

## NEWSVIEW: SOUTH AFRICA

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#### BODY COUNT, NATAL

##### Nationalism and the Reign of Terror

Over 600 Africans were killed in the Pietermaritzburg district in the Natal midlands between September 1987 and October 1988, and the carnage continues with weekly, if not daily, reports of more deaths. These murders were (and are) perpetrated, not by police and not by whites, but by blacks on blacks. By any standards, the death of so many people (and this excludes those assaulted, maimed, wounded, and burnt out of home) is exceedingly high.

In Natal the carnage was initiated by vigilante groups associated with the Zulu nationalist movement *Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe*. But not all deaths were at their hands: groups of youth claiming affiliation to the United Democratic Front (UDF) retaliated, and some of the casualties fell to them. Nonetheless, all available evidence points to members of Inkatha as the initiators of violence, and behind them have stood members of the (white) police force and the *kitskonstabels* (black auxiliary 'instant' police) providing arms and support.

The violence perpetrated by Inkatha did not start in 1987, but extends back to its reconstruction in 1975 on the initiative of Chief Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi (and the blessing of the ANC). However, before tracing its particular path of mayhem, that movement (and its opponents) must be viewed against the screen of total South African terror. Any country in which the hangman sent 1,330 persons to their death between 1978–88, and 164 in 1987 alone, is a land in which violence is endemic. Statistics, extracted from the events of a country, tend to sanitize the violence that is omni-present in South Africa, but they do provide an overview of what occurred. In the year June 1984–June 1985 the *Race Relations Survey* (1986) quoted the Commissioner of Police as saying that there had been reports of 8,959 murders, 123,100 serious assaults, and 16,085 rapes (p.854). Most were criminal deeds, reflecting a society in which life is held cheaply. According to the same source, the police shot and killed 624 adults and wounded 1071, and killed 92 juveniles and wounded 387 in 1986. Furthermore, in that year there were 1,298 deaths due to political violence. Half died following inter-black violence, 454 were killed by the security forces (see p.518).

## Vigilantes and the 'Homelands' Rulers

The setting up of 'Homelands' in South Africa opened up a new layer of terror in South Africa that has yet to be fully explored. The new rulers of these regions arrogated to themselves the old chiefly authority (but without any traditional safeguards) plus that of the police and army, and the backing of the South African armed forces. The legislation in most 'Homelands' is even more draconian than that of the central South African state. In these territories the police harassed, imprisoned, tortured or killed those who opposed the ruling clique. Over and above the officially recognized forces of coercion (backed by South African police or soldiers), vigilante groups were organized and smashed opposition groups in a brutal reign of terror. Whether it was the Transkei, the Ciskei, Bophutatswana, or Vendaland, all political rivals were silenced or removed. In the style of old China, war lords established areas of suzerainty and exploited the local population, and used their positions to amass individual fortunes through control of amenities, or by bribery and corruption. It was not long before details emerged of the peculations of 'Homelands' officials and their hangers-on. Those that protested were imprisoned, banished, or otherwise silenced.

Before this fortune hunting could commence, potential ruling groups rounded up opponents and took command of the administration. With the opposition effectively silenced, there was no accounting for personal enrichment, and only partial records are available of what was salted away. Furthermore, it is apparent from the granting of concessions, the licensing of businesses and the control of land, that individual members of the governing group have prospered while the average citizen's fortunes deteriorated. It is only when thieves fell out, and governments were toppled, that the press published information about personal aggrandizement and enrichment.

We cannot be certain that this is happening in all the 'Homelands' but it is quite apparent that the chiefs who control these mini-territories follow a common pattern in organizing guards to 'protect' their territory and destroy all opposition. They have also mobilized fellow clansmen, in towns and villages, to attack any person suspected of involvement in anti-government activity.

