SAP, and his fellow contestants, were much more well known in the community. Rev Buti had helped people during the 1976 removals. The campaigns included meetings at the stadium, poetry readings, music and modelling shows.

Voting started on the 16th May and according to the press there was a rush to



vote. Residents qualified to vote if they were over 18 and possessed either a residential permit, an ownership permit, a housing certificate, or a hostel certificate, as well as a receipt to prove that he/she was up to date with rent payments. The press said that the elections were well supported by the young. The booths were apparently so crowded that voting was extended by another day.

All the candidates of the SAP were elected by a large majority. The election poll was said to be 46%. However many questions remain to be asked about the election.<sup>12</sup>

#### WHY?

WHY did it appear so important to the government to destroy the Alexandra community, and which considerations stayed its hand at the last moment? An important function of apartheid is to retain within urban areas only as many africans as are required for the labour needs of white South Africa, and to remove the old, unfit and unemployed to the 13% of the country comprising the 'homelands' or 'independent states'. With this objective in mind, some 2 million people have already been uprooted and relocated, some of this number coming from Alexandra.

In the urban areas the state has attempted to house as large a percentage as possible of the labour force in well controlled hostels. However, unfortunately for the state there were a large number of africans who had lived in the urban areas for so long that they no longer had any rural ties. The government has attempted to make these people as rightless as possible in urban areas, while encouraging them to take out 'homeland' citizenship. And so, in Alexandra freehold

rights were removed. Family housing in urban areas has been provided, but is well controlled and segregated. Alexandra was not particularly conducive to control for reasons we have discussed above - and so the authorities desired its removal.

There were, of course, other reasons given to explain the removal of Alexandra, eg it is a 'black spot' and health hazard. However, we must be careful to distinguish between real reasons and ideological cover-ups. Alexandra was to have become a hostel town and would still have constituted a 'black spot'; in fact this 'black spot' was very desirable for the industries which had developed around the township. But the reasons for Alexandra's removal need not necessarily be explained by economic determinants. Ideology in South Africa has a momentum of its own and there is considerable economic irrationality in the dogmatic pursuit of complete segregation in urban areas. Alexandra was to a certain extent a victim of this ideology. The change of policy in 1979 is perhaps a return to a more rational path.

Why in 1979 did the government reverse its decision concerning Alexandra, especially since they had attempted so hard for so many years to remove the place? While one may answer that it was as result of Sam Buti's appeals and actions, the real reasons go far deeper.

To understand the reason why Alexandra was saved, together with communities like Glenmore and Crossroads, let us look briefly and rather crudely at the South African political economy in 1979. In the last decade or so there has been a structural trans-

formation of the South African economy, and monopoly capitalism has become dominant. This has had a wide range of repercussions on areas such as employment, capital intensity, trade, the division of labour, government and ideology. Unemployment had increased in the 1960s despite a growth in the economy and has become a structural feature, a fact even the government is now coming to terms with. In the labour process, africans are increasingly occupying semi-skilled positions. There is a growing identity of interest between business and the state, and the traditional cleavages along the lines of nationalisms are becoming less significant.

South African capitalism has thrown up a whole series of contradictions and the rather unique capitalist structure is going to have to change to survive. So while there may be some superficial changes being made to apartheid there are also some far reaching, more genuine changes being made to alter South Africa from a race to a more overtly class orientated society.

South Africa's strategy for change, or 'total strategy' as PW Botha has termed it, involves five different areas. Firstly, there is an attempt to mobilize all of South Africa's resources which includes the co-ordination of private and public sector activities, and the civil action programmes of the army in the rural areas. Secondly, there is the building up of a strong military force, going hand in hand with a growing militarization of our society. Thirdly, there is an attempt to give people vested interest in the status quo. There has at least been a recognition of the permanence of the urban black

population, and efforts are being made to make the lives of this group easier and so to create an urban elite. Fourthly, those landless and unemployed that are not incorporated into the power structure are identified as the potential enemy and are tightly controlled. They are dumped into rural areas with no means of escape. It is important to bear in mind that the relative privileges granted to urban africans are at the expense of intensified impoverishment in the rural areas. The urban unemployed are resettled in the rural areas. And fifthly, there is a new flexibility as regards racial domination; so long as class domination remains. For South Africa to maintain essential links with imperialist powers she can no longer afford to have the image of a totalitarian state with deaths in detention, bulldozing of houses and other seemingly irrational actions.

Yet despite state repression, resistance is growing and the state and capital are working hard to undermine it. And so they defuse potential flashpoints such as Crossroads, Glenmore and Alexandra which might become focuses of political mobilisation and struggle. This simultaneously improves South Africa's image abroad. This new flexibility is simply there to undraccut resistance and has no effect on the millions of other victims of removals, resettled less conspicuously.

It seems that although Alexandra has not received as much prominence as Crossroads or Glenmore it has also become the subject of Koornhofs new 'flexibility'. Once the state is committed to permanent urban residential rights for africans, and is concerned with

creating an urban elite, the old motives for demolishing Alexandra fall away and instead it becomes important to co-opt Alexandra and put it under the same degree of control as other african residential townships. Because Alexandra was always meant to 'be going', the provision of controls such as wide roads, police stations, strategically planned open spots, as well as Urban Bantu Councils or Community Councils did not exist. Many people were able to live illegally and with their families more easily in Alexandra than in other Reef townships. Coloured people, as well as some members of other racial groups were able to live in an integrated community with little racial friction. The 'informal sector' could also thrive.

