

Editorial

Since the last issue of WIP appeared, much of dramatic import has occurred in South Africa. Steve Biko is dead. 18 organisations have been banned, and 49 people have been jailed under preventive detention measures.

WIP mourns the death of Steve, not only because he was a close friend, not only because of the cruel and lonely circumstances in which he died. He was a rare, talented and treasured individual, who - if the State had not constantly restricted him, and eventually created the conditions for his death - would certainly have been a major figure in the restructuring of South African society.

When the time comes for South Africans to start rebuilding - when the opportunity arises, as it will, to remake the economic, political and ideological reality of this country - then we will miss Steve and his talents even more than we do at present.

We had hoped, in this issue, to have reproduced the evidence which Steve gave in the BPC/SASO trial. We believed then, as we believe now, that it was an important, lucid and erudite statement not only on the shape of things to come, but also on the tactics and strategy of the Black Consciousness movement.

Now, Black Consciousness as an organized force has been effectively outlawed through the banning of its organisations, and the incarceration of its leaders who had not already felt the force of the South African state.

The fact that Steve died in detention, that the World Newspaper has been closed down and that organisations have been banned and leaders detained, are by no means unrelated incidents. In the last issue of WIP, we presented certain statements and documents outlining the idea of a 'total war' strategy in South Africa. These included, most significantly, statements by General Magnus Malan, chief of the defence force, and the Defence White Paper, endorsed by P.W. Botha.

At the time, we believed that the conditions were present for the continued development of an exceptional state in South Africa - a state which has a specific form of autonomy from the direct and immediate interests of capital and its fractions, and which has developed particular forms of apparatuses.

The actions of Kruger on October 19th confirm that the strategy of total war, and the development of an exceptional state, are reaching a period of consolidation. The point of no return has been passed. Whether the emerging state form shows a trend towards fascism, or some other state type, is a question needing much serious discussion and analysis in the immediate future.

Whatever the conclusions reached on that question, it is clear that the 'verligte' option has lost the struggle within the power bloc, and the apparatuses of the state are becoming ever-more geared towards a function of direct and repressive control over all the structures and practices which

constitute society.

This is shown in much of the information gathered in this issue of WIP - the nature and mode of implementation of the new Criminal Procedure Act, the proposed legislation covering 'Social Work', 'Welfare' and Fundraising, and the ongoing activities in the field of publications control and censorship.

It is also suggested that certain of the responses to the current conjuncture are totally inadequate - be they the form taken by the Urban Foundation and its informal affiliates, or the ideology of Africanisation. We had also hoped to carry an article on Soweto's Committee of 10, analysing its role, responses and class basis. But its banning, and detention of most of its members, rendered that a task too difficult to fulfil at present. We were also going to reprint the recent SASO policy taken on the Urban Foundation - but that, now, would be illegal.

There is a wide range of subject matter in this issue of WIP. Kelwyn Sole's provocative article on the criticism of African literature has generated two equally interesting critiques.

There is also material on the class determination of intellectuals, and various aspects of political economy. Apart from the interesting information contained in some of these contributions, they are all held together by a common thread in that they are concerned with different ways of perceiving, and relating to, reality.

As has been stressed before, WIP will only be a successful project if it stimulates debate, argument and contributions. This issue is encouraging, in that much of it was submitted in response to material in WIP 1. Nonetheless, there can never be enough material submitted, enough people contributing. We seriously ask you to contribute your ideas, information and analysis - be it in the form of articles, letters, briefings, indicators or artistic style.

These can be sent to the address which appears on the contents page.

We believe that at this crucial time, WIP can be an important project. It is essential that all concerned with the understanding of the dynamics of society share their ideas and subject them to criticism. Please become involved - not just through reading, but also by contributing, and ensuring that your friends see WIP, and contribute in their turn.

THE NATURE OF WIP, WHICH IS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION AND CRITICISM, ENSURES THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE EDITOR, OR ANY SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTOR.