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[Cover by Kevin Humphrey]

EDITORIAL

Elsewhere in this publication a forthcoming SARS book - SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW 1 - is announced. The contributions to this book - of which there are over 20 - largely focus on the theme of 'restructuring' in South African society.

With the coming to power of the PW Botha faction of the National Party, the political conditions for a close alliance between monopoly capital and government were created.

Since then, South African society has experienced a process of change, which has largely been undemocratically imposed from above by the ruling group and its allies. It is this process of change which has been termed 'restructuring'.

The content and nature of restructuring has been hotly debated: does it involve reform or cosmetic change? To what extent does restructuring go hand in glove with increased repression and control? How come a traditionally conservative and authoritarian body like the military has played such a prominent role in the restructuring process?

These are some of the issues taken up in the Review, which contains six general areas where restructuring can be seen. Each section comprises a number of articles written by different contributors, which look at some of the major trends and processes currently occurring in South Africa. While the book does examine restructuring in 1982, its content and analysis is not limited to one year: the contextualisation of current crises in South Africa necessarily involve both historical and background material.

The sections of the Review deal with the following areas:
SOUTH AFRICA'S CHANGING RELATIONSHIP TO SOUTHERN AFRICA: Contributions cover South Africa's destabilisation policies on the sub continent, Namibia, the role of the SADF in the southern African conflict, and

the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC).

THE ECONOMY, in which South Africa's changing position in the world economy is examined, and the process of the monopolisation of the economy is discussed. In two case studies, the question of skill shortages and african income and employment are considered.

POLITICS: Economic decentralisation as a basis for constitutional change; the bantustans; resettlement; the President's Council and local government; and the changing class basis of the National Party are some of the contributions in this section.

LABOUR: A detailed sector by sector break-down of strikes in 1982 forms the major part of this section. Union involvement in the strikes is also detailed. This is supplemented by a discussion of the response of established registered unions to the changing labour dispensation.

REPRODUCTION: Crisis in health, housing and education, and the state's response forms the theme of this section.

WOMEN: The changing position of women in regard to legislation, employment and the home is discussed in this section.

State and capital have responded to the generalised societal crisis in both subtle and crude ways. This mixture of restructuring, increased control and repression grants more importance to analytical material which tries to make sense of a complex situation. The SOUTH AFRICAN REVIEW, as an overview of aspects of restructuring, is designed to fill one of the gaps in the understanding of contemporary South Africa.

'STATE HOMES FOR SALE': re-examining home ownership

Government has recently decided to sell off 500 000 Black Affairs and Community Development controlled houses. Will this necessarily have a stabilising effect on those who buy these previously rented houses? ALAN MABIN discusses the relationship between home ownership and the creation of an african middle class.

'The new home-ownership scheme involving the sale by the Government of 500 000 State-owned houses has been hailed all round as "one of the most stabilising steps that has been taken in many years"' (Rand Daily Mail, 05.03.83).

'Dr Nthatho Motlana, chairman of the Soweto Civic Association, and the Urban Foundation both saw it as having stabilising effects' (Rand Daily Mail, 04.03.83).

With banner headlines the daily press has welcomed the new 'home ownership' scheme announced by Dr Piet Koornhof and Pen Kotze, the Ministers of Co-operation and Development and of Community Development.

It seems that not only the Urban Foundation and the Soweto Civic Association, but also the critics of state housing policy, are in agreement about the effect of this policy. All agree that the extension of house ownership is likely to stabilise the population of the cities, not only geographically but socially: home ownership is almost universally seen as encouraging conservatism, as an integral part of the creation of a 'middle class'.

On one hand the Urban Foundation enthusiastically promotes home ownership in order to develop a property-owning african middle class who will champion the virtues of 'free enterprise', while on the other hand the left has traditionally seen home ownership as

diversionary for the working class, an aspiration towards home ownership as 'false consciousness' not in the true interests of the working class. Although the programmes of the right and the left have differed radically in supporting and rejecting home ownership respectively, these programmes eventually rest on the same analysis: that home ownership encourages stability and conservatism.

As the South African state takes its largest-ever step towards selling off state-owned retail housing, it becomes essential to re-examine home ownership and its implications.

THE STATE'S PROGRAMME

The South African state's involvement in housing grew rapidly from the 1920s onwards, as municipalities and central government departments assumed ever more responsibility for the investment of capital in housing. The heyday of state housing construction in South Africa was in the 1950s and 1960s, when most of the housing units which the government now plans to sell were built. The crucial aspect of this development was that the state retained control over housing and, through numerous offices in the townships and housing estates, collected the rents paid. Throughout the 1970s the state continually shifted its housing policies, until now, in 1983, the 30-year, 60-year and 99-year leasehold schemes have culminated in the Koornhof-Kotze proposal to sell practically all the rental housing still left in the hands of the Bantu Affairs Administration Boards (BAABs) and of the Department of Community Development. Tenants will effectively be forced to buy their houses or face 'drastic rent increases' (RDM, 04.03.83).

STABILITY, SECURITY, PROPERTY?

There is a myth which dies hard that

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home ownership necessarily means greater stability, greater security and a commitment to property among home owners. Imagine (or live) the situation of a family which has been on the waiting list to rent council housing on the Cape Flats for many years. Eventually the family gets a house or flat. To move to Port Elizabeth they would have to go through a waiting list all over again.

Rental housing can, under specific circumstances, tie people to one place, to one job, just as effectively as monthly payments on a bond used to buy a home. The outright owners of houses, free of bonds, are the only people who have any real freedom to move, particularly when there is a shortage of housing.

Again, someone who owns a home is supposed to have greater security than someone who rents. But a default on bond repayments reveals just how thin that security is when the title reverts to a building society; while someone who lets out the rooms of a house in Soweto always has the money to pay the whole (or most) of the rent to the West Rand Administration Board.

Eviction is thus relatively uncommon.

In conditions when 'home owners' find it hard to make ends meet, let alone make bond repayments, private property in housing does not necessarily enhance stability, security, or a sense of commitment to the principle that houses should be 'owned' by their occupants.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WORKING CLASS HOME OWNERSHIP

Matthew Edell, in a review of different ideas of home ownership, points out that working class home ownership is an anomaly if one takes literally the notion that workers have nothing to lose but their chains. Thus owner-occupiers must be defined as 'not working class', or the home must be defined either as 'nothing' or as a 'chain'.

The oldest left position, which follows from Engels in The Housing Question, is that the home is a chain which binds workers to few employers and heavy costs, and (more recently) to an ideology of home ownership and consumerism. The problem is that such chains seem to arise just as much from some rental situations and from some

ownership situations, and perhaps even more so from conditions in the workplace (such as low wages). One might, indeed, argue that workers would in some circumstances reduce the weight of their 'chains' through home ownership rather than renting.

