

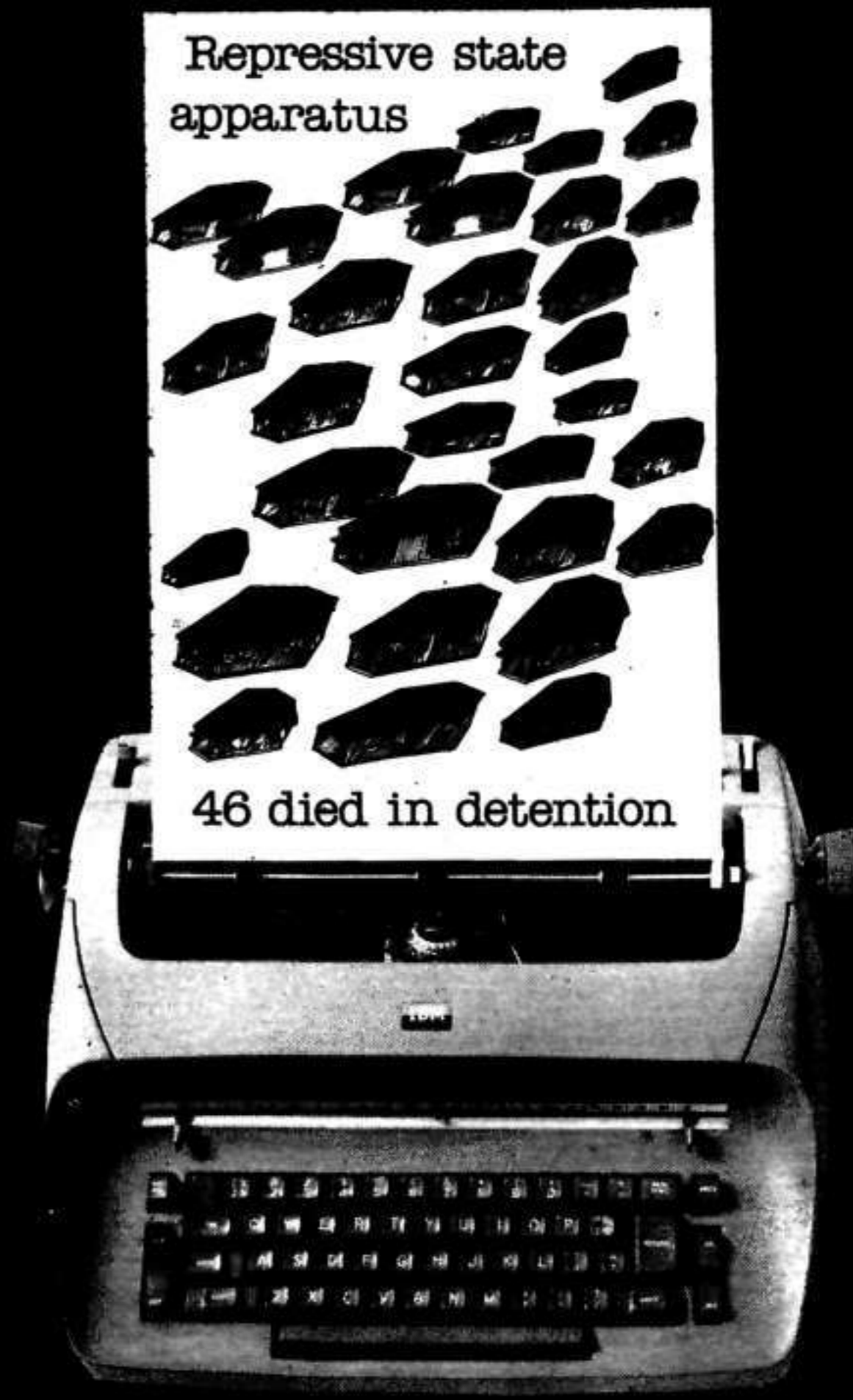
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WORK IN PROGRESS 22 - April 1982

Cover by Kevin Humphrey

The nature of Work In Progress, which is to stimulate debate and present controversial views on a wide range of subjects, ensures that the opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial collective.

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EDITORIAL

There were two particularly pleasing features about this issue of Work In Progress: in the first place, many more people were involved in writing and producing the publication than has previously been the case. This is a development that will hopefully continue, as it allows for a more diverse set of interests to present information and views.

Secondly, the three responses to the WIP 21 article, 'Organising Women?' follow a pattern which is encouraging: short responses to particular aspects of material presented are a useful way of promoting debate on the issues presented in WIP. These sorts of responses allow those who are not keen to write lengthy articles to contribute to debates, and ensure that WIP remains a forum for different and conflicting interpretations of social reality and ways of understanding it.

The fact that so many more contributors were involved in this edition meant that the editors had too much material. Already page-space has been increased from this issue with the introduction of a larger lay-out grid, and the presentation of all information features in a more compressed format. Despite this, certain contributions could not be run because of lack of space: we apologise to the contributors affected, and to readers for this, and guarantee their appearance in the next WIP.

The editorial collective aims to double distribution of WIP in the course of the next year. This will by no means be easy, given that WIP is not commercially distributed. Readers are accordingly asked for suggestions on how to reach a larger audience both through the medium of individual subscriptions, and group distribution schemes. Ideas for expansion would be most welcome.

DETENTIONS: Rabie Reports

JUST two days after the Report of the Rabie Commission into Security Legislation was made public, trade unionist Neil Aggett died while in security police custody. The Rabie Commissioners put forward certain proposals 'with a view to the protection of detainees': if this additional 'protection' had already been in force, could the outcome of Neil Aggett's prolonged incarceration and interrogation have been different?

Even the briefest glance at the Rabie proposals regarding detention indicates that the Commission report offers almost no change to the system of detention as it currently exists. The section of the report dealing with detention of people for purposes of interrogation offers little comfort for those concerned with the conditions under which detainees are held and questioned. Nor, it must be stated, would the Rabie proposals have offered any additional protection for those detainees who have recently found themselves in the wards of Johannesburg's General Hospital. For the recommendations flowing from the Commission report do little more than regularise and give legislative legitimacy to the detention system as it already operates.

This can be shown by comparing the Rabie proposals with the detention system as it currently exists. In this regard, see the table on this page.

If the Rabie proposals had been in force in November last year, when Neil Aggett was detained for purposes of interrogation, how would his detention conditions have been altered?

- He would have been visited by a magistrate every two weeks - which must have happened at any rate;
- He could have been examined by a district surgeon -

RABIE PROPOSALS	CURRENT DETENTION REGULATIONS
Visits to detainees by a magistrate every two weeks	Visits to detainees by a magistrate every two weeks (section 6(7) of Terrorism Act)
Visits to detainees by a district surgeon every two weeks	Visits where necessary to detainees by a district surgeon (section 8 of the police warrant for detention)
The setting up of an inspectorate of detainees, empowered to visit detainees and to make written representations to the Minister	While there is no legislation regarding this, such an inspectorate was set up by then-police minister Kruger after the death of Steve Biko in 1977
The Commissioner of Police be empowered to allow people not connected with interrogation to see detainees	Both the Commissioner of Police and the head of security police empowered to grant access to detainees in terms of section 2 of the police warrant for detention
A 30-day limit be placed on detention unless the Minister, on the advice of the Commissioner of Police, authorises further detention	Section 6(1) of the Terrorism Act allows for indefinite detention. However, once a month police are required to inform the Minister why each detainee should continue to be held (section 6(2))
After 6 months of detention, a review board appointed by the Minister must examine the case. The board then reports to the Minister, who may or may not accept their recommendations as to the release or continued detention of the detainee	Review proceedings undertaken by a board appointed by, and responsible to the Minister exist in respect of preventive detention (section 10 of the Internal Security Act). In terms of section 6(3) of the Terrorism Act, a detainee may at any time make written representations to the Minister as to why he/she should be released. The Minister may, at any time, order the release of a detainee (section 6(4))
Preventive detention proposed, together with a review board to examine such cases	Section 10 of the Internal Security Act provides for preventive detention, together with a review board to examine such detentions
Potential state witnesses in security trials may be detained at the discretion of the attorney general	Potential state witnesses in security trials may be detained at the discretion of the attorney general
Any policeman of or above the rank of warrant officer may detain a person for up to 48 hours as a preventive measure; a magistrate may extend this period for another 12 days on request of the police. This detention is not for interrogation, nor does it appear that the detaining policeman must believe that a crime has been, or is likely to be, committed	Section 10 of the Internal Security Act provides for preventive detention. Section 22 of the 1966 General Laws Amendment Act provides for detention for interrogation purposes for up to 14 days. Any policeman may, if he believes that a crime has been, or is likely to be committed, may arrest a suspect, and hold the arrested person for 48 hours before bringing them to court or releasing them

which is explicitly provided for in the detention warrant currently used by security police;

* He would have been visited by the inspector of detainees - which presumably did happen;

* The Commissioner of Police could have allowed a friend or family member to visit him for a short period, under police supervision - and this did occur during December 1981;

* After 30 days in detention, the police would have had to explain to the Minister why Neil could not be released. They might have said that he had not answered all questions to their satisfaction; or that other detainees had implicated him in some offense; or just that they had not yet finished interrogating him. Presumably this did happen at the end of December, and again at the end of January, as section 6(2) of the Terrorism Act makes provision for these procedures. The Minister did not order Neil Aggett's release then. One doubts that the Rabie proposals, if implemented, would have made any difference;

* Of course, if Neil had lived through 6 months of detention, the Rabie Commissioners would have wanted a review board appointed by the Minister to examine his case. This board would not have been obliged to hear evidence from Neil - or even to have seen him. If the board recommended Neil's release, the Minister could have ignored this recommendation.

* If Neil - or any other detainee - lived through all of this, and was charged, the attorney general could refuse to allow bail. This is currently the case, and is also a Rabie Commission proposal. If, like most detainees, Neil had not been charged, the Rabie proposals would have allowed his continued detention as a potential state witness, or as a 'danger to state security'. This, too, can happen to any detainee in terms of already existing security legislation.

In the light of the above, there seems little room for doubt as to how much difference the Rabie proposals would have made to Neil Aggett's life - or death. Nor does there seem any reason to believe that the proposed added 'protection' for

detainees would have prevented Thozamile Gqwetha or Sam Kikine from finding themselves under security police guard in the psychiatric wards of a hospital.

The Rabie Commission accepted that detention for the purposes of interrogation by security police was a necessary part of security legislation. In their summary of findings, the commissioners argued that

information obtained from persons in detention is the most important end, to a large extent, the only weapon of the Police for anticipating and preventing terroristic and other subversive activities, and also that information obtained in this way may in appropriate cases be used as evidence in the trial of persons charged.... The Commission finds that it is essential to retain this measure....(para 14.5)

In its own terms, the commissioners are correct: in the summary of their terms of reference, they write that

To be able to judge realistically of the question (sic) of the necessity, adequacy, fairness and efficiency of legislation relating to the protection of internal security, regard shouldbe had in the first instance to society as it is at present and as it is likely to be in the foreseeable future (para 14.2).

The Report then goes on to state that there can be no doubt as to the need for security legislation - including detention provisions - given the nature of society as it currently is, and is likely to be in the near future. This is particularly so in the light of

the terrorism and sabotage committed in the Republic during the past few years, the likelihood that these activities will continue to increase in the foreseeable future, the fact that these activities are planned and committed by the supporters of organisations whose aim is to overthrow by violence the existing order in the Republic, the fact that in their activities to achieve this aim these organisations receive the support and assistance of communist countries, and the fact that these activities are carried on from territories bordering the Republic -, and the Commission believes that the measures it recommends are necessitated by the exigencies of the situation in which the Republic finds itself (para 14.2).

What the Commission declines to consider is the sort of society South Africa is, and why it needs the protection of security legislation and detention in order to survive in its current form. Indeed, the Commission explicitly excludes this from

the terms of its investigation and report.

Put in its briefest and simplest form, South Africa is a society in which the majority of the inhabitants are governed without even the semblance of their consent and participation. The Rabie report acknowledges that there is a view which claims that the 'non-white sectors of the population' have no part in governing the country, and that this is the reason for resistance which led to the adoption of security laws. The Commission admits that many people have concluded that there is no hope for peaceful change in South Africa, and that violence is the only outlet for frustrated political and economic aspirations. But this the Commission sees as being part of the political arena, while its mandate involves a juridico-legal viewing of security laws in the light of present and likely future events.

Of course, it would be facile to suggest that in all societies which are governed without the active consent and participation of the majority, repressive security legislation exists in the form proposed by Rabie. Those societies which regard themselves as capitalist democracies include both repressive and ideological mechanisms to ensure the passive consent of the majority of people. There is ruling class and state repression in, for example, North America and Western Europe - but in those areas the majority of inhabitants have some limited control over parts of their lives via trade unions, political parties, the right to vote in elections from city level upwards, etc. In a South African context, even these limited institutions for controlling conflict between rulers and ruled are largely absent.

As such, the Rabie Commissioners are correct when they claim that detention and other security legislation is necessary to maintain society in its present form. The real issue, then, is whether society should be maintained as it is, and if not, in what directions it should be altered. But these questions are placed beyond the scope of Rabie's investigation, which limits itself to questions of how best to protect those interests which currently

dominate in South Africa.

In these terms, the recommendations of the Rabie commissioners are largely understandable. For society can only be maintained in its current form through the use of ever-increasing repression and control. Commissions of Inquiry such as those headed by Wiehahn and Riekert dealt with aspects of control of sections of the working class; the Rabie report deals with the other side of a fundamentally undemocratic society, namely repression.

Having said this, however, a little more could have been expected of the Rabie Commission - at least as far as the protection of detainees is concerned. Within their terms of reference, the commissioners are bound to justify and legitimate detention for the purposes of interrogation: as the report argues, this is probably the most important way in which the police gather information. But the commissioners could still have looked at the possibility of protecting detainees from security police bent on obtaining information. John Dugard, director of the University of Witwatersrand's Centre for Applied Legal Studies, has looked at this question in regard to the conduct of British police in Northern Ireland. He points out that in 1978, the European Court of Human Rights condemned various forms of interrogations used by the British as 'inhuman and degrading treatment', in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. Partially in response to this, British authorities attempted to counter allegations of mental torture of detainees: a detainee may not be held for more than 5 days for purposes of interrogation.

Moreover in terms of the 1979 Bennett Committee Report into Police Interrogation Procedures in Northern Ireland, which today guides police conduct, detainees are allowed visits from their lawyers after 48 hours, interrogations are to be monitored by closed-circuit TV, police 'interviews should not last longer than the interval between normal meal times, or extend over meal breaks, or continue after midnight except for urgent operational reasons'. (John Dugard, writing in the Sunday Times, 07.02.82).

Surely it would not have been too much to expect a Commission headed by an Appeal Court

judge to examine the effects of prolonged solitary confinement. For even if detainees are not tortured or assaulted in a direct physical manner, many claim that detention in solitary conditions is a form of torture. The recent cases of Sam Kikine and Thozamile Gqwetha - both admitted to psychiatric wards as a result of prolonged detention - occurred after Rabie had completed his report. So did the admission for observation of awaiting trial prisoners Mthenjane and Keys, both of whom had been in detention for long periods before appearing in court. But if the Rabie Commissioners had wanted to look at the effects of detention, they could have studied a trial which took place in the Eastern Cape Supreme Court during 1976. The first state witness in these proceedings was Vuyo Baleni of Port Elizabeth, who told the court that while in detention he had tried to cut his wrists and arms with a razor blade. The witness then stood down, and was admitted to the Fort England Mental Hospital for observation. A few days later, the medical superintendent of that hospital reported that Vuyo Baleni had gone into a psychotic state, ripped off his clothes, and now needed psychiatric treatment.

Subsequently, the superintendent of the Tower mental hospital testified that he had 'certified' Baleni, whom he classified as a hysteric, not fully responsible for his actions. The medical superintendent explained that in detention, affinities built up between detainees and their captors: the fact that Vuyo Baleni was unwilling to give evidence against his friends, but was required and expected to do so by police, and the court, could have led to his breakdown.

There are other cases of mental disintegration which can be laid at the door of the system of detention and interrogation: Vuyo Baleni's is given as one example which should have alerted the Rabie Commissioners to the dangers of the system as it exists. Given that the Terrorism Act explicitly authorises detention in solitary conditions, the Rabie commissioners could have proposed that this not be permitted because of its dangerous effects

on the mental health of detainees. Without even alleging that physical torture is a component of interrogation techniques, it can be suggested that those people found by inquests to have committed suicide in detention were driven to this by a combination of solitary confinement and intense interrogation. Rabie's report does nothing to alter this as the usual manner of extracting information from detainees by security police.

Regarding the regular and persistent allegations of physical torture and assault as a method of interrogating detainees, Rabie does nothing to deal with the oft-expressed belief that this does indeed happen. It is very difficult to prove - in a legal sense - that detainees are tortured and assaulted. The whole system of detention is a closed, self-perpetuating one, with no group of people independent of the state having the right of access to detainees. In a few cases - especially where detainees have died - clear indications of assault or torture have emerged. But in general, the veil of secrecy which is one feature of the detention system has prevented independent scrutiny of interrogation techniques.

Take, for example, the inspectorate of detainees which then-police minister Kruger set up after the death of Steve Biko - and which the Rabie report puts forward as a 'new' proposal to protect detainees. The inspectorate is responsible only to the Minister - and reports to him on a confidential basis. In one recent case, a detainee complained to Transvaal inspector Mouton that he had been tortured while under interrogation. In the subsequent trial, the detainee - now charged - subpoenaed Mouton to produce the documents in which the complaint had been recorded. Mouton refused to produce the documents, claiming that section 6(6) of the Terrorism Act justified the withholding of the documents from the defence team. Much the same happened in regard to statements made to magistrates by detainees alleging assaults. Rabie's proposals do not alter the closed, self-monitoring nature of the detention system.

The Johannesburg-based Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC) responded to the Rabie proposals on detention in the following way: they argued that there were three main features of the current detention system, namely

the total discretion of the Minister and the Security Police from the moment of detention, the lack of independent monitoring of their arbitrary exercise of power, and the vulnerability and dependence of detainees on their interrogators.

The DPSC went on to say that they saw 'nothing in the (Rabie) recommendations which indicates any change in these respects - indeed, we suspect that these features are being entrenched' (Star, 04.02.82).

The DPSC became even more aware of the 'closed' nature of the system a few days after responding to Rabie's report - when Neil Aggett was found dead in his detention cell. Before his death, a number of relatives suspected that certain detainees were being mal-treated during interrogation - through sleep deprivation, prolonged periods of enforced standing under interrogation, and in some cases, other assaults and torture. What could parents and relatives do about their suspicions?

Some members of the committee felt that an application should be made to the Supreme Court, restraining security police from assaulting or bringing undue pressure to bear on detainees. But the DPSC faced a major problem in this regard. How could they convince a court that they had good reason to believe their relatives were being mal-treated? Often, the basis of the allegations involved a whispered word, a smuggled message - sometimes passed on at second or third hand.

No court could order an independent investigation of the condition of a detainee: a judge is not even permitted to call the detainee to give evidence, or empower an independent lawyer or doctor to consult with the detainee.

Even if it was possible to obtain a court order preventing mal-treatment of a detainee, how could this be monitored? Would the detainee be told of the court decision, and who could ensure that it would be obeyed by all who had access to the detainee?

Only those within the closed system are in a position to do that.

There was another reason why no relative brought an urgent application to the Supreme Court - even after Mrs Helen Suzman made known the allegation that Neil Aggett had been assaulted before he was found dead in his cell. If an interdict was applied for - even if it was granted - how could the DPSC be sure that the detainee mentioned would not be victimised in some way? Possibly by the withdrawal of reading material or food parcels (where those are permitted); or even the possibility of assaults or other pressures.

The discussion on this problem involved very difficult decisions for relatives of detainees. Neil Aggett was dead - and according to one detainee, had been beaten before his death; a number of others were in hospital. How could other detainees be protected?

In the event, no court application was brought - partially because of the difficulty in proving allegations of mal-treatment. But one thing was made very clear: the so-called safe-guards for detainees currently in force are of almost no use at all. And the Rabie proposals do nothing more than perpetuate a closed, self-contained and self-regulating system of detention for the purposes of interrogation.

As already mentioned, the Rabie report does not look at the question of solitary confinement as a way of extracting information from detainees. Neither does the Commission deal with other interrogation techniques: what of sleep deprivation, or prolonged standing in one spot? How does the Commission feel about these methods? They remain silent - and again fail to offer any new protection to those detained under a system which has caused the death of at least 50 people - and severely affected the mental and physical health of hundreds, if not thousands, of others.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the role of the attorney-general's office in the detention system. Often those held in detention for the

longest periods involve detainees which the office of the attorney-general has designated potential state witnesses in political trials. This does not mean that the person held has agreed to testify - or even that he/she will be called as a witness. It is sufficient that the attorney-general feels that the potential witness might be intimidated, or might abscond, or that it is in the 'interests of the administration of justice'; the person can then be held in conditions which are effectively the same as those applying to section 6 of the Terrorism Act, for a period of up to 6 months.

In practice, those held by the attorney-general as potential state witnesses have previously been section 6 detainees. Their transfer to section 12 of the Internal Security Act is largely administrative: in the recent cases of journalists Thami Mazwai and Zwelakhe Sisulu, they were detained by security police in mid-1981. Early in 1982 they were transferred to section 12(b) of the Internal Security Act. Until Mazwai's appearance in court, and Sisulu's release in February 1982, they received no visits from family, friends, independent doctors or lawyers. For them, 12(b) must have been much the same as section 6 - and it was the office of the attorney-general which was responsible for their detention under 12(b) and for the conditions of detention.

The Rabie proposals retain provisions for the detention of potential state witnesses. This is not surprising, given the general approach of the Commission. But it is worth emphasising that detention provisions are not only administered by security police, and that the offices of the respective attorneys-general are integrally involved in the lengthy detention of people under conditions similar to those existing under section 6 of the Terrorism Act.

Over the past 6 months, a considerable amount of energy has been expended in focusing on the issue of detention and security detainees. Large-scale police raids, followed by the detention of trade unionists, community workers and students initially

high-lighted some of the issues involved; further detentions, the death in security police custody of Neil Aggett, the hospitalisation of a number of section 6 detainees and the report of the Rabie Commission itself continued to focus attention on the system of interrogation and detention. In the major urban areas detainee support groups were set up, meetings held, publications produced.

But if, as has been argued above, the state needs security legislation to maintain society in its current form, it must be asked why opposition groups have given so much attention to this particular issue. After all, the system of detention is just one more aspect of an undemocratic ruling group attempting to maintain its power. While the call may have been for the unconditional release of all detainees and the abolition of detention-related legislation, few have seriously believed that government would take note of such a demand. It therefore becomes important to look at what sort of issue detention is - and why it has recently commanded so much attention.

One obvious answer to this question relates to attempts at protecting those who are currently in detention, and those who may be held in the future. Earlier, it was argued that in ruling class terms, Rabie was correct to recommend the maintenance of a system of interrogative detention if South Africa was to be reproduced as an undemocratic, non-participatory society. But it was also argued that one could have expected the Commission to put forward proposals which provided for the protection of detainees from solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, physical assault and mental torture. Given that such safeguards hardly exist in the current situation, a focus on the whole detention system serves the function of monitoring what occurs in detention, and bringing pressure to bear regarding detention conditions. This may, in certain cases, be of protective value to those undergoing interrogation.

In this context, attempts to organise professional bodies and groups with a direct concern in the system of interrogation and detention - lawyers, medical practitioners, psychologists and psychiatrists -

may be one way of trying to protect detainees from the effects of the system.

2. A second reason for focusing attention on detentions involves the way in which that issue casts light on other aspects of the social system. Over the past few years, it has become fashionable for certain privileged representatives of the ruling classes to argue that the South African state is bent on a reformist programme. All that is holding government back from implementing a wide range of reforms, they argue, is the right wing nature of certain National Party elements, sections of the civil service, etc. What the detention issue does is to show that the so-called reform programme of the 'verlig' wing of government involves a high degree of coercion, repression and control. Elections to the South African Indian Council go hand in hand with the detention of anti-SAIC activists; those unionists who oppose the 'new deal' on labour relations, and who assist instead in the building of strong, democratic unions, are detained. Open opposition political activity, if it involves mass participation, seems to lead to the cells. The whole system of detention demonstrates that current state initiatives may involve change - but not necessarily in the direction in which the majority of South Africans want. Those who are involved in organising and facilitating mass opposition to government's policies - be they the programmes of PW Botha's generals, Piet Koornhof's bureaucrats or Fanie Botha's Department of Manpower Utilisation - face the danger of state repression in one of its forms.

But having said this, it must be noted that detention in itself is a limited issue. Rejection of 'detention-without-trial', of detention in conditions of solitary confinement, of interrogation techniques which involve coercion and manipulation of mind and body - this is a platform which a broad spectrum of organised interests, from representatives of 'enlightened' capital through to the left, can support. But precisely because such a broad and potentially conflicting set of interests can support the issue, its content, limits and parameters need

to be assessed very carefully.

With this in mind, a number of points can be raised in the hope that consideration of them will be constructive for those involved in the detention issue.

1. It needs to be asked which groups and individuals are best placed to facilitate the mobilisation and organisation of those professions which have an interest in the issues and conditions of detention. (This is one of the activities which can potentially provide some protection for detainees, in terms of monitoring conditions, pressuring for safeguards, etc). Of its nature, this is a limited activity: the majority of those involved in the professions are likely to occupy intermediate positions on the political spectrum. As such, it is unlikely that professional bodies can go much beyond attempts to improve conditions within the system of detention.

In these terms, it should be asked whether those on the political left are best suited for engaging with the professions over the issue of detention, or whether this is better undertaken by individuals within the professions who are keen to consolidate progressive viewpoints in their sphere of activity.

There may be an argument that attempts by the political left to intervene with professional groups on an explicitly left-wing basis are counter-productive, and limit the role which such professional groups can play vis-a-vis the detention issue.

2. Much of the activity around detentions has involved a protest component - public meetings, picket protests, petitions, letter writing, religious services. It can be argued that this is a legitimate and important terrain of activity for certain groups - especially moderate interests which have retained or developed a concern and conscience about the direction in which South African society is moving. This, for example, has been an area of activity for the Johannesburg Detainees' Parents Support Committee, which has been both active and successful in its chosen sphere of politics.

But it does need to be asked whether these are the sorts of activities or issues which the left

should be expending time, energy and resources on - especially when they are already being undertaken by other groups.

3. If organised left wing interests are going to undertake certain detention-related activities in alliance with other groups closer to the centre (eg liberal groups), the terms, nature and function of this alliance need to be worked out and specified in each case. For example, some have seen a purpose in trying to inject a greater left-wing content into the activities of predominantly white, liberal groups. Whether this should be the function of an alliance over a limited issue like detention needs to be assessed in terms of productivity and effect.

This is not to suggest that there is no place for co-operation between liberal groups and those further left. This is especially so regarding mutual information inputs, ideas and support in times of crisis. But it does need to be asked whether organised groups to the left of centre are best occupied in liberal, protest and/or 'pressure-group' politics over the issue of detentions when this is already being undertaken by 'centre' groups.

An assessment of these questions can possibly serve to develop both the strategy and tactics of those who see themselves as part of democratic opposition in South Africa.

(A) FCWU

NEIL Aggett, Transvaal secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, was by no means the first trade union leader to be detained in terms of South Africa's security legislation. Neither was he the first trade unionist to die in the custody of security police. Before him, unionists like Looksmart Ngudle (1963), Caleb Mayekiso (1969), Luke Mazembe (1976), Lawrence Ndzanga (1976) and Elijah Loza (1977), died while being held for the purposes of interrogation by security police.

State action against trade union officials was not uncommon before 1950: for example, a number of people associated with the African Mine Workers' Union were charged as a result of the massive 1946 mine workers' strike. But in 1950 the new National Party government enacted the Suppression of Communism Act. The provisions of that Act were used in an attempt to destroy, or at least weaken, independent militant trade unionism. Of those unions affected by government's use of this, and other, anti-working class legislation, the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU) and African Food and Canning Workers' Union (A-FCWU), warrant special consideration. For over the decades, FCWU and A-FCWU have endured wave after wave of state action against their officials. Neil Aggett's detention, and subsequent death while in security police custody, is the latest in a long line of actions which have affected the organisation of workers in the food and canning industry.

Why have FCWU and A-FCWU attracted so much state action? What kind of unions are they that so many of their officials have been banned, detained, banished, tried, forced into exile? What follows is a short summary of some of their history, in an attempt to contextualise state action against independent trade unions, and to situate the death in detention of the Transvaal secretary of the A-FCWU.

The Food and Canning Workers' Union was established in the Western Cape during 1941, having been organised by Ray Alexander, a trade union and political figure of note in working class struggles until forced into exile by a series of banning and house arrest orders. When workers met to establish the union's Pearl branch, they were unable to obtain a hall in which to meet: gathered along the banks of the Berg River, they formed their branch under the moonlight, and signed application forms to join the new union by the glow of car headlamps.

Perhaps that incident captures some of the spirit of the union and its members - determination to press ahead with the workers' struggle despite obstacles, harassment, lack of resources.

The union, from its inception, was strongly non-racial, committed to the organisation of all workers in the food industry. But in 1947, FCWU was forced by law to separate into two separate branches - one for african workers, the other for the remaining 'races'. It was at this time that the A-FCWU was formed as a union formally separate from FCWU. The distinction was, and remains, largely tactical, and union officials continue to refer to 'the union' rather than to two distinct bodies. One difference between the two is that FCWU remains a registered union, while A-FCWU is not, and has never been, registered.

While always basing its organisation on the factory floor, the union combined workplace issues with those broader matters affecting workers outside of the workplace. Housing, Group Areas Act removals, resettlement, bantu education and consumer boycotts were all issues involving the FCWU in its first 15 years of existence.

The union protested to the Land Tenure Board against the group areas allocations of land for Pearl and Wellington. In Leeberts Bay, where FCWU had a large membership, the union was involved in opposition to the resettlement of african women and children away from the area. 1958-59 saw a consumer boycott of the products of the Langeberg Ko-operasie

Baperk (LKB), because of its anti-union activities such as the withdrawal of stop order facilities and the victimisation of union leaders. The outcome of the consumer boycott reminds one of the more recent dispute at Fatti's and Monis, where a boycott of products was launched in support of the workers' demands. In 1959, as in the latter case, the FCWU won recognition from management, and entered into an agreement over wages and working conditions.

FCWU and A-FCWU were involved in a large number of activities undertaken by the Congress Alliance (which involved the African National Congress, Congress of Democrats, the South African Indian Congress, Coloured Peoples' Congress, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions). The unions played a major role in the formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which was the trade union wing of the Congress Alliance, and maintained affiliation to SACTU until such time as state repression forced SACTU into exile.

The dispute at LKB, referred to above, integrally involved the FCWU's relationship to the Congress Alliance through its affiliation to SACTU. The consumer boycott of LKB products was led by Congress, and representatives of the Alliance were involved in negotiations with LKB during the course of the dispute.

When the Bantu Education Act was passed, FCWU supported the ANC's call for a boycott of bantu education schools. The union also participated in activities related to the Congress of the People. Members of the FCWU management committee attended an August 1954 conference to plan the Kliptown congress, and union members set up groups to discuss what the Congress of the People was about, and what the demands of union members were.

FCWU and A-FCWU were involved in SACTU's 1957 E1 a day campaign, and union members were prominent in some of the stay-at-home calls of the period. For example, a 3-day stay-away was called in May 1961, opposing the declaration of South Africa as a Republic. The call received mixed and patchy support, but on the Rand, 75% of food and canning

workers stayed away from work for the whole 3-day period.

But it would be a mistake to see the union as a 'paper organisation', involved in national politics to the detriment of factory floor organisation. From its formation in 1941, FCWU grew in strength, forming branches over the western and eastern Cape, and up the west coast. A separate union was formed in Johannesburg and Durban, and in 1953 this amalgamated with FCWU to form a nationally-based union.

At SACTU's inaugural conference, held in March 1955, FCWU was the largest union represented (9 000 members), with A-FCWU being the third largest (3 600 members). By 1962, FCWU had 8 052 members, while A-FCWU had grown to include 9 565 members. Indeed, the unions seemed to be strengthened by their affiliation to SACTU, and in turn were a back-bone of SACTU activities. One union official explained this in the following way:

It is not enough just to be affiliated. In every town where our Union is in existence we must help SACTU to organise the unorganised workers and build SACTU into a powerful all-in national trade union centre.

Despite the formal existence of two separate unions, a high degree of non-racial working class unity has been displayed by union members over many years. One example of this involved the 1957 strike at Spekhenham Food Products, in Cape Town. Initially, coloured workers from the FCWU went on strike, but when A-FCWU members arrived at the factory gates, they joined the strike. 27 african workers were charged as a result, and at the trial one explained:

I didn't have anything to gain for myself. The reason I didn't go to work was that I wanted to support my Coloured brother workers who were on strike.

During the course of this strike, the 4 congress organisations (ANC, SACPO, COD and SACTU) sent a joint delegation to see Spekhenham management about re-opening negotiations with the striking workers.

The 1956 Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act attacked the internal scope and regulation of registered unions: no further 'mixed' unions would

be registered, already existing 'mixed' unions were to be compelled to separate into uni-racial branches, and racially integrated congresses and shop-floor meetings were prohibited. The majority of SACTU affiliates, being unregistered unions, were not affected by this Act, but some of the best organised and strongest unions were registered. One of these was the FCWU.

Initially, SACTU attempted to form a united front of trade union groups to oppose the legislation, but TUCSA and the other co-ordinating bodies preferred to oppose SACTU rather than the government in power. A two-year debate over the issue of registration took place in SACTU: the options posed involved the formation of uni-racial unions; dividing unions into racial branches; or de-registering in defiance of the law. Oscar Mpetha, who until his detention in 1960 was still organising for A-FCWU, was one of those who argued for de-registration at the time.

