

IZWI lase TOWNSHIP



EMPLOYERS' PARADISE

Ziyaduma, Majita - Hazaal werk!

WHERE LIFE IS CHEAP, LABOUR IS CHEAP. Alexandra is an employers' paradise. Like other locations it is a labour reserve, with a massive number of unemployed. Contractors come scavenging here every morning, finding what they want on the open plain opposite Entokozweni. The unemployed wait for trucks and kombis to pull up, then surround them, offering themselves.

INTERVIEW

"I haven't found a full-time job for two years. Here we are picked up for a day's work. Some lucky ones get a Monday-to-Friday job. Maybe I get nine Rand or ten Rand for today, but tomorrow nothing, or even for the rest of the week nothing."

"How do you live on ten Rand a week?"

"There's nothing you can do. I take two Rands to the rank at 15th Avenue, buy shoe-laces (mala) for 30c, 30c for tomatoes. That leaves one Rand forty, out of this I buy 75c mealie-meal, and just a few other things. Eight Rands I put separate, so I know that I can eat again tomorrow.

When that eight Rands is finished, I know I must get into a truck in the morning without asking how much will they pay. It is the same for many of us. It causes some to steal and do funny things."

"What about rent?"

"I help my father with a few Rands each month. Our family has one room, for nine Rands. We can live if we live in an uncomfortable way."

FAILURE TO PRODUCE?

A yellow kombi pulls up. Men scatter, running towards the township streets. It is a police vehicle; and plenty of these men are unregistered.

Yet hunger doesn't wait for the correct documents. All men must find an income. Those without permits are safe only when they have been taken into a truck and driven off to work; thus they ask no questions about the wage or the job.

FRUITS OF PARADISE

Contractors especially benefit from this reservoir of unemployed workers. From day to day they might not know what their labour needs will be, so they avoid a full-time staff whom they would have to pay regularly. Getting day labour from Alex, they don't need to register their workers, don't pay a levy, don't give sick leave or paid holidays, have no problems with unions about retrenchment or serving notice, don't worry about bonuses, and pay an absolute minimum.

Strictly speaking it may not be legal to take on workers like this: but it is done on a massive scale. And it cannot be stopped, while the two parties, boss and worker, seek each other - the one driven by a need to make profits, the other driven by a need for mala and me-pap.

A FOOT-HOLD IN THE CITY

The key to the situation is cheap housing: and even if it is uncomfortable, a place in Alexandra for nine Rands is cheap. It makes it possible for people to keep a foot-hold in the city, even with very low incomes.

The number of unemployed in urban areas has been regulated for many years by influx control, but this is now a tough problem for the authorities. There is rising unemployment, and a growing number of people even with urban rights (undersections 10) are unemployed.

MIDDLE-CLASS NURSERY

The Koomhof Bills are the basis of a new policy, to organise the character of urban locations around 'approved accommodation'. To stay in a city will in future depend not on rights, but on access to a house or a hostel. Housing, in particular, will become far more expensive: this being the way the state hopes to establish a settled, well-off middle class of Africans, who will be a sort of cushion against the low-paid working class. The days of nine Rand rent in Alex will soon be over!

How do they make housing expensive? One way is this: you demolish an old house where people payed nine Rands rent, and you move such people into new houses. You call it redevelopment, and you say that you are Moses Leading the People to the Promised Land.

In this way you enjoy pop and so get your hands on ter, when you feel strong demand R140 for a month these new houses, and y shocked occupants that the up or quit. There is plenty the old Alex, you tell them can't live in a nice house mah someone who can afford, and with him!"

Gradually as the old Alex i down, space for the poor gets and smaller, until finally Rev. Molepo gives you a ticket to homeland or other, where yo every right to sit and rot.

That's one way of doing it. A breaking down shacks, forcing to give up their free-hold title, harassment and threatening people, and a lot. The new 'Councils' are the perfect instrument for doing these things, cause they have to finance themselves and because they depend on a middle class elector to remain in power.

DO-IT-YOURSELF OPPRESSION

In this way the Councils are fully the tradition of South African dumb bodies. As Duma Nokwe pointed out in 1961 when the UBC's were being constructed, "The URBAN BANTU COUNCIL Act is a skillful attempt by the Nats to divide the African people and get them to operate their own machinery of oppression."

2-million jobless by end of year

By Amrik Manges
UNEMPLOYMENT in South Africa, including the home-lands, will pass the 2-million mark by the end of this year. The projected figure represents 25% of the total labour supply of almost 8.5-million, according to the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit (Saldru).

For an individual who does not have a job, unemployment is a crisis. It is a crisis of survival. Where will he get the money with which to live?

For the system, unemployment is a crisis only when there is a lot of it. It becomes socially embarrassing. Politicians begin to worry about riots, store owners begin to worry about theft.

There is such a crisis at the moment. Some say the number of unemployed black workers is 3 million. It is actually many more: but as I shall argue later, the actual number makes no difference in principle.

Because of this social crisis, people are beginning to scratch their heads about

unemployment. Why are things like this? To prevent them reaching the right answers, capitalists spokesmen are saying that unemployment is a 'problem'. The Minister of Manpower says, 'The key to solving South Africa's unemployment problem lies in a more aggressive effort to decentralise industry.' (Star 6.10.83)

WHAT IS A PR

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What is this ghost "Unemployment"?

WHAT IS A PROBLEM?

We must be very careful with this word 'problem'. To say that there is a problem means that it can be solved. This opens the door to all sorts of fancy 'solutions' such as encouraging small businesses (which have been treated as illegal in the past); training more skilled workers; and preaching birth control to the working class.

Such schemes have no chance of removing unemployment, because in actual fact it is not unemployment that is the problem, but capitalism, for it is capitalism that creates unemployment and benefits from it. Unemployment is not a fault in the system, but something that belongs to it. Any capitalist who pretends to find unemployment unacceptable, is lying. The only possible solution to the crisis of unemployment, whether for many people or few, lies in changing the economic system.

Let us not accept unemployment, and look for 'solutions'. Let us rather try to understand the significance of unemployment, as a consequence of the capitalist system, so that we may grasp what capitalism does that is bad for the working masses.

IN SIMPLE WORDS

Unemployment is a very strange thing. Here is a person unemployed — it means no job — he is not producing. At the very same time, people need things to be produced — for they lack housing, clothes and even food. Production is wanted urgently, yet a person available to produce cannot find a job!

Put it another way. This very person who is looking for work, was born into society, he belongs to it, and is prepared to contribute his time and labour to it. Yet society has no place for him, it pushes him aside, and he is left with no support. A strange kind of society which says to someone, 'You are not wanted.'

QUOTES

'Retrenchments have been our major problem' this year, with 5 000 MAWU members already forced into the growing pool of unemployed workers' (Star 7.9.83)

'African unemployment has risen from 11.8% in 1970 to 21.1% in 1981 (S.A. Review)

'Officials are trying to turn back a tide of desperate and hungry black people fleeing to the cities from drought devastated bantustans.' (Sunday Express 9.10.83)

'40% of the Ciskeian population . . . are unemployed' (Sowetan)

'So many people are without jobs that nobody knows the true extent of unemployment in the P.W.V. area (Sowetan 28.4.83)

Put it yet another way. Although many people lack necessary things, masses of unnecessary things are produced. In South Africa there are 260 different models of private cars produced. They pass in the street, with often no more than one person inside: while masses wait for public transport which is crowded and scarce. In the Cape, there is a lake of wine stored in tanks — far more than people want.

SOMETHING'S WRONG

It seems there are obstacles between production policy and the needs of the mass of people in South Africa. People are in want, but do not get; people are prepared to work, but do not find jobs. There is starvation within a stones throw away of the very gold mines on the Reef, at the same times that millions of hands are forced to be idle. The connection between PRODUCTION AND PEOPLE is faulty. How has this state of affairs come about?

People need basic goods, like food and clothing. Why then do they not themselves produce these things? Why do we blame the system, saying that people look for jobs but do not find them? Should we not rather say that anyone can grow food or sew clothes or build a shelter. Then why don't they?

We said above that unemployment is a consequence of capitalism. But it is also a pre-condition. Capitalism has not existed from the beginning of the world. It came into being quite recently; and one of the ways it established itself was by preventing people from producing for themselves. It continues to exist, moreover, by continuing to prevent people from producing for themselves. This must be explained.

THE MAKING OF A PROLETARIAN CLASS

Let us try to recall the kind of natural production system that existed before capitalism conquered the Southern Africa region. Everyone in society had a task; that is, everyone was drawn into production as soon as he or she was able to work. Production took place in answer to need. If a hut was needed, it was built; if clothes were needed they were made. It would have been strange for someone to be told, 'There is no work for you to do, and no food for you to eat.'

To be sure things were not quite so straight forward. In African kingdoms some people were richer than others. Supplies were taken from producers to feed soldiers while fighting, and to support the notables. But things did not depart very far from the simple natural economic system outlined above.

The main feature of such a system is that PRODUCTION IS FOR PEOPLE. Everyone born into society had a task in production, and received what he needed to live on. How did the change to capitalism come about in South Africa?

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Before diamond and gold discoveries one hundred years ago, colonists got workers by direct force (conquest and slavery) or took advantage of those who were driven from their land by misfortune; for instance, cattle disease, raids by other tribesmen, etc. But the number of labourers was quite small.

With large scale mining, vast numbers of labourers became necessary. Employers, helped by their colonial governments, developed ways of getting men to leave their land to seek cash wages. Taxes were imposed; land was made scarce; desire for European clothes, weapons, tobacco and liquor were stimulated. There is plenty of evidence to show that these methods were conscious and deliberate.

'The fundamental cause of insufficiency of supply of labour lies in the conditions of life and population in South Africa. The mere necessities of existence are few, and obtainable with little exertion.' 1883 Cape Labour Commission

'In November 1897 the Zululand magistrates were ordered to 'remind all the chiefs of the necessity for preparing their people to pay the Hut Tax next year, by encouraging the young men to go out to work.' G. Guy.

SANAC recommended 'The encouragement of a higher standard among Natives by support given to education with a view to increase their efficiency and wants.' 1905

'These people, I am fully convinced, will never go out to work so long as they have land in cultivation sufficient to grow crops . . .'

'In the interests of their development, it is our duty to foster industry among them by raising their standard of life in such a way as to create new wants. . .'

(Report Native Commissioner for Lydenburg, Middleburg, Barbeton et al. 1902.)

THE NUMBER of people who are unemployed or laid off is growing by the day and stories of misery in the black townships are only superseded by the fear of the many social and economic problems that are likely to result from this.

With the scores of factories forced to close down and drastically cut their staff as a result of the deepening recession, thousands of people are queuing at factories hoping to get work. The unemployed range from youth to old, men and women with suffering mirrored on their faces.

THINGS GET SERIOUS

The problem of labour became far more urgent when mining capitalists realised that gold would have to be mined at deep levels underground, and that the cost of labour would have to be low. To get a large and cheap labour force for regular work on the mines was beyond the ability of the small Boer republic of the Transvaal, under Paul Kruger. Workers would have to be raked in from every region of Southern Africa, even from as far as Angola, Malawi, Mozambique; and they would have to be driven off their lands in every part of South Africa. To achieve this would require a huge, powerful, centralised administration; and it was fundamentally for this that Britain

provoked the Boer War in 1899. The historian J. Hobson wrote, *'The British war aim was to secure a full, cheap, regular, submissive supply of Kaffir and white labour.'*

In this action of the British we see clearly the capitalist attitude to people and production. The Boer system, as well as the African systems of production, were to be smashed so that PEOPLE could become LABOUR, to be used in the interests of foreign capitalists who wanted to gain diamonds and gold profits.

WHAT IS THE AIM?

Already by 1890 (as the writer G. Guy puts it) 'society had changed from a society in which man was the aim of production, to one in which production was the aim of man.' That is to say that under capitalism people produce for the sake of profits (accumulation), not for the sake of human welfare.

THE GREAT QUESTION

A new batch of administrators began to run the country after the end of the Boer War. In his first report the new Commissioner for Native Affairs wrote:

It was apparent to me from the first that, as the prosperity of the country hinges so largely upon the great labour question at the goldfields, there were good reasons for establishing my headquarters at Johannesburg.