The pattern of repression established in the 'Homelands' was also employed by the more conservative leaders in townships and squatter camps, Vigilante groups were mustered to drive out the radical youth and 'trouble makers'. The only qualification for joining these urban gangs was a willingness to obey commands and wipe out the opposition (behind a shield of police support). Some joined voluntarily, expecting payment or reward, others were press-ganged and then remained, unable to extricate themselves.

A comprehensive account of vigilante gangs, even in the period 1984-6,

would fill several volumes. A summary of their activities by Nicholas Haysom of the Centre of Applied Legal Studies, *Apartheid's Private Army: The Rise of Right-Wing Vigilantes in South Africa*, presents some documented cases in urban and rural centres. Speaking of the vigilantes in the townships, he said:

The bands of conservative right-wing township residents that have mushroomed in numerous black townships in South Africa, have uniformly been called 'vigilantes' by residents and the popular press alike. They have generally come to be associated with a right-wing response to popular and anti-apartheid urban organizations. In general their victims have felt powerless against the vigilantes because of a perceived relationship between such organizations and the police (p.12).

The vigilantes were most often associated with township or village councils, and their targets have been the anti-apartheid activists who were involved not only in opposing the councils as useless bodies, but also in the rent boycotts, the consumer boycott of white shops and the boycott of schools. After initial action against activists by the police, the vigilantes moved in, assaulting and whipping, mugging and killing, attacking persons and property. Houses were gutted if any one of its occupants was suspected of opposing the Council or its members.

The appearance of vigilante gangs is not a new phenomenon. Such groups were formed by shanty-town leaders in 1945-6, and the government encouraged such groups in the suppression of unrest in the Reserves in the late 1950s. They appeared in more recent times during the Soweto revolt of 1976-7 when migrant Zulu workers opposed, or were used to oppose, stay-at-homes and attack school youth. Some of the migrant workers' resentment arose from their dislike of work stoppages and their lack of political consciousness. They were *amagoduka* ('those who go back' or target workers) intent on earning money and returning to the Reserves, who viewed political activity with suspicion. But it seems that Chief Buthelezi, as chief minister of KwaZulu, used their irritation for his own ends, and rather relished the attacks by 'his men' on the radical youth. In Natal, there was more direct involvement of Inkatha members in attacks on opposition elements in the colleges, and there were struggles for the political control of the campuses.

In 1980, when youth organized a nation-wide boycott of schools, they were joined by students at a few schools in KwaZulu. The Inkatha leadership condemned the action, and in May a number of students, alleged to have been involved in the boycott, were attacked by a mob armed with spears and assagais. Thereafter Buthelezi called for the formation of vigilante

gangs to protect the schools, and there were numerous attacks on those suspected of supporting the boycott, or said to be critical of Inkatha.

A fuller record shows that the pattern of events had become part of the political scene in Natal, with Inkatha bringing its forces to bear against anti-apartheid activists. The press provided tacit or open support for Inkatha when its brigades hunted down the members of more radical movements.

### **Inkatha and the UDF in the Natal Midlands**

The pattern of vigilante violence in South Africa appears to have worsened over the past two years in the Natal midlands. In focussing on this region, it must first be stressed that this is the one area from which information has become available. Other regions of Natal/Zululand have been affected by violence that might well surpass that of the midlands, and refugees in towns around Durban have claimed that Inkatha vigilantes have been responsible for widespread harassment and killings.

The first clashes between Inkatha and the UDF/COSATU (as distinct from earlier attacks by Inkatha in 1976-7) were in 1985 when the entire workforce of about 1,000 in Howick, near Pietermaritzburg, came out on strike at BTR Sarmcol (a subsidiary of the British Tyre and Rubber Company). They were all dismissed and, in response to white shopkeepers support for Sarmcol's management, called a boycott of white businesses in Howick. When scabs were brought in by Sarmcol and independent arbitration was rejected, the union called a one-day stayaway at Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas, which received widespread support. After months of agitation, the workers went back defeated, but meanwhile they also had to contend with the antagonism of Inkatha and its 'trade union', the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA). This led to the petrol bombing of houses, and ultimately in December 1986 the assassination of five union members by members of Inkatha. Then came fresh conflict when COSATU/UDF leaders called a stay-a-way for 5-6 May to protest against the all-white parliamentary elections. Inkatha turned its wrath on local bus drivers, claiming that the response to that call was aided by their refusal to work, and at least 12 drivers were killed in attacks by Inkatha backed vigilantes. But this was still not the start of the major clashes, even if the COSATU/UDF initiative was seen by Inkatha local leaders as a threat to their control of the region. In September a dual campaign was launched: to recruit members for Inkatha, and to oust COSATU/UDF.