Finally, FCWU reluctantly decided to comply with the new Act: while expressing total opposition to it, the union felt that until there was greater unity in the trade union movement it would remain registered.

Given the growing strength and influence of FCWU and A-FCWU, it was inevitable that action would be taken against the unions. Some attempts to weaken them involved administrative action. For example, in 1957 the Wage Board claimed that FCWU was 'unrepresentative' and could therefore not participate in the Board's investigation of the industry. This was despite the fact that FCWU had more than 51% of workers in the industry unionised.

In 1958 the Wage Board actually imposed cuts for certain categories of workers in the food and canning industry, and only the union's strength and relationship to the Congress Alliance prevented these wage cuts from being implemented. At about the same time, the industry was declared 'essential' by government, meaning that there was a total prohibition on all strike activity.

With the passing of the 1960 Suppression of Communism Act, government began removing trade union officials from their union positions. In 1953 the

original organiser of the FCWU, general secretary Ray Alexander, was banned. She was replaced by Becky Lan who was in turn banned from gatherings in 1954, and prohibited from all trade union activity in 1956.

During this period, union president Frank Marquard was banned in 1954, as were Gus Coe of the union's Port Elizabeth branch, and Sarah Wentzel, secretary of the Worcester branch.

When the union's first general secretary, Ray Alexander, was ordered by government to resign from the union, workers struck in protest throughout the Cape. Most of these protest strikes took place in the Western Cape, but there were work stoppages in Port Elizabeth and East London as well. 100 african women migrants struck in East London, and composed the following tribute to their banned general secretary:

By encouraging African workers to organise, you have brought new hope and dignity to thousands of workers. Sobaye Sibona (we will meet again).

In 1959 Elizabeth Mafeking, president of the A-FCWU was banished from her home in Pearl to a farm in a remote, semi-desert area, 80 miles from the nearest large town. Taking only the youngest of her 11 children, she slipped out of South Africa into exile. Frances Beard, secretary of the FCWU's Port Elizabeth branch, was detained by security police in 1962, and banned in January 1963. Held in solitary confinement for a year, she was finally convicted in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. On her release, she was banished to the Northern Transvaal, a thousand miles from her home.

The list of officials removed from FCWU and A-FCWU is very long. Mabel Balfour, Transvaal general secretary of the A-FCWU was banned in 1962, and confined to a small house in Roodepoort; Liz Abrahams, who acted as FCWU general secretary after the banning of Ray Alexander and Becky Lan, was herself restricted in 1964. And Mary Moodley, who had organised workers on the East Rand into FCWU in the 1950s, was held under 90-day detention in 1963. Banned from trade union work in 1963, she remained

banned for all but 3 days of the next 16 years, dying a restricted person in October 1979.

Those arrested in the Treason Trial included A Mahlangu of the A-FCWU, S Demons and Frances Beard of FCWU's Port Elizabeth branch. When the state of emergency was declared in 1960, and the ANC and PAC banned, Beard, Mabel Balfour and Oscar Mpetha were detained. Subsequently, Lily Diedrichs, secretary of the FCWU benefit fund in Port Elizabeth, was also banned.

Inevitably, state action had its effects on the unions, and gradually FCWU retreated to its Western Cape base, where only a few branches remained active. But the development of new independent trade union groupings in the 1970s gave FCWU a new impetus, and by 1979 the union was strong enough to take on the management of Fattis' and Monis in a protected strike - and eventually win recognition. It was during this strike that a consumer boycott of F & M products was launched in support of the workers' demands - a tactic previously used by the union in an earlier period. In the 1950s workers from the union were involved in the boycott of potatoes in the Transvaal, and oranges in the eastern Cape.

The F & M strike served to underline the FCWU's policy of non-racial worker solidarity; both african and coloured workers were involved in the strike activity, and non-racial support groups were set up around the country to undertake the boycott of F & M products.

Union members have been involved in militant strike activity in a number of instances over the past few years - at Sea Harvest in Saldhana Bay (see WIP 11:26-27), and at Kromrivier Apple Co-op (see WIP 13:23-25), for example. Branches have been set up or re-activated in Johannesburg and East London - the latter having been involved in the opposition to Ciskeian 'independence', which obviously affects a majority of union members. Indeed, a number of FCWU unionists were detained by Ciskei authorities in 1980 and 1981, while East London branch secretary Bonisile Norushe was held by South African security

police for 7 months before being called as a witness in a political trial. When he refused to testify, he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

No account of state action against leaders of FCWU and A-FCWU is complete without mention of Oscar Mpetha: involved in A-FCWU for over 3 decades (interrupted by banning orders and imprisonment), he is currently standing trial in Cape Town with 17 others. Detained in August 1980 in the context of the Cape Town bus boycott, the state refuses even to allow this 71-year old veteran of trade unionism bail, despite failing health and very little evidence implicating him in his trial. In many ways, Mpetha's involvement in trade union, community and political struggles symbolises the history of FCWU and A-FCWU - including the systematic attacks made by the state on these unions.

This is the context in which Neil Aggett's death should be viewed. As secretary of the Transvaal branch of A-FCWU, he was integrally involved in the resurgence of worker organisation. His death robs A-FCWU in particular, and the independent union movement in general, of a valued and important member. But the union has outlived the numerous previous attacks on its officials. As a recent press report noted,

On general policy issues,....the unions' stance remains within an established tradition. There is a bedrock belief in industrial unionism, non-racialism and rank and file control (Star, 18.01.82).

It is these features which should enable FCWU and A-FCWU to survive the death of an organiser, as well as any future actions which the state is planning against the independent trade union movement.

DETENTIONS: Investigating Inquests

IN response to Neil Aggett's death in detention, and the approach of the inquest into the circumstances of his death, it is important to focus attention on the procedures followed in inquests. This article looks at some features of the inquest with regard to political detainees. It includes concrete examples illustrating the role of police, the presiding magistrate, and state pathologists. Other legal proceedings resulting from deaths in detention are also considered.

The Inquest Act, No 58 of 1959

It is essential to understand the purpose and aims of an inquest in order to realise that the limitations contained in the various provisions of the Inquest Act lay inquest proceedings open to such abuse as to prevent the achievement of those aims.

An inquest is not a criminal trial in which people are found guilty and then sentenced. An inquest is a hearing consisting of

- 1) a magistrate;
- 2) a public prosecutor;
- 3) a person representing those with an interest in the outcome of the inquest (hereafter referred to as a lawyer); and
- 4) any witnesses that are necessary to assist the court in the search for the truth.

The function of both the public prosecutor and the lawyer is to present the magistrate with the facts surrounding the death of the deceased. The magistrate then has to arrive at a decision as to the circumstances of the deceased's death, and whether it was caused by any act or omission on the part of anyone. It must be stressed that the role of the

public prosecutor is only to lead the evidence, and not to attempt to exonerate or apportion blame; it is certainly not the public prosecutor's role to put the beliefs and past actions of the deceased on trial, as occurred in the Timol and Haffajee inquests.

The Act deals with all types of inquests, but we will only deal with the most important areas of the Act that relate to the situation where a person dies mysteriously in detention.

A person is detained by the security police and kept in solitary confinement. On the fifth day of detention the South African Police announce that the detainee was found dead in police cells at John Vorster Square. Section 3 of the Inquest Act states that if any policeman has reason to believe that death was not as a result of natural causes, then the SAP must conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the death.

The same section of the Act provides for the holding of a medical examination of the body, but only if the magistrate 'deems it expedient in the interests of justice'. At this medical examination the only people who may be present are

- 1) the South African Police;
- 2) a district surgeon or any doctor appointed by the magistrate;
- 3) a medical practitioner nominated by anyone who satisfies the magistrate that he or she has a substantial interest in the issue of the examination;
- 4) anyone else who has the consent of the magistrate or the medical practitioner conducting the examination.

The results of the police investigation must then be handed to the public prosecutor (section 4 of the Act). If the public prosecutor decides not to prosecute anyone in connection with the death of the detainee, then he or she must give all of the documents to the magistrate who shall proceed to hold an inquest as to the circumstances and causes of death if it appears to the magistrate that death was not due to natural causes.

It is at this stage that the actual preparation

for the hearing begins, but unlike a normal trial at which both the state and defence have access to the various documents to be used, in an inquest only the magistrate and public prosecutor have access to the documents. The lawyer may only have such access if the magistrate, in his discretion, allows this.

With regard to witnesses, the magistrate has the power to subpoena any person to give evidence or to produce a document at the inquest (section 8). The lawyer has no right to subpoena any witnesses. In Timol and another vs magistrate of Johannesburg and another, the then Judge President of the Transvaal stated that 'It must be remembered that the witness is the witness of the inquest court and not of a particular party'. This means that the public prosecutor and the magistrate decide who the witnesses will be. Thus, if the lawyer wishes to call a certain witness, the magistrate's permission must first be obtained before that witness may give evidence.

If the magistrate decides that the assistance of an expert in any particular field is needed to assist the court in coming to a finding then the magistrate may choose one or two 'assessors'. Even then, the magistrate alone may decide on any question of law, and it is also for the magistrate to decide which are questions of law, and which are questions of fact.

During the inquest, the public prosecutor may examine any witness giving evidence (section 11(1)), whereas the lawyer may only ask the witness such questions as the magistrate may allow (section 11(2)). An important provision in the Act is that one which provides that any document purporting to be officially made by any person in connection with the death shall, in the discretion of the magistrate, be admissible as proof of the facts set out in the document (section 13). The magistrate then has the discretion whether or not to call the person who made the official statement to give evidence. This in effect means that the public prosecutor can submit an official statement made by a member of the SAP. This document then stands as uncontradicted evidence as the lawyer does not have the opportunity to cross

examine the maker of the statement in order to ascertain the truth of the allegations contained in the statement. However, the magistrate may decide to call the person who made the statement to give evidence - but then the magistrate has the discretion to determine which questions the lawyer should be allowed to ask.

After all the evidence (such as it is) has been heard, the magistrate 'shall record a finding....

- a) as to the identity of the deceased person;
- b) as to the cause or likely cause of death;
- c) as to the date of death;
- d) as to whether the death was brought about by any act or omission involving or amounting to an offence on the part of any person'.

If the magistrate is unable to record any finding, then he/she must record that fact. No reasons need be given by the magistrate for coming to any of the findings.

If the magistrate states

- 1) that the court is unable to record a finding, or
- 2) that the death was brought about by an act or omission involving or amounting to an offence on the part of any person, or
- 3) if requested to by the attorney general, then the magistrate must give the file of the inquest to the attorney general who may then, in his discretion, reopen the inquest.

There are certain offences that the Inquest Act does set out, the most important being that 'any person who prejudices, influences or anticipates the proceedings or findings of an inquest....shall be guilty of an offence'. Sentence is a maximum of R500, or 6 months, or both. This offence was introduced in 1979, not long after the conclusion of the Biko inquest.

Bearing in mind the fact that the public prosecutor and the magistrate are public servants in the pay of the state, and the extent of the discretion that is given to the magistrate, it is clear that the Inquest Act is vulnerable to abuse. The magistrate can, with the use of the discretionary powers, direct and channel the events in the

inquest to the extent of almost excluding the party representing the relatives of the deceased.

An effective summary of the Act is to compare the ambit of the magistrate's discretion with the rights of representatives of the deceased.

The following fall within the magistrate's discretion:

- 1) Whether a medical examination should be held or not (section 3(2)).
- 2) Whether the deceased's body should be disinterred or not (section 3(4)).
- 3) Who should be present at the post mortem besides the district surgeon and police.
- 4) The date of the inquest - 'reasonable notice...to be given to the spouse or relative, provided the spouse or relative is available and the giving of such notice will not, in the opinion of the magistrate, unduly delay the inquest' (section 7).
- 5) Which witnesses should be called to give evidence.
- 6) Which assessors should sit with the magistrate to decide on the findings: must also get Ministerial sanction for this (section 9(1)).
- 7) Which persons should be excluded from the place of the inquest - '...the magistrate holding the inquest may in his discretion exclude from the place where the inquest is held any person whose presence thereat is, in his opinion not necessary or desirable' (section 10).
- 8) Which questions may be put by interested parties to the witnesses - 'Representatives of interested parties may only put such questions as the magistrate may allow' (section 11(2)).
- 9) Whether and when the inquest should be adjourned (section 12(1)).
- 10) Which documents should be admissible in proof of the facts stated therein (section 13(1)).
- 11) Whether the person making the above-mentioned affidavit shall be called to give evidence (section 13(2)).
- 12) Whether evidence should be taken on commission or not (section 15).
- 13) Whether interested parties should see or obtain the documents given by the prosecutor to the magistrate which may or will be used in the inquest.

'It will be in his discretion whether he allows them to have a copy or to peruse the document, and it will be in his discretion whether it is to be allowed in respect of all the documents or only in respect of some of them, and as to when this is to be done, or in what circumstances and subject to what conditions the perusal is to take place or the copies are to be delivered'.

14) Whether a list of witnesses and documents to be used in the trial be given to the interested party.

The rights of interested parties (normally relatives of the deceased):

- 1) The right to nominate legal representation.
- 2) The right to nominate a medical practitioner to be present at the medical examination (section 3(5)(b)).
- 3) To put such questions to witnesses as the magistrate may allow (section 11(2)).
- 4) To hand in affidavits (section 13(1)) - and ask that the makers of the affidavits be subpoenaed to give oral evidence.

Post-Mortem

THE Inquest Act lays down the legal framework in which the post-mortem examination is to take place. According to the Act, a magistrate to whom a death is reported may 'if he deems it expedient in the interests of justice, cause (the body) to be examined by the district surgeon or any other medical practitioner who may, if he deems it necessary for the purpose of ascertaining with greater certainty the cause of death, make or cause to be made an examination of any internal organ or any part of any of the contents of the body, or of any other substance or thing'.

In addition, a private pathologist may be present if the magistrate is satisfied that such a person (usually representing the family of the deceased) has a 'substantial and peculiar interest in the issue of the examination'.

Even if private pathologists are present, they may not necessarily be so at the critical post-mortem. In the case of Luke Mazembe, private pathologists were only able to see the body 5 days after the

officially performed post-mortem. In the case of Neil Aggett, the post-mortem was started prior to the arrival of the private pathologist.

The aim of the post-mortem examination is to establish precisely the cause of death. The post-mortem examination consists of the following procedures:

- 1) Identification of the body;
- 2) Secondary post-mortem changes;
- 3) External appearance of the body and condition of the limbs;
- 4) Examination of the head and neck and organs;
- 5) Examination of the chest and organs;
- 6) Examination of the abdomen and organs;
- 7) Examination of the spine;
- 8) Additional observations;
- 9) Specimens.

All the observations of the pathologist are entered into Form (Health) 1, titled 'Report on a medico-legal post-mortem examination', which is completed under the auspices of the Department of Health. This form concludes with an observation as to the cause of death.

It is important to note, however, that the whole examination is still subject to the personal interpretation of the examiner. The pathologist is in a position to note or overlook certain findings and to take or ignore certain specimens. At the inquest of James Lenkoe, evidence of electric shock treatment and traces of copper were found by a private pathologist. The state pathologists were unlikely to have taken such specimens.

Thus, while the inquest post-mortem has the air of cold, objective, scientific enquiry, it is nevertheless open to personal opinion, personal bias, and in some cases, political objectives. Even the scientific basis of many of the conclusions are open to discussion - the Biko inquest contained hours of discussion over how, exactly, certain injuries might have been sustained. The pathologist is in a very powerful position of being expected to state with authority what was the cause of death. In many cases, pathologists refuse to commit themselves by stating

a particular event likely to have caused death. In other inquests, the testimony of doctors has given important insights into the methods of interrogation used by security police, and the resultant deaths of detainees.

The evidence presented by government pathologists is highly regarded by inquest magistrates. Solomon Modipane died on 28 February, 1969. A police spokesman announced that the detainee had received certain injuries when he had slipped on a bar of soap. The district surgeon announced that he was unable to determine the cause of death; the magistrate used this information to state that it was a 'natural death' and that no inquest was necessary.

The pathologist may be unwilling to speculate as to how injuries may have been caused. Imam Abdullah Haron died on September 27, 1969, in the Maitland police cells. The minister of police told the press that he had died of natural causes, having fallen down stairs. 26 bruises of varying ages were identified on the front, side and back of his body. The pathologist stated that the cause of death was heart trouble related to injuries sustained in the fall. He could not or was not willing to say how the other injuries had been caused. Interestingly, although the magistrate attached no blame to any person, the state paid Mrs Haron R5 000 in an out-of-court settlement.

The evidence provided by doctors may also be significant in implicating the security police and their interrogation methods. James Lenkoe was found hanging in his prison cell in Pretoria. The prison surgeon found that death was due to hanging. The family of Lenkoe insisted on another post-mortem being conducted by an independent pathologist. At the inquest, counsel for the widow presented medical evidence that indicated that Lenkoe had been given an electric shock on the day he died. Three pathologists testified that there was a mark on his body that was consistent with a very recent electric burn. The verdict in the inquest was 'self-inflicted hanging'.

In summary, the Inquest Act allows for post-mortem

examinations to take place. These are conducted by state pathologists, except where the magistrate has allowed private pathologists to attend the examination. The post-mortem itself is subjective in terms of what tissues are examined and what specimens taken; the observations too may be contested as to their significance. Doctors involved in providing evidence at inquests may be of assistance to the family or 'prosecution'; sometimes this is intentional. The objectivity of the post-mortem findings is itself a myth.

Illustrations from past inquests

1. Hussein Haffajee

Haffajee, a 26 year old Durban dentist, died on 2 August, 1976, which was the first night of his detention. The inquest into his death was only held in 1978.

Security police testified that Haffajee was detained at a specially erected police block. Police had previously entered his flat, photocopied items there, and then left the premises as if undisturbed. After being detained, police drove Haffajee around Durban, and according to security police he put up a struggle and fought with them a number of times, as if trying to escape. Police claimed that these tussles were the cause of bruises found on the detainee's body, and denied that they were the result of 'excessive interrogation'. The chief state pathologist and an international forensic expert both agreed that the 40-50 bruises on the body were not the cause of death. The representative of the public prosecutor accordingly argued that Haffajee had killed himself by hanging.

The public prosecutor applied to lead documentary evidence to indicate a motive for suicide. These involved notes in his handwriting on how to make explosives, manuals 'for organising terrorism', and other books. He even wanted to call a police explosives expert to testify that bombs found in a building were the same as those described by Haffajee in his notes.

Counsel for the Haffajee family opposed the

application, claiming that it would turn the inquest into a criminal trial of an accused already dead, and therefore not in a position to answer allegations. The magistrate, however, ruled that the documents could be led as evidence.

The public prosecutor then argued that the documents proved that Haffejee had committed suicide because he did not want to face public trial and be exposed as a saboteur.

At the conclusion of the inquest, the magistrate found that no-one was to blame for Haffejee's death. Regarding the injuries on his body, the magistrate found that security police were not responsible. In any event, he ruled that the issue was irrelevant 'since in terms of the Inquest Act the court was not concerned with issues not connected to the cause of death'.

2. Lungile Tabalaza

Tabalaza, a 21 year old youth, fell to his death from the fifth floor of the Sanlam Building (security police headquarters) in Port Elizabeth on 10 July, 1976. This was the same venue where Steve Biko sustained his fatal injuries shortly before.

Tabalaza's death led to calls for the resignation of police minister Jimmy Kruger - who announced that a senior police officer had been appointed to make immediate investigations into the circumstances surrounding the death of Tabalaza.

Two weeks later, Kruger announced that three security policemen in Port Elizabeth would be transferred to another area. One of these was the commanding officer of the PE security police, Colonel P.J. Goosen - prominent in the Biko inquest. Goosen has recently been promoted to Brigadier.

Tabalaza had been arrested together with another 17 year old youth. They were taken from the police station in New Brighton to the Sanlam Building in town where the security police have their offices.

The 17 year old youth was brought to trial on charges of arson and theft within 48 hours of Tabalaza's death. Tabalaza would have been a co-accused in this trial. The youth pleaded guilty on all charges, but the magistrate found him not guilty on some of the charges because of insufficient

evidence. He was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment.

During the course of the inquest, this youth was called as a witness at the request of the family. He said that the security police had told him that he would be detained for 10 years if he did not plead guilty. He also said that he did not want to make a statement in front of a magistrate, but made one because he was afraid of being beaten up.

The security police claimed that Tabalaza had jumped from the fifth floor office in a bid to reach the roof of a building across the street. Counsel for the family said that this was pure speculation and that Tabalaza could have jumped to escape the police or to commit suicide. Tabalaza was afraid of the security police, and they were not only morally liable for his death, but had been criminally negligent, said counsel.

However, the magistrate found that nobody was to blame for his death. He regarded the evidence given by the security police as honest and thoroughly tested, while the evidence given by the youth was false. He rejected his evidence of threats and assaults by police, which the youth had given for the first time at the inquest.

3. Ahmed Timol

Timol was a 30 year old school teacher who fell from the tenth floor of John Vorster Square, Johannesburg, in October 1971.

An inquest date was initially set down for December 1971, but at the start counsel for the family applied for access to documents relating to Timol's detention. The magistrate refused this, and counsel applied to the Supreme Court to set aside this refusal. The Supreme Court ordered the magistrate to study the documents, but said that it was still at the magistrate's discretion what to do. After studying the documents, the magistrate allowed them all to be disclosed.

When the inquest began at the end of April 1972, statements allegedly written by Timol during the three days before his death were handed in as exhibits. He was reported to have described how he was recruited and trained by the South African Communist Party

in London.

During the course of the inquest, a visit was made to the room from which he was alleged to have jumped. Security police who had been present and involved in the case at the time, gave evidence about how Timol jumped. Two security police gave conflicting accounts, and counsel for the family pointed out that one of them had only handed in a statement to the CID, who were investigating the case, two weeks late. To add to the drama, General Buys, head of the CID and leader of the investigation team, who had agreed that there were inconsistencies, had a heart attack while being cross examined. Later, he was apparently back in his office doing light work, but was unfit to return to the witness box.

The state gave two possible reasons why Timol had jumped: they said that he had jumped after a Mr X (an informer whose name they would not disclose), had walked into the office and announced that they had traced 'Quentin and others'. If this was the same person as Quentin Jacobson, he was later acquitted on charges under the Terrorism Act, and Timol was not mentioned in that case.

The second reason put forward related to documents found in Timol's possession, which instructed members of the Communist Party to commit suicide rather than betray the Party. The magistrate accepted that Timol must have been familiar with these instructions.

Detailed medical argument was led concerning dates of bruises that were found on Timol's dead body. It was difficult to ascertain whether the bruises were inflicted prior to detention, or while he was in detention. The magistrate recommended when giving judgement, that detainees under the Terrorism Act should in future be examined by a district surgeon as soon as possible after their detention. This might avoid the necessity for long enquiries, and might save the police unnecessary embarrassment.

There was also medical debate about injuries that could have been sustained immediately prior to death. However, counsel admitted that injuries,

unless inflicted before death, would be indistinguishable from those sustained at death (from falling).

Counsel asked the magistrate to give a verdict that he was unable to say whether the death had been brought about by an act or omission on the part of any person. The magistrate's finding was that nobody was responsible. He said that Timol's death could have been politically motivated because of his alleged adherence to communist ideology, and that 'his death was a terrible loss to the police', since he was very 'valuable' for their investigations.

Other legal proceedings

THE general and most accepted procedure after a death has occurred in detention is an inquest hearing. Two of the deaths that have occurred in detention have result in additional court proceedings. The cases of Joseph Mdluli and Mpetle Mohapi are these instances.

Joseph Mdluli

On 19 March, 1976, Joseph Mdluli died in police custody in Durban, 24 hours after he had been detained. No inquest took place as the state decided to prosecute 4 security policemen for culpable homicide.

The ANC in London released certain photographs of Mdluli's corpse. They showed a multitude of injuries on his body. He had numerous abrasions, a fractured cartilage, broken ribs and his brain was congested with haemorrhages. This was the climate in which the trial of the 4 security policemen took place.

The accused were:

Captain DF van Zyl
Lieutenant HR Taylor
Detective Sergeant MP Makhenya
Detective Sergeant Z Ngobese.

The accused did not give evidence. Instead they made statements to the prosecutor. Their version of the events leading up to Mdluli's death was as follows: Joseph Mdluli was arrested on 18 March at about 10h00. The following morning, while being

interrogated, he moved towards the window in an attempt to commit suicide. He was restrained, and a fierce struggle ensued. The incident was reported to Major Coetzee who saw Mdluli and stated that he was satisfied that Mdluli had not been injured.

Mdluli's interrogation continued with occasional breaks until about 20h30 the same day. The police alleged that he then suddenly got up, staggering and complaining of dizziness. He fell with his chest or neck onto the back of a chair. The chair toppled and Mdluli fell against the door. Shortly afterwards, Mdluli was dead.

In his judgement, Justice James referred to the evidence of Dr van Straaten, the state pathologist who carried out the post-mortem on Mdluli's body. Dr van Straaten had originally attributed the cause of death to throttling, but after discussing the matter with the chief state pathologist, Professor Gordon, he came to the conclusion that Mdluli's death was associated with the application of force to the neck. The judge did not dispute this finding, and had this to say about it: 'In other words, although what he observed was consistent with death through throttling it was also consistent with the application of force or some other manner'.

Justice James referred to the statements which the accused had made, in which they said that Mdluli had admitted to having recruited people for military training. They also said that he had revealed the name of the taxi driver who had transported the recruits. The judge accepted the accused's story that they had used no more 'force than was necessary' to subdue Mdluli after he had moved towards the window. He said they 'clearly were not guilty of any unlawful conduct at 8.30 on the morning of the 19th March because they applied no greater force than was lawfully justified in the circumstances'.

When the second incident occurred 12 hours later, the 4 accused, according to their statements, were not in the room. Other security policemen, Khumalo, Nduli, and Mhlongo were there. The judge said that although the accounts given by the latter differed in detail, there seemed to be general agreement that

Mdluli got up from his chair, held his head in his hands, complained of dizziness, and then fell onto a chair and then against a door frame. Other policemen rushed to the scene and endeavoured to apply artificial respiration. By 21h30 it was obvious that Mdluli was dead.

If this evidence of the police is to be accepted at its face value, then it is clear that the 4 accused were not responsible for the death of Mdluli. They were not present when he died and had left the room about an hour before. The only incident in which they had been involved in any violent contact was at about 8.30am over 12 hours before his death and according to Major Coetzee he noticed nothing wrong with Mdluli after the incident,

the judge said.

The judge discounted the argument put forward by Mr Brunette for the state, that the death occurred as a result of the incident which took place at 8h30 in the morning. The doctors' evidence had stated that death would have been almost instantaneous after receiving the neck injuries. He could not have sustained these injuries and only died 12 hours later. Furthermore, if Mdluli had received the neck injuries in the morning and died immediately, the judge said, the court 'was unable to accept' that it was possible for the police to cover this up until that night.

The 4 security policemen were thus found not to be responsible for Mdluli's death, although there was a possibility that they had used 'legitimate force to subdue him'. Justice James acquitted them of the charge of culpable homicide.

Before concluding his judgement, however, the judge had this to say in the light of the widespread injuries on Mdluli's body and the conflicting evidence he had heard:

I need hardly say that the problem of how Mdluli met his death is one that should be solved and that it is one of great importance.

Joseph Mdluli was listed as a co-conspirator in a trial in Pietermaritzburg of 10 men charged with ANC activities. Mr Justice Howard, in a section of his judgement, referred to Mdluli's death in detention. He said that the injuries that caused his death could

not have been self-inflicted, nor caused accidentally. He said

We are satisfied that Mr Mdluli sustained the injuries while he was in the custody of the Security Police. There is no evidence of how he suffered the injuries, or in what circumstances. That is a matter peculiarly in the knowledge of the persons in whose custody he was at the time and none of them has given evidence.

The statements made by both judges have far-reaching implications in terms of further investigation into Mdluli's death. However, no further action has been taken by the attorney general, and the circumstances of his death have only left his interrogators that much more suspect in the eyes of the world.

As has been stated above, inquests are far from adequate means of establishing what actually happens when a death has occurred in detention. If a civil or criminal case reaches the courts, much more evidence is brought to light, both sides investigating and arguing more deeply the events leading up to the death.

Mapetla Mohapi

An inquest into the death in detention of Mapetla Mohapi (died 15.07.76) found that the cause of death was 'force applied to his neck due to hanging'. His death, the magistrate said, was not brought about by any act or omission by any living person. However, the magistrate did not issue a formal verdict of suicide.

Mapetla Mohapi's widow then sued the Minister of Police for damages for loss of support resulting from the death of her husband in police custody. This is the only civil action with regard to a death in detention actually fought in a court of law which was not kept out of that arena through out-of-court settlements, which has been the common practice.

In Mohapi vs Minister of Police, much of the argument centred around a suicide note which counsel for Mrs Mohapi argued was faked. They brought in expert witnesses to testify, one of whom was a Dr Julius Grant, past president of the Forensic Science Society, and Medical Legal Society of Great Britain.

Dr Grant showed differences between the handwriting of the alleged suicide note and other authentic examples of Mohapi's handwriting.

Doctor Grant had the toilet paper on which the alleged suicide note was written analysed under ultra-violet light. The same procedure was adopted for other notes which Mohapi had smuggled out on toilet paper, while in detention. Dr Grant claimed that the composition of the paper on which the 'suicide note' was written was of a different composition from that of Mohapi's clandestine letters, as they did not come from the same roll.

Evidence was also led as to the change in tone from three optimistic letters written from jail and then the improbable suicide note. Mrs Mohapi said that in the letters he had smuggled out, Mohapi had expressed optimism about the future. He advised her to obtain a loan in his name to tide her over 'until I am back in circulation someday'. In an unprecedented move, evidence of an ex detainee, who was in exile in Lesotho, was heard. Thenjiwe Mtintso described in her evidence how Captain Hansen of the security police had held her head with his thighs and put a towel across her face and pulled it tight. He had then said, 'Now you know how Mohapi died' (Star, 18.01.80).

The police led evidence to the effect that the suicide note was genuine. Lt Col Fourie said he had examined the suicide note and compared it with authentic writings of Mohapi's, and said 'there were no signs to convince (him) that it was not a genuine document'.

A second police handwriting expert, Det-Sgt KFC Landman, said he had applied 10 different criteria to establish whether the Mohapi note might be a forgery. They all proved negative, he said.

The finding of Justice Smalberger was that there had not been sufficient evidence to suggest that Mohapi's death had been caused through assault by the police. Neither was there convincing evidence to suggest that the suicide note was faked. He dismissed Mrs Mohapi's claim, and ordered her to pay all costs to the Minister of Police.

AN overview of the available findings of inquests into deaths in detention reveals two issues: firstly, the magistrate's findings as to the cause of death follows closely the explanations advanced by security police when they announce the death. Secondly, no magistrate has ever found any policeman or other person responsible for a death that has occurred in detention. Further, no magistrate has ever recorded an 'open verdict' in an inquest into a death in detention - which would mean that he was not able to make a finding on the basis of the available evidence. In all legal proceedings dealing with deaths in detention, security police have been exonerated every time.

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INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ECONOMY, part 4

THE previous three parts of this series have concentrated almost exclusively on the structure of the capitalist economy. As explained in part one, the economy was focused on because it is the basis of society in general. This is not to say that politics, law, culture, the state and ideology are not important. Clearly they are, and some of the most significant processes and relations are found in the non-economic areas of society. But as Pierre Jalés argued,

humankind's first need is to maintain physical life; production of the means of subsistence (clothing, food, housing) and the conditions under which they are produced are of immediate, fundamental and permanent importance....A society can only be built upon such an economic infrastructure as a house on its foundations (quoted in WIP 19:24).

In other words, the understanding of economic structures and relationships allows for the exploration of other aspects of society. In this sense, the method used in the series on political economy involved exploring the base of capitalist society - the economy - before trying to move on to other important features of the social system.

But it is not quite accurate to say that the whole economic structure has been explored in this series. The economy itself is made up of a number of interrelated parts. These involve the actual production of commodities, as well as the way in which commodities are bought and sold (circulation of goods). In looking at the economy, it was argued that the most important processes and relations at work involved the way in which commodities were

produced. The economy as a whole was therefore not examined, but rather the conditions under which commodities are produced.

In the investigation of production, two very important sets of relations were uncovered. They involved

1. the relationship of the various classes to the means of production; and
2. the way in which the capitalist class attempts to increase the amount of surplus which is produced by the working class.

It was argued that these relations were important in that they formed an initial basis for understanding the differences and similarities between various societies. It was found, for example, that the capitalist class as a whole owned the most important means of production. This ownership is a significant basis of power, in that it enables the owners to decide what is produced, how it is produced, and how any surplus is distributed and reinvested.

Those relations which were identified in the first three parts of the series on political economy form a basis for understanding what classes are in society, and how one identifies such classes. The capitalist class is identified in terms of its ownership of the means of production, the fact that its members do not produce commodities, and its ability to take over or appropriate the surplus value and profit which emerge from new production.

The working class, on the other hand, is defined by its separation from (or non-ownership of) the means of production, the fact that its members are the direct producers of surplus value, yet have no control over how it is distributed or reinvested.

It is the identification of these relations which begins to explain the nature of the contradiction between the two major classes of capitalist society. This contradiction is the basis of conflict between these classes. In as much as the contradiction is inherent in the economic structure, conflict cannot disappear without a change in the basic economic relations.

Put simply, this contradiction between the two largest classes in society is indicated in the following ways:

the working class produces value and surplus value, while the capitalist class appropriates (takes over) the surplus value produced;
the capitalist class owns the means of production, while the working class is separated from (does not own) the means of production;
it is in the interests of capital to increase surplus labour time relative to necessary labour time worked (see the diagrams and explanations in the first three parts of this series for the difference between surplus and necessary labour time);
it is in the interests of labour to increase necessary labour time relative to surplus labour time.

