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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

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ALL LITTLE SISTERS GOT TO TRY ON BIG SISTER'S CLOTHES: THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA[1]

Robin Bloch

"The time has come for us to carry the can" - George Thabe, on becoming first Chairman of the Vaal Community Council, 1978.

"I cannot allow myself to be used by anybody" - George Thabe on resigning from the Vaal Community Council, 1981.

INTRODUCTION

The Community Councils Act of 1977 provided for the establishment of community councils in the African urban townships - the *urban* locus for the management and reproduction of the African labour force in the cities and towns of 'white' South Africa. Community councils were to replace the largely defunct urban bantu councils (UBCS) and advisory boards in the townships. They were to take over significant aspects of the execution of state urban management - reproduction policy in the townships from administration boards.

By March 1980, according to the Department of Co-operation and Development (CAD) 224 community councils had been established. Elections had been held in 193 cases, with an average poll of 41,9%.[2] CAD 'facts' and 'figures' notwithstanding, by 1980 things did not look too healthy for the community council-. In reality, the period from 1977 - when the first council was instituted in the Vaal townships - saw the rejection of community councils by the vast majority of township residents all over South Africa, resulting in the effective failure of the system - in its first incarnation, at any rate. The council system was restructured slightly as part of Koornhof's "new deal" bills in October 1980 ; massively rejected and sent for redrafting, the latest version of the community council has just seen the light of day in the Black Local Authorities Bill of March this year. This bill has now been sent to a Parliamentary Select Committee for review.

This paper examines the community council system, since 1977 and locates it within the *broader* patterns of changing state urban management reproduction policy, which is, arguably, in an ongoing state of crisis.

This crisis of urban policy - *"a crisis of state intervention on the effects of the urban crisis"*[3] - has its roots in the urban crisis of the mid-70's in South Africa. Before examining the community council system in detail, we must give some brief indication of the causes and dimensions of this crisis.

In terms of the provisions of the Bantu Affairs Administration Act of 1971, 22 Bantu Affairs Administration Boards (BAAB's) were established by the state in 1972 and 1973 to control and manage the African dominated classes in the townships and on the 'white' farms (all areas outside the bantustans) Created by the state to co-ordinate more efficiently the influx of labour into the cities and towns with the urban reproduction and management of this labour force in the townships, BAAB's took over from about 450 local (primarily municipal) authorities as the *central pivots* of township control. This represented the final centralization of state urban management-reproduction policy and its execution. Thus, from 1972-1973 onwards, the BAAB's were solely responsible - as "agents" of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (BAD) and controlled directly by the Minister of BAD - for the provision, distribution and management of many of the means of collective consumption in the townships.[4]

By the mid-70's however, there was effectively an urban crisis in the townships - a crisis of the management reproduction of labour power.[5] The urban revolt of 1976-7 was both a manifestation and a further cause of this crisis. Crucial here, were the role of the state's *"manager(s) of collective services, structuring daily life"*[6]; the BAAB's. The state's intervention in the townships in the early 70's to secure and extend bourgeois domination *and* to manage and reproduce labour power more efficiently - these two functions are not separate - in the form of BAAB's had not worked and had, in fact, merely sharpened urban contradictions - and pointed them in the direction of the state. The harvest of BAAB total control - and total neglect - was reaped in the destruction of its facilities and of its ability to rule effectively in the subsequent period.[7] The urban crisis of 1975-7 forced the state to rethink and replan its urban management-reproduction policy - in effect as "the urban component of the overall total reconsideration of relations towards the popular classes".[8] And, in its turn, the community council system, formed a vital part of the "new" state urban policy.

This "new" urban policy - deliriously heralded as "reform" by so many - was premised on a state solution for two state perceived problems. Firstly the total unprofitability of collective consumption processes and their management had to be tempered somehow. Secondly, the demands of the popular

classes in this sphere, conjoined as they were (and still are) with broader political demands, had to be assuaged, particularly given the growing significance of monopoly capital in state and economy. The resolution of these problems necessitated greater and intensified intervention by the dominant classes in the urban sphere in an ongoing and contradictory programme of reformulated control, disguised as "reform" and "development". The 'concessions' so ungraciously extended were only *real* for small sectors of the dominated classes -- and satisfied no *real* demands. It is this strategy that has somewhat backfired in the context of continuing struggle: in effect redoubling the crisis of reproduction into one of urban policy.

The post-1976 urban 'reforms' (as connected with 'reforms' in other spheres) should be seen as aimed at dividing and controlling the popular classes; at splitting apart the popular alliance of classes objectively opposed to the capitalist logic of the management-reproduction of their daily lives; at co-opting sectors of these classes with material/consumption 'bribes'; at deflecting popular opposition away from the centres of power in the townships -- in essence, at containing and subordinating the struggles of the dominated classes to maintain political domination and to smooth the path for accumulation -- as the conomy began to recover and monopoly capital's need (stemming from the labour process itself) for 'better' management-reproduction of a more skilled workforce grew.. And, of course, where 'reforms' would not suffice, naked repression just had to do: the balance always shifting in the class struggle.

LEGISLATION -- AND MOTIVATION

The Community Councils Act (No. 25 of 1977) was passed in June 1977. It was the first real shot in the onslaught by the dominated classes on the urban question post-1976, and was followed in August by the appointment of the Riekert Commission, and in September by that of a Cabinet Committee to investigate the position of urban Africans. This flurry of 'reformism' and investigation did not mean that struggle was *only* being conducted by the cominant classes in the period however: 'unrest' continued in the townships and rural areas and the Act's promulgation was immediately preceded by the SSRC's successful rents campaign and the ousting of the Soweto UBC.[9] Ine June too, the Committee of Ten emerged, rejecting community councils and any dealings with WRAB. The body would negotiate only with the Prime Minister, it stated. In the following month, the Committee drew up a 'blueprint' for the running of Soweto, providing basically for an autonomous City Council of 50 members which would receive state funding, with powers to pass by-laws, draw up its own budget and delegate powers to an executive.

A public meeting to present this to Soweto's inhabitants was prohibited by the state on two occasions.[10] The state's new dispensation for urban Africans to 'rule' their own townships was thus born amidst continuing popular organisation and mobilization. And from the outset, it was *only* the townships that were to be 'ruled': as Vorster stated while discussing the community councils in Parliament in early 1977, "the urban ... Bantu will have to exercise his political rights in the homelands."[11] Both continuing struggle by the dominated classes *and* an emphasis on the exercising of political rights in the bantustans by the state were to characterise the community councils era.

According to the Riekert Report, the central aim of the Community Councils Act was to provide for

> "the creation of responsible independent bodies with meaningful executive powers, which could function and develop alongside administration boards."[12]

Thus the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development[13] was to establish a community council in a township by a notice in the *Gazette*, after consultation with the relevant administration board[14], and existing advisory board or UBC in that township.

According to the Act, this council was to consist of members elected by the inhabitants eligible to vote -- this determined by the Minister too, and usually in practice consisting of those registered tenants with Section 10 qualifications -- including in some cases hostel dwellers. From the start then, ministerial control was to be total: the Minister was to establish the council; decide, after consultation with the board and UBC, what powers it was to have; was able to dissolve it or take away its powers; could make regulations in regard to elections, periods of office, conditions of service, conduct of meetings, employment, finance or anything else which affected its operation and, originally, was able to appoint members if there were not enough to go round.[15]

The powers a council could have were limited by statute, and were "subject to the Minister's directions".[16] These were, inter alia:

> " (i) the allocation and administration of the letting of accommodation to single persons as if they were single;
>
> (ii) the allocation and administration of the letting of dwellings, buildings and other structures;
>
> (iii) the prevention and combating of the unlawful occupation of land and buildings;

(iv) the allocation and administration of sites for church, school or trading purposes;

(v) the approval of building plans of private dwellings and the removal or demolition of unauthorised or abandoned buildings or structures;

(vi) the prohibition, regulation or restriction of the keeping of animals, except dogs;

(vii) the control over the keeping of dogs and the imposition of a (dog) levy ...;

(viii) the promotion of the moral and social welfare of persons living in its area;

(ix) the promotion of sound community development in its area;

(x) the beautifying of and the tidiness of the area;

(xi) the administration of sport and recreational facilities;

"(xii) the administration of library services;

(xiii) the award of bursaries;

(xiv) the maintenance of services determined by the Minister."[17]

The council could also control and manage a community guard; make recommendations to the Minister about transport services, educational matters and township regulations; "advise" and assist bantustan representatives in the township; impose levies after consultation with the Minister; appoint committees and staff; designate members to act on school boards and most importantly, according to Section 5 (1) (n) of the Act, be given powers by the Minister not specified in the original Act, after consultation with the appropriate administration board. The councils were to be financed via the administration board with the same sources that the latter received: rents, liquor and beer sales, fines, etc.