The conduct of the recruiting drive only succeeded in antagonising many householders. A joining fee of R5 was demanded and those who refused saw their houses burnt down. Furthermore, people would be press-ganged at night and forced to participate in the attacks on households. To meet this

harassment, local committees were organized and there were clashes in which the radical groups seem to have triumphed. Inkatha lost ground in the urban centres, particularly in the Edenvale complex where freehold rights were available and the population more settled. As a consequence, Inkatha turned to the semi-rural townships, some of which fell within KwaZulu, but here too there was resistance, even if less well organised. The conduct of the anti-Inkatha campaign was not appreciably different from that of Inkatha itself. The 'defence' committees were not accountable to any organization and they were responsible for wounding or killing Inkatha supporters, and furthermore, no political organization put out a call for the blood-letting to stop.

In all the clashes the police were absent or seen to be supporting the Inkatha gangs. Also, when auxiliary police (the 'kitskonstabels') were recruited, they were all members of Inkatha. Consequently, Inkatha members were rarely apprehended by the police, and if arrested, generally released after a short period. Those held in detention in the Pietermaritzburg area, and this was estimated as about 1,000, included no member of Inkatha.

Between September and January, according to Aitchison, the level of violence was horrifying. He continued:

Clearly associated with some of the violence is the element of revenge and the participation of criminal groups. Varying estimates have been made by some commentators of the extent to which poverty, unemployment and criminality fueled the fighting that had started.

Inkatha leaders were obviously involved. They were often called 'warlords' by their opponents — whether in imitation of old China or Japan is not clear, but the title was remarkably apt. In those countries there was the same bid to control territory, exact tribute or taxes, and use patronage to maintain local power. And when that power was not secure, criminal gangs were used to destroy any enemy — real or imagined.

There was a steady background of clashes (fighting, arson, murders and so on) through January–August 1987, each clash leading to one or more 'incidents' (where incident refers to any reported case of intimidation, assault, abduction, rape, injury or murder). Besides the difficulty in obtaining accurate figures for the more obvious crimes, like murder, Aitchison points out that estimates of intimidation or injury were bound to be grossly underestimated.

Nonetheless, the events that were monitored through to August showed that the incidence of attacks on persons was high. Then, in September, the number of clashes mushroomed and the death rate (that had not exceed 17 per month) suddenly jumped to 60. Thereafter there were 83 deaths in

October, 61 in November, 113 in December and 161 in January 1988. There was a partial respite as deaths dropped to 50 in February and 14 in March, but the lull did not last. Averaging about 30 a month from April to June, it then rose to a steady 50 per month in July to October, the last months in which totals have been reported from the Centre for Adult Education. In 1987 there were 895 clashes, involving 1,160 incidents. A count of those killed during the year showed that 62 were members of Inkatha, 126 were from the UDF, and 202 were unknown. The size of the last figure reflects the fact that members of households could be attacked and even wiped out because one of the children was implicated, or thought to be implicated, in UDF activity.

The most recent violence (on 4 December 1988), was reminiscent of the St Valentine Day's massacre in Chicago in the 1930s, when mobsters controlled the streets with sawn-off shot guns. At 3.0 a.m., on the morning of the 4th Inkatha vigilante swooped on a wake for a baby at Trust Seed, near New Hanover in Natal. The gang attacked and killed at least eleven persons: two men, seven women and two children. As in most such cases, the attack had its roots in local conflicts, but was used by Inkatha to take control of the area and force residents to join the organization and pay the R5 fee. If that had been all, the killing would have been significant only in the ruthlessness with which it was executed, and the number of victims executed in one fell swoop. But it was the deep seated nature of the conflict in the region that drew attention to what had happened, and the alliance between black landowners and the 'war lords' that gave added significance factor to this attack.