It was possible to do a great deal in formulating plans for the adjustment of the great question relating to the mass of labourers who are essential to the development of the Witwatersrand goldfields. . .

Now, this 'great question relating to labourers' is, in fact, the central political question in capitalist states. It requires a strong state to force vast numbers of people from their land, into industries, mines and farms, as wage labourers. Once they are in employment, under contract, labour can be extracted from them in ways the employer himself determines. Part of this labour is paid for by the wage; but part is over and above the value of the wage. This is where profits come from — from unpaid

Announcements that work may be available have produced quite startling results. At Maluti in the Transkei, the arrival of an ISCOR recruiter in February with a requisition for 300 workers brought an outpouring of over a thousand African workseekers. At Motetsi in Lebowa, the arrival of a work requisition order stirs the labour bureau clerk to ring a bell. 'There is a hell of a rush in January if you ring that bell,' the labour officer observed. 'They come out like moles out of their holes.' If the bell is rung on any Monday, two or three hundred people will line up. To protect against a rush of desperate job seekers, TEBA in Transkei has erected security fences around its offices - 'not to protect against terrorism,' an official noted, 'but to keep the workers out, to keep them from tearing the place down.' In King Williamstown, TEBA had been taking on only those workers previously guaranteed re-engagement and virtually no novice miners: 'One day we got a pretty considerable order and we announced it. The blacks just flattened the fence.'

S.A.L.B.

labour forced from the worker by various methods. The worker is made to work extra time, or extra hard; or he works with machinery that increases his output. But whichever method the employers use, profit comes from unpaid labour, i.e. exploitation of the working class.

SUBJECTION

In the capitalist system, production is undertaken to make a profit for the owners, not for the sake of social well-being. And in this process, workers become 'labour units'. They are not in a position to decide how to work, or what to produce. Being without any means to produce for themselves, they are totally dependent on being given employment; which means that they have to present themselves at a business, ask for a job, and then do whatever they are told to do. The worker is really subject to his boss or supervisor. He needs the wage for his survival, he needs to 'put bread on the table' if he has a family. He is weaker than the firm that employs him. As an individual, he cannot fight against instructions. (Things are of course different where there is a strong union workers can join). If he loses his job, he has nothing to fall back on. Land, seeds, implements, or a craft of making this or that, have long been abandoned. Proletarians have nothing but their labour power to bring them an income — and maybe nobody wants it!

Union of S.A.

South Africa became a united state in 1910, and began to develop a unified policy of labour control. The most important measures were land restriction, which set aside only a very small percentage of the country for black ownership; and the Influx Control system. Land scarcity forced Africans into wage employment; Influx control herded them into whatever sector needed their labour, whether the mines, industry or farms.

WORKERS TIED TO WAGES.

The capitalist system of production requires workers who are dependent on wage-work. To get such a labour force, it compels masses of people to abandon their traditional system of production, which thus collapses, and in this way many millions of people become sub-

ject to the wages offered by capitalist employers or the state. This mass is called the proletarian class.

PROLETARIANS

Not all of them work in production. There are those who stay home to look after families; there are the young and the old, the sick, scholars and so on.

As a whole, the proletarian class is far larger than the number of actual workers. When we say 'working class' we must bear in mind that it means workers and others, all of them being proletarians in the sense that they have nothing but the wage to keep them alive. The question of employment and unemployment affects not just active workers, but the whole proletarian class, for they are all in some way or another involved in 'the great question relating to labourers', because they are all ultimately dependent on wages paid out by the employer class.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

We are now in a position to say a few things about the capitalist attitude to unemployment. We have seen that the capitalists originally created 'unemployment' in the sense that they consciously destroyed an existing system of production, and drove people into the labour market. We now ask, what responsibility does the capitalist class have to these proletarians? The answer is, they have none. Firms are interested in the business of making profits, not in the welfare of people. They pay workers enough to keep them alive and working, but not more. The capitalists attitude is well expressed by the Director of Personnel for Barlow Rand, Mr R Hofmeyr, when he said, '*The view of Industry is that the survival of the business is of greater importance. Productivity will tend to come before the interests of the workers.*'

1. One way of ensuring that workers work hard, for low wages, is by having a reserve of unemployed people always at hand. If everyone was employed, workers would be less easy to discipline, and wages would tend to increase. It is partly the threat to replace a worker by an unemployed person, that keeps him obedient and cheap.

2. Secondly, a reserve army of workers is useful because capitalist industry is highly changeable, sometimes in full production, sometimes cutting back (recession). This was explained clearly in the Fagan Report of 1947:

In estimating labour requirements one has to remember that, where there is great industrial activity, it is also necessary that there should always be a substantial reserve of labour — people who are ready to step in when others fall out or when there is increased activity in some industry; and there are many industries that are constantly expanding and contracting for seasonal and other reasons. In the building industry, for instance, there may be a pause when it rains, or when cement cannot be had; as soon as the sun comes out again or the cement arrives, the workers must be at hand.

3. Thirdly, industrial firms like to get machinery to replace labourers, if possible, since machines generally produce more and don't go on strike. Capitalist farms, for instance, have increasingly got rid of unskilled workers and replaced them with combine-harvesters and so on.
4. But finally, we must realise that there is no necessary connection between the number of workers required in any regional production system (eg Southern Africa), and the number of people forced into the ranks of the proletariat. Whenever there are too few workers capitalism will find people whom it can force into production. But if there are too many proletarians created in this way, capitalism has no plan for the well-being of the excess.

We see that unemployment is not a function of more or less jobs. It is a function of the size of the proletariat. If there are too many proletarians for the economic system, no amount of tinkering will cure the problem. The system itself will have to be replaced.

The black population of South Africa is 21 million, and this is the bulk of the proletarian class. Of this 21 million only 6 million are in wage-earning jobs. Does this mean that all the others are unemployed?

The word 'unemployment' is a tricky one. Usually when people speak of unemployment, they only include those people who are looking for work. But not everyone in the proletarian class does look for work; some are too old, others are still at school and so on. In South Africa, also, there are very many people who could work, and who need the income, but the various laws and obstacles make them so discouraged that they don't even bother to look for a job. They are put off by pass laws, by low wages, by the behaviour of bosses and overseers; they feel disgust at the system of exploitation, they fear the chaos of townships and the lack of accommodation. Many women are in this situation, and in addition they are worried about their children, for whom there is little proper care in the absence of their own mothers.

Such people are classified as 'not economically active', and they are not considered to be unemployed. Yet they certainly are unemployed, in the sense that they could be productive, and also in the sense that they need the income they would get with a job.

We can understand now why there are such different estimates of unemployment, where some say that the number of unemployed is half a million, and others say that it is 3 million. You get the low figure by leaving out some of those who are 'not economically active', and you get the higher figure by putting some of them in.

Take the case of a woman, living in a bantustan, whose only chance of a job is on a farm, picking tomatoes for one rand a day. She would like some income, but she thinks that this low amount is not worth the hard labour she would have to do, so she stays home. Is such a person unemployed? Or is she 'economically not active'?

Price rises over 5 years

	1978	1983
Brown Bread	16c	36c
Steak (1 kg)	R3-00	R6-50
Margarine (250 g)	33c	57c
Milk (litre)	30c	57c
Eggs (1 doz)	62c	R1-18
Sugar (2.5 kg)	85c	R1-57

NATURAL RIGHTS

How do proletarians who do not have wage employment survive? Many are dependents of the wage-worker, his family, whom he supports. It is in fact mostly in family groups that the wage is received and spent. This makes us see that the amount of the wage means nothing by itself, since it almost never belongs to one person, but to families, which are of different sizes. If there are many dependents, the wage will have to be spread further, and thus it will have less value. It is also clear that the wage itself, as money, is only a means of buying necessary items such as food, clothing and accommodation.

Clearly, if we want to grasp what unemployment is all about, we have to understand the nature of the proletarian class and how it came into being.

VALUE OF THE WAGE

In any serious sense, she is definitely unemployed, since she is without a job, and yet she could work, and wants to work. But because capitalism wants cheap labour and is not concerned about people as human beings, it offers her a ridiculous wage, and when she rejects it, leaves her to suffer hunger in a barren reserve. Such a woman has simply been robbed of her natural rights within society; she is oppressed by the system that will neither use her energy nor support her existence. In South Africa (and even more in the larger region of Southern African countries from which South Africa has drawn labour) many millions of such people exist.

Thus, if prices rise, the value of the wage drops. Thus we have to consider how many people the wage supports, and the price of goods, before we can get an idea of the value of the wage. What we should look at, therefore, is not the wage itself, but the standard of living, given any particular wage.

STANDARD OF LIVING

The standard of living is flexible. It is possible to survive with low income, if for instance, one lives under cardboard, eats very little and gets no schooling. Among proletarians there are great differences in the standard of living; some live reasonably well, others in great poverty. These differences are actually created and controlled by the capitalist class, which needs different grades and kinds of workers; eg cheap migrants for mines and farms, settled urban dwellers for skilled jobs in industry and for clerks in banks and insurance companies.

Se 9/10/87
CHILDREN in Lebowa are starving to death.
 There are about two million children in the arid homeland. About 125 000 (or 6%) are malnourished.

Not only does the capitalist class control these differences, it controls the standard of living as a whole, by raising or lowering consumer prices, either by inflation or by price controls on certain goods.

Perhaps it should be pointed out here that black and white workers were divided by allowing white workers a far higher standard of living than blacks. Thus, though they are still workers (ie proletarians who depend on wage jobs), white workers have been turned against their black co-workers. They protect themselves from competition by agreeing to racist legislation and outright oppression. The same could happen if the state succeeds in creating urban privileged workers! Urban workers will then be hostile to rural workers, both being black.

But in the end, workers are workers, and cannot progress under capitalism. In Europe, the number of unemployed is a staggering 20 million; white workers, in some of the most industrially advanced countries in the world.

What about proletarians who do not receive wage benefits at all, either directly as workers or by being part of the family of a worker. How do they survive?

CASH

The need for cash is something no-one can escape. Everything in capitalism is regulated by money. Without wage income to rely on, proletarians must get money some other way, or starve. In actual fact, many do starve, as the clipping below shows.

The two best known ways of getting an income other than a wage, are to work in the INFORMAL SECTOR, or to practice TRANSFERS, as they are called. I'll explain these:

The informal sector includes all small, unofficial businesses, such as making brooms, leather belts, shoe-repairs building etc. These have long been illegal, being unregistered; but recently they are being encouraged by what is called the Small Business Development Corporation. It is said that these backyard businesses provide employment, but the real reason for legalising them is probably because the state wants to develop a black 'middle class', to help keep the working class disciplined.

This sector also includes vendors, selling mala, vegetables, hardware, clothes etc.

Services are provided by musicians, photographers, priests and doctors, laundry-women, transport drivers.

Transfers means shifting valuable objects or cash from someone else's pocket to one's own, by force, fraud or seduction. It can be done softly (pickpocket) or hard (tswara poo). It is what happens when a migrant loses money in a game of dice to a township clever who has loaded dice (dimbombayi). It happens in more elaborate ways, as with fah-fee. Shoplifting, house-breaking, car theft (kokota), armed robbery, are forms of transfer from the wealthy class to the crook (who may also be wealthy!). A common way of making money which is not quite informal sector nor transfer, is prostitution. It is a form of relationship, similar to marriage but often shorter, which many women (and some men) enter into for financial support.

The life of the proletariat, outside of direct wage earning, is full of trouble and misery. It is a cycle of unemployment, abandonment, desperation, drink, illegal acts, deception, concealment, imprisonment. This helps to explain the savagery of life in black locations. There was an account of a boy of 12 from Kwazakele caned for the killing of an adult man in a row over R2....

The window on his life opened between mouthfuls. He first went to the roadside gambling spot in 1981. He tried a game of crow-and-anchor, played with dice. He won a few rand and bought food for his younger sisters. They had not eaten for a full day.

© Doesn't your mother buy food for them?
"Sometimes she does not have money. She does not work."

SUBJECTION

When the proletarian class is created by taking away from people their land and their system of production, their relations to one another also change.