Home owning workers can also be seen, however, as somehow removed from the working class: the worker with a house is privileged. Therefore, the home owner is distanced from the working class politically as well. An absurd conclusion of this line of argument might be that if all factory workers owned their houses or flats, there would be no working class. Here class, in other words, is defined on the basis of relations of consumption and not relations of production.

These approaches to the implications of home ownership are not fully satisfactory. They fail to analyse the role of housing as part of the historically determined needs of workers - in which the advances of capitalist production and struggles by workers enter into the determination of what kind of shelter, and under what conditions, is 'necessary' to the reproduction of workers. Taking this view, housing and the forms through which workers gain access to housing (ownership, rent, etc) are the subject of individual and collective struggle: we must then question why workers at certain times seek to acquire ownership of their housing (rather than simply arguing that in so doing, workers display 'false consciousness').

Of course, much of the time workers do not get what they want, whether it is houses to own, rent, or live in free of the strictures of private property. Capital and the state determine how, where, on what conditions, and at what price housing is available, subject to the outcome of 'struggles around the built environment' as David Harvey puts it.

In recent years in many capitalist countries less and less housing has been produced and rented by the state. Increasingly, people who live in the cities of the capitalist world have been forced to look away from the state as the source of their housing. This process has been described by Michael Harloe as the 'recommodification' of housing, by which he means that from a situation in which much housing was supplied by the state, people in

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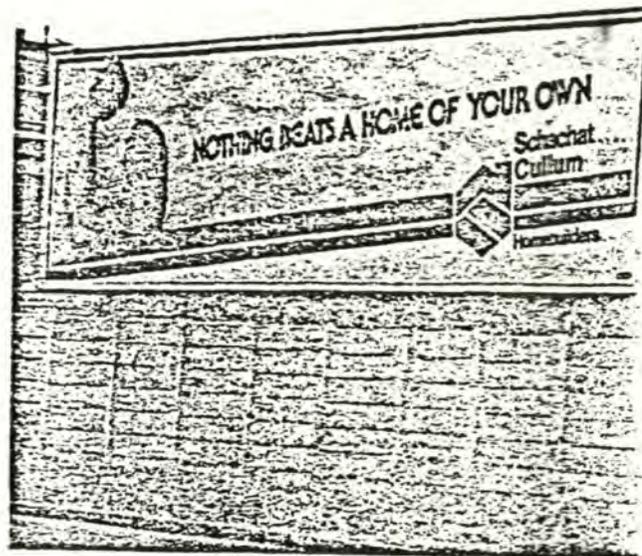
capitalist cities now find themselves forced to seek housing which they purchase or rent in the market rather like any other commodity - except that it is their largest single item of expenditure.

This recommodification is typified by the Thatcher government's policy of selling off council housing in Britain. The same process is taking place in South Africa, culminating now with the state selling off hundreds of thousands of houses previously rented by BAABs, city councils and the Department of Community Development.

Why this recommodification of housing has occurred is not the subject of this article, but suffice it to say that recession, the fiscal crisis of the state and the restructuring of capital are obviously connected with the shift away from state-supplied housing.

The process of recommodifying housing in South Africa has advanced through at least three phases since the late 1960s:

1. The state simply ceased, or practically ceased, its direct involvement in the construction of urban housing, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to provide their own housing - which many have done in squatter settlements. Renting a piece of land in the Winterveld or hiring private contractors to lay foundation slabs in Kroonstad is what self-help really means under these conditions. Far fewer people have been able to borrow from employers and institutions to build and buy in more established areas.
2. The state, especially at the local level, began to plan and manage (though not to construct) new housing schemes for sale instead of rental. The classic example is the Cape Town City Council's scheme at Michell's Plain.
3. Increasingly the state has begun to lease on long-term or to sell its existing rental housing stock. This would not have been possible without the acute housing shortage brought about by the effects of earlier state policies, since building society and other institutional lending is dependent on a ready ability to resell houses on which bond repayments are in default.



Koornhof-Kotze Homebuilders?

HOUSING AS COMMODITY AND HOME OWNERSHIP

Simply because the state decides to sell its houses and flats to their current tenants does not mean that all tenants will become or, more importantly, remain home owners. As a housing market develops in places like Kagiso, Sebokeng and Daveyton, many former tenants who have bought their houses relatively cheaply will sell out at enough profit to buy a couple of new household appliances and thereafter rent their homes from private landlords - until they are evicted or forced out by unaffordable rents.

As purchasers of homes default on bond repayments their houses will be resold to other buyers - perhaps landlords again. It is inevitable that a concentration of ownership will occur. The South African state is now heavily engaged in turning housing back into a commodity. The process does not mean home ownership for all, despite the enthusiasm of the daily press in that connection. Much housing will come to be rented from landlords on a private market instead of from the state.

A tight private rental market and changes in influx control laws, making 'adequate housing' the control on access

to the cities, will force people out of town altogether. Rather than dividing the working class between those who own and those who rent, it may mean a clear division between the middle classes who can own homes and profit in the housing market (through speculation and high rents) and the working class who gain minimal benefit or lose from the process.

There are many implications for organising in these developments in the housing question. People will have to develop new means to deal with the problems of the private housing market, private landlords and the associated insecurities. In some other countries worker housing co-operatives have formed to cope with the situation. Certainly, there will be new dimensions to all forms of collective organising in the working class areas of South African cities.

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STAY-AWAYS: Soweto 1976

In the last edition of WIP, it was argued that work stay-aways, as a weapon of struggle, are not mass strikes but demonstrations.

GLENN MOSS examines the 1976 stay-away campaigns in this light, and concludes that they failed in tactical terms.

The work stay-aways called for in Soweto between August and November 1976 represent the high point of mass participation in the township revolts of that year. The level of support gained for each of the four stay-aways differed, and is impossible to calculate with any accuracy. But the numbers supporting a stay-away demonstration is not necessarily its most important feature. John Berger has suggested that 'State authorities usually lie about the number of demonstrators involved. The lie, however, makes little difference. (It would only make a significant difference if demonstrations really were an appeal to the democratic conscience of the state). The importance of the numbers involved is to be found in the direct experience of those taking part in or sympathetically witnessing the demonstration'.

SUPPORT FOR THE STAY-AWAYS

Without placing any undue emphasis on reported support for the stay-aways of 1976, it can be said that the August and September campaigns gained considerable sympathy in Soweto, while the November call was largely ignored.

On the first occasion in 1976 when a stay-away was attempted (4 - 6 August), some Johannesburg firms reported absenteeism of 50 - 60%, with one large department store admitting absenteeism of 75%. In the food, motor accessories, tobacco, rubber,

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electrical, hotel and finance sectors, absentee rates of between 30 and 50% were reported.

The second call was made for the period 23 - 25 August, and estimates of Soweto residents absent from work ranged between 70 and 80%. The third, and numerically most successful stay-away called by the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) covered the period 13 - 15 September. Within Soweto, it was estimated to be up to 80% effective. Spot checks carried out at various Johannesburg concerns indicated absentee rates as follows:

Premier Milling	50%
Advance Laundry	50%
OK Bazaars	50 - 70%
Checkers	60 - 70%
Edgars	20 - 50%
Wits University	80%
Jhb Transport	90%
Department	

As far as the planned five day stay-at-home called for at the beginning of November, it is widely accepted that this gained very little support from Soweto residents.

WORKING CLASS INVOLVEMENT

Through its calls for township residents to stay away from work for specific periods, the student-led resistance was able to broaden its base of original support considerably, drawing in employed workers, petty bourgeois elements, and even hostel dwellers in some cases.

The stay-away campaigns involved and affected the majority of Soweto residents in the second half of 1976, and represent the pinnacle of student leadership. But this does not, in itself, mean that the tactics of the stay-away are without problems. Brooks and Brickhill, in a book on the 1976 revolt, seem very uncritical in their acceptance of the stay-away tactic: 'It is apparent...that the contribution of the black working class to the 1976 uprising was a major one. Both the successful efforts of the students to win black workers to their side and bring them into action, and the much less successful efforts of the authorities to split the workers themselves...implicitly recognised the central importance of the role of the

black working class. In acting (or choosing not to act) this class indicated its independence of mind, its readiness to sacrifice when the need arises, its common commitment to the cause of liberation'.

In a previous article on stay-aways (WIP 25), it was argued that the stay-away is a more limited tactic than, for example, a mass strike. These limitations do not necessarily make the stay-at-home or demonstration strike invalid as a weapon of struggle. But they do suggest that the tactic must be subject to scrutiny and assessment, rather than uncritical acceptance. The 1976 Soweto stay-aways provide a useful focus in assessing the stay-away or demonstration strike.

AIMS OF THE STAY-AWAYS

The Soweto stay-aways had the features of demonstrations rather than mass or political strikes. The demands put forward in the campaigns were popular-democratic* rather than specifically working class. The action of staying away from work had a symbolic, and sometimes quasi-religious component, and the mode of organisation almost exclusively involved pamphleteering and attempts to enforce the stay-at-home at transport centres.

This is not to deny the validity or importance of demonstrations. They involve a flexing of muscles on the part of their organisers and participants, and take on considerable importance at the beginning of periods of mass struggle. Demonstrations may indicate the balance of power between various classes and interests in society. But as John Berger put it, 'Demonstrations express political ambitions before the political means necessary to realise them have been created'.

Whatever the intentions of the organisers and participants, the stay-aways could not have brought capitalist production and distribution to a halt.

* Popular democratic demands are not class specific. They are made by 'the people' or 'the oppressed', rather than the working class, and are addressed to ruling class power or the 'oppressor'.

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Regionally based - usually in one township - and called as symbolic shows of strength, they may well have hurt individual firms. But they could never strike at the capitalist ruling class as a whole. Neither could they have overthrown the state. A student may have expressed a widely-held optimism when he or she said 'If we get the parents on our side, we can call out a strike; if we call out a strike the economy will collapse; if the economy collapses we will have black rule in 1977'. But this could not have been the effect of a set of demonstration strikes, no matter how wide-spread or well organised.

There is some hint that the Soweto student leadership believed that an ever-extending campaign of stay-aways could ultimately overthrow the state. In much the same way, the Pan Africanist Congress claimed in 1960 that 'Our movement knows that when we withdraw our labour the whole structure (in South Africa) will come falling down'.

But it is not whether the motivations or intentions underlying the stay-aways could succeed that is of relevance here: a different basis of assessment is called for. It needs to be asked whether the stay-at-home demonstrations created conditions for more advanced struggle and organisation.

ORGANISING THE CAMPAIGNS

The first issue to be probed involves the manner in which the stay-aways were organised. Some of the stay-at-homes called for between 1950 and 1961 involved careful organisation over a period of time. For example, the one-day stoppage in May 1950 was preceded by a thorough organisational build-up, 'with the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) playing a vital role. They stressed that a carefully planned programme of organisational work leading up to the event was essential for the mobilisation of workers. The build-up consisted of ANC and trade union branch meetings followed by mass township meetings, culminating in a mass rally at Market Square, Johannesburg, a week before the strike'.

The 1976 stay-aways were organised in a semi-clandestine manner. For almost the whole period involved, all

township meetings were legally prohibited, and the police presence within Soweto was extensive. The call for township residents to stay at home was invariably made through pamphlets, distributed on a door-to-door basis - although small meetings (for example with hostel inmates in September) and public calls through the press also occurred.

This was probably the only way in which stay-away calls could be made. The stay-aways were themselves illegal and found to be an element of sedition in a trial which followed the township rebellion.

A meticulous and detailed build-up to the stay-aways was largely absent - indeed, it was probably impossible in the conditions of the time, given their illegal nature and the mass police presence in the township. This lack of actual organisation was made worse by the non-involvement of trade union bodies in the planning, calling and implementation of the stay-aways. In the 1950-61 period, first CNETU and then the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) were actively involved in the organisation of the stay-aways called by Congress organisations. In a survey of the 1961 stay-away called to coincide with the first Republic Day celebration, a case was advanced for a crucial link between unions and stay-away calls: 'Workers who are organised into trade unions are more responsive to a political call than unorganised workers. Their trade union activity has given them heightened political consciousness and they also respond more readily when the appeal is made on a factory basis as opposed to a residential basis as they feel that there is less chance of dismissal if the whole factory is involved'.

With one rather limited exception, there is no evidence of any union participation in the Soweto stay-aways. The exception involves the Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU), which claimed to have assisted in the organisation of the stay-away demonstrations. According to BAWU, 'Black workers, under the basis and aegis of Black Allied Workers Union and brother unions, obeyed and collaborated in the call and launch of 4 stay-away strikes'.

The only evidence to substantiate this claim involves a link between a BAWU official - Drake Koka - and the

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SSRC. According to a senior SSRC official, Koka assisted the SSRC in drafting the pamphlets calling on township residents not to go to work. He also had some of these typed and duplicated for the SSRC. This certainly does not constitute a union presence in the organisation of the stay-aways.

TOWNSHIP STAY-AWAY OR FACTORY STRIKE?

Calling for the withdrawal of labour on a residential, rather than a factory basis, has certain implications. Some of these were mentioned in a previous article (WIP 25:33-34), especially regarding the surrender of initiative to employers, and the ability of police and army to break the stay-away through township action.

But there is another important effect of a residentially-organised withdrawal of labour. For the class make-up of the factory and the township, of the trade union and the community organisation, is not the same. It is not as if the choice between them as places of struggle is a purely technical one, based on convenience or tactical considerations. This position seems to lie at the core of Brooks and Brickhill's suggestion that the stay-at-home reflects a tactical approach to what is in effect a general political strike: 'In view of the difficulty of organising on the shop floor...stay-at-homes have been organised on a township rather than a work-place basis'.

However, the township community has a different class composition to the factory floor. A withdrawal of labour organised on a factory or shop floor involves exclusively working class action. A township based stay-at-home, on the other hand, can never be class specific in its demands or participants in the way that a factory-based strike can.

The implications of this are clearest in the content and demands of a stay-away campaign. To include and mobilise all classes and strata within the township the demands formulated can never be class specific, but enter into the area of popular-democratic or national struggle.

Popular-democratic struggle involves class alliances, rather than exclusively working class activity: hence, in South Africa, this relates to

'national liberation' rather than class struggle. But every set of class alliances poses the question of the relative weight of those partially antagonistic interests which make up the alliance. It is accordingly inadequate merely to assert the importance of working class participation in a popular-democratic national struggle. The relative weight and organisational strength which those competing interests making up the alliance have must also be probed.

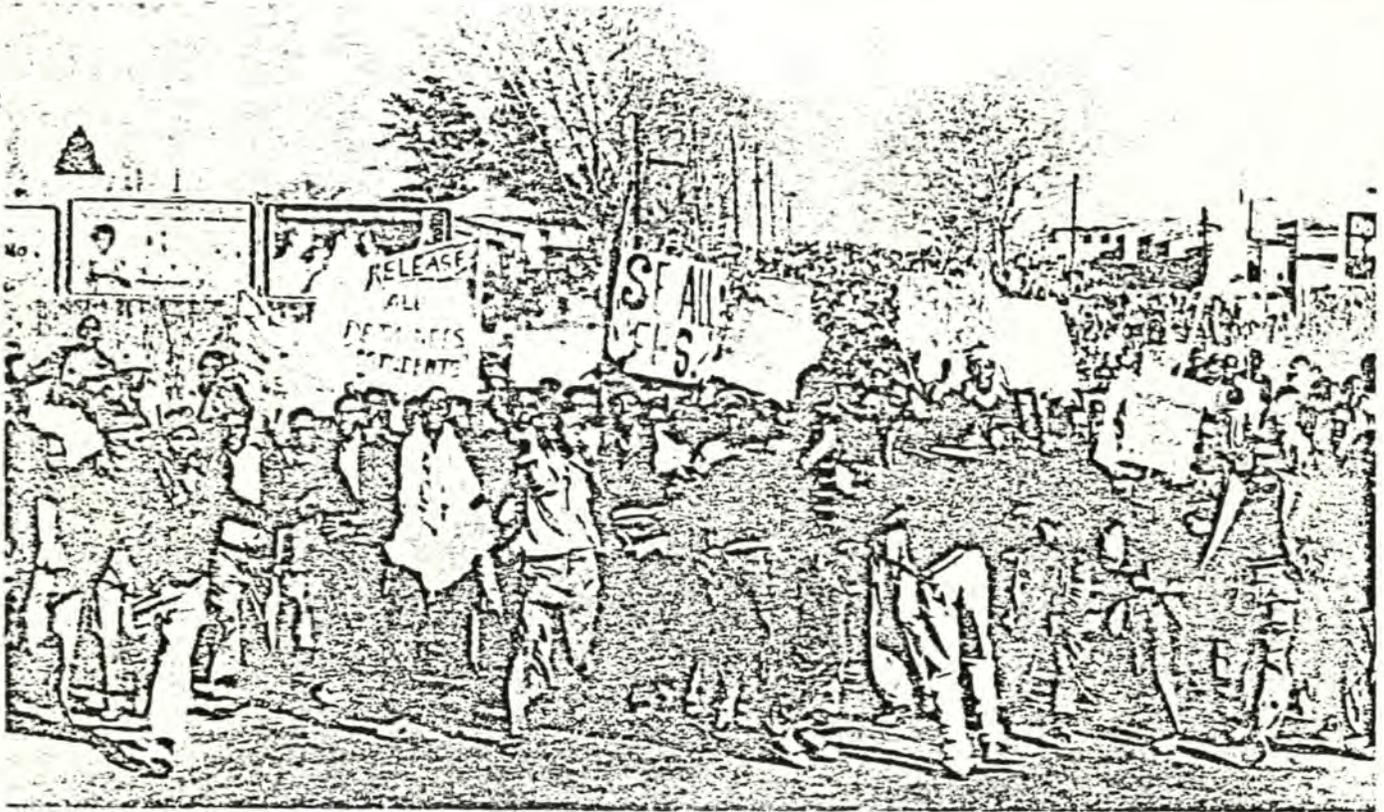
To some extent, the presence of SACTU and its affiliated unions inserted a working class component into the stay-aways called by the Congress Alliance during the second half of the 1950s. But in the absence of an organised working class presence in the 1976 stay-aways, it is much more difficult to assess the class composition of the stay-at-home campaigns.

DEMANDS MADE

One indication of the class composition of the stay-aways lies in the content of the demands put forward. The first stay-at-home was called for 4 - 6 August, very shortly after the SSRC had been formed. The SSRC planned, on the first day of the stay-away, to march to John Vorster Square police station, Johannesburg, and there demand the release of all those detained in terms of security legislation. It was hoped that those staying away from work would join the march to Johannesburg, thereby swelling its numbers.

The other demand made - involving both the proposed march and the actual work stay-away - was for a total scrapping of the bantu education system. In the 16 June demonstration, the key demand was for the scrapping of Afrikaans as a medium of educational instruction, although even then there had been calls to end Bantu Education. But by the beginning of August 1976, Soweto students were demanding a total abolition of Bantu Education.

The first stay-away clearly indicates the demonstrative nature of the activities associated with it - especially regarding the march on Johannesburg. This march appears to have been the main purpose Soweto's adult population not to go to work on 4 August.