According to an account in the *Weekly Mail* on 8 December, the story extends back twenty years when Trust Feed was declared a 'black spot' and the residents threatened with removal. A 'crisis committee' that was formed to stop removal was successful and greeted the conversion of the region into a 'black development area'. They won the support of the farm tenants and pressed for improvements on the land — a factor which inevitably antagonised the black land owners. Local Inkatha leaders gave their full support to the landowners, and also called for the imposition of a tribal structure in Trust Feed, and for the appointment of chiefs and *indunas* (or headmen).

When Trust Feed was declared a development area in March 1988 Inkatha launched a major recruitment drive. It also appointed a body to oppose the crisis committee and started a campaign to drive its rivals out of town. The killings of 4 December was part of the concerted attack on members of the crisis committee and their families, and one further step in entrenching Inkatha control. On this occasion with the open support of the black landowners.

## The Warlords and Nationalism

In describing the acts of terror in South Africa, it is all too easy to see the issue as being specific to local conditions, and it is certainly the case that the nature of the struggle in South Africa, and the strategy of the government, promotes such gangsterism. Without wishing to suggest that the focus of the killings exist outside the immediate area (whether the clashes were in the squatter camps, the townships or the Homelands), it would be overly parochial to see this as a particularly South African phenomenon.

Many of the most vicious criminal gangs operating in the world today emerged from local self-protection groups (such as the Sicilian Mafia) or from patriotic societies (such as the Chinese Triads). Their transformation from socially 'responsible' groupings into self-seeking racketeers has a parallel in the history of many national movements. The use of gangs and retainers was a regular feature of Chinese history until the mid-30s, when provincial war-lords ruled their territories by means of terror. Chinese gangs were responsible for the most brutal killings, and tens of thousands of trade unionists and communists in 1927-31 were slaughtered at the behest of Chiang Kaishek and his ruling nationalist movement, the Kuomintang.

Central to Chiang's strategy, and that of the nationalist leaders in Asia, Africa and Latin America (and also those in eastern Europe who pursue similar politics), was the use of national institutions for personal enrichment and the construction of a capitalist state in which their riches would be protected. This has been the guiding star of nationalists everywhere in the 19th and 20th centuries through Asia, Latin America and Africa; and this became the policy of the Homeland leaders, including Buthelezi of KwaZulu. There was nothing remarkable about the direction such men took. They had decided where their class interests lay when they embarked on their particular brand of politics. However, the appearance on the Inkatha platform of Rowley Arenstein (one-time leading member of the Communist Party and later leading Maoist) does suggest that nationalist leaders have been able to utilise the concept of nationalism once favoured by Stalin and his disciples. This point is taken up in this issue of *Searchlight South Africa* in the discussion of the ideas once favoured by the Moscow Institute of African Studies (see 'A Question of Class'). Arenstein's role stems in part from his acceptance of Stalin's simplistic definition of the nation, in terms of which he has called for the recognition of the claim of the Zulu people to nationhood. This led him to a defence of capitalist 'development' in KwaZulu, support for the launching of a tribal trade union and then ultimately a rejection of talks with the UDF/COSATU because of some supposed misdemeanour on their part. This, then, is the end result of a man who has allied himself to Stalinism (and its war-time variant, Browderism),

Maoism, and now Zulu nationalism, and could see no wrong in the crimes perpetrated by his heroes. The progression has a logic of its own — taking Arenstein through a range of reactionary ideologies, and depositing him finally in the ranks of provincial nationalism.

