

**"African Student Protests and Government Responses
in the 1970s and 80s in South Africa:
An analysis and evaluation of the educational dimensions."**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of M.A. (History)

By

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1990**



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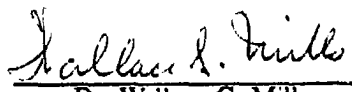
**"AFRICAN STUDENT PROTESTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES
IN THE 1970s AND 80s IN SOUTH AFRICA:
AN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS"**

- ELIAS WILFRID SELLO THEMA

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of Master of Arts (History)
at Saint Mary's University

Elias Wilfrid Sello Thema, 1990

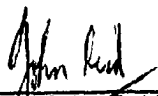
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ABSTRACT

**African Student Protests and Government Responses
in the 1970s and 80s in South Africa:
An analysis and evaluation of the educational dimensions**

by

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One country that is being treated as a pariah by the international community of nations as a whole today is South Africa -- a society that is widely regarded as being the most pervasively racist in the world. The reasons for this treatment is the result of laws promulgated by a White minority regime against a predominately voteless Black majority. Segregation, which flows from these laws, has been present and clearly outlined in the minds and practices of the "trekking" Afrikaners as early as the nineteenth century and grew organically out of previous forms of domination, climaxing in what is generally regarded as "the highest stage of White supremacy."

The economy, culture, societal mores, beliefs, politics, education, etc., are all literally permeated by wholesale discrimination which contain great advantages for some and great disadvantages for others.

The coming into power by the Nationalists in 1948 saw to the institutionalization of segregation in, among others, the education system. As a result of the logic of the policy of segregation, commonly called apartheid, the system of education in South Africa came to be run strictly along racial lines. In fact, had this policy been practicable and implementable to its logical end, the system of education for Blacks would have further been divided according to ethnicity (actually, the present education system, as followed in the so-called homelands, is invariably run along ethnic lines).

During the height of apartheid "lunacy" (the period from the beginning of nationalist rule to 1976) segregation in the education system was at its highest peak -- from pre-school, right up to tertiary. The events of 1976 in the educational sphere, and the increasing world tension concerning South Africa, contributed to an intense and sustained drama which is being enacted up to the present (1990).

The 70s and 80s saw Black students taking up the cudgels on their own behalf to redress the wrongs inherent in the education system; they had felt that their parents had let them down. The struggle which was waged in the school yards became multi-pronged, proliferating into what one can safely regard as a political struggle. Even though not acknowledged by authorities, the struggle in the school campuses became political. Activities of students undeniably played a leading role in keeping the spirit of resistance in South Africa alive. In fact, Black Consciousness, (BC), as embodied in student organizations such as SASO, became a means towards involving Black people in the struggle and was clear to its leaders that it could only be a first stage in the fight for freedom. As a result of these aforementioned reasons, even though this thesis

focused on African student protests, responses from the government, and educational dimensions, it has neither been easy nor possible to wade away from political waves; the two aspects being inextricably intertwined.

Complaints from the Black students were largely ignored until the initial explosion in 1976. After this period authorities began to address themselves to rectifying the situation. However, because of the dictates and demands of the policy of segregation, reforms introduced can only be carried to a point. Constraints placed by ideology make it nearly impossible to introduce meaningful reforms which can be satisfactory to the Blacks -- a unitary education system.

Furthermore, the thesis touches on the aspect of alternative education which is seen by the Blacks as an answer to the State's refusal to implement desired changes in the education system. Other dimensions flowing from uprisings are also covered -- positive aspects such as involvement of commerce and industry in education, as well as the negative aspects comprising the near collapse of order and discipline in schools in certain areas of the PWV, mainly the Soweto area. The ironies of the South African situation are also portrayed, that while Blacks pupils are overcrowded in run-down classrooms with some pupils having to forgo their right to education, "White" schools are either running half full or are emptying and closing at an alarmingly fast rate.

As always, the closer the period under discussion approaches the present, the more difficult it becomes for the historian to write objectively. Since I have not waited for the patina of time to dull the immediacy of events investigated, the reader may find me, from time to time, culpable of being subjective. As an historian, I have tried my utmost to approach and treat this topic as objectively and as responsibly as circumstances permitted. Any traces of betrayal of these principles on my part shall not have been consciously nor maliciously committed.

Lastly, there appears to be a political thaw in South Africa as judged by the recent announcement by the State President, Mr. de Klerk of the unbanning of the African National Congress and other organizations. It is thus my fervent wish and hope that no time and opportunity are lost in redressing ills current in the education system of South Africa.

VITA

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
ASA	African Students' Association
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organization
Azasm	Azanian Student Movement
AZASO	Azanian Students' Organization
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
DET	Department of Education and Training
DNE	Department of National Education
ITT	International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation of the United States of America
JMC	Joint Management Centres
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEUSA	National Education Union of South Africa
NUAY	National Union of African Youth
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
NYO	National Youth Organization
PRO	Public Relations Office
PWV	Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Naal area
SAETF	South African Education Trust Fund
SACE	South African Council for Education
SASM	South African Student Movement
SASO	South African Student Organization

SAYCO	South African Youth Congress
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSRC	Soweto Student Representative Council
TYO	Transvaal Youth Organization
Wits	The University of the Witwatersrand

INTRODUCTION

South Africa is, at present, the centre of world-wide attention. In its history, nothing has drawn international attention to South Africa more than two events -- the Sharpeville massacres of the sixties and student uprisings of the seventies and eighties. While the Sharpeville crisis drew attention to political and social injustices, student uprisings marked a climax of student resistance to inequalities in the education system. The study of this resistance is very wide in scope. It is for this reason that I have arbitrarily set myself some boundaries, limiting my scope to focus on the impact of these uprisings on education. Even within these limits, my territory still remained a minefield; as a consequence, focus is mainly on the Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vaal area (commonly called the PWV area) and its high schools and colleges only.

At the heart of these uprisings lies the policy of Separate Development, generally known as apartheid. Because of this policy, Black education suffered "years of neglect" which have inflicted incalculable harm to the educational, economical, social and political development of the Black people of South Africa, if not of South Africa as a whole.

Thus, the focus of this thesis is not on the history of student resistance as such, but rather on analysis of the post 1976 protests and their impact on education per se. The first chapter gives a brief overview of fledgling student groupings which organized ostensibly to articulate grievances against injustices inherent in the education system for Blacks. The importance of these earlier groups lies in the fact that they gave birth to better organized and well-coordinated student structures in which the students strengthened themselves against overwhelming odds. A brief sketch of the origins of the system of education for Blacks is also given. Events leading to the first insurrections are also briefly touched upon. I found

inclusion of the notorious speeches of early Nationalist Members of Parliament imperative for the understanding of the root cause of Black student grievances against the Black education system.