The strategy for Alexandra is to recognize it as an urban residential area and use it as a powerful instrument in co-opting africans support, giving them a stake in the status quo.

One of the first things that Vosloo said when he announced the change in state policy towards Alexandra was that there would be a survey conducted to establish which families would qualify to stay in a redeveloped township. Under the pretext of this survey they would be able to weed out 'illegals' who would then be sent to the 'homelands'. Since the reprieve for employed 'illegals' which gave them permission to register and become 'legal', most of the 'illegals' in the urban areas will be those people who are unemployed. Thus the 'homelands' become the dumping grounds for all those who are not needed in urban areas, who are 'unco-optable' and who could cause unrest. The separation of

the employed and unemployed also destroys the solidarity of the oppressed people.

The migrant workers living in Alexandra have also been 'saved' by Vosloo. They still have to live in hostels, are denied permanent residential rights, and are not allowed to bring their families to the urban areas. Today a new 2 500-bed hostel is being built without any but minor changes to previous models. As long as migrant labour persists the basic structure of exploitation and oppression in South Africa remains.

Who then has Vosloo 'saved'? He has 'saved' those who have the correct permits and who have the potential to have a vested interest in the status quo. In the government's bid to create a 'black middle class' and in commerce and industry's keenness to back up the government, they have become concerned with the provision of satisfactory housing, education and social services. Promises of plans for duplex flats, green belts and shopping centres are on the one hand a way of gaining support from people who aspire to a suburban status, and on the other an indirect call to business and industry to respond and provide assistance. The Urban Foundation has been very forward in offering assistance to an Alexandra development project.

Plans are also in the pipeline to establish an Alexandra Town Council, presumably with more powers than those of Community Councils. The government's announcement that they would 'save' Alexandra just after the announcement of the Alexandra Liaison Committee elections, was a powerful ploy to gain legitimacy for the committee and the elections.



'South Africa is a graveyard of predictions' says Johnson, author of How Long Will South Africa Survive?, and this is probably as true for Alexandra in the future as it has been for Alexandra in the past. The question to be answered is will Alexandra be co-opted and become a model township for those people whom the government wants to provide with some vested interest, or will more powerful social forces overtake these moves.

#### Notes:

1. According to an explanatory memorandum issued with the Act, the Act made it possible for the state to declare an area where africans had acquired land, to become an urban location. This meant that provisions of legislation relating to africans in urban areas would now apply to Alexandra. The Group Areas Act now applied to Alexandra and so steps to move more coloured families out began.
2. Incidents reported in the newspapers include: a) the case of 15 landowners who went to court, eventually to the Supreme Court, and appealed for an interdict demanding that no persons be forcefully expropriated. They won this but it was only a partial victory since they still had to leave their homes; b) one elderly man fought the authorities singlehanded in his attempt not to be moved. He went to court and to jail and it was only after his release that he gave up and went to live in Soweto.
3. The hostels cost R1 045 194 and R1 134 763 respectively to build. By 1973 the men's hostel was full and a waiting list existed. However, only 600 out of the 2 600 beds in the women's hostel were occupied, and was therefore a financial loss.
4. This involved the removal of 2 484 women and 200 men from 156 blocks of flats. The state devised a formula for the numbers of servants who could legally stay in flats and people in excess of this number had to go.
5. Their grievances included heating, rent, permits for visitors, bad treatment by

inspectresses, lack of hot water, petty charges and arrests, and a lack of space.

6. This meant that they complied with regulations laid down in 1968, that only a man who is over 21 years of age, who is a South African citizen, who qualifies to be in a prescribed area (in terms of Section 10(1)(a) or (b) of the Urban Areas Consolidation Act) and whose wife is legally in the area and who has dependents may become the registered tenant of a house in a Bantu Residential Area.

7. 79% of the children of women at the hostel managed to find places in the 'homelands' while the other 21% went to live with relatives in other towns or on farms in white areas.

8. The blueprint for the reconstructed hostel town included 8 hostel complexes (6 for men) and recreational facilities. Recreational facilities are often included in hostel plans since recreation channels grievances, dissatisfaction and frustration about work and living conditions into some harmless pursuit.

9. In anticipation of the move of all coloured families all facilities for coloured people (eg the school and graveyard) were switched from Alexandra to other areas. The coloured people have as yet (January, 1980) not been moved.

10. As well as running a parish in Alexandra Rev Buti occupies a leading position in the South African Council of Churches.

11. The plan included flats and new houses but said that the existing hostels should remain.

12. Was there coercion, false promises and misunderstandings that got people to vote? Were the booths really as crowded as the press made out, or was it a tactic to get the people to vote? Or were people genuinely enthusiastic about the elections and prospects of representation? Was there any move to encourage a boycott of the election? Unfortunately I have not been able to find answers to these questions.

Letter from the editor, Star newspaper, launching the Alexandra 'uplift' campaign.

#### COMMENT

## Something YOU can do!

South Africa presents a microcosm of some of the most acute problems of the Twentieth Century.

We deal daily with the problems of international finance, nuclear energy and rapid industrial expansion. We also experience the whole gamut of Third World problems. We have racial and nationalistic antagonisms. Language and cultural differences. A dangerous imbalance between the "Haves" and the "Have-nots." In the face of these universal issues, what on earth can YOU as an individual do?