The use of violence to settle accounts with opponents has taken a variety of forms, varying with the local configuration of political forces. In viewing the destructive path of Inkatha it must be noted that the organization was reconstructed by Buthelezi on the suggestion of the ANC, and that Buthelezi claimed to be a long standing member of the Congress Youth League, and then of the ANC. He has always called for the release of Nelson Mandela as a precondition for any talks with the government. Although he heads a Homeland government, he has steadfastly refused to ask for 'independence', and his political philosophy is little different to that of other Congress leaders. The conflict with the ANC has more to do with political fiefdom than with principles, and future alliances between the ANC and Inkatha — or at least a tolerance of each other — is not to be discounted. On this account we have every cause to fear that the ANC and its present allies could follow the same path nationally as Inkatha does regionally, if they ever got near the reins of power. The possibility of their being better than the present regime is no compensation. Like nationalists everywhere, committed to a capitalist society (even with welfare statism written into their programme), the trajectory of their political path is determinable. It is for this reason that the comparison with events across the world becomes important. There is no reason to believe that the ANC would act any differently from nationalists elsewhere, and that its record would be any better than those leaders who permitted, or even encouraged: the massacre of Muslims in India and Hindus in Pakistan after partition; the attacks on Palestinians by Israelis (once so proud of their 'socialism'); the carnage that has destroyed Lebanon; the attacks on Karens by Burmese; the elimination of Chinese by Indonesians and of Tibetans by Chinese; the fighting between Sunni and Shia Muslims in the Gulf; the fighting between Turks and Greeks in Cyprus; of Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka; of Koreans, Chinese and others by Japanese; and the long list of inter-ethnic fighting that includes the Punjab, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Serbia, and on, and on, and on.

Each case must be discussed separately to show the precipitating factors, and to trace the roots of acts of terror. Ultimately it will be shown, in almost every case, that the antagonisms are compounded of immediate deprivation and/or poverty and long standing ethnic (or religious) hostility. The history of the past sits heavily on any generation, but it is the immediate difficulties confronting any population that leads to the outbursts of violence — assisted of course by ideologues who have an interest in these eth-

nic clashes. And when the clashes come, it is against the background of nationalist myths which are used to mobilize sections of a people against their opponents. How revealing then to view the myths, sent out on South African television in December/January 1986-7, of the prowess of the Zulu king, Shaka.

The vastness of the problem on a global scale indicates that generalizations are difficult, but there can be no doubt that nationalism has been invoked by local leaders to secure control of given territories, the better to exploit local resources and the population. Through nationalist propaganda, political leaders acquire the control of patronage, the right to tribute, and obviously, formalization of the control of coercion.

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## BIG BROTHER AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

### The National Security Management System (NSMS)

The power structure of the South African state has been refashioned over the past few years. In line with most modern states, and particularly those based on dictatorial powers, ultimate control rests on a balance of power between the governing party, the armed forces and the security police. The issue of who should manipulate the institutions of state depends on the relative strength of these three bodies, and that, in turn, will depend upon the stability or perceived stability, inside the country.

After the unrest of the early 1960s, and the emergence of sabotage groups in South Africa, the security police and the army established separate information bureaus and had their own information collecting networks.<sup>1</sup> From

the mid-60s a number of attempts were made to centralise the state's security force, with the police securing the central position under prime minister Vorster. This altered with the succession of P.W. Botha (previously Minister of Defence) to the premiership. Because of his close association with the army, Botha shifted the central focus of state security to the army, and Magnus Malan, the army chief, was given a cabinet position. Then came the liberation of Mozambique and Angola, and the state responded with a programme of 'total strategy', aimed at destabilizing neighbouring states and crippling internal opposition groups.

The government did not seem to have a preconceived plan for its total strategy — rather, it proceeded pragmatically, improvising as it moved along a tortuous path that promised reform, while maintaining a repressive system of controls.

