

HOUSING

1. INTRODUCTION

Housing is a basic need. It should provide shelter, access to essential facilities, such as water, electricity and sewerage and be situated within easy reach of our places of work, schools, hospitals, etc. In South Africa the vast majority of our people are faced with permanent housing shortages and live in overcrowded, unhealthy conditions in Group Areas, Resettlement camps, etc., often located at a considerable distance from industrial and commercial centres and other urban facilities.

The hardships that result from the inadequate provision of housing, endured by the working class in common with other oppressed classes have become the primary focus of **community** organisations throughout the country. This article will examine a matter of immediate concern to such organisations—the **context, details and objectives of the state's changing housing policy.**

2. THE STATE'S OLD HOUSING POLICY

Until recently, the government, through the Department of Community Development, and the local authorities, undertook responsibility for the provision of housing, by providing low interest loans for approved housing schemes. But while the government provided the initial money for houses to be built, a policy of "self-financing" was applied — "Everything you get you must pay for". Thus tenants presently living on Council property repay government loans plus the interest over 30 years as part of their rental. Only the interest part of the loan, which is calculated according to the tenants' income, is subsidised by the state.

This policy placed a ceiling on capital spending, including housing construction. In addition, the counterpart of the state's involvement in the provision of housing for people "resettled" under the Group Areas Act, has been the **continuing destruction of housing** formerly occupied by black people in areas designated for white occupation. The extent of removals under Group Areas legislation (81,948 Coloured and 39,485 Indian families were moved from their homes up to the end of 1982), gives some indication of the actual destruction of the housing stock.

The state's housing policy, then, together with other apartheid legislation, has resulted in massive housing shortages. Living conditions in urban ghettos are overcrowded and unhealthy. Many people, furthermore, are forced to live an insecure existence in illegally rented 'white' accommodation.

According to the **ACTION COMMITTEE TO STOP EVICTIONS (ACSTOP)**, there are at present between 8,000 and 12,000 Coloureds and Indians living illegally in Johannesburg.

In addition, the state's housing policy has been used as an **instrument of political control.** The provision of state housing has always been accompanied by Group Areas removals, influx control and residential segregation.

3. URBAN CRISIS

Housing has therefore become a political issue. All over the country community organisations have been formed demanding **HOUSING, SECURITY AND COMFORT.** Community struggles have produced an **urban crisis** — an aspect of the

general crisis of the state, increasingly forced onto the defensive by intensifying mass struggles against all aspects of apartheid. New policies and strategies have therefore become necessary to blunt the edge of the oppressed people's growing opposition to the present system.

4. THE STATE'S NEW HOUSING POLICY

The state has responded by denying its responsibility to provide decent and affordable housing. It now argues that it has fulfilled its responsibilities in relation to the "resettled" population now that the Group Areas programme is complete and that in accordance with the "principle of a free market system" the state "cannot accept responsibility for the general provision of housing". Individuals must now erect their own dwellings with their own funds or finance obtained from sources such as building societies and employers. State funds will, in future, only be provided for the development of infrastructure and to make serviced stands available to individuals.

Broadly, in terms of this policy, housing will no longer be provided where there is a **need**, but only if individuals can **afford to pay**, since the provision of this important item of collective consumption will now be determined by market forces. More specifically, the new emphasis on "market-solutions" means that the government has decided that it will no longer build houses for **rental purposes** except those earning less than R150 per month and welfare cases (the aged, pensioners and the disabled), and then only by reducing building standards. Since housing and other subsidies for those earning above R150 has been removed, interest, services and maintenance costs will now be determined by their market value.

POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE STATE'S NEW HOUSING POLICY

1. SHIFTING THE BURDEN

The state is now evading its responsibility by shifting the burden of the provision of housing, education, medical care, etc., onto the shoulders of the individual. The Minister of Community Development was quoted in Parliament as saying that "no government that supports the capitalist system can take upon itself the responsibility for all housing for the lowest income groups." This emphasis on market-forces will reduce the living standards of the majority of our people. At the same time, the new housing policy has allowed the government to win support from certain business. Building societies, banks and the building industry, hungry for new investments and markets, have all supported and promoted the new policy.

SOCIAL POLICY AND THE P.C. PROPOSALS

There is a close connection between economic and social policies of the state, and the planned changes in the political system. A concern to contain popular pressures for the expansion of public expenditure is central to the recommendations of the P.C. According to Dr. Simon Brand, economic advisor to the Prime Minister:—

"The large discrepancies in the average standards of living between different sections of the population, coupled with the accelerated pace of constitutional reform, give rise to strong pressures for rapid increases in the scope and level of public spending....it will only be possible to contain these pressures within economically realistic bounds if the scope of the public sector's responsibilities for the provision of these kinds of services should be revised drastically

The housing crisis has led to the creation of slums, squatter camps and unbearable conditions. Below is a photographic profile of housing conditions in different areas.



K.T.C. squatters afetr the demolition of their shacks.



A Living Hell — Reiger Park's "one rooms".



Katlehong's shack dwellers.



downwards.

“Though the P.C.’s proposals are presented ideologically as an attempt to ‘democratise’ the state, the dismantling of the public sector, and the recourse to market-generated solutions indicate an attempt to insulate the state from popular pressures (through authoritarian political forms). Similarly, the ‘reform’ of the public administration, of local and regional government, and privatisation of the provision of health, education and housing, are presented ideologically as the ‘decentralisation’ of the state administration. In practice, the involvement of the private capital in these sectors will mean that the provision of items of collective consumption will now depend on their profitability and the individual’s ability to pay.

3. MILITARISATION

Rather than spending money on housing and social services, the state chooses to spend money on defence. This year the defence budget went up 15.9% to R3,093 million. The total sum allocated to housing in 1982/3 is equivalent to approximately 1½ Mirage jets.

4. DIFFUSING HOUSING STRUGGLES

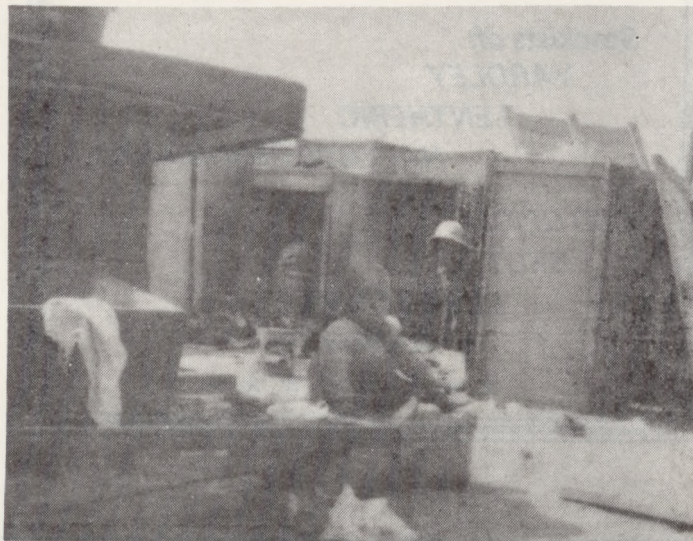
Housing is a sensitive political issue and one around which community organisations have mobilised people and made extensive demands on the state. The state’s solution is to remove itself entirely from this responsibility and in this way depoliticise the issue. It is also hoped by both state and big business that home ownership will lead to social stability. By allowing people to own their own homes, the state hopes to create “reliable” and “responsible” workers. In other words, they believe that home ownership gives people a bigger stake in the system. In the words of the Minister: “The most important objective is, however, to create a broad owner

class within our coloured communities with the pride and other benefits which go hand in hand with home ownership and proprietary rights. In the new constitutional dispensation this will form the basis of the three-tier government.

The flaw in the state’s strategy is that far fewer people than before will have access to housing they can afford and that the housing shortage will become worse.

CONCLUSION

There is a clear relationship between changes in the political system in the form of the P.C. proposals and new emphasis on “monetarism” and the “free” market. It is important, therefore, now more than ever, that struggles around material issues, e.g. housing shortages, high rents, transport costs, are not isolated from those with broader, more general and longer-term concerns.



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S. Mati — Cosas President.

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bridegroom
Rise up beyond your thorny grave
For amid the carved inscription on the
tombstone
Lies your mended dreams*

*Arise from your daily drudge
And feel the pulse
Beneath the cacophony of grit aND BLOOD
The cadaverous stench of your oppression
Harbours the sickly sweet perfume
Of your prostituted days.
Walk amidst the throng
And feel under your creeping flesh
the stealthy slime of your repulsed hours
Steal away to a culmination of victorious
mementos*

*Embracing a velvety world
From within the detention of your ideas
At Central and John Vorster let slip
The pendulum motion
Of your savage impulse
Let loose the forbidden stream of your
oppression
Let loose your people.*



YOUTH ON THE MOVE

Mass campaigns such as Fattis and Monis boycott, the 1980 school boycott and the Anti-Saic campaign at the turn of the decade mobilised thousands of young people.

As these campaigns ended, organisations on different fronts channelled peoples' energy into trade unions, civic organisations, student organisations and women's organisations.

But not all young people could or did become involved in these new structures. Some had been expelled from schools and universities and could not go back after the boycotts had ended. Many were unemployed and could not join trade unions. Instead organisations were set up to cater to their needs.

Youth organisations have the potential to draw youth away from becoming involved in criminal activity against their own communities. Organisers believe youth need to be encouraged to see their problems as part and parcel of the problems their community faces and to realise these problems can only be overcome through united action.

Youth organisations in different parts of the country have arisen through different circumstances and have taken different forms.

In the Western Cape, the extensive 1980 school boycotts mobilised large numbers of young people. Today there is a youth movement in almost every community in the area. The newly formed Cape Youth Congress (Cayco) aims to:

- Unite youth in the Cape;
- Respond to the cultural, political and economic demands and aspirations of all young people;
- Build good relations between parents and youth;
- Create a spirit of trust, responsibility amongst its members;
- Find ways of linking up with youth with similar aims to Cayco in other areas.

July this year saw the formation of the Soweto Youth Congress (Soyco).

At the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) annual congress in May last year, the delegates decided Cosas should concentrate on organising scholars and separate youth organisations were needed for young people who are no longer at school.

The Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (Peyco), formed in September last year, arose as a result of this decision. Peyco says anyone who sees him or herself as youth can join. But young people not involved in Cosas are their target membership.

The successful **Anti-Saic** campaign in 1981 mobilised a large number of young people in Lenasia. However, at the end of the campaign there was no organisation to cater for these young people. This saw the formation of the Lenasia Youth League (LYL) in July 1982.

In areas where there are no student organisations or conditions in schools make it difficult for organisations to take place, scholars have chosen to organise with youth. Often, scholars active in youth organisations also become active in school structures such as debating societies where they try to raise other scholars' awareness.

University students have been active in youth organisations. After the boycott at the University of Durban Westville in 1981, university students went back to their communities and became active in setting up youth structures.

University students are often in a position to obtain and share resources and information with other young people in the community. Working members may have administrative skills which can be transferred to the rest of the group.

Most young people have no economic responsibility, more time and in the case of children with a more materially privileged background they have a greater access to theory. It is for these reasons that young people mistakenly believe that they are the vanguard of the liberation struggle.

Significant is that the most advanced phases have been the working class and masses of people more generally who have revealed their centrality of the national liberation movement. Social forces are not consistently revolutionary but are impelled by the actual contradictions in a system to take decisive political action. For long historical periods masses may lay dormant but will always take action at decisive moments. This is why young people think of themselves as the vanguard of the struggle. Young people who have these advantages in a sense enjoy a relative autonomy from social classes. To that extent they are immune from some of the stabilising features of the South African society. For the same reason they do not carry any historical weight.

In catering for the needs and aspirations of young people, youth organisations are often forced to raise political issues. Yet they take care to raise these issues in such a way that members and potential members are not scared away. Amongst the activities youth organisations have taken up:

Drama, poetry, music. Many youth groups have organised variety concerts, talent shows or drama evenings where youth are challenged to develop their abilities. At the same time, they provide entertainment for members of the community, raise money, gain publicity for the organisation, and, perhaps, attract more members. Often the songs, poetry and plays performed pass a message to the community.

Tuition schemes, organised by youth in all centres, are an activity that has drawn in new members and provide a service to the community.

A common activity — and an essential one — is fund raising.

Many youth groups have a sport sub-committee. This is an important way of attracting new members.

Many youth organisations run seminars or workshops and produce newsletters where a wide variety of issues are discussed to increase the awareness and understanding of their members.

Young people, because they have time, can make a consistent effort, can produce literature, and it is to this extent they play a crucial role but must not stand in the place of the working class and masses of people — without whom change is almost impossible or could only be reactionary. The youth should act on all fronts. Broad based activity, linked up to every form of democratic struggle, should be pursued — then only is victory certain.