Under the capitalist system people no longer directly depend on one another in production. They do not produce together with other members of their family or society, for all their needs. The aim under capitalism is to get a cash income, by working for an employer.

In this way, a worker becomes subject to the employer. Likewise members of the family now become subject to the one who earns the wage. People do not depend on one another equally, because they are not equal partners in production. This leads to relations of domination: the boss dominates the wage-worker, and he in turn dominates his dependents.

Two major social evils result:

1. There develops a wide gap between those who work by giving instructions, and those who work taking instructions. It breeds arrogance in the supervisors and a lack of confidence in the workers.

2. There develops a tendency in men to oppress women. This in turn leads to great violence against them — wife beating and rape. Because women find it harder in most cases to get access to a sufficient wage, they depend on men, and men exploit this advantage.

In many cases the two problems actually reinforce each other. A man who is oppressed at work, goes home and bullies his family.

PROFIT in DRUNKENNESS



We can understand a lot about our present society by following the change from subsistence economy to money economy.

Take the case of Utshwala, sorghum beer. In traditional society this was brewed and offered as a social privilege. The use of intoxicants was well regulated.

Children and young persons did not attend beer parties with their parents, under native custom. Immature youth and children were not brought up on kaffir beer. Not all Africans drank beer as they ate ordinary food. There was etiquette and special sanctions attached to beer drinking in African customary life.

Children were not given beer at all. It was a privilege of old men and women beyond child bearing age on special occasions and seasons. (Evidence to

Thus beer had a social value; it was not a social problem.

But, when African subsistence economy was undermined, and work-seekers, set free from their social bonds, began to gather in camps, locations and barracks their desires were exploited by people seeking profit. An obvious opportunity for gain is in the supply of alcohol.

Women, unable to get wage jobs, began to brew for sale. Men were attracted to their shebeens also by a delicious mix-up of music dancing and sex — Marabi — Famo. It was a way for women, some married, some single, to get part of the wage earned by men on the mines and in industry.

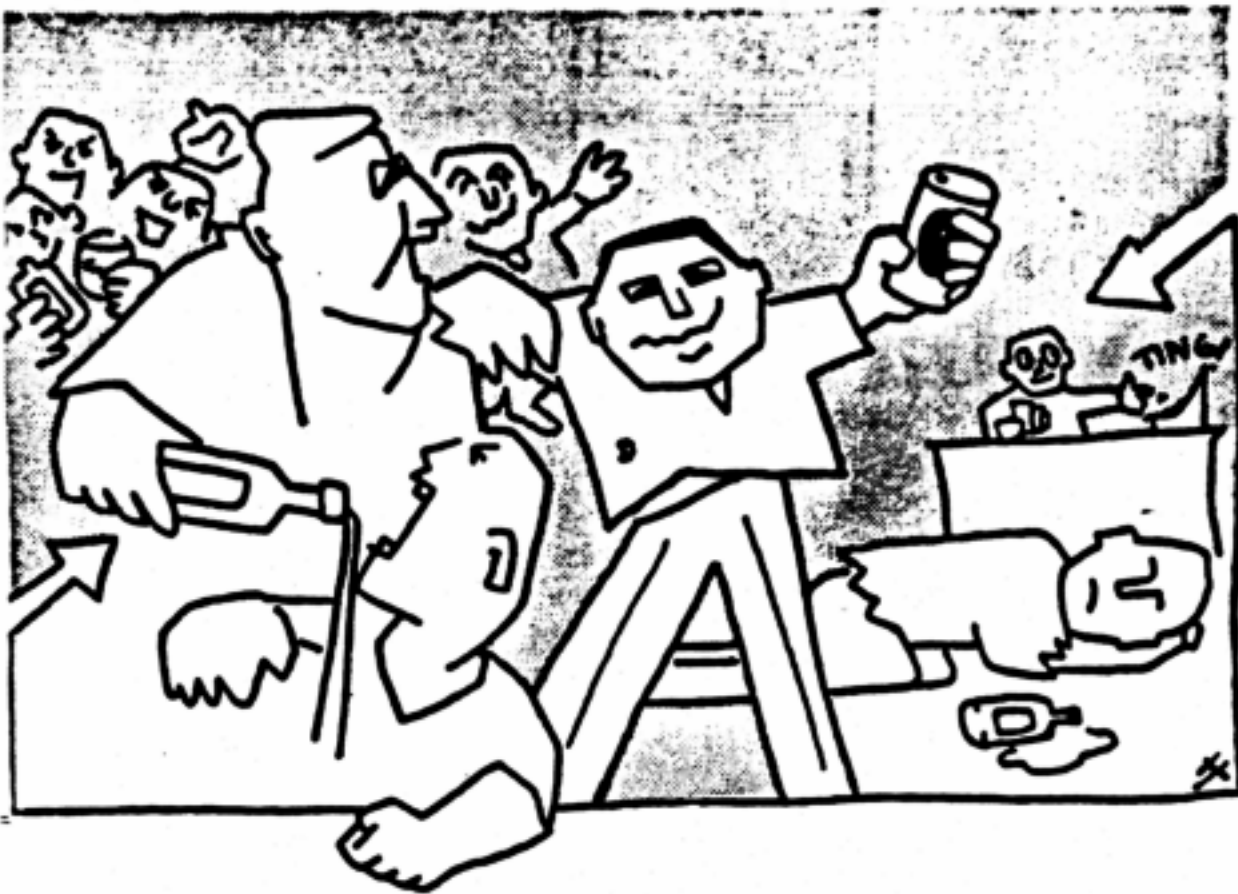
'In 1926 there were 7816 convictions of black women on the Witwatersrand for possession on Kaffir beer: while the total adult female

55 murdered in townships
on / Forty lives are lost
Township murder rate
'result of no work; drink
26 die in violent weekend
89 killed in total
on Reef in past 10 days

'When I see hundreds of black women going to jail every Monday, I do not think of them as criminals. I blame the system under which they live. It must be changed.'
(Xuma in evidence to Native Economic Commission 1931.)

These women brewers were considered a great nuisance by municipal authorities, who similarly wanted to tap the earnings of drinkers. The state encouraged municipalities to take over the business of brewing and selling sorghum beer, and gave them monopoly rights.

By 1940, forty one municipalities had set up beer-halls and were making profits. With these they financed services and housing for black workers in locations: in this way they took the burden of supporting the labouring class from the shoulders of the rich and placed it on the shoulders of the poor.



Shebeens and municipal beer-halls equally disregarded the problems of drunkenness and social disruption. What counted was profit; and alcohol, though it is a poison, is a highly successful way to get into peoples' pockets.

The struggle between town managers and shebeen queens over beer, aggravated the social problem. Police raids against illegal brewing stimulated the women to invent fast-acting brews such as kill-me-quick and skokiaan, which took less time to ferment and gave more kick with less quantity, so that in the event of a raid a drinker could finish what he had paid for before the cop got him.

The disastrous social effects of alcohol are quite obvious. Yet there is no attempt to limit the supply or regulate the drinking habit. Because it is a source of immense profits, businessmen (and local authorities) compete for opportunities to promote it.

PROFIT AND DRINK

At present, the state is seeking to gain by selling its liquor outlets to private enterprise. (It does not want to lose again, as it lost in 1976). Business people are red hot to get possession of these outlets and the right to sell bottles of drunk.

No-one bothers that the crime rate in South Africa's locations is probably

the highest in the world, and that alcohol plays a major part in it. Great sense was shown by the pupils who destroyed liquor outlets in 1976.

We can see from this brief account, how profit shapes social behaviour. The formality of beer drinking changed to the present social chaos of drunkenness and violence, because profit has become the central value, and not social well-being. We are not trying to blame individuals: clearly shebeen brewers found it necessary to get an income — workers were driven hard, and they were far from home, and needed forgetfulness — even the municipalities had a rational case for setting up beer-halls. Under capitalism, everyone is subject to the profit motive, whether they like it or not. This cannot be changed by reforming people, only by abandoning profit as the social regulator.

Sowetan 16/1/83
BLACKS on the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) complex spent a staggering R254,5-million on booze bought from outlets under the administration boards in the last financial year.

A VICIOUS war looms between the National Taverners Association (NTA) and two newly-established companies for control of the more than R40-million per annum liquor industry in Soweto and the East Rand.

From the Press

'A police spokesman in Katlehong said drink and joblessness were the two main problems leading to crimes of violence.' (Star 30.9.83)

A police spokesman in Tembisa, where 5 people were murdered last week, said he believed growing unemployment was driving people to violence.' (Star 30.9.83)

South Africa's liquor market is worth R800 million a year. (Sunday Express 6.11.83)

'Sorghum beer is the major source of income for the administration boards which have controlled the townships. Without it the new local authorities may be crippled from the start.' (Press 3.10.83)

'About 62 liquor outlets go up for sale early next year — setting the scene for the bottle store war in the liquor industry worth more than R400 million in the black community.' (Sowetan 21.11.83)

Star 1987

ILLICIT BREWERS OPPOSE ALEXANDRA BEER HALL PLAN

Brewers of illicit liquor in Alexandra Township are believed to have prompted many of the so-called "supporters" of temperance leaders in their opposition to the Health Committee's plan to establish a beer hall in Alexandra. It is understood that the temperance leaders themselves, who opposed the beer hall plan because of the ill effects liquor is having on the Natives, were surprised to receive support from unexpected quarters. Many of these "supporters" were primed by shebeen "queens" and others who are making substantial profits out of illicit liquor sales in the township and who are afraid that the establishment of a beer hall at which a better product will be sold at cheaper prices, will affect their trade.

The Health Committee wants to establish a beer hall to curb trafficking in illicit liquor. Moreover, revenue from the beer hall will be used to provide amenities such as electric lights and good roads.

i-Job Card, i-sjambok yaba qashi

WORKERS LABOUR & BOSSES CONTROL

When a worker appears at the factory gate looking for a job, what happens?

Two people are involved, the worker and the capitalist employer, or rather his representative who are going to make a deal. With money the capitalist buys the worker's labour power, and the latter agrees to sell it. In other words, the capitalist buys someone's ability to work, and in exchange agrees to pay a certain sum, say R50 or R60 per week.

Why, then is there a struggle between workers and employers? Why do workers resist the bosses' control, if they have agreed to work for a specified wage, at a specified job?

LABOUR POWER

Although the first contact is person-to-person, in reality the employer is only interested in the work a person can perform. To him work is similar to machinery and raw materials: it is one of the elements necessary to get things produced. Workers are essential, for without them nothing can be done at all. Even machinery, in the absence of workers, must remain idle.

IDLE MACHINERY

This is always clear in times of labour shortage. For example, the Witwatersrand gold mines were quite idle during and just after the Boer War, when labour was in short supply.

... There was a great demand from all sides for native labourers, and the white people, returning to the goldfields, were clamouring for employment, which could not be given to them until native labour set the mining machinery in motion, and produced something with which to pay salaries. (Tvl Admin. Report for 1902)

Workers are necessary; employers must get them; and so from their side they are ready to enter the contract to employ.

To workers, who have nothing else to keep them alive, a wage is necessary. They cannot remain without income — so from their side too there is a readiness to enter the contract to work.

WHY THE STRUGGLE

The problem, however, is this: labour is bought at a fixed amount, but the actual work intensity is not fixed. Whether the worker works fast or slow, he still gets the agreed wage. It is therefore in the employer's interest to make him work hard, and he (the worker) holds back, since he realises that he produces far more value for the boss than he gets in the form of the wage.

Thus, it is the intensity and the amount of work, that workers and employers constantly struggle over.

WAYS OF CONTROL

In the factory there are regulations which every worker must obey. Presently I am not quite secure in my job as these regulations seem like the infinite laws found in the bible; there are so many that we infringe them now and again . . . and we can be dismissed any time.' (Statement of a worker)

The bosses have many methods of regulating the work performed by their work force. One of the key elements in productivity is the management of workers, scientifically planned to get a maximum of labour from them, once they are under factory discipline.

Firstly, the structure of management is authoritarian. Supervision is imposed on the workforce, the workers are subject to all sorts of rules against so-called

interruptions such as talking, smoking, leaving the work-place and so on, during the labour process.