Men and women, black and white, rich and poor — all are eager to roll up their sleeves and tackle the things that stand in the way of everybody's peace and prosperity. But what can they tackle? The political issues are too diffuse; the socio-economic issues too big for individual effort. Even the problems of Soweto seem too large.

Nevertheless, let's DO something.

Today, the Star invites you—housewife, businessman, labourer, community leader, industrialist — to join us in a campaign. We are going to focus on one clearly defined, manageable area: Alexandra. Let us, together, uplift Alex. Let us make a model community of this depressed zone near the heart of one of the richest, most privileged urban areas in the world. Let us save Alex — and, in doing so, set a pattern

for uplifting every race relationship, every slum, every communal mess in the land.

Alex is a mess. A social, economic, political pollution in a delightful urban area. Yet, there is no reason why it should not rival its neighbours in cleanliness, orderliness and social drive ... so long as all of us co-operate in putting Alex back on its feet.

Its bus boycotts in the 1940s and 1950s, its gangsterism, its drama over evictions, its clinging to freehold tenure, have earned the 75-year-old township a special place in the Rand's history. Today, it lacks almost everything: adequate schools, lights, sewerage, recreational facilities, community spirit and money. But a vision is being created of a new Alex: a new family suburb for city workers.

Join us to make it come true.

During the uplift campaign, The Star will highlight the areas in which organisations, industries, businessmen, individual local residents and YOU — can help. There are many problems, including major political issues, standing in the way. But none is so big that enthusiastic co-operation cannot overcome it.

This is going to be a people-to-people effort. TEACH and CARE, two campaigns which the people of the Rand have helped to forge, will join with community organisations in Alex. So will officials, local residents, and even neighbouring towns.

Let's roll up our sleeves and tackle our "world problems."

Let's start in Alex.

— The Editor

# ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP:

## 'uplift' or co-optation?

On 7th May 1979, the deputy minister of Co-operation and Development, Mr Vosloo, announced in Parliament that Alexandra township had been granted a reprieve. He said that plans for the development of Alexandra into a hostel town for single migrant workers had been shelved and that his department was planning a renewal programme based on high density family housing.

This change in policy with respect to Alexandra must be seen in the context of the general change in state policy with respect to urban black areas. This change is conditioned by the attempt of the state to restructure social relations in order to cope with the changing needs of capital. South African capital is becoming dominated by the monopoly sector which is at present

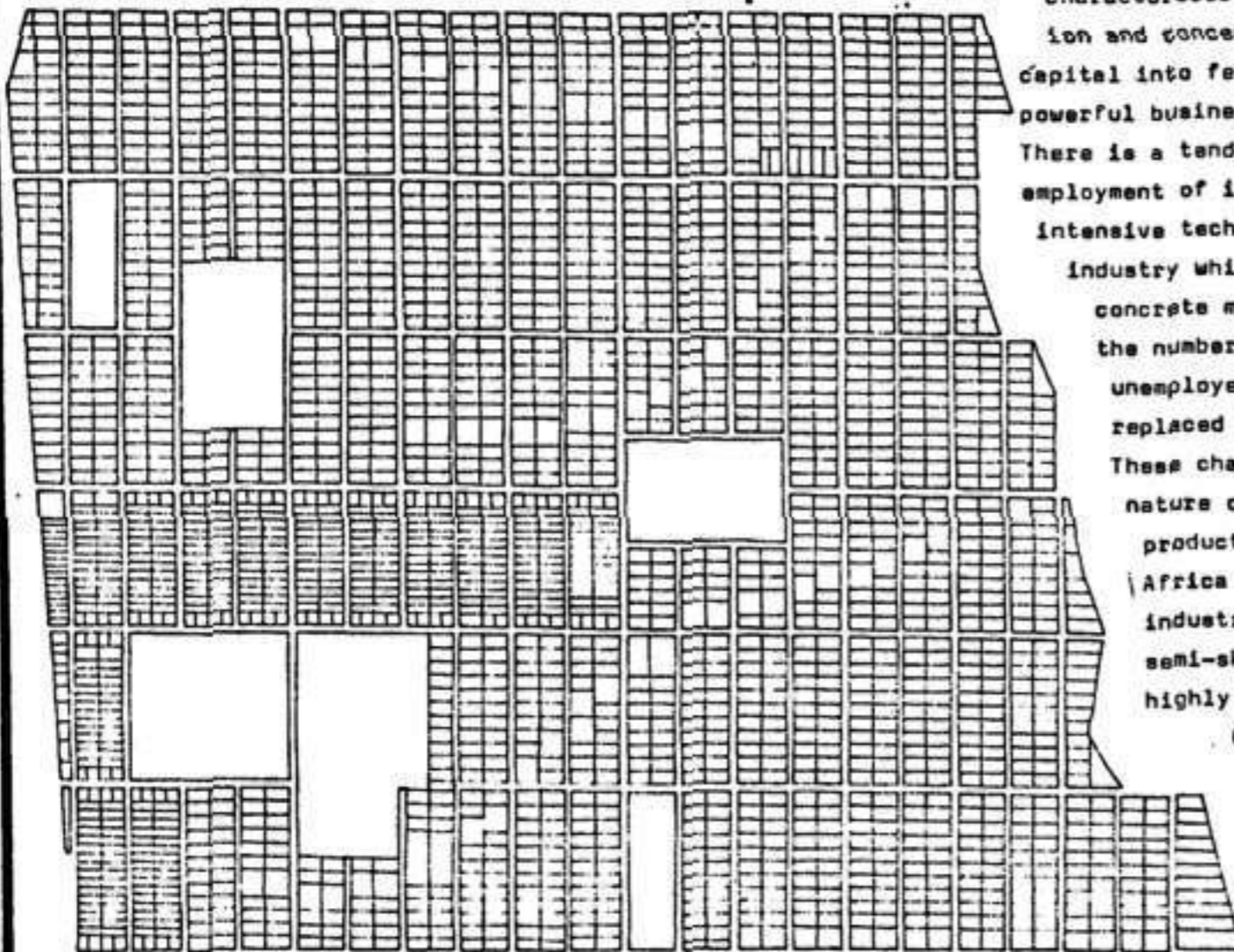
characterised by centralisation and concentration of capital into fewer, larger, more powerful business organisations. There is a tendency towards the employment of increased capital intensive technology in industry which has its concrete manifestation in the number of workers unemployed as they get replaced by machinery. These changes in the nature of capitalist production in South Africa mean that industry needs both semi-skilled and highly skilled workers.

