

IZWI last TOWNSHIP



REPRIEVE OF ALEX – RUBBISH, SAYS REV BUTI

The unacceptable reality of Alexandra is the unacceptable reality of South Africa – millions of people, the great majority of the citizens of the country, live still at the mercy of others.

It is good to hear someone say RUBBISH to the state's deceitful projects. More people should say RUBBISH. 'Permanent Urban Rights' – RUBBISH. 'Free-enterprise System' – RUBBISH. 'Independent States' – utter RUBBISH. 'Education & Training' – what RUBBISH. They are all rubbish for the same reason, that they are words put there to conceal an underlying exploitation.

anyone. In a recent interview with IZWI, Rev Sam Buti dismissed the sweet talk with one word – RUBBISH.

'For us to be told – well, you've got a reprieve – its rubbish so far as I'm concerned – because . . . reprieve, what is a reprieve? – In other words you live still at the mercy of another man!'

Four years ago it was announced in parliament that Alexandra would be re-developed for family housing. There were celebrations. It was said that Alex had been saved. Many people, confused by all the speeches, began to feel grateful to Koornhof and his gang, and desired to cooperate with them.

Four years later the idea of a 'saved' or 'reprieved' Alexandra no longer fools

2
Yet rubbish or not, these words do have power to entangle people in the false promises of the system. Koornhof only has to say the words 'Municipal Status', and certain people begin to crave for the limited power that seems to be offered. They do not say RUBBISH, because they desire to be active. Not liking to sit in idleness, they blind themselves to reality. They want to act and at the same time they do not want to see that they are being manipulated.

Some people are never taken in. As early as July 1979 Rev. M Thema was scorning the nonsense of Alexandra's 'reprieve'. He said openly that Piet Koornhof and the Department of Community Development (another lying title) 'were emblems of oppression to the black man.' And he warned against collaborating with them. 'Black people cannot afford privileges and favours. We thirst for reality and our rights.'

That's well said. But what then can we do?

What is to be done

The first step is to try by all means to uncover reality: and that is why the word RUBBISH is of great value to us. We must sweep aside the lying words the system uses to hide behind so that we may get close to reality. This is the process of increasing consciousness.

What is the second step? For clearly one cannot stop at just knowing what is wrong: one has to act on society in order to change it. But here a tremendous difficulty presents itself — how can one achieve the power to act without working through state institutions? It is, for example, as an approved 'local authority' that the Liaison Committee in Alexandra has power to direct community affairs. To what extent is this power controlled, or to what extent is it independent?

The cart that pushes the horse downhill

Sam Buti retains the belief that he has a large measure of independence, that the Liaison Committee is able to act meaningfully on behalf of residents of the township. He rejects the implication of the word 'reprieve', but he accepts the semi-official role the Liaison Committee has in municipal affairs:

'What is important is that black people should now rally around and be united and form a force that can really pressurise for certain things.'
(S. Buti — Interview)

Pressurise or Collaborate

Yet, to link into the system is to risk collaborating with it, whether you want to or not. As a local authority the Liaison Committee is bound to support certain apartheid mechanisms such as influx control, house permits, ejections, shack-demolition and so on. A very thin line divides 'pressurising' from 'collaborating'.

Both steps — increasing consciousness, and action — are necessary for progress and development. They cannot really be separated in practice. People should know what they are doing.

We of IZWI are not yet able to present views on one of these twins, namely this problem of action, in a thorough manner. We will do so in a future issue of IZWI. In this present issue we concentrate on the question of consciousness. The articles that follow have this theme and purpose in common: they take ordinary seeming things — Clinics, Youth Centres, Exams etc — and show how they are used to ensure a blind faith in the capitalist system, and to conceal its methods of getting people to accept it.

Interview with Buti

IZWI had an interview with Rev Buti, chairman of the Alexandra Liaison Committee, in March, 1983. The interview was about developments in Alexandra generally, and more particularly concerning housing. Apart from his comments on the so-called reprieve of Alexandra, mentioned in our leading article, the following are some of the interesting points that were made:

(Concerning housing and the socio-economic survey that was made in Alexandra a few years ago)

Izwi — There must have been something central that came out of the socio-economic survey?

Buti — The priority number one that came as a central point, as a focal point, is that people need houses, not rooms.

Izwi — Whose idea was it to have Thusong, the tennis courts, sports fields and the expensive houses?

Buti — Projects like Thusong and the others are projects that came from people who live around Alexandra. The sports fields are the Mayoral Project of Sandton — Thusong is the project of the Sandton Civic Association — and all these other things were meant to assist the people of Alexandra. The Alexandra Liaison Committee could not have started with such projects . . .

Izwi — But you did . . .

Buti — We did not start with these projects ourselves . . .

Izwi — But you gave them the go ahead?

Buti — Well, I mean, there's no use to say no to them, when they say 'We assist'. If a person says to you you don't have a trousers and I would like to assist you with a trousers, you cannot say no to that person. You know your priorities . . .

Izwi — If you feel the trousers is not important first, it is important at a later stage?

Buti — I don't think that is good reasoning, and I don't think there is logic in that. In any development of a town, you don't develop lopsidedly — you develop as a town. If you build schools, you build houses, you build streets, you need facilities for the children to recreate. And if there are people who come and say we want to assist with this, we cannot say no. But if that thing can stand in the way of development of houses, then we will say no. But in no way are these projects in the way of the development.

What Rev Buti has to say about projects like Thusong and the sportsfields, is of great interest to us. Izwi has always maintained that such projects are wrongly given a priority, and has insisted that housing should be the priority. Rev Buti insists that these sites and buildings do not stand in the way of housing. But this is quite puzzling, in that what we see, apart from a few sub-economic houses, is the rapid, efficient development of these projects which undoubtedly take up space.

The crucial question which this poses, is that given the reality that Alexandra is a small area, with 60 000 people, where are the houses going to be built to accomodate everyone? It is this that makes us believe that Alexandra is intended primarily for fewer people, and especially for those who can afford expensive housing, and who are in a position to enjoy tennis, etc. What is 'perfectly clear' to the Department of Community Development, must surely also be clear to Rev Buti, 'that even a redeveloped Alexandra cannot accommodate its present inhabitants and that some of the Blacks may find it necessary to resettle elsewhere.' (This comes from a letter from the Department to Percy Williams of the Save Alexandra (Coloured) Party - reproduced below). It will consequently be of great interest to see how Rev Buti manages to keep his promise, in a situation which seems to make it impossible for him to do so.

Report on school results

1982 School results were bad in both Minerva Secondary and Alex High School, but scandalously bad at the High.

Why is this so?

The question is confused and confusing as everyone involved in education shifts blame and responsibility. The Department of Education and Training says it is largely due to underqualified teachers that we have such bad results. Teachers blame pupils and say they are lazy and do not take their work seriously. Some pupils blame teachers for incompetence, some blame themselves as they feel they are not capable of comprehending school work. Parents blame their children or teachers, or both children and teachers.

Teachers get caned

At the meeting of teachers and inspectors held at Minerva, where the new regional director, Mr Van Zyl, was introduced to teachers, Alex High School was criticized for the high rate of failures in both JC and matric. The fault, it was said, lies with teachers who are irresponsible and fail in their duty to apply restrictive and disciplinary measures on pupils.

A pupil at Alex High reported to IZWI that some teachers told them about the meeting, and said that they were blamed undeservedly, as they felt that pupils fail because of their laziness. One teacher went further to say that pupils misinterpret the role of teacher, and expected teachers to spoon-feed them, whereas he held that the role of a teacher is to guide.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTEMENT VAN GEMEENSKAPSONTWIKKELING
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

00 100(a)

Mr P R Williams
Save Alexandra (Coloured) Party
P O Box 507
BERGVLEI
2012

Verrekening/Reference Sandton 4/2
Namen/Expeditie J W Pourie Ve-76C
Telefoon/Telephone (012) 29551 X153
Tel Adres/Address DEVELOP
Telle/Telno 3487
Sake/Sake/Versending Building
Volvoorsiening/Voorsiening Address

Sir

1981-10-09

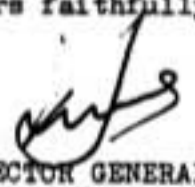
PERMANENCY OF COLOUREDS IN ALEXANDRA

I refer to the letter addressed to you by the Administrative Secretary of The Honourable S P Kotszé, Minister of Community Development, dated 25 September 1981 and wish to inform you that cognizance has been taken of your representations.

You are aware of the overcrowded conditions in Alexandra and that redevelopment of the township is under way. However it is perfectly clear that even a redeveloped Alexandra cannot accommodate its present inhabitants and that some of the Blacks may find it necessary to resettle elsewhere. It is, therefore, inevitable as well as imperative that additional land will have to be identified, preferably in the vicinity of Wynberg, where the Coloureds of Alexandra can settle permanently and where all necessary facilities can be provided for them.

Unfortunately, suitable land is not easily available in that area and the Department is still busy with certain preliminary investigations in this regard.

Yours faithfully



DIRECTOR GENERAL:
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our opinion is that teachers do not themselves understand the concept of teaching, and that under the bantu education system teachers cannot help but miseducate.

Some dictate, some educate

A teacher in class dictates terms to the pupils; he acts as an arbitrator and gives orders and instructions and so on. Moreover he believes that somehow he is entitled to do these things because he has a certificate, and has been appointed as a teacher. This sort of behaviour itself miseducates, in that it suppresses the initiative of pupils and instils in their minds undemocratic ideas.

We hold that a true teacher is one who is capable of unfolding pupils' potential, arousing curiosity and encouraging initiative and self-direction on the part of pupils.

A tyrant solution

The reality in present bantu education schools, is that teachers have a completely different approach. This can be illustrated by the solution suggested by teachers at Alex High for solving the high failure rate at that school. Their plan was to lock gates, keep pupils in class and force them to read! The effect of these measures is a tense situation in which any real education is impossible.

From the above it can be seen that few people really understand the problem or the remedy thereof. This makes it desirable that we should try to analyse and explain the situation.

An explanation

In this article we are going to attempt to give an account of the school situation by showing how it fits into our society. This needs to be done because schools are not **neutral**, but part of the political struggle that exists in South Africa. Education never exists in a social vacuum, but is necessarily social and therefore political.