Quite clearly, the legislation did not provide for meaningful 'self-rule' for townships in any way. If anything, power was to be even more centralized than before -- at the very apex of the Department of BAD and its predecessors (this reflecting overall state restructuring). The councils were to represent nothing more than vaguely cranked-up UBCs -- without even the latter's powers (never really used in practice) over influx control and medical and health services. It is little wonder that their advent was

not exactly greeted with joy in South Africa's townships.

Most obviously, the community council strategy represented a *form of attempted state restructuring at the local level* on the part of the dominant classes -- in response, largely, to the intensified popular struggles of the 70's. Community councils emerged as the latest in a long line of state-created vehicles for co-option and incorporation, diversion and fragmentation and, ultimately, *division and control* of the African dominated classes in the urban townships. This is very general though, and it is possible to probe deeper in order to understand why community councils were set up.

Castells is illuminating here. He states that

> "the intervention of the state (in management-reproduction processes) becomes necessary in order to take charge of the sectors and services which are less profitable (from the point of view of capital) but necessary for the functioning of economic activity and/or the appeasement of social conflicts.[18]

In this light, the creation of community councils can be seen on a number of interrelated levels. In the first instance, the councils were designed to take over, to some extent, some areas of the provision and management of the means of collective consumption -- especially in the sphere of housing -- from the administration boards in the townships. This was quite clearly a *diversionary and deflective* tactic by the state: the board system had been shown up as unworkable -- so replace it in part with a parallel body featuring 'popular' representation, but keep overall power in your hands. Furthermore, in a period in which the dominant classes were finding it increasingly difficult to provide for some of the collective means of consumption unproblematically -- costs were high and opposition to the state's functioning intense -- it became vital that

> "black communities .. bear to an increasing extent a greater part of the total burden in connection with the provision of services in their own communities"

to quote Riekert's words.[19] The dominated classes were thus to pay even more towards the cost of their own management and reproduction, but instead of administration boards doing the dirty work ... community councils were to be given "municipal status" and told to collect the rents. As a speaker pointed out at a meeting which rejected community councils in Mlungisi, Queenstown: "'ECAB (Eastern Cape Administration Board) will say it is your people who are arresting you'."[20]

But 'ruling' the townships obviously went slightly further than this. The same speaker quoted above recognised this:

> "As community councils are a government creation for black residents they must be seen as nothing more than puppet bodies set up to create the appearance of self-rule in the urban areas."[21]

"Puppet bodies" the community councils certainly were. However, their creation *also* corresponded to the need of the dominant classes, in a period of crisis, to somehow extend participation in the political structures of the (up to then) racially exclusive state. This participation clearly was not to amount to much, but it did represent a low-level political tactic for the co-option and containment of parts of the urban African working class and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie -- to run their own townships (and their own lives) and thus to 'rule' their 'own' people.

In the final analysis then, community councils emerged as state-created bodies for the better and smoother regulation of management-reproduction processes in the townships: a dubious 'concession' handed down by the state, imposed on it by the struggle of the dominated classes and the demands and needs of monopoly capital. The councils therefore were both an *effect* of and an attempt to *defuse* struggles on the state's part.[22]

THE COUNCILS CRAWL INTO ACTION

> "In a nation ruled by swine, all pigs are upward-mobile" - Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, c. 1971

The procedure for the establishment of councils was as follows:

1. The Department of CAD gazetted that a community council was to be established in a particular township, usually within a period of six months.

2. The administration board responsible, having consulted the UBC or advisory board in the area if one or the other existed, then set a date for an election.

3. The election took place. Most townships were divided into wards for this purpose. Some elections occurred along "ethnic" lines; others did not. Only *registered* tenants in the township were allowed to vote, sometimes including hostel dwellers. This, of course, effectively excluded large numbers of township residents.

4. The (hopefully) elected council negoitiated with the Minister and appropriate administration board as to its duties. It was decided on what powers were to be transferred.

5. In a heart-rending ceremony, the council was then inducted. The document handing over powers was signed by representatives of both the council and the board. This was usually effective for a year. Often high-powered state officials such as the Deputy Minister of CAD, Dr. G. de V. Morrison (who seemed to make this somewhat of a speciality) made speeches. Such paternalistic brilliance as "People have to crawl before they can walk"[23] was showered forth upon those present by this orator *extraordinaire* on more than one occasion.

6. The community council crawled into full action.

Step 6, of course, was not the final one. CAD reviewed the transfer of powers *every year* and on a basis of performance or "necessity" handed down more powers -- or took some away. These additional transfers seemed to take place on a fairly *ad hoc* basis -- dependent on the sanction of the Minister and that of Frans Cronjé, the official in CAD with the overall responsibility for boards and councils. And in spite of Section 5(1) (n) of the Act, the handing down of powers from the boards could only go a certain distance -- and no further. The attainment of "full, independent municipal status" for councils -- as state officials so consistently and eagerly put it -- was not to be that easy in practice. When councillors reacted with disappointment to their powerlessness, they were fobbed off with such statements as this one by Morrison at the induction of the Kagiso council:

> "But we don't want to give you powers you can't handle. We are not afraid -- but you don't have the experience or the know-how."[24]

Similarly, Koornhof stated at the jamboree inaugurating the Diepmeadow Council in 1978, that

> "The Act is a vehicle for a purpose. If the purpose cannot be achieved by the vehicle, I will change the vehicle to suit the purpose."[25]

Clearly, this was a long way from the naive demand articulated by Steve Kgame -- as President of the Urban Councils Association of South Africa (UCASA), a co-ordinating body set up in 1978 -- that "the administration board officials must take a back seat while you (councillors) drive the car."[26]

The vehicle of the councils was aimed at regaining and

extending control over the townships in the context of intensified struggle. Thus the limits on the vehicle were very much inbuilt, as we shall see. This was *not* to preclude the unveiling of new models, however. We will consider the question of the powers of councils as handed down in the context of their operation below. Firstly, however, we must look at the election process.

Information about elections was difficult to obtain and very sketchy, with the obvious exception of Soweto. By April 1978 there were 18 councils; by the following April 160 -- and by 1980, as indicated already, over 200. There were 112 elections held by 1979 -- with an average poll of 41,27% according to CAD.[27] This is manifestly an inflated percentage -- in fact, as the boards oversee *all* elections, any percentages given (except the very low ones) are to be treated warily. The first council was established in the Vaal Traingle in November 1977 with a percentage poll of about 20%. Officials of the Department of BAD were delighted with this auspicious start to their new master-plan for control and co-option. Their hopes took a nosedive by the end of April the following year. An election and a by-election had been held by that time in Soweto -- in February and April respectively. The events underlying and the details of these two elections are well known -- the October 1977 bannings, the detention of the Committee of Ten, the freeing of some of its members after the catastrophic first election, the pamphlets from the sky proclaiming "Be a historymaker and not a sell-out"[28] and Minister of PRAD, Connie Mulder's miserable excuses. I cannot go into further detail here. Both elections though, saw a massive popular stayaway. Percentage polls were 5,6% and 6% respectively, with only 3 600 out of an eligible 60 000 (itself a tiny figure considering Soweto's size) bothering to vote. The new 97-vote 'mayor' David Thebahali -- later to be called "that poisonous and obnoxious weed"[29] -- and his council took office without any support from the majority (or even the minority, for that matter) of Soweto inhabitants. This setback did not deter CAD too much, however . Elections continued to take place with monotonous regularity amid marked popular uninterest and often, opposition. The percentage polls were, in many cases though, significantly higher than in Soweto -- particularly in smaller rural towns. Some examples were: Daveyton (19,59%), Kwa Thema (19,75%), Grahamstown (25,01%) Fort Beaufort (70%), Bloemfontein (29%), Ermelo (32,6%) Port Elizabeth (11,2%), Kimberley (37,61%), Jacobsdal (54,8%) Atteridgeville/Saulsville (25,8%), Ladysmith (26,4%) and Witbank (25%). It should be noted that councils were often formed for more than one township (e.g. the Vaal Triangle council). The community council system was clearly to be instituted, even in the face of stayaways from the polls and other resistance. Before examining the powers the councils actually received and the functions they fulfilled -- which were to have real effects on the management reproduction of the labour force in the townships -- we must make

a few brief comments on the stances adopted towards participation in the 'new' bodies, and then look at who *did* participate.