(for a more detailed discussion of these issues,

see the article on 'Total Strategy' in Work In Progress 11, February 1980, especially pages 3 - 5).

The uprisings in 1976-77 highlighted the need for a stable and contented labour force. The state's response to changes within capital, and increased worker militancy, is articulated in the reports of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions, and in the total strategy initiatives being formulated by the state and its apparatuses. These reports advocate increased control over the working class and attempt to create a labour aristocracy and black petty bourgeoisie. The Riekert Commission attempts to locate blacks in jobs at higher levels within the production process through increased training programmes. It also attempts to relocate the unemployed by exporting them to the rural areas. This is an attempt to make urban areas safe from the potential threat of the unemployed. It also advocates the creation of a privileged section of the working class in the sense that they have protected rights to employment. The flow of migrant workers into the city will be tightly controlled.

Relating to the provision of housing in black urban areas, the Commission recommended that even with the necessary services should be allocated to blacks in their residential areas on a leasehold basis. The Commission recommended that influx control be linked to the availability of work and of approved housing.





The Commission further recommended the creation of a stable black middle class pacified with better housing and conditions of employment. Restrictions in respect of black businessmen are to be lifted.

Although the report of the Riekert Commission was published some months after the reprieve for Alexandra was announced, it should be seen in terms of the overall change in state policy, the conditions for which already existed.

The recommendations of the Riekert Commission should be seen as linked to the 'total strategy' concept formulated by the state and its apparatuses in order to 'defend South Africa'. Certain changes are being made to give blacks a material stake giving them cause to 'defend South Africa'. These attempts by capital and the state aim at extending political and ideological control through the granting of material concessions.

The establishment of the Urban Foundation after the uprisings in 1976 aims to improve the quality of life in black urban areas through training schemes, house betterment and urban renewal schemes. The Urban Foundation manifests capital's attempt to maintain the existing process of capital accumulation. This point was made clear recently by Mr Justice Jan Steyn, executive director of the Urban Foundation, when addressing Rotary International's 55th annual conference of District 925 in Nelspruit. There he said

"If people want the free enterprise system to continue, they are going to have to get off their butts and make contributions towards housing." (2)

He went on to warn that the lull in township protests should not be regarded as 'breathing space'.

It has clearly been the impetus of monopoly capitalist interests which have articulated the above strategy; this aims at containing township resistance by the employment of schemes to improve the material conditions of sections of the working class through organisations like the Urban Foundation. Members of the Urban Foundation have acknowledged that certain reforms are necessary in order to maintain social stability and continuous capitalist production.

Between 1st March 1977 and 3rd August 1979, the Urban Foundation undertook a total of 268 projects throughout South Africa. 9 of these projects were national projects and 28 were research or feasibility studies. The projects undertaken were in the area of housing, education and training, community facilities and health services. The funds approved for these projects amounted to R13,06-million. (3)

It can be seen that an attempt is being made to buy off a section of the working class. This section gain their access to these privileges by qualifying for urban rights under sections 10 (1) (a) and (b).

In presenting the annual report of the Department of Community Development to Parliament on 27th March 1980, the secretary of the department warned against disruptions in the state's housing programme through the lack of funds. He added that any attempt to curtail state participation in housing provision would play into the hands of 'South Africa's enemies'. (4)

So it can clearly be seen that the state and capital are involved in a desperate attempt to buy off a section of the working class. Coupled with this is the attempt to strictly control the people who do not qualify for incorporation, namely the landless and unemployed who will be relocated in the rural areas under the control of the various 'homeland' administrations whose responsibility they have become.

The reprieves granted to Crossroads and Alexandra and the subsequent plans for redevelopment are, I believe, the first involvement of the state in 'betterment schemes' aimed at improving the 'quality of life' in existing black townships. The state is now following the initiatives undertaken by capital. It should, of course, not be forgotten that the state has given its approval to programmes undertaken by the Urban Foundation.

The redevelopment is being planned by the planning section of the Department of Co-operation and Development in conjunction with WRAB, the Department of Community Development, the Alexandra Liaison Committee and the Sandton City Council. (6) The intention is to turn Alexandra into a model township (7) that will be the pride of every South African. It is to have flats and maisonettes, reconditioned houses, green belts, tarred roads and full services. An attempt is at present being made to acquire more land on the east side of the Jukskei River to make into an elite area. (8)

Piet Koornhof has also promised publically to request Parliament to grant

full municipal status to Alexandra. (9)

Alexandra has a history of freehold rights. To date there are still 432 freeholders. Despite this, the basis of land tenure in the redeveloped Alexandra will be 99-year leasehold. The 99-year leasehold tenure system is intended to promote urban black home ownership. These regulations were gazetted in December 1978 and represent a response by the state to the demands of organised capital as a means of creating a black middle class. This leasehold scheme means that blacks can for the first time take out building society loans. Previously, building societies did not consider the 30-year leasehold under the 1968 regulations as adequate security. (10) Under this scheme only those with urban rights qualify for home ownership.