The second chapter deals with responses by the State to the uprisings. The initial responses by the State, particularly to the first uprisings in 1976, were negative and self-defeating. However, somewhere along the line, a reappraisal of the situation became apparent. This reappraisal manifested itself in apparent changes in attitudes and approaches in dealing with Black student grievances. At last, the authorities were beginning to listen. New perceptions on the part of the authorities crystallized in conscious and deliberate effort being made to rectify and redress the inequalities. The spirit of the de Lange Commission fits into this era -- the era of reform. Reforms which were introduced in terms of quality and quantity were meaningful. The figures and statistics given to illustrate this, if viewed in isolation, look very impressive, representing phenomenal growth. If scrutinized however, they fail to stand any test -- a cruel illusion of change. The rises in expenditure for Black education do not seem to grow commensurate with the population growth.

In the third chapter, comparison of figures pertaining to expenditure on education is made. The figures are compared with those of the White group. From the analysis it is clear that the Black student is short changed. There are, however, improvements that are acknowledged -- service conditions of teachers; salaries; upgrading of facilities; free text books, etc. Although these are certainly positive steps, they do not seem to address the central issue -- a unitary education system as clamoured for by the Black students. They feel the State is merely "papering over the cracks." Obviously, inability of authorities to work outside of the parameters of State policy places serious constraints on any attempt to meaningfully address the central issue. State policy of separation still has to be followed slavishly by the bureaucrats

The fourth chapter looks at two sides of the impact of student uprisings. The positive side is characterized by "intervention" from the international community and the

corporate sector. This "intervention" is given impetus by the change in attitude of authorities. Through this initiative, funds are made available for projects that are meant to upgrade the quality of teaching, as well as alleviating overcrowding in classrooms. Scholarships and bursaries for study, both inside and outside the country, are made available. This chapter also deals with the concept of an alternative education -- "The People's Education." It is not the first time that an attempt was made towards this end. In the fifties the African National Congress tried this with the initiative ending unsuccessfully, due to lack of resources. Strained relations between the proponents of "the People's Education" and the State are also analyzed and discussed.

Negative effects of uprisings are discussed. It is shown to what extent education in the PWV areas has suffered. This situation is manifested by chaotic conditions in the schools: lack of discipline, low morale of teachers, wanton destruction of school property and generally, a situation in which very little effective teaching takes place. An impression should not be gained, however, that this situation is the result of uprisings. The root cause of the problem remains the policy of segregation in education. Some of life's ironies are clearly portrayed when South African "White" schools can be closed owing to a decrease in the White population rather than accommodate Black pupils from overcrowded classrooms, or Black pupils without a school.

The chapter also treats the issue of the "brain drain." South Africa spends millions of rands of the taxpayers money to educate White professionals, such as doctors, architects and experts in one field or another. The sad part is that some of these people, upon completion, emigrate to more politically stable countries. This kind of "education for emigration" goes with resultant loss to South Africa in terms of money and human resources. The loss is incalculable. This trend could easily be reversed with the removal of segregation.

Note should be taken of the fact that the term "student" has been used rather loosely. In the strictest sense, this term is universally understood to refer to those in

institutions of higher learning. I would also like to mention that education can never be "White" or "Black". These terms, as used in this thesis, do not reflect my personal acceptance of this fact. I have used the terms as dictated to me by the realities of the South African situation.

One of the demands of Black students is for a "democratic education system." This phrase has been tossed around with great rhetorical impact. However, its meaning is fuzzy. What does "democratic" mean when applied to an education system? This term was used a great deal in North America during the student protests of the late 60s and 70s. It led to a considerable amount of confusion. Certainly, in South Africa the exclusion of Africans from all effective participation in political decision-making or policy discussions in education, gives some validity to the term, "undemocratic". It should not, however, be inferred that the sense in which "democratic education system" is used in this thesis implies some sort of right of students to determine what or how they will be taught. It is not only a call for the desegregation of schools, which would certainly be an important step, but it seems it also includes a substantial agenda of control, implying that Blacks (not necessarily students) will have an effective voice in decision-making, especially with regard to content and objectives of the education system.

Finally, it should be clear that, as far as education is concerned, the students call for a unitary education system where the colour of one's skin is not a factor. This is where disagreement with the government accrues. The government can only go (at least for now) as far as "equality in education" is concerned, (whatever that might mean). It is like a stalemate in the game of Chess.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

The history of the South African education system is very complex and controversial. Policies governing Black education since the Nationalist party took over the running of the country have always raised controversy and have been a source of much discontent among the predominantly Black South African population. The biggest problem, regarding Black education seems to arise from the strong links that exist between the formulation of the policy of Bantu education and the general development of educational ideas associated with the principles governing the notion of the "Christian National Education" as propounded by the nationalist ideological architects.

There is a remarkable similarity between South Africa's education policies of the past forty years and the education policy initiatives of the earlier nineteenth century Britain. Peter Kallaway puts this very succinctly:

Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century there was little attempt to educate the growing industrial proletariat on the argument that "a little knowledge is dangerous." Workers who were required to do simple manual labour on the factory floor were kept in ignorance "for their own good," lest they become tainted by "foreign" ideologies that might give them ideas above their station and lead them to put forward "unreasonable" political demands for social change.¹

Thus the education that some British received equipped them only with the necessary basic skills of numeracy and literacy in order for them to be able to fit properly into the then fast changing world of industrial and technological Britain. The proletariat were supposed to remain educationally (academically) unsophisticated so that they would

¹ Kallaway, Peter: ed., "An Introduction to the Study of Education for Blacks in South Africa Apartheid and Education," *The Education of Blacks in South Africa*. Ravan Press, Johannesburg, p. 11.

not be able to interpret their position in terms of their economic, political, educational and social rights.

The difference between early nineteenth century and late twentieth century South Africa, as far as education is concerned, is that there was no official education policy on the part of Britain. In fact, until 1870, there was no British education policy (it was only in that year that the first education Act was passed). Prior to that, there were a variety of education facilities provided by private initiatives. While some working class children had access to "grammar schools" (privately endowed and often very good), most got basic literacy either from private village schools or from "Sunday Schools" operated by churches and/or philanthropic groups. These initiatives were not part of any education policy and were operating because there was in fact a vacuum. However, in the case of South Africa, the policy guidelines which were supposed to govern the Black education system, were much more deliberate and systematic.