JOB-CARDS

Then there are technical means of control. The job-card system, for example, pressurises workers to reach targets of production, so that they have to discipline themselves. They have to make sure that when the supervisor makes his hourly production check-up, they are on target.

STATEMENT OF A WORKER

I think job-cards have been created by management for their advantage, in that workers are forced to reach an estimated target of production never mind their physical and mental abilities. But nevertheless, all are paid the same low wages. The bloody thing was introduced also to let workers have no chance to discuss their factory problems: in fact, since this job-card system was introduced, it has been difficult to organise for union activities, because, the way it affects workers, they can't give time to consider how to fight this exploitative system, but look only at production, production and nothing else.

Every worker in our department has been trying hard to satisfy the boss and only to earn a living. Also the system divides workers, because those who manage to reach the target are used by management to pressurize other workers who are unable. You always hear management arguing that if other workers can produce the estimated output, why can't you do the same? Workers also view those who are able to reach the demands of bosses as 'good boys', who are selling out other workers by not restricting output.' (Statement of a worker)

INCENTIVE BONUS

Of course management knows that workers try to 'restrict' output; and



they counter this by offering incentive bonuses to encourage greater output.

AUTOMATION

Another way used to tighten discipline and control of workers, is by introducing modern machines. In most cases these are highly automated and as a result the labour process is carried on independently of the craft or skill of the worker. Brain-work is removed and located in the production planning department. Machines dehumanise workers labour.

CONTROL OVER WORK

But how has this situation arisen?

To manipulate workers more easily, control over the goals of production, and even over the process, has been removed from workers. In this way, it becomes possible to impose on them the mechanical pace of a machine.

Workers are in fact controlled either by a machine, or by a conveyor belt. The pace of these things is established by manager, who can speed them up or slow them down, according to productivity targets, and to the capacity of willing workers. Thus, the control over work pace is used to discipline workers.

Caught up in this situation where their jobs don't make demands on their intelligence, workers tend to be uninterested in products or production.

These are of interest only to the capitalists. Workers are only interested in the pay packet.

'Every time when I work I know I don't use my brains. All I do is keep the filing sheets in alphabetical order. I don't care, as long as I get my wage. They are the ones who are interested in the order of these papers, and I am interested in my wage.' (Statement of a worker)

Ngingumsebenzi kwenye yame factory ase Kew. Ngineminyaka engu 2 ngisebenza khona. Inkampani lena yenza ama main switch box namaplug' nokunye okuqondene namandla kagesi. Ekufikeni kwami ngathola kuse-tshenziswa imishini ye zandla (hand operated machine) eminye iyazisebenza (automatic machine). Kwathi ngonyaka ophelile kwafakwa imishini yokubala umkhiqizo (production counters) eyokwenza ukuthi umuntu no muntu ukhiqiza kangakanani ngosuku. Kodwa ke umkhiqizo lona ubalwa ngamahora (hourly production) Umuntu unikezwa iphepha a fanele akusebenza ngalo (production sheet) ukuzobhalwa kulo umkhiqizo wakhe wosuku lonke (daily production). Ngokubona kwami wukuthi lesu lokafaka ama counters ukuba abantu basebenze ngokushesha, wokuthi babone abaqashi ukuthi umsebenzi othile ukhiqiza kangakanani. Thina basebenzi ayisithokizisanga lendlela ya ma counters ngoba yenza okuthi sisebenze ngokuzikhandla kakhulu ngoba sithuswa ngokuthi kumele sikhiqize inani elithile. Uma kubonakala ukhuthi ukhiqiza kancane uya xoshwa. (Statement of a worker).

Bosses justify themselves by saying that it would be impossible for workers to work at machines and at a desk at the same time. That a special type of man is needed to plan ahead, and an entirely different type to carry out the work.

The factory system forces workers to think like this. Bosses actually want that kind of indifference. Yet many workers are quite aware of what is taking place. They see how the system affects them, and they resist in their thoughts.

'My first factory job was at B. . . . Manufacturing, in Kew. My work was to assemble stoves on the conveyor belt. There were normally three workers per stove, each assembling a particular component. What I learned in this kind of work, was speed.

A worker on the conveyor belt had to work fast, or else he was likely to be fired. Nevertheless, the job was boring. I was always putting the same component in the stove, and in the end I could not explain how the stove was made, all I knew was that one component.

Sometimes I felt it was stupid working with a product but without knowing how it is produced. My co-workers used to say that I should not worry about stoves, all I need to worry about is money. They always said, I should look at my family first.

But what is surprising about them is that they think bosses are cruel, not realising that they are actually only following the capitalist factory system; where workers are made to produce fast, and in the end to be replaced by another fresh worker, when old. Employers don't worry about workers, their families, or working conditions, all they want is profit.

Hence, workers should realise that their family problems are caused by this hunger for profits, which leads to lower pay in factory work. When your wife says there is no sugar you should blame yourself for not fighting in the factory, because only when workers are united will they be in a position to oppose bosses and raise their standard of living.' (Statement of a worker.)

THE MEANING OF PRISON



It can be said that prison itself causes violence by its nature and structure: it de-humanises prisoners, treats them as numbers, strips away their rights, including their rights to pleasure, and removes their control over their own decisions and lives.

DOMINATION

In a prison there are two categories of persons: those who exercise control and those whose lives are controlled. Those who control – the warders – view prisoners as objects not as people. They come to despise them: and in turn prisoners come to resent the warders.

WHY ARE THERE GANGS?

But just as the prison creates a battleground between warders and prisoners, it also can divide prisoners. Hence the widespread presence of prison gangs.

These gangs are organised to try to recapture some control over their environment. This is done not in the way that workers organise in the factory, to gain advantages from the capitalist owners; rather, prison gangs operate by plundering their fellow prisoners and by dominating them. Gangs offer their members not only the benefits of theft (dagga etc) but also real status and power. A gang judge has similar powers to a high-court judge – he can and does sentence people, even applying the sentence of death.

A CONTRAST

It is only in prisons where the prisoners are more politically clear, eg Robben Island, that prisoners have worked together to secure better conditions for all. Otherwise prison culture (of power, privileges, abuse, control, removal of dignity and privacy, emphasis on physical strength) causes violence and competition and excludes co-operation, sensitivity and compassion.

The prison authorities' explanation is that prisoners have violent personalities.

A NON-EXPLANATION

But really this 'explains' nothing. Violence is only one possible method of getting what a person wants. Humans can use different methods, such as discussion, co-operation, sacrifice in the interests of the group, etc. If prisoners are violent, it is not because they were born with a bad personality, but because—

1. prisons do not allow for the improvement of conditions by **discussion**. Prisoners are not encouraged to think progressively, or to allow themselves emotions such as kindness, compassion etc.
2. many prisoners come from ghetto environments (locations) which, like prisons, stimulate violence as almost the only response to difficulties.

Barberton

In the Barberton prison trial 7 warders were found guilty of viciously assaulting 36 prisoners. As a result of these beatings, and being made to do strenuous work in the sun 3 prisoners died and others were hospitalised. During the trial it became clear that this sort of treatment is not unusual.

In the Johannesburg Regional Court, during the same time, 7 prisoners, members of a prison gang, were tried for the brutal killing of a fellow prisoner. In their own 'trial', they had condemned him to death for breaking the gang's law. Such murders occur frequently in South African prisons.

It seems clear that in prisons there is much violence between prisoners, and between them and their warders. Why?



IS PRISON USEFUL

Prison is supposed to rehabilitate prisoners, while at the same time it prevents them committing further criminal acts. It is also meant to deter would-be criminals. In fact there is plenty of evidence that shows that prisons actually increase the criminal and anti-social behaviour of prisoners. Youngsters learn more about crime in jail than anywhere else. As for the belief that the threat of prison deters people from crime, the evidence suggests that it is social conditions that cause criminal behaviour, and that the threat of imprisonment does not prevent it. An unemployed person will steal, or an angry person will kill; and the penalty makes little difference. Moreover, in South Africa there are certain laws which make people criminals, even though their behaviour is not criminal. To pass laws are of this sort.

If prisons do not really stop crime, why do they exist?

Prisons exist because many people believe they work. They think that criminal acts are the result of an individual's faulty personality. The criminal is supposed to have a simple and clear choice either to do, or not to do, a criminal thing. The individual's place and position, his disadvantages in life, are ignored. This leads to the notion that one can reform or deter a person without altering his living conditions.

Prisons also exist to punish people into conforming, that is, to force them to keep society's rules. Yet these rules are made by the very class of people that oppresses the individual whose rebellion gets him into jail.

WHO GAINS FROM PUNISHMENT?

Prisons have not always been the method of punishment in the world. In fact, they are quite recent. There can be many different forms of punishment. In certain societies before capitalism, the principle of compensation was applied, rather than the principle of punishment. Suppose one person killed another, then he would be compelled to make good the loss to that man's family, perhaps by working for them for a number of years. In our modern criminal law, on the other hand, there is very little idea of compensation to the victims of crime.

WHERE THE SYSTEM GAINS

A study on the history of punishment has shown that the economic system of a society influences the kinds of punishment that society uses. For example, fines are only possible in a 'money' economy, where people do not produce things directly for use, but work for cash incomes. Another example is drawn from the time when European nations were developing navies for conquest and trade overseas; a typical form of punishment was to make criminals work as oarsmen or sailors in merchant-ships or war-ships.

At the time of colonialism, white populations were established in the colonies (e.g. Australia) by the method of deporting criminals to those places.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

At the time that peasants in Europe were forced to move off the land, there was widespread theft and banditry. The punishment that was developed to create a new sense of the importance of property and to protect it, was public tortures and executions. This was using punishment for spectacular terror, in order to show that the right to property was more important than lives.

PRISON FACTORIES

When the first industrial workshops developed in the U.K. and Holland, those two countries introduced 'poor-

houses' - a sort of prison-factory, mainly for people who were vagrants, or who had been driven off the land and had become paupers. The poor-houses supplied labour to the new kind of industrial factories being developed at the start of the industrial revolution.

Prisons themselves were used as factories. This was at a time when many peasants rejected the idea of daily labour in factories. Prisoners were used as surplus labour, and they were taught the discipline of factory work. Prison of course has the same division between those who supervise and those who obey orders. The authorities claimed that learning work discipline cured people of criminal tendencies.

IS WORK PUNISHMENT?

Later on, when machines replaced hand-craft industries, and when more and more people were forced off the land and desperately needed jobs, prisons were no longer used in this way, because people went into factories willingly. Prisoners today are still made to work, but it is not productive or useful - they break rocks, for example. There is this idea which is a consequence of the way capitalism puts people to work, that work and punishment are nearly the same thing.

In South Africa the forms of punishment have changed with changes in society. Until 150 years ago punishment was mostly by means of public torture. But later black prisoners were used on a large scale as unpaid labourers to build roads. In this century, whenever there was a labour shortage on farms, prisoners were (and still are) used as cheap farm labour.

The present drought forced many farm prisons to limit production, so the prison population in the main jails remained overcrowded. Apart from the effects of overcrowding, discomfort, anger and intensified violence, it is very expensive to maintain people in jail. This is probably one reason sentences are administratively reduced, by remission, by parole, and by general pardons granted on certain occasions. A capitalist society has to balance what it costs to leave people out of jail, against what it costs to keep them there!

REMOVALS in ALEX

Extracts from the diary of a young man

September, Monday 19

We were well organised after all. The protest was really big. I gave my placard to some women to carry — **HANDS OFF OUR PROPERTY**. Most of the guys stayed down at 6th, but some went to Minerva, and we three rushed up to Alex High. Ma-tiza tried to stop us getting into the classrooms, we forced. In each class we gave the students a little talk, then we demanded volunteers. After all, it is these very students' parents who are facing removals, if not today then at some time for sure! The Rev has made a big mistake this time, putting himself so clearly on the same side as WRAB.

Lots of students came to 6th from Minerva, but very few from the High. What's wrong with those guys? All they've got in their heads is getting better jobs.