Debate on this vexed question has long historical roots. For community councils it is possible to point to some fairly consistent -- and equally inconsistent -- positions. Bodies such as the Committee of Ten, its 'mass' successor the Soweto Civic Association (SCA), and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Association (PEBCO) and its associates -- as well as many other civic and residents' associations all over the country -- have maintained, to this day, a stand of non-participation. After all, these bodies were, and still are, explicitly concerned with mobilizing against the actions of boards and councils. Motlana's statement below summed up this stand to some extent -- which is not to deny the often significant differences existing between various bodies:

> "Until and only when that day comes that we blacks have representation in the central government would people like myself agree to serve ... The community councils are a non-event and I refuse to dignify them with a comment."[31]

PEBCO's stance on non-negotiation with and non-participation in what it called "dummy bodies" was also initially implacable.[32] Inkatha's position, however, was and continues to be far more fluid. The possibly yes - possibly no stance of 1978-79 -- with Inkatha members apparently contributing to high percentage polls in Natal with their enthusiastic participation -- was supplanted by a definite 'no' in January, 1980 for the Soweto elections to be held later that year. Then in April came Buthelezi's stirring announcement on the participation issue at a meeting at Vosloosrus:

> "I say to you bluntly: do not be ashamed to enter the fray at the level of community councils ... (they) ... are not the vehicles of individual enrichment. They must be turned into chariots which rush us into battle ... I can see in the short and medium term, blacks pouring their strength into the community council system and so joining one council to another so that the very structure of division is turned into a mechanism of unity."[33]

However, despite Buthelezi's fiery imagery (drawn, it seemed, straight from *Ben Hur* or such like) by late July there had been second thoughts. Peter Davidson, PRO for Inkatha on the Rand, insisting that "Inkatha is not doctrinaire, but practical" stated that Inkatha would *not* take part in the Soweto elections until the council was

made financially viable -- a process he seemed to equate with it owning the land and houses in its area. Davidson was of course implying that if the council could sell land and houses people would not resist paying higher rents -- and only then would Inkatha participate.[34] Shortly after this it was largely resistance to the actions of councils that caused Koornhof to postpone the Soweto (and other) elections -- on the "request" of his 'mayors'. Inkatha continued to vacillate though. In October 1980 it was reported that Inkatha was preparing to take part in future elections in Soweto and elsewhere.[35]

Buthelezi's comment in February 1981 that

> "To me, to live in a'Native location' and refuse to accept responsibility even for rubbish removal, sewerage and schools while one lives there, shows dangerous political immaturity."[36]

would appear to typify this 'new' stance.

It is, of course, not sufficient to examine the participation issue without looking at the position and electoral platform of those individuals and parties which actually have taken part in elections. I cannot go into detail here. One example -- out of a multitude of parties (often linked with bantustan parties and politics) all over the country -- is that of the Sofasanke Party in Soweto in 1978, which stood on a ticket demanding freehold land tenure, the abolition of influx control and electrification. Many similar examples could be quoted. In essence though, we can broadly state that the councils, in most cases, have in the past four years represented the most conservative and reactionary of petty bourgeois interests. The internal politics of the councils -- the *putches* as chairman flit off to America on visits, to find themselves replaced on their returns, the machinations of ruling and opposition parties -- can be seen as the quintessence of petty bourgeois politics. Most councillors have been drawn from the ranks of the traditional petty bourgeoisie -- as well as some from the new petty bourgeoisie. They have often ceaselessly articulated demands over such issues as business rights and freehold land title -- and their distance from the discourse and practices of the working class, and significant sectors of the new petty bourgeoisie -- as from the realities of exploitation -- has been marked. Of course, given the objective function of the councils as institutions to *control* and *manage* the dominated classes, this is hardly surprising.

It appears too that via the agency of community councils, the state successfully created its own small-scale, localised Matanzimas and Sebes in the townships. Corruption has been a by-word in the functioning of the councils. On the one level, this has meant jobs and trading licences for pals. A example from the Vaal Triangle

bears this out:

> "Mr Kosilang (a councillor in opposition to the ruling bloc on the Vaal Council) said, when a business was advertised for occupation the 'favoured' people knew in advance of the official announcement that they had been granted licences. They openly boasted about it and to 'prove their point they would immediately throw braaivleis parties for the executive members of the council'."[37]

Such antics have not ended here though. Councillors have often spent large amounts of time attempting to increase their allowances, buying themselves 'mayoral' cars, chains, liquor cabinets and robes, beating up their enemies with their own private police/vigilante forces and so on. Thebahali's gang in the Soweto Council, for instance, continues to be a potent symbol of corrupt low-level bureaucracy running high and wild. And, as if this were not bad enough, the popularity of the councils has not been helped by the contempt in which councillors often hold the people of the townships. In a notorious incident in 1980, a Manguang councillor described his constituents -- he claimed he was speaking of "stone-throwers" -- rather derogatorily:

> "An African is like a baboon which you make to sleep on a bed with white sheets and clean pillow, but who still remains a baboon."[38]

Katlehong's mayor at the time M.B. Kumalo's benignly contemptuous comment to me in an interview, that

> "For negotiation purposes you don't want to go to the masses ... they are scared to take decisions ... I take decisions and I account for them in Katlehong and on the East Rand" [39]

is perhaps an instance of the same attitude, in vastly altered form. The undemocratic and fundamentally coercive activities of the community councils and the resistance engendered were major factors leading to the failure of the system and the rejection of Koornhof's "new deal" bills of 1980.

So far we have painted a rather bleak picture of the community council system: as agencies of control and division, created by the state to extend co-optive but effectively meaningless 'political' rights to sections of the dominated classes on the urban terrain and to ensure that the townships -- site of the extended reproduction of capital's workforce -- continued to "pay their own way." Monopolised by a *small* (and often corrupt) segment of the petty bourgeoisie, the council strategy

emerged therefore as one to revamp the management-reproduction of labour power in the townships in the face of ongoing popular struggle in this domain. Crucial here were the powers and duties handed down to the councils. The Act did have a certain degree of flexibility and *how* the councils were implemented and empowered in different townships was dependent on the level of militancy there, the forms of organisation existent and the resistance to their operation. These powers could only go a certain distance. Administration boards retained their powers over influx and labour control functions. And the other powers and duties passed down from the boards appear to have been, in most cases, rather limited, even within the extremely circumscribed powers community councils can exert by law. Most councils seemed to acquire powers in the same piecemeal way as the Soweto Council: firstly control over housing, land and trading matters (as specified in the Act) and permission to establish a community guard in June 1978; then the power to draw up its own budget and establish its own treasury (revenue control and collection, control over capital expenditure, tenders, insurance and salaries) in June 1979; and then control over its own salaried officials and staff as well as seconded administration board officials in November/December 1979.[40] The Soweto Council was, by the time of the last step, supposed to be nothing less than a fully-fledged municipality, and more powers could be granted if the councils so requested, stated CAD officials.