From the very beginning, The Nationalist Party and the late H.F. Verwoerd were specific in describing their goals and objectives (since 1948) when they assumed power. The separation of education along racial and ethnic lines followed Document 10 from the Bantu Education Act, number 47, of 1953. This Act was not only meant to regulate the system of African education so that anomalies between provinces and schools could be removed, but it was also to control education in accordance with the policy of the State. According to this policy, education was supposed to underpin the separate and unequal life envisaged by apartheid. The policy guidelines were, from time to time, clearly emphasized by a number of nationalist Members of Parliament. In a speech in Parliament, J.N. Le Roux stated:

We should not give the natives an academic education, as some people are too prone to do so. If we do this we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in the country?.... I am in thorough agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent, he must be the

labourer in the country.²

Prior to 1948, the powerful Afrikaner think-tank, the Broederbond, drew up a manifesto for "Christian National Education" which set out an exclusive racial doctrine as an expression of Afrikaner nationalism, stating *inter alia*:

All White children should be educated according to the views of the life of their parents. Consequently, all Afrikaans speaking children should have a "Christian Nationalist" education.³

The document went further on to state that education was to run strictly on ethnic and racial lines and that Black education was to lead to: "the development of an independent, self-supporting Christian Nationalist Native Community."⁴ What is worthy of note is that it was clearly specified that "Native education should not be financed at the expense of the White system."⁵

Later, the then Minister of Native Education, the late H. F. Verwoerd, rhetorically asked:

What is the use of subjecting a Native child to a curriculum which, in the first instance, is traditionally European, in which one learns of the Kings of England, and how much wheat Canada has exported, and through which our children are taught these general facts as a means of building up a fount of knowledge? What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd.⁶

² Le Roux, J.N.: "House of Assembly Debates" (Hansard), Vol. 52, 2 April 1945, Col. 4527 as quoted in: *Apartheid, its effects on education, science and culture*, second edition revised and enlarged UNESCO, 2nd edition, p. 33.

³ "Education 1948-1976, South African Education in Conflict", *Briefing Paper*, World University Service, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1 2 UN, p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid*: p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid*: p. 2.

⁶ Verwoerd, H.F.: As quoted in *Apartheid: A Documentary Study of Modern South Africa* by Edgar Brookes. London Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1st impression 1968, p. 50.

These sentiments were to become the cornerstone and foundation of the present Black education system.

It is against this background that one can approach the study of African student protests, which have their origin in the implementation of the policy of segregation in education.

Although the year 1976 provides a watershed in African Student protest, the history of resistance over educational issues can be traced as far back as the 1920s, when grievances centered mainly around poor facilities. It is not the intention with this thesis to give an elaborate history of the African student resistance; however, a brief outline of the historical background of student resistance to educational policies of the nationalist South African government is deemed necessary for the understanding of later developments.

Student Groupings

The first cohesive group to articulate African student grievances against educational policies, (the National Union of African Youth), came into being in 1939 with a small membership confined mainly to the Transvaal areas, especially in the Pretoria, Witwatersand and Vaal area.

1944 saw the first sympathy and solidarity strike by the Brakpan Mission school pupils over the dismissal of a popular teacher for political reasons. Inspired by these events, the African National Congress had a Youth League started primarily to foster and engender a spirit of African nationalism among the youth. It might be appropriate to indicate that the origins of a search for alternatives to unacceptable practices by the government found its roots during this period. A model of the present initiative of alternative education was set when the Youth League established a makeshift school in the now demolished area of Newclare for children who had been refused admission at local

schools through a lack of accommodation. This effort was later complemented by the establishment of a night school and literacy campaign in 1949.

When apartheid education became a structural reality with the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act, the African National Congress, through its Women's and Youth Leagues, launched a "Resist Apartheid Campaign" in 1954. The campaign took the form of massive boycott of schools by over 10,000 pupils in the East Rand townships of Benoni, Germiston, Brakpan, in the Reef area of Johannesburg, as well as in some townships in the eastern Cape. These developments evolved into the formation of the African Educational Movement which, together with the local parent organizations and the African National Congress (ANC), were involved in the establishment and improvement of an "alternative education" concept.

The early 1960s saw a lull in Black student resistance. This lull can be attributed to severe suppression and crackdown on radical opposition and dissent following the Sharpsville massacre of Blacks in 1960 and the mass arrests which preceded the "Rivonia trial." However, an attempt was made in that decade to rally support for resistance among high school pupils and university students through the formation of the African Students Association (ASA) whose existence was short-lived as a result of the harshness of police actions. Despite police actions, at the end of the decade an important force in the history of the student movement finally culminated in the formation of the South African Students' Organization (SASO); SASO accentuated the ideal of self-reliance and Black pride centred on "Black Consciousness." SASO had organized mainly at the universities. Another organization, the South African Student Movement (SASM), was formed in 1972 to organize at secondary school level. The SASM was one of a number of Black consciousness groups whose constituency comprised mainly of the Black youth, school children and students; starting from humble beginnings, it became a midwife to various other student organizations that were to follow: "It was from the foundations laid by

organizations such as SASM and SSRC (Soweto Student Representative Council) that the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was formed in 1979.”⁷

These earlier student groups had a number of limitations. They were basically pressure groups and action-oriented, concentrating mainly on protests and demonstrations -- planning action after action. From time to time these bodies would take up community-related problems like rent and housing; otherwise, their links with the community were very tentative and loose. There were also, at that stage, no formal links with the Trade Union movements as the unions were striving for survival and consolidation as a result of the security police and State legislation. In its short life the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC), which had successfully coordinated the 1976 student uprisings, succeeded in organizing three partially successful stay-aways, in having rent increases shelved, and finally destroying the unpopular Urban Bantu Council system. As a result of a police crackdown, the SASM, SSRC, and virtually all other “Black Consciousness” organizations were declared unlawful in October 1977.

It is worth noting that at this juncture a shift in emphasis took place when “the leadership of the Black consciousness movement associated themselves with the progressive movements.”⁸ In 1978, the Azanian People’s Organization (AZAPO), a new Black consciousness organization, was formed at a conference at Wilgerspruit (Roodepoort). An off-shoot of this group, the Azanian Students Organization (AZASO) formed in 1979 in universities and colleges, declared its support for the non-racial Freedom Charter.⁹ In the same year this shift in allegiance resulted in the formation of a

7 *The New Nation*; Johannesburg, June 15-June 22. p. 6. Column 5.

8 *Ibid*: p. 6, column 5.

9 In brief, the Freedom Charter calls for the doors of learning and culture to be opened. The general clauses of the Freedom Charter establish the basis of a future education system in democracy, equal rights and Freedom of Speech, while the education clauses stress the need for universal access to education and for an education aimed at developing national pride, universal brotherhood, and aspirations to liberty and peace. The Freedom Charter emphasizes equality irrespective of race, colour, sex, or creed. (By implication, political equality).

much more cohesive and well-coordinated movement -- the Congress of South African Students, commonly known as COSAS. What is very significant about the shift was the belief that "whites have a role to play in the struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa."¹⁰ Thus, the machinery of resistance at student level was becoming better organized and refined. Demands shifted from the immediate issues to broader demands for "democratic" education as part of a changed South Africa: "COSAS and AZASO actively campaigned during the time that followed and together with NUSAS (the National Union of South African Students) began to stress the need for integration of the student struggle in the broader national struggle for democracy."¹¹

At an AZASO Congress held in Cape Town in 1983, a call was made to organize, mobilize and educate students as an integral part of overall opposition to apartheid. In addition, a new Black consciousness-inclined group was formed in the same year -- the Azanian Students' Movement, commonly known as AZASM. This new movement, however, dissociated itself from the Freedom Charter, and was thus, by implication, ideologically incompatible with student organizations such as COSAS and AZASO. However, despite the differences and some rivalry between these groups, as far as education is concerned, their goals remained fundamentally the same.