Our society is capitalist. It functions on the basis of private ownership of the means of production, by which we mean land, farms, factories, machines, banks etc. There are two main classes in this society, capitalists (bosses) who own



and control these means of production – and workers who do not own any means of production, but sell their labour power to the bosses in order to live. There is a necessary struggle between these two classes as to who must own the means of production. This is why there are always strikes, disputes and other conflicts at factories, taking the form of disagreement over wages and working conditions. Workers and bosses enter into a hostile relationship and conflict of interest, in that bosses want profits as high as possible, while workers want higher wages and better working conditions.

Class (room) struggle

The conflict or struggle does not end up at factories: it is repeated on other levels. In locations there is a struggle over rents, housing and services. And there is a struggle also in schools. What we should ask, then, is how education fits into our capitalist society, what form the struggle takes, and in particular, what significance examinations have in this situation.

Black schools are predominantly attended by working class pupils. As we all know, the state and the bosses do not have the interests of the working class at heart, and they never will have as long as there is capitalism, because the bosses and the state will always live at the expense of the working class. What they are interested in is to exploit us. Why, then, does the state offer schools and education?

Future workers

Working class children are potential workers of tomorrow. They are necessary to replace their parents when they die or get too old to work. So the state wants children to be educated, so that they may be able to do their jobs in the economy, to read and write, to calculate, understand English and Afrikaans and so on. Some of these children are going to be semi-skilled or skilled workers, others bank tellers, clerks at WRAB offices to collect rents and things like that.

But of course the capitalists do not have it all their own way, for, as we have said, there is a struggle between them and the working class. What this struggle involves, in the sphere of education, concerns what should be taught and how. The state wants to use schools to control pupils and shape and prepare them for their future in labour. Pupils, on the other side, want to use school to get an education that will develop their minds and characters and make them fit to know and understand the complex world of today.

Ibhongo

This struggle at schools can be illustrated by what has been happening recently at Ibhongo Senior Secondary School, in Jabulani, Soweto. According to a news report in February 1983, 'Students at the Ibhongo Secondary walked out in protest . . . Earlier the students had held

a meeting during which they indicated that they were unhappy with the formation of the 'Committee of Nine', a body said to consist of school teachers who are allegedly victimising "politically minded" pupils at the school.

Critical minds

What does this mean - "politically minded"? You can be sure that students who are defined in this way are pupils who resent being locked in the school premises during the day, as if it were a kind of concentration camp - or pupils who are critical of the teaching staff - or who demand an SRC, or who sometimes try to raise questions about important social and political matters. This is the sort of attitude that develops critical minds: and this is what the state does not want. A critical attitude is quite undesirable in pupils who are intended as labour units in commerce and industry.

Critical minded human beings who question authority and make demands, while in school, are the sort of people who would question the rights of bosses to own the means of production, or make demands like higher wages etc. Capitalism is not fond of this sort of employee, it prefers cheap and docile labour.

Why did you fail?

Examinations are said to test whether or not pupils learned their work. But there are already inequalities that exist among pupils brought about by our society in terms of pupils' family background, reading opportunities etc.

Some pupils are from ambitious families, where there is already some education they know the advantage of education and encourage their children to work hard at school whatever they might be taught, or under whatever conditions. The child thus motivated by careerism works hard to obtain a certificate. It also helps if their family has spacious accommodation, so that the children can study properly.

Other pupils are from poor families with little or no education. Such children might well be more interested in learning why they are in the situation they find themselves in. Geography might appear irrelevant. What they need to understand is how it happened that they became poor; whether out of misfortune, conquest, personal laziness or what.

They sometimes arrive at school with an empty stomach, or a stomach filled with junk food, so that their level of concentration is low. These are some of the factors that contribute to a failure rate in the hundreds.

Examinations that do not take these inequalities into account, are clearly not fair.

Failure swells the working class

What the examinations actually do is reproduce the inequalities we have mentioned, by selection and rejection. This is useful to the capitalist economy, as knowledge and skills become concentrated in the hands of a few, thereby rendering those who are unskilled and lack knowledge workers, to be placed under the supervision and control of the others.

Those who are in this way rejected by the system not only lack knowledge or skill, but the absence of these puts them in a position of lack of self-direction and self-government.

We can see from the above that education is not accessible to everyone, but is turned into private property, just like the means of production (land, factories, machines etc), to be owned by a privileged few.

Schoolgirl's attack

A SOWETO school teacher had to run for his life this week when a group of angry female pupils threw empty tin cans and a dustbin at him after he had sent them out of class as punishment.

About 30 female pupils stormed into the classroom while Mr Gregory Lebele, a teacher at Seipateng Higher Primary School in Diepkloof, was still conducting a lesson, demanding to be readmitted to the class, and when he refused, tins and stones were hurled at him.

The male pupils intervened, saving the teacher who is still limping from the powerful blow he received from the dustbin.

When The SOWETAN interviewed Mr Lebele, he said he suspected the influence of some female teachers at the school. He said it was only after a certain female teacher accused him of doing a senseless thing by sending the pupils out of class that he was attacked. He said the pupils took advantage of him after he was ridiculed by the female teacher.

DET chief liaison officer Mr Job Schoeman said the question of discipline on the part of pupils not only rested on the shoulders of the teachers but on parents as well.

Izwi salutes the girls at Seipateng. We cannot think of any missile better than a dustbin to throw at a tyrant teacher. Like every other person, teachers must be taught the golden rule - Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

A person who was once an excellent teacher in Soweto has said, 'If a teacher enters class with a cane, assault him.' The same is now accomplished by the girl pupils of Seipateng. They have returned rubbish for rubbish, and their teacher will remember his lesson at least for as long as he limps.

We therefore advise all pupils, to have dustbins ready, for use against any act of tyranny or folly from their teachers.



First building in ALexandra, 1912

Mala-Mogodu

Until it was destroyed by the colonisers gun, game was plentiful in South Africa, and therefore meat was plentiful. Apart from game, there were large herds of cattle, these being central to the economy of most tribes. Van Riebeeck speaks of 'a camp of Saldanha men with fifteen huts and fifteen or sixteen hundred cattle, and sheep besides . . .' Food included game meat, wild vegetables, mabele and milk.

Making profit

Today meat is still a major industry, but under capitalism the system of producing and distributing it is very different from what it once was. Previously the purpose of killing either game or cattle would be to eat; and things were shared pretty equally. Today the purpose of all production is to make profits. The task of distributing food so that everyone in society may eat properly, is not regarded as important.

Who's in control

The supply of meat is controlled by a few very large firms in South Africa, among them VLEISSENTRAAL (which is a gigantic farmers co-operative) and IMPERIAL COLD STORAGE. These Big Business operations have investments in the production of meat from before

the time it is born until after it has been squeezed into tin cans. They make money from maize, which is the chief food for cattle that are being fattened; from fertiliser, which feeds maize; and from hides and bones. The high price of meat today is no doubt a direct result of their control over the market, and the policies which they can impose.

In Alex

The first two buildings in Alexandra were a small mud-brick house, and a zinc covered butchers shop. These were standing in 1912, near the old Pretoria road. As the township grew, so did the number of butcher shops, so that in 1941 the Medical Officer of Health reported that there were 40 butchers in Alexandra trading under licence (and no doubt others trading without licences, as today). No mention is made in those times of any large scale market in offal. Even ten years ago offal was not a common food, most of it being discarded immediately after slaughtering.

Offal

Today red meat is too expensive for most families in Alexandra, and offal has become the major source of animal protein in the diet of residents.

How does offal compare with red meat? It is equally rich in protein, in iron, in vitamins A & B. It has no fat; it has a stronger flavour. In fact it is very good

food. Nevertheless, people eat what they are used to. Red meat is preferred: the only reason why so many people today buy offal, is that they have had to give up red meat which is expensive, and get used to this cheaper substitute.

The question of price

Offal is cheaper than red meat: but we may ask, why is this so? And why is it not even cheaper? It is quite hard to find out the reason for the price of things. We notice prices changing from time to time, usually going up, but even sometimes coming down (as in the case of paraffin this last month). But the way prices are determined remains hidden. We just accept that prices are what they are, and if we can afford, we pay. It may help us understand at least some of the things that influence price, if we outline the way a product is produced and distributed. In this article we will deal with the product offal.

Process of production

Stock farmers send cattle, sheep etc to the abattoir (slagpaal) for slaughter. The animal's carcass, the frame of bone and red meat, is put on a hook. The offal (that is the insides, the head, feet and tail) and the hide, are stripped away and sent to a separate building known as the Offal Pool, where they are cleaned and trimmed and prepared for sale.

Auction price

The carcasses of red meat are sold by auction 'off the hook'. Dealers and wholesalers make their bids, and the highest bidder sets the price of each grade and kind of meat. Offal, on the other hand, is not auctioned, but sold at fixed prices.

Fixed price

With the auction system, whoever bids highest gets the product. Where the price is fixed, however, there must be either a queue or a quota system to determine who is to get the goods. For example, to buy mala from Wynberg Chicken Co people have to join the line early, and wait. In the case of offal at City Deep (slagpaal), certain people are allowed a quota, which gives them a right to a certain quantity of offal each day.



margin on tinned food high. Certain mining interests and some canning companies are part of the controlling group of the Offal Pool. No doubt it is the influence of these groups that keeps the price of offal controlled and low.

We should also ask why, if there is a great demand for offal, the supply does not increase. Usually, if many people want a certain product, more of it is produced to satisfy the demand. However in this case offal is actually only a by-product. It is produced at the same time as red meat, being nothing other than the insides of animals that are bred and slaughtered for their meat. The supply of offal is linked to the supply of slaughter animals for meat.

Beef has it all – especially profit

What the big firms want, is a high price for quality beef, mutton etc. They can get this from rich white consumers; and so the supply is deliberately limited, or carcasses are withdrawn from sale, in order to keep these prices high. And since the supply of meat is limited, the supply of offal is necessarily limited too.

Is offal cheap?

The fact that the price of offal is low at the Pool, does not mean that it is still low when someone buys it in a location



Mala/Mogodu – the last stage.

street. Between the Pool and the final point of sale (hawkers table) the price rises a lot. The dealer, who gets his stock at the pool at fixed price, adds on a profit when he sells to the retailer or the hawkers. He might add a profit of 40% or so, paying himself for his truck, his time, his labour, and something extra to put in the bank. Then the hawker also adds on something to get a profit, often as much as 100%. He too has to make a living.

Example

A dealer buys 1 kilo of sheep stomach for 64c
 He sells this same kilo to a hawker for 90c
 The hawker sells it to a hungry person for 1,87c
 Thus the dealer and the hawker have taken R1,23c in trading profits.

