



WORKS

Within the BCM the ideology of “mass action” lay latent almost from the start. With the uprisings that began in Soweto, the ideology of “mass action” found the SSRC as its vehicle and came to the fore. The black proletariat’s spontaneous organisation of its struggle assured its early successes; but this gave way to a second phase in which the “fifth column” worked from the inside in the form of the SSRC as the vanguard movement. The mass movement sacrificed its reality for the shadow of its defeat.

Even though the SSRC did have widespread support amongst the Soweto high school students and gained international recognition, to justify it on the strength of its allegiance is to miss the point. Popularity of a hierarchical organisation does not condone the organisation, but exposes the degree to which the consciousness of its supporters has been colonised.

The most important point to recognise is that the SSRC owed its reputation to the very organisation of South African daily life, to institutions compatible with apartheid and the white state, which the proletariat in action was out to destroy. It was the press that gave it a name both literally and metaphorically. It was an intellectually intimidated community both at home and abroad which was highly susceptible to advertisable commodities that gave it pride of place on the stage of revolution.

Inside Soweto the SSRC’s ability to stabilise itself and to advance its vanguard aspirations at the very time that the struggle intensified, and when all other organisations were key Black Consciousness organisations (ANC and PAC having all but disappeared), is not testimony to its indispensability. On the contrary in Soweto the SSRC enjoyed a deep degree of very bourgeois respectability, being recognised by moderates (who highly condemned the folly of the struggle), as the only visible and legal organ still operable, and which seemed to be the only possible starting point for some sort of detente. High ranking officials in the South African Police shared the same opinion.

A concrete example of the SSRC’s moderation is to be found in one of its press releases in October, 1976. In this statement the SSRC leadership condemned anonymous leaflets which had been circulated in Soweto and which incited people to violence. Small wonder that as a result senior police officers in Johannesburg as much as thanked the SSRC for its collaboration, when the police issued a press statement immediately afterwards, in which they said that they felt that the township would be peaceful and law-abiding because the SSRC had repudiated the leaflets.