By 1984, COSAS had grown into a country-wide student organization with branches coordinated through a well-oiled machinery. The need was also felt to accommodate or to organize a structure that would cater for all students who were precluded for one reason or other from attending school: "There had to be a home for those students who left school either because of the 21 year age restriction, because they did not have bursaries or because of intimidation."¹² As a result of this feeling, "Youth

¹⁰ Bot, Monica: "School Boycotts 1984: The Crisis in African Education", *Indicator Project*, South African Centre for Applied Sciences, University of Natal, Durban.

¹¹ *Ibid.*: p. 17.

¹² *New Nation*, June 15-June 22, p. 7, col. 1.

Congresses" started to sprout up in the townships. Students in the high schools came together to look seriously at the need for a national youth organization. This initiative ended with the formation of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) which was based in townships throughout the country. Youth groups formed earlier, such as the Transvaal Youth Organization (TYO) and the National Youth Organization (NYO), were regionalized and were not as broad-based or as nationally representative as SAYCO. SAYCO was a reasonably organized structure.

It is thus clear that ever since there had been perceptible inequalities in the educational system based along racial lines, dating as far back as the 1920s, there has been a sustainable amount of resistance on the part of the Blacks who were obviously not favoured by the policies that governed that system. These student organizations, as they developed, became much more coherent and sophisticated in articulating student grievances. For example, before its banning, COSAS had been very articulate. Its leadership emphasized the strategic value of boycotts, using them effectively and calling them off at the appropriate time. In addition, COSAS succeeded in forging a reasonable alliance between students, parents and workers. This alliance was strengthened when COSAS successfully managed to organize several Transvaal groups to discuss the education crisis, and subsequently launched a very successful stay-away in 1984. Another strategy which indicated COSAS' sophistication and maturity used very effectively, was its ability to demarcate clearly among short, medium and long term demands, by identifying demands which could be met within a reasonable time limit: "Through these demands we are laying the basis for the long term demands. The demand for democratic Student Representative Councils is part of the process of preparing ourselves and building a future South Africa where representation will be genuine and democratic."¹³

13 Lulu Johnson as quoted in *SASPU Focus*, Vol. 13, no. 2, Nov. 1984.

The apex of student unity against the system of Black education was reached when in 1984, COSAS, AZASO, NUSAS and the newly formed National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA) came together to formulate definite guidelines as to the demands of the Black students. What resulted from this coalition was the historic education charter whose primary objective was "to gather the educational demands of all the people in South Africa into a coherent document, to give direction to the students' struggle and to guide students to work for non-racial, free and compulsory education for all in a united and democratic South Africa."¹⁴

The education charter, which oozes with the spirit of the Freedom Charter, can be regarded as the latter's parallel in the educational field. The completed text follows:

**DECLARATION OF THE EDUCATION CHARTER CAMPAIGN
WE, THE PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA...**

- noting: . that the separate and inferior system of education for the majority of the people of South Africa entrenches inferior and undemocratic ideas
- . that the unequal education which students continue to reject further deepens the present crisis
- . that the so-called reforms including the de Lange proposals and the White Paper are measures to ensure the continued survival of apartheid education
- . that under this New Constitution apartheid education will still be felt in our classrooms and the cultural life of our people will still be harmed
- believing: that education must be based on the needs and serve the interests of the people
- . that education should be accessible to all regardless of colour, creed, sex or age
- . that reforms will not bring about a lasting solution to our problems in education
- . that our students' struggles arise out of real grievances
- . that education is not an issue affecting students alone but all sectors of our society
- . that there can never be meaningful change in education until there is meaningful change in society
- therefore pledge: . to unite as workers, women, youth, students, professionals, sports people and others, and fight side by side
- . to interlink the struggles in education with the broader struggle

¹⁴ Bot, Monica: "School Boycotts 1984: The Crisis in African Education", *Indicator Project*, South African Centre for Applied Sciences, University of Natal, Durban; 1984, p. 18

for a united, free, democratic and non-racial South Africa to engage ourselves actively in a campaign for an Education Charter that will embody the short-term, medium-term and long-term demands for a non-racial, free and compulsory education for all in a united and democratic South Africa based on the will of the people.

SOURCE: SASPU FOCUS, Vol. 3, No. 2, November 1984

Thus, the Education Charter can be regarded as the result accruing from the cumulative challenges from the early days of the struggle for justice and equity on the educational front by the Black students within the highly repressive system of apartheid. This refinement and coherence of demands by the student organizations appeared to coincide with the State's interest in gaining sufficient acceptability among Blacks and the international community. This time the State was trying to avoid the need to resort to force at ever more frequent intervals in order to maintain itself.

Prelude to First Uprisings

However, for the purposes of this thesis, it is important to look at the situation immediately preceding the cataclysmic events that engulfed almost the whole country in clouds of smoke in 1976. The events of that year contributed much towards a crystallization of global condemnation in an unprecedented manner. Historically, the events occupy a singularly important place:

Indeed, if the events of 1976 are profoundly important in any singular way it is in the fact that they symbolize in the most heroic of fashions that the spirit of Black resistance is far from extinguished, that it has not succumbed to the interconnected web of repressive mechanisms which have been built into apartheid over three decades - and that - to the very contrary - it remains a powerful and autonomous force to be reckoned with in the immediate political future.¹⁵

¹⁵ Frankel, Philip: "The Dynamics of a Political Renaissance: The Soweto Students Representative Council." *Journal of African Studies*, Heldref Publications, 400 Albermale Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20016, p. 167.

Some of the basic grievances which triggered off the wave of resistance of that year can be directly connected to a lack of facilities: "For science students, for instance, there was no laboratory. What we called a lab would consist of a few test tubes and a beaker. It was very, very poorly equipped. If you spoke of a library it would be a set of encyclopedias and a few novels."¹⁶ These were typical complaints that came from frustrated students that would fall on deaf ears of authorities year after year. It was to be at this juncture that the South African Student Movement, (which, as earlier mentioned, was not cohesive), came prominently into the picture and was to play an important role as subsequent events unfolded. It was through this body that representatives from all Soweto high schools were selected to form a very decisive actor in the whole saga -- the Soweto Students' Representative Council.