These seemingly abstract notions have very real and concrete effects in society. (It is worthwhile repeating here what was previously said about abstraction, as that notion applies to the method of political economy. In part one of the series, it was argued that

The manner of investigating the general nature of a social system involves....abstraction. This is the way in which the most important, the basic features of a system are identified, and the way in which they are lifted out of (abstracted from) the less important features of that system. This process is something done in the mind in an attempt to find out which aspects of a society are basic to that society - and which are superficial. The method of abstraction - of removing fundamental processes and structures from less important ones so that they can be examined - is tied up with the attempt to understand reality, rather than accepting that things are the way they seem to be (WIP 19:24)).

A number of the abstract relations and processes identified have concrete effects in the real world: for example, the changing relationships between necessary and surplus labour time in practice involves struggles between workers and employers over the length of the working day, overtime, mechanisation, and the speed and intensity of work. Conflicts over these issues tend to indicate an attempt by either capital or labour to change the

divisions of the working day. The respective power, organisation and strength of the two conflicting classes will, in each case, decide how each issue is resolved.

In much the same way, it was argued that the setting of the value of labour power was an important process in society. Conflicts and struggles over this show up in wage disputes, changing relations between industrial and rural areas, and in a series of other ways.

Another important abstract relationship discussed involved the differing positions of the various classes to the means of production. There are a number of different ways in which the capitalist class can own and control the means of production - involving formal share ownership, state involvement, managerial representatives acting as agents for owners, etc.

The relation of the working class to the material means of production also changes within the capitalist economy. And, importantly, non-capitalist societies (eg feudal, socialist) involve very different relations of both direct producers and non-producers to land, machinery and tools.

This, then, has been the major aim of the series on political economy: to identify a set of important abstract economic relations, and to see what they tell us about capitalist society in general. Those relations which exist within production have been concentrated on. However, while they are very important, other factors have to be taken into account to understand any society. The conditions under which commodities are produced tells a lot about certain basic processes in capitalist society. But to understand specific societies, other dynamics which do not relate only to the economy also have to be analysed and understood.

'ORGANISING WOMEN': Response 1

A controversial feminist once compared the connection between marxism and feminism to 'the marriage of husband and wife depicted in English common law: marxism and feminism are one and that one is marxism'.¹ Hartman continues her simile, 'either we need a healthier marriage or we need a divorce'. The article 'Organising Women' (WIP 21) is an important contribution towards a more equal state of affairs, but both the article and Hartman's simile suffer from a similar defect: they fail to go beyond the conventionally accepted social and political forms. While Hartman fails to problematise the institution of marriage, the authors of 'Organising Women' fail to push beyond the conventional sites and forms of political struggle.

The thrust of the article is how to integrate women into class struggle. The authors show very clearly that working class women experience exploitation and oppression, both as women and as members of the black working class. The theoretical assumption behind their argument seems to be that class structures define the forms of sexual oppression to which women are subject. However, they fail to follow through the political implications of their argument. This is essential if feminism is to be prioritised, and put on the agenda for political action, and not simply subsumed under class struggle.

In the first place, two themes within feminism which have considerable force have to be confronted if the predominant conception of feminism as a 'weapon of imperialism'² or 'bourgeois indulgence' are to be dispelled. A radical feminism which assumes that the sexual oppression of women transcends class divisions must be attacked on all fronts. This perspective is

exemplified in the slogan 'A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle'. While this might express a notion of female autonomy and independence which is valuable in some contexts, it is dangerous and divisive in a society like our own, where progressive men and women have to unite in a common struggle against exploitation and oppression in all its forms.

A liberal or bourgeois feminism which seeks equality with men within the existing order must also be attacked. This kind of feminism is on the ascendency in South Africa and fits in very well with the 'total strategy' to which capital and the state are committed. Total strategy involves utilising all the resources available to change South Africa in ways that enable those in power to remain in power. It involves giving privileges to a select group of people - specifically some groups of urban blacks - at the expense of the vast majority of blacks in the rural areas. In the same way, bourgeois feminism involves increasing the privileges of some groups of middle class women at the expense of the vast majority of women in South Africa. This kind of feminism might involve change, but not progress.

In the crisis we are presently facing there is no room for any alliance with radical or bourgeois feminists. The authors of 'Organising Women' are clearly wanting to distance themselves from both positions, but this requires a more rigorous statement of the socialist feminist position. The way forward for socialist feminists does not lie in the 'equal and active participation of women in all organisations.....' (WIP 21:22). Obviously the authors are sensitive to the 'pull' the organisations and issues they cite have for black working class women, but in the present situation more creative and innovative strategies are demanded. Strategies such as organising around the sites in which working class women are oppressed have not been prioritised by socialist or nationalist movements in South Africa. Sites such as the health care system in which women, both as the majority of producers and consumers of health care services, are exploited and

oppressed BOTH by capital and by men. Sites such as the household in which the wife's unpaid labour benefits BOTH capital and men. Looking at sites of oppression such as the household and the health care system has the potential for mobilising women because it involves raising questions about 'the private domain', about our most deeply intimate and personal affairs. These questions are not normally the subject of political struggle. By making these issues part of politics, feminism has begun to break down the barriers which have kept so many people - especially women - out of political struggle. It has this potential because it is calling for a 'total politics', a politics which fights oppression on all fronts. The notion of the totality of oppression is central to the marxist theoretical tradition, but has been lost in socialist politics - in methods of organising. It is a tradition on which feminism can build.

To return to Hartman's simile, a divorce is needed - not from marxism, but from bourgeois and radical feminism and the divisive and distracting strategies they have generated. A 'healthier marriage' between marxism and feminism involves prioritising feminist politics in a more creative way. 'Organising Women' leaves many important questions unanswered:

1. What is the role of the white middle class feminist in our struggle; a struggle in which we are both the oppressed and the oppressors? Joseph³ has argued that it is necessary for white feminists to
 - (i) recognise their implication in the partnership (of capital and patriarchy) as benefactors and tools;
 - (ii) address the unique problems of black women in the labour force; and
 - (iii) distinguish between the role of white men and black men in the partnership of capital and patriarchy (Joseph, 1981:102).
2. What is the role of the progressive man in relation to feminism? The current 'politics of adoption'⁴ is hardly a strong platform from which alliances could be forged. One version of this has been articulated as follows:

To the extent that feminist demands flow from an experience of oppression which is specific

to women, which men can never themselves experience and to which they actively contribute, all they can do is listen, agree and support. Thus male socialists can support women's struggles for the same reason that they support the struggles of all oppressed people, and feminism is linked to socialism through the general category of oppression. This kind of male solidarity with feminism seems to offer a new version of an old problem facing white middle class male intellectuals: the fact that the objects of their political concern have always been external and other - the poor, the black, the colonised, exploited and physically or spiritually crushed in some inaccessible combination (Politics and Power: 1981:8).

3. Is there a case to be made for a specifically black feminist politics? Some time ago, Kollontai posed the question of whether a united women's movement was possible in a society based on class contradictions.⁵ We have to take this further and ask what are the possibilities for feminism in a society shot through with racial inequality and antagonisms? The sexual inequality between black men and women has very different historical and cultural beginnings to those between whites, and clearly calls for different strategies for change. Angela Davis has argued that the institution of slavery played a curious role in bringing about equality among black men and women.⁶ In South Africa, the structures of apartheid have created a shared sense of oppression among blacks, and generated very particular forms of sexual inequality. This would suggest that the peculiar dynamics of racial oppression have to be confronted and not subsumed in class analysis.
4. How much dialogue is there between white and black women in South Africa at present? Joseph sees a process of mutual education as the key to political action:

As black and white feminists combine forces in the struggle against male supremacy and white supremacy, they must be willing to communicate and follow a format consisting of dialogue, practise, more dialogue, and more practise - moving slowly and inexorably towards advanced levels of understanding and respect for one another's differences. The similarities among women are easier to understand and should be used as building blocks towards understanding and respect for racial and class differences. The possibility of an alliance between black and

white women can only be realised if white women understand the nature of their oppression within the context of the oppression of blacks (Joseph, 1981:106).

Only at that point will we be able to unite in a common struggle against racial, sexual and class inequality. But the different forms and structures demanded in this struggle have to be specified very clearly.

The authors of 'Organising Women' begin their article by quoting from the Women's Charter of the Federation of South African Women, 1954, which states, 'We women have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder (my emphasis) with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty, race and class discrimination....'. 'Shoulder to shoulder' was a rallying cry among the militant suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Britain early in this century. This powerful image of alliance raises difficult questions in the South African context. This comment has simply tried to focus on some of them.

Jacklyn Cock (February 1982)

Notes

1. Hartman, H - 'The unhappy marriage of marxism and feminism', in Capital and Class, Number 8, Summer 1979.
2. de Chungara, D - Let me Speak. Testimony of 1978 Domitila, a woman of the Bolivian mines. (Stage 1, London).
3. Joseph, G - 'The incompatible menage a trois: marxism, feminism and racism' in L Sargent (ed) Women and Revolution (Pluto Press, London).
4. Politics and Power 111. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981 London).
5. Kollontai, A - Selected Writings. Allison and Busby, London).
6. Davis, A - 'Reflections on the black women's role in the community of slaves', in The Black Scholar, vol 3 no 4, December 1971.

Response 2

A few years ago some best-forgotten group put out a bumper sticker bearing the slogan 'Peaceful change now!' Our response to 'Organising Women?' (WIP 21) was much the same as our response to that sticker, sympathy with the strong feelings of the authors, but disquiet at their logic.

The conclusion to 'Organising Women?' -

It is only through the equal and active participation of women in all organisations, now, that women's basic demands will be met in a future democratic South Africa

- flies in the face of the authors' own data and of the political realities of this country.

While appreciating the 18 months' research done by the women's study group into the forms of oppression peculiar to black working class women and recognising, as they do, the need for a radical change in sexual attitudes, we believe that there are some serious flaws in their arguments.

Firstly, after stating emphatically that 'the majority of women' are not ready to participate in mass politics (an assertion we would dispute in its present form), they then demand 'equal and active participation in all organisations'. Given that the majority of women are not ready (to quote the authors) to participate in mass politics, are they suggesting that x number of such 'unready' women get dragged in off the streets to fill their 50% quota in the ranks of these 'organisations'?

Or are the authors perhaps looking a little closer to home? Are they modestly suggesting that they are ready to shoulder this heavy burden themselves - being, presumably, liberated, and thus unencumbered with 'subservience, passivity and lack of self-confidence'?

Come now, let's be realistic. Women are oppressed because that oppression serves certain interests, not because their male counterparts don't like mixed stoves.

No-one would suggest that under the present

regime the working class could somehow gain control of the means of production. Why then do the authors expect anything different in the realms of sexual politics?

After pages of examples demonstrating why women do not participate equally in 'all organisations' (whatever that may mean), the authors blandly demand, in their last sentence, that they should.

Surely they cannot be suggesting that the structural and ideological constraints of South African society are accidental, and that merely by wanting to, these 'organisations' can somehow steal a march on Mocambique and implement sexual liberation before economic and political liberation?

In addition, the authors seem to believe that the nature of female participation in industrial or community action is somehow different from that of male participation. The female rent protestors in Soweto mentioned by the authors did not necessarily participate in that action as women; nor did those involved in the Sea Harvest or Fremetex strikes involve themselves because they were women. This would only be the case if it could be shown that women only act as women, and never as part of a broader, non-sexually defined community.

Women suffer as much as men from non-sexual forms of oppression and exploitation. Why then do the authors appear to see the above actions by women as some sort of victory for feminist consciousness? Those women were reacting as people affected by particular circumstances. For women to participate in political or industrial action is nothing new. Wherever people - male or female - have the necessary opportunities to act against oppression, they do.

True, there are millions of women who do not participate in 'mass politics'. There are also millions of men. The point of mass political activity would appear to be to mobilise as many people as possible over issues that affect them jointly, not to do a head-count of the sexes.

The structure of our society dictates a larger male participation, and until that structure is altered, that disproportion will remain, no matter

how undesirable.

The article also makes much of 'organisations... already serving to connect working class women'. It should be pointed out that not all structures serving to connect working class women are, of themselves, a Good Thing. Neither, for that matter, are those serving to connect working class men, or members of the working class generally. One only has to consider Inkatha, whose strength among working class men and women in Natal is indisputable.

And to take a structure apparently favoured by the authors: the Catholic Church women's groups. One would have to search long and hard to find a sexually progressive component in an organisation which condemns absolutely contraception and abortion - two major factors in the liberation of working class women from a purely domestic role - and has as its ideological basis the inherent superiority of males. To say nothing of the sewing circles and housewives' leagues which appear to find such favour as sites of struggle.

Yet for some reason the authors see such groups as having progressive potential, while rejecting the National Union of Clothing Workers. How does an organisation dedicated to the reinforcement of women's domestic role have progressive potential, while an organisation with a membership of 20 000-plus indisputably working class women does not? Merely because of Ms Mvubelo's leadership?

It should be pointed out that while the housewives' leagues and sewing circles twiddled their thumbs during the 1976 stay aways, in at least one, 75% of Ms Mvubelo's membership answered the students' call to stay at home.

And then there is the issue of separate women's organisations. Or rather, then there isn't. Surely this is one of the fundamental issues which needs to be examined. Yet the authors of 'Organising Women?' skip over the issue as if all the arguments are common knowledge, and only the conclusion (that they are a Good Thing To Have - in moderation), is worth putting on paper.

Finally, we would like to take issue with the

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authors' contention that it is expedient to organise women only to draw them in to the main stream of political organisation. Why else? Because they are nicer people than men?

Women need to be organised because they have not as yet shouldered their full share of the burden of struggle against a system which the authors themselves recognise oppresses them more harshly than it does the other half of the 'oppressed masses'.

Surely the question which the women's study group should have asked was: why do women not participate 'equally and actively', and how to get them to do so. Demanding that they do - whether the demand is made to men or women - is a little beside the point until that question has been answered.

Unfortunately, 'Organising Women?' did not answer it. It merely confused the question.

Response 3

THE article 'Organising Women?' (WIP 21) is welcome because there is a good deal about women's oppression, class division and organisability in South Africa that needs to be debated from both practical and theoretical viewpoints. The article provides a vivid picture of some working class women's experience, and has tried to be readable and colloquial.

Its central weakness seems to me to be the inadequate distinction between oppression and economic exploitation. This results in the vague generalities of the conclusion: no clear answer is given to the questions posed at the beginning of the article.

Time and again, oppression is referred to as the specific and concrete experience of exploitation:

By oppression we are talking about the way in which working people experience the effects of this exploitation in their daily lives. For example, lower wages mean inadequate food, poor housing and inadequate education.

The authors seem to mean that non-ownership of the means of production leads to class exploitation; which in turn causes low wages; which in turn

results in suffering and deprivation, which is the same thing as oppression. Women suffer deprivations over and above those of the working class, while sharing those as well.

As far as I can see, economic class exploitation arising from the mode of property ownership under capitalism is regarded by the authors as the sole basis of all forms of oppression in society; and individual or group experience of that exploitation is what the authors understand by oppression.

While the authors give an explanation for class exploitation (non-ownership of the means of production) they nowhere give a reason for the specific and extra penalties suffered by women. They describe these interestingly and movingly, but without any explanation as to why women as an identifiable group should suffer the extra penalties of oppression. They seem over-anxious not to depict women's oppression as arising from a contradiction separate or even distinguishable from class oppression; they avoid any mention of patriarchy and the debates around it, or discussion of such issues as the technical division of labour.

As a result, the authors are unable to consider any forms of female oppression other than working class oppression - in fact, according to their conceptualisation, only working class women can suffer oppression. This despite the fact that a number of the examples they put forward for working class women's oppression - the double day, sexual abuse inside and outside marriage, being cut off from wider social activity by family structures and restrictions - are experienced by women in other classes.

There is nowhere any suggestion that the ability to oppress is a function of political power, and conversely that oppression is a consequence of political powerlessness. Oppression derives from political power, political power does not always derive from economic power. (If political power always derived from economic power, state power could never change hands once held by an economically dominant class. Surely any thought about the split between political power and economic control in the third

world would show that the kind of reductionism that is unable to see power sources separate from economic/property ownership is going to go very far astray).

Political power can be understood in the broadest sense as the ability, by sanction or coercion, to protect or advance one's interests as an individual, a group or a class. Economic and/or state power are not the only sources of power and potentially of oppression in a society: within many - if not all - social organisations and structures there is a potential for sanction and coercion within the organisation, and in relation to others, according to the organisation's scope. As the authors demonstrate, even within the working class there is differential access to organisational, community, family and other structural bases of authority and power.

The article describes the authority of working class men within the family, and their ability to oppress on that level. Consequences of this are felt in community and trade union organisation as a result of extra difficulties experienced by women in participating in them at all, never mind on equal terms.

Women's oppression - the double day; extra weariness and no time for activity outside work and the family; sexual abuse; unshared responsibility for children; marginalisation in the labour force - must spring from women's powerlessness in social structures, beginning with the family. It reproduces itself in other social arenas, including the labour market, which is many women's hope of some material basis for ultimate independence of family authority.

All this is obviously not a simple spin-off of their economic position as workers: female 'super exploitation' is made possible by the structures of specifically women's oppression. In an exploited class, this will be more acute, because powerlessness as women is not mitigated by class privilege and the increased options it brings.

By seeing working class women as simply a type

of super-oppressed group within the working class, there is no ultimate justification for women - working class or otherwise - to organise separately, except insofar as it is a more practical way for organisers to get at them. The article does not go this far, and rightly classifies such an attitude as 'expedient'; but having tentatively accepted that separate women's organisations have some role, it does not explore the alternatives.

The authors say

We feel that to assume that separate women's political organisations have the capacity by themselves to deal with all the issues faced by women is to make a number of serious mistakes.

Certainly: but what are the issues and objectives that can, and perhaps must, be dealt with by separate women's organisations. What is meant by the claim that women's organisations 'can only be effective if they exist within the context of the organisation of women, and of men and women, at different levels'(WIP 21:21-22)? What levels? Are the organisations 'of women' seen as social bodies ameliorating the condition of the women mentioned in the interviews, or supplanting the services provided by stokvels, or women's wings of political and labour organisations, or any of those depending on a particular group's needs? What is the role of non-working class women, women with more options of time and participation in these issues?

By implication the article answers its questions as to why working class women and women's organisations have been almost solely issue-responsive in the past: the interviews show why these women would react defensively to further erosions of already tenuous positions, and respond to mobilisation around issues such as pass laws, rent increases, etc. But they have not the time nor the option to involve themselves in on-going long term organisation.

This raises the problem of organisability on a long term basis of 'the most oppressed of the oppressed' - those who live on the bare bones of survival. Some minimum of time and freedom is needed to participate socially and politically.

The description of participation in stokvels and church groups shows that a tiny option of social participation must be used in organisations that help the women and their families in the daily battle to survive. Certainly such women would benefit from health and child care programmes. But how far would they be able to participate on an ongoing basis?

Programmes aimed at this category of women would need to have as a short term goal the provision of options, particularly some mobility and spare time, which open the possibility of a broader social involvement. This may well be resisted by the heads of working class families, as well as employers, but long term involvement and participation by substantial numbers of working class women in organisation seems pretty well impossible if this cannot be done.

Susan Brown

TEACHERS IN SA

INTRODUCTION

EDUCATIONAL change is part of the broader subject of social change. Social change, as many students and teachers have come to realise through the 1976 and 1980 school uprisings, is a highly complex and little understood phenomenon.

In this paper the major political and social questions are acknowledged as being of central importance in a discussion of teachers' strategies. The importance of the development of a theoretical framework which guides and relates educational strategies to the broader social change strategies is also seen as vital. Teachers in the medium-term will need to link into and coordinate their efforts with other bodies on a national scale if the society is to be transformed. However, in this paper the concern is with the 'here and now'. What steps can teachers take in the short-term?

POSSIBLE APPROACHES:

Theoretical Dimensions

PEOPLE'S actions are believed to be directly related to their understandings of their situations. It is for this reason that educationalists like Freire, Bowles and Gintis, Gelpi, etc, believe that the teachers' understanding of their situation is so important. Each person operates from a theoretical framework. It is, therefore, important that teachers become more self-conscious in their teaching, of their own ideologies.

Teachers need to be clear about the implicit or explicit values they are conveying to pupils. Self-awareness or self-consciousness is an important aspect of teachers' personal development which will influence their ability to understand and manipulate their environment. For example, by analysing the classroom and school situation with a variety of

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Isabel Hofmeyr
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'analytical tools', like role theory, class analysis, and personality theory (when and where appropriate), some of the external forces and the personal motives can be more clearly understood and acted upon.

Another theoretical dimension is the need for teachers to have a broader understanding of education. The educational problem is above all a political problem and, therefore, educational strategies need to start out from an analysis of social and political forces. What happens in a classroom can either reflect the status quo in the broader society, or it can analyse the society critically and attempt to construct alternative relationships. The latter approach would lead into an analysis of issues like power relationships, control and authority.

Practical Dimension

IN order that teachers can work towards a greater self-consciousness of their own actions in the school and classroom, and in order to develop a broader perspective on educational problems, three approaches will be mentioned briefly. The reason for the choice of these approaches is related to the belief that teachers in South Africa need to play a critical and dynamic role in the schools and community.

1. Research orientation:

Many writers believe that change in schools will only occur when teachers become aware of the school and how it functions. It is acknowledged by writers that academic educational researchers have got a role to play but in the end educational change depends on the understanding and the actions of teachers. Teachers, as was inferred above, therefore need to acquire analytical skills and what could be called a research orientation.

Ideally, for a school to develop this idea effectively the principal and/or leading teachers should be actively involved. To develop the idea of a teacher-researcher and to encourage a 'research' climate will be difficult under most circumstances. However, if a teacher or a group of teachers wants to begin to test the idea, perhaps a small ad hoc research group could be formed. This group, by drawing on their own resources or external help,

could decide on approaches to classroom research which, preferably, would involve students as well.

2. Study of innovation:

The study of failed innovations can help to develop a deeper understanding of educational and social change. For example, in the event of an SRC having been created which then fails to attain its goals, a careful analysis of the 'failure' by those involved and by others, can reveal the limits to change in a particular situation. This information can then be used to guide the implementation of future change strategies.

In the South African situation, where changes have occurred at certain times, the need for teachers and pupils to become reflexive and to analyse what has happened seems to be a crucial task. Other examples of innovations may be the more active participation of pupils in the classroom, change in curricula content, or change in teaching styles. These could possibly provide the material from which pupils and teachers could constructively learn.

3. Supportive action:

Teachers are in general in a confrontation position where the contradictions inherent in their roles can and do create stress. In South Africa the teachers' position is extreme and teachers' reactions to various situations have ranged from bitterness, anxiety, exhaustion, to excitement. 'Survival' teaching is a common response. Many writers believe that teachers require extensive support and that they also need help in order to be able to transcend the situation.

One writer proposes a counselling model which may be one way of helping teachers transcend their circumstances. He believes that transcending the situation means that a state of sufficiently internalised principles of 'good' practice needs to be achieved. This could help teachers cope with uncertainty or anxiety generated by change.

In South Africa the use of a counselling model which involves individual, group, or peer counselling may have some relevance. It could be used to help teachers locate themselves more accurately in the society. Perhaps it could facilitate the development

of a self and social awareness which has been mentioned as necessary if they are to play a dynamic and creative role. In addition it may help identify the problems for which action strategies need to be developed which could relate to specific training needs. The acquisition of counselling skills amongst teachers could have advantages both in the classroom and in the staffroom.

The three strategies, is the development of the 'teacher-researcher', the collective analysis of innovations, and the engagement in supportive action, all link in with the development of theoretical understandings. They are concerned with teachers' present social reality and have been proposed as possible starting points for the analysis and the development of the teacher's role. There are several other strategies which could have been put forward. However, the main purpose has been to try and demonstrate that even in a repressive system there may be some degree of autonomy for educational action.

Short, Medium or Long-Term Strategies

IT is accepted that action strategies should be related to a broader conceptual framework. It is also accepted that the consciousness of the people which is developed in the 'transitional stages' should be congruent with a long-term vision of a future society.

Long-term strategies will focus upon features of an educational system which would characterise a 'hoped for' social and political dispensation. However, the likelihood of a coherent, acceptable political framework emerging which is adopted by the majority of people in South Africa, and which can provide the basis for teachers' 'here and now' strategies, seems remote. It is, therefore, proposed that in order for teachers to develop their roles in a way which both helps them to cope with the current situation, and which constructively contributes to the long-term transformation of the society, some basic criteria for action need to be agreed. Some ideas are tentatively offered as examples of possible working criteria.

1. There is no blueprint for transforming education and society. As has been stressed already,

strategies can only grow out of analysis of local conditions, needs and interests. The teachers' position is intimately bound up with the expectations of their role-set. Therefore, the development of strategies needs to take into account the expectations and the roles of pupils, parents, colleagues and authorities. Teachers can undertake to increase the communications between all members of the role-set in order to de-escalate the levels of conflict and then encourage co-operation. A working criteria could be to open up communications between all members of the role-set.

2. The aim of education for transformation must be that of helping pupils, other teachers, parents and themselves to understand the material and social world around them. As many educationalists believe, it is not the content but the educational process which is most important. The organisation of the school and of the classroom should therefore promote critical understanding. Participation in the educational process should be encouraged. Gelpi, the current head of UNESCO's Lifelong Education unit, believes that self-directed learning by individuals and groups should be promoted as 'it is a danger for every repressive force, and it's upon self-direction that we must insist'. He goes on, '(r)adical change in social, moral, aesthetic and political affairs is often the outcome of a process of self-directed learning in opposition to the educational message imposed from without'.

Several writers who are concerned with educational transformation insist that the development of critical thinking is fundamental to the task. This means that trying to indoctrinate pupils with an alternative ideology is the worst way of progressing. A dialectical educational philosophy needs to form the cornerstone for change. Education needs to enhance the chances for a genuinely democratic and participatory society. The second working criteria could therefore be a commitment to the development of a critical and dialectical educational philosophy.

If criteria like the above were accepted as key principles in the strategies adopted by teachers,

perhaps a constructive start could be made to the building of a unified community of teachers, where 'divergent-type' thinking is encouraged and teachers are able to play an important role in facilitating positive educational developments, which both begins to meet the present needs and can also contribute to the foundations of a future, more desirable education system.

CONCLUSION

THE teacher in this article is treated as one in opposition. Therefore strategies which are projected need to be concerned with 're-definition', relatively small-scale, low-cost, and ones which draw primarily on teachers' own resources.

Shirley Walters

Note: The author of this article has developed ideas that serve as background to the strategies discussed in the article above, in an M Ed dissertation at the University of Manchester. Readers who might be interested in this dissertation are asked to contact Shirley Walters through the editors of WIP (address on the index page of this publication).

ETHNICITY AND CLASS IN GAZANKULU

IF there is agreement about anything regarding Gazankulu, it is a sense of surprise at the bantustan's very existence. Cos Desmond, who visited the Northern Transvaal in 1969, wrote that

the Tswanastan belies the idea of a nation-state in that its sections are often hundreds of miles apart. But the Vendastan and Tsongastan make the idea of creating a viable nation-state even less plausible.

Yet only three years later, Commissioner-General EF Potgieter was able to tell the Gazankulu legislative assembly that

I very much realise that there was a time when you were grouped together with the Bavenda on the one side and with the Basutho on the other and that you were not a people as you are today in this meeting hall.

The decision to create Gazankulu as a separate political entity for the Tsonga/Shangaan ethnic group was almost an afterthought in the South African state's grand scheme of 'separate development'. Thus, the problem which this article addresses itself to can be stated quite simply: how is it that in little over a decade, ethnic consciousness has been aroused to the extent that Gazankulu is now well on the way to bantustan 'independence'?

As an analytical category, ethnicity or nationalism has always presented a massive problem to materialist writers. In an important article, John Saul writes that 'progressive writers on Africa generally approach the issue of "tribalism" as one would approach a minefield - and with good reason'.³ Saul makes the point that it is useless to sloganise ethnic consciousness away as 'false consciousness'. The very fact that ethnic consciousness has so often been mobilised into a powerful political platform demands an explanation of the availability of

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sufficient numbers of the population to accept such identification. Thus, while it is wrong to regard ethnic consciousness as an independent metaphysical 'form', it is politically and intellectually absurd to disregard its existence entirely. What needs to be done is to link the politicisation of ethnic differences to the process of class formation and to treat the changing political and economic significance of ethnicity historically.

When we apply this project to the case of Gazankulu, the solution to the problem of ethnicity is surprisingly straightforward: politicised ethnicity - though by no means the neatly packaged product of a cynical conspiracy amongst the dominant classes - is underlaid by many clear material concerns. It is therefore the task of this article to exemplify and analyse those material forces which have matured the development of politicised ethnicity in Gazankulu.

A Tsonga/Shangaan 'Tribe'?

ACCORDING to South African government sources, there were in 1975 some 744 400 Tsonga in the Northern Transvaal of whom only 265 100 actually lived in Gazankulu.⁴ The Tsonga originated in Mocimboa, being more or less between the 21st and 27th degrees latitude. They arrived in the Northern Transvaal throughout the 14th century in a number of waves of immigration. The first wave of immigration into the Transvaal was a result of clashes with Nguni refugee leaders (like Shoshangane), who fled present day Natal as a result of the Mfecane. A second wave of Tsonga immigration from Mocimboa occurred in 1858-62, due to a succession dispute between two of Shoshangane's sons. A third stream of refugees arrived in the Transvaal between 1846 and 1900 as a result of the Portuguese destruction of the Gaza kingdom. The other component of Transvaal Tsonga arrived in small groups after being employed as migrant labourers on the Transvaal mines.

The crucial importance of the foregoing summary is that the Tsonga in the Transvaal were never comprised of unified tribes with powerful chiefs.

They were distributed over a wide geographical area and were concerned only to find a place to live under the protection of whatever chief would give them land. As a result, Tsongas have been scattered throughout the Transvaal, living mainly amongst Venda- and Sotho-speakers. As the government ethnologist, NJ van Warmelo, put it in 1935,

The Tsonga in the Transvaal are, with some exceptions, not organised into tribes at all, but represent a large formless population, the make-up of which almost defies analysis.... the bulk of them live under headmen of no real rank or standing or else form part, sometimes even the greater part, of the following of Sotho and Venda chiefs of high and low degree.⁵

The concept of a Tsonga tribe was conceived largely as a result of the work of the anthropologist HA Junod in the early 20th century. According to Patrick Harries, Junod, trapped in the 19th century European ideology of the nation-state, attempted 'to create clarity where clarity did not exist' by classifying the Tsonga as a group.⁶

The area known today as Gazankulu has always been noticeably devoid of powerful Shangaan chiefs, and unlike the case of the KwaZulu or the Transkei, there has never been a paramount Shangaan chief.

Yet despite the absence of any clearly defined Tsonga or Shangaan nation, the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act of 1959 recognised the Tsonga/Shangaan as a separate population group. This Act was followed in 1962 with the creation of a Mashangana territorial authority and the subsequent granting of a legislative assembly in 1971. In 1972, the name Gazankulu was coined, and in 1973 the new bantustan was declared a self-governing territory awaiting 'independence'.

It is not, however, the concern of this contribution to explain the decisions of the South African state in its creation of Gazankulu. As in the case of the other 8 bantustans, a complex matrix of Nationalist ideology, the need to export the reserve army of unemployed, attempts to fragment Africans politically, etc, all played formative roles in the creation of the bantustans. Rather than discussing this aspect of bantustan creation, it is our concern

to explain how ethnic nationalism has been mobilised within Gazankulu as a necessary precondition to the successful execution of the homeland strategy.

Class and Ethnicity

IN recent studies of the post-colonial state in Africa, it has been commonly argued (with varying degrees of sophistication) that nationalism has been the class project of the indigenous petty bourgeoisie in its attempts to secure political and economic dominance. This is qualified with the proviso that no class ever conspires in unison to conceive an ideological blueprint for class domination. The case of Gazankulu broadly supports this thesis. It has in fact been precisely because the petty bourgeoisie believes its own ideology that its ideology has gained such force.

David Dison notes that Gazankulu's formation has been unique because of the fact that a separate Shangaan entity was never envisaged in the original plan to balkanise South Africa. It did not grow up in the 'classic homeland mould'⁷ - out of parties made up of chiefs and their supporters. Rather, its formation was mediated through a group of Shangaan businessmen, teachers and bureaucrats, under the leadership of Professor Hudson Ntsanwisi of the University of the North, and former moderator of the Tsonga Presbyterian church.

Dison perhaps overstates the uniqueness of the formation of Gazankulu. As we shall presently see, the role of chiefs and headmen salaried by the South African state has been a crucial factor in Gazankulu's creation. Nevertheless, it is to the role of the entrepreneurial petty bourgeoisie that we should turn to first.

During my visit to Gazankulu in December 1981, I spoke to only two shopkeepers at any length. Interestingly, both readily ascribed their material advancement to the creation of Gazankulu. Even more interestingly, both businessmen admitted that they were the first people to live in their respective areas. Since both these businessmen were living in areas newly occupied by resettled people, the

implication is clear that they had received advance notice of mass population removals.

One of the businessmen I spoke to lived in Lulekani, an area just east of Phalaborwa, which seems to be destined to become a site of mass resettlement for Gazankulu citizens. As a Gazankulu citizen, he had recently moved across the main road from the Namakgale location where he had owned a shop and butchery. (It seems that Namakgale is to become part of Lebowa, while Lulekani - where he now lives - is to become part of Gazankulu. Both settlements are therefore destined to become bantustan dormitory towns serving Phalaborwa).