Following the strike wave of 1973-6, and the Soweto revolt of 1976-77, two government commissions (those of Riekert and Wiehahn) proposed plans for the stabilization of the black urban population and the legalization of African trade unions. These provided the basis for an urban programme that was reformist in scope. Furthermore Indians and Coloureds were brought into a watered down parliamentary system through representation in ethnic 'parliaments' in a tri-cameral constitution. At the same time, following the formula of the ex-police chief General Johan Coetzee, low level protest organizations were to be allowed to exist, and controlled by the use of infiltrators, bannings and detentions.

But this strategy failed to rid the government of its opponents and it met new opposition from the black communities. The trade unions spread rapidly and demanded better wages and work conditions, and also showed a readiness to enter the political domain. Parallel to this, and complementing immediate worker demands, black communities rejected Community Councils, organised rent and consumer boycotts, and students boycotted schools. Street committees and youth groups gained control of townships and squatter camps, and umbrella bodies such as the United Democratic Front and the Azanian Peoples Organization could not be silenced by the old methods. The use of force could stifle some voices, but the effect of unemployment, social deprivation, and political oppression led to the uprising of 1984-87.

### **'Winning Hearts and Minds' (WHAM)**

The failure of existing strategy led to a reformulation of methods to suppress opposition. Its open manifestation was the organization of a nation wide shadow administration and the appointment of new personnel to head the new body or bodies. How the relative position of security police and

army was adjusted in this rearrangement is not yet clear, but it would seem that the armed forces now dominate the security forces in the country.

The state, according to Major General Wandrag of the South African Police Riot Control, had resolved to pre-empt 'hot-spots' or uprisings wherever trouble was expected — not through negotiations (which were to be avoided) but through adequate communication and education. The state believed the population was interested in better opportunities, clothes, bread and so on, and 'not...in political organizations'. It would channel resources into 'oil-spots', as areas of potential trouble were called. The first four to be chosen were Alexandra, Mamelodi, New Brighton and Bonteheuwel. The system was to be implemented through the National Security Management System (NSMS), which would also ensure a massive presence of the security forces in the black townships. There would also be a crack-down on political bodies.

Consequently, effective power in the country has been shifted to its central body, the State Security Council (SSC), which meets before every cabinet meeting and advises on all security matters. The SSC heads a chain of bodies that extends into every township in the country. Its information comes directly from twelve Joint Management Centres (JMC), each one headed by a member of the army. Its members are all appointed by state departments, and they represent the security forces and state 'welfare' departments. Under the JMCs are 650 sub-JMCs, and they in turn are to receive their information from mini-JMCs situated in each township.

Thus is Orwell's nightmare *1984* come alive, in which every person is placed under continual scrutiny. In this bureaucratic jungle it is planned that every JMC will set up Community Liaison Forums to meet with local capitalists, local councils and collaborative Africans. Each JMC will have three committees: one for intelligence, one for political, economic and sociological information, and a third for communications. The task of the third committee is to feed the Bureau of Information with reports of any unrest. The 650 sub-JMCs will each have Monitoring Committees on 24-hour standby to advise the authorities of any impending trouble. Officially, the role of the JMCs is described as providing resources to meet perceived needs so that disaffection is avoided. More to the point, the purpose is to stifle popular protest, spread disinformation and kill off any opposition movement.

A booklet issued to leading politicians and state functionaries by the SSC has the enlightening title: *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary Warfare*, which carries more than a faint whiff of US policy in Viet Nam. This is a manual, it is claimed, for all those who want to 'defeat the revolutionaries'. The techniques to be employed are simple:

Task 1. Seek out the enemy and destroy him (sic).

Task 2. Establish an effective and well motivated administration which will deny revolutionaries the initiative.

Task 3. Initiate the 'Winning Hearts and Minds' (WHAM) campaign by: Creating good working relations between the administration and the masses by identifying problems and applying correctives. Train loyal leaders (who must be well paid). '[Take] the lead ... with the organization of social, career, sport, education, medical, religious and military activities'. Create special constables with the support of local leaders to form the basis of self-defense. They will constitute an armed local militia, and form a bridge between the administration and the masses. Establish an effective (and covert) intelligence system with roots among the masses. In this way, 'revolutionary and non-revolutionary organizations' will be identified.