Coupled with complaints about inadequate facilities was the issue of Afrikaans. Black educationists and students had vainly demanded the abolition of Afrikaans as a compulsory language of instruction in 50% of subjects offered at secondary school level; "the fervency with which the students pursued their cause was in good part stimulated by the total refusal of the National Party authorities to accord legitimacy to their position by departing from official policy on the educational role of Afrikaans as prescribed for over two decades by the system of the so-called 'Bantu education'."¹⁷ The reasons for the request to scrap Afrikaans were quite legitimate and valid:

- (i) there were very few teachers who were adequately equipped for this task.
- (ii) the burden of having to study and learn through three languages; (Afrikaans, English and mother tongue) was burdensome to the students and not empirically sound.

¹⁶ *New Nation*, June 15-June 22, p. 7, col. 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: p. 168.

In addition, the biggest bone of contention was due to the attitude and view of the Bantu Education authorities that sole responsibility for decisions on this issue lay with them on the premise that it was the "White South African government, backed by the White taxpayer, who furnished the majority of technical and material facilities for the working of the Bantu education system."¹⁸ This feeling was diametrically opposite to that of the Blacks -- students, teachers and school boards -- who felt that they had the right to decide, simply because Blacks were the very object of that self-same system.

Matters came to a head when, in March 1976, two members of the Tswana school board in Meadowlands (Soweto) were dismissed from their positions for taking a stand and refusing implementation of this policy in their schools. The last two weeks in May saw strikes by Orlando West and Pimville township students expressing their feeling against the use of Afrikaans. On June 16 a protest march organized by the Naledi and Thomas Mofolo high schools, ostensibly with the intention of holding a mass meeting at the Orlando Stadium, was intercepted by the police. In the ensuing fracas, one pupil, Hector Petersen, died from a police bullet and the tragedy of June 1976 had been set in motion to change the whole character of resistance to the Black education system for good.

¹⁸ *Ibid*: p. 168.

CHAPTER II

Government Responses

The upsurge of student power and militancy invariably elicited responses from the State, these responses became both positive as well as negative. It should be kept in mind that the demanded changes in education were no longer rooted in the issue of the medium of instruction but had mushroomed and developed in proportions to include demands for the total abrogation of Bantu education, for the "democratization" of school organization, for the integration of black and white educational systems, and for the subsequent removal of practical inequalities inherent in the black education system. By implication, student protest had moved into the political arena. The state reacted with characteristic promptness to the initial student militancy. The state responses at this juncture could generally be regarded as negative.

Negative Responses

A wave of arrests followed the first eruptions in the late seventies. This induced many students, who for one reason or other felt threatened by arrest, either to go 'underground' or flee the country. "By November 1976 it was conservatively estimated that 630 Sowetan students had fled into exile during the preceding six months."¹ Among the most prominent of the student leaders was Tsietsi Mashinini who had eluded police detection for some time before fleeing the country into exile. Actually, the entire history of the Soweto Student Representative Council is a history of a trend in which leaders appeared out of confrontative situations, were almost immediately arrested or politically immobilized in some way or other, and gave way to new leaders who were treated in the same manner.

¹ Frankel, P: "The Dynamics of a Political Renaissance: The Soweto Students Representative Council." *Journal of African Studies*, Heldrey Publications, 400 Albarmale Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C., p. 172.

Of the Council's five chairmen, two were arrested and three were forced to flee the country before they could effectively consolidate their position: the leadership echelons were recurrently depleted by wave after wave of arrest and much of the police activity in the townships during 1976/77 involved a creaming off of leadership potential.²

Later in the 80's, six months after the formation of COSAS, almost its entire National Executive was detained and released after five months, except for Ephraim Mogale who was by then serving a five year jail term in a prison on Robben Island off the Cape coast.

Besides police arrests, the state used other means for quelling student protests; these included, *inter alia*, closure of schools. For example, in 1980 the Department of Education and Training (DET) closed 77 African secondary schools during unrest in Soweto.³ On 15 May 1984, the Department closed six schools in Atteridgeville until the end of the year resulting in about 6,000 pupils being in the streets.⁴ These are but just a few examples of similar steps taken by the authorities in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand and the Vaal area. Other measures included propaganda through state controlled media such as the radio and television, pamphlets urging students to return to school, occupation of school premises by the police, misinformation, disruption of student meetings, bannings, house arrests, and detention without trial.

On the 19th of October 1977, eighteen black consciousness groups were banned under decree. Among these organizations were a number belonging to students. These included:

The National Youth Organization

The Border Youth Organization

The Eastern Cape Youth Organization

² Ibid: p. 177.

³ Bot, Monica: "School Boycotts: 1984. The Crisis in African Education", *Indicator Project*, The South African Centre for Applied Sciences, University of Natal, p. 16.

⁴ Schoeman, J.A.: "Black Education: A Soft Target," *The South Africa Foundation News*, Volume 10, November 6, June 1984, p. 1.

The Natal Youth Organization
 The South African Students' Movement
 The South African Students' Organization, and
 The Western Cape Youth Organization.⁵

All of these repressive measures culminated in the declaration of a state of emergency after the 1984-85 uprisings up to and continuing during the time of writing (October 1989).

An impression should not be created here, however, that all students arrested were not culpable of anti-social behavior and criminal activities (which remains a social problem related to the racial issue). Especially in its budding stages, resistance by students had been inclined to a lack of organizational coordination which allowed a small unruly element, the township malcontent and the juvenile elements, to take advantage of the prevailing confusion. In addition to this, it should be taken into account that bodies such as the SSRC⁶ arose directly out of an immediate and pressing situation and, like many other resistance and political movements sprouting under conditions of social turmoil, "its appearance on the political scene went mainly unaccompanied by any clear appreciation on the part of its leadership of the goals of the movement or the strategic requirements preconditioning their realization."⁷ Reaction from the state was in the main, therefore regarded and viewed as harsh, repressive, brutal, and unwarranted. In any case, significant results of relations between the state and students can be detected.

On the part of the students, one can notice a more sophisticated machinery of coordinated organization taking place, employing new strategies such as a mix of protests, marches, boycotts and stay-at-home demonstrations. Of paramount importance is the

⁵ Frankel, P: "The Dynamics of a Political Renaissance: The Soweto Representative Council," *Journal of African Studies*, p. 179.

⁶ The Soweto Student Representative Council. This was the first body that was formed to orchestrate resistance to the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Soweto schools in 1976.

⁷ Ibid: p. 169.

emergence of a heightened sense of unity and resolve among the students. This resolve has basically resulted in educational institutions becoming sites of struggle in South Africa -- the very same institutions which were supposed to become midwives of 'education for domestication' on the Verwoerdian model; these institutions have now turned out to be "trojan horses". It is not uncommon for students in boarding schools to hold a political meeting under the guise of a religious church service to avoid police surveillance. In addition, the political awareness of the Black students has been greatly heightened and strengthened.