Down at 6th Avenue we could see that the demolishers were backing off, so we went to join the demonstration at Buti's. The cops formed up, and some were already stroking their batons. They were looking for war. When they switched on the loud-hailer we all disappeared fast-move.

Apparently Buti at that stage called a meeting so he could give explanations. I'll fill in again this afternoon after the meeting . . .

P.M.

No-one was really listening to the Liaison Committee speakers. In fact people formed their own small meetings; they were murmuring and complaining to one another. As for the Rev. he said all the same old things, backed by biblical notions; how he had done so much for Alexandra, the people should be grateful. 'Ke le ahetse . . .'

But in fact the LC were only addressing themselves. Everyone else drifted away. Youth Council members used to clap



their hands at every chance, to make it seem that the speeches were appreciated; but they can't win people by clapping hands. Soon there was almost no-one left in the meeting. Outside people were saying, 'Ba dlala ka rona. Be re etsa bana'

Wednesday 20

The action committee's work is over. Families will not be sent to across Jukskei. Some have agreed to accept accommodation in the busses, others are getting into the new zozos.

We want to keep our group together, so we plan to make some investigations into the housing question. James and I have in fact spoken to some residents, and we found out many things.

Thursday 21st

We went up to see the Rev. this morning. He agrees that he made a fuck-up. The TB hospital is no good, he says. He went to see it on Monday after the trouble began. Why did he never go to see it before Monday?

He said a lot of things: how he is 'in the struggle', and we should be 'fighting the system, not fighting him, he is a black man, and blacks should struggle together. We must fight the boers' . . .

But in my mind I was asking, Does he really believe what he says. I just wanted to tell him, we are not children. We have seen many people use this argument of blackness, while they themselves crush black people. Because they are black, should they be allowed to do damage? It's shit.

Well, we told him clearly — *No, you are helping WRAB, and in doing that you are not part of the struggle but part of the system.* But we did not push the point too hard, he seemed upset and we feared that he was going to cry.

Then we left.

Oh, but wait. I'm forgetting. He said something about the Black Authorities Bill: that he wanted municipal status under this law, and then Alex would be FREE. Kak. Free from what?

But we want to be clear about this Black Authorities what-what, so we made another appointment, for next Tuesday. He warned us he would be late, 'Our ALC meeting goes on till after 7.30.' That's OK . . .

Tuesday 27th

Tom says it was like a cowboy movie! We were at the ALC building by 7.30 to keep the appointment, but there was no Buti, and no Liaison Committee meeting. Security said there never had been a meeting. So where then was the Rev? u-Poisa says point-blank that he is at the shebeen in bus-town. Off we go to the spot.

Sure enough the Rev's car was there. We called the shebeen owner and asked for Buti. He went to get him. We waited.

Bus-town gives you a strange feeling. It doesn't seem real. Those long silver bodies of busses, with people walking quietly about them, talking, getting ready for bed; and the windows showing faint yellow light inside. It is part scrap-yard, part holiday-camp.

The owner comes back and says, 'Buti is not here.' Behind him appears Magermann, who tells us crossly that Buti is not there and we must go away. But we point out that his car is in the road. Well anyway, Magermann insisted that we were there for nothing. We felt sure that the Rev was in fact inside, but we wandered off.

By this time the others had also arrived at the ALC offices and been told to follow us to bus-town. They came along 2nd Avenue, past the back entrance to the yard, at the very moment Magermann was hustling Buti out the back door, and towards his (Magermann's) car. The guys went over to the car, recognising Buti, and banged on the window, demanding him. Magermann however revved up and went like a-hell down 2nd.

When we met up, we decided to pursue the matter, and we followed on foot towards Buti's house. On the way Magermann drove past (going back to the shebeen?) and wound down his window. He shouted at us that we had damaged his car and that we would pay . . . he also hotly denied that it was Buti whom he had driven off so fast.

We got to Buti's. There was a lot of commotion, Youth Council fellows standing outside the house, guarding it. George and Siphon, of course, were up front. They sort of threatened us, saying that if we went inside we would be killed. They said the LC members were mighty angry. Well, we pointed out that we had nothing to do with the LC but that we had come to see Buti himself, personally, at his own invitation, and that we would see him, whatever anyone said or did.

We got inside.

Why we insisted on seeing the Rev. I don't know. He did admit that it was he in the car with Magermann; he says

that he went to the shebeen because his driver was there. He went to fetch him. Actually, who cares why he went to the shebeen? We were angry that he had not kept his appointment, that's all.

Personally, I'm no longer interested in any kind of talks with Buti and his LC gang, and that includes their creche, the Youth Council. These are definitely the class of people fit to 'govern' our ghettos on behalf of the bosses in Pretoria. Whether he's called Buti or Thebehadi or Mangope, his function is the same. It now seems to me that the division comes between those who gain by the present system, and those who want something different. Blacks are divided right here on this point. There is no such thing as black unity. Alex is a split society; Soweto is a split society; so are all the other locations in South Africa. And by locations I mean also Transkei, KwaZulu, Bophuthatswana.

They are all labour reserves, with a mass of labourers, and a class of elites on top to keep them in order, to keep them stifled. Two classes, not one.

Koornhof works day and night to get his good boys ready for their jobs. And we must also work day and night, to tell the mass of labourers, 'Look, those are Koornhof's good boys'. The Rev, George-and-Siphon, Darkie, Magermann, Ma-Tiza - anyone who prospers and feels satisfied while around them hunger rages, kids steal, people sleep houseless. *Ke sono, ua itse!*



BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF PRODUCTION

THEY STRUGGLE OVER WHAT?

Workers and employers are opposed. Yet they jointly produce goods.

What then do they struggle over?

Employers pressurise workers to produce as much as possible, for wages as low as possible.

Workers struggle for the opposite. They press for higher wages, and they resist being pressurised in their work.

Actually it is too vague to speak of a struggle between workers and employers.

Who exactly are the 'employers'? And workers themselves are not always united. They have different attitudes and opinions about their work.

But the struggle is quite clear when a machinist downs tools and walks out because he has been shouted at by a supervisor. There we can see the

struggle in real terms. In fact, the opposition between employers and workers is seen clearly in the hostility between workers and supervisors.

SUPERVISORS

Supervisors are the front-line soldiers of the bosses. Their task is to keep workers busy producing in the way management has organised it. For this is how maximum productivity is achieved; and thus, for the bosses, maximum profit.

SHOP-STEWARDS

Who are the front-line soldiers of the workers? As the democratic trade union movement develops, it becomes the task of shop stewards to protect workers interests in the work-place.

The two sides in the struggle, employers and trade unions, constantly try to strengthen themselves. Employers use 'scientific management' to control their work force so that they produce more;

and on the other side, unions organise more efficiently to be able to make demands on management for better work conditions and higher pay. As the struggle between the two parties gets stronger, the opposition between shop steward and supervisor becomes a central feature of the struggle.

FIRE POWER

Many strikes have been caused by workers rejecting a tyrant supervisor. The supervisor's position is dangerous to workers if the person in that position is able to fire workers. An important demand of trade unions has been that the power of supervisors be limited.

Arbitrary dismissal is a thing of the past. There must be acceptable reasons for the dismissal of any worker, otherwise a union will claim 'unfair labour practice.'

Recently an industrial relations expert said:

Supervisors have ended up in a terrible no-man's land. When they lost their right to fire, they became dogs without teeth . . . Supervisors must be given authority.

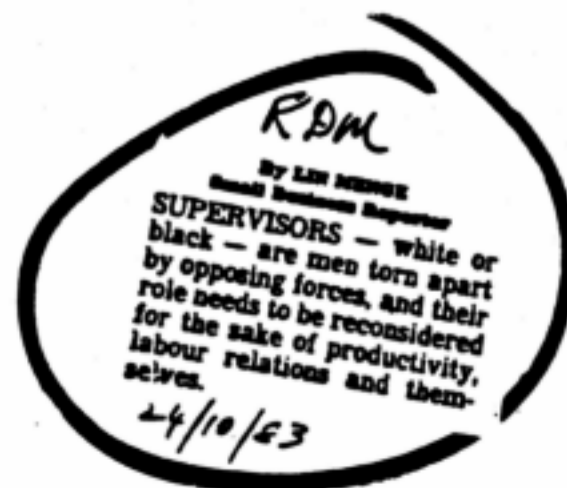
Of course it is not a simple matter to 'give them authority'. A strong union will do all it can to prevent the supervisor getting 'authority'. It is said that in England, shop stewards claim that if workers want some control over the production process, they must 'break the power of the supervisor'. (S.A.L.B. 8/8)

There is clearly a struggle going on over the power of supervisors in South African industry. Nowadays employers are trying to confuse workers by appointing blacks to the position of supervisor.

They are often chosen from amongst the workers themselves, and given a thorough training. They want workers to think that they and the supervisor (since he is black and comes from the same ghetto etc) are part of the same team, a production team. Moreover, this new supervisor will know better than most whites, how to treat workers with respect.

This is going to make the task of the shop stewards more difficult, for it will be their job, in the event of a factory struggle, to identify the supervisor as part of management — a representative of the employers — and not part of the working class at all.

The following article discusses the very important question of how employers are using education and training to develop their 'front-line soldiers'; teaching supervisors and managers the tricks of the trade — how to extract extra work out of the workforce, and at the same time persuading them to admire capitalism.



EDUCATION / PERSUASION

Education is a complex issue. People want more education, and they are frustrated when they can't get it. This means that people are usually pleased to have opportunities to get education. Of course education isn't neutral. Those who provide it use it to control the minds of pupils. But most people don't worry about this. They tend to think that education is good in itself.

In recent years, there has been a lot of on-the-job education going on. All the big companies are running courses and training programmes. There are programmes for managers and supervisors. There are also courses for artisans, apprentices and operators, to teach skills needed for the job. Some companies provide literacy courses and basic education for their workers.

Why is all this education being offered at the workplace? Why are firms prepared to spend a lot of money educating workers? What are the aims of these "educators", and what do they teach? We spoke to people who have been involved in these programmes. Here are some of the things we discussed.

SKILLS SHORTAGE

The usual reason given for the training programmes is that there is a shortage of skilled workers. Business people have complained loudly about shortages of suitably qualified employees. Newspapers and government statements have echoed this. They claim that there are shortages of skilled white workers, so firms seek blacks to fill these positions. And here, they face the problem of Bantu Education: many workers have poor schooling or no schooling at all. Since the state does not provide enough education, the task has fallen onto the shoulders of businesses themselves.

Certainly, there is some truth in these arguments. But there are also confusions. The first question is, how can there be a shortage when so many people are unemployed, and school leavers can't get jobs?

Secondly, we must ask if the education provided by business is an adequate alternative to a general state education for everyone. There are also questions about the role of workers struggles. Are capitalists being generous, or are they forced to make changes because of pressure from workers.

CHANGES AT THE WORKPLACE

In recent years there have been important changes in the economy, and also changes in factories. During the 1960s, there was an economic boom. This was a period of expansion for the economy. But the 1970s saw an economic downturn. And now in the 1980s there is a recession. It is hard to make profits. Issues of productivity have become even more important for capitalists.

New machines are being introduced into production. These machines are changing the way work is done, and they are also changing relationships at the workplace. In South Africa there are great changes in the racial division of labour. Before the new technology, there were skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers. Skilled work was usually done by whites; unskilled work by blacks. The new technology has meant that machines have taken over a lot of skilled work — certain workers' skills are no longer required. Many white workers in this position are being upgraded into technical or supervisory jobs. Machines are operated by semi-skilled operators — mostly blacks. And, as part of the same process, many unskilled workers lose their jobs and become redundant.

The implications of these changes for skills training are obvious. There may well be a need for training at many levels, since people's jobs are changing. People surely need technical and supervisory training, and also operator training.

WORKERS MILITANCY AND EDUCATION

But there are also other processes to consider. One of these is the process of class struggle. Since the 1970s, there has been increasing worker militancy. Worker organizations have grown in size and effectiveness. There have been waves of strikes and stoppages.

The recession, combined with labour unrest, has threatened profits. We could say that this has meant a greater need for businesses to build a stable, efficient, workforce. One of the ways of doing this is to promote the creation of a black managerial class. And another way is to invest in training programmes which help to consolidate the new middle class, and to stabilize lower levels of workers. It may appear that people are being trained because of skills shortages, when in fact, attitude to work may be even more important. Training programmes may actually be a form of work discipline.

