

THE SACP JOHANNESBURG DISTRICT NIGHT SCHOOL PILOT PROJECT

The idea of a night came about from the meetings of the SACP branches in Johannesburg. Members held mini-discussion groups where they discussed issues ranging from the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO to WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A COMMUNIST. During these discussions some comrades indicated that they had difficulty with understanding some historical issues and concepts referred to in the discussions.

In addition, they felt that they wanted the historical background of the issues they discussed, e.g. in the Communist Manifesto the development of the BOURGEOISIE and the PROLETARIAT is discussed. Members wanted to know how these classes came about, and why? They also wanted to understand the relationship between the mode of production and the relations of production. It was decided that these questions could be better tackled in a night school.

This idea was carried forward to district level where it was decided that a pilot project be instituted. The night school is therefore a district project.

Prior to the launch of the night school, several comrades were asked to research education projects in Johannesburg. The task involved looking at the needs of the party members, what facilities were available and accessible, what programmes were being offered, who was offering those programmes and whether party members could gain access to those programmes.

Questionnaires were distributed. The launch was set for July 31. Initially, planning was for two programmes that were to run parallel. At the launch members indicated that they wanted the programmes to run alternatively, i.e. programme I in one week and programme II the following week. (See the time-table (A)).

The night school is primarily a Political Education programme. Literacy could be added later depending on members' needs. A literacy project would include teaching reading and writing, english literacy and skills training (i.e. how to take minutes, chair a meeting, etc.).

The methodology used is generally one that encourages participation in classes. It was agreed that a teacher-pupil type of situation was to be avoided. The best method of teaching is where participants are allowed to express their views on the issues under discussion to facilitate better understanding.

The Night School was launched on July 31, with over 80 people in attendance. Comrade Jeremy Cronin presented a talk on "Has the ANC Changed Its Goals?"

Two weeks later the first session on Historical Materialism was held. The first session on Current Questions for Socialists was held on August 21. Comrade Jeremy will be conducting most of the sessions, including all the four Historical Materialism sessions. A package on Historical Materialism prepared by the SACP (National Office) is used as resource material. It is an easy to follow package, and is particularly useful to workers.

(A) NIGHT SCHOOL TIME-TABLE

PROG. I

Subj.: Historical Materialism

- a) Why do we Learn History
- b) The Laws of History
- c) Early Tribal Societies
- d) Slavery
- e) Feudalism
- f) Capitalism I and II
- g) Socialism I and II

PROG. II

subj.: Current Questions for Socialists

- a) Has the ANC changes its Goals
- b) The Role of the SACP
- c) What is Democracy?
- d) Social Democracy in Europe

(B) NEW NIGHT SCHOOL PROGRAMME

Date	Topic
September 11	Capitalism (Parts I and II)
September 18	Socialism (Parts I and II)
September 25	Questions arising from the Situation in the USSR
October 2	The History of the Soviet Union (Events up to 1917)
October 9	Social Democracy in Europe
October 16	Democracy and How we work for it.
October 23	The Role of the SACP

N.B. the topics from September 25 are not final. The whole programme will run up to the end of November, or early December if necessary. More topics will be added to the time-table in the near future.