Rakgwebo kapa mmereki

This brings us to the question of traders. Are they part of the working class, or are they part of the capitalist class, profiting at the expense of workers? Actually it seems that their class position is uncertain, some of them going the one way and others the other way. For this reason they are said to belong to the 'middle class'. This includes people who do not own capital (and therefore cannot be called capitalists), but on the other hand they do not do productive labour, that is, labour that results in goods being produced. This middle class thus includes teachers, officials, secretaries, traders and so on. And all of these people are a bit uncertain whether they favour the workers or the bosses. Those who remain, like the workers, poor and in difficulties, are likely to regard themselves as part of the working class. But those who are able to accumulate wealth, who buy maybe a shop, or a taxi or some machinery, and begin to employ workers themselves, these become more and more like capitalists, and give the capitalist class their support.

Among hawkers, some sell large quantities, while others sell only a little. To see why this difference is important, we must say something about 'profit margin' and 'turnover', which are the most important things in a business.

Who gets these quotas? The mines have the largest quota; then companies that make other products out of offal, such as pet-food, or tinned meat for export to neighbouring African states; then the wholesalers, who sell to retail butchers and hawkers; and lastly hawkers themselves, on condition they have a trading licence. In this last case, the amount they get is based on how much they sell during summer, when there is less demand for offal.

This system of quotas and fixed prices makes the offal market a controlled one. Even great demand for offal, as in winter, does not lead to a rise in prices at the Offal Pool. It is said by officials that it would be too difficult to auction offal: firstly because it has to be distributed fast, since it quickly gets bad; secondly because there are many different items, such as heart, lungs, stomach, tripes, liver, brain etc. and they all have different prices. To auction each and every one of these would be quite difficult.

The policy suits whom?

But no doubt the main reason for a fixed price policy is that it suits certain industries, like the mines and canning companies. The mines, which depend on cheap labour, keep down the cost of feeding their workers by buying offal in bulk at low prices. Canners also need cheap raw materials to make their profit

Profit margin is the amount of profit you can get on the things you sell. If you buy something for 50c and sell it for R1,00, your profit margin is high, being 100%.

Turnover refers to how much of your stock you can sell over a period of time, say one day. If you sell all your stock in a day, your turnover is higher than if you sell only a small part of the stock in that time.

These two things together determine whether you earn a lot or a little. Take the case of two hawkers, who both pay 60c for a kilo of mautwana, and sell for R1,20.

Their profit margin is the same. But one hawker sells 10 kilos a day, bringing him a profit of R6,00: while the other sells 100 kilos, bringing him a profit of R60,00. You can see that the first person will stay poor, while the second will soon get rich and will buy a truck, do transport business, then get part shares in a petrol station, and finally become a Tshabalala of a tycoon!

Many hawkers in Alex are of the first sort. They buy just a little offal, and they spend the whole day before it is all sold. Others buy a lot, and many different types of offal, spread it over many tables and attract the crowd by their appearance of doing well. These are the ones who look forward to living in new houses even if the rent is high.

Ukushunqula

One of the biggest problems faced by hawkers who do not have trading licences, is the high cost of feeding the police. They are raided regularly, and made to pay fines. It is commonly said by hawkers that they are not given receipts, which means that the money probably goes into the pocket of a policeman. Not that it matters to the hawker who takes his money. The fine is regarded as a kind of tax; and hawkers feel that so long as the police can count on getting a bit of extra pocket money from them, they will not actually prevent them from trading.

Interview with a hawker

- Hawker** *This bag is ox offal, that one sheep offal. I buy them from the Chinaman in West Street. They won't sell to me at City Deep because I don't have a trading licence. I applied long ago for one – do you think you could help me there...?*
- Hawker** *If I ask for one they say I should come back in the afternoon. And then when I go back, those very people can't be found. No one knows anything about it.*
- Izwi** *How do you travel to get this offal?*
- Hawker** *By bus. I go there and back almost every day. It's quite expensive.*
- Izwi** *How much profit do you make selling this stuff?*
- Hawker** *I don't know. I spend money for coal, pay fines to the police, there's rent, food...*
- Izwi** *How much are the fines?*
- Hawker** *Last year they were R20 but this year they are not so high. The police are giving us a discount.*
- Izwi** *Do you get a receipt?*
- Izwi** *But they let you continue selling...*
- Hawker** *They know we help the people here get food. And the police too must live. If they stopped us, where would they go when they run out of cash? (laughs)*
- Izwi** *Do you have a family?*
- Hawker** *Sure. Five children. And we only have one room, divided. It's not good.*
- Izwi** *Could you afford a rent of R50,00 if they let you have one of those new houses, kodizozo?*
- Hawker** *No. Even now it is hard to find enough money each month to survive. We are suffering.*

IZWI LASE TOWNSHIP is published by Ditshwantsho tsa Rona. It offers notes and views about events of today and of the past. Though mainly concerned with Alexandra, because that is the home location of Ditshwantsho, we hold that Alexandra is but a part of South Africa, and shares in the general struggle in this country. We reject the ghetto status of the township, and we reject strategies that attempt to divide it from other parts of the nation.

It is necessary to understand society in order to change it. We invite the public to participate in this paper, by carrying out research and by contributing discussion.

Letters, articles, comments and enquiries should be sent to our address:
PO Box 720, BERGVLEI, 2012.



Overcrowding makes the problem worse because illness can spread fast in conditions like in Alexandra where 60 000 people occupy 1 square mile, and where in some cases as many as 50 people live in a single yard.

Curative

A scientific attitude to illness is obviously necessary, and trained doctors, nurses and researchers are needed. But it is important that we realise that basically health is a social matter, that looking after health is a social, that is political, duty. While it is true that sick individuals are helped very often by medicine and by specialist treatment, medicine itself cannot remove the causes of many illnesses, so long as the conditions which give rise to them exist.

In South Africa preventative medicine is far more urgently needed than curative medicine; and yet it is the state's policy to develop high technology equipment, hospitals, highly trained doctors etc, rather than eliminate the social causes of disease. What can their reason be for this policy?

Who benefits?

One answer is that curative medicine is very profitable. Most doctors see their training as a way to make money. Also the manufacturers of medicines and the pharmacists who sell them, make very high profits. In fact these profits are also often shared with doctors in the form of bribes to induce them to use and prescribe particular brands of medicine. This has recently been revealed in an investigation by a large Sunday newspaper. We must also not forget that company profits also means money in the governments hands, as they get tax.

It is a consequence of capitalist policies, that we see on the one hand terrible social conditions in the Alexandra ghetto, and on the other a clinic (which of course is a relief to people suffering from illness: it is a blessing in their lives.) The Alexandra Clinic is rather famous. Not only does it serve the 60 000 inhabitants of Alexandra, but people come from far away to be treated there. It is understaffed, and the staff members are underpaid, in comparison to white hospital

Can aspirin cure poverty?



Many illnesses could be prevented if these things were attended to, and there would be less need for medicines and doctors. This is called **preventative medicine**. The most common illnesses in Alexandra are malnutrition, skin infections, TB, parasites (worms in the stomach and intestines) gastro-enteritis, VD and so on. All of these have social causes. For example, people who do not have enough to eat, or do not get enough sleep, become weak, and then they are more likely to get some disease.

Slum diseases

We know that malnutrition is a result of low wages; and we know that many workers spend long hours travelling to work and back, which cuts down on their sleep. As for skin infections, they are partly caused by inadequate diet, partly by the dust and dirt in Alexandra. TB is well known to be a slum disease. It is nurtured by bad housing, poor ventilation, malnutrition, bad hygiene and overcrowding. Many other diseases besides develop in these ways — they are diseases of poverty.

People do not think of health and illness as a political problem. This is because it seems to be a technical matter, for experts to deal with. When someone gets sick, he or she goes to a clinic to be cured. This is called **curative medicine**.

But there is a different way of looking at health care. It is stupid to build hospitals and train doctors, which cost enormous amounts of money, and not do anything about starvation, contaminated water or lack of shelter for people.

staff. Its annual income is small. It relies on donations from Big Business, from Wits Rag Charity and so forth.

There is of course little the clinic can do to improve conditions in the township. It is itself set up as part of the curative medicine that, as we have explained, is favoured by the system in this country. As it receives support from drug companies and capitalist business, it is quite unlikely to challenge the system in any meaningful way. People will go on getting 'filth diseases' in Alexandra, and then getting treatment at the clinic.

There is no way in which the clinic or its staff could enter the social (political) struggle, and work with trade unions or community organisations, to alter the inequality that lies at the base of South African society.

What does the clinic hide?

In other words, the clinic is inevitably part of the problem. It repeats or continues the system of curative medicine in a situation which desperately needs the other approach. In a sense, therefore, the Alexandra Clinic conceals the most urgent problem of illness. It is useful to the state in that it disguises the social problem and makes it seem that donations of cash or drugs are a benefit, when they are actually a curse.

Preventative

Preventative medicine is a form of medical care that attempts to find out the social causes of illness, and tries then to get rid of these causes. It attempts to prevent illness, by removing its causes. Health is a political matter; and to health problems there must be political solutions. What this would mean in practice is that workers themselves should control such medical centres as the Clinic, and take part in defining health care, and the way to overcome illness. This would be possible only when workers control the factories and their profits; it is not a possibility in the present South African form of society.

It's unhealthy, say doctors

By LIZ MCGREGOR
Medical Reporter

IN A "gross maldistribution", 80% of South African doctors care for 20% of the people.

This figure was given in a report in the latest issue of the South African Medical and Dental Council on a conference on "Health Realities in Africa" held recently at Medunsa.

The "gross maldistribution" of health manpower could partly be attributed to students training in a city with sophisticated medical facilities — and were then "ill-prepared to cope with the adverse circumstances and frustration prevalent in rural areas".

One solution was to take training to the areas of need — some medical schools now require students to do some training in rural areas.

Although South Africa was highly sophisticated in certain fields, such as cardiac and renal transplants, coronary bypass surgery and nuclear medicine, most of the health

problems of developing countries — such as gastro-enteritis, tuberculosis, rheumatic heart fever and malnutrition — were still found in the Republic, said the article.

It was clear poor water sources, poor sanitation, nutrition and communication routes were at the roots of health problems in developing countries, it said.

"The importance of the World Health Organisation's goal of providing water to all by 1990 was frequently stressed, a piped water supply to every family and a good sewage system would greatly improve the health status of a population as a whole," it said.

There was also a strong feeling among delegates that the people should become involved in their own health care, it said.

"This approach has been applied with success in remote African villages where village health workers and health committees have been recruited from the local population and given relevant training," said the report.

Health in Alex

Every large size settlement of people needs arrangements for their health and hygiene. The first duties of a local authority are to secure a supply of fresh, clean water, and to plan the regular removal of waste, eg excrement, rubbish, rotten food and so on.

Alexandra has lots of underground water, and for many years the water supply came from wells, some of which were polluted because they were near to pit latrines. Piped water was not laid on until 1941. As for waste there have from time to time been slight improvements in the system of bucket removal; but it is a primitive and dirty method, and it is still in operation.

Early days

In the early days of Alexandra cleanliness was not adequate and by 1935 the township was becoming overcrowded, making the problem worse. In 1936 a Provincial Health Inspector, Dr Fourie, scared everyone with his report on health conditions:

'Both the water supply and the sanitary conditions in the township, as well as the night-soil depositing site, favour the presence of enteric fever. Unfortunately the community is not an isolated one. Most of the inhabitants are employed in Johannesburg and there is reason to believe that a considerable number of them come into close contact with the

population of Johannesburg in their homes as cooks, nursemaids and so forth.

There are other intestinal diseases, such as infantile dysentery, and the available records of Alexandra Township show quite a high incidence of mortality due to those diseases among infants and young children. As I said before, it would not matter very much if Alexandra Township were an isolated community, but it has a very close contact with the population of Johannesburg.'

What disturbed Dr Fourie is that disease does not seem to be colour conscious. It ignores the boundaries drawn up by white legislators, and might spread from Alexandra to the residents of white suburbs in Johannesburg. These residents took fright from his report and feared infection from servants quarters (ie Alexandra). Pretty soon things were being done to improve the township's condition.

Improvements

By 1939 the Alexandra Medical Officer of Health, Dr AB Xuma, reported:

Since Mr Justice Feetham's Commission in 1936, the Health Committee has acquired new grounds for a cemetery and for a depositing site, the need of which was largely the cause of the enquiry into the conditions in Alexandra township.'

And he goes on to point to the remarkable decrease in cases of Enteric Fever, 'a filth disease', from 176 cases in 1936 to 34 cases in 1938. Caution on the part of the citizens of Johannesburg was having an effect.

What about the medical side of health in Alexandra? The first organised effort at clinical treatment was introduced by missionaries. The situation was outlined in 1935:

'The present Health Committee has in the past given financial support to the medical work of the American Board of Missions, and is making an annual grant to the Committee which has taken over the Alexandra Health Centre from the Mission. The staff of the Centre consists of an honorary physician, a European sister in charge and two trained Native nurses. The doctors leave instructions for the nursing of their patients at the clinic, and a nurse is sent to carry them out.'

By the year 1940 it has grown somewhat larger:

'The clinic was established in a small way and has now grown to the dimensions of a double storied concrete building. It is situated in 2nd Avenue just off the Pretoria Road. The full-time staff consists of a doctor, one European sister and five native nurses. The clinic contains a casualty dressing room, dispensary and two consulting rooms.'

WITS sees a chance

In this year the Centre began to interest Wits Medical School. A valuable insight into the Wits Clinic is given in a report by the first students to have used Alexandra for their medical training:

It does not appear to be generally known by medical students that our University has appointed Dr Prestwich as a Medical Officer to provide medical service, with the assistance of students, to the poor people of Alexandra Township. As we are the first group of medical students to have availed ourselves of the privilege of working in the Township for a fortnight, we felt that a description of our experiences might be of some value to the student body.

The report that the students then give shows an interesting mixture of attitudes. On the one hand they are really learning things about society.

'For the first time in his training the student comes face to face with real poverty and its devastating effects on the health of the population. . .'

But on the other hand, their reaction to this seems almost completely exploitative, as they go on to say:

'Therefore the stay in Alexandra was regarded as invaluable for bringing students in contact with the practical aspects of general medicine and of revealing how potent is the environment in the production of disease.'

The students are amazed by the sheer amount of disease in the township: or should one rather say, they were delighted by it?

The incidence of TB, enteritis in children, marasmus in infants, and utter ignorance of infant feeding all seemed incredibly high. There were cases which really should have been sent to hospital, but which demanded treatment at the clinic or at home. Such procedures as the administration of intra-peritoneal salines to wasted infants had to be performed. In addition there was ample scope for giving N.A.B. injections and doing an occasional tooth extraction or lumbar puncture.

This is what they term '*.. gaining valuable clinical experience.*' It is so useful indeed, that they go on to say, '*The establishment of a hospital at Alexandra should be the ultimate aim of all medical students.*'

Practise makes perfect

You can't blame medical students for their interest in disease. They are naturally excited by the battle-field, casualty ward or urban slum, for in such places one contacts the most interesting medical problems in all their variety and intensity.

What we are speaking of is not the individual medical student or doctor, however, but the social process that gives certain selected people (students of Wits University, for example) possession of technical skills in doctoring, while it gives to others (residents of Alex, for example) possession of illnesses.

Capitalism behind poverty

This is a class arrangement. Wits is a capitalist university; Alexandra a working class ghetto. White education is supported on the back of black worker exploitation. White doctors are the product of their class advantage.

Most of the doctors in South Africa when they have qualified, work among white patients in towns and cities: very few are willing to go to rural areas, where poor black people live. This is partly because it is more comfortable for whites in towns, but also because white patients can afford the very high fees doctors like to receive. Most doctors don't even see



these facts. They come to believe that they are doctors because they are cleverer than other people; in other words they think that their privilege comes from their own brains and hard work, whereas in fact it comes from the advantage of their class position.

It must also be said, that when doctors work in places like Baragwanath Hospital or at the Alexandra Clinic, it is often another form of exploitation. It is regarded as part of their training; after which they go into private practice, and neglect the real problems of health work, which are mostly to be found in rural areas, or urban location.

What the doctor did not know

In his 1940 report, Dr Xuma remarks,

"One finds it difficult to understand the tendencies of public authorities who spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on subsidising housing schemes and free clinics for the poor, but do not seem to be making any attempt at removing the root cause of these peoples' misery, namely poverty."

He would have understood better if he had realised that poverty is actually a product of the capitalist system. It is not an accident. The 'public authorities' have simply no reason to abolish poverty, since it is a necessary part of the system that they have created.

Wits medical students, and Alexandra patients are on two sides of the class division in South African capitalism. Doctors will only be motivated to serve the people when they come from the working class, and are subject to the social values of that class. That is a more important thing to understand, than the mere technicalities of curing this or that disease.



Nomads of Apartheid

By the early 1950's my mother started working as a domestic servant in Pretoria. She lived with her aunt, brother and sister in Eersterus. She was the only member of the family who was working – her brother and sister were still at school and her aunt was unemployed – she sold liquor and vegetables. As a domestic worker my mother earned six pounds per month, and this money was not enough to pay rent, transport, schoolfunds and books, so selling of liquor and vegetables helped them to maintain the family. Later in the mid fifties they were evicted and my mother came to Johannesburg while her brother, sister and aunt went to Pelindaba.

She went to J.H.B

In Johannesburg she found employment at an old age home, but left the job for domestic work which was paying better. Her new employers provided accommodation. She lost this job and the accommodation when her employers went to live overseas. She went to Alex and lived with a relative in 7th Avenue. Shortly afterwards, she found a job at a certain factory in Johannesburg, and here she worked for a long time earning R24,00 per month. Late in 1957 she and her future husband found a room in 4th Avenue, by this time their first child was born and she had to leave the job.

Shortly afterwards, her husband lost his job, so she had to return to work as soon as possible. She found a new job with the same employers as before, but this time doing domestic work.

Slave wage

From the R24 which she was earning she had to pay rent, buy food, pay transport, buy clothing for the baby and pay a nanny to look after it for about R1,00 per month, buy milk, napkins and so on. Early in the sixties her wage was increased to R30,00 per month. By this time they had two children: a boy and a girl born in 1960. Now she had to support a family of four from the R30,00.

They had to live on cheap food, like Mala, mogodu, maotwana and mealie-meal.

When her husband was banned later in 1963 their last born child was in Roodepoort Hospital where he spent two years. All this cost a lot for a woman who was underpaid. When her son was discharged from the hospital she had to get someone to look after him, and my brother was about to go to school. The R30 was not sufficient so she joined a mogodisana for buying and sharing groceries. This helped her a lot because she could save more than if she was going to the shop

individually. Mogodisana was not enough for she had to work at an extra job to cope with the ever rising cost of living. On Saturdays and Sundays she was doing washing in the suburbs. Life was becoming more difficult for she had to pay installments, which were so high that she had to borrow money from friends. She could not afford to give her son pocket money for school, this led him to start begging in the stadiums and shopping centres. From begging he became a caddy; being a caddy was tough and cruel, because they were robbed by the bigger caddies, and even beaten up by both far bigger caddies and golfers. Begging was his favourite because there were no older boys who could take his money, but there were police who always arrested them, to wash their cars, and they were beaten up by rude unsympathetic whites – but this was not as frequent as on the golf course.

Kept him out at night

Begging and caddying were the means of getting money for bioscope, stadium, and mostly for pocket money at school. The eldest was helping his mother who was not able to give them pocket money for school, to go to bioscope and anywhere they wanted. Later in 1967/8 we were evicted from 4th Avenue for the erection of a hostel. My mother found a room in 3rd Avenue. We did not stay long in 3rd for this place was also demolished.

Scattered family

All these years Peri-Urban was harassing people. My parents were among the victims and they were fined on many occasions for living in Alex without a permit. In 1972 when the yard in 3rd Avenue was demolished the family was scattered. My mother went to live in Hillbrow in a flat where her employers lodged, and the three of us went to Marapyane and Seholo. In the bundus we were not living together – my brother went to Seholo and my sister and I to Marapyane. We lived with our grandmother and our elder brother with our mother's uncle. Our mother had to pay:

School building. R20,00;
Post Office. R 1,50;
Regional Office.R10,00

before we could be admitted at schools. She had to buy groceries for two families, schoolfunds, books, uniforms for two different schools and transport. Transport was scarce and most people used trucks and some privately owned buses. The fare for this kind of transport was very high, especially the individual truck owners. A single trip from Johannesburg to Marapyane was R5,00 without your luggage which was charged separately (a box weighing 30 – 35 kilos was charged R2,00). She had to cut her trips to visit us because of the expense. She only sent the groceries. She could not cope with such expense, and in 1977 we went to live in Hammanskraal with her aunt. By this time my mother was earning R80 per month and she had to pay: R20 for food every month; R9,00 for school funds; R40,00 for books which we bought at school; R30,00 for uniforms; R4,00 for transport.

A two-roomed

Late in 1977 we found a two roomed house in the township Temba. By this time my brother was working in Johannesburg at a factory earning about R24 per week. Both their wages could not afford to support a scattered family. My mother was now living in a hostel because her employers had bought a new house and there were no rooms for workers. Our brother was staying with a friend.

Triple rent

My mother paid R5,00 for rent, our brother R4 and ourselves in Hammanskraal R5,60. She had to buy food, pay school fees, transport, clothing, rent and etc, for three places. In 1979 I came to live with my mother in Alex at my grandmother's place in 2nd Avenue. She had to pay R7,25 for rent in Hammanskraal; R4,00 for my brother's rent; R6,70 for her hostel room; R20,00 for school funds for Hamanskraal and R15 for school fees for Alex.

Back to Alex

She applied for a permit in early 1979 and she got it later in December the same year. She found a house in 4th Avenue. This house like other houses in Alex is bad, at any time bricks are falling out of the wall. Later in 1982 her wage was increased to R100 per month.

SUBSCRIBE TO IZWI 5

4 issues for 60c. Please add 15c postage for each issue.

Send postal order (made out to – Ditshwantsho tsa Rona) to

Subscriptions
IZWI LASE TOWNSHIP
P O Box 720
BERGVLEI
2012

Please Print: Name
.....
Address
.....

NOTE: Back issues numbers 3 and 4 are available and may also be ordered at 15c each plus 15c postage each.

LETTERS

Izwi,

Have you noticed that on two sides of Alex factories are being built. A few months ago that ground was empty – it has been empty since I can remember, though Alex was crowded and needed more room. Well then why could not the township be made bigger by taking that land – why must it be factories?

Another thing is, they are built so quickly. What causes this, when it seems such a difficult thing to build small little houses for people, but factories go up overnight?

I am not against factories. People need jobs so factories are welcome. But they can be anywhere, why on our doorstep, where we need the land for our own township space.

G.N.

ON BECOMING A CADDY

There were nine in my family; two were domestic workers who lived at their employers residence and came back home at weekends. During the week we were only seven people at home, my grandparents, my cousins and myself. In actual fact my mother and aunt were the sole breadwinners, and as domestic servants they earned low wages and had to combine them in order to maintain the whole family. At that time my mother was earning R50 per month, while my aunt got R65 per month. They were only relieved when both my grandparents got their pensions which came every after two months. I should add that during the month they got into kinds of jobs to get some money. My grandmother was doing washing for other people, while my grandfather was chopping wood in order to sell. I used to gather aluminium objects and copper wire to sell at the scrapyards, and this helped me a lot because I could get money to eat at school and also could join my friends when they were going to the cinema.

Golf course as an alternative

Things changed when I entered my higher primary schooling. My mother could not afford buying books and at the same time paying school fees and buying uniforms; and that led me to run away from school because our teacher was unreasonable; he could beat us even though we tried to explain the situation at home. Fortunately some of my friends were caddies and I started going with them to the golf course during the weekends. My mother did not like this idea of going there, she had all sorts of bad stories about the golf course, and always told me to behave myself because caddies were rough boys who have run away from their homes and sleep in the water-pipes or drains.

Once I was a caddy I realised the change in her attitude towards me. She was always worried and asked me how it was in the golf course. I think she thought I would never return home once I became a caddy, because there was that belief that once young boys become caddies

they are exposed to money and start to think that they are men and can control themselves. But the actual reality is that caddies struggle to get money. They go through different processes which are humiliating and this causes them to be demoralised. They become stubborn and would not listen to anyone who tries to give them advice about how to spend their money.

It is true that most caddies did not go back to their homes; and there are reasons for that; like for some the reason was that their places were far from the golf course. I remember, caddies from Tembisa used to go to Kings Cinema on Saturday nights to avoid going back home because they might be late and find long queues at the golf course. (I will talk more about the long queues as the article goes on.) Well to my side it was different because I did go home usually, even though we sometimes slept in the golf course; and especially during the '76 riots because we feared people who were threatening to beat those who were using Putco buses. With the money I got from the golf course I bought books and paid the school fees; and my mother used to say I was showing signs of becoming a good man when I grow up. She was saying this because she could save some cash instead of buying my school books and uniform; but she did not know the actual life I was leading.

She did not know about the bad treatment. Sometimes, when she was at home, she used to tell us how hard she was working for the cruel master who paid her less wages. She complained to the extent that she threatened to leave the job; and everytime she was complaining I could compare her complaints as a domestic worker with mine as a caddy; and I would keep quiet because I knew if she got to know the situation at the golf course, I would not be allowed to go back there again.

As I've said it was through my friends that I knew the golf course. We started carrying at the Wanderers Club; then after the Royal and the Huddle Park golf course which was called 'Betty' by most caddies.

Golf courses are like any other sportsfield in that they must be kept clean; grasses kept in good order and greens cut at normal level. This means workers were needed. In most cases (in the golf courses I had been involved in) 'migrant' labour was recruited from the rural areas. Like any other 'migrants' who are working in the urban areas, they were housed in compounds which are in the golf course and this led many caddies to refer to them as 'Mazumpi' which was a popular name given to black actors in Tarzan's movies. Besides keeping the course in good order; migrants were also involved in carrying duty during the weekends.

Zishangani ekraalini

At the golf course we used to meet boys from different locations like Soweto



'The wall was used as a queuing lane for caddies'

and Tembisa. The system which was used to control us as caddies was the 'kraal system' which worked as follows: The kraal was similar to that of cows; it was four-walled with precast concrete and had a thatched roof. There was only one entrance which served also as exit. This opening was used by the caddies master to keep an eye on the caddies inside the kraal. The wall was also used as a queuing lane for caddies as the only way you could get a job was by queuing. Migrants were given the priority since they had their own queue which was attended first; and this caused the conflict between them and caddies. The intense hatred caddies had towards migrants was exposed by giving them nicknames - for example the name 'Mazumpi'.

Bra Joe in authority

Like I've said the kraal was used for control over caddies, the caddiemaster being the only person who controlled migrants and caddies. In actual fact he was also a compound dweller who had been employed by the golf course, and in most cases he was corrupt, cruel and authoritarian. Since his main job was to keep the long queues in order, the only way he could do that was by beating up caddies who were struggling to be first in the queues. The struggle was caused by the fear of not getting jobs that day; and most of the caddies came from remote areas like Soweto and Tembisa.

Beating was the main strategy of power in the kraal; even bigger caddies used to beat smaller ones in order to get money or in actual fact to be feared in the kraal and be able to dominate others by force. Once a caddiemaster noticed that you were feared by your colleagues, he would appoint you to do his dirty job. Appointed caddies were in most cases controlling the queues and they did this by taking bribes from caddies who wanted to be first in getting jobs. In some cases the bribes were shared with the caddiemaster.

The appointing of caddies to control the queues also strengthened the conflict between caddies from different places. Like I've said appointed caddies were corrupt, but their corruption was one-sided; for instance if he was from Soweto, only Soweto caddies would be in front that day. Things got tense when two caddies were appointed from

different places because each would favour those from his location and of course in this case the one with less power would be dominated, and his colleagues would be last in the queue.

The only way we avoided this kind of racketeering was by waking early in the morning, about three to four o'clock. Since we were eight boys in our street each of us would have his weekend to wake up first and go from door to door waking others. If anyone was slow in waking up, we used to leave him behind. We woke up early so that we could catch the first bus which was used by less caddies; and we would be first in the queue.

Prison camp

Beside the long queue the kraal itself was horrible; it was more or less like a prison camp. In most cases fighting among caddies was encouraged and was taken as a test of power. Once you beat a number of caddies during those fights, you would be known and feared.

As far as golfers were concerned, there were those who played morning sessions and others in the afternoon and this had an effect on caddies, because (if) they could get jobs in the morning and of course, through bribes, also in the after-

noon. Those who did not bribe; or were not known by the appointed caddies or the caddiemaster, could spend the whole day without getting jobs. When that happened to us, we used to go to Alex by foot, but there were other alternatives in the course; like we would go and look for lost golf balls and sell them to the pro-shop which was in most cases owned by professional golfers. In the case of Wanderers Club it was Graham Henning and he used to rob us when selling golf balls, but it did not matter as long as we could get money for food and bus fares.

Low Pay - Cruel Master

Getting a job was itself not an escape from the bad conditions and treatment because most golfers were cruel and racist too. They never regarded caddies as humanbeings. Nonetheless to be a caddie required one to have various skills required in golf as sport. A caddie was supposed to know the course very well; must be able to tell the direction of the wind; measure distance to the green and be able to tell the direction of slopes in greens. Good eyesight was also required to see the ball. Without the above-mentioned you were easily harassed by your master; abusive language was used in most cases; and some golfers went to the extent of beating up the caddies.

City golfers beat off caddie 'invasion'

RAND DAILY MAIL

13 JUN 1977

Multiracial golf day to raise money for black youth

A multiracial golf day will be held at Germiston on March 12 to raise money for the youth centre in the township of Kaitleng. The tournament is being organised by the Kopp East Rand Tidy Golf Course. All proceeds will go towards the conversion of an old brewery, which has been donated by the Kaitleng Community Council, into a youth centre. This centre will provide a variety of activities, from boxing to ballroom dancing. It will also be a venue for educational film shows and lectures. If you wish to take part in the golf day, the entry fee is R10 (closing date is February 18). For more information telephone Mr Churchill Neala at 970-3535.

By WILMAR UTTING

MEMBERS of Kennington Golf Club, Johannesburg, have been using clubs, sjamboks and an electrified truncheon to beat back the mob of caddies invading the course at weekends looking for work.

The system covers up. See also the article on Youth Centres.