According to research done by Dr B Boaden, senior lecturer in Quantity Surveying at the University of Witwatersrand, this scheme will not benefit the majority of black urban dwellers who do not have the monthly income to repay a housing loan. He has estimated that the average monthly household income of blacks in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging triangle is R200, of which an estimated R188 is spent on necessary items. This leaves R12 over as the possible repayment on a loan. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these people would be able to pay the estimated R300 in site surveying expenses, or that they would be able to afford the initial costs of taking out a 99-year lease which includes a 20% deposit on the house, connection fees for water, sewage and electricity. By the end of March 1980, 184 people had registered leasehold titles under this scheme. (11)

At the same time as granting the reprieve for Alexandra, Vosloo also announced that a survey would be undertaken by JHAB to establish who would qualify for housing in the redeveloped Alexandra. Presumably the underlying intention of the survey would be to establish who did not qualify to be in the area so that they could be exported to the 'homelands'. This is in keeping with the Riskert Commission recommendations and the new strategy adopted by the state.

A 1979 population census was held in Alexandra and it was estimated that the population was 50 000 of whom 10 000 were estimated to be 'illegals'. (12)

With respect to this issue, the Alexandra Liaison Committee has an ambivalent position. In the first issue of the Alexandra Chronicle, the official bulletin of the Liaison Committee, published by WRAB, Sam Buti, chairman of the Liaison Committee warned 'illegals' that they would not be permitted to remain in the area. In the same issue, it was reported that the administrative sub-committee of the Liaison Committee had investigated the cases of 'illegals' and had found that 2 000 families did in fact qualify for urban rights and so the Liaison Committee had in fact saved the families from eviction. (13)

Under closer analysis, this statement emerges as an attempt to retain their popular facade while at the same time acting as mouthpiece for the state. A recent survey into the socio-economic conditions in Alexandra undertaken by the Sociology Department at the University of South Africa (UNISA) has shown that the average family

size in Alexandra is 5,7. (14) Simple arithmetic shows that the Liaison Committee has thus 'saved' 12 000 people from eviction, when only an estimated 10 000 'illegal' people exist.

The Liaison Committee has also given its support to the idea of Alexandra becoming a totally 99-year leasehold area. Sam Buti is quoted as saying that the 99-year leasehold suits Alexandra better than a freehold system as more houses can be provided. (15)

In the light of the above statements, it seems that the Alexandra Liaison Committee has been co-opted and functions to legitimate the plans the state has for Alexandra. The Liaison Committee has no legal status and very limited powers. All of its actions are subject to the scrutiny and approval of the Department of Co-operation and Development. They do, however, attempt to create the illusion that they have greater powers and claim that the relationship between the Liaison Committee and the Department of Co-operation and Development is one of client and consultant. This is meant to imply that they have powers of veto and do not have to accept whatever the Department presents them with. (16)

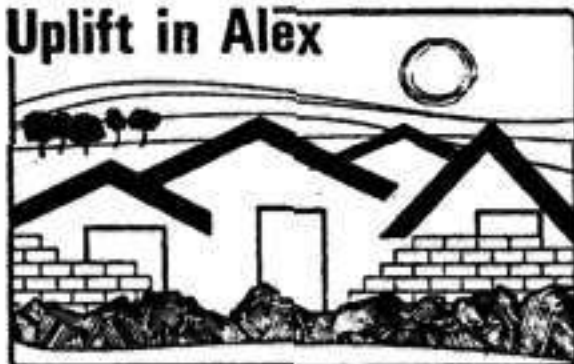
Finally, Alexandra cannot be seen as an attempt by the state to cope with the housing problem. It must be seen as an attempt to co-opt a clearly defined and relatively small working class community, which will no doubt feature prominently in local and overseas media as an indication of the progressive nature of the present regime. It must also be seen as an attempt to pacify a section of the working class with material concessions



in order to maintain the process of capitalist production and profit.

SR

### Uplift in Alex



**FOOTNOTES:**

1. Rand Daily Mail, 79.05.08.
2. Star, 80.04.11.
3. The Urban Foundation - Project Statistics 1 Mar. 77 - 79.08.31.
4. Rand Daily Mail, 80.03.28.
5. Rand Daily Mail, 80.03.28.
6. Star, 79.05.08.
7. Piet Koornhof, quoted in Sunday Express 79.07.29.
8. These facts emerged from an interview with the town planner.
9. Sunday Express, 79.07.29.
10. Creedy, B. A house for total strategy: the political economy of urban african housing in contemporary South Africa, 1980:70.
11. Star, 80.04.11.
12. Star, 80.03.06.
13. Star, 80.03.06.
14. Preliminary report of a socio-economic survey done in Alexandra. Department of Sociology, UNISA. This survey was funded by the Urban Foundation.
15. Sunday Post, 79.06.24.
16. This emerges from interviews with the Liaison Committee and from a document setting out their objectives and approaches.