Of course, this was nonsense. "Municipal autonomy" was still a long way off for most councils by the end of 1979 -- or 1980 for that matter. Moreover, few township residents took the powers granted to the councils seriously anyway. As a Soweto clerk commented after the first "Councils get teeth" announcement in 1978:

> "Whether these powers are good or bad is immaterial. They have been given to the wrong people. We do not know them, nor do we want them as we have shown. I wonder if they will know what to do with them?"[41]

The strategy was one that ensured that the responsibility for the provision and management of township services -- the collective means of consumption in part -- fell directly into the laps of the elected councils: "The Community Councils must consider matters and *take the rap* if things go wrong" as an ex-director or WRAB smugly put it.[42] Or, from the rather bemused and suddenly wise perspective of a Soweto councillor: "The council has been given the power to control and draw up its budget. But the council is broke."[43] And it was then that rents had to be raised and popular mobilization to the actions of the councils grew, while the likes of Thebahali asked innocently, "What's wrong with increasing rents?"[44]

In this regard, the relationship between boards and councils was critical. Rather than making the decisions and having the administration boards execute them, the councils emerged as nothing more than the boards' little sisters[45] - wearing their big sisters' clothes. The boards -- and CAD -- still held the management power in the townships and they were not to disappear suddenly. Thus WRAB's new chief director, G.J. Bezuidenhout, speaking in May 1980, stated that the boards would exercise "creative withdrawals" from the controls in townships. At the same time though, this creativity notwithstanding, "there would always be room for the board as a co-ordinating body somewhere between local government and central government."[46]

This relationship between the boards and councils caused councillors all over the country -- by 1980 some 15 00 to 2 000 of them -- much heartache and many a sleepless night, as they pondered the nightmare question: are we in charge of runaway vehicles with no effective powers?

This outline of the operation and powers of the councils must now be supplemented with analysis of how the system fitted into the overall trajectory of state urban management-reproduction policy in the period since 1977. Since that time - and primarily as a consequence of intense and continuing popular struggle and urban fiscal crisis - this policy has been characterised by a developing "crisis of state intervention on the crisis of the reproduction of the labour force"[47] - a crisis of urban policy, in other words.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND URBAN POLICY 1977-1980

(a) Influx Control and Labour Allocation

In the period administration boards -- and the apparatus of Commissioner's offices and courts and the SAP -- retained total authority over the *influx and labour control system.* It was made explicit by the Department of BAD, PRAD, and CAD functionaries on many occasions in 1977, 1978 and 1979 that this control function would not devolve on to community councils. The enforcement of the pass laws was nevertheless tightened to some extent, as hundreds of thousands continued to be prosecuted in assembly-line courts and 'rehabilitated' in aid centres. Legislation in 1978 provided for the extension of the removal of "idles and undesirables." It was in 1978 and 1979 though, that the state's overall strategy in the influx control sphere became clearer: an extremely

> "limited relaxation of controls --- entirely conditional upon the increased efficiency and severity of controls over the section of the urban African population not considered to be 'established' in the towns."[48]

-- coupled with a gradual assault on Section 10 qualifications in general. The African dominated classes were to be divided into 'insiders' and 'outsiders': the 'insiders' those legally in the cities necessary for (primarily monopoly) capitalist production and granted effectively meaningless consumption and 'political' concessions (better houses, community councils); the 'outsiders' the unemployed and marginalized, removed to the bantustans, where the Mphephus and Sebes could look after them. Thus, according to the Riekert Report masterplan, influx control would be more closely tied to housing and employment availability. In 1979 for example, legislation was made for the harsher punishment of those who employed "illegals" (a R500 fine). However, analysis in terms of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' must not blind us to two fundamental and interconnected facts:

(i) that the 'insiders' are to remain 'outsiders' in their own country. It does not appear that the urban dominated classes are to exert their *national* political rights anywhere but in the bantustans;

ii) that as noted, the state is engaged in a process of whittling away Section 10 qualifications. The passing of the Black Laws Amendment Act in 1978 -- which prevented children born to 'Citizens' of 'independent' bantustans after they became 'independent' from obtaining Section 10 (1) (a) and (b) qualifications -- made this clear, as did Koornhof's influx bills of 1980.[49]

Removals continued, pass laws continued to be savagely enforced and the "blackjacks" still terrorised the townships. The labour bureaux still functioned all over the country. In spite of all the 'reformist' initiatives presented to the masses by the state -- the influx-efflux control system still remained -- functional (although not uncontradictorily) to political class domination and class exploitation in South Africa.

(b) Housing

The involvement of the community councils in housing and residential control was very significant. As we indicated in the previous section, many councils (the exact figures are unknown) were granted most of the powers in this sphere provided for in the legislation. In effect, these councils became responsible for the *allocation and management* of housing in their areas -- while still under the watchful eye of the administration boards. And this, of course, was in the context of increased state and monopoly capital involvement in the housing 'problem' and the upgrading of the "quality of life." In addition to the extravagent planning schemes which were discussed *ad nauseum* by the dominant classes, the following measures were taken:[50]

(i) Increased state capital expenditure -- the R250 million housing package (R50 million for African housing in the 'white' areas) announced in 1977 was vital here. Of course, in the long run, the dominated classes were still to pay this back through rents, etc.

(ii) The institution of the 99-year leasehold scheme in 1978, and the limiting of superintendent/manager's powers in 1979 to facilitate this.

(iii) The abolition of the Black Housing Board in 1979 -- and the granting of sub-economic housing loans to Africans from the same year onwards.

(iv) The acceptance by the state of most of the Riekert Commission's recommendations on housing.

(v) The pouring of funds into the townships by the capitalist classes (e.g. the Urban Foundation) and also employers increasingly contributing "towards alleviating the desperate need for housing for their workers."[51]

The last-mentioned point is of the greatest significance. The housing crisis so clearly visible by 1976-77 had to be relieved somehow -- Riekert calculated that by the end of 1977 there was a shortage of 141 000 houses and 126 000 hostel beds, and that by 1982 this would have dropped only to 132 000 and 113 000 respectively.[52] Some measure of destatisation was urgently needed -- an index of the impossibility for the state of effectively providing and managing this collective means of consumption -- and the calls for increasing capitalist involvement in housing came thick and fast from the state. As Deputy Minister of the Department of Bantu Administration, Willem Cruywagen, put it as a ceremony to open show houses in Sebokeng in 1977.

"The provision of housing to satisfy the needs of

> all people is the mutual responsibility of both the public and the private sectors in contemporary society."[53]

But all of this could only be the literal drop in the ocean. The state continued to build towns and houses in the bantustans -- and the number of commuters[54] *and* the number of bus boycotts grew. The backlog of houses and beds remained and it was calculated that it would cost well over R1 000 million to meet it by 1982.[55] Equally, the provision of "elite townships for the rapidly developing Black middle classes"[56] -- the 'new' *divisive* strategy in this area of collective consumption -- did not proceed too quickly. Very few 99-year leaseholds had been granted by the end of 1980.[57] The new era of (different) houses for all was slow in coming.

The increasing responsibilities of community councils in this sphere did not help at all. Rather then deflecting township anger, the councils instead focused it -- on themselves. Inheriting the deficits of the BAABs (which increased after the destruction of the beerhalls), the councils were soon in above their heads. Huge and superficially impressive budgets were drawn up, but the funds were not there. And, as services continued to deteriorate and the councils became more involved in the running of people's lives in the townships, opposition and anger grew. The fact that the councils were seen as being a puppet-like extension of the administration boards did not help matters for the state. "Those whites are just using you to oppress us", said the leader of an opposition body to the Evaton Community Council at a meeting the council had called.[58] But it was -- and continues to be -- the state's transparent strategem in placing the responsibility for raising rents in the hands of the councils that caused the most virulent popular anger and opposition. To understand this we must examine the financing of councils more closely.

(c) Finance[59]

The *financial crisis* in the townships was and continues to be one of the state's main problems in the sphere of the management-reproduction of labour power. Both the Riekert and the Browne Commission were to agonize over this issue. Basically though, the establishment of the community councils saw the state's policy of financial self-sufficiency for the townships unchanged. Riekert's recommendation that the dominated classes pay *more* towards the cost of their own reproduction further entrenched this policy -- and no further sources of funding were provided. Employer levies were increased by 20% in 1977[60] but capital was unhappy with this, and Riekert suggested the gradual phasing out of these as a result. Thus, in drawing up their budgets the councils soon realised (or were told) that if they wanted to provide amenities and services in the townships (and if they did not there would be considerable anger)

they would have to raise rents. As John Knoetze, the Chairman of WRAB, so succinctly stated in 1980.

> "Now it's up to the Soweto Council to find ways of getting the money .. either from the residents or from employers, but definitely not from us as our resources are now dry."[61]

The councils, running on empty, were thus forced to attempt to increase rents -- or components of them[62] -- and face the mobilization and resistance of their constituents.