Soweto residents march on John Vorster Square in the August stay-away

The second stay-at-home call - addressed to 'parent-workers' - refers to the stay-away campaigns as 'the third phase of...struggle against the oppressors'. The call was again for the abolition of Bantu Education and the release of those detained by security police: this time, the 'overthrow of oppression' was also cited as a reason to stay away from work. Parent-workers of Soweto were exhorted to stay away from work if they were 'proud of the soldiers of liberation' they had given birth to: 'If you go to work, you will be inviting Vorster to slaughter us, your children.. You are giving Vorster pretext for murdering us. Please do not allow Vorster to instigate you to murder your own children'.

The slogans for this stay-away were 'Away with Vorster. Down with oppression. Power to the people'.

In the third stay-at-home under examination (13 - 15 September), parents and workers were called on to stay at home as 'proof that you are crying with us over those cruelly killed by the police and those detained all over the country in various prisons

without trial'. In addition, the SSRC noted its protest against the shooting of people by police; arrests and detentions; the killing of three detainees; train accidents; and 'the cutting down of our parents' wages who had stayed away from work in sympathy with their killed sons and daughters'.

The stay-away called for 1 - 5 November was to indicate that 'Blacks are going into mourning for their dead'. In addition, the demand was made for prime minister Vorster and police and justice minister Kruger to resign; for all detainees to be released; and for police to remain in their barracks during the course of the stay-away.

The politico-ideological content of the stay-aways thus falls into two major categories:

demands for an end to Bantu Education, the release of detainees, resignation of government ministers, and an 'end to oppression';

protest against police activity, wage deductions, deaths in detention and train accidents.

The context for both demands and protests is one of solidarity: parent-

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workers were called on to symbolically support their children, and mourn those killed in the general uprising.

The demonstrative and solidarity component of SSRC activity is well indicated in a pamphlet issued shortly after the November stay-away, in which 'ALL FATHERS AND MOTHERS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, FRIENDS AND WORKERS' are called on to abstain from end-of-year celebration:

'ALL THINGS THAT WE ENJOY MUST BE SUSPENDED FOR THE SAKE OF OUR KIDS WHO DIED FROM POLICE BULLETS.

- NO CHRISTMAS SHOPPING
- NO CHRISTMAS CARDS
- NO CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
- NO CHRISTMAS PARTIES
- NO SHEBEEN DRINKING'.

This boycott or prohibition of the symbols of Christmas celebration was called for the following reasons:

1. Soweto and all Black townships are now going into a period of MOURNING for the dead. We are to pay respect to all students and adults murdered by the police.
2. We are to pledge our solidarity with those detained in police cells and who are suffering torture on our behalf.
3. We should show our sympathy and support to all those workers who suffered reduction of wages and loss of jobs because they obeyed our call to stay away from work for three days.
4. We should stand together and be united in the demand:
CHARGE OR RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!
5. WE MUST BE FREE!

MOBILISING TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

The way in which township residents were mobilised for the stay-at-homes is of importance in assessing their impact on participants. They were called on a residential basis. As such, they were not, and could not have been, class specific in the people they mobilised. The basis of a residential stay-at-home is an alliance of interests, aiming to reach a broad spectrum of township residents regardless of their class position.

The content of the stay-aways, as far as can be gauged from the pamphlets

issued, was broadly-based, and is best described as popular-democratic. Township residents were mobilised as 'the people' in opposition to ruling class power. Pamphlets were addressed to 'Parent-workers'; 'The people of South Africa'; 'To you all: Parents; brothers; friends and all workers'; 'Blacks'; and, in one case, 'To All fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, friends and workers, in all cities, towns and villages in the Republic of South Africa'.

Sections of some pamphlets were specifically addressed to workers. For example, a pamphlet issued after the second August stay-away argued that

'because of the monopoly of knowledge exercised by the factory-owners and their managers, we the workers will not know how much was lost by these money makers....Well, that we will lose...wages is a fact but we should not cry over them. We have to rejoice over the fact that while we lost these wages, we dealt the Racist Regime and Factory-Owners a heavy blow - They Lost Their Profits'.

On the other hand, an SSRC press statement issued on 4 November 1976 - after the failure of the November stay-away - addressed itself to non-working class elements. This statement captures particularly well the ambiguity in the students' mobilisation of Soweto residents:

'We, the students of Soweto and your children, wish to extend our praise, thanks and appreciation of the stand that the Soweto business men showed during the stay-at-home strike. These men complied with our humble request even though it meant loss of sales and profits. They sacrificed their business in order to join hands with us in the struggle. Power to all business men and women. We wish to make it clear that we are not in any manner against the Black peoples business...Bravo to all black businessmen and taxi owners who stood with us. We are your children: sons and daughters who are prepared to lay down our young lives that you may be free'.

The demands put forward as part of the stay-away campaigns indicate that residents of the Soweto township were mobilised as 'the people' against

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ruling class power. This is clear from examples quoted above, and through the use of slogans like 'United we stand';

'Vorster and Kruger: resign; you have mismanaged Azania. You have plunged the country into violence and loss of human life';
'Black People let us be one';
'Away with Vorster!!! Down with oppression!!! Power to the People!!!';
'To all black people of Azania we say: Take heart, have courage. Victory is ours!'

WORKING CLASS CENTRALITY?

The weight and importance of different class interests in the stay-aways has been the subject of differing interpretations. Brooks and Brickhill argued that the 1976 stay-aways occupied 'a central role in mobilising the adult community for action, as workers rather than parents', and that by the September stay-at-home the student leadership had 'widened the scope of their propaganda to include an issue which directly affected workers as workers (the loss of pay during the second strike) and the question of safety on the railways'. In these terms, they conclude that the 'contribution of the black working class to the 1976 uprising was a major one'.

Rather more critically, Baruch Hirson claimed that 'The students never really learned how and when they could call on the working class to join them', and that the stay-aways were not 'launched in order to improve conditions in the worker's household. Strikes of finite duration, announced at the inception as being for a limited period, cannot win any betterment for workers. Nor had any of the SSRC demands been pitched at securing concessions from the employers'.

These two conflicting interpretations of the stay-away campaigns - especially regarding the working class content of the demands - take one to the very heart of the 1976 Soweto stay-at-homes. On the one hand, it has been argued that the support given to the student demands indicates the centrality of the working class to the uprising. On the other, it is claimed that at most, workers responded to the student calls as

parents and township dwellers, deeply concerned about their children and the level of repression in Soweto.

On the face of it, the pamphlets which called forth the stay-away campaigns support both these positions. Township residents were mobilised as 'parents', 'workers', 'parent-workers', 'the people', and 'Blacks'. But the mere language of a campaign is not sufficient to assess its content. This is a serious problem in probing the Soweto stay-aways. Called for in a period of intense crisis, largely as demonstrations of solidarity and support, there is little indication of any organisational intervention between mobilisers and those mobilised.