This businessman, (Mr MM), is a caricature of the petty bourgeois 'on the make'. His large corrugated-iron house-cum-office is situated in the midst of shanty-town structures. In contrast to the general atmosphere of heat and squalor, his office is filled with ostentatious furniture, ornaments and paintings. A Persian-looking rug was draped over his desk and a cabinet to the rear was filled with huge books and a set of encyclopedias. The bizarre situation was compounded by his bombastic self-importance - he initially refused to see me because I had not made an appointment with his 'secretary'.

It would be comforting to believe that Mr MM is unique - unfortunately, he is not.. He is one of a new generation of petty bourgeois businessmen who are the direct beneficiaries of bantustan consolidation and population resettlement. It is hardly surprising therefore that Mr MM is a hearty supporter of the development of Gazankulu. A particularly revealing expression of the benefits to be gained by businessmen who gain trading licenses by virtue of bantustan consolidation is seen in the following extract from the Gazankulu legislative assembly debates:⁸

Mr N Chauke: Things which worry me most are the shops of foreigners. What permits these shops to be situated in our areas?...This is disgraceful. Especially non-white shops.... We may sympathise a little with whites because we are asking for better and bigger businesses from whites with which they must come and help us.....But a non-white? He will only use our money and go away with the money. We do not

need a foreign non-white person to manage our businesses.

The granting of trading licenses to citizens of a particular bantustan is thus a primary reason for the support which the petty bourgeoisie gives to bantustan consolidation. Traders, however, are not the only beneficiaries within the petty bourgeoisie. In 1973 it was alleged in the Gazankulu legislative assembly that some Shangeans were 'buying cars, hoping that the business of removing people would bring them a substantial income'.⁹

Similarly, owners of the ubiquitous Japanese bakkies and taxis who ply their respective trades throughout Gazankulu are beneficiaries of the system by exploiting the opportunities afforded to the full. On account of their vested interests they too must therefore be considered sympathetic to the process of ethnic fragmentation.

It is a prerequisite that inspectors of schools, principals, nurses and bureaucrats of the capital Giyani must all be citizens of Gazankulu in order to hold their jobs. For these members of the petty bourgeoisie the existence of Gazankulu is of more than mere sentimental significance - it is the basis of their power, status and class position.

Chiefs

THERE is no doubt that chiefs and headmen have played an instrumental role in fostering ethnic consciousness amongst their subjects. The series of apartheid Acts following the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act involved an attempt by the South African state to conserve 'traditional tribal' structures in a restructured form. Specifically, they were aimed at restoring economic, political and social control to chiefs and headmen who had lost these powers as a consequence of the penetration of capitalist relations. By investing chiefly elements with administrative control, and by effectively incorporating them into the civil service, chiefs and headmen were drawn into a class alliance with the proponents of separate development. Throughout Gazankulu I was told how chiefs and headmen were bribed and corrupted by promises and often

material gifts. In a strategy reminiscent of gifts of worthless trinkets to chiefs during the colonial era, one man described to me how chiefs were given 'dignity bags' (briefcases) at preliminary meetings with the South African government.

Significantly, chiefs and headmen now receive salaries directly from the bantustan government, according to the numbers of subjects living under them. This has been of crucial importance with respect to population removals since chiefs have often encouraged such removals in the hope of gaining more subjects.

In motivating an amount of R16 600 for payments to chiefs and headmen in 1972, Professor Ntsenwisi told the legislative assembly:¹⁰

Die ou mense het gesê dat die slang beweeg omdat hy derms het. Ons kapteins en hoofmanne is ook dieselfde - daardie slang wat beweeg omdat hy derms het. Ons wil dus hê dat hierdie slange van ons derms moet hê.

The graphic image of snakes and intestines can hardly be more apposite with regard to the payment of chiefs. Thus, it is no surprise that a year later Ntsenwisi told the legislative assembly:¹¹ that

A chief will now be paid twice; he shall be paid for the work he does at home and also be paid for being a member of the legislative assembly.

The foregoing discussion does not suggest that each and every chief and headman has benefitted from bantustan consolidation. In many instances they have been moved together with their people and against their will. This has frequently occurred when, for example, a Shangean chief has been moved in order to facilitate the consolidation of Venda. But even forced removals do not necessarily negate the ethnic consciousness of those chiefs removed with their people, revealing it as a fraud. Quite the contrary; hostility and resentment against being removed is seldom aimed against the distant South African government. Since it is directed against the ethnic group amongst whom the removed people have been living, ethnic consciousness can be engendered among chiefs, headmen and their people, irrespective of whether they stand to gain or lose by being removed.

Ethnicity: the ordinary people

THROUGH listening to missionaries, churchmen, teachers and ordinary people, there is overwhelming evidence that Tsonga-speakers have been living perfectly easily amongst Vendas and Sothos for the last 100 years. Throughout the Northern Transvaal, I was repeatedly informed, Tsongas have intermarried extensively with Vendas and Sothos and have lived side by side with them. In many areas the constituency of Venda chiefs was predominantly Tsonga, and the converse applied too. Those to whom I spoke were virtually unanimous in declaring that sustained friction between ethnic groups is a relatively recent phenomenon, a direct consequence of the implementation of the Bantu Authorities system.

A Sotho health inspector whom I met at a café near Shiluvane told me that 'before separate development I lived amongst Tsongas and went to school with them. Now I would rather have a white man in my house than a Shangaan'.

Throughout these areas poised between consolidation into either Venda or Gazankulu, Tsonga-speakers expressed horror at being 'Vendafied'.

Friction erupts everywhere. At Shiluvane near Tzaneen the Douglas Smit hospital which was built after World War 1 to serve the local population was declared part of Gazankulu in 1981. In retaliation Phatudi of Lebowa ordered the removal of all Sotho staff from the hospital in April/May 1981. Moreover, Sotho patients (some on drips!) were removed by ambulance to a 'Sotho' hospital some 15km away. At present, tensions amongst Sotho and Tsonga speakers at Shiluvane are close to breaking point - all this in an area which churchmen describe as having been a model of harmonious human inter-relationship.

How, then, are inter-ethnic tensions stimulated amongst the ordinary people who stand only to lose from bantustan consolidation? The key to this question lies in the fact that there is no alternative; faced with the reality of bantustan consolidation, ordinary people are forced to operate within the system in order to survive. In the fight

for survival, gladiators must have hated one another with more intensity than they did the Roman aristocracy responsible for placing them in the arena in the first place. The same principle underlies the development of ethnic hostility in the Northern Transvaal.

The establishment of boundaries, bantustan consolidation and population removals are among the main reasons for ethnic differences assuming a politicised form. Divisions are enforced through the establishment of separate clinics, schools, labour bureaux, post offices and other administrative structures for each population group. On a main road in Gazankulu, the road suddenly narrows and is pitted because it has briefly entered Venda territory and is therefore of no significance for Gazankulu authorities. It becomes increasingly difficult for pensioners to receive their monthly handouts if they are living outside of their 'nation' - even if they have been living in the same place all their lives.

One of the greatest reasons for the emergence of ethnic hostility relates to the establishment of single-medium schools. When schools are suddenly declared 'Venda' or 'Shangaan' or 'Sotho', it becomes impossible for children to receive mother-tongue instruction. Faced with this problem, cultural traditions can only be upheld by removing to ones 'homeland'.

The relationship between the development of the bantustans and the acceptance of their existence by their 'citizens' is a product of a vicious circle. The South African state establishes boundaries in the name of 'homeland' consolidation and those people caught outside their 'homeland' suffer victimisation and uncertainty as a result. Victimisation with regard to schooling, the awarding of labour contracts, pensions, hospital services, etc, together exert tremendous pressure on people to move. In addition, a favourite tactic of the 'GG'¹² is to intimidate those threatened with removal over an extended period of time. As a result of these threats of removal, those in possession of relatively greater material means move before the alternatives offered to them become

less and less attractive. The community is therefore split and it is inevitably the poorest elements who are finally carted away and dumped by the GG trucks or their bantustan functionaries. Within these parameters it is therefore virtually impossible not to accept homeland 'independence' in some form. The South African government sets the situation and the mechanism of ethnic fragmentation acquires a dynamic of its own.

Conclusion

The tragedy of ethnicity in the Northern Transvaal is that it is real. At a political level the implications are extremely depressing; the South African state which is ultimately responsible for the politicisation of ethnicity through its pushing of separate development, is seen by some as an honest broker. The greatest amount of antagonism in Gazankulu is reserved for Venda and Lebowa - while Koornhof is respectfully approached by 'deputations'. Rev Sydney Ngobe, general secretary of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, explains that 'ethnic feelings have increased so much since separate development that people speak of "we Sotho" or "we Tsonga" rather than "we people" or "we africans". People who used to say "we blacks are not allowed to go there" now say "we Shangaan may not go there".'

It is therefore at their peril that progressives blithely dismiss the emergence of ethnicity in the Northern Transvaal as 'false consciousness'. False it is in the sense that the real source of misery and oppression - the South African state - becomes obscured. But this false consciousness is not a mere ephemeral ideology which can be ignored. Its basis is distinctly material; rooted on the one hand in the class interests of the new african petty bourgeoisie, and on the other hand in the struggle for survival faced by the ordinary mass of exploited and oppressed people.

Seul Dubow

Notes

- 1 Desmond, C. The Discarded People. Johannesburg, 1971:144.
- 2 Gazankulu Legislative Assembly debates, volume 1, 1973:45.
- 3 Saul, J. 'The dialectic of class and tribe', in Race and Class, XX, 4, 1979.
- 4 Gazankulu Economic Review, Benbo, 1976:11.
- 5 Van Warmelo, NJ. A preliminary survey of the Bantu tribes of South Africa. Department of Native Affairs Ethnological publications, vol 5. Pretoria, 1935:40.
- 6 Harries, P. 'The anthropologist as historian and liberal: HA Junod and the Tsonga' in Journal of Southern African Studies, vol 8 no 1, October 1981.
- 7 Dison, D. 'Opposition politics in Venda and Gazankulu', in Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, Development Studies Group, Johannesburg. 1976.
- 8 First Gazankulu Legislative Assembly, vol 5, Gazankulu Appropriation Bill, p 126.
- 9 *ibid*, p 123. Speech by MW Baloyi (Ribungweni).
- 10 Gazankulu Legislative Assembly, April 1977, vol 1, p 1507. Literally translated, 'The snake moves because it has intestines'.
- 11 Gazankulu Legislative Assembly, May 1973, vol 5 p 74
- 12 'GG', meaning Government Garage, are the initials of the trucks owned by the South African state which effect population removals. 'GG' is often used as a term of dislike to describe the state.

INFORMATION

Strikes in the Metal Industry

OVER the past two months, the East Rand's metal industry has again become a key centre of worker struggle, with 24 work stoppages/disputes, occurring against a backdrop of the pending annual wage talks between the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA) and the unions in the industry. 15 of the stoppages have involved FOSATU's registered Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU). Last year, too, saw the East Rand metal industry becoming the focus of labour action with 24 stoppages in Wadeville, Benoni, Boksburg and Springs, involving a total of 10 772 workers. In this year's disputes 6 000 MAWU members have been involved and approximately 2 400 workers at firms without unions.

In the 15 stoppages involving MAWU, 33% were over dismissals, 53% over wages, 1 strike over a night shift dispute, and 1 strike over the disbanding of a liaison committee and recognition of MAWU. This compares with 50% of last year's disputes over dismissals, 25% over wages, and 25% in opposition to managerial staff behaving in an arbitrary fashion.

This analysis will focus mainly on MAWU's involvement in the recent work stoppages and disputes. The nature of the demands in the disputes and issues related to them will be discussed.

Demands for the reinstatement of dismissed workers were made in 33% of the disputes, and MAWU members were successful in two such struggles: at Litemaster Products in Wadeville, 22 workers were dismissed last year in October. Until the resolution of the issue, the union helped support the workers who did not seek new employment, waiting rather for the outcome of the issue. Up to January, management refused to negotiate with the union despite its majority representation amongst the firm's 280 workers. MAWU arranged for an Industrial Court hearing at the end of January to challenge the firm's refusal to negotiate with a representative union. In the meantime, shop stewards in the factory put continual pressure on management, and workers boycotted overtime. Just before the court hearing was due Litemaster management capitulated and rehired all 22 workers. A recognition agreement with MAWU has almost been completed.

A second victory over a dismissals issue was won at Transvaal Malleable Foundries in March. Workers came out on strike for three days in support of two dismissed colleagues. Initially, management fired the entire workforce and said that it would selectively re-employ workers. Worker solidarity on

the issue was so strong that no one re-applied for their jobs and scab labour was not forthcoming. Hence, management re-employed the entire workforce, even the shop stewards, and the two workers initially dismissed. (A successful strike over dismissals occurred at TMF late last year as well).

The struggle at Hawker Siddalay Machines over the dismissal of two workers was fought unsuccessfully, in that workers were 'selectively re-employed' and the 30 trade union members lost their jobs. However, the Wadeville organiser does not regard this as a total failure, for he says that these 30 workers are united and determined to carry on with the struggle. He says that whether dismissed or not, the feeling of the workers is not affected - they become strengthened through their struggles rather than disillusioned.

At present a struggle is continuing at Flekspr (in Wadeville) over the retrenchment of three MAWU members. 200 workers are out on strike and the outcome is not yet known.

Wage demands accounted for 53% of MAWU's disputes during the present spate of strikes. At present the minimum wage for the metal industry, as determined by the June, 1981, wage talks, is R1,13 per hour. In all the disputes the demand was for a R1 per hour increase, or for a R2 per hour minimum wage - a standard FOSATU target. (This demand has just been successfully negotiated at Colgate-Palmolive where FOSATU's CWIU has just negotiated a minimum wage of R1,95 an hour, and all other other grades will receive over R2 per hour. In November the minimum wage will be increased to R2,04 per hour.

Wage increases were demanded at Dresser SA, (Wadeville), Lasher Tools (Germiston), McKinnon Chair (Pietermaritzburg), Chubb, Hubco, McKechnie Brother, (Wadeville), Hawker Siddalay Transformers and Automatic Plating (Isando). The Wadeville organiser relates these demands to the high cost of living, and poor rains in the bantustans (which have eroded the migrant workers' supplementary rural incomes). None of these demands have been met - slight increases have been granted: at McKechnie Brothers a 12c per hour increase was granted, as well as a 2c per hour attendance bonus rise, and at Lasher Tools a 4c per hour increase has been granted. Most firms have refused to negotiate wages until the Industrial Council wage talks between SEIFSA and the unions have been completed.

The wage demands must be seen in the context of the system of wage determination in the metal industry. The demands are also a statement about how workers feel wages are to be negotiated - at plant level rather than industrial council level.

SEIFSA, the tough employer body representing some 8 500 bosses (RDM, 05.11.81), meets unions in the metal and engineering industry each year for negotiations on the Industrial Council, to determine wages and working conditions for the industry's approximately 440 000 workers (RDM, 03.11.81), nationwide. Unions and employers have an equal number of representatives on the Industrial Council. The bosses, although competing for markets, are prepared to equalise many factors and inputs of production,

particularly wages, and hence work from a position of unity and strength on the Council. On the other hand, the whole spectrum of unions, with widely differing policies and demands, are expected to sit together on the Council, thus making for weakness and division (eg in the present wage talks the Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers' Union has taken a completely independent stance from that of other unions in its demands).

More significantly, the bargaining process is isolated from the work place, where workers have the strength of their organisation, and the power to withdraw their labour in order to reinforce demands. On the council, the participatory nature of worker involvement in their union is diminished, for they are not negotiating with their own employer through their elected shop stewards or representatives: they come to play a passive role, for their mandate is not (immediately) required by their union - they merely receive a 'report back'. Thus, the council system weakens unions' bargaining power and encourages bureaucracy, and hence most sections of the progressive union movement refuse to participate on the industrial councils.

Thus, in the present Industrial Council wage talks in the metal and engineering industries (which began on 9 March, but have been postponed to mid-April after deadlock was reached - with unions flatly rejecting a wage offer made by employers) the General Workers' Union (GWU), the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) and MAWU have refused to participate. Unregistered unions were invited to participate informally as observers for the first time, but only the Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU) and SEAWU have accepted. TUCSA is of course participating - at their annual conference in East London in September last year, delegates declared their support for the 'tried and true' council system. The GWU stated that it had reservations about the industrial council structure, and would not join the same caucus as TUCSA affiliates because of TUCSA's consistent hostility to the independent unions, and its 'appalling' stance on Neil Aggett's death. (TUCSA criticised protest which rose from the death in detention of Neil Aggett. General secretary Arthur Grobelaar said in a statement that the Council 'unhesitatingly distances itself' from any calls for industrial action in connection with Dr Aggett's death - because TUCSA 'cannot subscribe to strikes or work stoppages which are not directly related to employer-employee relationships'). GWU says that the Industrial Council allows for negotiations not by workers, but by 'professional bureaucrats'.

The 14 registered unions presently on the Council represent only a third of metal workers, but are negotiating for the entire industry with 45 SEIFSA employer associations.

MAWU rejects the industrial council system as it stands. The Wadeville organiser says that MAWU is not against negotiating for wages at a national level per se, but that these talks should be more decentralised into national bargaining for separate categories, such as electrical, rubber, metal

industries, etc. Bargaining at national level, he said, would be favourable for those workers who are not yet organised, but the national-level bargaining should not eliminate the right for organised workers to bargain at plant level with individual employers, as many can afford to pay well above Council-determined minimums. MAWU will only be prepared to negotiate at national level when only representative unions are allowed to participate. (On 24 March, MAWU's national executive was to meet an Industrial Council separate committee to discuss why the union was not prepared to sit on the Council).

This is similar to the GWU's stance: the GWU is 'not in principle opposed to multi-plant bargaining as long as it facilitates a process of direct negotiation between elected worker representatives and management? It believes that 'bargaining in the steel Industrial Council hinders this direct participation in the bargaining process by virtue of the size of the Council and its highly bureaucratic structures'.

SEIFSA, however, in its November (1981) guidelines reiterated its support for the council system (saying, though, that reforms were necessary) and its opposition to bargaining by individual employers on matters covered by council agreements. They suggested incentives to unions to serve on councils, such as advising employers to grant these unions stop order facilities, access to workers for recruitment, access by union officials to shop stewards, and access to company notice boards for union announcements. Graham Brustred, chairperson of Anglo American's Highveld Steel, said: 'Joining a council will give the unions more influence than before'. The guidelines did accept though, for the first time, a factory floor role for representative unions, whether registered or unregistered, in consultations over issues not covered by council agreements. This shows a new commitment to bargaining with representative unions and an approach of persuasion, rather than coercion, in getting the 9 unions outside the council system to join up. Unionists, responding last year to these guidelines, said that they represented a 'shift', but that 'the real issue is our demand to bargain on wages and work conditions outside the council system, and SEIFSA has not changed its stance on that'.

SEIFSA's stance is contrasted somewhat by that of the country's largest industrial capital grouping, Barlow Rand, whose Executive Director of Industrial Relations, Hofmeyr, said in December last year: 'Employers will have to live with the fact that there will be parallel negotiations with trade unions at both industry level and shop floor level'.

The 'ideal' situation, he said, is for employer bodies, employee representatives, and registered non-racial unions to meet at national level, and to hold supplementary negotiations on domestic issues at plant level through works councils. He realised this is impossible as unions rejected the present IC system, and he admitted that ICs could suffer the same fate as works and liaison committees. He said further: 'We appreciate the problems that can arise through parallel negotiations at shop floor and

industry level, but believe this is not necessarily fatal and is in fact something which South African employers will have to learn to live with'.

However, SEIFSA stresses that it will not allow unions who agree to sit on the Council to negotiate wages at plant level. Van Collier, SEIFSA chairperson, stressed that they saw the boycott of the Council by fast-growing unions as a serious problem: 'We want to negotiate with representative unions. So we want those unions who do represent workers to do so on the Council' (ADM, 05.11.81). However, this is clearly not likely to happen as recent struggles and successes on the plant floor considerably weaken SEIFSA's position. SEIFSA is trying to evolve counter strategies. For example, this month, a confidential paper was distributed to employers on strike handling in the wake of the strike wave which has gripped the Wadeville-Germiston area. Companies are warned in it that by agreeing to bargain outside the council system, they are 'in effect establishing an alternative bargaining arrangement to the Council'. It advises setting of deadlines for return to work, and in the event of these being ignored, that the company dismisses all workers. It also advises members not to negotiate with strikers until they have returned to work.

Most responses by Wadeville and Germiston metal companies to the strikes have been consistent with these guidelines. In some of the un-unionised factories these strategies have been successful, for example, at Baldwin's Steel and Alumco, where all strikers were fired and replaced. At Hubco, after workers failed to meet the management deadline, they were regarded as having 'dismissed themselves' (negotiations between Hubco and MAWU are still continuing). At Hollosec and EMES, where negotiations took place after workers returned to work, the wage demands were not met. At Rand Scrap Iron, the 350 workers who did not return by the deadline, were regarded as fired, to be followed by 'selective re-employment'. This is a typical management strategy by which those they regard as 'troublemakers' lose their jobs (as happened at Hawker Siddeley).

Employers charged (ADM, 03.03.82) that the recent unrest was a 'co-ordinated campaign' by MAWU. One said, 'They are trying to influence the negotiations or are flexing their muscles'. MAWU denies this: 'We had nothing to do with it. It is the workers who have decided to take action. One day we might decide to call our members out, but we haven't done it this time' (ADM, 04.03.82).

The MAWU organiser at Wadeville, Moses Mayekiso, explains the present strength of MAWU by its grassroots organisation. Struggles are articulated by shop stewards, the central leadership group in the union, and then the union is called in to negotiate. Although MAWU was started in 1975, it has only grown in the last year to its present strength of 29 000 signed-up members, of whom 20 000 are well organised. In the past, he said, the union relied too much on organisation by individual officials. Since then, organisation had become the task of the workers themselves, through shop stewards. The shop steward council meets regularly for seminars on organisation

and negotiation techniques. There is also intensive discussion in the planning committees at each 'local' on problems and disputes, and a report back meeting to the entire union every three months by the shop stewards council.

The union also grew rapidly through the selection of 'target factories' - usually the biggest firms - for intensive organisation. Through communication between workers in the townships and hostels other workers from smaller factories in the area were attracted to the union.

Mayekiso said that 'Here in Wadeville, no union can challenge MAWU'. (At National Springs in Wadeville, for example, members of SEAWU left that union in favour of MAWU). Only when MAWU has ± 60% membership in a factory does it approach management for recognition. Three recognition agreements have been concluded with MAWU in the past year, with more in the pipeline after the current strike wave. For example, at Krost Brothers in Harrietdale, 1 300 workers came out on strike demanding the disbanding of the liaison committee and its replacement by union shop stewards. The liaison committee has been disbanded, and the company is conducting recognition talks with MAWU.

Mayekiso said he was happy with the outcome of the struggles in the Wadeville area, for there had been more successes than failures. Despite the failures, he said, workers had learnt to struggle together.

In the recent events on the East Rand management strategies and the SEIFSA stance represent capital's attempt to institutionalise industrial conflict and articulate it in an organised, self-regulating manner. The recent shop floor struggles in the metal industry are evidence of workers' determination to resist this strategy and thus to weaken capital's position.

CM (March, 1982)

Labour Action

NATIONAL STOPPAGE

Shortly after the death in security police custody of Neil Aggett was announced, the union of which he was Transvaal secretary (Food and Canning Workers' Union - see above) called for a national half-hour work stoppage to mourn his death. Almost immediately, the majority of the independent union groupings supported the call: FOSATU, CUSA, GWU, CCAWUSA, BAWU, Orange-Vaal GWU, SAWU, MACWUSA, GAWU.

The proposed stoppage was set for Thursday, 11 February, from 11h30 to noon. The unions asked employers to agree to this demonstration strike - and a number of the largest employer groups (eg FCI, SEIFSA) recommended that no action be taken against those workers who joined the stoppage.

Only days before the proposed stoppage, police seized 20 000 stoppage support stickers from a

Johannesburg printer - these had been ordered by the Transvaal Unions' Solidarity Committee. Certain employers, for example SAPPI, threatened workers with dismissal if they joined the stoppage, while TUCSA ran true to its long history of scabbing on other working class organisations by distancing itself from the stoppage.

Shortly before the stoppage was due to begin, it was announced that the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) had imposed a week-long ban on South African shipping and air travel - this action was in protest against the death of Neil Aggett and the continued detention of trade unionists in South Africa, and followed on a call for protest made by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The unions were joined in the work stoppage by other organisations - community groups, universities and journalists.

Promptly at 11h30 on 11 February, tens of thousands of workers downed tools. Estimates of the numbers of workers involved in the stoppage ranged from a management figure of 30 000 to a union figure of 100 000. Most commentators have suggested that the higher figure is the more accurate.

The joint action by so many unions was an indication of their growing unity on some issues. This was reflected in the speech given by the GWU's David Lewis at the union-organised funeral for Neil Aggett:

Neil's death is a great price to pay for the unity of the trade union movement. We must take the example showed on Thursday when they stopped work and the example of this funeral and we must start uniting the trade union movement, said Lewis.

While the work stoppage was ignored by SABC-TV, other saw it as very significant. Numerically very large, it involved as many workers as went on strike during the whole of 1973 - a year in which the incidents of strikes was the highest of the 1970s. Equally as important, it was an explicitly political strike. While there have been many political strikes before in South Africa - the stay away campaigns of 1976 for example - this work stoppage involved workers taking action on the factory floor rather than in the townships. Some critiques of the stay away tactic have suggested that stay aways separate workers from their most important place of power - the factory floor. In terms of the number of workers involved, the unity shown by trade unions, and the nature of the issue, the half-hour work stoppage of 11 February can be seen as an important indicator of possible future trends.

TRANSVAAL

Adonis Knitwear (Doomfontein): More than 100 workers staged a brief work stoppage on 2 March. They were protesting about the dismissal of a shop steward who put forward their wage demands to management. They returned to work after they were promised a R2,00 increase on their weekly wages, and the reinstatement of the shop steward.

Afrox Gas Equipment (Germiston): About 300 workers at Afrox downed tools on 8 March. The strike was in support of an increase to R2,50 per hour. Most of the workers at Afrox do not belong to any union, although some are members of the Steel and Allied Workers Union (SAWU). Four negotiators were appointed by the workers to talk to management on their behalf. No further news.

Allied Publishing (Johannesburg): (Background on the company is given in WIP12:1-3; strike action at this company is covered in WIP16 and WIP17:46; CCAWUSA objections to the use of child labour in the distribution of newspapers is covered in WIP17:47)

In March, 1981, CCAWUSA already expressed alarm at Allied's advertisements requesting Johannesburg's northern suburbs children to deliver their newspapers (see WIP17:47). In February this year talks began between CCAWUSA shop stewards and Allied. The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union's concern is that the greater use of child sellers will cost workers their jobs. Management is responding by saying that workers whose jobs are threatened or made redundant will be re-employed elsewhere in the company, and is assuming that there will be no mass firing (RDM, 27.02.82).

No further news.

Alumco Metal Industries (Wadeville): 40 workers were fired when they struck on 8 March, 1982. They were demanding a rand-an-hour increase. Management said that they had been replaced (Star, 12.03.82).

Automatic Plating (Isando): A one day strike, involving 150 workers occurred at Automatic Plating - a company in the Dorbyl Group. Management and the Metal and Allied Workers Union (FOSATU-affiliated MAWU) had talks over wages but the demands were not met (Star, 13.03.82).

Baldwins Steel (Brekpan): 18 drivers went on strike at this firm, demanding a wage increase. They were discontented with the system whereby they were paid a minimum wage as well as an incentive bonus. They agreed to call off the strike the following day, after talks with management. When they failed to return to work management informed them that they had 'dismissed themselves' and started hiring new drivers (Star, 12.02.82).

Chubb Lock and Safe Company (Wadeville): 240 workers at this firm downed tools in support of a R2,00 an hour minimum wage. The strike lasted for two days, after which management sacked the striking workers (Star, 05.03.82).

Clifford Harris (Vereeniging): For previous strike action see WIP19:53-4.

A two day strike occurred at the company. 700 workers supported it. The workers returned to work on 9 March, after management had agreed to meet some of their demands, except those involving wages.

The workers had demanded that they be paid at 14h30 instead of 16h30 on Fridays, in order to be able

to catch their transport to get home on weekends - which the company agreed to. The company also agreed to review the cancellation of overtime on weekends. Demands involving wages could only be reviewed in April and October, company officials said. The negotiations took place between management and the Orange-Vaal General Workers' Union.

Coca Cola Warehouse (Florida): Drivers at Coca Cola stopped work for a few hours. They wanted to discuss working conditions, specifically the long hours they were required to work (Star, 20.02.82).

No further news.

Colgate-Palmolive (Boksburg): For background, see WIP 18:44-5; 19:54-5; 20:43. A recognition agreement between Colgate-Palmolive and the FOSATU-affiliated Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) was signed in August, 1981 (see WIP 20:43). Wage negotiations went on for most of February this year. They were the first negotiations since the recognition agreement (a result of a 4 month strike). Workers at Colgate-Palmolive will now receive a minimum of R1,95 an hour in May, to be increased to a minimum of R2,04 in November.

Corobrik (Bedfordview): About 500 workers downed tools at Corobrik on 1 February. They were demanding that Corobrik sign a recognition agreement with their FOSATU-affiliated Glass and Allied Workers' Union.

The union claimed that management was demanding industrial council membership as a prerequisite for union recognition. Workers also claimed that the company was refusing to recognise the union because it was not registered. Management said that it was merely restating its position, adopted in December last year.

The striking workers were considered to have 'discharged themselves'. Management said that they would be re-employed selectively if they applied for their jobs.

Diamond Cutting Industry: (For earlier information on the diamond cutting industry, see WIP7:35; 16:44).

LJ van den Bergh (25) appeared in the magistrate's court in March, 1982, for allegedly breaking an industrial council agreement. The agreement states that if a diamond cutter leaves his job, he must wait three months before joining another employer within the trade. If he re-enters the trade inside three months, he is bound to return to his former employer.

Van den Bergh pleaded not guilty. He said he was employed by Jooste Diamond Cutting Works until July 24, 1981. Intending to become a carpenter, he left the firm. Before leaving he signed a document setting out the conditions (outlined above) under which he could return to the trade. The following Monday he joined LC Diamond Cutting Works. He said that he was under the impression that the agreement was not binding on him because he had resigned from the SA Diamond Cutters' Union.

The magistrate found the agreement to be binding. He also found Van den Bergh guilty of breaking it.

Distillers Corporation (Wadeville): The dismissal of

three workers at Distillers Corporation resulted in about 600 workers downing tools. The workers claimed that management had broken an agreement between them when the workers were fired. According to the agreement management was required to consult the shop stewards when disputes arose. Workers said that the three had been victimised for their union activities (Sowetan, 24.02.82).

No further news.

Dresser SA (Wadeville): Between 300 and 400 workers downed tools demanding a rand-an-hour increase on their wages. Workers said that a company official had not addressed them when they had initially asked for the increase. Now that they were on strike the workers refused to enter into negotiations with management. They wanted an answer of 'yes' or 'no' to their demands.

After three days the workers agreed to return to work on condition that management had talks with MAWU on a recognition and procedural agreement. The terms also included talks with an interim committee of workers which would replace the existing works committee, and an assurance that the striking workers would not be victimised.

Dunlop Industrial Products (Benoni): On 1 February, 1982, 300 workers demanded higher wages (Sowetan, 02.03.82).

No further news.

EMES (Germiston): 40 workers demanded pay increases. They downed tools for a day and then returned to work although their demands had not been met (Star, 12.03.82).

Fansecure (Germiston): At this firm 30 workers went on strike demanding to be paid a minimum wage of R2,00 an hour. They also expressed dissatisfaction that their pay slips did not reflect their hourly wage, and that their weekly wages were not consistent, ie they were sometimes paid R47,00 and sometimes paid R60,00 per week (Sowetan, 09.03.82).

No further news.

Fenner SA (Isando): At this firm about 150 workers struck demanding an increase of R1,00 an hour. They returned to work after management said that they would not discuss a new increase until after the Industrial Council negotiations next month (RDM, 17.03.82).

Flekaer (Wadeville): Workers at this metal company downed tools on 18 March, in protest against the dismissal of three of their co-workers. A union shop steward was sent to negotiate with management, who claimed that the workers were just being laid off for a month. The striking workers claimed that the dismissed workers had been victimised.

The following day the striking workers returned to work, but threatened further action if the men were not reinstated. MAWU said that it was attempting further negotiations with management on the dispute (RDM, 20.03.82).

No further news.

Fuchs Electrical Industries (Alberton): About 800 workers downed tools and demanded higher wages. When the strike had entered its fourth day the workers elected representatives to negotiate on their behalf, and returned to work (Sowetan, 17.03.82).

Grayhound Bus Lines (Krugersdorp): (For background on this firm see WIP17:40; 20:43).

Following the strike in February, 1981, a preliminary recognition agreement was drawn up by the Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU). The company signed it in December, 1981 (RDM, 17.12.81).

Harvey Tiles (Boksburg): Workers at Harvey Tiles claimed that their employers had breached an agreement about night shifts. Management had originally stated that night shift would cease on 9 December, and had then ordered it to cease on 4 December.

Workers were locked out when they arrived for their night shift on 7 December, and told to return the following morning. On that morning 30 workers refused to work the day shift, and were all dismissed.

When the company reopened on 6 January, 1982, after the Christmas break, the dismissed workers were not allowed back.

Forty of their co-workers went on strike in their support. All 70 workers were offered their jobs back but refused and were all dismissed. MAWU claims that the company has violated an Industrial Council agreement compelling companies to notify the Council when dismissing workers. MAWU is considering charging the company for having locked out its employees on 7 December (Sowetan, 20.01.82).

No further news.

Hawker Siddeley Africa: 150 employees at Hawker Siddeley downed tools demanding the reinstatement of two of their colleagues and an increase of R1,00 an hour. They returned to work while management held talks with MAWU (Sowetan, 04.03.82).