It is to secure these ends that the JMCs and the National Security Management System have been established. To take care of 'area defence', the military has been ordered to work in close co-operation with the local administration and assist 'with the building of roads, dams, irrigation schemes, schools, churches, etc'.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these disclosures, the entire system is run on a cloak-and-dagger basis. There is no declared budget — despite the fact that money is spent lavishly on its activities — and its members are sworn to secrecy.

### **Applying the System**

The central features of the State Security system have been in place for some time. The SSC and (presumably) the 12 JMCs are functioning, and money has been poured into some townships. Also, there has been some relaxation of laws relating to movement in the urban areas by Africans; African trade unions have legal status, and the tri-cameral constitution has been implemented. However, like all 'reforms' instituted by an oppressive regime, they carry a sting. Their objective, as explained in *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary Warfare* is to destroy any political activity of which the state disapproves. That has been amply demonstrated by the regulations and laws restricting trade union rights, by the banning of the main political organizations and the establishment of state sponsored sports and cultural organizations. Furthermore rent and economic boycotts have been broken, trials against leading activists have continued, activists have disappeared and many trade unionists and political leaders have been assassinated.

Also, the JMCs have made no statements on the activities of the vigilante gangs. They have said nothing about the killings in the Homelands,

have encouraged vigilante activity in the squatter camps, and have taken no effective steps to stop the weekly death toll in the Pietermaritzburg region. Inkatha vigilantes were not stopped or impeded by the police. The arrest and arraignment of two leading Inkatha men on charges of murder indicates that only the most blatant of episodes have forced the state to act.

The programme for the townships is also open to question. Besides the fact that any alterations in black townships is in keeping with the philosophy of segregation and must be questioned on that ground alone, there are also restrictions on what is being attempted. Only the so-called 'oil-spots' are to be upgraded, and the vast majority of townships will be left unaltered.

The application of JMC strategy in Alexandra Township, a one-time militant centre of community action in Johannesburg, and earmarked for removal in earlier strategies, is outlined by Karen Jochelson.<sup>3</sup> Working through a newspaper and a comic strip (in which young Alex confronts 'Comrade Rat' a scruffy creature who denigrates all township development) the mini-JMC for Alexandra has set out to sell a new development plan for the urban renewal. This can be broken down as follows:

Task 1: Rents are to be collected and the rent boycott broken.

Task 2: The township is to be improved through the building of sports fields, play parks for children and so on.

Task 3: Business finance is to be employed to finance housing, sponsor skills training centres, assist small business development and youth programmes, and help clean up the township.

In its programme for 'progress', the JMC is to provide the training ground for future black manufacturers and industrialists, supplemented by 'the fostering of an individualistic ethic where self-upliftment and hard work guarantee success'. So the illusionists would have it. More to the point, local political groups have been rendered inoperative — either driven underground, or severely restricted in their activities.

Approximately one quarter billion rand has been earmarked to improve Alexandra — one of the medium sized townships in South Africa. Despite the raising of this sum the financial constraints on development makes its progress doubtful. The raising of similar amounts for other townships must remain in doubt.

Ways of combatting the stranglehold by the mini-JMCs in a township like Alexandra will be one of the major problems facing the inhabitants in the years to come. This will be a task that will tax the most persistent and most courageous — but it is a task that will have to be undertaken.

## NOTES

1. This was disclosed in 1964, during the trial in Cape Town, of members of the African Resistance Movement.

2. Information has been extracted from Mark Swilling, 'Whamming the Radicals', *Weekly Mail*, 20 May 1988; and *Southscan*, 13 January 1988, reporting a talk to the Institute for Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria and a confidential briefing to businessmen by Major General C.J. Lloyd (chair of the SSC).

3. 'People's Power and State Reform in Alexandra', *Work in Progress*, No. 56/57, November/December 1988.