## Work in Progress

To: The Editors, Work in Progress, PO Box 93174, Yeoville 2143, South Africa.  
 I wish to subscribe to ... copy/copies of Work in Progress, beginning with issue No ...

OR

I wish to distribute WIP to a group, and will pay after each issue has been distributed.

Name: .....

Address to which WIP should be sent .....

.....

# AFRICA

subscribe to ...

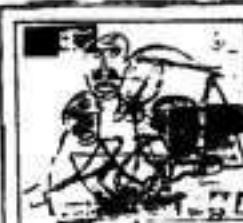

**AFRICA PERSPECTIVE**, a quarterly journal, started in 1974, attempts to raise the level of discussion on African, particularly Southern African events, through articles that are both theoretical and factual, both historical and current. Some of these have been about resettlement, women, state and labour, underdevelopment, industrial conflict, the role of the reserves in S.A., local political bodies, and the growth of capitalist agriculture.

African countries which have been looked at are Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Angola, Namibia, and Zaire. Issues planned will focus on the social consequences of the use of machinery in S.A. industry, and on the Southern African states.

LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS-R3,80 FOR 4 ISSUES, POSTAGE INCL.

# PERSPECTIVE

WRITE TO: PO BOX 32287, BRAAMFONTEIN, JOHANNESBURG, 2017.

APR 1979  
70c PER

AFRICA PERSPECTIVE

# schools boycott

WHILE WORK IN PROGRESS WAS AT THE PRINTERS, EVENTS DICTATED THAT THIS EDITION CARRY SOMETHING ON THE SCHOOLS BOYCOTT, WHICH WAS SPREADING THROUGHOUT SOUTH AFRICA. BELOW, WE PRODUCE A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF SOME OF THE MAJOR EVENTS THUSFAR, AS WELL AS A FEW INDICATIONS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THESE EVENTS. (80.04.27)

WHAT follows is a brief description of some of the more important events relating to the schools boycott which began in the Western Cape, subsequently spreading to most other regions in South Africa. As a hastily compiled chronology of events, it is incomplete; but more important than this, it should not be seen as a 'history' of current resistance to racially-based education in South Africa. For to do so would suggest that both history and resistance consist of a series of short dramatic events, rather than an on-going process involving conflict and organisation, victory and defeat, advance and retreat. The current struggle of pupils to what they have called 'gutter education' and the system which it is a part of must be seen in an overall context of resistance to the nature of society, and the attempt to create a totally new social structure and reality.

In February 1980, students of the Mountainview High School, Hanover Park, began boycotting classes. A series of meetings were held by the pupils, where they discussed and formulated their grievances against the system of coloured education. On March 13th, students on the Cape Flats called a meeting to discuss the system of 'gutter education', and an ad hoc committee of parents and pupils was formed. Amongst those present at this meeting were three young white teachers

from the Crystal Senior Secondary School - Liz Everett, Brenda Liebowitz and Barbara Houghton.

A week later, on March 20th, some 800 parents and scholars drawn from Crystal Senior Secondary and Mountainview High Schools met in Hanover Park, where those present formulated their objections to coloured education. These included

- + a shortage of text books;
- + students being forced to buy stationary;
- + principals enforcing the wearing of expensive school uniforms;
- + a shortage of teaching staff;
- + the abuse of corporal punishment, including the beating of girls;
- + headmasters refusing pupils permission to form recognised representative councils (SRC's);
- + poor school facilities;
- + buildings which had been damaged during 1976 - 77 had still not been repaired.

Later that week, pamphlets calling for solidarity amongst parents, pupils and workers were widely distributed throughout the Cape Peninsula, and a specific call for the removal of the principals of Mountainview and Crystal Senior Secondary Schools was made.

On March 28th, the three teachers who had attended the previous meeting of pupils and parents were dismissed from their posts at Crystal Senior Secondary. 2 days later, pupils from Crystal and Mountainview met and called for the unconditional reinstatement of the teachers. "These teachers showed solidarity with us, and we must now show solidarity with them" was the way a student leader put it. A meeting of representatives from the two schools decided to inform all their classmates and parents of the victimisation of the 3 teachers. (It should be noted that Minister of Coloured Relations, Marsie Steyn, claimed that the teachers had been dismissed to make way for 'suitably qualified coloured teachers'. However, when school term re-opened in April, after the vacation break, no new teachers had been employed at Crystal Senior Secondary to replace the dismissed 3).

80.04.07. Student representatives from 19 Cape High Schools, as well as from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and



Hewatt Training College met, and resolved to fight the education system for coloured pupils "at all levels". They set out a series of short-term demands which, they said, if not met within a week would lead them to consider boycott action. The demands included

- pay increases for teachers;
- better provision of school books;
- immediate repairs to schools damaged during the 1976-77 riots;
- reinstatement of the 3 teachers dismissed from Crystal Senior Secondary school;
- removal of the principal of Crystal Senior Secondary.

Placards were posted on the fence at the Wynberg offices of the Administration of Coloured Affairs. They proclaimed that

"Our parents are forced to work because the bread price had increased. School books are not free. Rents and rates are increased. They have no say. Solidarity Workers Students Parents",

and

"Racist education to divide student workers of tomorrow. The education we are receiving is providing Cheap Labour for the Capitalist".

80.04.09. It was announced that the principals of Crystal Senior Secondary and Mountainview High schools had been transferred, and Minister Steyn said that repairs to damaged school buildings would be undertaken. The representatives of the 21 educational institutions which had met on March 7th (the United Education Front) rejected these moves as insufficient - "it just scratches the surface. The whole system has to be changed".