We need to remember that education plays an important part in class formation. It gives people skills but it also teaches them certain opinions.

WHY TRAINING

There's no doubt that the state has been providing more opportunities for blacks to get technical and vocational training. Technical courses and technical subjects are being introduced into schools. Many of these could be seen as training people for operator jobs. Higher level technicians and also managers, meanwhile, are being trained at the new Technicons.

But private sector training which is going on within industries is even more significant. As we've said, this is at all levels of work. It is estimated that there are over 1 million people being trained, which is more than 15% of the workforce. Training courses are being paid for by firms themselves, though in most cases there are tax rebates from the government. But even where the state isn't giving pay-backs (for example in the mining industry) a lot of training is going on. This training costs money. Why are businesses prepared to spend money to train workers? And what sort of education do they give?

As we've said, business people usually blame a skills shortage. But there is some doubt that this is the reason, or even if it's true.

Some researchers have looked at figures of job vacancies, and have found that there are no great shortages. According to these researchers, the shortages have been exaggerated. Other researchers have suggested that it is not a shortage of technical skills. People often have the right qualifications. But they may not know how to act as managers and supervisors. Let's stop for a moment, and look at the position of managers.

In capitalist production, there are definite relationships at the workplace. Managers are there to control production on behalf of the owners. So they need to be able "manage" workers, to keep running costs down to a minimum, and to keep productivity at a maximum. The underlying motive is to make as much profit as possible.

All workers know that their pay is not equal to what they produce. Their surplus production goes into the pocket of the capitalists. This is how capitalists make their money. This is called "exploitation" of labour.

The capitalist system tries to hide this process. One of the aims of capitalist education is to make exploitation invisible. So, for example, "productivity" is shown to be valuable, but nobody points out that greater productivity in

a capitalist system means more exploitation of workers. Productivity is important; but it should not be based on exploitation.

So where does this leave managers? Obviously firms want them to believe in the values of capitalism. They also need to be able to deal with relationships in the workplace. And this is why management education is given by employers.

Some researchers claim that the main aim of management training courses is to teach how to control people, and thus how to increase productivity. These are social skills rather than simply technical skills. Perhaps there is a greater need for these skills to make labour more productive when there is an increasing challenge from worker organizations.

As for operator training, these researchers claim that these courses deal more with encouraging "the right attitudes" in workers, then with learning genuine new skills.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISOR TRAINING

The high level manpower of the country should not only have qualifications and knowledge, but should combine these with a sense of responsibility, enthusiasm, initiative, tenacity and especially boldness.
(National Manpower Commission)

There can be no doubt that managers need certain convictions, if they are to support the interests of capitalism. And, indeed, some of the training programmes are openly persuade trainee managers about the benefits of the free enterprise system. One of the most popular training programme is the 6M Simulation Training Course. (The 6 Ms are men, money, machines, materials, management, markets.) According to one writer,

it uses models and artificial money to imitate in a concrete way the establishment and operation of a business in a free enterprise system.

Many businesses recognize the difficulties that black supervisors face. Ford runs a six-month training programme for supervisors. As part of the course, supervisors are taught things like "how to improve employee-performance", how to "improve work habits", and how to take "effective disciplinary action". Supervisors are trained in the skills of controlling workers.

A representative of Timber Manpower Services said,

We need educated and experienced blacks in management positions. They should be able to communicate with black workers - not only to convey the policy of management to them, but also to convey the attitudes and feelings of black workers to management.

Black managers and supervisors are promoted to increase the productivity of black workers and to control them.

OPERATOR TRAINING

What about operator training? Here again, there's evidence that capitalist ideas are taught, as well as skills. At this level of work, qualities like steadiness, punctuality, and diligence are necessary. Research has shown that training courses help to develop these qualities.

RDM 4/1/83

His position is as unenviable as that of his black colleague who epitomises the "man in the middle" or the "marginal man", caught between black workers, their unions and an essentially white managerial staff, all of whom have conflicting expectations of him.

"Having supervised his black subordinates in the work environment and being, for all practical purposes, regarded as 'one of them' - the bosses' along with an essentially white managerial staff during working hours, the black supervisor, at the end of the working day is rejected by the white world and thrown back into second-class citizenship along with his black subordinates."

The question arises: to whom should the black supervisor, experiencing the "gross inequalities" of South African society, show allegiance and with whom should he identify?

He often plays a crucial role in the maintenance of sound industrial relations between unions and management - "in spite of the fact that he often has to adhere to a management-union contract in the formula-

BENEFITS TO CAPITALISM

Clearly training is being used to promote capitalism: to increase the productivity of labour, to persuade managers that 'free enterprise' is a good system, to develop settled workers, and to encourage work discipline.

But there's also a hidden message. When firms supply education, capitalism is seen as a provider of good things: it has a chance to show its good face. At all levels, it seems that workers can get the training they need to improve themselves and do better. The underlying promise is: you can succeed if you try hard enough. And, certainly, a few people do advance. They are promoted to higher positions, with better benefits. But for most people this doesn't happen. Progress of blacks to management positions is very slow. In fact, the training which people are given is usually so narrow that they can't even use it to get a better job somewhere else.

How successful are these education courses in winning over workers? This depends partly on the unions, and what sort of workers consciousness they can arouse.

And what about workers — can they benefit from this education, without being corrupted? It can be very hard for individuals to remain clear, especially if the training programmes seem to offer them benefits and advancement. They may be given education opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have. They may be increasing their knowledge, and learning new ideas and new techniques. But they are learning all of this together with capitalist attitudes. The danger is that they may be seduced by capitalism. With management training in particular, they may be changed from workers into bosses. Before they realize it, they may find themselves divided from the social group they identify with.

Here are two interviews with people taking training programmes.



The opposition — Trade Union Education.

Albert is a trainee production manager, doing a three-year diploma course run by the Production Management Institute of South Africa. His company offered to send him on the course; it gives him paid study time, and also pays the cost of his course. Albert is now in his third year part-time, and plans to go on to study for a degree in Business Administration.

James is a supervisor, who has been attending a series of in-house training programmes. He attends three hours a day for one week on each course. He has just completed his second course on safety measures in the factory.

Interviews

We'll start with Albert's interview.

Izwi: Why do you think the company is prepared to pay so much money for your training?

Albert: The main reason is to get a skilled person to do the job. In the past they could employ fully qualified people for the job. But with economic expansion, they couldn't get qualified people. They thought it better to train from within. They usually say that a person who is from within is fully acquainted with the atmosphere. To employ an outsider costs them more. They are lazy to pay more to a qualified outsider.

Izwi: So you think there is a shortage of skilled workers?

Albert: Yes, I definitely believe so. That's why they're doing this training.

Izwi: Will your qualification help you to get a job somewhere else?

Albert: Yes, it's general enough. There are a lot of companies that I could work for. I am presently being paid less than whites doing the same job. When I finish my course, I must get the same pay as whites or I buzz off.

Izwi: What sorts of things does your course teach you?

Albert: The main study is really how to control the people. By creating teamwork, by understanding each other, we can produce more. We need better communication. Because of my business training, I would put the management point of view — for higher production. I can support high production, provided we are paid more. If I achieve more production, then I and the workers must get remuneration.

Izwi: Do you think black managers are used to control workers better?

Albert: I think I can control workers better than a white. The main thing is to get down to my people's level. I have to be sympathetic to a problem. They mustn't see me as something far higher.

Izwi: Do you see yourself as part of management, or as a worker?

Albert: As a co-worker. I have been sent by someone else. I am a worker. I joined the union before, and I don't think I'd ever do away with the union.

We are sure that readers can see certain difficulties in Albert's position. To a large extent, he has accepted management's explanations and their aims; yet he still sees himself as a worker. He wants to remain a union member; he wants better wages for workers; and he sees exploitation around him. Yet he is going for management. He believes in values like productivity, even though this means productivity in a capitalist business i.e. for profit. In fact, he wants to use his skills to get on top of the production process in a capitalist business. Albert is in a difficult position.

What about James, answering similar questions

Izwi: Why do you think the company

is prepared to pay so much money for your training?

James: They are practising cheap labour. They don't want to hire qualified people to do those jobs. Actually I just go there to pass the time. They won't pay me for what I learn.

Izwi: Do you think there is a shortage of skilled workers?

James: I don't believe there's a shortage. They don't want to pay the qualified people.

Izwi: Will your qualifications help you to get a job somewhere else?

James: I can't say. I don't know if the other companies will accept my certificates. Albert can leave the company tomorrow. With my certificates, it probably wouldn't work to change companies.

Izwi: What sort of things do your courses teach you?

James: They are trying to teach atti-

tudes that are more favourable to management. They teach how to handle workers. For example, you must know their moods; how you should approach them; know their surnames; their domestic problems; everything.

Izwi: Do you see yourself as part of management, or as a worker?

James: I regard myself as a worker, not management. As a supervisor, I have to pass the foreman's ideas to the workers. From supervisors downwards, we work as a production team. Management pushes us to produce more for their gain. We get nothing; they get the profits.

James' position as a supervisor is less complicated than Albert's position as a trainee manager. James is less torn by contradiction. But then, by comparison, his training also gives him fewer benefits.

And here the question really applies: Is his training a substitute for general school education?

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

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

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

TRADE UNION GAINS

Workers in South Africa have made some important gains over the past 3 years. Trade unions have expanded at an extremely rapid rate, and those which were solidly organised in the factory have succeeded in surviving the present economic recession. As a result the black working class is in a strong position to make new advances when the present economic situation improves, as it is expected to do over the next 12 months.

COGNITION AGREEMENTS

What has allowed the trade union movements to hold onto its gains over the last 12 to 18 months, and even in certain instances to make further advances? No simple answer can be given, but one obvious reason is strong organisation on the factory floor. How has that organisation been achieved and maintained, when this has so often failed in the past? Again no easy answer can be offered, but one important factor has been the winning of legally enforceable rights for workers through recognition agreements. Economic recessions mean lower production in the factories, redundancies, short time working, high unemployment and attempts by employers to maintain profits by squeezing more production from each remaining worker. In these situations workers are placed on the defensive. They may be dismissed. They are more easily intimidated by management either on trade union activities or over speed-ups of production.

PROTECTION AGAINST DISMISSAL

Recognition agreements can provide important defences against such managerial assaults. One of the most important rights a trade union demands for the workers who join it, is protection against arbitrary dismissal. Dismissals are commonly used, especially at time of high unemployment, to weed out worker leadership, and to discipline the remaining workers to more intensive work. Important concessions have now been made by many companies

on these issues in recognition agreement. Dismissal procedures have been negotiated; redundancy clauses have been agreed, whereby the company undertakes to retrench those last employed by the company first, to give preference to those retrenched workers when re-hiring, to pay severance pay and so on. Equally important, companies have agreed not to fire and selectively re-hire workers within 2 days of a strike breaking out; or have undertaken to fire all workers and not selectively re-hire. This has been an important victory for workers since companies always need to keep on some experienced workers in order to train the strike-breakers that have been newly employed.

So protection against dismissal has impeded managements attempts to undermine workers organisation during the present recession and has given workers greater confidence in enforcing their rights.

FOR EXAMPLE

In a glass factory in Pretoria recently, workers were put on short time, and were then told to increase production targets in the shorter time they now worked. Workers stopped work for 6 hours and the management backed down.

THE UNION MEETS IN FACTORY HOURS

Another important right which has been won in many factories and which has helped maintain organisation and confidence during the present recession, has been the right to union meetings in factory hours. This concession may not seem much, but it is of vital importance. Modern factories are designed to make communication difficult between workers. Workers may be ordered not to talk to each other; the shift system and different lunch hours and tea-times make it difficult for workers to contact each other.

A number of problems can arise from this situation. As workers are divided from one another, solidarity can weaken. Alternatively, management may channel all communication through one

worker leader in the factory, and democracy can break down. The right to have shop stewards elections in the factory, to have shop stewards meetings on factory premises, in which members can express their solidarity and mandate their representatives, are thus all important for strong factory floor organisation. Such rights have again helped trade unions maintain their membership in the present recession, and protect their members against the growing demands of management.