From the violent response by the State, an important lesson can be learned; the state came to realize that there is no military solution to South Africa's long-term political and educational problems. Strong-arm tactics against the students seemed to militate against the very aims that the use of force and bullying tactics were supposed to achieve -- students' unquestioning obedience to authority. In brief, violent reaction on the part of the state to student grievances had become counter-productive.

The international community also became increasingly hostile and South Africa was being isolated from the international community of nations, gradually becoming the pole-cat of the world. It therefore became necessary and imperative for the State to find some formula to defuse both the internal and external tensions which were gradually increasing. What followed was a multi-faceted reformist programme which generally came to be regarded as 'total strategy'.⁸ This strategy comprised the Wichan, Riekert and de Lange Commission reports. For the purpose of this thesis, however, attention will be focused mainly on the de Lange Commission in that it can be regarded as a blueprint for educational reforms in South Africa. This will then lead us to those responses by the State which can be regarded generally as positive, and which, in a way, helped to defuse a somewhat explosive situation on the educational front.

⁸ Kallaway, P.: ed., "An Introduction to the Study of Education for Blacks in South Africa." *Apartheid and Education*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, p. 20.

POSITIVE RESPONSES

Reforms in the Education System

It is worthy of note that the period after 1976 saw perceptible changes of attitude and approach towards educational issues on the part of policy-makers. Whether this was as a direct response to protests and student demands is a matter of conjecture. An official of the Department of Education and Training, a Mr. Chernys (who was helpful during research for this thesis), would not state whether there was a connection between the change in attitude and approach, and student protests. However, it suffices to say that new policy statements and statements of intent were matched by deeds. It appears that the state had finally recognized the need to redress the educational deficiencies inherent in the African education system. However, the main problem facing the state was how to go about implementing meaningful changes without shaking the foundations of the apartheid structure. The needs of control in the apartheid structure were still to be maintained. Changes had to be attained within the parameters of the apartheid system.

In the light of the significant challenge to the state articulated in the mass struggle of 1976-80, the older and cruder educational policies are being revised and reformulated. New policies are explored in an attempt to meet the 'needs' of the post-Soweto situation. The rhetoric of state officials and the Department of Education and Training regarding the new dispensation has concerned arguments about increasing social justice through the greater provision of 'equal education' (whatever that might mean) to the whole population, and the real increases in government spending on black education and training during the seventies.⁹

The initial response of the State shortly after the 1976 upsurge was to give in to demands by the students to scrap Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Prior to this, Dr. Andries Treurnicht, the then Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, had said "whites were

⁹ Ibid: p. 14.

paying for black education and were therefore then entitled to decide on matters affecting it."¹⁰ This capitulation on the part of the State was significant in two ways. On the one hand, it became a victory for the students, for they had managed to wring out some concessions from the authorities by force, and the political strength of the Black students was consolidated. On the other hand, by giving in to the demands, the state was showing that at least, it was prepared to listen to reasonable demands made by students. This was a credit to the government, the only snag being that it was not necessary to have waited for pressure before yielding to such demands. Authorities ought to have set an example by recognizing that negotiation could yield results.

Another crack in the granite wall of the apartheid educational structure came with the changing of the name from that of the Department of Bantu Education¹¹ to the Department of Education and Training. There is not much in a name, but it has generally been known that the black people of South Africa resented being called "Bantu", preferring instead, to be called Africans or Blacks. Nothing much can be read in the change of name as far as education is concerned, but politically, this was an admission by the government that names and titles that are always arbitrarily imposed on Blacks by the state are resented and stigmatize any institution or organization that may be associated with such particular names or titles.

To show that approaches and attitudes were really changing, in May 1980, the then Prime Minister, Mr. P.W. Botha, made the following statement:

The government pledges itself to the goal of equal education for all population groups but emphasizes that the historical backlog cannot be overcome overnight.

My government and I are prepared to accept a programme

10 Mabe, Sam: "Straw That Broke the Camel's Back", *Sowetan*, Thursday, June 15, 1989, p. 6, col. 2.

11 This Department was responsible for education for Blacks outside the 'national states' (i.e. "homelands") prior to 1978.

whereby the goal of equality in education for all population groups can be attained as soon as possible within South Africa's economic means.¹²

This statement somewhat signified a wide recognition by the State of a degree of urgency in finding solutions to student demands. It was finally dawning on politicians, educationists, and businessmen of all shades of political convictions, that a solution was essential, even if their analysis differed widely. There was finally consensus on the need for educational reform.

A major step towards reform was then taken by the government in mid-1980 by commissioning a major study of the South African education system to be carried out under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council. A select 25-member multi-racial committee, headed by the then Rector of the Rand Afrikaans University, Dr. J.P. de Lange, mobilized hundreds of researchers for a survey that extended from informal and pre-school to graduate education. The result was the now widely acclaimed HSRC Report of 1981, commonly known as "the de Lange report."

The HSRC Report was an important milestone because it represents the first significant official document on black education in South Africa since the 1935-6 Inter-Departmental Committee on Native Education (the Welsh report) and the 1951 Commission on Native Education (the Eisselen Commission).¹³

The de Lange committee recommended substantial and fundamental changes in the education system for Blacks which included: the creation of a single, unified department of education; administrative decentralization, with communal or racial criteria for school admissions to be determined by regional authorities (an innovation intended to open the way to some voluntary integration); compulsory primary education and funding parity for

12 "Black Education: A Historical Perspective" *Circular* Compiled and issued by the Public Relations Section, Department of Education and Training, May 1988, p. 3.

13 Kallaway, P. : *Apartheid and Education*, p. 25.

all students, teachers, and schools as quickly as possible; university autonomy over (racial) admissions policies; development of more technical and private sector education; and establishment of a multi-racial Council of Education to oversee implementation of the Committee's proposals for comprehensive educational development. These proposals were widely acclaimed and regarded as a milestone in the history of African education in South Africa.

Implementation

It should be noted that the government accepted "a wide range of recommendations"¹⁴ in its 'white paper.' The new Department of National Education was established and the National Policy for General Education Affairs Act, 1984 (Act 76 of 1984) was passed.

According to a circular compiled by the public relations directorate of the Department of Education and Training (black) dated June 1989, the Department of National Education (white) formulates norms and standards applicable to all education departments in respect of:

- a. the financing of running and capital costs of education for all population groups;
- b. salaries and conditions of employment of staff;
- c. the professional registration of teachers and
- d. syllabuses and examinations, and for the certification of qualifications.

The circular goes on further to state that the general education policy is formulated within the framework of certain principles, the most important of which is "that equal

¹⁴ "Education for Blacks in South Africa," *Circular* Compiled and issued by the Public Relations Section, Department of Education and Training, no 32/3/1 June 1989, p. 3.

opportunities for education, including equal standard of education, shall be striven after for every inhabitant of the Republic irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex.”¹⁵

In determining the general education policy, the responsible Minister consults with, and is advised by, the following:

- a. All Ministers of State Departments for education;¹⁶
- b. The South African Council for Education;
- c. The Universities and Technikons Advisory Council;
- d. The Committee of Heads of Education Departments;
- e. The Committee for Education Structures, and
- f. A central registering body for the registration of teachers.