Herkel (Isando): A half-hour work stoppage occurred at this firm. Workers at the Isando plant came out in support of a strike by fellow workers at the Natal plant (see below) (RDM, 11.03.82).

JH Henochsberg (Doornfontein): About 140 workers staged a brief work stoppage at this firm on 8 March. The National Union of Clothing Workers (NUCW) said that the cause was an Industrial Council agreement that was expiring in June. Workers were demanding pay increases and management granted a R3,00 weekly increase after the stoppage.

Highvald Bus Company: A strike occurred at this company during October, 1981. No further news (RDM, 15.10.81).

Hollosec (Germiston): A strike by 80 workers occurred on 10 March, 1982. Their wage demands were not met, but they returned to work the following day. Management said that negotiations with a works council were proceeding (Star, 12.03.82).

Hubco Metal Industries (Wadeville): 160 workers went on strike on 3 March, demanding an increase of R1,00 an hour. They returned to work the following day after management had agreed to negotiate with an elected workers' committee.

Iscor (Vereeniging): About 200 workers were dismissed after a two week pay strike in October, 1981. The workers were mainly employed as shunters. Most of them were migrants from the Transkei, the Ciskei, KwaZulu and other areas. As they were no longer Iscor employees the sacked workers were told to vacate their rooms at the Iscor hostel. Their dismissal would also have meant their removal to the bantustans (Sowetan, 29.10.81).

Strikes at Jays, Lovable, and Ram Clothing (all three in Johannesburg): Strikes at the above clothing factories have annoyed the TUCSA-affiliated unions to which the workers belong. The strikes in support of higher wages, have occurred in the context of a new wage agreement to be negotiated by employers, the Garment Workers' Union and the National Union of Clothing Workers. The agreement is to be negotiated in March, and will take effect in July. The unions have issued a warning that 'workers must not think they can strike and negotiate their own increase over and above the union increase'. They appealed to workers not to take this issue into their own hands in the interim (RDM, 24.02.82).

Also see strikes at SA Weatherwear, Suki Crawford, RMB Dress, Adonis Knitwear, Remarque Wear, JH Henochsberg, and Patons and Baldwins Textiles, in this issue of WIP, and a forthcoming article.

Johannesburg underwear firm: Over 300 workers struck at this firm over wage demands. They rejected a R1,00 attendance bonus and demanded a R5,00 increase in weekly wages. The workers claim that they were ordered to leave if they refused to accept the bonus offer (RDM, 10.02.82).

No further news.

Krost Brothers (Herriotdale): A dispute involving union recognition arose at this firm. Workers sent a petition to their employers calling for the liaison committee to be disbanded and replaced by a shop stewards committee of MANU. The firm's managing director agreed to disband the liaison committee and ask the workers to elect a new one until such time as MANU had been formally recognised. He added that MANU shop stewards would only be recognised when the union gained recognition.

At this point, 1 300 workers went on strike. After negotiations with MANU, the company agreed to recognise union shop stewards, and to sign a written recognition agreement with the union. The workers then agreed to call off their 1 day strike (Star, 04.02.82).

Kusiek Dairy (West Rand): On Thursday, 12 March, 90 workers from this, the only dairy in the area, stopped work. The strike involved dissatisfaction

over deduction from their wages. Abel van Wyk, managing director of the dairy, said that he feared that the strike would continue, but he hoped to have the workers back at their jobs on Monday. The remainder of the only two reports on this strike dealt with practical arrangements for people to get milk, including the involvement of Radio Highveld.

Lasher Tools (Germiston): More than 200 employees (the entire workforce) at Lasher Tools went on strike on 1 February, 1982. They demanded an increase of R1,00 an hour. One of the workers told a reporter that they were being paid R25,00 a week (Star, 03.02.82).

No further news.

Lovable (see Jays).

McKechnie Brothers (Wadeville): Over 1 000 workers downed tools on 1 March demanding an increase of R1,00 an hour. The demand was later changed to one for a R2,00 an hour minimum wage. After three days the workers agreed to return to work, on condition that management negotiates on their later demand.

Nampek Recycling Industries (Edenvale): About 75 workers went on strike in support of a R1,00 an hour increase. The following day the workers had returned to work pending talks between management and the FOSATU-affiliated Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union later that month (Star, 04.02.82).

No further news.

Patons and Baldwins Textiles (Randfontein): A three hour work stoppage occurred at this firm on 8 February. Over 200 workers threatened to go on strike if money that had been deducted from their wages was not returned to them. Negotiations began between management and the Textile Workers' Union. The workers agreed to return to work on condition that management suspend all further deductions while negotiations were taking place. The explanation that management gave for the deductions was that the computer had made tax deductions that were too low during 1981. A spokesperson for the union said that it was trying to get a full explanation from management and would then decide on possible further action (Sowetan, 09.02.82).

Power Steel (Wadeville): For information of earlier strike action see WIP 21:58.

An undisclosed number of workers downed tools in early March, demanding wage increases. Worker representatives and management were reported to be holding talks (Sowetan, 03.03.82).

No further news.

Rand Scrap Iron (Germiston): 500 workers downed tools at this plant on 10 March, 1982, asking for higher wages. The company alleged that striking workers had stoned vehicles attempting to enter the plant. About 150 workers returned to work and management

said they would take back most of the rest, except for those who had been involved in stone throwing (RDM, 11.03.82).

Remarque Wear (Doornfontein, Johannesburg): On Tuesday, 2 March, more than 100 workers at this clothing firm went on strike, over the dismissal of a shop steward who had taken wage demands to management.

The workers went back to work shortly after the strike began after being granted a R2,00 weekly increase, and having the shop steward reinstated.

Ram Clothing (see Jays).

RMB Dress Company: A brief stoppage occurred on 12 March. No further news.

SA Abattoir Company (Krugersdorp): Workers downed tools at this firm protesting about the dismissal of a union shop steward. The general secretary of the CUSA-affiliated Food, Beverage and Allied Workers' Union said that the firm had previously refused to recognise the union because it was not registered. He claimed the union had a membership of about 200 workers at the plant (RDM, 02.03.82).

The following day workers returned to work after assurances from management that no further workers would be fired (Star, 03.03.82).

Sapekoe Tea Plantations (Tzaneen): WIP has just come across a report dating back to late last year, and referring to strikes at the Sapekoe Tea Plantations.

It appears that on Friday, 30 October, 1981, 400 women from the company's Grenshoek tea plantation marched on Tzaneen. They were stopped by police when about ten kms from the town. On Saturday morning they were paid off, but management said that the next Monday, 2 November, they were all back at work.

On Monday, 2 November, 600 workers from the Middelkop plantation marched on Tzaneen, but were, in turn stopped by police a few kms from Tzaneen. They were said to have been carrying flags, sticks and singing while marching in an orderly column. DJ Penwill, managing director of the company, said that they had no wage demands, although an amount of a monthly increase of R36,00 had been mentioned (Beeld, 03.11.81).

We have no further information on these events.

SA Weatherwear (Mayfair, Johannesburg): On 9 March, 1982, workers struck demanding wage increases. They returned to work the following day after management had offered a R5,00 per week production bonus.

Sharp: A strike at a firm identified as 'Sharp' by workers was mentioned in a report (RDM, 04.03.82).

Suki Crawford (Johannesburg): A brief stoppage took place on 12 March. 35 workers struck demanding wage increases. They returned to work after they had been promised a R3,00 weekly increase.

Transvaal Malleable Foundries: 360 workers refused

to work in protest against the dismissal of two colleagues. All were dismissed but later re-employed (Star, 05.03.82).

Unilever (Boksburg): About 200 workers at the Lever Brothers plant struck for a few hours on 25 February. This was in protest over the dismissal of some of their colleagues. The return to work happened in terms of a dispute procedure agreed upon by the CUSA-affiliated Food, Beverage and Allied Workers' Union and Unilever last November.

A Wolff General Engineers (Waltloo, Pretoria): At this factory 40 coloured painters and welders resigned. They were protesting about the fact that they were to be replaced by african workers. One of them said, 'If blacks take our positions they will work for less pay' (Star, 21.01.82).

Woltube (Germiston): About 260 workers struck demanding the dismissal of a white security guard. He was dismissed two days later and the strikers returned to work.

NATAL

Bata (trading as KwaZulu Shoe Company) (Loskop, near Estcourt): This factory is owned jointly by the (Canadian based) Bata company (holding a two thirds share), and the state's Corporation for Economic Development (CED) (one third share).

The FOSATU-affiliated National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) has been active in organising the workers at the factory. At a union meeting a woman worker had complained of ill-treatment by a supervisor at the firm. She was subsequently dismissed and another 100 workers were told that they would also be fired if they attended union meetings.

On Monday, 22 February, 700 workers at the KSC went on strike in support of the dismissed worker. Workers were said to be earning R14 a week. When the Industrial Council for the Leather Industry was asked to comment on these wages, they said that there was nothing they could do as the factory 'was not in South Africa'! (Natal Mercury, 24.02.82).

The IC spokesperson confirmed that the wages paid by the KSC were far below the minimum laid down by the IC for the factories in the industry ('even a flicking worker, responsible for cutting out the uppers, was paid a minimum of R74,41 a week, according to the (IC) agreement').

Philip Kotzenberg, senior liaison officer of the CED, said that the Corporation 'did not interfere in any of the homeland industries' set up by the CED. It was a matter between management and workers.

He said the primary objective of the corporation was to provide work in the rural areas. It could not do this if it had to adhere to the minimum wages laid down for metropolitan areas by the various industrial councils. (Natal Mercury, 24.02.82)

Obed Zuma, general secretary of the NUTW, said that the matter had also been taken up with the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and the local chief, asking them to exert pressure.

On Wednesday, 24 February, workers allegedly decided to return to work, after an NUTW meeting. 'Community councillors' (?) had earlier asked the workers (at management's request) to return to work. The workers refused to listen to this request.

There is a considerable break in the coverage of this strike that we have at our disposal, dealing with the next few weeks.

It was reported on 18 March that 700 workers had been fired 'last Thursday' (ie 11 March). In the same report it was said that the NUTW said that management would not speak to them or to the KwaZulu 'labour officer'. The union also said that there had been no production at the factory since the dismissals.

However, another report (Echo, supplement to the Natal Witness, 18.03.82) said that ZA Khanyile, the KwaZulu 'labour officer' had met with management.

Even on the flimsy news we have on this strike it is obvious that there are several important aspects to it: It draws attention to the nature of foreign investment (some of it) in South Africa, willing to make the most of the extremely exploitable conditions that exist in the bantustans; it draws attention to links between foreign companies and the CED, under the guise of providing employment opportunities; it shows up the limitations to the industrial council system when it comes to setting wages; the difficulties of organising workers in conditions of poverty and unemployment are present; and it raises the interesting aspect of the relationship between the bantustan authorities (in this case the pro-investment Buthelesi region) and the workers situated within their areas - what was the line that the 'labour officer' took with the KSC management, and how did the chief respond to the request that he exert pressure on the company?

Hopefully one of our readers will be able to fill us in on these and many other questions that arise out of this strike.

Defy (Jacobs, Durban): See WIP21:52.

The evening shift on Monday, 1 February, refused to start work and by the next day all 1 200 workers were on strike. The issue was, once more, workers' contributions to and withdrawal from the pension fund administered through the Industrial Council for the steel industry, to which Defy belongs.

The South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), representing most of the Defy workers, were said to be holding talks with representatives of the pension fund. Defy directors said that the company had applied to the Industrial Council to withdraw from the the Group Metal Industries Pension Fund, and to establish a private scheme.

SEIFSA, the employer body in the industry, said that it was examining the pension issue - but at the moment contributions cannot be withdrawn unless the employee leaves the industry, and then only after six months have expired. This was already a change from the previous 'frozen' pension situation (frozen until death or retirement) - a condition the same as that proposed and dropped in the state's Pension Bill. As for the six month delay, Sam van Coller (SEIFSA

director) said that 'We have assumed that for the first six months after a worker loses a job, he will be able to claim from the Unemployment Insurance Fund' (ROM, 10.02.82).

On Thursday, 4 February, after an ultimatum to return to work, all workers were fired as 'the company could no longer tolerate the workers' continued absence and refusal to work' (ROM, 05.02.82).

Herbert Barnabus, national organiser of the SAAWU, said that a workers' committee had told management that they would meet the ultimatum 'if Defy could settle the pension issue within the next two weeks' (Natal Mercury, 05.02.82). The workers were also awaiting the arrival of their lawyer, Graham Dyson, from Johannesburg.

Defy was reported to be taking on workers from Monday, 8 February. By that day the strike was said (by director R Collie) to have cost the firm R1,4-m. Fired employees could reapply for their jobs but would lose long-service benefits.

No further information at present.

Henkel Chemical Manufacturers (Prospecton, Durban):

See WIP 21:53. 230 workers were fired on 10 March after being on strike (from reports at hand it is not clear for how long) over pension fund refunds, wages, and the new shift system which decreased the difference in wages paid to shift and day workers.

The FOSATU-affiliated CWIU and management were set to meet on 24 March. The International Chemical and Energy Federation (Geneva-based, with more than 6-m affiliated workers internationally) said that they would support a boycott of Henkel products if workers were not reinstated. 75 workers had been taken back. Among those left out was CWIU national president, Abis Ceele (Sunday Tribune, 21.03.82). (Information seems to indicate that the strike started on Monday, 8 March).

Iscor (Newcastle): See WIP 20:47 for coverage of the strike at this plant. The Industrial Council for the Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Industry, could not resolve the dispute between Iscor and the Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU). The meeting of the IC (in October 1981) discussed the call by the union for reinstatement with full pay of the 78 fired workers. Iscor would only take them back 'on merit' (Star, 15.10.81).

McKinnon Chain (Pietermaritzburg): 90 workers, who had downed tools on Monday, 15 February, over alleged non-payment of promised wage increases were evicted from the company's premises by police that same afternoon. The next day they were told that they had been dismissed.

A MAWU organiser had said that management insisted that wage decisions be negotiated at industrial council level. The union was considering contacting the USA parent company of McKinnon Chain.

Mondi Timber mill (Port Durnford, north coast):

All 131 workers (120 of them members of the FOSATU-affiliated Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union), were dismissed on Friday, 5 February, after having gone

on strike the previous day. The issue was over pension fund contributions which the workers demanded to have repaid. Management said that they would have to resign to get the money back. The workers refused to resign, but also refused to work.

They would not accept their wages. Said PWAUWU organiser, Pat Horn, 'Mondi workers are emphatically opposed to belonging to the pension scheme and they are demanding that they be consulted on this before final policy decisions are made' (Natal Mercury, 08.02.82).

The management at the Anglo-American owned firm, steadfastly refused to deal with the PWAUWU, until late in the strike.

On 15 February, all 131 workers were taken on again, with the understanding that the pension scheme would be investigated, and workers kept informed of progress (Natal Mercury, 16.02.82).

Natal African Blind Society (Umlazi): After having been on strike for a week, 59 blind workers at this cane work factory were fired on Thursday, 11 February. They were dissatisfied with an increase in the boarding rate from R1,50 to R2,50 a week (in some cases) (one-eighth of their salary). This increase was said to be necessary to cut 'the tremendous loss' at which their hostel was said (by NABS secretary, Lovell Greene) to be running.

The workers were given a deadline of 10h00 on Saturday, 13 February, to leave the hostel and had not been fed since the day before they were fired ('because they were no longer employed by the factory', said director J Randels).

H Barnabus, of the Blind Allied Workers' Union, said that workers wanted to be charged the same rate for lodging, and not a proportional amount of their salaries (said to range from R8,00 to R22,00).

When the workers refused to leave they were charged with trespassing in the hostel, which the workers said they regarded as 'their home'.

Randels was later persuaded, by KwaZulu authority officials to feed the workers (KwaZulu owns the factory building, run by the NABS on an agency basis).

On Monday, 15 February, 52 workers appeared in the Umlazi magistrates' court, charged with trespassing. On 17 February, they were found guilty and their sentences (R30,00 or 30 days) were suspended on condition that they leave the premises. CJ Albertyn, for the defence, arranged a stay of one night at the hostel.

The workers applied to the Supreme Court to be allowed to stay in the hostel. Randels was ordered to show cause (by 5 March) why he should not be prevented from ejecting the workers.

No further information available to us.

Progress Industries (Hammarsdale): 80 workers lost their jobs on Friday, 12 March (?), after protesting over wages (Star, 18.03.82). The fired workers demanded that all of them be reinstated. Management refused and another 500 then went on strike. They were given until Wednesday, 17 March, to return to work. It was then announced that management would take on the 80 who had been fired.

The National Union of Textile Workers said that they would talk to management about workers' short pay, and recognition of the union.

Richards Bay Minerals (Richards Bay): See WIP19:48. Following the strike in 1981, the International Metal-workers' Federation (IMF) said that Canadian workers were being asked 'to use their influence' to win the reinstatement of RBM workers (the IMF said that a Canadian company owned 31% of the shares in RBM).

Matthews Oliphant (now detained), general secretary of the National Federation of Workers (NFW), whose affiliate the National Iron, Steel, Metal and Allied Workers' Union was said to have been involved in the dispute, said that a handling boycott of steel exported by RBM might be requested. He said that life 'had been made "hell" for workers since the stoppage' (ADM, 04.02.82).

T and C Organic (Mandini): Workers on two shifts at this factory went on strike on Friday, 5 February, protesting at the dismissal of two shop stewards the previous day (Citizen, 06.02.82).

No further information.

Tongaat Milling (Estcourt): An incomplete report said that 150 workers had been fired on Thursday, 11 March (?), after demanding the dismissal of a foreman (Star, 18.03.82). The Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union was said to be involved in recognition talks at the factory. Workers were calling for full reinstatement, while management were said to be planning 'selective' re-employment.

No further news available to us.

Turnell Ltd (Jacobs): About 400 workers downed tools during the week ending Friday, 12 March over union recognition demands ('Echo', supplement to the Natal Witness, 18.03.82).

From another report (Natal Mercury, 16.03.82) it appears that the workers had downed tools on Wednesday, 10 March. Management said that most of the workers had returned by the Friday.

Vickers Lenning (Isithebe): On 16 November, 1981, 265 workers (almost the entire workforce) were dismissed following a strike, and demands to be paid while on strike.

The workers' action at this 'growth point' factory in KwaZulu, was said to have started on 12 November, over 'grievance procedure'. Management said that 'some' workers would be rehired (Natal Mercury, 18.11.81).

No further information available to us.

Zinkwazi Caravan Park (north coast): (See WIP21:55). The trespass trial of 43 workers continued in February. 21 of the workers were found guilty, cautioned and discharged.

WESTERN CAPE

Leyland (Cape Town): See WIP20:49 for previous coverage and references. Late in 1981 the Leyland company made an offer of R1,76 per hour as its minimum

wage rate for the 2 000 workers employed at its two Cape Town plants. This was rejected by the FOSATU-affiliated National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU), who asked for R1,80 an hour minimum.

Early in February the company asked the state to appoint a conciliation board to mediate in the dispute between it and the NAAWU. Failure to settle after this step could have led to a legal lock-out by Leyland of the workers employed by the company.

NAAWU members had said that they would accept R1,76, if new negotiations were held in June (after six months). Leyland wanted the rate to stand for 12 months.

On 12 March it was announced that the dispute was settled. From press reports it appears that NAAWU won their demand for wage negotiations in June, and accepted the R1,76 and hour minimum rate from January to this date.

EASTERN CAPE

Volkswagen (Uitenhage): On Friday, 5 February, two workers were fired, for 'disciplinary reasons'. On Tuesday 200 workers went on strike and shut down several production lines. They returned to work on the same day while NAAWU shop stewards and officials continued negotiations with management.

No further news available to us.

See WIP20:49 for previous coverage. Also WIP21:60.

Wilson-Rowntree (East London): See WIP21:46-8; WIP20:50.

The British Distributive and Allied Workers' Union (DAWU) and the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) demanded in mid-January that Wilson-Rowntree recognise the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) and reinstate the dismissed workers, otherwise action would be taken against the UK-based parent company, Rowntree-Mackintosh.

Later that month people marched through the streets of York, demanding reinstatement of the fired workers. York is the international headquarters of Rowntree-Mackintosh. Rowntree-Mackintosh shop stewards proposed, in February, that the matter of the fate of the South African workers be raised within the British Trade Union Congress.

MINING

Veal Reef's gold mine (Orkney): Miner George Nortje was stabbed to death after an underground argument on 26 January. No further information available, other than that a man was to have appeared in the local magistrate's court the next day in connection with the incident.

Buffelsfontein Mine (Stilfontein): Miner Leonard Johannes West was stabbed to death on 12 February by an african miner after an argument while on duty.

No further information other than that a miner was to have appeared in the Stilfontein magistrate's court on Monday, 15 February.

Ermelo coal mine (Ermelo): On 17 March 700 african miners 'rioted' for three hours, demanding that the last Saturday of every month be free to allow them to

return to their homes in the bantustans. It appears that they were willing to work in time to make this possible.

Conflicting statements by officials of the owners of the mine, Gencor, described damage as 'minimal' and as 'the worst I have seen' (Star, 18.03.82).

The situation was still tense the next morning and the trouble was expected to spread to other mines at some stage. Workers agreed to return to work while the matter was being discussed with the white unions. These unions come into the picture because they had agreed to an 11-day fortnight, on the way to establishing a five-day working week (their ultimate demand). The african miners' demands would, therefore, mean that not all white miners would have a regular 11-day fortnight.

Arrie Paulus, general secretary of the Mineworkers' Union, said that he had refused the request for the end of the month free Saturday - 'the only change his union would favour would be a five-day week'.

Negotiations between Gencor and white (!) unions were said to be continuing.

TRADE UNIONS AND UNIONISTS

The Ciskei authorities are taking a long hard look at the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) after the latest trial of strength between the two bodies.

A mammoth court case which led to the conviction of 35 SAAWU members under the Riotous Assemblies Act was only the last of several clashes between the trade union and the 'government' it so strongly rejects.

Held in the Zwelitsha magistrate's court, the case was completed some three months after it opened, when 35 'ciskeians' were charged under one of several security laws retained when the bantustan opted for South Africa's version of 'independence'. Forty-two SAAWU members were originally charged with inciting public violence at a bus terminus in Mdantsane during September last year (see WIP20:50). They were all arrested after getting off a bus taking them home from a SAAWU meeting held at the height of the Wilson Rowntree dispute.

They also allegedly sang inflammatory songs calling for the head of the Ciskei Central Intelligence Service (the CCIS), Major General Charles Sebe, to be killed.

During the trial CCIS members told how the bus arrived at the terminus with people singing loudly, while other stuck clenched fists out of the windows. Some passengers were allegedly singing 'Charles Sebe will die' and said that they would 'always follow Gqweta', a reference to SAAWU president Thozamile Gqweta.

At the end of the state's case SAAWU's advocate, M Brassey, called for all 42 to be discharged, saying that the prosecutor had failed to prove who the principal perpetrators were and what their common cause was.

The magistrate, J Kotze, turned down the application, saying that he could not reject all the state evidence.

Of the original 42, 35 were found guilty on the main charge of incitement and sentenced to pay R100

finas. They were also sentenced to nine months imprisonment each, suspended conditionally for five years.

Five were found not guilty and discharged after claiming they were 'innocent bystanders'. A warrant of arrest was issued for a sixth accused, Nuku Kolisi, who failed to appear on the day of judgement.

The 42nd accused did not live to see the end of the trial. He was stabbed to death over the Christmas period in a brawl.

After sentence was passed Sebe warned that the Ciskei was considering banning SAAWU.

'I have said on various occasions they (SAAWU) do not stand for any trade union', he told the Daily Dispatch newspaper. 'Today we have brought them to court and got a conviction. I am glad we have proven our case to the world.'

'We have been accused, particularly me, of harassing SAAWU members. It is now in the hands of the government whether to ban SAAWU.'

The Ciskeian threat comes at the end of a long, sometimes vicious war between the two bodies.

Just over two years ago the Ciskei authorities fired the first shots in the war when it refused to give SAAWU offices in the Mdantsane shopping complex - Sebe claimed trade unions were redundant in the Ciskei because the 'government of Ciskei looks into the problems of every worker'.

Since then approximately 300 SAAWU members have been detained, either by the South African security police or the CCIS.

Thozamile Gqweta himself has been detained five time without being convicted of an offence, and was also picked up during the Zwelitsha trial. After being accused by CCIS officers of 'making petrol bombs and pamphlets', he was released.

Last year Gqweta's home was mysteriously set alight and two close relatives - his mother and an uncle - died in the fire, allegedly because somebody had wired both entrances closed (see WIP21:61-2).

At their funeral Gqweta's girlfriend, Deliswe Roxiso, was shot dead when shots were fired at a crowd of mourners.

Recently Thozamile Gqweta was detained for 86 days by the South African security police. He was released 'for health reasons' after being admitted to a psychiatric ward.

- Eastern Cape correspondent.

The death in detention of Neil Aggett has dominated the labour scene both locally and internationally. It is quite remarkable how the state and its media/propaganda arm, the SABC, has toned down its coverage of the Polish situation now that the local repression of the working class and its leaders has had such international coverage.

Neil Aggett was not the first, and will probably not be the last. Trade unionists who are known to have died in detention:

Looksmart Ngudle	September	1963
Caleb Mayekiso		1969
Luke Mazembe		1976
Lawrence Ndzanga	January	1976
Elijah Loza		1977
Neil Aggett	February	1982

The offices of the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU) in Newcastle were raided by security police on Tuesday, 19 January, 1981. Documents and some correspondence was removed.

A prayer meeting that was to be held by the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (MWASA) was cancelled when the security police intimidated the priest in whose church it was to have taken place. Cars of MWASA members who were already at the venue were searched (Star, 15.02.82).

The South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) has come in for more than its share of the intimidation and harassment of the security police, both in the Ciskei bantustan (see above) and the national security police. During the first week of February the offices of the union in East London were raided three times in two days. The officials present were told that they had no right to be in South Africa as they were foreigners from the Ciskei. The head of the security police in East London, Colonel AP van der Merwe, said that the offices had not been 'raided' but that they had been 'visited', and that some documentation had been removed. The union was using a disused church hall as offices, having been evicted from their offices in the city.

Two officials had been taken away by the security police for questioning. They were released two hours later.

It is feared by trade unionists that another tool could be added to the array of security measures that can already be, and is being used against them. This is the recommendation by the Rabie Commission that 'intimidation' be declared a crime (this would prohibit anybody 'from compelling or inducing another person from doing any act or forcing another to adopt or abandon a certain viewpoint'). Anyone found guilty of this 'crime' would be liable to a R20 000 fine or ten years imprisonment, or both. Picketing is at present being 'discouraged' through the application of the Riotous Assemblies Act.

The case in which 40 workers who had been involved in the strike at Rely Precision Casting are suing the Minister of Police for R1 500 each, continued during January and February. The workers allege that they were beaten up by the police. This case will be written up later. See WIP21:58 for references to previous coverage of the strike at the firm.

The Minister of Police said in reply to a question in parliament that a total of 21 trade unionists had been detained in South Africa since the beginning of 1981. Ten of these people, according to the Minister, had been released without charge and the others were in detention under the Terrorism Act (ADM, 26.02.82).

Trade union related people known to be in detention as at 15.03.82 (central state):^a

Date of detention	Name	Union/organisation	Section
24.09.81	Alan Fine	Ass Sec Witwatersrand Liquor and Catering Trade	6 TA
23.11.81	Monty Narsoo	ex-Jhb Municipal Employees'	6 TA
27.11.81	Erema Mashinini	Gen-Sec, CCAWUSA	6 TA
"	Sam Kikine	Gen-Sec, SAARU	6 TA
"	Semson Ndou	Pres, GAWU	6 TA
"	Rita Ndzanga	Org-Sec, GAWU	6 TA
"	Marle Favis	Editor, SALB	6 TA
"	Liz Floyd	Associated with IAS	6 TA
08.12.81	Sisa Njikelana	V-Pres, SAARU	6 TA
11.12.81	Eric Mtonga	Branch Chair, SAARU	6 TA
? .12.81	M Taho	SAARU member	6 TA
13.03.82	Matthews Oliphant	Gen-Sec, NFW	22 GLA

Trade union related people released from detention:^{aa}

03.06.81	(-15.02.82)	Dumile Makhanda	Chair, MACWUSA	6 TA
"	"	Maxwell Madlingozi	Official, MACWUSA	6 TA
"	"	Zandile Mjuza	Official, MACWUSA	6 TA
"	"	Mxolisi Didize	Org, MACWUSA	6 TA
26.06.81	"	Sipho Pityana	Org, MACWUSA & GAWU	6 TA
27.11.81	(03.03.82)	Thozamile Gqetha	Pres, SAARU	6 TA
29.01.82	(-12.02.82)	Isaac Ngcobo	Treasurer, SAARU	22 GLA
02.03.82	(09.03.82)	Mary Ntseke	Gen-Sec, GAWU	22 GLA
"	(05.03.82)	Solly Pholoto	GAWU	22 GLA
"	"	Elliot Tshabangu	GAWU	22 GLA
13.03.82	(15.03.82)	Four unnamed trade unionists detained with Matthews Oliphant of the NFW		

(a TA - Terrorism Act; GLA - General Law Amendment Act
aa Date in brackets is the date of release)

STOP PRESS

Of the detainees mentioned above, Alan Fine appeared in court on Friday, 26 March, charged under the Terrorism Act together with Barbara Hogan and Cedric Mayson.

On the same day, Liz Floyd of the IAS was released from detention, and unconfirmed reports suggest that Monty Narsoo has been transferred to section 12(b) of the Internal Security Act.

STATISTICS AND EXPLANATIONS

A Centre for Black Advancement has been formed with the intention of 'helping managements throughout the country to set up grievance procedures and also build up lines of communication with workers to minimise the possibility of strikes (Citizen, 20.01.82).

Dries Bester, industrial psychologist at Potchefstroom University, believes that the spate of strikes in South Africa are the 'birth pangs of a new industrial order' rather than anything to worry about. He argues from the point of view that conflict is functional to society, in that it stimulates change (Beeld, 03.02.82).

According to the Department of Manpower, there were 55% more strikes during 1981 than during 1980 (342 recorded strikes and work stoppages), involving

94 842 workers, all black (RDW, 05.02.82). These strikes cost 226 550 shifts. These official figures do, of course, only reflect strikes reported to the Department of Manpower.

After the annual plenary session of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, meeting in Pretoria early in February, the church issued a statement that it would 'throw the moral weight of the church' behind the struggle of workers in South Africa. This statement followed many references made to the parallels with the Polish situation. Archbishop Hurley said that the majority of the members of the church, who were black, would support the statement.

The Old Mutual's pensions manager said that it was lack of understanding of the pension issue that led to the strikes around this issue during 1981 (Transvaler, 12.02.81).

Courts

TERRORISM ACT TRIALS

Oscar Mpetha (71), Lawrence Lerotholi (18), Morgan Makubala (19), Aaron Tshangema (28), Peter Kube (18), Alton Sabusa (18), Fumanikile Booi (18), Vuyisile Kzaze (19), Johannes Nhlapo (20), Jeffrey Baardman (20), Vuyisile Diba (21), Richard Masopondo (20), Welile Mazothane (21) and 5 youths.

Charge: The state alleges that between August 8 and August 12, 1980, the accused incited people to damage motor vehicles by throwing stones and petrol bombs, and setting alight the vehicles. The accused are charged with assaulting 6 people, two of whom subsequently died. Other charges relate to the barricading of Klipfontein Road by placing stones, tree stumps and tyres in the street; marching in singing groups armed with sticks, stones and other weapons; ordering the closure of black schools; and congregating in various churches to encourage people to participate in 'terroristic' activities.

For previous details, see WIP 20:38-40, and WIP 21:42-43.

When court re-opened on 9 February, Justice Williamson ruled that in respect of statements made by two of the accused to magistrates - both of which were confessions - the onus was on the state to prove that they were freely and voluntarily made, without the imposition of pressure or undue influence.

The statements of three other accused were ruled by the judge to be admissions, and the accused had to bear the onus of disproving that they were voluntarily made.

Since court re-opened in 1982, the state has called some 20 witnesses in connection with the trial-within-a-trial relating to two of the confessions. State witnesses have denied assaulting the accused and promising to release them from detention if they made statements. The accused allege assaults, threats and promises of release on making statements.

Essentially, this issue revolved around the credibility of the state witnesses and the accused as to the admissibility of the statements.

During the course of the trial, the health of the first accused, Oscar Mpetha, has been cause for much concern. Mpetha, who is 72 and suffers from diabetes, has been hospitalised a number of times during the trial. He has been in custody since August 13, 1980, and the state has consistently refused him bail. Most recently, he was hospitalised with chronic diabetes, and underwent an operation for an enlarged prostate gland.

In another development, security police raided the offices of the Cape Town Students' Representative Council in February, seizing hundreds of posters portraying Mpetha.

The trial, which has now run for well over 100 court days, continues in the Cape Town Supreme Court.

Fana George Sithole, Jabolani Wilfred Ngcobo, and Titi Aloia Mthanyane.

Charge: The accused face two counts under the Terrorism Act, and accused number 1 (Sithole) faces a further 15 counts under the Internal Security Act, relating to the breaking of his banning order.

The state alleges that the accused formed an organisation known as the African Youth Congress (AYC), with the intention of furthering the aims of the banned African National Congress. They are alleged to have incited others to leave the country for military training, and assisting them to leave via the organisation of transport.

The accused are also charged with obtaining information regarding security arrangements at the Caltex Oil Terminal in Durban, and to have obtained explosives.