In the post 1977 period then, rents rocketed in townships all over South Africa.[63] But so did resistance. While the state examined ways to improve the funding of the townships, civic and residents' associations emerged to fight their administration on many issues - notably rents and transport. Motlana was quoted as saying such things as

> "You moved Soweto twenty miles outside of town. For your convenience. It's your baby. You finance it. There's no way in which the people of Soweto can finance it by themselves "[64]

on many occasions and this does exemplify a particular stance often taken by township residents. In a number of cases the increased rents were not paid, so strong was popular organization and commitment. And it was the councils which had to cajole and then try to *enforce* inhabitants of the townships to pay up. In fact, very often, it was the *way* in which rent hikes were announced (or rather *not* announced) that added to popular indignation. Boards merely announced the increases *through* the councils -- which then had to go and evict people, nail doors shut and so on. "People look upon us as rubber stamps" said a Soweto councillor angrily in 1980, referring to the way in which township managers made the councillors do their dirty work.[65] It was, after all, one of the council's powers. Furthermore the financial idiosyncracies of the boards themselves contributed to the mess -- donating sums to SABRA and investing in banks which collapsed shortly afterwards, for instance.

Clearly, with regard to the financial situation, the formation of community councils, rather than deflecting attention away from the repressiveness and inefficiency of administration in the ownships, instead sharpened tensions and contradictions -- and stimulated popular mobilization.

(d) "Free Enterprise"

Of course, one of the problems contributing to the fiscal crisis in the townships was their lack of a tax

base, owing to the paucity of businesses in them. Over the past few years the state has tried to make a start in solving this problem -- so that the townships can *really* pay more for themselves. Thus, most restrictions on African traders and businessmen were lifted in November 1977 and September 1978. We should note though, that there were still long delays in allocating sites, that traders were often prevented from altering and improving their buildings and that permission had to be obtained from boards and councils to dispose of trading licences.[66] And freehold land tenure was still not granted, although there were vague hints that this long-awaited concession was on its way.

Meanwhile the state took other steps to start stimulating "free enterprise" in the townships. It appointed Louis Rive, ex-Postmaster-General, to head the Soweto Planning Council to plan and develop Soweto in conjunction with the Soweto, Dobsonville and Diepmeadow councils. One of the main objectives of Rive's "fantastic mission", as he described it himself[67], was to look into the question of business development. In that year as well one of Riekert's recommendations on business was accepted -- notably that of allowing 'white' capital into the townships (up to 49% of shares in a business). Community councils were to oversee this process, as well as continue to allocate trading sites and licences.

Here, there were problems as African businessmen often opposed 'white' capital's entry. The often bad relationships often existing between councils and local NAFCOC branches did not improve matters either - these possibly due to the penchant of the councils to award trading licences to the family and friends of councillors -- not to mention themselves. In 1980 the state announced that shebeens were to be legalised and then Rive stated that small-scale industrial parks were to be developed in the townships. The arbitrary and often ridiculous policies of the councils continued to cause friction with 'excluded' businessmen. NAFCOC asked to be allowed to take over the administration boards' liquor businesses[68] while its President Sam Motsuenyane, continued to demand freehold tenure. "How can you make anyone a capitalist without ownership of property?" he asked at an Assocom conference in 1980.[69]

In the final analysis then, community councils were (and continue to be) inextricably linked to the whole state initiative to 'develop' the townships industrially and commercially. And their role here too even managed to some extent, to alienate certain sectors of such bodies as NAFCOC[70] -- further contributing to the total rejection of the council system by the vast majority of people in the townships.

(e) Conclusion

I hope I have shown that the activities of the community councils in management-reproduction processes in the townships effectively aggravated existing contradictions and created new ones. Truly then, in this case certainly, "state intervention in the urban crisis produce(d) new popular struggles"[71] -- deepening and broadening the crisis of urban policy. Here we have not even mentioned the role of the councils in forming community guards -- so hated by the townships, or the way that councils often controlled the 'blackjacks; or their draconian social welfare policies; or the uselessness and ineffectualness of the national body, UCASA, riven as it has been by petty squabbles.[72] Moreover, we should not forget that the role of the boards scarcely diminished in the townships -- there were "two bulls in one kraal"[73] as Steve Kgame so eloquently put it, with *both* boards and councils controlling the townships. The system thus did not change too much, and the changes that were made merely sharpened popular resentment and resistance. Over the past years it was struggle that placed major limits on the implementation of the state's new policies -- and struggle that effected their unworkability and the endless drafting of "new deals" as a result.

"COMMUNITY COUNCILS ARE DOOMED"[74] --OPPOSITION AND RESISTANCE 1977-80

State intervention in the townships in the post 1977 period certainly incited "the politicisation of protest".[75] Castells' statement that

> "Contradictions developing in the sphere of collective consumption, and conflicts originating in urban organisation, tend ... to be more or less directly reflected back on to state intervention and underlying political trends" [76]

was proved over and over again, as the popular classes organised and protested against the actions of administration boards and community councils -- often winning significant victories.

The resistance of the popular classes to the activities of the state in the townships in the sphere of management-reproduction controlled by the boards and councils caused the massive *rejection* of the council system: as state-created "screens for keeping the masses at a distance" they definitely "turn(ed) out to be veritable sounding boards or amplifiers of popular struggle."[77]

Thus in the context of widespread militancy on every conceivable terrain and swiftly-developing grassroots organisation in factories, school and townships -- all of which I cannot detail here -- the period saw an intensification of urban struggles. To a greater extent than before these struggles saw the mobilization of broad sectors of

township inhabitants in democratic organization, and the linking of management-reproduction issues with the structures of exploitation and oppression in South Africa -- and broader long-term political objectives.

Almost every township in the country the residents resisted and mobilised against the way their everyday lives were controlled by the state in the form of administration boards and community councils. All over South Africa, township residents formed civic associations to fight the administration boards and community councils, protested against and boycotted rent and service charge increases, called upon community councils to resign, protested against housing shortages, squatted in reaction to these shortages, resisted township removals and boycotted bus fare increases. Outbreaks of 'violence' and 'rioting' - these including attacks on individual community councillors - were also increasingly prevalent. The significance of these outbreaks - always a very real threat to the state's *physical* power and presence in the townships - should not be underrated. And the impact of all the struggles mentioned above was less important on *individual* townships than on public opinion and the *general* formulation of urban policy.[78]

It is really too early to provide any rigorous analysis of the struggles post-1977. I will merely make a few brief comments. On the one level, the struggles do demonstrate "the multi-class character of urban contradictions" [79] - as these contradictions do affect all classes in the townships. This should not be overstated though. A recognition of "the growing homogenity in the interests of all popular classes"[80] on the urban terrain must be tempered with an awareness of the way state intervention, for instance, is designed to *divide* the popular classes. The 'reform' instituted during the community councils era, however, seem to have been accepted only by the most reactionary elements of the petty bourgeoisie in the townships. And here I am largely referring to the traditional petty bourgeoisie. The new petty bourgeoisie has proved to be less easy to 'co-opt' -- or contain. But this question of "homogenity" of course is linked to the way that struggles are fought and alliances formed.

These struggles described above often took the form of 'defensive', 'spontaneous' responses to state policies and practices. They often went beyond this though drawing the links between wages and rents, between workplace and 'community' issues, between struggles in the factories and struggles in the townships, between urban issues and the broader national political struggle. Elements of leadership emerged in each struggle. As Gramsci pointed out

> "The fact (is) that every 'spontaneous' movement contains rudimentary elements of conscious leadership, of discipline ... This unity between

> 'spontaneity' and 'conscious leadership' or 'discipline' is precisely the real political action of the subaltern classes."[81]

The dangers of struggles becoming *too* specific to particular urban issues, of undemocratic organisational and leadership practices, subordinating working class interests while adopting overly legalistic or non-participatory tactics are apparent. But equally clearly, urban struggles can be articulated with broader political struggles as vehicles for organisation and mobilization. It is in these struggles that alliances can be made, and working class hegemony forged. Given the location of urban contradictions over the perceived *capitalist* management and reproduction of the labour force in the townships in the overall structure of exploitation and national oppression under which the *majority* of South Africans suffer, such imperatives, objectively facilitated in a sense by state intervention on the urban terrain, appear possible -- and fundamental. As Castells states, "It all depends on the ability of ... political movements to recognise and direct"[82] the movements of urban protest which emerged and continue to do so in South Africa -- incited by urban contradictions and the attempts of the dominant classes to resolve these.