The circular states that these are multi-racial bodies representative of all population groups.

Areas of improvement following the new dispensation are cited as follows:

(i) the same standards apply in Black schools as in the schools of other Education Departments with regard to syllabuses and examinations. “Not only are the same core syllabuses used, but the Joint Matriculation Board also requires the same standards for university entrance from Black pupils as from any other pupil in South Africa.”¹⁷

(ii) Blacks have been included in subject committees; Black Teachers’ Associations are represented on the Examination Board; the Council for Education and Training consists entirely of prominent blacks while parental involvement has been secured in the control and administration of schools.

(iii) Improvements in farm school and rural education include in-service training programmes and the channelling of better qualified teachers to farm schools. Farm

¹⁵ Ibid: p. 3.

¹⁶ State Departments are Departments of Education in the various homelands in South Africa.

¹⁷ Ibid: p. 3.1.

schools have been located geographically and demographically in such a way that pupils will not have to travel for more than 5 kilometres each way.

With regard to physical facilities, the Department states that between 1 April 1979 and 31 December 1988 20,351 new classrooms were erected with a further subsidization of 3,679 classrooms at farm schools.

With its massive building programme the Department aims at eliminating all existing backlogs within a period of 10 years, funds permitting, and its immediate target is to have a maximum of 40 pupils for primary classroom and 35 per secondary classroom.¹⁸

Teacher Training

As far as teacher training is concerned, the Department states that there are, at the moment, 39 colleges of education for Black students with a total enrolment of more than 27,000 students. Fourteen of these colleges are controlled by the Department of Education and Training. From 1961 to 1987 these colleges trained approximately 130,000¹⁹ Black teachers. Regular in-service training courses are offered.

The Department further states that compulsory education, first introduced in 1981, now includes 371 schools and 254, 115 pupils. This affects all pupils who turned 6 before or on 31 December of the previous year. Compulsory education is being extended horizontally to higher classes from year to year and also to other areas at the request of the communities concerned.

Another dimension of the state response and effort came with the establishment of Vista University, a decentralized institution with satellite campuses in some of the main cities in South Africa to cater exclusively for higher learning for Blacks. Some 20,000²⁰ Black teachers are improving their qualifications through this university.

¹⁸ Ibid: p. 3.7.

¹⁹ This figure invariably includes those teachers who trained with less than standard 10 (grade 12) certificate.

²⁰ Figure provided by PRO pamphlet. DET, June 1989.

Technical Education

In so far as Technical education is concerned, it appears that the government had finally come to accept the fact that South Africa is, at present, suffering from an acute shortage of manpower -- a shortage which the best efforts of the Department of Immigration have not been able to overcome and cannot be expected to overcome in the future.²¹ According to Dr. Johannes van Zyl, Executive Director of the Federated Chamber of Industries, an additional 300,000 jobs requiring technical skills would have to be filled if South Africa hoped to continue to grow at an average rate of 5% per annum over the following 20 years.²²

In the early days at the Cape, Sir George Grey, through the help of large subsidies from the Colonial Office, had succeeded in introducing industrial education for Africans and Coloureds (S.A. term referring to people of "mixed" blood) long before such training existed for white youth. This gradually died away and both opportunities for employment, as well as technical and vocational training for Blacks, became severely limited as they expanded for whites. In 1977 there were only five technical high schools for Africans and two vocational high schools for people of "mixed" blood. This evidently depicted a picture of almost total neglect of a most important aspect of both education and the economy.

It was thus appropriate for the Department of Education and Training to give due attention to technical education after the 'de Lange blueprint.' According to the DET²³, it is envisaged that eventually 21% of pupils in the senior secondary phase will receive education directed towards a technical career.²⁴ Thus, at present, the trend at school level

21 "Secondary Education for Africans": *Pamphlet*, South Africa's Institute of Race Relations, RR. 96/65, p. 2.

22 Adelberg, Mantyn: "National Education Conferences Examines de Lange report on Future Education in South Africa", *Fait Lux*, Vol. 7, no. 7, September 1982. p. 19.

23 DET - this is the shortened form of the name of the Department of Education and Training.

has been to integrate technical with general education by opening both in comprehensive high schools.

There are at present 41 Technical Colleges for Blacks offering vocational training in various fields such as motor mechanics, electrical work, and carpentry. Most of the 20 colleges which are controlled by the Department of Education and Training also offer commercial courses and block release courses for apprentices, while some offer re-employment training as well.²⁵

Mention should also be made of an innovative scheme involving existing Department Technical centres. The public relations section of the department has this to say about the scheme:

This programme, which was embarked upon in 1975 and which is unique in South Africa, if not in the world, provides for technical orientation to pupils as from Std. 4 (sixth grade) and is an extension of the normal school programme. Pupils from the neighbouring schools attend classes for 25 hours per week at such centres, taking courses such as electrical work, brickwork, woodwork, welding, electronics and technical drawing... This scheme offers a wonderful opportunity to pupils to broaden their knowledge of the occupational world in a practical way.²⁶

At tertiary level, the department notes the new technikon at Mabopane East near Pretoria, which offered its first secretarial, commercial and business management courses in 1980. This is the showpiece of the Department, built at a cost of R80 million and is expected to eventually accommodate 5,000 students per year.

24 "Education for Blacks in South Africa" *Pamphlet*, Public Relations, DET; no. 32/3/3, June 1989, p. 3.6.