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LABOUR RETRENCHMENTS

Over the past two years thousands of workers have been retrenched or "laid-off". Retrenchment today is still the order of the day. Being retrenched, workers are faced with an ever-increasing burden; there is no money to pay the rent, to buy food or buy clothing. Their young children are forced to leave school and look for work.

For the contract workers this means back to the "Homeland", where there are hardly, if any, jobs available. Here they join the other thousands of unemployed, waiting for a chance to be recruited for new employment. In the meantime, they make use of savings or pensions of aged parents. Otherwise they are forced to come back to the cities but face the possibility of landing in jail owing to influx control regulations.

WHEN AND WHY DOES RETRENCHMENT OCCUR?

Retrenchments occur during a period of recession. A recession normally follows a period of boom. A boom period is when everything is going well for the bosses and the state. Both their incomes increase enormously while that of the the bosses and the state reinvest very little income back into industry, the majority portion being taken out of industry. A good example is the increase in gold prices in 1981 when the bosses invested their profits in buying property and other companies, while the state spent an enormous amount on defence rather than promoting agriculture, mining and commerce.

Over a period of time, the profits of the firms decrease because people do not have enough money to buy goods produced by the firms. The state's revenue also decreases because of the reduced tax it receives from the firms and individuals. Lower income means lower tax. Thus the economy finally reaches a period of recession. During this period the bosses try to maintain the profit rate obtained during the boom period. They do this by keeping wages at the same levels by laying off workers, cutting back on production and raising the prices of goods. Recent increases include the increase of essential goods like milk and butter. The state on the other hand increases the GST or reduces its subsidy on essential commodities like bread. It also shifts its responsibility by spending less on housing and transport and placing the responsibility on individuals to build their own houses or pay more for bus and train fares.

HOW RECESSIONS BENEFIT THE "BOSSSES"?

They use recessions to maintain a small work force but demand an increased production level. Thus, for example, ten workers may be forced to do the job of 25 workers at the same pay they (the ten workers) received previously. If any of the ten workers dare to complain they are threatened with dismissal. The bosses can do this because they are aware of fact there are many other workers waiting for a chance to be employed.

The bosses sometimes retrench workers in order to replace people with machines. The cost of machinery is cheaper and less burdensome for them unlike workers who are always striving for a better wage. On the other hand workers are able to resist the bosses when there is dissatisfaction. Machines cannot do this.

Bosses also use recessions to weaken trade unions, and to fire workers indiscriminately. They get rid of union leaders and workers whom they regard as "agitators". They try to

disorganise strong worker organisations.

The threat of retrenchment is used as a means of controlling and disciplining workers.

WHAT SECTORS AND WHICH SECTIONS OF THE WORKERS ARE AFFECTED?

Retrenchments occur in all sections of the industry. It affects all races — black and white; all industries — mining, motor and textile; and all categories — skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

In the motor industry about 2,000 workers lost their jobs late last year. Most motor companies — Sigma, Ford, went on to three- to four-day working weeks.

In the mining industry up to 15,000 workers lost their jobs, mostly because of the drop in gold prices.

In the textile industry, Veldspun retrenched 600 workers.

WORKERS' RESPONSE TO RETRENCHMENTS

The progressive trade union movement has refused to accept that nothing can be done about retrenchments.

These trade unions have coped with retrenchment in various ways:

For example when the General Workers' Union (GWU) were threatened with retrenchment at Trident Marine Engineering last July, workers with permanent resident rights volunteered to be retrenched in order to safeguard the jobs of migrant workers who would be forced into unemployment and starvation in the Homelands.

The Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) negotiated with management the following retrenchment procedure:

- First worker in should be retrenched last
- Workers must be warned about retrenchments three months beforehand
- Retrenched workers must fill the first vacancies
- Workers must receive compensation for retrenchment

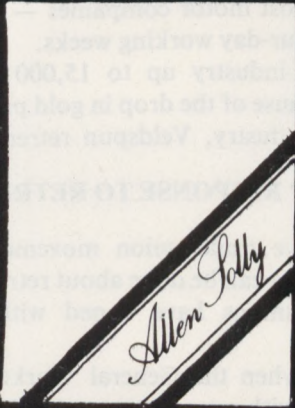
Recessions and booms and thus retrenchments, unemployment, high profits and low wages are all typical of the present economic situation. In this system there are the owners of capital and providers of labour. The bosses own all the factories, mines and farms while most workers do not own anything. The bosses' only interest is to make high profits, while that of the workers is to earn a decent wage. This being so it results in the bosses not having the interest of workers at heart in that they refuse to pay decent wages as this would decrease their profits. The workers are forced to demand a better wage in order to improve their living conditions. The state on the other hand assists the bosses in meeting their interest. In this country the state would, for example, not lay down minimum wage levels but would use its military force to harass workers should they demand better wages. This conflict of interest between the bosses and the state on the one hand and the workers on the other hand results in all the ills of this economic system. Retrenchments and strikes are clear examples of such ills.

The present economic system has created an oppressed and exploited class. Workers reject this system and demand a just and democratic system — one in which the wealth of the country will be equally distributed and in which the land shall be shared amongst all those who work it. However, in the intermediate, there is need for strong worker unity so that workers can together overcome the problems they are faced with.

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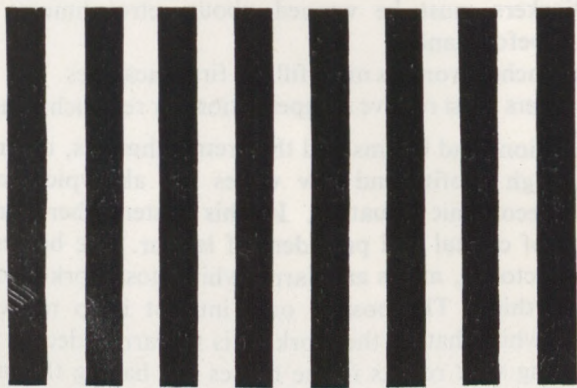
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EDUCATION FOR DOMINATION

The South African society is one which is ridden by the evils of racism, oppression and economic exploitation. To uphold the present social and political order the state has devised a number of ways to force us to accept this type of society. They use direct naked force in the form of the police, army and laws like pass laws, detentions, etc.

They also use indirect methods to control us. These indirect methods try to control our ideas. Because they try to control our ideas they are called the ideological forms of control. Ideological control is carried out through the newspapers, TV, radio, religion, etc. The most important form of ideological control is **education**.

The ideas that this racist, exploitatative regime pushes through its agencies try to force people to accept racism and exploitation. It tries to dominate people — thus education becomes an agency of domination and not liberation. The task of students therefore is to expose the education system for what it is. They must challenge the ideas of racism and exploitation and present their alternatives. The Azanian Students' Organisation (AZASO) and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) is presently involved in drawing up an Education Charter which will outline the kind of education we want. While striving for changes in the education system we must remember that no real changes can be made unless there are fundamental changes in the rest of society. Thus, students must always ensure that they link the educational struggle with the overall struggle for liberation.

METHODS OF DOMINATION

The South African society is similar to many Western countries, e.g., the United States, Britain and West Germany in that it consists of two distinct groupings. The vast majority who are the workers and a small elite who own and control the mines, factories, etc. In South Africa a large majority of the workers are black (African, Indian and Coloured) while the rich elite is mainly white.

Any oppressive system will ensure that the people do not demand change, that they passively accept what is given to them. If people begin demanding change then the authorities know they will be in serious trouble. One of the ways the system safeguards itself is by saying that people are poor because that is nature's way. In class we often find that the teacher shouts at us if we give a wrong answer, saying that we are "dumb" or stupid. We are told that we either inherited this "dumbness" or we just did not receive any brains. This is why most blacks are "slow thinkers". Thus students begin to accept that there must be something seriously wrong with themselves without looking for the cause of the problem elsewhere. This is called **Fatalism** — the philosophical doctrine that all events are predetermined so that man is powerless to alter his destiny. But it has been proven over and over again that brighter students usually come from well-to-do families. This because they can be provided with the best toys, books, nourishment, etc.

Another feature of our education system which is common

to others is that of **regimentalisation** — the forcing of discipline or order on a grouping in a domineering manner or more simply the way students are required to follow every command of the teacher no matter how silly it is.

This aspect aims at creating a passive, obedient work force who will come to work at a specific time, sit at their machines or desks the whole day, obey the floor manager and then leave at a specific time.