Up to this point we have shown that the community council system merely aggravated urban contradictions and the crisis of management-reproduction in the townships primarily by inciting popular struggles of an unrivalled breadth and combativity. These struggles truly placed limits on the implementation of the dominant classes' 'new' urban strategy -- a rather vacuous programme of intensified control, disguised as 'reform' and 'development', with certain sectors of the urban African population recognized, in effect, as *permanent* "temporary sojourners". But popular struggle in the townships, intense as it was and continues to be, does not mean that the dominant classes did not have still more 'remedies' as the crisis of management-reproduction was extended into a crisis of state intervention on this -- a crisis of urban policy in effect.

It is in this context that we must now turn to a brief examination of Koornhof's "new deal" bills of 1980-1 - the fullest attempt by the state up to that time to come to terms with the crisis of reproduction *and* urban policy.

(a) The Background

On 31st July 1980, in the context of a massive upsurge of popular struggle all over South Africa, Minister of CAD, Dr. Piet Koornhof, announced that the Soweto community council elections, scheduled for 27th September, would be postponed until 1982. Koornhof claimed that this step had been taken on the request of Soweto's 'mayor', David

Thebahali, in order that the council be able to "finish its present projects", in the latter's words. Koornhof further stated that the state was to introduce legislation in 1981 providing for the development of community councils into fully-fledged local authorities -- as recommended by the Riekert Commission. Council elections, therefore, should wait for this new "new era" to dawn; those councils which had elections falling before December 1981 were eligible for this postponement -- and all they had to do was ask, like Thebahali.[83] The facts that rents were to rise in Soweto -- and many other townships -- before September, and that the widely discredited Soweto Council faced an enormous popular stayaway from the polls in the context of mobilization over the rents issue were not, of course, mentioned. Quite clearly though, increased resistance engendered by the operation of the councils countrywide had necessitated a rethinking of the system.

In the next few months, councils in Daveyton, the Vaal Triangle, Kwa Thema and Mamelodi announced the postponement of elections. CAD officials continued to hint at the exciting "new deal" just over the horizon. At the end of October, a scant few weeks after Koornhof's catastrophic visit to Soweto to receive the "freedom" of the township, this was finally unveiled in the form of three draft bills. These represented the fullest attempt to resolve the ongoing crisis of management-reproduction and urban policy. The 'reforms' and 'concessions' since 1976-77 had manifestly *not* eased urban contradictions -- indeed they had, in many ways, only exacerbated them, inciting more and more urban protests. The "new deal" bills were designed to cope with this, as the State's reformulated masterplan for the management and control of the townships, based on the Riekert Commission's recommendations and those of the Regional Committees set up in 1979 to advise the Cabinet Committee on "urban blacks".

(b) Riekert's Recommendations

We have already briefly discussed the commission's recommendations on influx control and their implementation. These were aimed at the division of Africans into urban 'insiders' and rural 'outsiders', with the availability of housing and employment in the cities and towns becoming a crucial mechanism of control. I will go into no further detail here. It is the Commission's recommendations on the restructuring of the pivots of township management-reproduction -- administration boards and community councils -- that are our primary concern. These were meant to be finally encapsulated in the legislative form of a proposed Black Community Development Act, for which the report gave a full outline.[84]

At the outset, Riekert suggested that CAD itself be 'rationalised', surrendering some of its functions to other departments, while remaining in charge of bantustan 'development' and the administration of urban townships -- controlling administration boards and community councils. The latter would continue gradually to be granted powers to run the townships. But this must be seen in the context of the commission's recommendations for the restructuring of administration boards. These were that:

(i) their name should be altered to Regional Boards for Black Community Development;

(ii) their constitutions be changed to allow experts from the state and the private sector to sit on them;

(iii) provision be made for two sub-committees, one to deal with labour, housing and administration, and the other with community development -- planning and determining priorities for the 'upgrading' of the townships;

(iv) local government functions be transferred gradually from the boards to community councils by the Minister;

(v) the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) be involved in the development of trade and service industries on an economic basis in the townships;

(vi) staff be trained and 'Africanisation' take place in administration -- with the Public Service Commission playing a major role in this;

(vii) the 'development' of the townships take place on an economic (non-subsidised) basis.[85]

The future, according to Riekert, was obviously to see an increasing of the powers of community councils and an intensification of township 'upgrading', for which the residents would themselves pay. The white paper on the commission accepted all of the recommendations listed above, except the fifth one. The EDC was not the right agency for the task apparently.

(c) The Bills[86]

In essence, all three bills followed Riekert's recommendations fairly closely.

The Black Community Development Bill provided for a 'modernised' system of influx control. Section 10 qualifications were abolished, and basically only those

people with state-approved accommodation and employment were to be allowed to remain in the cities and towns. 99-year leaseholders were to be high on the list of the wanted. The penalties for "illegals" were increased. The "dompas" was to remain, as was the power of the Minister to establish and demolish townships -- and resettle people. The only 'concession' provided for -- that of allowing qualified people to move from one control area to another, subject to the availability of housing and employment -- had already been embodied in the June 1980 labour regulations. In the final analysis, the bill emerged as an extension and intensification of already existing influx control policies and practices, directed at dividing and controlling the African dominated classes -- paltry 'concessions' for those necessary to capitalist production, and dumping for "illegals", the unemployed and the marginalized. It was perceived as such and was met with widespread public disavowal.

The other bills predictably gave flesh to Riekert's proposals on administration boards and community councils. In terms of the *Laws on Co-operation and Development Amendment Bill*, the former were to be restructured as smaller development boards, with a chairman, six members nominated by the Minister, some on account of their expertise, *inter alia*, in local government and town planning, and others because of their "expert" knowledge of industry, commerce and farming in the board area. To some extent these membership provisions represented a streamlining of the boards, mirroring state restructuring on other levels. But this should not be over-estimated: the involvement of 'experts' in an attempt to overcome the *"bureaucratic ponderousness or administrative inertia"*[87] inscribed in the structure of the boards was not fundamentally to alter the form or function of the boards. Their scope of operation and total control by the Minister was to remain essentially similar, apart from the renewed exphasis on development (provided for in the bill, for instance, by the institution of the sub-committees envisaged by Riekert). Financial sources remained unaltered, except for the provision of a new Revolving Fund which was to receive loan funding from the state. The new boards were also to be allowed to co-operate with municipalities to provide township services. In the final analysis, the development boards were merely to be a rationalised version of "baasskap administration", designed to become *gradually* responsible for planning and overseeing the administration and 'upgrading' of the townships, while the revamped community councils did the day-to-day *control* work.

Of course, town and village councils (as the community councils were to be called according to the *Local Government Bill*) were only to be allowed to do this *gradually* as well. Most councils were to become village

councils, while some (presumably in the bigger townships) were to be renamed town councils -- and to have "full municipal autonomy." A Director of Local Government was to ensure the implementation of the bill, but final control, as before, lay with the Minister. There is really very little that can be said about this bill. Village councils appeared to be an *unchanged* version of community councils while the powers of town councils were not specified -- it was again to be up to the Minister to decide. Likewise, the Minister was to have the power of veto over virtually anything the councils might do, as well as being able to authorise someone to ensure that a council kept on functioning. Fiscal sources remained the same, with the exception that influx control fines were to go to the councils -- no doubt to encourage them to take over the control of influx in their areas. The councils were not to own land, cutting down further on the possibilities for increased revenue. The 'new' village and town councils emerged from the legislation as another *undemocratic* body for ruling the townships, in essence very little changed from the previous model. Still the boards' little sisters, their growth was to be severely limited by CAD. It is no wonder that Steve Kgame eventually described the council bill as a "raw deal".[88] Pretty words obviously meant very little any more -- even to Kgame and his 2 000 councillors. Wide-spread protest forced the state to withdraw the "new deal" bills by February 1981.

The appearance -- and the withdrawal -- of the bills was yet another manifestation of the crisis of urban management-reproduction and urban policy facing the dominant classes. The attempts by the state to resolve the urban crisis prevailing since 1976-77 by "maximising the integration of certain sectors of the dominated classes into the order which it represents while maintaining this order by repression"[89] had not been successful and had, in fact, the effect of *further* politicizing contradictions on the urban terrain. The combination of *"domination-integration"*[90] characterizing urban policies since 1976-77 merely led to a *crisis* of urban policy. The state had been forced to try to make concessions on the urban terrain, in response to popular democratic demands. But these concessions were not real -- they were designed to divide and control -- and were too little and too late.