80.04.11. Pamphlets calling for pupil solidarity and resistance to gutter education were widely distributed on the Peninsula. They stated that most of the pupils' grievances involved "economic issues strongly felt in working class areas like Hanover Park. The burden of enforced uniforms, expensive stationary and text books and forced levies, hits working class families hard". The pamphlet went on to say that students had "mobilised against their inferior education which keeps them in their oppressed position".

Fezela High, IO Mkize and Langa High schools, all based in african townships, joined the United Education Front planning committee.

80.04.13. A mass meeting was held where representatives of african, indian and coloured pupils in the Western Cape were joined by students from UWC and Hewatt Training College. It was decided not to launch an immediate boycott of classes, as certain victories had been won from the authorities (the removal of principals, a promise to repair school buildings). Instead, Coloured Relations was given until the end of the month to fully meet the demands previously made.

A representative of Belgravia High school explained that the promises made by Steyn were insufficient.

"The steps undertaken by Mr Steyn, to supply proper text books and to keep the school buildings in good repair are the run-of-the-mill things any good administration should do.

What we are dissatisfied with is the general low standard and poor conditions surrounding coloured education".

80.04.14. Despite the decision taken the previous day not to launch a boycott of classes at present, hundreds of pupils do begin to boycott lessons at school. At Fezela High School in Guguletu, 800 boycotting pupils demand the right to form an SRC; the same demand is made at Wynberg Senior Secondary, while placards reading "reject racial education" are put up by pupils at Bridgetown and Steenberg High.

A mass meeting is held at Hewatt Training College, and there is a call for an immediate boycott of classes protesting against inferior racial education.

80.04.15. Pupils at Spee Bona High School, one of the largest schools in the Athlone area, boycott classes, and demonstrate by marching around the school, and placing placards on the school fence setting out their grievances.

A total stay-away from classes is reported from Parkwood High School.

80.04.16. Minister Steyn says that 'positive attention' is being given to the pupils' grievances.

Pupils decide to boycott classes until the end of the week, and then to decide on further action.

Many more schools join the boycott of classes.

80.04.17. Elsies River High, Elewood High, Bellville South High, Manenburg, Silverstone High, Manenburg High and Gordons High School in Somerset West are reported to be boycotting classes.

80.04.18. Cathkin High in Heideveld joins the boycott; pupils at Vista High School walk out of classes and demonstrate in the school quadrangle; for the third day running, pupils at Kensington High School refuse to attend classes.

The only Indian High School in Cape Town, Rylands, joins the boycott of classes. A statement is issued by Rylands boycotters dedicating themselves to "fight oppression and racist education which divides us from our fellow South Africans". It is further stated that education is an "ideological control on the part of the state" designed to "train people for the cheap labour market".

In Johannesburg, between 2 000 and 5 000 coloured school children march in protest against 'inferior education'. Security police and flying squad forces intercept and break up the march. Steyn says that the issue is not one of education, but of children being influenced by propaganda. He accuses suspended AZAPO president, Curtis Nkondo, of going to the Western Cape to incite scholars, and notes that Nkondo 'is not a coloured man'.

80.04.19. Over 25 000 pupils are reported to be boycotting classes. In the Western Cape, the boycott spreads to Strand and Somerset West schools.

At Hewatt College 248 representatives from 52 Western Cape educational institutions meet and decide that the boycott should continue the following week. They call on pupils to go to school/campus, but to stay away from classes.

Representatives are present from almost every senior secondary school on the Peninsula, as well as from Paarl, Worcester, Stellenbosch and a number of tertiary educational institutions. They reject statements made on their behalf to the press by 'racist bodies' like the Labour Party, lecturers at racist institutions, and 'reactionary organisations like the Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA).

An umbrella student body is elected at this meeting, to represent all institutions present. A series of demands, including the abolition of racial education, integration of all schools, the phasing out of armed soldier-teachers, and the creation of autonomous SRC's at schools, are made.

80.04.20. Students at the University of Natal medical school decide to boycott their graduation ceremony to protest against

discrimination in education.

A mass meeting of 2 000 at UWC decides to boycott all tests, assignments and classes. A meeting of 700 parents in the Grassy Park area decides to support the pupils in their boycott of classes and demands. Schools in George and Worcester join the boycott of classes.

The general theme of the boycott in the Western Cape suggests that education prepares scholars to become a cheap labour force for capitalism.

80.04.21. It is reported that more than 100 000 students from 70 schools in the Western Cape and Witwatersrand are boycotting classes. Eersta High School, Pretoria, Reiger Park High School, Boksburg, and Vredenberg Senior Secondary School in Saldanha Bay join in the boycott.

80.04.22. Boycott of classes spreads to Natal and Free State. Becket Training College, Durban, and Dr Blok High School, Bloemfontein closed when students demonstrate. Pupils at Lenasia schools begin boycotting classes, as do students at Fordsburg Teachers Training College, 2 Durban coloured schools, a Durban Teachers' Training College, and pupils at a Kimberley school.

10 000 pupils hold a rally in Bosmont, outside Johannesburg, and riot police in camouflage uniform fire tear-gas to disperse 8 000 marching pupils in the streets of Athlone.

The pupils representative committee criticises the Athlone marchers, saying that they had violated a majority decision taken not to leave school premises during boycott action. The boycott reaches Port Elizabeth: 1 000 pupils at Bethelodorp High School, and hundreds in East London join in demonstrations. Demonstrations of support are held at Dordrecht, Genadendal in the Little Karoo, on the East and West Rand, and at the University of Natal.