TIME-OFF FOR SHOP-STEWARDS TRAINING

One other gain that has been important in allowing union shop stewards to represent their members in the factory, and so maintain the unions strength, has been the right for time-off during working hours, for shop steward training. Now that trade unions for blacks have spread to most industrial areas in South Africa an army of personnel managers has been employed. Companies have become more and more sophisticated in their attempts to control the trade unions; the training of personnel officers in new methods of control has become a big business in its own right.

In order to cope with these developments, shop steward training is also essential. It gives skills to the shop steward in confronting management, and it gives the shop steward confidence. As any shop steward will tell you, shop stewards are not supermen. They need support and training to do their job. They also need time for leisure and recreation after a hard day's work and week-end overtime. They cannot always as a result be expected to give up their time for shop stewards courses. The right to paid time-off for shop steward training is therefore an important weapon in the battle to maintain organisation in the factory.

It is also vital in restricting managements efforts to change work-schedules, and to re-organise production to the disadvantage of workers. It is therefore vital not only to maintaining but to extending worker power in the factory, something trade unions can look forward to over the coming two years.

Ziphi inkomo zelobolo ?

LOBOLO/BOHADI

Different people have different opinions and attitudes to the practice of lobola. Some people feel that it should be scrapped because it is pure commercialism – i.e. if you want something you must pay for it – if you do not pay you do not get it: and the person who sells the thing does so in order to gain profit.

Others support the practice of lobola and feel that it is the custom of our grandfathers so it cannot be scrapped.

All the same, lobola is widely practiced – in fact nearly every African who marries in this country does so with lobola. This article looks at lobola as it was in the past, and as it is today. What was its function then, and what is its function today?

IN THE PAST

Lobola in the past was a custom of societies involved in an economy of subsistence. That is, an economy in which the main aim of producing was not for profit and accumulation, but for the survival of the members of that society. Wealth was therefore distributed for the benefit of the group, and not kept by individuals.

LABOUR

For the economy of subsistence to sustain itself, peoples' labour was very important. Therefore, if a group or family lost members, this would affect the production of that group; there would be less manpower for the group's production of livelihood. When a woman was married into another family, her own family lost her labour, and her husband's family would gain her labour.

This new family's wealth would be increased also in that the woman would enable that family to grow and thus it would get more labour. Lobola was thus an exchange for both the woman's labour and her ability to bear children.



This exchange was a long process; it did not take place in just a moment, as when one buys commodities or goods over the counter. It took place over a long period, hence the saying 'Bogadi ha bo fele.' A number of things were considered in the exchange, like the fertility of the woman and whether she was hardworking or not.

CHILDREN

Lobola was also very functional in legitimizing children. The saying 'Ngwana ke wa dikgomo' illustrates this. If the appropriate number of cattle were not transferred from the family of the man to the family of the woman, or if no cattle were transferred at all, the children would belong to the woman's family group, and owe allegiance to it. If they were boys they would look

after their mother's family's cattle and goats, and if they were girls they would work in their mother's lelapa and fields. It would only be after the transfer of cattle that this labour, and also the upbringing of the children would be transferred to the man's kraal.

IN THE PRESENT

Now, we know that the economy of subsistence is no longer in operation. Cattle have lost their function, and the 'cash economy' has taken over. Yet the practice of lobola is still in full swing, though it has changed its complexion a lot. Lobola is now paid in cash, sometimes at one go and sometimes in instalments. The lobola price is now also fixed, whereas it was not in the past.

After marriage, women may not even take part in earning for their family, but may simply depend on the husband's income. The question in this case, is why do people still practice lobola when the economy on which it is based has been smashed.

TRADITION

Some say that it must remain, simply because it is tradition. You often hear people say 'This is the practice of our grandfathers - we cannot get rid of it.'

Elders also like telling the young ones 'My mother was paid lobola for and I was paid lobola for, so why can't my children be paid for?' We know that culture does not die soon, but there is always some purpose in cultural practices. We do not just do things for no reason. Today one often hears conversations like this:

A: My daughter is about to get married, I am so pleased for her.

B: Good news - Jy staan alright - What are you going to charge?

Or you might hear: 'So and so has 6 daughters, not far apart in age. She will be rich when lobola is paid.'

From such remarks we can perhaps conclude that lobola tallies with the ideology of gain and profit today.



Having a daughter or daughters is some kind of investment. There are cases where families have quoted up to R3 000 for their daughter's bogadi.

PROFIT MOTIVE

It is true that the cost of bringing up children is high: but does one bring up children in order to make a profit?

And yet we must ask, does lobola in modern times actually mean that women are being sold like commodities?

This does not seem really to be the case - since most women consider lobola as a way of respecting them and as an indication that they are being valued. Many women would not enter into marriage if they were not paid lobola for. It would mean that they are not respected, they argue.

There has clearly been a shift in the perception of lobola. Today it reflects what capitalism does to the relationships between people. People seem to represent the value of a person in terms of cash. Can one really do that?

There has been a debate on lobola for quite some time. The questions we have raised in this article are complex and we have not closed the debate. We would like readers to send us their views about lobola, in our money economy.

INDABA NGELOBOLO

i-Lobolo liyisiko labantu bomdabu balapha e South Africa namanye amazwe. i-Lobolo liyisiko lokwakha ubuhlobo babantu ababili abaganayo kanye nemdeni yabo. Phela uma insizwa iganwa yintombi, kufanele yaxiwe ngokwesintu, noganayo naye kufanele aziwe. Loku kwenziwa ngoba kugcinwa isiko. Kodwa kukhona okungahambi kahle ngelobolo lanamhlanje ngoba akusenziwa isiko kodwa kuyathengiswa noma kuya dayiswa ngabantu be-

sifazane. Isiko phela aluguquki noma alushintshi luhlala lungenyakazi. manje abazali bentombi babiza imali eninginingi.

Uma umlisa ala ukukhokha bese bethi "hamba uyothenga izinkomo eziphilayo uzolobola ngazo" noma bethi "Uma engafuni ukukhokha hamba uye lapho uzogana khona mahala." Bayakhohlwa ukuthi abantu abaholelwa imali iningi ongothenga ngayo inkomo. Futhi loku kwenza ukuthi kungabi nokuzwana phakathi komlisa nabazali bentombi.

Kuvele umonakalo omkhulo phakathi kwabo ngoba isiko yisiko lezihlobo, kulobolana izihlobo. Abazali bensizwa nentombi kusuke kuyizihlobo kungakho belobolisa. Umzali wensizwa wuye wathuma ingane yakhe kwabontombi aze ajwayele khona ukuze ubuhlobo bungapheli. Noma kunemisebenzi lezingane ziyazizana, abazali bakhuthaza labantwana ukuthi badlale bonke noma bavakashelane. Uma umzali wentombi eyisihlobo nomzali wensizwa angeke abize ilobolo elikhulu, abulale ezihlobo zabo bazi bize i-R 2000,00 kodwa kuyakhulunywa kuzwanwe kahle kubizwanwe kahle ngobuhlobo. Manje uma kusuke umuntu nje ezolobola lapho angaziwa khona uzokhokha imali enkulu kulesikhathi samanje njengoba izinkomo zibiza kakhulu. Abantu bakhokha imali esuka ku R 900,00 kuya R 2 000, ngoba abazali bentombi abamazi lomlisa akusisihlobo.

Isiko lomdabu lenziwa izihlobo ezihlobeni kuphela. Nentombi ngeke ishiye indoda yayo kanye kanti nendoda ngeke ishiye umkayo ngoba abazali babo bayizihlobo ngokuzalwa. Noma kukhona ukuxabana kukhuza abazali. Kodwa namhlanje kukhona amadivosi abazali bengazi. Namhlanje kukhona uthi amaring nezitifikadi. Umakunje umuntu akasakwazi ukuthatha abafazi babili kodwa ilobolo lisakhokhwa.

BLACK AUTHORITIES

Is the recipe right this time?

Where lies the difficulty in setting up local government for urban locations? Perhaps the best way to see what is required, is to look at the system invented to govern the bantustans. In those miserable areas there is a kind of self-government, or independence, which offers no threat whatever to the South African regime. The formula is SWEET-HEART INDEPENDENCE.

CLASS DIVISION

It is possible to achieve this by dividing the inhabitants of any area into two classes — a governing class who hold hands with the governing group in white South Africa, and a working class, oppressed and under control.

In the bantustans, the first step was to co-opt the chiefs (a ready-made ruling elite) and get their co-operation by giving them access to power and wealth, so that they would be ready always to assert their rule against their own subjects. The second step was to create wealthy commoners, thus to broaden the ruling class to that in addition to chiefs there would be prosperous traders, administrators, teachers, lawyers and so on. In this class system, wealth flows to the wealthy, who therefore energetically defend their privileges.

Thus the machinery of oppression is constructed. We see clearly from current events in the Ciskei, the kind of hostility that develops between the working class and their rulers.

LOCATIONS ARE DIFFERENT

This scheme was not possible in locations, firstly because of the absence of

chiefs or tribal structures; secondly because whites did not want a class of African businessmen so close next door.

Let us look at these two problems in more detail:

There have been attempts to zone the locations into ethnic segments, thus to follow to some extent the bantustan pattern. In this way it was hoped that

traditional forms of authority would develop, especially if strong links with the bantustans could be established.

The Urban Bantu Council system actually made provision for at least some members of the councils to be 'chief's representatives'. But this approach was never successful, mainly because the nature of locations actually disintegrates tribal consciousness. Urban Africans resist attempts to 'tribalise' them.

BLACK LOCATIONS LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1923 **Advisory Boards** were created in black locations. White local authorities were supposed to 'consult' with these Advisory Boards. A certain amount of local politics was stimulated around the Boards. The Sofasonke Party, under James Mpanza campaigned for inclusion on the Orlando Advisory Board; so did the local Vigilance Committee.

1961 **Urban Bantu Councils (UBC's)** were created. The first move in the direction of dividing locations into ruling and subordinate classes. These councils were in fact never given their full powers. They became known as Useless Boys' Clubs.

1971 **Bantu Affairs Administration Boards (BAABs)** were set up (for example the West Rand Admin Board — WRAB) to take control of all locations, under the central management of the Department of Bantu Affairs. This was to bring the administration of influx control, housing etc more into line with Nationalist Apartheid policy.

1977 After the June uprising of '76, the UBCs came under heavy pressure from students. The Soweto UBC was forced to resign. The UBC system collapsed. In the same year, the **Community Council** system was created. The aim of these councils was 'to provide for the creation of responsible, independent bodies with meaningful executive powers, to function and develop alongside Administration Boards.' (Rieckert Commission Report)

1983 **Town Councils** (and Village Councils) have been created to replace the Community Councils; and Admin Boards are being replaced by Development Boards.

Tribal zoning was abandoned: it is left to the bantustan governments to extend their influence into urban areas if they chose to. Some parties supporting local candidates are in fact tribal, as for instance INKATHA, or the LEBOWA VULAMEHLO-VUKANI PEOPLES' PARTY, which supported a candidate recently in Mamelodi Ward 8.

The second problem has to do with money-making. In the bantustans African traders and business people were developed at the expense of local whites. The same procedure obviously is difficult in white areas, at least until the notion of permanent black urban presence is accepted. The dangers that became visible in 1976 made it essential to recognise that simple fact, and do something about it.

The ruling class is one that gains from the system in terms of money and power. To keep its privileges such a class willingly stands on the neck of the working class.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

To start the process of generating wealth, restrictions on African traders in locations were lifted in 1977; the Rieckert Commission recommended that white capital be allowed into black areas, in junior partnership with black capital (the 49% - 51% rule); in 1980 it was announced that shebeens would be legalised; 'Industrial Parks' have been built for small local industries; the SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION was set up to finance and help the 'informal sector', a struggling class of would-be businessmen; and perhaps most important of all, 99-year leasehold was introduced, making it possible for blacks to own property in locations. This is important in that ownership of property enables people to raise credit on its secu-

rity. Sam Motsuenyane said, at a conference in 1980, 'How can you make anyone a capitalist without ownership of property?'