For caddies who had no knowledge, of the course, it was disaster, especially when they carried the bag of temperamental golfers who could go to the extent of breaking his irons if he did not manage to use them. In such a situation a caddie would always be ready to have the iron club on his head. Golfers would carry out this kind of assault openly because there was nowhere for caddies to report such acts of violence. Other golfers instead of beating up the caddie, would send him back to the kraal and this was embarrassing because caddies would make a joke out of you. Caddie-masters usually threatened such caddies not to come back anymore to the golf course or else you would get beaten up, but fortunately others were labelled special caddies for lady golfers and the reason being that ladies don't require knowledge; all they want is the caddies to pull the cart or carry the bag and nothing else

The risk of the game

Carrying as a job itself was dangerous. Besides bad masters the course itself was dangerous. You could get killed easily by being hit by a golf ball from some other fairway. During rainy days caddies were sometimes victims of lightning. I remember during our days two caddies lost their lives due to lightning. Even though the job was dangerous the pay was low. The way payment for caddies was made up was as follows: when golfers hired caddies from the kraal they bought caddie tickets. There were two tickets; one for food at the

halfway house and one was worth 50c which I did not actually understand what it stood for; but caddies used to believe that it was from the golf club itself and was payment for having come to the club to assist its members in carrying their bags during the game. Besides the two tickets there was payment which came from the golfer himself and was called tips. The tip was set by the golf course and in Wanderers we usually got R1,20 for eighteen holes which took approximately six hours.

The eighteen holes were broken into two parts, and every after nine holes there was a break. A special cafe called the halfway house was built for the golfers. This is where they ate their delicious food while caddies were given a cup of coke and a bun. At the Royal Club they used to give caddies two slices of bread with mince meat and a cup of cold-drink. In all these courses cold-drinks could be given out even if it was cold or raining. There was that tendency for golfers to buy peanut-snacks and most caddies used to feel like they were treated as baboons; because while golfers would be eating different kinds of sweets or snacks, the caddies would be eating peanuts.

Obviously the whole pay was inadequate and the food bad. It is due to this inadequacy that most caddies stole items from their bags or those carried by other caddies. Mostly items like watches, purses, golf balls, irons and umbrellas were stolen and hidden in the course.

Gambling and stabbings

Gambling was also the result of low pay; and this is where stabbings and killings occurred. The gambling also led to robberies. Smaller caddies were victims of bigger caddies who would rob it they have lost; and in order to run away from losers we had to make secret exits so that we would not be seen until we reached the bus stop.

Once you were in the bus the whole fear of uncertainty would come to an end. The fear of being beaten by caddie-masters, kicked by the golfer or robbed by other caddies would come to an end; but that was only for a while, because you would be returning to the horrifying place even tomorrow.

Letters

Izwi,

I write to complain about how you handle the general issues of life. Always when I read your paper I see the articles opposing one thing or another. For example, I did not like to see your article Badla Nombuso whereby you criticise Ds Buti.

I think this is unfair, as this man has done many things to help the people of Alex. Had it not been for him, where would most of us be? I think he deserves to be praised. However I do agree with some of the things you criticise, as when you say the LC pressurised stand-holders to sell their property. But there is nothing Buti could do, because these very stands would have made the redevelopment of Alex impossible. But I sympathise with the stand-holders.

No one can claim to be perfect, so I think we should bear with Buti and his shortcomings. Though there is little he has done to develop Alexandra during his 4 years in office, I still think half a loaf is better than none

L.P.

Izwi,

I would like to make my contribution, which is inspired by the article on Shacks in your December/January issue. I actually want to question the stand the so-called leaders have taken on the shack issue in Orlando East. Since your paper was published there has been a lot of action in Orlando. Many

shacks were demolished and the Soweto Council was taken to court. Several meetings were also held by different groups. What interests me most is what Ambition Brown told the people of Orlando about this shack problem. In what looks like his election campaign into the Soweto Council, he blames the people of Noordgesig for the shortage of space in Orlando!

I do not know what Mr Brown wants to achieve by making such irresponsible suggestions. Does he not realise that the people of Noordgesig are put there by the same fate that put the people of Orlando shacks where they are?

I think if Brown wants a seat in the Soweto Council he should not use the people

of Noordgesig to get there. If he wants to fight this shack issue, he should fight WRAB and the Soweto Council, and not the coloured people.

Izwi,

Can you give some information about this thing called a 'housing committee' Rev Buti mentioned in his talk at the Stadium last time. What is this housing committee, what will it do and who are the members of it?

J.K.

(We also do not know very much about this committee yet. It was said that it would consist of people

from different professions, for example, a social worker, a teacher, a policeman and so on.

We ourselves think that such a committee is desirable, but we believe that it should be an elected committee, representing every section of Alex. The township could easily be divided into four areas - east and west of Selborne, Frogtown and Up-town. And in each quarter, maybe two representatives could be elected by residents. In this way the members of the committee might or might not include such people as Rev Buti has in mind, but it would depend on the people of Alex directly, whom they wanted to represent.)

Editor

Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi



"I work at a Wynberg garage (Shell). We are three women and two men. We all pour petrol, but we women don't only pour petrol, we also clean the garage, and make tea for the bosses and the other workers. We earn R54 per week and the men earn R64 per week. I am inclined to say that this R54 is only for pouring petrol, not for the other work which we do."

The woman speaking above is clearly useful to capital. Her experience is a good example of the experience of women in our society. They are doubly exploited - they are paid lower wages than men for doing the same work that men do. And they do unpaid domestic work - at home and at the work-place - for men.

The position of women in society is that of being treated as though they are inferior to men. This is a wrong practice and a false ideology, which has got to be

challenged since it leads to the disunity of workers.

By ideology and tradition men see themselves as being above women. This is reinforced by all the common sayings about women ("Dietela etsegadi ke pele di wela lengopeng"). Men say that the reasoning power of women is lower than their's

Men and women can easily do the same kind of work. In societies where they have done different kinds of work, it is because this has been useful in organising work efficiently. But a division between men and women does not mean that one kind of work is better than the other. Why then is it now considered that women's work is inferior to men's work?

Under Capitalism

At a certain point the capitalist system developed. Under this system, anybody who works but does not produce goods which can be sold to make money, is not considered to be a productive worker. Hence the work that is traditionally a woman's work — housework, childcare and so on — suddenly seems inferior.

Necessity of Housework

Although it is obviously useful and necessary housework does not produce objects which can be sold for profit. It is therefore regarded as inferior work, and women are then seen as inferior people. ("Mosadi ke tshwene — o jewa mabogo")

Power of Money

In most cases the man is the boss in the home, because it is he who earns the money. A family cannot survive without money, and whoever has control over the money has authority in a home. (In fact, in a household where a woman is the only money-earner, she will be the boss). When there is unemployment, men are given preference for jobs so that many women do not go out to work at all . . . they stay at home and do 'inferior' work — housework, for which they are not paid. When a woman does get a job, she almost always gets paid less than a man. Men think that they are by nature above women, that they should be the only ones who make decisions for the family and for the woman, and that women should just carry out their decisions.

(Ga go poo pedi mo lapeng)

Women as we can see are not regarded as reasoning beings equal to men. They are always put in an inferior position and this excludes them from decision making in the family and in society as a whole. Most married and unmarried women are turned into property by the men they live with.

Domestic Tyranny

Whenever a man is hungry or has dirty clothes, or the house is dirty, he looks at the woman with tyrant eyes. It seems natural that women should do the housework. "*Mosadi o tshwanetse go tsoga ka matsha a feele lebala.*" But in fact it is not natural. The present society teaches people that what you do, another person should not do — that is, a man cannot do the housework, and a woman cannot make decisions on her own. In fact men benefit from not having to do the housework, from having their wives serve them and from having better jobs. When any worker returns from work, he or she is tired and hungry — but a man sits down and expects to be rested and fed, while a woman has to continue working late into the evening looking after the man and the children.

These benefits that men enjoy hide the real conflict in our society (being the conflict between the owning class and the worker class) and retard the workers' movement to progress. Instead of fighting the employers, men and women fight each other.

"It is bad to be a woman because you are a worker who suffers from the capitalist's exploitation at the factory, and then from men's domination in the home." In fact this domination of men in the home is not just a private issue between men and women. Women's work in the home also directly benefits the capitalists. It is the appearance that in the home women labour for men, but in reality women are labouring, again, for the capitalist.

If we just look at the work women do at home — looking after children, cooking, washing, keeping the house clean — we can see that the capitalist wouldn't be able to exist without all this.

The woman creates labour-power for the capitalist. She looks after children who will later be used to produce profit.

Also, the capitalist needs a healthy worker each morning who has been well fed and who is not tired, otherwise the worker will not produce enough profit for the boss on that day. It is the woman who sees to it that the worker goes back to work each day able to produce a maximum.

The capitalist manages to use this inequality between men and women, at the work place. When both men and women work at the same place doing the same job, they are paid different wages — the woman's less than the man's. A woman is paid less than men not because the man has more skills, or a longer record of service at the workplace, but only on the grounds that she is a woman. This can be seen as a strategy of the capitalists: dividing the workers, so that they compete amongst themselves along sexual lines. It seems that there are two classes of workers — a good, well-paid efficient class of men and an inefficient badly paid class of women. This division of the workers interests makes it difficult for them to unite against the capitalist.

This strategy of capitalists has an effect on men and women — they actually see that in the workplace they are unequal, therefore they feel that it is natural they should be unequal. But in fact it is not natural. What makes it seem natural is the unequal society in which we live.

The real conflict

The dominance of the man in a family should be discouraged, since it is something that hides the real conflict in our society, which is between a worker and a capitalist. Because of dominance, capitalists benefit a lot. What the woman worker from Shell says, shows how employers benefit from employing women — they do not have to employ separate people who will clean the garage and prepare tea. Instead, because women are there they have to overwork — apart from pouring petrol they do housework and are unpaid for that job. It is the same in the home — women are not paid for the work they do there. Then, on top of this, the Shell employers pay her less than they have to pay the men.

From the above we see that women often perform unpaid work. To fight for progress we need to do away with man's domination, that is, abolish slavery within the family and establish equality between men and women of the working class to fight the capitalist class.

Stealing youths from the working class

Some people want us to believe that Youth is a group or class separate from the two main classes in capitalist society, workers and capitalists. This is false. It is convenient for the dominant class to confuse things in this way, because it helps to distract working class youths from their real problems.