80.04.23. Police fire a shot, and baton charge 500 students trying to hold a meeting at Eldorado Park. Teargas is used to break up another meeting in Kliptown, and several pupils are injured.

In Natal, 6 000 students and pupils are reported to be boycotting, and police use teargas to disperse pupils at Wentworth.



Curtis Nkondo addresses students at Wits University, and calls for a white role in the boycott. Argues that white education is by no means perfect: it aims at indoctrination, while black education aims at domestication. A few hours later, Nkondo is detained by security police. This marks the beginning of a large security police swoop, with an ever-growing number of people being detained.

80.04.24. It is revealed that the government was warned six months previously that 'coloured education was in a mess, and headed for collapse'. Warning was issued by the Transvaal Regional Education Committee, with 50 000 children under its auspices.

Police baton-charge 500 Chateworth pupils holding a silent protest in their school grounds, and arrest two.

Pupils at Durban Indian Girls High School, Gandhi Desai, Orient High, Sastri College, ML Sultan Technikon, Wits University, Transvaal College of Education and Laudium High School join boycott.

Further reports of boycotts from Klerksdorp, Roodepoort, Potchefstroom, Middelburg (Transvaal), Grahamstown, Pietermaritzburg. Police say that in only three divisions - Northern Natal, Northern Free State and Namibia - have boycotts not been reported.

2 000 parents meet in Bellville and express solidarity with student demands.

4 000 pupils hold a mass meeting in East Pearl.

1 000 pupils in Grabouw boycott classes, while all senior secondary schools in Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Humansdorp and Graaff-Reinet are reported to be boycotting classes.

80.04.25. Students at Actonville, Benoni, Randfontein, Eastern Cape and Durban reported to be joining boycott. 16 out of a total of 17 Indian and coloured high schools in the Eastern Cape are involved in the boycott of classes.

A NUMBER of important features have emerged from the current boycott of classes. These are most obvious in the Western Cape campaign, where pupil activity appears to be more organised and sophisticated than elsewhere.

1. The pupils have continually emphasised that the majority of them come from working class families, and that the financial burdens of racial education are being borne by the working class (their parents). In one of their pamphlets, they write that

"We are aware as students coming from working class backgrounds that our parents cannot afford to provide shelter, food and education for us. The policy of the state is to make it financially difficult for us to stay at school. We are then forced to leave school and join the cheap labour force".  
(RESISTANCE AGAINST RACIAL EDUCATION).

The pupils have accordingly conceptualised their current struggle as a working class issue, rather than an educational issue. They have seen that while racial education affects all blacks in South Africa, it affects working class families in a more serious way than petty bourgeois black families.

2. Related to the above is the way the pupils of the Western Cape see the whole question of 'inferior' education. They have not, in general, argued for equality with white education, for they realise that white education is as functional to exploitation and oppression as black education is. They have stressed that the education they receive is functional to the maintenance of the ruling capitalist class in South Africa, and in rejecting that form of education, they also reject the political and economic system as a whole.

The pupils have not asked for technical improvements in the quality of education only - better laboratories, more funds etc. They have also demanded a change in the social content of education.

3. This is shown in the slogan they have adopted - AWAY WITH RACIAL EDUCATION. They have not called for equality with white education, but rather for an end to racially-based systems of education. Implicit in this is a critique of the nature and function of white education as producing oppressors, just as black education produces the oppressed.

4. The pupils' critique of the education they receive has included an anti-capitalist position. They have seen themselves as produced as cheap labour for a capitalist

economy:

"We reject apartheid and the economic system it is maintaining.

Every student in South Africa should realise that they are the workers of tomorrow and they will be exploited like their parents.

We reject the exploitation of our parents the workers".

The boycotting pupils have accordingly situated their education within a broader social context, seen the links between education and maintenance of an exploitative system, and realised that a change in education involves a change in the whole social system.

5. A strong current of non-racialism has been present in the activities of the Western Cape pupils. This has not only shown itself in the alliance between african, coloured and indian scholars, but also in the way the pupils of Crystal Senior Secondary School demanded the reinstatement of 3 victimised teachers who happened to be white. This non-racialism has manifested itself as an alliance of progressive forces, rather than an inter-racial solidarity for its own sake.

6. The pupils have worked hard in explaining the nature of their demands to other students, and to the community at large. Mass meetings of teachers, parents and others living in communities affected have been held, and the slogan of solidarity between students, workers and parents has been given a content and reality.

7. Related to the above has been the attempts to ensure that the whole boycott campaign is educative for its participants, and that the forms of organisation which have emerged are functional to consciousness-raising.

An important pamphlet issued explains that the short-term demands of the pupils must be linked to long term demands.

"These short term victories, however, are incomplete until they are linked up with long term goals. We must see how these short term demands are linked up with the political and economic system of this country. We must see how the fail/pass rate in schools are linked up with the labour supply for the capitalist system, how low quality school buildings are linked to the unequal allocation of funds to education for children of the oppressed and children of the oppressor, how inadequate library facilities are linked with the need to confine and limit the thoughts of the oppressed, how distorted history text books are

linked with the need to obscure and propagandise against the proud history of resistance of the indigenous people against economic slavery, how, in fact, the whole educational system against which we are rebelling, stems from the fact that we are denied basic political rights and thus political power".