The stay-at-homes took place in an atmosphere of extreme crisis. Students had been killed by the police, the level and intensity of violence was high, and the state's repressive organs were being experienced by township residents as an occupying force. This gave rise to the demonstrative or protest aspect of the stay-aways - which involved an immediately-experienced rejection of daily conditions on the part of township residents.

The township location of the generalised crisis meant that, at least initially, large numbers of residents would support demonstrations and protests against visible manifestations of state power - police, bantu education, large-scale arrests and detentions. The failure to consolidate this into an organisational presence and set of relations between 'the people' and student leadership is indicated by the collapse of the November stay-away. Brooks and Brickhill touched on this difficulty when they wrote that 'The fact is that by the beginning of November the uprising was beginning to wind down... The black working class had come out massively on at least three major occasions within a relatively short space of time. The issues had been very immediate, the tide of anger had been rising... This time the call for a strike came when the tide was receding'.

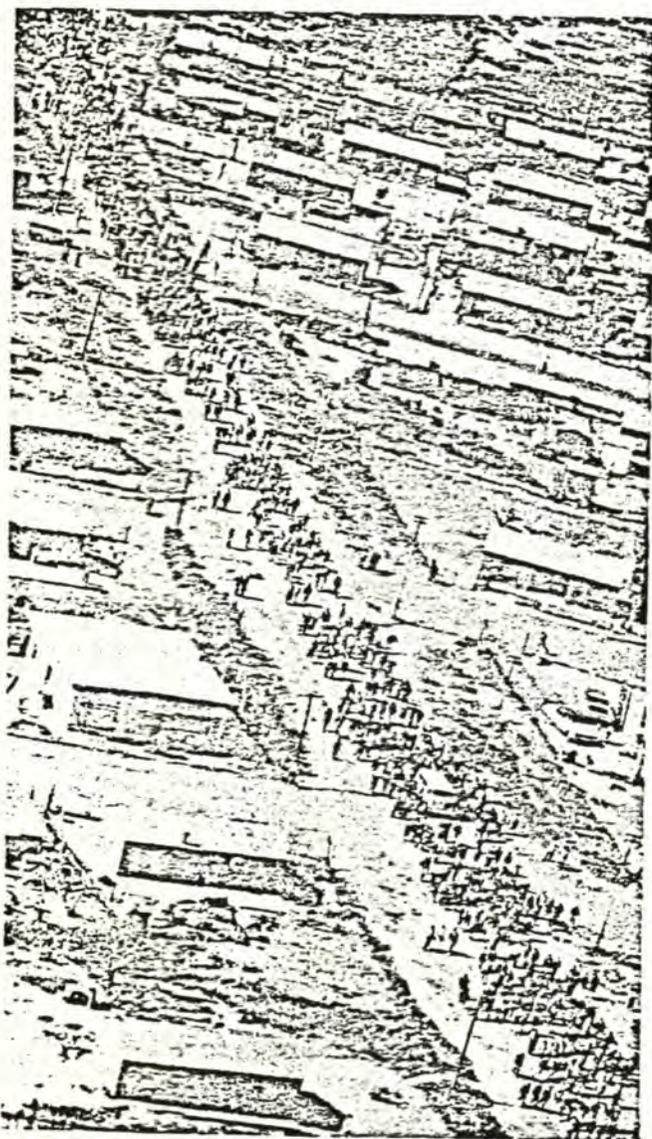
EMPLOYER RESPONSE

Many employers initially adopted a

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fairly sympathetic attitude to the stay-aways, and in some cases paid workers for periods when they were not actually present at work. However, as time passed, employer attitudes hardened, and well before the November stay-away the Transvaal Chamber of Industries advised their members not to pay workers for periods of absence due to stay-away calls. In mid-October, the Chamber circularised its members, saying that 'Employers in general were very sympathetic at the start of the unrest towards those black employees who did not report for duty. However, with the effluxion of time, employers' attitudes hardened to the extent that their feelings today can be stated as being "NO WORK, NO PAY"'.

Marching through Soweto, 4 August 1976



It was also suggested to employers by the Transvaal Chamber of Industries that they circularise workers before the November stay-away, setting out their position on absenteeism. A proposed circular was provided for black workers, written in English and certain african languages. It read as follows:

'TO: THE BLACK WORKERS
FROM: THE TRANSVAAL CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES.

You have been given pamphlets by the Agitators who say:

Parents: "Co-operate with your children"

Workers: "Stay away from work".

The Transvaal Chamber of Industries is the place where your employers meet to talk about the problems of their factories. All the things that worry them are talked about there and that is where they discuss together what can be done to make things better for their factories and for their workers.

After the first problems in Soweto, The Transvaal Chamber of Industries told the Government of all the things which they felt should be done to make things better for their black workers.

Now the Transvaal Chamber of Industries wants to tell you what will happen if you listen to these Agitators and how badly these agitators make you suffer when you listen to them.

Firstly: There are many factories which, for some time now, have not been as busy as they used to be. Some factories could even close down or work short-time, but they are trying to keep going so that you can keep earning your pay.

Secondly: Therefore, if you stay away from work, you are harming yourself as well as your employers.

Thirdly: You know that there are many black people who do not have jobs and who could easily take your place.

Fourthly: If you stay away from work it is your family and your children who will suffer.

You must be strong and come to work so that you can earn money for your family and your children to buy food, clothing and other necessities. Your well-being depends on your working with us; listening to the Agitators will not improve your position.

WE REPEAT:

KEEP YOUR JOB AND IGNORE THE AGITATORS'.

This indicates another difficulty with a residentially-based stay-away. If a whole factory goes on strike, there is some protection for workers against victimisation. All the striking workers are able to support each other, and there may be union structures of protection and support. In the case of a residentially-based stay-away, not all factory employees will necessarily heed the call. Some may be resident in townships not affected by the stay-away, and protection for absentee workers against victimisation is almost non-existent. Workers dismissed or penalised for adhering to a stay-away call confront employers as individuals, not as a solidly organised group. With this in mind, it can be suggested that the Transvaal Chamber of Industries pamphlet reproduced above must have had some effect on workers. It is one thing to risk victimisation over a demonstration stoppage once, when tensions are running high in the townships and some employers are showing sympathy with township residents. But when workers are called on to repeat this risk time and time again, with no structures of protection, and when employers are adopting a threatening attitude, it is no surprise that the five-day stay-at-home called for November 1976 failed.

ENFORCING THE STAY-AWAYS

It has been suggested above that the numerical success of the first three stay-away campaigns can best be understood in the context of the general political crisis in Soweto at the time. Wide-scale support for the campaigns did not imply any organisational component, nor did the content of the demands involve the long-term interests of those staying away from work. The organisational structures necessary to turn individuals into committed social actors in a struggle did not develop in Soweto at the time.