It cannot be accepted that Youth is classless. Youths belong either to the working class or to the capitalist class (or to the 'middle-class', which lies between the other two). The problems faced by working class youths are the same as those experienced by their parents, namely how to escape from or cope with poverty, unemployment, bad education, bad housing, ghettos, oppression etc. Adults try to handle these problems through working class institutions like trade unions, stokvels, mohodisano, burial societies and so on; while youths, who have not yet fully entered the routine of work and marriage, have different ways of coping, as we will describe later in this article. It is at the stage before

youths become conscious of themselves as workers, that there is an attempt to organise them into Youth Clubs or Centres. This Youth Strategy, developed by the dominant class, is intended to separate youths from their parent class, so that they may be organised, disciplined, tamed and taught to have middle class values and attitudes.

The dominant class is quite conscious of the trouble that can be caused by working class youths when they are not under some kind of control. The following remarks were made in the report of a Commission that investigated certain so-called riots that took place in 1949 in the Western locations of Johannesburg, Krugersdorp and Randfontein. What was happening there? In plain English, the location residents were enraged by continual police harassment and by steadily rising costs of transport etc, and there were demonstrations, which turned into stone-throwing and so on. The commissioners put blame on liquor, movies, communists and youths.



Dies die ouens van way-back 50's

They report:

The location youths who on account of their education are not subject to any social bonds, lead idle lives. No wonder that most of them drift into gangs with an anti-social tendency.

These gangs, whose badge of office is narrowed trousers and who make use of a secret language code, roam about the Native areas defying all authority and creating a reign of terror.

They thrive on disorder and it is no wonder that they played such a prominent part in all the disturbances. . .

Especially in very turbulent times, great attention is paid to 'getting youths off the streets', by which is meant, getting them under control, not leaving them to organise and make trouble for the system.

A youth centre

Let's examine one such attempt, namely the youth centre called THUSONG, in Alexandra. This centre is especially interesting, in that its founders are quite explicit about its aims; and also because it is so obviously financed by Big Business, and directed by members of the dominant class.

Thusong was established in order to soften the blows of the system aimed at the working class. This is of course not the way the founders of Thusong would put it. Their stated reasons for starting the centre are sociological. Research into conditions in Alexandra showed that there was overcrowding, gambling, alcoholism, insufficient recreation, a high drop-out rate at local schools. What they did not discover (or at least they do not mention it) is the exploitation of workers by the capitalist class, which produces the bad conditions mentioned. The founders of Thusong have adopted the conventional Liberal approach of trying to make bad conditions bearable, without understanding or perhaps wishing to alter, basic causes.

Actually they could not admit exploitation, seeing that Thusong has been es-

established and developed by the finance gained in the course of such exploitation. Out of their immense profits capitalists donate money, in the form of charity, for a youth club which will help hide the realities of class domination and exploitation, and even to some extent win the gratitude and the consent of workers. By gaining such consent, the dominant class secures its domination, and thus continues to extract surplus value from the working class.

Sponsors

The force behind Thusong is the SANDTON CIVIC FOUNDATION, which gets its money mainly from Big Business, and is basically responsible to these donors. Whatever the Foundation does must therefore in some way be suitable to the capitalist class. The Foundation is a class instrument.

Thusong e thusa mang?

Influence in Thusong is carried out culturally. The activities offered are distractions from the real problems and needs of working class youths: traditional dramas and dance, modern ballet, tourism, making wire-cars, and a few rather feeble occupations like cooking and typing. As explained in another article, the hidden purpose of these kinds of activities is to prevent the formation of genuine working class values and actions. Youth Club members are more likely to develop into middle class people, or at least people with middle class attitudes, than to become working class spokesmen.

The founders of Thusong are quite conscious of its purpose. The chair-person explained in an interview:

We like to mould together a particular group, develop their maturity and responsibility, and hopefully send them out as leaders of the Alexandra community, to serve the community in various ways . . .

If we do develop young people in this way by broadening their horizons in offering them so many more opportunities than they would have in school or their home, I believe that we could show other urban areas that centres like Thusong are of vital necessity in a stable community . . .

The 'stable community' that is favoured, is of course still the ghetto community of separate black locations; the only difference being that they will not rebel, destroy capital, strike, fire buses and buildings and threaten revolution.

Repetition

It seems that whenever events compel reformers to notice the working class, they think of Youth Centres. An exactly similar thing to Thusong was being thought out in the 1940's, another time of turbulence in urban townships. A certain ET Grieveson wrote in a letter, dated about 1945:

It seems that Alexandra is rather in the public eye at present. I don't know whether this means that any improvement schemes will actually be launched or come to anything . . . but I believe that there is today among Alexandra people a greater readiness to respond to a lead and co-operate than there was two or three years ago; though I don't think they are any more capable of taking the initiative themselves, and any lead given would have to be in a carefully considered direction.

I was naturally very interested in Dr Dexter Taylor's remarks about Boys' Clubs at the last Joint Council meeting, and think that his suggestion of trying to establish what might be called a whole-time club is a very sound one.

The scheme I should propose would be the establishment of a kind of Junior Social Centre, providing opportunities for a Boys' Club (preferably divided into junior and senior sections) a Roamer Crew, and a Pathfinder Troop. . . it would be more effective if means could be found for the provision of a special building for these activities. . . Then couldn't this be linked up with the general question of school overcrowding and unoccupied children by making it an overflow school!

The way Thusong is managed is significant. There are all the customs of democracy, without any real democracy. Members elect a group of leaders who are called councillors, including a 'mayor' and 'deputy mayor'. The youths themselves chose this system, after they had visited Boys Town. This was a successful introduction of youths to the style of liberal democracy where domination is disguised beneath elections. There is abundant evidence that the

'mayor' wields real power, and is not obliged to work through mutual consultation and group decisions, which would be the case in real democracy.

Above this youth council there is a management committee, and several paid organisers, who get their salary direct from the Sandton Civic Foundation. This management committee also adopts the style of democracy, with votes, minutes, and so on.

But it is quite clear that there is no real power in this committee, since it does not have a final say over the spending of money. Finance is controlled by a separate committee, which guards the interests of those organisations that donate funds.

Radichelete slaan die snaar

Without money, no Thusong; and the allocation of the budget is firmly in the control of this small, elite committee. While things go smoothly, the money is available; but should any serious difference of policy arise between members of Thusong and the founders, one need have no doubt that the money supply would dry up.

Democracy is possibly only where the mass of people themselves control their finance, and where decisions are really taken by groups in consensus, not by leader/masters.

Struggles

There have been struggles between the members and the founders of Thusong. One difficulty is the question of administrative personnel. Since the members do not themselves elect their director/organiser, he might be a person they do not accept, and who they feel has been imposed on them. To the founders, however, it must seem necessary for them to maintain control through people they themselves have chosen to 'direct' youths at the centres.

Another difficulty has been 'politics'. The Foundation insists that there should be no politics at Thusong, while some adult members regard politics as being an inescapable part of their lives. The two sides compromised — by restricting politics to poetry readings, which on the one hand have clearly been political, since 1976, but on the other hand, could be seen as merely 'cultural'.



Engaging in wars and dances for no good reason

Cultural imperialism

Many people in the townships are familiar with youth clubs and the 'good work' which they do in keeping children and the youth away from the streets.

All social institutions are set up for furthering the aims and ideology of one or other section of the community. We shall use this space to examine youth clubs and the kinds of activities they offer, as well as where they belong in terms of the different facets constituting a 'community'.

Firstly most youth clubs operate under one or other umbrella body. These umbrella bodies play important financing and controlling functions. The majority of youth clubs in Soweto are controlled and financed by WRAB. Youth clubs not falling under this category are mostly affiliates of the SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH CLUBS. Though the Association has a lot of influence in determining the activities of the clubs, youth clubs can, and do, appeal to wealthier organisations for financial support. Money is a strong tool with which the financing class dominates classes in need. The wealthy organizations do not just part with their money — they only do so when they are sure that their money is put to 'good use'.

Some organizations such as the Group Chairman's fund of Anglo American, and Mobil, claim to give donations to community organisations without any strings attached. But before these organisations give out any money they make a serious study of the constitution of the youth club appealing for funds. They will then give out money on the basis of what the constitution says about the club. Clearly if they are faced with a constitution that challenges their interests they will not offer any support. Some big business funders (Mobil for example) will go to the trouble of 'assisting' in drawing up a constitution. Because Youth clubs need venues (rent), electricity, equipment, etc, they would find it impossible to operate without anyone funding them. They therefore comply with the expectations of their funders by structuring their programme so that their activities do not embarrass their funders. Instead of making youth clubs centres for children of the working class parents (by undertaking activities that will enable youths to understand their position as working class young people, and prepare them for challenging the system), youth clubs undertake neutral activities such as ballroom dancing, gumboot dancing, sports, and so on. All these activities will satisfy the funders and in no way question their position.

It is obvious in this regard that youth clubs operating under the auspices of WRAB or the community councils, whatever they do, are always subject to their superior's sanction. This is done more directly through the employees of

WRAB (employed as full time youth leaders).

Though there may occur friction between the superiors and the subordinates, the superiors always wield power and their word is final.

As suggested above, it is not only where the money comes from that will determine the class direction an organisation takes. The activities undertaken by the organization have a great influence and effect on the participants. We shall take a close look at some of the youth club activities.

Ballroom dancing

This activity is foreign to the culture of the townships. It is therefore useful as part of capital's strategy of undermining the culture of the working class. Middle class activities such as this are introduced to make the workers doubt their own culture. Ballroom dancing in youth clubs also depends on competitions to exist. With competition arises lots of hostility among competitors. If there is not hostility there is no competitive spirit. This is a kind of empty hostility based on no genuine human feelings but only necessary to create this 'spirit'. Within this activity, based on partnership (male and female) there arises among participants a certain kind of



unreal relationship. The language used determines this relationship. Men are referred to as 'gentlemen' and women as 'ladies'. The terminology suggests that dancers are noble. These people are also affected by this terminology, and start trying to adjust to their titles, thereby trying to perceive themselves differently. They start to relate to one another differently too – they lead a life based on titles ie based on some vague middle-class title.

Festivals

These activities are organised so that youth clubs may display their day to day activities. In most cases festivals and concerts are just a series of performances by youth club members. They display several activities – drama, dancing (several kinds) and music. Youth clubs operating under the auspices of the Association – Thusong in Alex being one of them – are discouraged from performing drama other than tribal dramas – that is, the children are discouraged from performing their experiences. Dramas based on tribal themes, as opposed to the living experiences of the youth, are useful to capital in that they are neutral about the issues of the present. "They do not provoke young children to become tsotsis or anything disgusting like that". On the other hand these tribal dramas fail to approach any historical events seriously. They merely conform to the stereotype of tribal/traditional plays – they present no useful or new way to approach history. They make tribal history feeble and reduce it to a series of events involving drunk chiefs and their indunas engaging in wars and dances for no good reason.