AFTERMATH AND CONCLUSION

After the withdrawal of the bills, the state announced the convening of the Grosskopf committee, whose task it was

> "to simplify ... (the bills) in accordance with the contents and spirit of the Riekert Report

and the government White Paper".[91]

In the past year then, we seem to have entered the era of Riekert Mk 2. The last twelve months have witnessed a continuation of the crisis of the townships - along with intensified state attempts to find a policy or set of policies for "accommodating the Urban Black"[92]. Indeed state activities in the past year arguably augur for a more 'integrated' approach toward solving the urban crisis - as one part of a proposed "total programme for meeting the future on a more realistic basis,"[93] (or "total strategy" Mk 2?).

The past year then has seen, if anything the dimensions of the urban crisis steadily enlarging. Influx control, according to Sheena Duncan, has become more rigid as more people became hungry as unemployment in the bantustans soared."[94] Labour recruitment in the bantustans was reduced, more money was spent on enforcing influx control - and the year was further marked by the massive and vicious pass raids in the Western Cape and on the East Rand.

The housing situation has further deteriorated in every township in South Africa. The housing shortage grew - with state functionaries often quoting the "official" figure of 420 000 houses needed (160 000 in the Durban townships, 106 000 for squatters in white areas and 154 000 in the bantustans) now at a cost of R3,360m. "What is at stake here", said Dr. G. Morrison, Deputy-Minister of CAD, "is nothing less than the future well-being of our entire economic system"[95] and J.H.T. Mills, Director-General of CAD, called for "a new approach" to housing, to "give the black man a deal to make him stand on our side against the enemy.[96]

We will deal with the slow unfolding of the "approach" shortly; for now we must merely note the failure of the 99 year lease system (only 1200 by the end of 1981), the worsening of services in the townships - and the continual raising of rents by the administration boards and community councils.

The rent hikes - apart from inciting mobilization and resistance by residents - have not helped alleviate the financial weaknesses of the boards. Criticism of wasteful fiscal policies of the boards has grown. Up to now we have rather neglected the fact of the unprofitability of the state's provision and regulation of collective consumption processes in the townships. However, it does need to be emphasized that this is a major factor underlying the crisis of urban policy now prevailing, conjoined as it is to the patterns of popular militancy. The state, simply is in great financial trouble in the townships. Deficits are mounting and it is becoming more and more evident that the state cannot by itself *cope* with the provision and distribution of the means of

collective consumption in the townships.

The state has made efforts to relieve this situation, but up to now these have not exactly been crowned with success. The Riekert Report indicated its concern over the funding of administration boards and community councils, but pointed out this was outside its terms of reference. The solutions were to be provided by the Browne Commission, set up to look into the financing of local authorities. The report of the commission though, published in June 1980, proved to be a disappointment for the state. In fact, the Browne Report provided no *real* suggestions as to how to alleviate the fiscal crisis to the townships, beyond recommending the encouragement of home ownership in the townships, that the 20% of liquor profits now paid to CAD should be kept by the boards and that the boards' agency services (e.g. bantustan development) be transferred to CAD or other state apparatuses.[97] In the meantime the deficits of councils and boards are growing rapidly - Soweto's, for instance is R1,5m a month - and reports flow in regularly of financial mismanagement by the boards.

And then, in the context of rising unemployment and inflation, with recession looming on the horizon - along with the growth of a broad-based non-racial popular democratic alliance - popular struggle in the townships has shown no signs of abating. The past year has seen struggle and resistance against the actions of administration boards and community councils - and demands for more and better homes and living conditions - in Soweto, Tembisa, Sebokeng (the three biggest urban townships), Kagiso, Daveyton, Thokoza, Evaton, Mzioni, Moklakeng, Mamelodi, Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu, Zwide - and in other townships as well.[98] The community councils have gained no further legitimacy whatsoever, and still remain utterly discredited. It has become increasingly clearer that the actual - and potential - resistance of residents places the major limits on the state in the townships. The state can only go so far - with raising rents for instance - and no further.

What has the state done then, to find a solution to the crisis of management-reproduction and of general policy in the townships in the past year. In general terms we can say that the state - and monopoly capital - are at present rethinking urban policy yet again. And as the urban crisis - and rural poverty and devastation concommittantly - have sharpened, the state has begun more and more to look for an overall solution - "a balanced development strategy" in the words of Dr. Flip Smit, newly appointed scientific adviser on housing and urbanization to Koornhof.[99] What this is to mean, again according to Smit, is

> "More balanced urban development, liaison amongst urban authorities themselves and within the rural areas a policy of deliberate urbanization as part

of an integrated development strategy".[100]

Regional development, renewed deconcentration and decentralization of industry and devolution of financial responsibilities to local authorities (including community councils) are now serious state proposals. And behind all this, of course, lies popular struggle and fiscal crisis in'the cities', townships and countryside - together with the frightful demographic spectre for the dominant classes of 28m "urban blacks" by the year 2000 - and the necessity for another ten Sowetos."[101]

It is the above context that we must see the following recent measures: the state's acceptance of the Viljoen Committee's recommendations facilitating increased "private sector" involvement in the housing problem; the apparent resolution of the inter-state conflict between CAD and the Department of Community Development over site and service/self-help/ core housing in favour of CAD, the proponent of the above measures; the increasing of control by CAD over administration boards through the enlarged van der Walt Commission and the state's new deconcentration and decentralization proposals.[102]

It is also in this light that the upcoming new "new deal" for the urban African townships must be situated. The first of the Grosskopf - modified bills has already appeared. It deals with community councils. However, the Black Local Authorities Bill seems a largly unchanged version of the Local Government Bill of October 1980 - apart from slightly lessening the Minister of CAD's discretionary powers, and removing the provisions for the state and bantustan governments to nominate councillors[103]. The bill has now been referred to a Parliamentary Select Committee; the nation awaits the other two which are to appear either this year or next year.

It seems evident however that there are two prongs to the state's 'new' strategy for the management-reproduction of the labour force in the townships. The first of these is to attempt to increase slightly the powers and status of community councils. This is obviously necessary, given the total failure of the councils up to now -- a failure largely owing to the resistance against them. Put simply, the councils (in whatever name) have to be made to look as though they have power in the townships -- even if they do not. In conjunction with this is the second prong: the stepping up of the 'development' of the townships (with Louis Rive's Soweto Planning Council the prototype for this initiative), while at the same time it becomes apparent to the state that more (monopoly) capitalist intervention in the townships is necessary if the grand plan for solving the crisis in the townships is to have the remotest chance of getting off the ground. And 'improved' community councils are on the agenda to make sure that the African dominated classes in the townships

begin to pay even more towards the cost of their own management and reproduction.

In fact, in many ways, the community council system, revamped, remains the "focal point" of the forthcoming "stable, humane dispensation for urban blacks"[105]. The "economic viability" of the councils is of "cardinal importance"[106] for solving the state's problems in the townships - or shifting them sideways at least. The state has appointed the Steyn and Croeser Commissions to investigate this "economic viability" issue - and with the postponed council elections scheduled for September this year this is clearly a top priority for the state. But with cutbacks in the CAD and Community Development budgets for 1982/3, it promises to be a long, cold winter before the spring.

I hope that I have shown that the crisis of management-production and the crisis of urban policy - the causes and dimensions of which have been analysed - remain manifest in townships all over South Africa.

The state *must* attempt to resolve this in the long-term interests of the dominant classes as a whole. And this task is complicated - if not made impossible- by the ongoing struggles in the townships as residents organize to demonstrate their fundamental opposition to the way their daily lives are run in the interests of the dominant classes.

Such struggles will continue until power and 'profits' are distributed equally in South Africa. Indeed, they have and will continue to play a significant role in making this happen.

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NOTES

1. This paper was originally the final two chapters of my Honours dissertation entitled 'The State in the Townships: State, Popular Struggle and Urban Crisis in South Africa 1970-1980', University of the Witwatersrand, 1981. My updating and partial remaking and remodelling of the two chapters hopefully goes some way to explaining this paper's unwieldiness. The quotation in the title is a line from an Elvis Costello song, 'Big Sister's Clothes'.