WEALTH AND POWER

Thus the new strategy for the Councils is to combine wealth with power, and use this formula to create a class of administrators, businessmen, professionals, teachers and hangers-on, and to establish thus a division between those who gain from the system and those who are to be confined to the ranks of the working masses.

The financing of black municipalities will change. In the past locations were supported by white local authorities, or, after 1955, by the production and sale of sorghum beer. But it seems likely that there will be a reorganisation of local government to make money flow from rich areas (such as Sandton or Johannesburg) to the poor ones (such as Alexandra or Soweto).

HIGH RENT

The increased rentals we see reported every month partly help to finance the self running of black municipalities, but their main function is to limit access to urban accommodation to those who can afford it. Housing is central to the new strategy of influx control and the creation of an urban middle class. Indeed, the prime purpose of the new Councils will be to organise their areas in such a way that they develop clear class boundaries between the middle class ruling elite, and the working class.

WILL THEY SUCCEED

Perhaps the most urgent question to ask is whether the new councils are puppet bodies, in the tradition of the UBCs

and the Community Councils, or whether they have a chance of becoming successful from the point of view of the states new strategy.

They are certainly dummies in some respects. For one thing they have no popular support. The elections showed even lower voting averages than elections for the CCs in 1977. Only four or five people out of every hundred actually voted for the councils.

But we must face the fact that actually popular support is not essential for the councils to be effective. Their business is not to be popular, but to oppress the working class. This is a task the new councils might well be capable of, if the recipe is now right - that is, if a new class of elites develops, becoming more wealthy, more comfortable, more ambitious, more greedy and more powerful. The combinations of wealth and power is already evident - witness the trading sites 'awarded' recently to Mahuhushi, mayor of the Diepmeadow council, or the election of Shabalala to the council in Soweto.

CLASS RULE

Those are just two men - not enough to make a class. But they indicate a direction, a tendency. When there are not two but many - and not just business people but administrators, teachers, professionals of one kind or another, people who have escaped the daily drudgery of labour in factories, and have gained a position from which to enrich themselves, they will constitute a class, whose interests are opposed to those of the working class, and who will consequently help to discipline workers and keep them in subjection. Thus will the locations be made safe from rebellion such as 76; and the S.A. capitalist state will have developed new allies in its project of class rule.

What they said in the past

July 18, 1980 Rand Daily Mail

Development of the area will be carried out in stages in order to cause minimum inconvenience to residents, said Mr Buti. "We are going to develop the area in parts. As we finish putting up a residential district, families will be resettled there before construction workers move on to the next."

April 28, 1981 Alexandra Chronicle

THE CHAIRMAN SPEAKS:

"People have been led to believe that the ALC intends catering only for the wealthy members of the community. This rumour may have started because the first 10 houses built are for high income people.

The ALC, after undertaking a socio-economic survey, is aware that the average income of Alexandrans is R150-00 per month. The policy is to cater for the entire community and with this information it is clear that a large number of low cost houses are needed. A range of house styles and prices will be provided, ensuring that all members of the community are catered for."

Jan/Feb 1982 Alexandra Chronicle

All residents who are legally in the area (between Rooth and London) will soon be resettled permanently in new houses complete with all facilities to be built in Phase 1.

June 1982 Alexandra Chronicle

The much awaited Sub-economic Housing Scheme is due to be started in Alexandra soon. Nothing exact could be said about the rentals of the sub-economic houses. Indications were that a Differentiated Rentals Scheme will be applied. This means that rentals will be set in accordance with the incomes of the rightful occupants of each house.

July 16, 1982 Financial Mail

Interview with Alex Rabie of WRAB.

A.R. Re-development (of Alex) has to take place in an occupied and overpopulated area with no vacant land. This means population removals, and we are hesitant to make people move from one area to another if the move isn't permanent.

October 5, 1982 The Star

A shock is in store for Alexandra township families who moved into their new "low-cost" houses last month. They are expected to pay R175 a month rental for a four-roomed house.

These figures, though unconfirmed by both the Alex Liaison Committee and the West Rand Administration Board, have been disclosed to The Star by a source close to both parties.

October 7, 1982 Sowetan

Rents for the new sub-economic houses in Alexandra Township will be determined by the income of a family's breadwinner, a spokesman for the ALC said yesterday.

August 18, 1983 Rand Daily Mail

(Concerning housing of people in derelict Putco buses.)

Reverend Sam Buti, chairman of the ALC, stresses his arrangement is in the interest of the community.

"And please remember", he says, "we are not developing virgin land, but a place inhabited by people. We cannot leave them in the open; we think putting them into the buses is better than that."

WHAT IS GOING ON?

A number of residents in Phase 1 houses have been told to pay higher rents. The increased amounts are between R 125,00 and R200,00.

The person demanding these new rents is a certain A.R.Moutlana, township manager, possibly employed by WRAB.

A reporter from The Sowetan asked Rev. Buti about these high rentals, and he was told that they 'had been suspended'

In an interview with Mr Snyman of WRAB, residents discovered that WRAB has no authority to raise rents, since the Alex Council got full powers on December 1, 1983. Also, Mr Snyman said that the ALC had accepted the high rents when WRAB proposed them, last year. (See interview with Snyman, in the following box)

In a later discussion with members of the ALC, residents were told that the Council had not yet decided on new rents, and that the high amounts mentioned had been demanded without authorisation.

How this is possible, we do not understand. It is our view that the high rentals were in fact decided on last year, and that the Alex Council is now testing the public

To do this, they propose high rentals unofficially, to see if residents will pay without resistance. If they do the Council will be satisfied, and if they don't, the Council has a chance to try a new approach.

This is a guess; but at least it helps to explain the confusion that exists. The Alex Council has not explained this confusion, or tried to remove it.

The Phase 1 Neighbourhood Committee is organising and alerting residents of the area

continued

The Committee has demanded proper answers from the Alex Council, regarding rentals and future development plans in the area.

INTERVIEW WITH MR SNYMAN OF WRAB

- Q. Does WRAB decide on rents?
- A. No. The Alexandra Town Council does.
- Q. Under what powers?
- A. It has full powers.
- Q. On what basis are the rents calculated?
- A. Its a big calculation. It is based on total cost, of developing the land, running the Council, the cost of services etc on a day to day basis.
- Q. Did WRAB have any part in deciding rents?
- A. The rents you are speaking of (Phase 1), were decided last year when WRAB was still in. WRAB recommended them, and the Liaison Committee accepted.
- Q. What if the residents wont afford the rents. What will they do?
- A. That is still to be decided. Probably they'll have to move out, to cheaper rooms.
- Q. You mean in the old Alex?
- A. At this stage, yes. You got to get people in here which can afford to pay

POST AND COMMUNICATIONS FORM

NAME:

WIFE:

DATE MOVED INTO ABOVE ADDRESS: 22 Nov 1982

EMPLOYER:

SALARY/PRICE: R 172.33

A. B. M. Mubana

K. 145-74 P.M.

RENEWAL OR BETRAYAL

The struggle in Phase-I

CHRONOLOGY OF PHASE 1 REMOVALS

August 31, 1982

Four families, living between London street and Roosevelt, were moved, to make way for new schools. This hush-hush removal created confusion, and the remaining residents wondered when their day would come. They therefore formed a temporary committee to try to get clarification from the township manager.

October 4, 1982

The committee meets the township manager, Gert Steyn. One committee member describes the interview as follows:

"We went to meet Gert Steyn at his office to demand at least three days notice before any future removals from the old houses, in Phase 1. The Alexandra Liaison Committee did not show much interest in this meeting. Mr Makubiri arrived late, and it seems he did not even have a man-

date from the ALC, but on invitation from Mr Steyn. During the meeting, Mr Steyn explained about the development and about how people were going to be removed. He agreed to let residents have prior notice of three days before their removal, as requested by the committee.

He spoke a bit about the rents, saying that these would be high; and he went further to say that those who won't afford, would have to swap with those able to from the old Alex. Unfortunately the committee did not give a report back to the residents before their removal; but the 'three days' promise was kept."

October 5, 1982

An article appeared in The Star about high rentals which were going to be paid by residents in the 'low cost' houses in Phase 1. The expected amounts were stated as high as R175 per month for four rooms, and R200 for five rooms.

A resident writes:



FROM "OLD ALEXANDRA" TO PHASE-1 "NEW HOUSES"

To the unsophisticated and unaffected this would sound like going to "THE PROMISED LAND". However from the beginning it all smelt of naked arrogance. We were given half a day's notice to gather all our belongings and prepare to move to our new houses. Having resigned ourselves to our fate we did all we could to get ready. The second blow was SEVEN O'CLOCK the following day! TIPPER TRUCKS WERE SENT TO TRANSPORT OUR BELONGINGS TO "THE PROMISED LAND"!!

With half our belongings broken to pieces we reached our promised land only to get OUR THIRD SHOCK. We were told in NO UNCERTAIN TERMS-TO SHARE THE FEW HOUSES THAT WERE READY. THAT IS TO SAY TWO AND THREE FAMILIES TO EACH UNIT!! However after a few murrners from some people we were settled in our own houses. We waited for OVER A YEAR TO GET OUR FOURTH AND GREATEST SHOCK OF ALL! The NEW RENT The fight is on.

— Phase 1 begins. Houses between Rooth and London demolished



SIXTEEN families were yesterday moved into five houses amid confusion and anger in the Alexandra redevelopment scheme.

October 7, 1982

Mr Nunka Mkhalipe, the ALC's Public Relations Officer asserted that rents for the new houses will be determined by the income of the family's breadwinner. He also said that residents would pay R9.80 per room until February 1983, when rent for the new houses would be determined by the LC and WRAB jointly.

October 15, 1982

A meeting was held between WRAB and the ALC. The decision was that for the time being, rent would be R9.50 per room, but that the following year rent would be based on the cost of the buildings and servicing of the land.

December 1982

Izwi Lase Township published an article about rent. This article predicted that high rentals would be imposed on residents, and went further to suggest the following ways to resist:

December 14, 1983

Having settled into their new houses, and made improvements, some residents are told by the township manager, Mr Mutluana, of their new rents, being

between R120 per month and R200 per-month! They were advised that if they could not pay, they should swap houses with old-Alex residents who could. Notices of the new rentals were done in a strange way: one resident gave this account —

"I was told of my new rental as I was paying my December rent. The township manager just issued a pa-

per with a WRAB rubber stamp and wrote on it the new rent. To my surprise it was R126, and I wonder how the hell I am going to afford. To add to that I was advised by the township manager to exchange my house with someone who could afford to pay — actually he pointed out one WRAB policeman as the nearest person who was willing to exchange with me, as he was in a position to pay the proposed rent.

December 15, 1983

Certain residents arranged a meeting to allow others to air their views, and suggest ways to respond to the high rentals being demanded.

December 20, 1983

An open air meeting was held, to which all residents of Phase 1 had been invited. It was decided to form a committee, which would take the residents mandate, and deal with the Liaison Committee, to get information from them on the one hand, and to take to them the residents views and requirements, on the other. This committee was empowered to seek legal advice, and to conduct a survey in the area affected, to get a full grip on the problem.

(This chronology will be brought up to date from time to time.)

Dont...

DON'T move from your present house, until you know what rent you will have to pay in the new house.

DON'T agree to pay a rental you cannot afford. Rent should not be more than about 10% of your income. If you earn R200 per month, your rent should be about R20 only: if you earn R400 you could pay R40 in rent: and if you earn less than R100 per month, you should pay R10 or less in rent.

DON'T agree to exchange houses, once you have been moved into a new one. If you go back into the old Alex, they will never again allocate a new house to you, and eventually you will be forced out of the township.

DON'T believe anyone who tells you that WRAB or the Liaison Committee can help you, if you throw yourself on their mercy. They are there to do Piet Koornhof's dirty work, and they will do it. There is more safety in organising with your fellow workers and residents, and fighting as a united mass.

Insist on your right to remain and live, in a well built house, with a reasonable rent, in Alexandra township. Don't allow yourself to be sent to any one of the ruined 'homelands'.