The accused, who first appeared in court in Durban on 5 January, 1982, were remanded in custody until February 23. When the trial began in the Durban Regional Court, they all pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Bhefika Ngobese told the court of a meeting of the AYC which elected ex Robben Island prisoner Phillip Mathews as president. At this meeting, Mathews said he would write to Oliver Tambo asking for financial assistance. Mthanyane said that a reply would indicate that 'we would be having recognition from the ANC and would know that the AYC is one with the ANC'. The meeting, according to the witness, also decided to send messages to Mandela and Sisulu on Robben Island via a lawyer who would be visiting them.

The state then applied for the cross examination of Ngobese to be held in camera, as he had received threatening telephone calls warning him not to continue testifying in the trial. This application was turned down by the presiding magistrate, who ruled that the witness was already exposed, and closing the court at this stage would do nothing to protect him.

After the magistrate had heard the evidence of a psychiatrist, Mthanyane was ordered to be placed under observation at the Maritzburg Prison Hospital. Dr E Valjee was called by the defence to give evidence on Mthanyane's mental state, after Mthanyane claimed that he was having difficulty following the court proceedings.

Dr Valjee told the court that Mthanyane had some disorder in his thinking process. He showed signs of depression and was experiencing hallucinations. He was also suffering from loss of weight and had lost his appetite.

Prior to his appearance in court as an accused, Mthanyane had been detained a number of times by security police. Since 1976, he has spent many lengthy periods in detention. In addition, he served an 18 month jail sentence for refusing to testify against co-SGRC member, Paul Langa, in a Terrorism Act trial.

The hearing was adjourned until March 1982.

Khoteo Sydney Seathlolo (25) and Mary Masabatha Loate (23).

Charge: The state alleged that Seathlolo, a former president of the now-banned SGRC, helped form the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO) while in exile. He was chairman of the Nigerian-based Council, a military group formed by students who left the country after the 1976 riots, and who did not join either the ANC or PAC.

According to the charge sheet, SAYRCO aims to incite blacks to overthrow the government by violence, and in achieving this, to recruit people for military training. The state also alleges that SAYRCO made contact with certain organisations within South Africa in an attempt to further its aims.

Among the acts detailed in count 1, it was alleged that the accused conspired with other members of SAYRCO to attempt to destroy law and order in South Africa through violence. It was also claimed that SAYRCO pamphlets were distributed at a meeting in Soweto on 16 June, 1981; that during June 1981, one of the accused brought two people from Botswana into contact with Thabo Ndabeni, national organiser of AZAPO; that Seathlolo joined AZANYU and introduced the national chairman and president of the organisation to people in Soweto; that Loate arranged a meeting between various AZAPO and AZANYU members, and SAYRCO; that she arranged a meeting between Seathlolo and Themi Masezi, news editor of the Sowetan newspaper; that she arranged accommodation for members of SAYRCO who entered South Africa; and that she had requested three people to apply for passports, which she took and kept for use by members of SAYRCO.

The second count alleged that Seathlolo and Loate had incited 5 persons from Soweto to undergo military training outside South Africa. They both pleaded not guilty to all the charges against them.

At the start of the trial, in the Vanderbijlpark Regional Court, on February 8, the court heard security police witnesses describe the arrest of the two accused. Captain EG Claassen described a raid on a house in Orlando West where SAYRCO documents were seized. Also found in this house was a forged Botswana passport and telegrams to Botswana.

A young girl who may not be named and for whom the magistrate cleared the court, refused to give evidence. She said she would rather go to jail than testify against her colleagues.

Another witness, who may also not be named, told the court of a trip to Gaborone made by himself and a group of church members. He said he was introduced by the previous witness to three youths, two of whom he remembers as 'Ieboho' and 'Paul'. Ieboho had told him that SAYRCO would liberate blacks through violence and that 800 - 1 000 members had committed themselves to the organisation.

The witness said that the following day he had met Seathlolo, who told him that the organisation considered itself to be a third force and did not align itself with either the ANC or PAC.

Seathlolo also asked him if he could get maps of Soweto. SAYRCO members had offered the witness and his colleagues booklets about the organisation

and about the lives of Brezhnev and Mao for distribution in Soweto. They accepted the booklets, but carried out none of the instructions.

7 witnesses refused to give evidence for the state: they were
Freedom Mazibuko (20),
Themi Masezi (38),
Carter Selake (24),
Thabo Ndabeni (25),
Alex Selani (27),
Sipho Somacala (28), and
Elsie Mathibedi (22).

They were all sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 9 - 18 months.

Verdict: Both accused guilty on both counts.
Sentence: Seathlolo - 10 years on count 1, 5 years on count 2, to run concurrently, ie 10 years imprisonment.
Loate - 5 years on each count, to run concurrently, ie 5 years imprisonment.
(Vanderbijlpark Regional Court, 11.03.82).
Shortly after sentence, Seathlolo was re-detained under section 6 of the Terrorism Act by security police.

William Mabone Duma (31), Dumisane Bizette Maninjen (31), Bayi Keys (52), and Luyanda Mayekiso (52).

Charge: In this, the first Ciskei Terrorism Act trial since the territory attained 'independence' last December, the accused are alleged to have been members of the banned African National Congress. During June 1980 to August 1981 they are alleged to have been actively engaged in the operational activities of the ANC, thus identifying themselves with its revolutionary aims.

They are also alleged to have recruited people to undergo military training, and to have possessed banned literature. The trial opened in the Zeelitshe Supreme Court on 22 February when the 4 accused appeared briefly before the Ciskei Chief Justice, Judge de Wet and two assessors, advocates B Pohl and F Nel.

The case was adjourned for 4 days to allow the oldest accused, Mr Keys, to be examined by a doctor 'to inquire into his mental and physical condition'. Mr Keys claimed he had been assaulted in detention. When the trial reopened on 26 February, Ciskei's attorney general WF Jurgens announced that Keys had been sent to Cape Town's Grootte Schuur hospital for tests, and said that Keys had a previous history of schizophrenic psychotic reaction.

According to a medical report from Grootte Schuur - submitted when Keys reappeared on 15 March - no evidence of current psychosis was found. However, a hospital psychologist said that Keys appeared moderately depressed and anxious. The Grootte Schuur report said Keys had denied any serious accidents or head injuries, but when asked whether he had been hit or kicked on the head while in detention he replied: 'Yes, they did everything to me' (Ja, hulle het alles gedoen by my). The psychologist's report suggested that Keys should not be kept in solitary confinement.

In another medical report, submitted independently by a Dr ID Muckison, it was stated 'This patient

alleged several assaults and there is no doubt he had a schizophrenic-like illness with auditory hallucinations when admitted to hospital'. Dr Huskisson said in his report that Keys had told him he was assaulted during his two months of interrogation, to try and make him talk about a certain meeting he had attended. Keys also told the doctor that he had been hit with fists and kicked on the head during interrogation. The next thing he remembered was being sent to Komari Hospital in Queenstown where he was kept for two months. He said that after being beaten his nose was sore and he could not see out of his left eye.

The trial reopened on 15 March with Mr Jurgens contesting the allegations of assault and making several amendments to the indictment. With Mr Keys back in court, the defence complained that another of the accused, Mr Mayakiso, had been taken from prison to give a handwriting sample without his lawyers being consulted. Jurgens conceded that the police had made 'an error of judgement' but said they had not tried to force evidence out of Mr Mayakiso.

In the state's evidence a South African security policeman, Warrant Officer ED Elsdon claimed he and his colleagues had dug up banned literature - one leaflet was allegedly entitled 'Mandela says unite' - in the back gardens of two houses in Mdantsane.

The prosecution called a lecturer in political science at Rand Afrikaans University, ID de Vries, to give a history of revolutionary groups in South Africa'. De Vries said that the most important movements were the ANC, SACP, SACTU and PAC. He pointed out that the ANC was opposed to 'homelands' and did not recognise Ciskei's independence. De Vries also claimed that the constitution of the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAWU) corresponded, with small exceptions, to that of SACTU.

The trial continues.

Robert Martin Adam (26) and Mandla Mthembu (25).

Charge: The accused are alleged to have conspired with the African National Congress to obtain information regarding the transmission system and other aspects of the SABC TV tower in Brixton. During July 1981, it was alleged that they visited the tower and obtained information about it, including the taking of photographs.

Adam is alleged to have drawn up a report for the ANC entitled 'Report on the reconnaissance of the SABC-TV system in Auckland Park', which was placed in a dead letter box together with certain photographs. These were collected by an ANC courier.

The accused are also jointly charged with attempting to recruit a person for the ANC, and possession of ANC literature.

Adam has admitted in court that he is an ANC member, and that he prepared the report on the SABC tower for the ANC. However, he claims that the intention was not to sabotage the tower, but to damage machinery and the building next to the tower. Mthembu has admitted taking photographs of the Brixton tower, but claims that these were

done for the purposes of writing an article for a magazine on which he is employed.

Mthembu has contested the admissibility of a statement he made after his arrest, claiming that it should not be accepted as evidence against him by the court.

The trial continues in the Johannesburg Supreme Court before the Judge President of the Province, Judge Boshoff.

INTERNAL SECURITY ACT TRIALS

Elaine Mohammed (20), Leslie Lax (23), Michael O'Donovan (21), Benjamin Greyling (20).

Charge: The accused were charged with distributing and producing posters which celebrated the 60th anniversary of the founding of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

The state called Rand Afrikaans University lecturer ID de Vries to give expert evidence on 'revolutionary tactics'. He claimed that a poster shown to him last year carried the words 'workers unite' which he said was extracted from Marx's Communist Manifesto. The poster, he said, could be seen as a way of publicising an unlawful organisation.

Ben Greyling told the court of his mal-treatment by police after his detention. He claimed that after three security police arrested him, his hands were tied behind his back, and he was throttled. Throughout the day until midnight he was bound hand and foot and forced to stand for 14 hours of questioning at John Vorster Square. He was forced to remove all his clothes and a bunch of keys was pushed against his private parts.

When he reported having been assaulted to a doctor, the report was referred back to his interrogators.

Unexpectedly, in the middle of proceedings, the accused changed their plea to guilty. It appears that the presiding magistrate was due to go on leave, and this would have extended court proceedings for some time, while the accused remained in custody.

Counsel for the defence then asked for wholly suspended sentences to be imposed: the accused had already been in jail for some time, and all were keen to resume their universities studies if given the opportunity.

Verdict: Guilty

Sentence: 360 days imprisonment, of which 350 days were conditionally suspended for 5 years. (Johannesburg Regional Court, 10.03.82).

Of interest was the state's policy regarding bail in this case, and the previous Official Secrets Act trial which Greyling was involved in. In the first trial, the state opposed bail strongly, and security police indicated that if bail was granted, Greyling would be redetained. He was subsequently acquitted.

In the second trial, the attorney general prohibited bail by means of a certificate. The accused was thus held in prison as awaiting trial prisoners throughout the trial. They were then sentenced to only 10 days imprisonment.

Mohammed Abba Omar (25).

Charge: Photocopying and distributing an ANC pamphlet. The accused claimed that he had received the pamphlet from an unknown person, and read it. It contained a message from Oliver Tambo on the 69th anniversary of the ANC's foundation. He gave the pamphlet to a friend, asking her to make copies as he intended taking them to a political science class which was part of his journalism course.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: 12 months imprisonment, suspended for 5 years.

(Durban Regional Court, 22.01.82).

APPEAL PROCEEDINGS

Guy Berger and Devandira Pillay.

The original charges against Berger and Pillay related to the provision of information on trade unions to SACTU, membership and furthering the aims of the ANC, and the possession and distribution of unlawful literature.

Effective sentence in Berger's case was 4 years, Pillay receiving 2 years.

They appealed against sentence, and were successful, in that Pillay's sentence was reduced to one year, Berger's to two.

(Grahamstown Supreme Court, March 1982).

Ncimbithi Johnson Lubisi (29), Petrus Mqhego (20), and Nqhtali Manana (24).

(For trial details, see WIP 14:39-41; WIP 15:40-41; WIP 16:3-5).

The appellants were found guilty of high treason in November 1980, and sentenced to death. The major act for which they received the death sentence involved their participation in an ANC attack on the Soekmekaar police station in January 1980.

On appeal, they argued that the death sentence was inappropriate because they had deliberately refrained from killing those inside the police station at the time of the attack. Various other factors such as their ages, the social disruption of their lives at the time they joined the ANC (involving the June 1976 events and after), and the disparity between their sentences and other accused, were put forward by the appellants.

Judgement has been reserved in this important appeal.

Wilfred Marwane (20).

Marwane was tried and convicted in Bophuthatswana in terms of South Africa's Terrorism Act. The trial judge, in summing up, said that while the Terrorism Act was passed in South Africa, it still applied in Bophuthatswana after 'independence' because it had not been repealed. Marwane was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

The appeal, heard in South Africa's Appellate Division in Bloemfontein - which has jurisdiction over the 'independent' bantustans - was on the grounds that the Terrorism Act was in conflict with the constitution of Bophuthatswana. This constitution has a bill of rights attached, which counsel for the

appellant claims overrules the Terrorism Act.

The appeal, being heard by a full bench of 11 judges, is proceeding.

PRISON ACT TRIALS

Michael Jenkin (31), Prasa Naidoo (33) and Eshirah Nambhai (44).

The accused, having been detained for some time under section 6 of the Terrorism Act, were charged with harbouring a political prisoner who escaped from Pretoria Central prison in 1979. Stephen Lee escaped with Alexander Mousbaris and Timothy Jenkin, brother of one of the accused, and all 3 subsequently managed to leave South Africa.

Jenkin has been released on bail of R500, while Naidoo and Nambhai are in custody.

Graham Dyson.

Attorney Graham Dyson is charged with attempting to smuggle a letter written by a prisoner out of the Fort Prison, Johannesburg. The prisoner involved was allegedly Elaine Mohammed, recently convicted in terms of the Internal Security Act (see above).

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The article which follows was originally presented as a seminar paper in the Department of Political Science at the University of Dar Es Salaam on Friday, 28 November, 1980. The paper, delivered by Dan O'Meara - then of the History Department at the University - was titled "'Muldergate", the politics of Afrikaner nationalism and the crisis of the capitalist state in South Africa'. The paper is due to be published elsewhere, in a substantially revised form, at a later date.

The 'Muldergate' article has been included in this WIP because of its importance in the analysis and understanding of the recent break away of the Treurnicht group from the National Party. Not only does O'Meara provide essential background to the latest crisis in both party and government, he also provides a methodology for interpreting what is happening in the National Party as an indicator of a generalised crisis of the capitalist state in South Africa.

The contemporary importance of this is that it enables one to identify the various class interests at work, not only within party and government, but within the capitalist ruling class as a whole. The identification of these interests allows for an assessment of the content of the 'reform' initiative which the alliance of the PW Botha led military group and monopoly capital is attempting to implement - and which has been rejected by the Treurnicht led alliance.

The editors of WIP only received permission to publish the 'Muldergate' article shortly before going to print. As such, it has not been edited for typing consistency in terms of the use of capital letters, underlining and other matters of presentation. Apologies are offered to both the author and to WIP readers for this.

'MULDERGATE' AND THE POLITICS OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

THROUGHOUT 1978 and much of 1979, the ruling Nationalist Party (NP) in South Africa, led by Prime Minister BJ Vorster, was shaken by an ongoing series of political and financial scandals. The opposition English-language press immediately dubbed the affair 'Muldergate', after its leading scapegoat, Dr Connie Mulder - then Minister of Information and Plural Relations and Development, leader of the Transvaal Nationalist Party, and Vorster's clear heir apparent. Widely trumpeted press and judicial revelations about the misappropriation of funds and other abuses within Mulder's Department of Information began to assume the tone of a moral crusade against political corruption. In September 1978 Vorster dramatically announced his resignation on 'health' grounds from the premiership and as national leader of the NP. He was promptly elevated to the purely ceremonial post of State President. Vorster's resignation was closely followed by that of his longtime political crony and arguably the second most powerful political figure in South Africa, General Hendrik van den Bergh, head of the notorious Bureau of State Security (BOSS). In a bitterly fought election within the NP caucus to select Vorster's successor as national leader of the NP, and hence the Prime Minister, Connie Mulder was narrowly defeated by the Minister of Defence and leader of the Cape Nationalist Party, PW Botha. The new Prime Minister pledged himself to run a 'clean' government, and in rapid succession Mulder was driven out of the Cabinet,

the leadership of the Transvaal Nationalist Party, Parliament, and eventually the NP itself. He now heads an extreme right-wing opposition group.

Muldergate attracted a great deal of moralising commentary and strident demands for the government's resignation in the bourgeois press. It has been almost universally interpreted as a symbol of the corruption of Afrikaner nationalism, reinforcing the widely held view that the root cause of social conflict in South Africa lies almost exclusively within the apartheid policies of a monolithically conceived 'Afrikaner' ethnic group. This supposed 'ruling ethnic group' is then presumed to use the state to pursue the narrow (and again monolithically conceived) interests of the Afrikaner volk.¹ More often than not, this kind of analysis continues further to pose a fundamental contradiction between Afrikaner nationalism and 'its' apartheid policies on the one hand, and the supposedly rational, inherently colour-blind imperatives of capitalism on the other - a contradiction in which the latter are fettered and distorted by the former.²

This conventional conception of Afrikaner nationalism rests upon a number of mutually reinforcing logical and analytical errors which together result in logical circularity and political confusion. Firstly, and most fundamentally, the highly disparate and differentiated Afrikaans-speaking white population of South Africa is unproblematically characterised as a monolithic 'ethnic group', with a presumably inherent organic unity and a set of common interests overriding all differences. This is taken as self-evident, thereby neatly and uncritically reproducing the basic tenet of Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Once this first untenable assumption is made, a series of others then follow naturally. The shifting and contradictory base of support for a political party (the NP) is simply collapsed into this 'ethnic' category. Given that the NP has been the ruling party since 1948, this illegitimate conflation of party and ethnic group then leads to the argument that Afrikaners monopolise political power in South Africa and hence comprise a

'ruling ethnic group', or sometimes 'a political class'. All this too is taken as self-evident.

In this way, the very different social categories of common language, ethnic group, class, political party, government and state are glibly collapsed into each other, and used interchangeably. Here the distinction between the vastly different areas, levels and types of social action and organisation to which these different categories refer is simply obliterated. This conflation closes a neat logical circle, in which the state is reduced to an Afrikaner entity, and conceived as a simple instrument in the hands of this alleged ruling ethnic group. These numerous errors and confusions apart, what gets concealed in this conception of the state is precisely its character as a capitalist state.³ And thus the political problems of South Africa are reduced to the problems of 'the Afrikaner'. Since 'they' are held solely responsible for the situation of social confrontation in South Africa, on 'them' alone lies the onus to change. In the words of a recent book:⁴

The great problem for South Africa...is essentially a problem for the Afrikaners since they hold the power in everything that matters.

Thus the real political questions in South Africa - those of the capitalist state, and the social relations on which it rests - are neatly avoided and displaced, so legitimising bourgeois politics.

An analysis of Muldergate as a crisis for both government and ruling party must necessarily break with these myriad confusions to confront the problem of the capitalist state in South Africa. In recent years a growing body of South African literature has raised this question. However, as Wolpe's recent review of this literature has demonstrated,⁵ all the various tendencies have remained trapped within an instrumentalist conception. Here, the state is in effect analysed as an institution external to class struggle, available for use as an undifferentiated instrument in the hands of a political party representing specific and purely economic interests. This literature has failed to grasp the character of the state as a differentiated and contradictory unity, itself constituted through, and a site of,

class struggle.

Such a conception of the state as a site of class struggle further poses the problem of the relationship between classes defined at the level of relations of production, and the concrete ideological and organisational forms through which class struggle is fought out. As here conceived, classes defined at the level of relations of production exist in class struggle in and through multiple forms of concrete organisation. Thus, in any conjuncture, the unity of this or that class as a social force cannot simply be read off from the relations of production, but needs to be constructed via the ensemble of concrete organisational and ideological forms in and through which that class exists. In these terms then, an analysis of the state conceived as a site of class struggle involves, inter alia, a focus on precisely the contradictions and conflicts within and between the various institutions and apparatuses of the state.

This paper represents a first attempt to begin such an analysis. It focuses mainly on but one aspect of the state - the significance of the current crisis in Afrikaner nationalism for the state as a whole. This is taken as a useful entry point into the much more complex questions of class struggle and the state as a whole. Thus the analysis presented here is necessarily partial and tentative, leaving unresolved numerous theoretical and empirical problems. These are hopefully to be confronted in future research.

The Muldergate imbroglio was the culmination of a long-simmering crisis in both the Nationalist Party and the NP government, then plunging both party and government still deeper into crisis. Yet it represents much more than the simple internal crisis of Afrikaner nationalism as it is usually depicted. I would argue that it was but an aspect of, and a product of a crisis for the capitalist state as a whole in South Africa. Its 'resolution' likewise represents an attempted resolution of the wider crisis of the South African state.

If this is in fact the case, to assess the significance of Muldergate for the state as a whole, it is necessary to answer three interrelated questions:

What were the broad features of this crisis of the capitalist state in South Africa? What was the significance of the particular form that it assumed in terms of the contradictions and conflicts within the Nationalist Party and government? And what is the significance of its form of resolution for the contradictions and conflicts within the state?

The Crisis of the 1970s

THE crisis confronting the South African state and ruling class in the mid-1970s was complex and multi-levelled - an ensemble of simultaneous and mutually determining economic, political and ideological crisis, producing significant shifts in the balance and alignment of class forces. A great deal of further research is necessary to arrive at an adequate analysis of this generalised crisis. Here is examined with very different emphases but three of its elements: firstly, aspects of the growing crisis of capital accumulation in the 1970s; secondly, the rapid intensification of the class struggle during this decade; and thirdly, in these contexts, the workings of Afrikaner nationalist politics. The aim is to attempt to understand how the first two elements both structured and articulated with the internal dynamic of Afrikaner nationalist politics to produce a political crisis in its particular form of Muldergate. This will provide a basis for a tentative assessment of the significance of the changes occurring in the wake of Muldergate.

During the 1960s the South African economy had expanded more rapidly than that of any other capitalist country except Japan, averaging an annual growth rate of GDP of between 6 and 8 percent. A number of features of this boom should be noted, as here were established the conditions for this crisis of the 1970s. Firstly, the brutal suppression of the national liberation movement by 1963 created the requisite conditions for rapid capitalist growth. Particularly significant here was the smashing of the economic organs of the working class. Thus, between 1964 and 1969, less than 2 000 african workers per annum went on strike. Secondly, the most notable

economic aspect of this boom was that it led to a dramatic concentration and centralisation of capital on the basis of ever more capital intensive production, leading to significant shifts in relations within the capitalist class. Prior to the 1960s, South African industry was characterised by a sharp economic distinction and political antagonism between local undertakings and foreign capital. The boom of the 1960s produced the rapid interpenetration of capitals and the consolidation of the dominance of diversified monopolies within the economy generally, and in all the major sectors of capitalist production. This process was effected on the basis of a massive influx of foreign capital, in a country where the return on capital was amongst the highest in the world. By 1970, total foreign investment was estimated at R5 818-million, and a total of R3 559-million foreign investment capital flowed into South Africa in the period 1965 - 1974.⁶

Consequent on this increasing dominance of capital-intensive production, these years further saw significant changes in the organisation of the proletariat within production, accelerating the process of the simultaneous attraction and extrusion of workers from production.⁷ The introduction of increasingly sophisticated technology into the production process on an ever expanding scale, leads to a relative reduction in the number of workers needed to operate it. Moreover, it simultaneously introduces a new industrial division of labour between semi-skilled operatives on the one hand, and technical/supervisory labour on the other, replacing the old unskilled/skilled division of labour. Thus, during this period, whilst large numbers of semi-skilled operatives were being drawn into production, even larger numbers of unskilled african migrant workers lost their jobs as they became 'redundant'. Throughout the 'boom', african unemployment stood at over 1 million. The influx control measures and pass laws of the apartheid system operated to expel the unemployed from the cities and dump and barricade them in the festering rural slums of bantustans. This process marked a decisive shift away from the reliance on cheap,

unskilled migrant labour so long characteristic of South African industry, towards the consolidation of a stable, semi-skilled workforce.

Similarly during this period, large numbers of skilled (white) workers were also rendered relatively superfluous to capital intensive production, as their skills were superseded by the need for technical/supervisory labour. Yet in apartheid South Africa, the jobs of white workers were protected. The rigid industrial colour bar reserved all supervisory, technical and professional work for whites. Thus in this changing organisation of the labour process, few white workers lost their jobs, but were either retrained and/or converted into supervisors of african workers. However, this process of reclassifying white workers was unable to fill the growing need for technical labour. The boom period was thus also characterised by a severe and growing shortage of labour in technical, professional and semi-professional grades of work - a shortage estimated at some 47 000 workers in 1969.⁸

In these years the monopoly element of the capitalist class did demand measures which would ease restriction on the mobility, employment and training of african workers, to permit its acquisition of a stable supply of semi-skilled operatives and to retrain african workers for technical labour. However, the overall conditions of expansion and high profitability mitigated the adverse effects of such labour shortages and thus did not lead to an all out assault by capital on the existing rigid racial division of labour. During this period, the economy was further 'cushioned' against such labour shortages by the continuing large influx of foreign investment capital. Thus, while the boom conditions persisted, the maintenance of the rigid racial division of labour in industry did not seriously threaten the interests of the capitalist class.

As the 1970s unfolded, the great boom of the sixties gave way to a deepening recession. By 1978 the country was facing the worst economic crisis in its history and an actual decline of GDP of 0,25% in 1977-78.⁹ By the mid 1970s, confronted both with an

international recession and growing industrial, political and economic instability within South Africa itself and the region as a whole, the very large doses of foreign capital which had sustained the growth of the 1960s began to dry up. South African Reserve Bank statistics show a reduction in the inflow of long-term foreign investment from R1 561-million in 1975-76 to R452-million in 1975-77. If this reduction is coupled with the actual net outflow of short-term capital from the private sector, the year 1976-77 saw a total capital outflow of some R121-million. Similarly, the recession dramatically increased the growing structural unemployment of african workers. In 1976, before the recession had reached its full height, it was estimated that african unemployment stood at 2,3 million workers. Moreover, simply to stabilise unemployment at this huge number it was calculated that the economy would have to grow at 6,7% per annum.¹¹ Ironically, in the face of this acute unemployment of african workers, the shortages of technical workers in the economy accelerated. By 1977, government figures show vacancies for 99 000 workers in the professional, semi-professional and technical grades.¹² The pages of authoritative economic journals were filled with reports of bankruptcies, and the state was forced to abandon or defer major infrastructural investment programmes in steel, petro-chemicals, transport and other sectors.

The above specification of some of the indices of the crisis of accumulation cannot substitute for its actual analysis. A detailed analysis would have to grapple particularly with the differential barriers to accumulation for various capitals, and the differential impact of the crisis on various capitals. This analysis remains to be done. Thus, the assessment of the effects of this crisis of capital accumulation remains necessarily incomplete. However, one general point can be made. This was far more than a cyclical recession normal to capitalist economies, but represented in effect a profound structural crisis for South African capitalism.

The rapid growth of the South African economy

in the 1960s extended the process of secondary industrialisation based on import substitution, which had begun in earnest in the 1920s. The impressive figures indicating the growth of secondary industry in South Africa 1920-70 tend to conceal the fact that these industries were concentrated very heavily in the wage goods sector, producing articles of consumption. The process of industrialisation behind protective tariffs did not lead to the development of a significant capital goods sector. As the regular and growing balance of payments deficits throughout the 1960s indicated, industry in South Africa remained very heavily dependent on the importation of capital equipment from the developed capitalist economies. These imports were financed through the export of primary commodities - agricultural products and minerals, but particularly gold. Thus, in a very fundamental sense, the limits of capital accumulation in South Africa remain set by the primary export sectors - ie agriculture and minerals, with gold being by far the most important.¹³

The economic crises of the mid-1970s revealed very clearly that, under the prevailing political and social conditions within the country, the South African economy was reaching the limits of industrial expansion based on import substitution. By 1977, faced with little apparent prospect of an early or rapid increase in the price of gold, virtually all South African economists were agreed that further industrial expansion would have to be based on the development of a strong capital goods sector, and a shift in the emphasis of exports towards industrial rather than primary products.¹⁴

The economic crisis of the mid-1970s thus presented both differential barriers for accumulation for particular capitals, and more fundamentally, for capital as a whole in South Africa. The resolution of this crisis appeared to demand a complex restructuring of capital in all sectors of the economy, a restructuring which would render labour more productive. This implied the need for an even more capital intensive basis to South African industry, now linked to the need to reap the benefits of

economies of scale. Thus the recession posed very starkly the urgent need for change in a number of the conditions of accumulation of capital in South Africa. In broadest terms, the entire set of conditions under which labour was utilised within the economy on the one hand, and the structure of the market on the other hand, were posed as urgent political problems for the capitalist class as a whole. Here, however, the differential impact of the recession on various capitals becomes important. The forms of resolution of these problems and the policies desired by various capitals differed substantially. This is an area requiring much further investigation.

Before analysing the unprecedented proliferation of politicking on these issues by the entire complex gamut of bourgeois organisations, the other side of this economic crisis needs to be mentioned. The process of capitalist accumulation of the mid-1970s took place in the context of, and was indeed largely a product of, a rapid intensification of the class struggle. The decade saw a growing militancy on the part of an increasingly organised african working class. It began with a massive strike of contract workers in Namibia. From 1972 onwards, South African industry was rocked by wave upon wave of strikes by african workers demanding higher wages and the right to organise. These strikes began at the tail end of the great boom of the 1960s, and in many ways heralded the onset of the recession of the 1970s. These struggles are well known and need not be documented here. The mining industry too was shaken by bitter disputes, stoppages and strikes between 1973 and 1976. These were largely suppressed with violence - in one instance in Carletonville in 1973, 11 striking miners were shot by police summoned by the Anglo-American Corporation. During the Soweto uprisings, two massive general strikes in August and September 1976 virtually paralysed South African industry.

These working class struggles apart, political stability was further shattered by other mass struggles against apartheid. The regime was rocked

by massive uprisings in 1976, by the collapse of Portuguese colonialism and particularly the humiliating defeat of the South African army in Angola. Significantly, beginning in 1976 a slowly escalating guerilla war inside South Africa was waged by the militants of the armed wing of the banned African National Congress, Umkhonto We Sizwe. As PW Botha claimed on assuming office, the state did indeed seem to be confronted with a 'total onslaught'. Certainly amongst South African businessmen there was an almost panic-stricken recognition that these struggles went beyond mere demands for the end to racial discrimination. In the words of one worried capitalist, 'there is a general tendency for young africans to be anti-free enterprise.'¹⁵

Again, the above simple catalogue of some of the events of this intensifying class struggle of the 1970s is no substitute for its analysis. Much further research is needed in this area. But one general conclusion is clear. By 1977-78 both the economic and political conditions which had underlain and given rise to the unprecedented boom of 1961-71 had been decisively shattered. Whilst the economic and political crises of the 1970s are not immediately reducible to each other, they both raised, in differing ways, as the central issue of political struggle, the question of the requisite state policies to ensure renewed capitalist growth and stability. Moreover, they did so in ways which began to shake loose the existing political alignments within South Africa, leading to intensified political conflict and significant political reorganisation of various class forces.

The Pressure for Reform

It is necessary to note that by 1978 a significant change had occurred in the alignment of the economic organisation of the capitalist class. With the important exception of organised agriculture, by 1978 all the economic organisations of the capitalist class were united in agreement over the need for significant reforms in economic and political policy. Even given the differential impact of the

recession, there was broad agreement over the nature of these desired reforms. The most significant of these can be broadly specified. Firstly, with regard to economic policy, there was wide agreement on the need to ease substantially legislative restrictions on the mobility of african labour (influx control, pass laws, the labour bureaux system), to permit its more profitable utilisation. This was accompanied with a general demand that restrictions on the training and employment of skilled african labour be likewise abolished or reformed, to permit the reorganisation of production on the basis of higher productivity. These two very basic issues further raised the need for a negotiated reorganisation of the labour process in many branches of capitalist production. Again, all employers' organisations were united on the need for some kind of state recognition and control of organisations of collective bargaining for african workers. In 1975, the various employers' organisations in South Africa formed an umbrella body to press these views on government. The evidence of the various employers' organisations to the government Commissions of Enquiry on Manpower Utilisation (Riekert Commission) and Labour Legislation (Wiehahn Commission) is strikingly similar on these issues. There was likewise unanimity between all the organisations of the capitalist class on the urgent need for a drastic reduction in state ownership and control in the economy.

The particular emphasis given to economic policy by all the various employers' organisations immediately posed the question of the necessary reforms to ensure the political stability so vital to further economic growth. Here were raised questions of both foreign and domestic policy. The flight of foreign capital, the intensifying wars of national liberation in Namibia and Zimbabwe, and the increasingly desperate need for export markets for South African industrial commodities, highlighted very clearly the relationship between international acceptability, regional stability and renewed prosperity. Once again, all the various employers' organisations put strong pressure on the government to introduce reforms

which would ease the international isolation of the country, renew the flow of foreign investment, guarantee Western support in Namibia and Zimbabwe, and, if possible, open the African continental market to South African goods.¹⁶

But the most overriding concern was the need to secure immediate domestic stability. Here particular emphasis was placed on the position of a newly discovered creature, 'the Urban African'. In mid-1976, in the aftermath of Soweto, a whole host of business-funded and cross-cutting organisations sprang up to 'deal' with the problem. The most important of these was the Urban Foundation, jointly established, and massively financed, by many of the major corporations in South Africa. Numerous proposals were made for 'improving' the lot of the urban african. What was essentially being proposed here was the removal of those apartheid restrictions which unnecessarily inflamed workers, and more particularly, lead to collective action between african workers and the african petty bourgeoisie. Thus the most widely trumpeted and major scheme of the Urban Foundation was an attempt to initiate a system of private home ownership for the very few africans able to afford housing. In reality, these various organisations envisaged isolating various groups of africans from each other, attending to their specific needs separately, hopefully to polarise them politically. Thus a slight amelioration in the living conditions of those africans who possessed the right under section 10 of the Urban Areas Act to remain in the cities would effectively separate them permanently from the vast reserve army of the unemployed barricaded in the rural slums of the bantustans by the influx control system. But more particularly, the sudden obsession of all these organisations with the (again newly discovered) 'black middle class', and the need to develop it very rapidly, was premised on the need to drive a wedge between black workers and the petty bourgeoisie. Certain sections of the capitalist class had long been arguing for this course. By 1978 it had become the universal litany of all employers and other

bourgeois organisations.