This failure in strategy can be seen in the way of enforcing the stay-aways, where the withdrawal of Soweto residents from the economy for short periods was seen as more important than the manner in which this was achieved. This is not to suggest that intimidation or coercion can account

for the support given to the first three stay-aways. These factors can never explain mass participation in a withdrawal of labour.

Nonetheless, there is evidence that the youth attempted to enforce the stay-at-homes in a vigorous manner; this indicates that it was the fact of not going to work, rather than its effect on participants and organisation, that was uppermost in the minds of those calling for the stay-aways.

It has already been suggested that stay-away demonstrations are best assessed in terms of the advances they make organisationally and their effect on consciousness of participants. In these terms, it is not merely the number of people who stay away from work which is important. The way in which they are organised to stay away, and the effects of this in strengthening organisations, is crucial. The vigorous way in which the 1976 stay-aways were enforced, especially at township railway stations, indicates that the youth was more concerned with the fact of withdrawing labour, rather than deepening and strengthening organisation within the township.

CONCLUSIONS

Earlier it was argued that the Soweto stay-aways were demonstrative in character. It was never likely that their immediate demands - which were sometimes vague and abstract - would be met by the state; and it was never possible that residentially-based stay-at-home campaigns called for symbolic periods could halt capitalist production and bring down state power.

It was suggested that stay-aways, as demonstration stoppages, were best assessed in terms of their abilities to create conditions for more advanced forms of struggle and organisation. The key questions which were therefore posed around the 1976 stay-aways were: did they involve organisational advances, and what was their effect on the consciousness of participants?

Essentially, it has been argued that the Soweto stay-aways were not successful in tactical terms. This is not because they failed to achieve their stated objectives, but in terms of the assessment criteria set out

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above. The manner in which the stay-aways were called - involving the use of pamphlets and some house visits - did not allow for the intervention and involvement of other organisational structures in the campaigns. This created a context in which new organisational initiatives did not emerge, and where already existing structures were neither deepened nor strengthened. The fact that those calling the stay-at-homes were ultimately not subject or responsible to those they were mobilising, limited the possibilities for a democratic extension and consolidation of organisational initiatives.

Equally importantly, the student leadership saw the success or failure of stay-away campaigns in numerical terms. This led them largely to ignore the question of how best to call and implement a demonstration campaign. Throughout the period of the four stay-aways, there were incidents of coercion which implied an over-emphasis on keeping people from work for a few days, rather than advancing conditions of struggle.

In these terms, one must question the success of the 1976 Soweto stay-aways, in that they were unable to create new and more advanced conditions of struggle and organisation. Neither can it be said that the stay-at-homes strengthened the working class in relation to other township-based classes.

MATERIAL REFERRED TO

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This dissertation, by John Perjan, examines the policies, practices and structures through which the South African state has tried to regulate the residence, movement and employment of the African population - and the working class in particular - in what the author calls the Pretoria - Odi complex.

The focus is mainly on Ge-Rankuwa and Mabopane, which are townships in the 'independent' bantustan of Bophuthatane; on Sophangwe which was excised from Bophuthatane in 1976; and on the densely settled 'squatter' areas of Winterveld and Mankwe which border on these townships.

The Pretoria townships of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville are also discussed and examined.

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TIC REVIVED:

An editorial in WIP 25 commented on the re-formation of the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), and raised some questions about its relationship to non-racialism and ethnicity. Since then, the editors have received a critique of the decision to re-constitute the TIC. Extracts from this contribution appear below as 'The Case Against'. This is followed by parts of an interview which SASPU National conducted with members of the Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee (Tasc), which was instrumental in the decision to revive the TIC.

the case against

The relationship between class and race and therefore the class struggle and national struggle has been the central issue confronting the political movement in South Africa. The dominance of monopoly capitalist relations has resulted in an intensification of the class struggle. But the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) is organising indians in the Transvaal on a populist, not a class basis. It is therefore unable to contribute to the decisive class struggle.

The President's Council (PC) proposals involve an attempt to create a black middle class which will exclude africans. It is based on an ethnic idea where the various ethnic groups would form a 'grand alliance' with the ruling class. The attempt is thus to co-opt indians and coloureds onto the side of whites and thus smash unity between indians, coloureds and africans.

The PC, together with the bantustans, divide the black population into various ethnic groups and within each ethnic group there would be a sector of the petty bourgeoisie and/or aspirant bourgeoisie which would assume leadership positions.

In opposing the government, various

people within the ranks of the oppressed have made the PC proposals the major focus of their struggle and as such see the constitutional proposals in isolation. This has led to an essentially ethnic response. Responding in a piece-meal fashion promotes the forces of ethnicity and thus falls in line with state strategy.

Proponents of the TIC argue that due to the Group Areas Act, the oppressed classes have been split on an ethnic basis and it thus becomes a strategically motivated condition that mobilisation and organisation also occur on this basis. This is ridiculous. The history of struggles waged by the oppressed indicates that these were not ethnically-oriented. Also, there is a fair illustration of attempts by the 'different' oppressed groups to work together.

It is misleading to speak of organising in your own areas. Are we talking about organising in your 'own areas' from a regional point of view? Surely this is not a question of logistics since in practice proponents of TIC are engaged in ethnic selection because they consciously select indians from every corner of the Transvaal.

Let us now look at some of the other motivations put forward by proponents of TIC. They have argued that its revival is necessitated by the fact that the indians do not have a political organ as such and that TIC would help to play this role. This logic is unscientific especially when one asks the question whether indians do need a separate political organ. Are indian aspirations different to other oppressed groups? Also we must recognise that amongst indians there exist antagonistic classes and that the overwhelming majority of indians are working class. Just which class interest is TIC advocating.

If the vacuum referred to is in regard to ethnic political organisations then it is true that such a vacuum exists. However, there is no such vacuum when it comes to non-ethnic political activity.

The criticism based on ethnicity which has been consistently levelled since the idea of TIC was first mooted, has been continually rejected by arguments claiming that ethnic symbols

are not used (eg WIP 25 editorial: 'the categorisation of the TIC as "ethnic" needs to be assessed... whether it manipulates ethnicity and racial symbols in its activities'). This is however contrary to their practice of using indian songs and values just in order to make politics more relevant for indians.

The problem with using symbols is that there always remains the danger that these symbols would entrench themselves and thus frustrate any future attempts to create coherency in ideological terms. There is an obvious question to be asked of TIC. Is the rank and file membership going to be exclusively 'indian'? If this question is answered in the affirmative then surely their claim to be non-ethnic is a lie.