Working-class culture

Members of a Youth Centre do not themselves usually invent their activities. These are already structured. Ballroom dancing is performed in a fashion created long ago, somewhere else, overseas perhaps. You don't make up the waltz, you learn to obey its rule. Even the kind of dramas put on by youth clubs have a prescribed formula: so that at drama festivals you will see the same thing time and time again – tribal nonsense. Scenes of life on a township street are actually forbidden.

It is quite different with activities that are invented by working class youths themselves, uninterfered with by authorities or middle-class misleaders. In this case it is youth themselves who produce their own culture, which, if they are working-class youths, is also working-class culture. In this section of the article we intend to discuss certain youth groups that are well known in black townships.

A re yeng mapantsuleng

What sense can be made of Pantsula activity and style? It is not very useful to take the view that these youths are merely gangsters and loafers. Even if it were true that many Pantsulas really are tough and aggressive, this is only one characteristic, and it is not shared by all youths who might call themselves Pantsulas.

Clash van die jewish

Let's examine their style of clothing. They go for trousers that seem deliberately shapeless – I refer to those called voops – which don't fit under the crotch, they are loose around the waist, so that the belt hangs down as if the buckle were too heavy; then the trouser legs are rolled up, or they have turn-ups (ash-trays) that flop over the shoes, and seem to scrape in the dust and get

caught under the heel. A majita wearing these pants looks like he has stolen them from some big fellow on the golf course. In actual fact, he did not steal them, but paid a lot of money for them, and he keeps them dry-cleaned and perfectly pressed. He may look untidy, but he definitely is not. It's the same with his shirt: even if it is a Christian Dior costing sixty, he will wear it with the sleeves too long, or an end hanging out of his trousers. He's trying to prove something. Shoes the same. If he wears takkies, they will be untied and the tongues are lolling out like two tired dogs – really untidy. But on the other hand those takkies are clean, clean, clean. He takes a lot of care.

Contrasts

In these contrasts (contradictions) we can read messages about the conditions of life in an urban ghetto. The Pantsula does not disguise his origins. His style borrows openly from the style of the tsotsi, whose second hand trousers and shirt have, generation after generation, covered a hungry frame and an Okapi.

Now this very Bra Boy-Boy whose clothes seem shapeless, and he himself seems lazy, in fact holds himself highly alert. He is manotcha, wakker. "Hy kyk en blaai, dinner en dinner, jare en jare, tot die laaste dag." He sees to it that he remains wide awake, and not a moegoe. Under his clothes that don't fit, the Pantsula is tense and ready. Hy's fluks.

But these symbols of the tsotsi are only half the style: the other half shows extravagance and ambition. Pantsula's clothes are not cast-off, but new, expensive, clean and fashionable; and they are worn as such. They shine. In this way these clothes are not just things to wear; they are messages revealing the complex lives of youths who accept that they belong "by die lokasie", but don't conform to it. They admit that they are oppressed, but they declare their freedom. Their style of dress combines oppression and ambition, shapelessness and style, the ghetto and their mockery of the ghetto. Pantsula style is a statement of working class life in South Africa. In fusing contradictions it tries to be in some way a solution to working class problems.

Sqamtho

There is the same formula of contrasts in tsotsi-taal, which combines seSetho/isiZulu with Afrikaans, especially Afrikaans constructions. It might seem strange that the talk of township youths should be 50% Afrikaans, which even blacks who speak it well recognise as the language of oppression. But what we must realise is that the situation of oppression is precisely that blacks must use the dominant language; and therefore they use it ambiguously. *Sqamtho* is a way of accepting Afrikaans, by transforming it.

Those who use tsotsi-taal, do so with a kind of mocking enjoyment. They do not show respect for Afrikaans, they flood it with vernac, subvert it with English, load it with words only the speakers understand.

Wat sê, mthaka

Ek se boeta yini ungazwakalanga edladleni jy ken ukuthi bekunenkware. En u loosile bezirara horaah. Die hele ouens en mshozas (ousies) was daar by my cabin (hideout). Besine braai i jeje galore. Ah! jy uyilahlile ngokungazwakali.

Ek verstaan ou Bra Boy-Boy beka-khona naye but zithe nge late bells nashifta saam.

Ja is waar hy was daar. Jy ken, bhazimen, daaie ou, hys 'n tiger. Hy vertel my dat hy was one man share toe hy 'n HB gemaak. Hy het pam-pam miring gekry. Intaba ek se. Ons het saam 'n zwaap getshaya daar by Mampedi se plek en so 'n case en 'n straight sputla geblaas . . . en so twee ousies getwist.

The contradictions in tsotsi-taal match those of the Pantsula's clothes and those of his dancing. He does not merely make use of language, he dazzles with it. Playing with the mother-tongue and with the language of baas-skap, he masters the cruel environment of their



Die ouens blom nou by die corners van township

relationship. Township language is a display of wit and brilliance in the hard task of handling life 'by die lokasie'.

Sdlhodlho

Some say that tsotsi-taal grew up on a location street, but was born in jail. This is surely true, for sqamtho is a way of dealing with law, with the commands and insults of racial oppression, in that it withholds clear information by making even Afrikaans obscure.

Tsotsi-taal is a warped language. It exists on the frontier between two groups where language cannot be pure. The further away from this frontier you go, the purer the language, as in rural areas where they speak 'deep' isiZulu, 'se-Tswana se phepha'.

Jail, to an even greater extent than the location, is a frontier between the work-

ing class and the state, since here in an undisguised form reigns the conflict between dominant whites and dominated blacks. In jail tsotsi-taal has its maximum intensity.

Sqamtho according die jive

Mapantsula dancing repeats what we notice in clothes and *sqamtho*, in this way again, that it is not silent about the real history and condition of the dancer. A Pantsula does not only move, he wieties with his body, he produces visible praises. His dance describes the suede patches on the jersey he likes, his success with mshozas; describes women looking in the mirror or hanging clothes on the line. Even if it is capitalists' music, imported from America, heartland of profit and exploitation, the Pantsula converts it to his own life's experience. He makes it ferment in his own bin.



Dlala Mshoza

Ho fereha

We should not forget that style in clothing or speech or dancing have immediate uses. It is not their intention to reveal these things we have been describing, about working class conditions. Fashion is clearly an important strategy in love making. He who can wietie fast and amusingly, or whose clothes combine poverty and arrogance; or a dancer from whose movements you cannot take away your eyes — such a boy will win girls and get prestige in his Pantsula circles. But this is not the **origin** of these fashions or styles. We have been trying to uncover what **generates** a certain style and keeps it going, so that although the items change from time to time, the pattern remains the same. It may well be, in this case, that **sometimes** a mshoza may wear a doek, **sometimes** a sportie, or beret, but she will **always** combine smartness with untidiness somehow, even if only by leaving a safety pin undone.

Magical solution

It is not the items, but the **contrasts** that are significant. The endless variation and inventiveness of these contrasts and combinations are born of working class experience, the contradictions of township life, their desperate need of remedies, driving youths to solutions of style, speech and movement; which do not solve anything really (to political problems there must be political solutions) — but which give expression to the reality of their lives.

Having it cool in a flaming ghetto

The other significant youth culture group is Mahippie, which really includes (though there are some small differences) Cats, Ivy and Rastas. These youths come from the same class as Mapantsula. They walk the same location streets, face the same unemployment and poverty and have the same background. But they have set up a different style of behaviour and dress. They tend to try to solve their class problem by **looking like middle class people**. They wear glasses, symbolising education and clerical work; they speak English in the manner of American blacks; they are non-aggressive ("Ain't no fightin' type") and they don't treat girls roughly. The life-style of Mahippie suggests a denial of the dangerous and illegal elements of life in an urban ghetto. They try to resolve the problem by escape. This, no less than the style of Mapantsula, is impractical: it is a solution by magic.

Ultimately youths from both these groups become workers, and learn the lessons of real political struggle.

The Ma-Hippie group have developed the image of being 'cool' and educated, elements which go with a middle-class life-style. Their immediate problem is that, as black South Africans, they cannot afford to seem to be adopting white peoples customs: and their solution to this difficulty is therefore to identify themselves with the most successful culture of a black middle-class in the world, namely American culture.

The Ma-Hippie have for a long time been importing American life-styles. They used to have Afros, wear bell-bottomed trousers and high-heeled shoes. But fashions in America have changed, and now they perm their hair, and go for tight trousers and T-shirts.

Ma-Hippie language is English (spoken with an American accent) and American usage, as for instance in referring to women as 'chicks', 'birds' and so on. They try hard to be sophisticated. Their greeting is 'Hi, brother' as opposed to the township 'Heit'. They have adopted a

kind of feeble comradeship, calling one another 'brother' and 'sister' — forms not bad to use when in the correct context.

They like wine and discos, hence the township song, 'Kaofela Ma-Hippie kaofela — kaofela ba tsamaya didisco.' Their general outlook on life is that they should get as much enjoyment as possible. They spend their time either organising fun or having it, at picnics, festivals and parties. Life to them means leisure time. They like American musicians; recent favourites being Barry White, George Benson, The Commodores. Their version of American culture is, of course, heavily reliant on media. It is not the real life of Americans that they imitate, but the picture of this as presented in magazines like Ebony, and in Hollywood films.

Rastas

The Rastas are different again. We find their position very hard to account for. What is it about that obscure, vague, imported cult that attracts township youths? No doubt to some extent it is a question of fashion, this being supported quite strongly by Reggae music, which has a wide currency in South Africa.

Ahoy Patriot

But we have still to grasp the coherence among all the odd elements of this style. Why would anyone believe in Haille Sellassie, and greet 'in the name of Shaka's spear, Haille Sellassie ever living, ever faithful Jah Ras-Tafarian'? Why is there a translation of ordinary political terms into terms such as Zion and Babylon? Why do Rastas greet people by saying 'Ahoy', and call their friends 'patriot'? If it is necessary to escape from the realities of a situation, why should this be done in the manner of people in the West Indies, of all places? Why is dagga not enough, but it must be called ganja, and be part of a foreign philosophy? Why must everything be translated out of South African ghetto life, into the ghetto life of Jamaica or Brixton?