Once again, much further research is required before an adequate analysis of the reactions of the capitalist class to these economic and political crises can be made. However, 5 preliminary general points can be stressed. Firstly, the combination of economic and political crisis gave rise to a strong demand for urgent reform from virtually all sections of the organised capitalist class. It saw a rapid proliferation of business-funded organisations and pressure groups to push for reform. In other words, through the various cross cutting organisations through which it exists as a class, the bourgeoisie engaged in a desperate flurry of open politicking on a previously unheard of scale.

Secondly, this flurry of bourgeois politics was in no sense confined to the party and parliamentary level. For reasons which themselves require detailed analysis, parliamentary politics are a relatively insignificant form of political struggle in South Africa. Rather, what took place was intense politicking on the one hand within and between the various (and proliferating) organisations of the capitalist class - ranging from directly economic interest groups to church organisations, women's groups, etc - and within and between the various state apparatuses and such bourgeois organisations on the other hand.

Thirdly, any consideration of this explosion of bourgeois politics must come to terms with the increasingly open and direct political role of the military. Particularly under the new Chief of Staff, General Magnus Malan, the military was now openly canvassing for state policies which were 'militarily defensible'. This is examined in greater detail below, but here it is important to note that this now openly political role of the military brought it into increasing conflict with other elements in the state apparatus, particularly the security services.

Fourthly, during these crises, long existing political alignments and alliances both within the bourgeoisie and between sections of the bourgeoisie

and other class forces, began to crumble and shift. Of special significance was the position of various large Afrikaner undertakings, both as individual companies, and organised collectively through the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (Afrikaner Commercial Institute). This points to the need for detailed research on the development of Afrikaner undertakings over the previous 15 years. But it can be noted that the now strongly-expressed demand by Afrikaner business for reform in the restrictions on the mobility, employment, training and organisation of african labour, together with a vehement attack on state interference in the economy and a vigorous campaign for 'the development of the black middle class', was shaking loose a long-standing political alliance between Afrikaner business on the one hand, and certain strata of white workers and the petty bourgeoisie on the other.¹⁷

This leads fifthly to the point at the heart of this paper. The explosion of politicking over the appropriate economic and political responses to these crises, when taken together with this shift in traditional political alliances, began to raise in very stark form another problem - the political capacity of the Nationalist Party government to implement the necessary reforms. This is not to pose the hackneyed and discredited view of a contradiction between the requirements of a rational capitalism on the one hand, and the irrational 'ethnic' concerns of the Nationalist Party on the other, in which the latter dominates and distorts the former. Indeed, elsewhere I have argued that the election of the NP government in 1948 represented a form of solution to an earlier political crisis of the capitalist state, and that its apartheid policies facilitated rapid capital accumulation in all branches of capitalist production.¹⁸ Thus, at no stage during its rule up to the 1970s had the capitalist class seriously challenged the nationalist government, precisely because the role of capital itself was not challenged. But the coterminous collapse of capitalist prosperity and the intensification of class struggles in the early 1970s began to pose the political question of

the role of the NP as the governing party in the capitalist state.

This is the context of Muldergate! The general economic and political crises went hand in hand with and helped to shape a growing crisis within both the NP government, and the party itself outside of government. Put another way, Muldergate represented in condensed form the complex articulation of three separate political crises:

- a) the crisis both for individual capitals and the capitalist class as a whole in the economic and political conditions of accumulation;
- b) for the Nationalist Party as the governing party in the capitalist state; and
- c) for the Nationalist Party outside of government as an Afrikaner nationalist party built on a particular set of political alliances.

It is crucial to realise that though inextricably interconnected, these three different levels of the crisis of the South African state in 1978 refer to very different alignments of sets of organisational and ideological class forces. Thus, the political crisis confronting the NP government as the ruling party in the capitalist state, was not the same as, and cannot be reduced to, the political crisis confronting the NP as a political party representing a particular alignment of class forces within the social formation. Existing accounts of both Muldergate and the development of Afrikaner nationalist politics have glibly collapsed these levels.¹⁹ To understand Muldergate as a crisis for the capitalist state as a whole, it is necessary to grasp these various crises both in their separateness and articulation.

The Struggle Inside the Nationalist Party

THE Nationalist Party has been in power in South Africa since 1948. It is conventionally seen as a monolithic organisation representing 'the Afrikaner' in South African politics. Such a static, undifferentiated view of the NP is profoundly misleading. As I have shown elsewhere the NP came into office in 1948 as the political organisation of

a shifting, highly differentiated and contradictory class alliance.²⁰ Far from being a monolithic force, the NP has always been wracked by vigorous, often bitter and sometimes violent conflicts between the various forces comprising its social basis. To the very limited extent that these conflicts have even been recognised in the literature, they have been universally depicted in purely ideological terms, often overlaid with a regionalist emphasis. Thus, the so-called 'moderate' nationalists of 'the South' (ie the Cape province) are supposed to be at loggerheads with the hardliners of 'the North' (the Provinces of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State). This is usually taken as given. Now clearly there are deep ideological and regional differences in the character of Afrikaner nationalism. Yet these are hardly their own explanations. They must needs be understood in terms of the significantly different social bases of the various provincial NPs, and the forms in and through which these class differences have been institutionalised in nationalist politics.

The NP is no single 'national' party, but rather a loose federation of 4 autonomous provincial parties, each with its own distinct social basis, party organisation, membership, constitution, leadership, press, and political and ideological style. The NP *qua* party has a 'national' existence only through 4 institutions: the National Leader elected by the Parliamentary caucus; a 'Federal Council' representing each provincial party, and which meets but rarely; the 'Federal Congress', which meets even more rarely; and the Parliamentary caucus in which sit the Nationalist Members of Parliament from all 4 provinces. The cabinet makes up a fifth National Party institution, but is simultaneously engaged at a very different level of politics, and subject to a much wider set of pressures and struggles.

Each of these 'national' institutions of the party is a site of widely differing struggles and represents widely varying interests. The much-neglected structure of the NP is vital to an understanding of its operation, as the real locus of power within the party qua party, lies in the Provincial party

organisations, rather than the national institutions. Within the Provincial parties, the Provincial leaders often have greater influence than the National Leader (who is usually also a leader of one of the Provincial parties - this comprises his real power base within the party). Within the party qua party (as distinct from the cabinet) the Provincial leaders wield as much power as the National Leader himself. The Provincial parties have always very jealously guarded their particular interests, prerogatives and identities both from each other, and from the 'National' institutions of the party.

Thus, the 'regionalist' or 'provincialist' struggles which have always plagued Afrikaner nationalist politics, rest at one level on these 4 distinct party structures. However, this regionalism and the often wide policy and ideological differences between the political parties are explained by the fact that each party has a distinct class basis: each is the institutionalisation of a distinct form of class alliance which differs in important respects from that of its federal partners. Thus, as separately organised, separately financed and separately led political institutions with differential social bases, the 4 provincial Nationalist Parties have acquired distinct institutional practices, ideological styles and interests. Far from being monolithic organisations, they have changed significantly during the period of the NP's rule.

Whilst it is composed of a federation of 4 provincial parties, the NP is in fact almost totally dominated by the two largest of these, the Transvaal and Cape Nationalist Parties. The NP of the Orange Free State has tended to follow that of the Transvaal (although there remain significant differences), and the NP of Natal is so weak as to be almost insignificant. Thus, for the sake of brevity, in the analysis of the growing crisis in the Nationalist Party during the 1970s, I shall concentrate predominantly on the two larger provincial parties.

Very schematically, in the Transvaal in 1948 the NP managed for the first time in its history to organise politically a class alliance of the (almost

exclusively Afrikaans-speaking) capitalist farmers of the Province; specific strata of white workers in the mining, construction, steel and transport industries; the large Afrikaans-speaking petty bourgeoisie in the state apparatus and the professions; and finally, emerging out of this latter group, a small class of aspirant commercial and financial capitalists organised in the Reddingsdaadbeweging (literally, the 'movement for the act of rescue'). This latter group were heavily dependent on the re-invested surpluses of agriculture and the savings of Afrikaans-speakers of all classes. Indeed, long before the NP was able to organise these disparate class forces into a political alliance, through the various organisations of the Reddingsdaadbeweging, the petty bourgeoisie had organised them into a form of economic alliance.

Elsewhere I have analysed in detail the conditions giving rise to, and the specific form of, this alliance.²¹ Here it should be stressed, however, that alongside the NP, Transvaal Nationalist politics was dominated by a secret society known as the Afrikaner Broederbond. The Afrikaner Broederbond was effectively the institution through which the specific interests of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie came to be independently organised and articulated.²² The Broederbond assumed a self-conscious role as the vanguard of Afrikaner nationalism. Through it the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie exercised ideological dominance over the Transvaal NP and other organs of Afrikaner nationalism in the province (and the Orange Free State). Thus, in both the wider Afrikaner nationalist movement in the Transvaal, and the NP in particular, an ideology of the Afrikaner volk was articulated which stressed a particular form of 'anti-imperialism' and the interests of the (white) 'small man' against the large (and predominantly English-speaking) monopolies which dominated the economy.

The situation in the Cape differed markedly. Here the NP had long rested on an economic and political alliance between the wealthier capitalist farmers, particularly of the western Cape, on the

one hand, and a small group of financial capitalists in the Sanlam (and later Rembrandt) companies on the other. The moving spirits in Sanlam had in fact dominated the Cape NP right from its inception in 1915. Thus the Cape party was far more openly capitalist in orientation and sympathies than that of the Transvaal. Its interpretation of what constitutes the 'Afrikaner volk' and 'its' interests likewise varied considerably, laying far greater emphasis on the conditions to secure stable capitalist profit. Most significantly, the Afrikaner Broederbond was not a particularly important force in Cape nationalist politics. Indeed, the Broederbond was often characterised as the major oppositional force to the 'Cape finance power' - which became the Transvaal sneer phrase for the Cape party.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the regionalism in the NP after 1948. Two points however should be noted. Firstly, during the 1950s, the previous Cape dominance over the NP as a whole began to give way to the now more powerful forces of the Transvaal. This is reflected in the success of the two Transvaal candidates (JG Strijdom and HF Verwoerd) over the Cape candidates (H Havenga and E Donges) in the leadership elections of 1954 and 1958. This growing Transvaal dominance reflects the increasing isolation of 'Cape finance power' from the forces making up the Transvaal NP.

Secondly, during the 1950s a crucial shift began to take place in the economic alliances underpinning the Cape NP. The accumulation strategy of the nationalist economic movement (the Reddingsdaadbeweging) during the 1940s rested on the centralisation into Afrikaner financial undertakings of surplus money-capital accumulated in agriculture, and its conversion here into productive capital. However, the savings of Afrikaner workers and the petty bourgeoisie were also an important secondary source of finance.²³ However, the rate and pattern of accumulation in the various economic undertakings established by the Reddingsdaadbeweging was uneven. As by far the largest and most powerful Afrikaner financial company, Sanlam had inspired the economic

movement (in collaboration with the Broederbond), dominated its various organisations, and was the prime economic beneficiary of the alliance. Largely as a result of NP policy after 1948, the growth of Sanlam after 1948 was nothing short of remarkable. By 1960 the funds under its control had been increased by over 1 500%.²⁴ The real significance of this growth lies in the fact that by 1960, long before any other Afrikaner financial undertaking (with the possible exception of the Rembrandt Corporation) was in a similar position, Sanlam's total economic dependence on an alliance with farmers and workers as the major source of its capital had been broken. Freed from the need for an economic alliance with agriculture, Sanlam began to pursue independent (and previously unthinkable) economic and political policies. After 1960, it moved into ever closer cooperation with the Anglo-American Corporation in a number of undertakings, culminating in a joint take over of the General Mining and Finance Corporation - thus gaining the first ever entry of an Afrikaner company into the 'enemy territory' of mining finance. This cooperation with the arch epitome of 'Hoggenheimer' aroused bitter condemnation of Sanlam within Afrikaner nationalist ranks.²⁵

The differential development of Afrikaner finance after 1945 is yet another area requiring much further research. Yet the basic point is clear. By 1960 the process of capital accumulation was rapidly loosening the economic alliance between Cape finance capital and agriculture. This vital shift in the alignment of forces organised by the Cape NP, had significant effects for the politics of the Cape party. Sanlam retained its overwhelming dominance of the Cape NP, which began to engage in increasingly open conflict with the other provincial parties on precisely the basic questions of the constitution of the Afrikaner volk and the nature of 'its' interests. In the period 1960-66, the Cape NP was regarded in nationalist circles as 'the opposition party'.²⁶ This conflict then raged in all the organisations of Afrikaner nationalism, from business groupings, the Broederbond (itself used

as a counter force to the Cape party), churches, Parliament and cabinet.

Here the vital question of the relationship between party, government and state must be posed. The years immediately before the NP came to power had seen an intense and open politicisation of the state bureaucracy in South Africa. Political struggles within the capitalist class, and between it and specific strata of the petty bourgeoisie and white workers were fought out so vehemently within the civil service that policy initiatives of the then-ruling United Party were effectively paralysed. The Afrikaner Broederbond was particularly active in this process, commonly referred to as the nationalist 'white-enting' of the government.²⁷ Immediately on assuming office in 1948, as a matter of priority, the NP government began a systematic purge of the senior ranks of the civil service and installed pro-Nationalist elements. These purges were carried out by individual Ministers, and involved a protracted process of struggle within the state apparatuses. In the process, particular government ministries became powerful political bases for a number of politicians. This should be seen neither in purely subjective nor instrumentalist terms. Rather, it implies that through the struggle to transform the state apparatus, the state apparatus itself became a site of ongoing conflict between the class forces organised in the NP. Specific ministries were identified with specific 'regionalist' political lines, and the regionalist struggles were fought out partially between particular state institutions.

This led to significant anomalies. Under the Premiership of Dr DF Malan, 1948-54, a disjuncture developed between the relative regionalist strengths in the party on the one hand, and the government on the other. By virtue of the results of the 1948 and 1953 election results, the Transvaal party had finally emerged as the most powerful of the provincial NPs. Yet, as simultaneously Prime Minister and leader of the Cape NP, Malan used his prerogatives of appointment in an attempt to shore up Cape dominance in the government. His first Cabinet

contained but two Transvaal appointments in relatively insignificant portfolios, whilst 7 Cape Ministers (in a Cabinet of 12) virtually monopolised the important posts. Thus, under Malan, particularly powerful Ministries became associated with the 'Cape line' (especially Finance and Transport) whilst the Transvaal struggle against the Cape 'moderation' was waged largely from the base of Strijdom and Verwoerd in the Ministries of Lands and Native Affairs.

Thusfar it has been argued that the 4 separate NPs rest on different social bases and hence have institutionalised significantly varied politics. An important feature of Nationalist politics lies in the ongoing struggle between these various class forces, a struggle institutionalised within the various parties, and taking the form of often bitter 'regionalist' conflict between them. This conflict is largely expressed in ideological terms as deep differences over what constitutes the Afrikaner volk and 'its' interests. It is waged not only through the NP itself, but the numerous organisations which collectively comprise organised Afrikaner nationalism.

At a second level, this struggle is over what types of policies should be pursued by the NP as the governing party. The fact that the NP was also the governing party gave a particular character to the ways in which these conflicts are fought out within the state apparatus. I do not want to be misunderstood here. This is not to reduce the state as a site of class struggle to a simple conflict between the various tendencies in Afrikaner nationalism. These need to be situated in their articulation with the wider class struggles and contradictions within and between the state apparatuses. But here I am particularly concerned with the question of how the effects of the contradictions within Afrikaner nationalism themselves helped structure the particular form of the crisis of the South African state in the mid - late 1970s. Thus, as conflict between organised class forces over state policy, these Afrikaner nationalist politics take place at three levels

within the state apparatus: the Parliamentary caucus; the cabinet; and within and between the various state apparatuses.

Acute conflicts and struggles within Afrikaner nationalist ranks were a constant feature of South African politics after 1948 (and indeed before). But these were not static struggles. Their content and forms shifted with the changes in the social bases of the various provincial NPs. Most significant here was the changing relationship between Cape finance and agriculture, which began to shift the Cape NP into an even more openly oppositional role within the party. In the immediate aftermath of the Sharpeville crisis of 1960, particularly whilst Dr Verwoerd was recovering from an assassination attempt, and the forces of the traditional nationalist alliance were temporarily leaderless, the struggle within the NP was very finely balanced. However, once Verwoerd returned to political life, he succeeded in mobilising against the Cape financial interests, all the other class forces in the NP. This was achieved partly by appropriating for the right the mantle of true Afrikaner nationalism, with Verwoerd as its infallible leader. For the remainder of his Premiership, he was successful in keeping the Cape politically isolated.

Verwoerd was able to maintain this alliance against Cape finance by centralising power in both party and government into his roles as National Leader of the NP and Prime Minister respectively. This was unprecedented in the history of the NP. Thus, the Cape was doubly isolated - within the party as a whole, and in the state apparatus itself. Verwoerd's period as Prime Minister saw a marked diminution in the powers of both individual Ministers and the Cabinet itself, with the Prime Minister taking final responsibility for all crucial decisions, and often announcing these to Cabinet without consultation. Likewise, the NP caucus had its political independence severely curtailed, and was simply not informed of a number of crucial political decisions (such as the vitally important 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill) before they were laid before

Parliament. Verwoerd was able to operate like this because of his personal political power base within the Afrikaner Broederbond. During his Premiership, the AB Executive Council in many senses displaced the Cabinet as a policy making body. And given that the Cape had no influence within the Broederbond, it was the ideal institution through which to mobilise all class forces in the nationalist alliance against the Cape.

Yet the contradictions and conflicts within organised Afrikaner nationalism were in no sense brought to an end under Verwoerd's authoritarian leadership, they were simply displaced. If an iron discipline of the majority was maintained in the party to keep the Cape in line, these struggles spilled over into bitter conflict in all the other organisations of Afrikaner nationalism, from church and cultural groups to business organisations, etc. Here the Sanlam group managed to maintain its control over the very influential Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) as a major platform from which to challenge the dominant line in the party. Despite a bitter struggle for power at the 1964 AHI congress, Sanlam could not be dislodged, and it was predominantly through the AHI that the Cape line was articulated. By 1965, it was openly acknowledged that Afrikaner nationalism had its 'verligte' ('enlightened') and 'verkrempt' ('reactionary') wings. The main base of the verligtes lay in the Cape party, with slowly gathering support for its position amongst certain business groups in the Transvaal. The so-called verkrempte wing was led by Verwoerd. The main differences were over labour policy and relations with English capitalists. The Cape groups favoured much looser restrictions on the mobility and training of african labour and close co-operation with English business. But these were in many respects the fundamental questions around which Afrikaner nationalism as a class alliance hinged - these issues touched directly the interests of all the various class forces organised under Afrikaner nationalism. It was precisely the accumulation of capital by the Cape financiers and their new

independence from the economic support of Afrikaner farmers, petty bourgeoisie and workers, which led to this change in Sanlam's position on the crucial issues of influx control, skilled labour, finance policy, etc. Thus, what the verligtes were in fact advocating was a new interpretation of the interests of the Afrikaner volk, one which concentrated particularly on the needs of the rapidly growing group of powerful Afrikaner capitalists led by Sanlam.

The assassination of Dr Verwoerd in September 1966 brought these contradictions out into the open, into a vicious fight within the NP itself. In these struggles, the personal political position of the new NP leader, John Vorster, became vitally important, in that it was a significant factor in the form taken by these struggles.

From the viewpoint of all 'normal' political considerations, BJ Vorster should never have been elected leader of the NP and Prime Minister. Almost everything in his political past told against him. During the 1940s he had been a leader of the bitterly anti-NP and Nazi-oriented Ossewa Brandweg. In the 1948 election Vorster had attacked the NP as anti-democratic when it opposed his candidacy for the NP's election partner, the Afrikaner Party. Defying party discipline, Vorster fought the election as an independent, losing by two votes, thereby denying an otherwise safe seat to the Nationalist coalition. He had only joined the NP in 1951 and been elected to Parliament in 1953. He had never developed a strong personal political base within the Transvaal party. In 1966 he ranked a lowly thirteenth in Cabinet seniority, and as Minister of Police, had been the man ultimately responsible for the Prime Minister's safety when Verwoerd was killed. The only other candidate for the leadership was the most senior member of the cabinet, Transport Minister Ben Schoeman, deputy leader of the Transvaal Party before the death of Verwoerd. But Schoeman's political past told against him too. He was one of the diminishing band of so-called oud-smelters, ie Nationalists who in the 1930s had split the Nationalist Party to join the United Party. He had come back to the fold in

1939, but some members of the Nationalist right wing had long memories, and regarded the smelters as far more objectionable than the members of the Ossewa Brandseeg.

Given that there was no clear and obvious successor to Verwoerd, whose total dominance of both party and government had thoroughly precluded the emergence of a number two in both, and in the light of the extreme factionalism within the party, Vorster's very political weakness stood in his favour. He was not firmly identified with any faction of the party, and enjoyed wide respect for his ruthless performance as Minister of Justice. Vorster eventually emerged as the unchallenged candidate because he enjoyed the total backing of two apparently contradictory wings of the party - the extreme right led by Dr A Hertzog, and the Cape party. Together they comprised a majority of Nationalist MPs, persuading Schoeman to withdraw before the issue came to a vote. The support of the extreme verkampes for Vorster can be easily explained. His membership of the pro-Nazi Ossewa Brandseeg when coupled with the hardliner reputation earned as Minister of Justice, seemed to mark him out as a committed partisan of the right. The Cape vote is explained by the fact that, in the absence of a credible Cape candidate, Vorster's marriage to the daughter of one of the founders of the Cape NP and Sanlam - PA Malan - made him the most acceptable candidate. It was through this connection that Vorster had in fact been so quickly rehabilitated in the NP after 1948. His appointment to the Cabinet by Verwoerd in 1958, but 5 years after entering Parliament, was widely interpreted in Nationalist circles as one of the sops Verwoerd offered to the Cape NP, still bitter after the defeat of its candidate in the 1958 leadership election.

This detail is crucial to an understanding of the nature of Vorster's leadership in both party and government. He immediately realised that he could not dominate either in the style of Verwoerd. In the party, he thus tried to stand above all factions, and bring them together by the prestige

of his office. To do so, he took a step unprecedented in Nationalist politics, one which was to transform the relationship between party and government. Under the normal procedure of the NP, as the chosen National Leader of the party in succession to Verwoerd, he would naturally have likewise succeeded Verwoerd as Transvaal leader of the NP. Every national leader of the NP since its inception had been simultaneously the leader of the Party in his home Province. This comprised the final political base of the National Leader. But Vorster had not risen to national leadership through the established path of promotion in his provincial party. He had not enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of Transvaal MPs in the period in which it seemed as if an election between him and Schoeman would be necessary to select the national leader. He had no natural political base in the Transvaal party. While the Provincial leadership was his to claim by right, he must have realised that not only would he enjoy at best the grudging support of the party organisation in the province, but given that the factionalism of the NP was at its worst in the Transvaal, he would get sucked into those struggles in a way which could rapidly lose him his support in other provinces. Thus rather than take these risks for little return Vorster announced he would not accept the Transvaal leadership, and offered it to his astonished and gratified opponent, Ben Schoeman - thereby placing Schoeman and his faction deep in Vorster's political debt, and explicitly elevating his own place in the NP to that above the various factions.

This departure was to be of vital significance in the factional struggle in the NP. With the National Leader of the party thus effectively without a local institutional power base in the party, it meant that the machinery of government would come to play an increasingly important role in these factional struggles. Despite his deliberate attempt to elevate himself above these struggles, Vorster could not remain neutral as the NP went into its most serious internal splits since the 1940s.

Indeed for the first three years of his Premiership he was attacked from a number of sides as being a weak leader. Simply to protect his own position, he was forced, within the party, to rely on various factional groups. In the early years of his leadership, 1966-9, when the extreme right attempted to drive the verligtes out of the ranks of Afrikaner nationalism (but ended up being driven out of the party themselves) Vorster was forced to rely very heavily on the Cape Party for support.²⁹ But Vorster depended for political support even more heavily on the Special Branch of the South African Police. As Minister of Justice, he had built the Security Police into a very powerful force in South African politics. The SB was used against Vorster's nationalist opponents as effectively as he had used it to break the national liberation movement in the early 60s. Thus, one of the most significant features of South African politics in the 1960s was the massive build-up in the directly political role of the Security Police under Vorster. Eventually in 1969, he created a new, special security service, responsible only to the Prime Minister, the notorious BOSS. Henceforth BOSS was Vorster's strongest and most effective personal political base. But this development meant that the apparatuses of the state were now used by the Prime Minister to intervene directly in internal nationalist politics.

There is a further important dimension here. The verkampes/verligte conflict was essentially a struggle between those who wished to preserve the class alliance of 1948 as an alliance dominated by the interests of farmers and the petty bourgeoisie against those who realised that in 20 years the social base of Afrikaner nationalism had shifted profoundly, and wanted to transform the ideology and politics to suit the changing class composition of the volk. The verligte phenomenon was a response to the emergence particularly in the 1960s of a class of aggressive, self-confident Afrikaner capitalists, whose interests now went beyond those of the narrow class alliance out of which they had emerged. By the late 1960s, the verligte element was no longer confined to the

Cape, but was emerging as a strong element in the Transvaal as well. And just as has occurred in the Cape a decade earlier, its economic dependence on an alliance of all classes of Afrikaans speakers had now been broken. Now the Transvaal businessmen were also beginning to pursue independent economic and political policies.

In its struggles against the verligte wing of the party, the verkramptes attempted to use their traditional political organisation, the Afrikaner Broederbond, against what they labelled the 'finance power of the South'. Indeed, a strong move was mounted to portray the factional struggle as a simple conflict between the Afrikaner Broederbond as the guardian and soul of traditional Afrikaner values on the one hand, and the nouveau riche 'money capitalists' of the South on the other hand. Here again the independent role of Vorster was vital. By 1967 it was clear that he was not going to support the verkrampte effort, and he began to be attacked as yet another lackey of the Cape. Given that Vorster was still very dependent on the Cape party at this stage, there was some truth in this charge. However, Vorster must have realised that if the Afrikaner Broederbond were used against him, he would be totally isolated politically. Thus as National Leader of the NP he demanded total loyalty from the AB, and particularly its arch-verkrampte chairman, Dr P.J. Meyer. Moreover, he further made sure that very large numbers of security policemen were admitted to the AB, and his supporters were thus able to outvote the extreme right in all important instances.³⁰ The effect of this was to destroy finally the political independence of the Broederbond, reducing it for the first time in its history largely to a platform for the leader of the NP. This accomplished, Vorster then required of the verkrampte Meyer that he purge from the Broederbond and party all the other verkramptes who would not tow the line. He used the right to destroy the right.

Vorster's deliberately chosen and carefully cultivated Bonapartist position within the NP as above the factions, likewise had vital consequences for political struggles both within the government

and state apparatuses. Given his own relative weakness within the Cabinet, Vorster discarded Verwoerd's authoritarian style of leadership through total domination of each Minister, and adopted a 'chairman of the board' approach. Full policy-making responsibility was again given back to Ministers within their own departments, and the Prime Minister was known not to intervene in any Minister's running of his department. This had the consequence that individual ministries were again rapidly transformed into powerful political fiefdoms by individual Ministers. The factionalist struggle within the NP was again openly waged within, but more particularly, between various government ministries.

Certain ministries rapidly became identified with certain 'lines' within the party, and interdepartmental tussles were openly discussed in the press. Thus, eg, the powerful rivalry between the Department of Foreign Affairs as a seat of the verligtes, and the Department of Information headed by the verkrampte Connie Mulder, was legendary. Less publically known, though ultimately equally important, was the growing conflict between the military and security apparatuses. Through the Department of Defence (presided over by the leader of the Cape NP, P.W. Botha) the military began to play an increasingly open role in South African politics, arguing for militarily defensible policies. The reforms desired by the military leadership in many ways coincided with those being argued for by Sanlam, and the military was known to be growing increasingly restive at the paralysis which NP factionalism foisted on the government. Indeed, in 1968, at the height of the struggle in the NP; military circles were reputedly buzzing with talk of a new political party to be headed by P.W. Botha. The security forces on the other hand were reputed to see South Africa's political problems largely in terms of conspiracies by agitators, and downplayed any need for reform. The conflict between the two reached breaking point over the South African intervention in Angola in 1975. According to top Parliamentary sources, the military

opposed the intervention, arguing that its likely results did not compensate for the political damage it would do to the government's 'detente' policies, whilst the Bureau of State Security was convinced that strong support in Africa could be gained for a South African defeat of the MPLA. P.W. Botha was reported to have been particularly embittered by the decision to risk a limited intervention.³¹ As it happened, BOSS was Vorster's own political base within the government and after the humiliation of Angola, the increasingly open conflict between the military and BOSS often pitted Vorster against P.W. Botha.

Whilst the economy was booming, and the country enjoyed relative political stability, Vorster was able to maintain his Bonapartist role within the party and government with some success. Particularly after the extreme verkramptes were driven out of the NP in 1969, his personal political prestige and influence were enormous. Following the successes of the NP against the right in the 1970 election, he was able to abandon his previously heavy political reliance on the Cape Party and assume in reality the role he had cast for himself as the force uniting in his person all factions within the NP. However, with the rapid escalation of economic and political crisis in the mid-1970s, this Bonapartist role became increasingly difficult to sustain. The verligte wing began to push for far-reaching policy reforms, particularly with respect to labour and state control of the economy, which vigorously re-opened the factionalist struggles in the NP. Particularly after the Angola debacle, Vorster's own personal position became increasingly identified with the right-wing of the NP, now led by the new Transvaal leader and Minister of Information, Dr Connie Mulder. The right were demanding a maintenance of tight influx control measures, restrictions on the employment of skilled African labour, no form of recognition of African trade unions and continued state control of the infrastructural sectors of the economy. This right wing position still rested on an alliance of capitalist farmers, white workers and sections of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie, particularly those employed by the state.

An important caveat needs to be made here. The argument that the contradictions within and between the class forces organised by the NP qua party were transposed into the Cabinet and especially into the state apparatuses themselves must not be misunderstood. This is not to imply that these were the only, or even the major struggles and contradictions within and between the state apparatus. The state has been defined as a site of class struggle. The specifically Afrikaner nationalist struggles were but part of, and indeed structured by and structuring of, wider class struggles. Thus a comprehensive analysis of the state would have to account for the complex interaction between these various contradictory class forces and class struggles within the state.

The point of this long analysis of the factionalism within the National Party and government is to situate Muldergate within the wider capitalist crisis. By late 1977, in the disastrous political aftermath of the defeat in Angola, the Soweto uprisings, the death of Steve Biko and the panicky banning of 18 african political and other organisations, confronted with increasingly organised and militant working class and mass resistance to Apartheid - a resistance now taking an openly anti-capitalist form - under severe international pressure from the West to introduce cosmetic changes, and faced with a massive outflow of foreign capital, huge unemployment and the worst recession in South Africa's history, both the Nationalist government and Party themselves were decisively split over precisely the political questions posed by these multiple crises.

The minutiae of these conflicts within both party and government could be elaborated if necessary. However, the point to note is that in this period of intense crisis, the party and government were both effectively paralysed by their own internal divisions. It must be emphasised as forcefully as is possible, that this was no simple personality struggle, or purely ideological difference, but much more profoundly a crisis of the class alliance on which Afrikaner nationalism had rested nationally and in the various provinces since 1948.

To oversimplify for the sake of exposition, the 'conservative' faction now grouped under Mulder, and enjoying the strong tacit support of Vorster, were committed to retaining the alliance of farmers, businessmen, workers and petty bourgeoisie intact. To do so meant resisting moves to reform labour and industrial policy, and anything more than minimal concessions to the black middle class. But it was equally clear that very few Afrikaner businessmen supported this policy with any enthusiasm. Rather, from within the Afrikaner business community, and amongst the leading Afrikaner intellectuals there was now strong support for the 'reformists' of the party. This reflected the substantial development of Afrikaner business particularly in the Transvaal during the 1960s.³²

Thus, Sanlam and the Cape Party were no longer isolated (as they had been in the early 1960s) from powerful forces in the other provincial parties. The Transvaal party was now itself decisively divided along fairly explicit class lines between conservatives and reformists. The Transvaal leader, Dr Connie Mulder, was the great hope of the conservative wing. But within the Transvaal Party there now existed a powerful reformist opposition, grouped under two very influential Ministers - the Minister of Mines and Planning, Dr P Koornhof, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, PW Botha. To Transvaal businessmen Mulder was an anathema. One leading Afrikaner industrialist described him to me as a doef - 'a fart'.

By 1977 a virtual political impasse had been reached in party, cabinet and state. Not only was Vorster's Bonapartism increasingly untenable within the party, but inside the Cabinet his practice of giving individual Ministers their head made it very difficult for him to recentralise control in his own hands. He was thus unable to intervene decisively to give a particularly conservative or reformist direction to this government, but was reduced to the increasingly sterile role of trying simply to keep all factions together.

After Angola and particularly Soweto, virtually all commentators were agreed that on all the burning

issues of economic and political policy, behind the overt face of hardline control, the government was virtually rudderless. Torn in many different directions, it spoke with many different voices. The political paralysis of the Vorster government when faced with severe and worsening economic and political crises, finally catalysed significant shifts in the alignment of political forces in the state. Two groups are crucial here - the military and the most powerful of South Africa's capitalists. An alliance between these two forces rapidly took shape.