Since we are working towards creating a unitary, non-racial, democratic society then surely the process of struggle should encompass these aims. It is essential to create a single nation. This is partly what the struggle is about, and this means transcending the arbitrary divisions the state has forced upon the oppressed. We should not allow the state to determine the nature and pace of our struggle because the state has promoted ethnic groupings. We should not use divisive groupings as a weapon in our struggle. We cannot fight ethnicity with ethnic organisations.

The proponents of TIC are essentially petty bourgeois and have petty bourgeois interests at heart. As recently as 1980 they wanted to participate in SAIC for 'tactical' reasons. Who is to say that these people will not revive this collaborationist position once TIC has entrenched itself?

Proponents of TIC constantly speak about the proud heritage of TIC in its struggle since its inception at the turn of the century. However, one must look critically at both the policies and strategies of TIC prior to its dissolution in 1964. There is rarely a meeting addressed by proponents of TIC which does not refer to Gandhism as its spiritual force. However, Gandhi's role in relation to the indian working class has been questioned by historians.

The vanguard of Gandhi's political initiatives throughout his

stay in South Africa was always the merchant class and not the workers. It may be argued that his intention was to unite the 'indian community' regardless of class antagonisms. However, the danger of his actions were only perceived when the class interests of the petty bourgeoisie clashed with those of workers, as was inevitable. Thus the Indian Congress remained in the hands of the merchant class from its inception until 1945 when a radical leadership under Dr Dadoo was able to take control.

Surely the very obvious divisive and debilitating effect of organising on an ethnic basis is apparent? However, it is more than divisive, it is extremely dangerous (the role of the petty bourgeoisie in the TIC up to 1946 indicates this). Yet it is the petty bourgeoisie to which proponents of the TIC pander in their statements from public platforms and newspapers. There is no attempt at a class analysis in their public stance, and this is the only way they can be judged.

the case for

Q: The recent Tasc congress decided to revive the Transvaal Indian Congress. Why?

A: At the congress it was decided that there was a need for a fully-fledged political organisation. The reasons for this must be seen in terms of the anti-Saic campaign. This campaign dislodged the reactionary and collaborationist hold over the Indian community in the Transvaal, throwing their ranks into complete chaos and disrepute.

But by the close of the campaign it had become evident that we could no longer make gains by mobilising public support through mass meetings and distributing newsletters, and that we needed to create the basis for ongoing political organisation and activity. Only in this way could we provide the community in which we are based with consistent political, moral and intellectual leadership.

Q: How can an essentially Indian

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based political organisation advance the struggle for a non-racial society?

A: To achieve a non-racial and democratic South Africa, we need to ensure that the methods used to achieve these ideals are successful in building grass-roots unity. We must not confuse goals and methods nor should we mistake the consciousness of political activists and intellectuals for the consciousness of the masses.

The physical separation of the oppressed people has imposed limitations on us and we have been forced to organise in our separate communities. During the '70s activists negated these factors and confused their ideals and the consciousness of intellectuals for the community's as a whole. At that time, students were forced to take the political initiative at national level since the people's leaders were banned, jailed or exiled. Thus the organisations functioning then failed to win mass popular support in our communities. The other side of their isolation from a mass base was the popularity of local management committees set up by the state.

Q: There have been criticisms that the TIC is an ethnic body. What is your feeling on this?

A: The criticisms are unfounded and fraught with misconception. We believe an organisation can only be accused of being ethnic if it evokes amongst its supporters an ethnic identity - if it encourages ethnic separateness and protects and advances its own separate and corporate group interests.

When the TIC is mentioned, what comes immediately to mind is not ethnicism, but historical events and symbols rich in meaning - the Congress of the People, Defiance Campaign, Congress Alliance, names like Mandela, Dadoo, Naiker and so on.

The TIC since the late 1940s has been closely associated with the struggle for liberation from all forms of oppression and exploitation for all the people of South Africa.

Q: Instead of reviving TIC, why

did you not form a new political organisation?

A: We have already established why it is necessary to form a political organisation. Some who agree that this is necessary have disputed our decision to revive the TIC.

Forming a new political organisation with another name will not, in our view, be politically as effective as reviving the old TIC. The TIC is an organisation deeply rooted in our community with many people still supporting their proud history in the struggle for a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

A new political organisation would have to prove itself anew and spend a great deal of time and energy in an attempt to establish its legitimacy at a mass level.

TIC supporters say that those opposed to its re-formation must show that this will separate the indian community from broadly-based struggles. They claim that the evidence points in the opposite direction, and that the recent anti-Saic campaign recalls campaigns of the 1950s where struggles were linked across racial or ethnic barriers.

Some of those in favour of re-forming TIC acknowledge that it will be dealing with a largely non-working class constituency in the Transvaal. But they argue that the mobilisation of middle class elements against co-option by the state is vital. Failing this, the ruling class attempt to incorporate the indian middle class will go unchallenged. They claim that their opponents in effect advocate ignoring non-working class constituencies, leaving them available for incorporation into government's black middle class strategy. This abandonment of non-working class issues, it is claimed, undervalues the importance of popular-democratic struggle.

The issue of the TIC is a controversial one. It goes to the heart of the relationship between national and class struggle, the meaning of non-racialism and the place of organisations with uni-

racial constituencies.

The Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee acknowledges that some of these issues are difficult: 'The ethnic tag may well have some disadvantage particularly as it could be misunderstood by people deeply committed to the ideal of a non-racial society and is also open to manipulation by our political foes. We however are convinced that the advantages of this initiative outweigh the disadvantages'.

WIP would be keen to receive further comment on these issues.



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MADNESS AND LABOUR

The relationship between mental health and work is not one that is often considered. In this article, GRAHAME HAYES argues that the organisation of work under capitalism causes mental health problems, and that there is also a clear relationship between unemployment and madness. The breakdown in mental health of both employed and unemployed workers is in the first instance socio-economic, not psychological.

In South Africa workers experience unhealthy conditions at their places of work - factories, shops, farms - and also where they live - townships, squatter camps, mine compounds. These conditions and the wider social context in which they occur have to do with how work is organised in contemporary capitalist South Africa. This article will try to analyse some dimensions of the social context of work which relate to the mental health of workers in South Africa.

There has been a fair amount written in relation to the physical health problems of certain jobs; for example, the predisposition to mesothelioma from working in asbestos factories, and diseases contracted from contact with some fertilizers and insecticides in farm work. Even a government commission (the Erasmus Commission) agrees that not enough time and money is spent on industrial and occupational health.

There has also been some work done on the living conditions which workers experience in their communities and the health problems which result from these social conditions. Working class communities have inadequate housing, poor sanitation, very little electricity, inadequate recreational

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