

EDITORIAL

TRANSFORMATION 4 concentrates on issues from a more long-term perspective than usual. Two important contributions are historical in content. John Hyslop provides an account of the movement for people's education in the 1950s that considers its strengths, weaknesses and contradictions and makes the contrast with present concerns in the sphere of South African education explicit. Rob Morrell examines political and social struggles of the 1920s in the agrarian economy and its relevance to contemporary South African capitalism. In so doing, he asks for a reconsideration of the debate about the class character and project of the South African state. He suggests that current views of the state are often too unproblematical and dismissive, collapsing important different positions and social bases.

Amongst those writers today who are again debating the character and historic formation of the South African state and economy is Merle Lipton. This issue contains a review article by Bill Freund on Lipton's work. He sees her inadequacy at conceptualizing the state as one weakness in a work that defies simple characterisation.

TRANSFORMATION 4 reproduces the inaugural lecture of the new rector of the University of the Western Cape. The transformation of this university into an institution that defines itself as the 'university of the Left' is without real parallel. Gerwel sees UWC as being able to play a unique role in South African higher education precisely because of its independence from the state-bound traditions of the Afrikaans universities and the capital-bound traditions of the English universities now that it has emancipated itself from a closed racial entrance definition.

This issue also includes another inaugural lecture by Colin Bundy. He places the trajectory of social struggles and political contestation in contemporary South Africa within a broad international rubric through making comparisons with classic revolutionary situations and considering some of the typologies of revolution in general that have seemed most convincing to him.

One constitutional feature which appears to intrigue the entire political spectrum from the National Party to the ANC with regard to a transformed South Africa is a Bill of Rights. Would such a Bill enable change to proceed or shackle society? The issue is considered by Dennis Davis from both a legal and political point of view.

The broader implications of transformation are central to all the pieces in our issue from a variety of angles. Hopefully they will provide food for reflection and debate.