Unique to the South African educational system is its racist basis that can easily be seen in the very vast differences in the expenditure for the different race groups in education. One of the most important ways that racism is perpetuated is in the use of the language. In lower primary courses the authorities urge students to "take pride in his/her own language. . . . as one of his most precious cultural possessions." This shows that education is used as a tool not only to separate different race groups but also to disunite on the basis of language. It is for the same reason that separate universities have been created to serve different language groups, like Fort Hare for Xhosas and Turfloop for Sotho and Tswana people and Westville for Indians.

Another subtle form used to further racism can be seen by the type of history we study. It is without a shadow of doubt a glorified history of the white man's rape, plunder and exploitation of this beautiful land. It aims at proving to us that the coming of the white man was an act of God to civilise the barbaric races that ran around in the bushes here. It aims to force us to accept that the ways of dispossession where our people lost their precious land, to the murderous colonialists, occurred because the Africans kept stealing cattle from the whites.

In our study of English we study only the works of European writers. We are never exposed to the works of African writers — who share our experiences and can reflect them. This creates an urge amongst students to imitate Western culture and values thinking that all he or she has ended up with, is inferior.

For such a status quo to be maintained, thus, education plays an important role. It inculcates capitalist values, individualism, fatalism, regimentalism and the suppression of free and critical thinking. Its contents are aimed at satisfying the needs of the ruling masters.

Our education system serves the functions of training people to take up particular jobs, it channels people into jobs on the basis of their race and their class position and it tries to teach people to accept a basically unjust society without opposition. These functions are an important part of the state's strategy for controlling working people in this country.

But black people have and continue to reject this inferior education. The education system received its most fundamental challenges ever in June 1976 and 1980. These years brought about a crisis in the education system which involved more than just protests and boycotts. The crisis refers to the ability of the education system to perform its functions of socialisation, regimentalisation, etc. The function of the education system in South Africa is an impossible one.

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It involves trying to persuade black people to accept their inferior position in apartheid society and training them for inferior positions in the economic life of this country.

That black people reject such an education goes without saying and as such the education system always has and always will be a failure. The rejection of the education system is part of an ongoing resistance to the system of apartheid as a whole. It is this political and ideological function of the education system which dooms it to failure and ensures

that it will be opposed by those who reject apartheid. In fact resistance to apartheid and resistance to the education system cannot be separated.

Conflict and crisis within the education system are inevitable because of the social system which it is serving is rejected by the majority of its citizens. Political and ideological control has become increasingly difficult to ensure, and the educational system has ceased to facilitate that control. Instead, it has come to generate so much conflict that it undermines the apartheid system instead of entrenching it.



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B.S.M. 1983 SOCCER FESTIVAL

TEAMS PARTICIPATING

GROUP A

1. Kimberley Team ★
2. Dicks Colts (geluksdal)
3. Celtic (Lenasia)

GROUP B

1. Athletico (Lenasia)
2. Manchester United (Benoni)
3. Durban Team ★

GROUP C

1. Belthorne United (Cape Town)
2. Stoke City (Benoni)
3. Azaadville United

GROUP D

1. Manchester City (Benoni)
2. Bluebells (Lenasia)
3. Young Eagles (Pretoria)

★ Teams as yet to be confirmed

FIXTURES : SATURDAY, 15th OCTOBER, 1983

STADIUM		TIME	SHADY WILLOWS A	
Kimberley	vs Dicks Colts	09h00	Belthorne U	vs Stoke City
Athletico	vs Man. Utd.	10h30	Man. City	vs Bluebells
Azaadville	vs Belthorne	12h00	Celtic	vs Kimberley
Eagles	vs Man. City	13h30	Callies	vs Athletico
Dicks Colts	vs Celtic	15h00	Stoke City	vs Azaadville
Man. Utd.	vs Callies	16h30	Bluebells	vs Eagles

FIXTURES : SUNDAY, 16th OCTOBER, 1983

STADIUM	TIME	SHADY WILLOWS "A & B"
Winners A vs C	09h00	Losers A vs C & B vs D
Winners B vs D	10h30	
LOSERS FINAL	12h00	
Swaraj vs Estcourt Leeds ★	14h00	
Message	16h00	
Wnners Final	16h30	
Presentation		

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