Whatever the fears of Afrikaner intellectuals of a coup d'etat, senior military officers began to intervene directly in these political struggles over state policy, advocating significant reforms. In 1977, through the Minister of Defence, PW Botha, the military proclaimed its programme of a 'total strategy' to meet the crises confronting the state. Its fundamental aim according to the official military journal, was 'a guarantee for the system of free enterprise'.³³ This could only be achieved on the basis of a 'comprehensive plan to utilise all the means available to a state according to an integrated pattern'. Total strategy held that 'the resolution of a conflict in the times in which we now live demands interdependent and coordinated action in all fields - military, psychological, economic, ideological, cultural etc ... We are today involved in a war ... the striving for specific aims ... must be coordinated with all the means available to the state'.³⁴

But this 'coordinated action' should not be understood as simple defence of a static status quo. - political and economic reforms were essential to ensure the defence of the state. In the words of the Chief of Staff:

The lesson is clear. The South African Defence Force is ready to beat off any attack ... but we must take into account the aspirations of our different population groups. We must gain and keep their trust.³⁵

In effect then, the Total Strategy Doctrine argued that 'blacks' had to be given a stake in the capitalist system, whereby they would begin receiving the 'benefits' of that system, their 'quality of life' would have to be improved, thus supposedly giving

'blacks' a commitment to the defence of capitalism in South Africa against 'the Marxist threat'. But this was only possible through the closest cooperation between the state and 'the private sector' - ie monopoly capital. Thus the Total Strategy Doctrine began to create the basis for an explicit alliance between the military and monopoly capital. In late 1977 the National Management and Development Foundation convened a meeting of key 'business leaders', senior military officers, and Department of Labour officials, to 'enable each group to understand the others' needs'. Chaired jointly by the Chairman of a leading bank and a senior General, the meeting was held in camera, under the cloak of the Official Secrets Act.³⁶

At precisely this stage of now direct military intervention in political struggles within the state, leading businessmen also became directly and stridently involved in a campaign for reform. The chairman of Sanlam published a swinging attack on the government's economic policies, characterising them as 'A Freeway to Communism'.³⁷ The influential Financial Mail argued that in the face of government paralysis, organised and co-ordinated 'Business Power' was essential to save 'South Africa' (ie capitalism) from the numerous crises confronting it. Moreover, in this period when behind the patent immobility of the government important shifts were taking place in the traditional political alignments of the capitalist class, the bourgeois opposition parties were undergoing a process of dramatic re-alignment. After years of political sterility, the official opposition United Party finally collapsed into a merger with the miniscule Democratic Party to form the New Republic Party. Large numbers of United Party MPs refused to join this NRP and eventually allied themselves with the Progressive Reform Party which had already taken on board exiles from the United Party. The PRP changed its name yet again to the Progressive Federal Party, and significantly watered down its liberal programme to make it more acceptable to a wide range of bourgeois interests.

In October 1977, Vorster called an early

General Election out of which the NP emerged with an even more massive Parliamentary majority and a substantially widened base of political support. Campaigning as the only party capable of dealing with the multiple crises facing South Africa, the NP for the first time won support from two further social forces - large numbers of English-speaking petty bourgeois whites, and significant sectors of business which had previously supported the now-defunct United Party. Ironically however, far from producing bold political initiatives, this fresh electoral support simply intensified the political inertia of both Nationalist Party and government by multiplying the centrifugal forces pulling it in different directions. The contradictions and conflicts within the party and government were compounded, and became a site of ever-more intensified political struggles. Inertia combined with increasingly vicious and cynical repression seemed the only centripetal forces in the NP.³⁸

The victory and consolidation of the reformist tendency

THE Muldergate circus burst into the open in this context of paralysis of both party and government - a context which produced a staggering proliferation of extra-party, cross-cutting organisations and agitation, largely by business interests. Muldergate began as a series of press revelations about the misuse of funds in Mulder's Department of Information. Juicy detail followed juicy details to reveal a vast well-financed and secret attempt by the Information Department to establish both inside the country and internationally an apparently independent communications network which would publish 'objective' pro-government material. Parliament had no control over, or power to review the use of these funds. One of the major projects involved the secret channeling of R7-million in state funds to establish an 'independent', pro-NP English-language newspaper - The Citizen - in opposition to the liberal Rand Daily Mail.

The revelations unleashed a massive outcry within white politics. Epithets about the destruction of democracy and the freedom of the press, ministerial

corruption etc, abounded. The details are not significant here, but the import of this scandal is. At one level, the intense moral outrage over Muldergate, even in the pro-NP Afrikaans newspapers, seems absurd. Full bourgeois democracy has never existed in South Africa, so it could hardly have been said to have been destroyed. The last vestiges of the Freedom of the Press had been abolished in the early 1960s, far worse examples of collective and individual ministerial corruption had occurred (such as the Agliotti affair in the late 60s) with virtually no political consequences. Abuses of power by the ruling party had occurred on a much more massive scale, to be easily dismissed - and defended by some of the newspapers now howling 'corruption' - as being 'in the national interest'. Indeed Mulder had defended the operations of his Department in these previously hallowed terms. So why did this particular brouhaha assume such monumental proportions?

The answer must be sought in the many-levelled character of the crisis confronting the South African state and ruling class, crises in the face of which the government appeared politically paralysed. This paralysis did not grow out of any lack of political will on the part of individual politicians, but stemmed from the balance of class forces within the NP, the nationalist government and the state apparatuses. Thus, when the report of the Auditor-General revealed the first irregularities in the accounts in the Department of Information, the pro-reform forces were presented with an ideal opportunity to attempt the political discreditation of the major politician of the right, the Minister of Information Dr Connie Mulder. The Muldergate incident is significant not for the degree of political corruption involved, but in the way in which it was used as a catalyst to effect a realignment of political forces.

Most significant here is the manner in which the leaks about Department of Information practices were made, and the way in which these leaks were then turned into the raw material of a political vendetta against the right wing of the NP, Mulder in particular,

and Vorster by implication. Although it is impossible to be sure on this, it is widely taken as established fact by Afrikaner intellectuals with close links to the Cabinet that the first leaks to the press were provided by Military Intelligence. The Minister of Defence and Cape NP leader, PW Botha, would probably not have been personally involved in these leaks, but was known to be angry with the loss of R54-m of the approved Defence Budget, now transferred to the Information Department secret fund. Once the initial leaks had been made, they were relentlessly pursued by the English-language newspapers of the Argus and South African Associated Newspapers groups. Owned jointly by the Anglo-American Corporation and the largest banks, these press groups were clearly hounding Mulder as but part of the wider campaign to effect vital reforms necessary for the restoration of capitalist growth. But even more significantly, after some hesitation, the anti-Mulder campaign was taken up in the Afrikaans press, and particularly in the newspapers of the official Cape NP press group, Die Nasionale Pers. In the Transvaal too, Nationalist newspapers began to pursue the matter, though the official Transvaal NP organ, Die Transvaler, did everything possible to protect Mulder and claimed he was not involved in the abuses - blaming it all on the Secretary of Information, Dr Eschel Rhoodie. This involvement of the official Nationalist party press in a campaign against a government Minister (and by implication against Vorster himself) was unprecedented. It indicated just how deep were the divisions within party and government, and the lengths to which the reformers were prepared to go to discredit the right. Further evidence of this lies in the belief of the above-mentioned Afrikaner intellectual sources that once the affair began to unravel crucial disclosures to the press were made by the wives of (unspecified) Cabinet Ministers. The 'English press' had long been depicted as the greatest enemy of Afrikaner nationalism. Now it became the crucial medium in which a decisive confrontation between factions in the NP was fought out!

Just as the affair seemed to be building up to a crescendo, Vorster dramatically announced his resignation on 'health' grounds. He was followed soon afterwards by the head of BOSS, General Hendrik van den Bergh. In retrospect, Vorster's resignation and that of Van den Bergh seem to have been prompted by two interrelated factors. Firstly, as was later revealed, both were deeply involved in the schemes elaborated by the Department of Information. Were this to come out whilst Vorster was still Prime Minister, the political damage would have been immense. Vorster must have realised that in such a case he could not rely on support from the whole NP. If he were elevated to the State Presidency however, even his opponents in the NP would be forced to protect his personal position.³⁹ But secondly, again it seems clear that Vorster was attempting to pre-empt the complete reformist discreditation of the right wing of the party with which he was now identified. If he resigned early, before the full details of the scandal broke, there was a strong chance that Mulder would be able to succeed him, thus forcing the reformists into an attack on the party through the position of its leader, rather than on an individual minister. Vorster's preference for Mulder was open. In the run up to the leadership election, BOSS leaked (distorted) information favourable to Mulder to the press - but it was published only in the Transvaal NP organ, Die Transvaler.

Vorster's ploy very nearly succeeded. Had Mulder been able to maintain discipline in his Transvaal NP he would have been assured of the Premiership by virtue of the Transvaal majority in the caucus. But by 1978, so deep were the class conflicts within the NP, particularly within the Transvaal, that Mulder was unable to control the party he led. Defying all party precedent, protocol and discipline, another Transvaal Minister, AF (Pik) Botha, put himself forward as a candidate for the National Leadership of the Party. This split the Transvaal vote, ensuring (as was later admitted to have been the aim) the defeat of Mulder and the

election to the National Leadership of the Cape leader and Minister of Defence, PW Botha (no relation). This drawing off of the Transvaal reformist vote from Mulder was shown to have been decisive when, in the election for a new Transvaal leader consequent on Mulder's enforced resignation from that post soon afterwards, the conservative candidate, Dr Andries Treurnicht, trounced the reformist Minister, SP Botha (again no relation).

Thus the long campaign of press revelations and judicial enquiry fatally weakened the conservative wing at a crucial moment of the struggle for dominance both within the NP and the government. The defeat of Mulder marked a significant shift in the balance of class forces organised by the NP qua party under the banner of Afrikaner nationalism. By now Afrikaner business had effectively established itself as the dominant force in the alliance. Through Botha it announced its intention to abandon some of the hallowed policies of this alliance, policies which before brought support from white workers and certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie. But it cannot be too strongly emphasised that this was no simple struggle internal to Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikaner capital was able to establish its political dominance within the NP over the other forces in the nationalist alliance only because of broader political support outside of the NP from other bourgeois organisations and institutions, and the army itself. On its own, the reformist wing of the NP would not have been able to defeat the conservatives and achieve the almost total discreditation of the right wing. To do so, it was forced to rely on, and indeed play a relatively minor role in, a broader campaign by various bourgeois political groups (but particularly the press) against the right wing of the Nationalist Party. Thus, the defeat of Mulder not only marked a decisive shift in the balance of forces within the Nationalist Party and government, at another level of politics it represented a now open alliance against elements of the NP on the part of almost all organisations of the capitalist class.

But to remain for a moment with the discredited and defeated forces of the NP right. The term NP-right does not refer to a monolithic group all with the same interests. It too represented a political alliance between specific class forces. Over-schematically these can be identified as certain capitalist farmers (particularly those who had not made the transition to the highly mechanised, capital intensive form of production which became increasingly common in South African capitalist agriculture in the 1960s), the lower strata of white workers (particularly in mining, transport, steel and various state industries), and specific sections of the Afrikaans-speaking petty bourgeoisie. Again to put it in crudely reductionist terms, for each of these class forces, the Apartheid policies of the state had produced definite economic and social advantages, and remained necessary to preserve and defend their existing position in society. Farmers needed a rigid system of influx control, pass laws etc to keep african labour on the farms. White workers bitterly opposed schemes to retrain african workers for capital-intensive industries, correctly seeing in this a capitalist ploy to secure cheaper technical labour. Similarly both groups were bitterly opposed to any recognition of african trade unions. And for the lower levels of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie, particularly those employed in the state bureaucracy, any talk of reform, and especially the now-familiar theme of concessions to the 'black middle class' seemed to hold out the prospect of severe economic and social competition and threaten their carefully carved out and heavily protected niche of economic and social privilege. Thus these groups were united in their implacable opposition to the reform proposals being trumpeted by Sanlam and other large Afrikaner undertakings. Yet, their interests were not identical, and their conceptions of necessary state policy cannot be seen as identical. This is important to bear in mind when assessing the possible political future of the Afrikaner nationalist right.

In the factionalist struggle within the NP, this

coalition of forces on the 'right' had always selected as its chosen terrain of struggle, and as the best means to defend its interests, its claim to constitute the authentic voice of the 'Afrikaner volk', and the embodiment of the interests of this volk. With the significant exception of the most reactionary of the white trade unions, within the NP the right had deliberately limited the range of its political struggles to purely 'Afrikaner' organisations. After Muldergate, with Afrikaner business allied with other capitalist forces against the right wing in the NP, the right wing bloc now found this old strategy to be a political trap. It was confined to the narrow terrain of Afrikaner politics, and had really lost control of most of the significant Afrikaner organisations outside of the Party. Thus, the only way it could continue with the factionalist struggle under the mantle of genuine Afrikaner nationalism, was to begin to attack the NP itself. Within the party it had been decisively defeated and could now only conduct a holding operation against reform. As will be seen below, this holding operation or brake, still remains an important aspect of South African politics however.

One last point needs to be made with regard to the defeat of the right wing within the NP. The different class forces comprising the right wing alliance began slowly to fragment. Most significantly, the extreme right wing unions began to act politically independently of the NP in an attempt to force Botha back into the traditional alliance. The Mine Workers' Union is the most important of these. In 1979 it forced a direct confrontation with the reformists in party and government by coming out on strike against (a government approved) reorganisation of job classifications on the mines - a reorganisation which would permit employers to utilise african labour in skilled jobs previously restricted to white workers. In a similar dispute in the mid-1960s, the government had immediately backed down and supported the white miners. Now this strike was decisively defeated and strikers dismissed with the active approval of the Nationalist Party government.

The Botha Regime and the Form of the South African State

ANY assessment of the implications of the election of PW Botha as Prime Minister for the crises confronting the South African state must begin by rebutting some of the widespread myths about his position within the NP. Immediately after succeeding Vorster Botha was almost universally depicted in the press as a 'hawk' and a nationalist hardliner. As the longtime Minister of Defence, Botha is clearly prepared for the most vigorous action to defend the existing state against the liberation movement. If necessary he would be quick to approve foreign military intervention. Thus, as the politician who for well over a decade had been responsible for the South African military apparatus, and who clearly got on very well with the military high command (Botha's political nickname in NP circles is 'Piet Wapen' - Pete Weapons), and thus can be relied upon to reflect the military's thinking to some extent, Botha may be called a militarist. But this term misrepresents both the military's current role in South African politics, and Botha's own long-held political position within the Nationalist spectrum. As argued above, for sound military reasons, the military high command is one of the most important pro-reform forces in the South African state. This neatly coincides with Botha's own personal position. Perhaps more than any other politician in the NP, Botha concentrates in his own political person, the dominant tendency of the Cape party. He is a political creature of the Cape party machine. In the late 1930s Botha was the first full-time political organiser hired by the Cape NP. His rise to political prominence has occurred through the organisation of the party - an organisation which he helped mould, and which he knows better than anyone else. This means that for his entire political life, Botha has been very close to the forces which dominate the Cape party, ie the financial interests, particularly around Sanlam, which founded the Cape NP and always dominated it. There is no other way to political prominence in the Cape. Thus, Botha concentrates in his own political person the interests

of the Cape party organisation and the political outlook of Cape finance, as well as those of the military high command. Since 1960 at least, within the context of Nationalist Politics, that has produced a strongly reformist orientation. Botha's twin political roles as Minister of Defence and leader of the Cape party, thus both compelled him into a reformist political position - which has always been hidden to those who mistake the bluster of political exchange for its content. The 'total strategy' is the embodiment of this reformism, and likewise concentrates the interests of Sanlam and the military in the defence of 'free enterprise'.

Thus, as already noted, Botha's election marks a clear victory in the NP and the government for large capitalist interests in the Nationalist alliance, and in particular, Sanlam. This has been politically acknowledged by the Chairman of Sanlam, who in a remarkably frank interview with the influential Financial Mail, admitted that in the last years of Vorster's leadership he had despaired of any movement out of the government; that his sensational published attack of the economic policies of Vorster's government (entitled The Assault on Private Enterprise) was intended to stir things up and produce a shake-up within the party; and that he could not be more delighted with the direction taken by Botha as it corresponded exactly with what he had long been arguing for.⁴⁰

While in certain important respects - particularly bantustan policy and state security - the Botha regime appears, thus far at least, to be the direct inheritor and guardians of the policies of the previous regime, in at least five areas of economic and political policy, Botha has gone a long way towards implementing the changes long fought for by the NP reformists, and Sanlam in particular. Firstly, all restrictions on investment by white capitalists in the african townships in the urban areas have now been lifted. Sanlam has embarked on a major campaign to establish a chain of 'Hypermarkets' in areas like Soweto, in so-called 'joint participation' ventures with african businessmen. Secondly, and much more importantly,

arising out of the Riekert and Wiehahn reports on Manpower Utilisation and Labour Legislation respectively, legislative restrictions on the mobility, utilisation and training of african labour have been substantially eased. While this in no way undermines the basic props of Apartheid as a system of labour legislation,⁴¹ it does go a long way to meeting the demands of big business for a flexible labour policy which will facilitate the reorganisation of production along more capital intensive lines. Thirdly, and complementary to this, the government has announced measures for the recognition of african trade unions in a way which brings them under much tighter state control than was previously the case.⁴² This has gone hand in hand, fourthly, with a government commitment in rhetoric at least to ease the minor pinpricks on the african 'middle class', forming the beginnings of a recognition of the need for a political strategy which differentiates between and divides this middle class from black workers, and further distinguishes between the 'rights' of urban african workers and those forced to live in the rural slums of the bantustans.⁴³ And fifthly, the Botha regime is pledged to a gradual reduction in the state control of key productive sectors of the economy, opening them up for private investment.

Simultaneously, the regime has taken a number of steps intended on the one hand to ensure its continued support outside of party and government, and on the other hand to set up state institutional and organisational structures which will serve to consolidate the reformist position against the right wing of the NP.

Firstly, Botha has gone out of his way to project his government as the government of a broad alliance of all sections of capital, and in this way to diminish still further the traditional English-Afrikaner political division amongst businessmen - divisions which long ago lost any economic meaning. This was best symbolised in the convening in November 1979 of a much-publicised meeting of the Cabinet and 250 leading South African businessmen - the ruling class incarnate it might be said. The purpose of this

meeting was to work out ways of implementing the 'total strategy' against the 'Marxist threat' to private enterprise and 'civilised standards' in South Africa. Though the proceedings remain secret, the meeting did produce a number of vitally important permanent standing committees composed of members of government and businessmen, with the avowed function of overseeing and co-ordinating the re-organisation of the administration of the state.⁴⁴

Secondly, within the NP, Botha has now decreed in his capacity as National Leader of the Party that in future, the annual provincial NP congresses will no longer have the power to question government policy, but may only discuss matters of 'principle'. By so redefining the relationship between party and government, Botha is clearly seeking to limit the ability of the NP right to organise against his policies within the party, and to force them to fight rather with the government, where they can be much more easily contained. This tactic very nearly forced an open split in the party in early 1980 on the issue of african participation in a traditionally 'white' sporting event - the so-called 'Craven Week'.

Thirdly, Botha's political attack on the right has not been confined to the level of the party only, but the implementation of the 'total strategy' has produced vitally important changes within the government and state as well. As Prime Minister he has acted decisively in an attempt to forestall the struggle in the government and state apparatuses developing into an effective attack on reformist policies. In effect he has attempted to drive NP factionalism out of these institutions, or to contain it so as to render minimal the political damage to his programme. A number of steps are significant here. The major portfolios in the Cabinet have been largely reserved for his own supporters. Botha has clearly abandoned any idea of balancing the NP factions within the Cabinet à la Vorster. Thus, although Traurnicht is the elected leader of by far the largest individual provincial NP, and in terms of party protocol ranks but second after the National Leader, Botha at first kept him out of the Cabinet (by refusing to promote him to full

Ministerial rank), and when finally forced to take Treurnicht into his Cabinet, assigned him the insultingly minor portfolio of Public Works and Tourism. The recent Cabinet reshuffle saw Treurnicht's further demotion to Minister of Statistics. Moreover in a further move to undermine the Transvaal Leader's position in his own provincial Party, Botha has given an important Cabinet post to the man who defeated Treurnicht and replaced him as Chairman of the Afrikaner Broederbond - Dr. G. Viljoen, the present 'Administrator' of Namibia. Viljoen is also a Transvaaler and his known pro-reform sympathies will act as a strong counterbalance to Treurnicht in both Transvaal party and government. Likewise, in the recent Cabinet reshuffle a number of Treurnicht's supporters were kicked upstairs into the newly formed, and purely advisory 'Presidents' Council'. This move provoked an angry response by former Minister B. Raubenheimer at the most recent Transvaal NP congress when he warned that 'The Transvaal' would oust 'The Cape' as the dominant force in the NP.

But far more than this juggling of individual politicians of the right, has been the structural changes introduced into the state apparatus. Under Botha the Cabinet and State bureaucracy have been sweepingly re-organised so as to concentrate power in the hands of the Prime Minister. In effect, the Cabinet has been virtually abolished as a responsible, decision-making political institution. It now seldom meets as a body, and leads but a largely formal existence. Much of its former functions have been taken over by a system of six, broad 'Cabinet Committees'.⁴⁵ Each of these is headed by the Prime Minister or his nominee, and their activities are co-ordinated by the secretariat of the Prime Minister's Department. Now effectively the executive bodies of government, the Cabinet committees are comprised of those Ministers whose individual portfolios in any way bear on the concerns of the Committee, together with an unspecified and flexible number of appointees of the Prime Minister - who do not have to be drawn from Parliament.

This step is highly significant for a number of

reasons. Firstly, it has transformed the relationship between the Legislature and Executive within the State. These Cabinet Committees are responsible neither to Parliament nor even the Parliamentary caucus of the NP. Rather they are answerable only to, and appointed solely by, the Prime Minister. Thus the entire principle of Cabinet responsibility has been shifted into the office of the Head of Government, dramatically increasing his power. Secondly, the long established role of the NP cabinet as an important arena of struggle between the representatives of the various factions in the NP has been virtually terminated. Since it has effectively been abolished as a single body, the Cabinet can no longer provide a base of political struggle against the dominant tendency in the government. Again, this represents an enormous concentration of power in the hands of the Head of Government vis à vis his own party, and a decisive weakening of many of the traditionally important institutional bases of political struggle.

The establishment of the Cabinet Committees thirdly marks the introduction of a new constellation of class forces into a direct role in the government. Under the former system of cabinet government, the Executive was drawn exclusively from Nationalist Party Members of both Houses of Parliament. Under this system, the balance of class forces within the NP was to some extent reflected in the composition of the cabinet. The internal politics of the party obliged the Prime Minister to pay due regard to the relative strengths of the various factions in the Party when drawing up the Cabinet. But the new Cabinet Committee system has effectively transformed the relationship between party and government. Now membership of the executive (the Cabinet Committees) is restricted neither to members of the NP nor Members of Parliament. Through these committees Botha has introduced directly into key roles in government a number of prominent (non-Nationalist) businessmen and senior military officers. Thus, if Botha's election confirmed a shift in the balance of class forces within the NP, this bourgeois domination of the party has been consolidated in government by

directly drawing into the government wider elements of the bourgeois class. Likewise, in this climate of 'total war' as Botha has termed it, the reorganisation of the government and state apparatus has for the first time given the military a vitally important institutionalised role with the executive.

Over and above the central role played by the military within the system of cabinet committees, senior officers now occupy key positions in the revamped State Security Council. This Council has emerged as perhaps the most influential decision-taking political institution in the country and is the main forum for formulating and planning the implementation of the much-trumpeted total strategy. Furthermore, military advisors sit on the 15 interdepartmental committees covering all major aspects of government and whose recommendations are co-ordinated through the State Security Council. Military men are likewise to be found on most of the public commissions set up by the Botha regime. This now institutionalised central political role assigned to the military extends even to the local level through the Joint Planning Centres which have been set up in the 9 military regions into which the country is divided. Finally this military presence in the central political and administrative apparatuses of the state has been further confirmed by the recent appointment of the Head of the Defence Force - Magnus Malan - as Minister of Defence, taking over the portfolio from Botha himself.⁴⁶

Thus, without undergoing the formal process of a coup d'état, the vestigial remains of Parliamentary government in South Africa have been almost totally abolished, and bourgeois politics have been militarised to a very considerable extent. Botha's own personal political support within the military is a critically important dimension of these changes. Until very recently he retained the portfolio of Defence, giving himself a personal political base outside the NP which is unequalled and unchallenged by any other Nationalist politician. Thus if Vorster tried to lead from above the factions of his party, Botha is trying to lead by going beyond and outside his own

party, in an attempt to defeat the opposition to his policies within the NP.

Finally, it should be noted that these sweeping changes in the form of the state over the past two years, have been accompanied by a parallel reorganization of the state bureaucracy. The number of Departments has been reduced from 40 to 22, and the Public Service Commission has been charged with the task of producing 'a smaller, but more effective and better paid' public service. Significantly, the Prime Minister has appointed 'private sector leaders' to oversee this work of the Commission. This move was explained as representing but one step in 'a policy of cooperation between Government and the private sector, including selected academics'.⁴⁷ If it is remembered that state employees have long constituted a vital basis of support for the NP, and in particular for the NP right, the significance of these changes becomes clearer. In effect, the Leader of the NP is relying upon leading non-nationalist party businessmen representing four of the biggest monopolies in the country,⁴⁸ to oversee the reduction in sanning and re-organisation of a crucial site of employment for (particularly) the Afrikaans-speaking petty bourgeoisie. There could be little more eloquent evidence of the shift in the balance of class forces in the NP.

Conclusion

It was argued at the outset that the capitalist state does not stand outside the class struggle as a simple, static and undifferentiated instrument to be laid hold of by this or that class, and then used to consolidate the interests of that class. Rather, as itself a contradictory unity, the capitalist state is constituted through, and is itself a site of, class struggle. This paper has attempted to examine elements of the class struggle within the state. If the analysis has been one-sided and incomplete in that it has focussed primarily on the significance of Afrikaner nationalist politics, it does seem that the culmination of these struggles in the election of Botha as National Leader of the NP and Prime Minister

has heralded important changes in the form of the South African state - changes based on the institutionalisation of a new political alignment of class forces in which the bourgeoisie attempts to secure the conditions for rapid-capitalist expansion through the noticeable centralisation of power in the hands of a single individual and the militarisation of politics generally.

The central political question arising out of these developments is simply this: what, if any, are the implications and significance of these changes in the form of the capitalist state for the national liberation struggle in South Africa? At one level the answer is clear. These much heralded 'reforms', the sudden concern with 'the quality of life' of South Africa's black population, the recognition of african trade unions, the concessions to the black middle class etc, in no way herald the collapse of Apartheid and the end to national oppression in South Africa. As a system of brutal and violent labour exploitation which controls, directs, channels and allocates labour on behalf of all capitalists and keeps South African workers divided and oppressed and their labour-power cheap, little in Apartheid is changing. For all of Botha's claim that his government will not tolerate 'hurtful or insulting' legislation against anybody, for all of Minister Koornhof's barefaced statement to American capitalists that 'Apartheid as you know it is dying', after the recent and proposed reforms, the fundamental props of Apartheid as a system of labour exploitation remain even more firmly in place. The regime has no plans to give Blacks the vote, or to abolish the pass laws and influx control, population registration, group areas or any other of the legislative props of Apartheid labour exploitation. Under the 'new dispensation' of the total strategy, African workers will go on queuing at the pass offices and labour bureau, sweating in the mines by day and cooped up in compounds at night. The millions of jobless will continue to rot in the Bantustans, denied all political rights, stripped of their citizenship in the land of their forefathers, now the subjects of play-play 'states' recognised by

nobody but the capitalists who might need their labour occasionally. So, at this level, little or nothing has changed. All that has happened is that the state has been further militarised, the apparatuses of oppression are now even stronger, more centralised and wielded with intent to crush but even the slightest hint of opposition.

But at another level, the changes in the form of the South African state analysed in this paper do have great significance for the nature and direction of the national liberation struggle. The consolidation of the Botha regime has finally stripped off the 'Afrikaner' mask which since 1948 hid the capitalist character of the South African state from so many of the opponents of Apartheid. Total strategy is a strategy to save 'free enterprise' from 'the Marxist threat' in Southern Africa. The regime makes no bones about this. It presents itself quite openly and proudly as a regime of the most powerful sectors of the capitalist class, in alliance with and resting on, the extremely powerful South African army. No longer can even the most blind apologist for capitalism argue that Apartheid must be blamed on Afrikaners and not capitalism. No longer can 'the Boers' be held to be the enemy. Indeed this 'Boer' state is now turning on other 'Boers' in the name of profit, private property and stability. Thus, the changes in the form of state in South Africa have clarified the real relations on which this state rests. The present crisis of the capitalist state in SA hinges on the question of how to maintain the continued untroubled and profitable rule of capital. That power does not lie in the hands of Botha alone, or even in the hands of the military. It rests finally with the working masses. And as the intensifying class struggle in South Africa testifies, the masses are becoming increasingly aware of their power. This is the real and insoluble crisis of the capitalist state in South Africa.

Dan O'Meara

Footnotes

1. Posing for itself the question 'can South Africa survive without destroying itself', the most recent and influential academic treatise on Afrikaner nationalism argues that to answer this question, it is necessary to focus solely on the 'ruling Afrikaner ethnic group'. H. Adam & H. Giliomee, Ethnic Power Mobilised, New Haven, 1979.
2. The classic statement of this position is R. Horwitz, The Political Economy of South Africa (London 1967).
3. Again the clearest statement of these multiple errors and confusion is Adam & Giliomee op.cit.
4. J. de St. Jorre, A House Divided, New York, 1977, p3.
5. H. Wolpe, 'Towards an Analysis of the South African State', mimeo 1980.
6. D. Hobart Houghton, The South African Economy, Oxford, 1967, p180.
7. Analysed by Marx in Capital, Vol. 1, Ch 25.
8. The Economic Development Programme ... 1965-70, pp86.
9. Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1978, Johannesburg, 1979, p138.
10. Quoted in R. Davies, 'Capital Restructuring and the Modification of the Racial Division of Labour', Jnl of Southern African Studies, 5, 2, 1979.
11. Charles Simkins, 'Employment, Unemployment and Growth in South Africa 1961-1979'. Saldru Working Paper No 4.
12. Davies op. cit.
- 13.
14. This is the subject of a Special Survey on Exports, Financial Mail, 19.8.1977.
15. Quoted in Financial Mail, 11.2.1977.
16. See eg the speech by the Managing Director of General Mining, 'The Ideological Orientation of Afrikaner Business' mimeo 1975.
17. This is clear from the book by the Chairman of Sanlam, A.D. Wassenaar, Assault on Private Enterprise, Cape Town, 1977.
18. D O'Meara, Class Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, D.Phil, Sussex University, 1979, Ch 12,7,13.
19. Again most notably Adam & Giliomee op.cit.
20. O'Meara loc.cit.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. Ch 3.
23. Ibid.
24. Sanlam Annual Report 1961.
25. See eg The South African Observer, X, 8, March 1965.
26. See H. Serfontein, Die Verkrempte Aanslag, Cape Town, 1970.
27. See eg the Report by the Head of Military Intelligence, 'The Afrikaner Broederbond' (n.d. - but from internal evidence, August 1944), The Hofmeyr Papers.
28. O'Meara op.cit., Ch 12.
29. Documented in B. Schoeman, Vorster se 100 Dae, Cape Town 1974.
30. Ibid, & Serfontein op.cit.
31. Interview with a Front Bench MP May 1976.
32. The terms verkrempte and verligte have now been replaced by conservative and reformist respectively.
33. Paratus, July, 1979, p36.
34. Defence White Paper, 1977, p5.
35. Gen Magnus Malan, Rand Daily Mail, 13.6.1979.
36. See the important article by Glenn Moss, 'Total Strategy', Work in Progress, No 11, Feb 1980.
37. AD Wassenaar, Assault on Private Enterprise: The Freeway to Communism, Cape Town, 1977.
38. Two statements by the then Minister of Police, J. Kruger, seemed to sum this up. After Soweto he declared that the police had used live ammunition rather than rubber bullets as a method of crowd control, because Africans had to be 'made tame to the gun'. Similarly when the news first broke of the death of Steve Biko in detention Kruger declared that it 'left him cold', and lied to the Natal NP Congress that Biko had died as the result of a hunger strike. The congress then congratulated the Minister 'on extending to Biko the democratic right to starve himself to death'.
39. This is in fact what occurred. Botha instructed the investigating judge not to divulge the degree of Vorster's complicity, but his orders were ignored and Vorster was then forced to resign from the State Presidency in disgrace in June 1979.
40. Financial Mail
41. See SACTU memorandum to 1980 ILO Conference, June 1980.
42. See the speech by the Minister of Manpower to the OFS congress of the NP, quoted in The Star, 8.9.1979.
43. This is particularly clear in the Government White Paper on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Manpower Legislation (the Riekerk Commission). A Cabinet Committee, which includes a number of leading businessmen has been set up to study the position of 'the urban African'.
44. Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1979, pp3-6.
45. Dealing with State Security, Finance, Economics, Internal Affairs, Welfare and Legislation and Parliamentary Affairs.
46. Magnus Malan is the son of the former Chairman of the largest Afrikaans Bank, Volkskas. His father was for many years one of the leading members of the Broederbond, a Member of Parliament and prominent verkrempte. Gen. Malan's personal and political biography thus makes him the ideal person to bridge the government, army and capitalist class.
47. Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1979, pp6, & 250-251.
48. Barlow Rand, SA Breweries, Old Mutual and General Mining.