2. *Survey of Race Relations* (Johannesburg 1980), 312.

3. M. Castells, *City, Class and Power* (London 1978).

4. By 'collective consumption' is meant 'socialised consumption processes which are largely determined by state activity', Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 179.

5. The term 'management-reproduction of labour power' refers in this paper to the political and economic processes of the control and reproduction of the labour force in the African townships of South Africa - processes largely organised by and through the state. This term is borrowed from N. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London 1978).

6. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 170.

7. For more details see Bloch, 'The State in the Townships', 78-101.

8. D. Hindson, 'The Role of the Labour Bureaux in the South African state's Urban Policy, with particular reference to the Riekert Commission's Recommendations', African Studies Institute seminar paper, (Johannesburg, 1980).

9. J. Kane-Berman, *Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction* (Johannesburg 1978); also 'Soweto Rents' in *Work in Progress*, 15, (1980). It should also be noted that these popular victories caused M.C. Botha, Minister of Bantu Administration, to set up an interdepartmental inquiry into the financing of housing, services and facilities in Soweto and other townships in May, 1977. Its functions were taken over by the Browne Commission. See Kane-Berman, *Soweto*, 9.

10. *Survey of Race Relations*, 404.

11. B.J. Vorster, quoted in Kane-Berman, *Soweto*, 204-5.

12. Republic of South Africa, *Report of the Commission of*

Enquiry into Legislation affecting the Utilisation of Manpower (Chairman P.J. Riekert), R.P. 32, 1979.

13. In 1978 the Department of Bantu Administration and Development changed its name to Plural Relations and Development (PRAD) and in 1979 this name in turn metamorphosised into Co-operation and Development (CAD).

14. The 'Bantu Affairs' portion of the term BAAB was dropped in 1975 by some boards, but this was never reflected in common parlance until about 1977-78. Thus, from this point onwards, I have referred to these corporations as administration boards, or just as boards.

15. By an amendment to the Act in 1978 (Community Councils Amendment Act, No. 28 of 1978) the Minister was empowered to declare a by-election instead.

16. Riekert Commission, para. 3.316.

17. Ibid.

18. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 18.

19. Riekert Commission, para. 4.341.

20. *Daily Despatch*, 14 December 1978.

21. Ibid.

22. Poulantzas, *State, Power and Socialism*, 184-5.

23. *Sunday Post*, 30 July 1979.

24. *Argus*, 17 April 1980.

25. *Informa*, October 1979, 8.

26. *Post*, 28 June 1980.

27. Republic of South Africa, *Report of the Department of Co-operation and Development 1978-79*, (CAD Report), 26.

28. *Rand Daily Mail*, 9 April 1978.

29. By a Soweto resident in *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 March 1980.

30. Bloch, 'The State in the Townships', 36.

31. *Post*, 21 May 1980.

32. M. Evans, 'The Emergence and Decline of a Community Organisation: an assessment of PEBCO' in *South African Labour Bulletin*, 6, 2/3 (1980), 45-47.

33. *The Star*, 14 April 1980.

34. *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 July 1980.

35. *Sunday Tribune*, 26 October 1980.

36. *The Star*, 2 February 1981.

37. *Sunday Post*, 20 July 1980.

38. *The Star*, 23 October 1980.

39. Interview with M.B. Kumalo, February 1981.

40. P.Morris, *Soweto* (Urban Foundation, Johannesburg 1980), 66.

41. *Post*, 9 June 1978

42. *Sunday Tribune*, 4 May 1980.

43. *Post*, 25 October 1979.

44. *Post*, 29 August 1980.

45. Even if there were less big sisters. The number of boards was reduced from 22 to 14 in 1979, in an attempt at 'streamlining' and 'rationalisation'.

46. *The Star*, 21 May 1980.

47. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 60.

48. Hindson, 'The Role of the Labour Bureaux', 15.

49. S. Duncan, 'Koornhof's New Bills' in *Population Removals*, Development Studies Group, Information Publication 3 (Johannesburg 1980).

50. B. Creecy, 'A Home for Total Strategy: The Political Economy of Urban African Housing in Contemporary South Africa', Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980.

51. CAD Report, 28.

52. Riekert Commission, para. 3.616-17.

53. W. Cruywagen, *Toespraak in Sebokeng*, mimeo (7 July 1977), 14.

54. Creecy, 'A Home for Total Strategy', 52-64.

55. *Survey of Race Relations*, 404.

56. Cruywagen, *Toespraak*, 21.

57. According to *Afrika*, 24 October 1980, the number was as low as 350 nationwide.

58. *Sowetan*, 9 February 1981.

59. J. Kane-Berman, 'Shoes without laces? The financing of Urban Black Townships with special reference to Soweto and the Soweto Community Council', South African Institute of Race Relations, 15th Annual Council Meeting, 1980.

60. *Survey of Race Relations*, 395.

61. *Sunday Times*, 16 March 1980.

62. 'Rents' in the townships consist of four parts:

    1. house rent - fixed according to a formula by the Department of Community Development (staggered according to income at the end of 1980) - and designed to recover the cost of building and maintenance;

    2. site rent, covering the cost of land purchase, infrastructure, health services and administration;

    3. service charges or tariffs for electricity, sewerage, water, refuse removal - the losses covered by beer and liquor profits and surpluses from the employer levies;

    4. schools levy - to build and maintain schools.

    In most townships in the period under consideration, the first component's set ceiling had been reached; it was the other three that were raised - but often not paid. The raising of lodgers' fees was often also a major cause of dissatisfaction. Kane-Berman, 1980, 2.

63. See *Survey of Race Relations* for 1977, 1978 and 1979.

64. Motlana, quoted in Kane-Berman, 'Shoes without laces?', 3.

65. *Rand Daily Mail*, 4 July 1980.

66. Morris, *Soweto*, 109.

67. *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 April 1979.

68. Kane-Berman, 'Shoes without laces?', 16.

69. *The Star*, 24 October 1980.

70. This is exemplified by the bad relationship existing between Thebehali's council and Veli Kraai's Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industry. See reports in *The Sowetan*, February 1981, about struggles over

increased rents for trading sites.

71. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 61.

72. UCASA's role in the townships up to 1980 - and since, for that matter - has hardly been dynamic. Members - of whom there are supposedly 1 000 - join individually, The body holds conferences, chats now and again to Koornhof and his colleagues, sends CAD threatening telegrams - and considers itself to be a 'major spokesman for urban blacks'. UCASA has resolved to tackle issues like council financing; deficits; 99-year lease and leasehold in general; housing shortages; unemployment and transport.

73. *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 January 1980.

74. Norman Mathebula of Soweto, letter to *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 August 1980. For more detail on this section see Bloch, 'The State in the Townships', 129-140.

75. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 171.

76. Ibid., 170.

77. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, 152.

78. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 2.

79. Ibid., 37.

80. Ibid., 61.

81. A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London 1978), 197-198.

82. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 166.

83. *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 August 1980.

84. *Survey of Race Relations* (1979), 388.

85. Ibid., 44; Morris, *Soweto*, 63.

86. *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 October 1980; Duncan, 'Koornhof's New Bills'; 'New Black Faces for Old White Facade', *SASPU National*, 13, 1980.

87. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, 194.

88. *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 February 1982.

89. Castells, *City, Class and Power*, 58.

90. Ibid.

91. *Growth*, May 1981.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Sheena Duncan, *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 March 1982.

95. Dr G. Morrison, *Daily Despatch*, 11 June 1981.

96. J.H.T. Mills, *The Star*, 22 January 1981.

97. Republic of South Africa, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Finances of Local Authorities in South Africa* (Browne Commission), R.P. 50 (1980), Vol. 1, paras. 11.8.6; 11.8.8; 11.8.9.

98. Various newspaper reports.

99. Dr Flip Smit, *Financial Mail*, 25 December 1981.

100. Dr Flip Smit, *Growth*, October 1981.

101. *Growth*, May 1981.

102. Various newspaper reports.

103. *Sunday Times*, 7 March 1982.

104. Republic of South Africa, *Report of the Committee to investigate Private Sector Involvement in Resolving the Housing Backlog in Soweto* (Viljoen Commission), R.P. 14 (1982), 62.

105. P.J. Koornhof quoted in *Sunday Times*, 7 March 1982.

106. Viljoen Commission, 62.