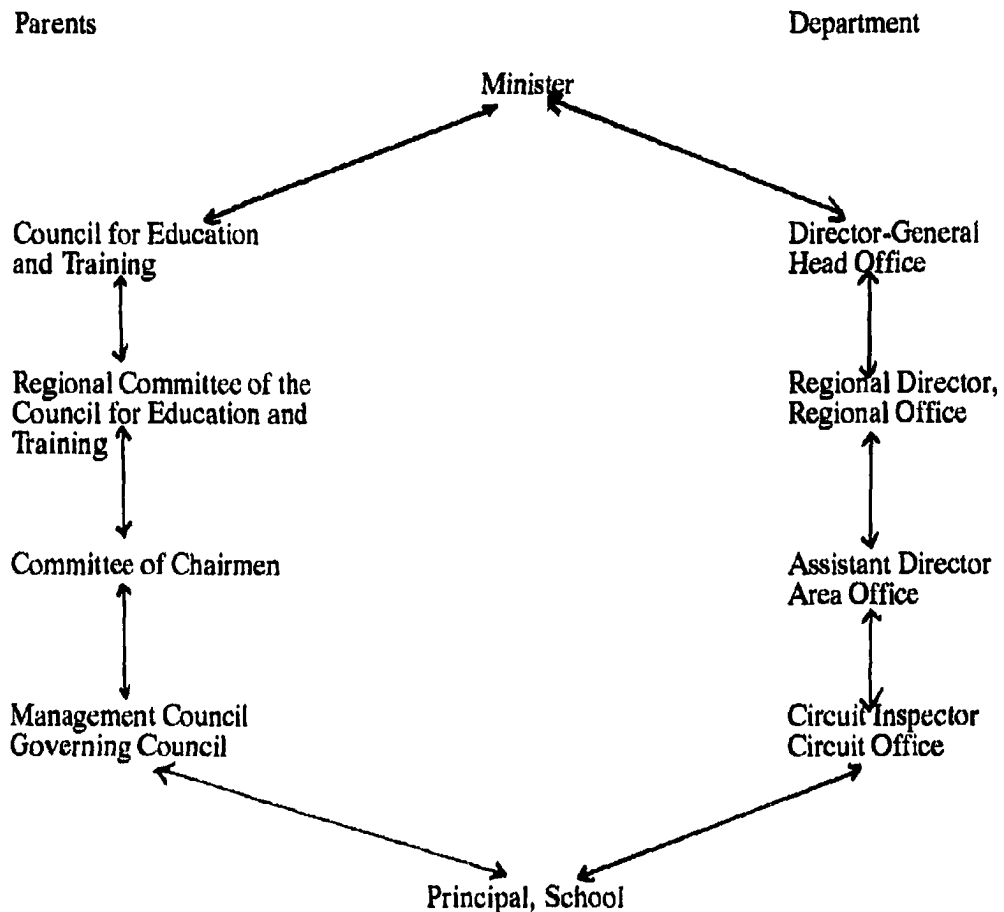
25 *Ibid*: p. 3.6.

26 *Ibid*: p. 3.6.

Management

The area of management of schools also received attention. The main feature of this dispensation lies with a more meaningful and effective role of parents in the normal management of the schools. The previous arrangement of school committees had been brought into disrepute in that they had no real power and were most of the time dominated by officials such as principals and/or inspectors. The biggest problem here, however, lay in the fact that they were bodies comprising members who were not democratically elected and were thus resented and not accepted by the people. The new structure ensures parental representation up to the highest level (i.e. in direct contact with the minister). This structure can be schematically represented thus:

This Structure Can be Schematically represented thus:



In brief, the Management Council is at ground level; its Chairman automatically belongs to the next higher body, the Committee of Chairmen, a body whose Chairman automatically belongs to the Regional Committee of the Council for Education and Training; the Chairman of this body (regional), automatically belongs to the highest body, which in this case, is the Council for Education and Training: "In this way parents are represented by elected representatives up to the highest level."²⁷

Students were also in some way accommodated in the management structure. It should be kept in mind that one of the main demands by students in the colleges and secondary schools in the uprisings of 1984-85 was the recognition of democratically elected Student Representative Councils. After much wrangling over this issue, the Department finally relented. The SRC's became a permanent feature in schools, elected by students to liaise with the principal on matters of concern to the students, and, "it is not part of their duties to prescribe to the principal or to become involved in the management or policy-making of the school."²⁸

Budget/Financing of Education

The area of finance is the most controversial of all aspects of the history of the education department. It is one area which has drawn much criticism from all quarters. The government's racially differentiated structure has always been a major cause of dissatisfaction, being perceived as a form of social injustice. The DET has given the following figures which, supposedly, are indicative of growth in the amounts voted for the financing of education for Blacks between the years 1978 and 1989.

²⁷ Department of Education and Training: "Implementation of the New Regulations in Connection with Management Councils": *Circular* no. 24/1/4 January 1989, p. 1.

²⁸ Lemmer, H.R.: "Information Conveyed to Inspectorate and Principals." *DET Circular* no. 6/11/2, October 1988, p. 3.

Year	Amount	% increase (in absolute terms)
1978/79	R 143 858 000	22,5
1979/80	R 181 804 000	26,3
1980/81	R 244 153 000	34,3
1981/82	R 369 794 000	51,4
1982/83	R 475 758 000	28,7
1983/84	R 561 318 000	17,98
1984/85	R 709 257 000	26,4
1985/86	R 917 486 000	29,4
1986/87	R1 157 831 000	26,2
1987/88	R1 487 840 000	28,5
1988/89	R1 952 284 000	18,9

(Table 1. Figures supplied by the Department of Education and Training. PRO Pamphlet, June 1989).

The same source gives further comment that:

- (i) The budget of Education and Training increased by about 1,300%.
- (ii) Since 1978 the annual percentage increase for education and training has been higher than for all government departments combined.

It is of particular importance to this study to have a look at figures pertaining to per capita expenditure as supplied by the DET. The preamble states that an assessment of per capita expenditure on education for Blacks should take the following factors into consideration:

- the dissimilarity in historical background between education for Blacks and Whites;
- the dissimilar growth rate;
- the dissimilar enrolment position; and

- the dissimilar age composition of both teachers and pupils.²⁹

It is important to note that the very factors which are cited above as justification for funding education differently are at the core of the student grievances. The DET should rightly know that if the criteria mentioned above are maintained, then the inequalities and deficiencies in the Black education system will never be rectified, with the result that Black student grievances will never be redressed. What the students are clamouring for is similar funding and education for all, and not dissimilar funding.

The figures per capita expenditure are given as follows:

1978/79	R 68,84
1979/80	R 84,57
1980/81	R116,76
1981/82	R167,22
1982/83	R195,03
1983/84	R237,16
1984/85	R291,87
1985/86	R378,02
1986/87	R476,95
1987/88	R560,50
1988/89	R648,37

(Figures supplied by DET PRO pamphlet June 1989).

Although these figures seem to represent a considerable improvement over a few years ago, two problems seem to arise; the growth is in relative terms and the figures are not compared with those of the other education departments. As a result, if viewed in

²⁹ "Education for Blacks in South Africa" *PRO Pamphlet*, no.32/3/1, June 1989, p. 3.12.

isolation, they give a picture of phenomenal growth and improvement. (This area will receive further attention).

Universities

The main thrust of the State's response lies in the establishment of the decentralized Vista University catering primarily for day students of the townships in which the satellite campuses are located. Mention can also be made of the fact that since April 1984, universities catering mainly for Blacks compile their budgets according to a subsidy formula which takes into cognizance student numbers, pass rates and research projects, thereby granting greater autonomy to the universities. Legislation has enabled these universities to extend their activities beyond their existing campuses. All of the older universities such as Fort Hare, Zululand and Turfloop, have established satellite branches beyond their campuses. Black student enrolments are put at 37,000 for 1988 compared to the 481 of 1961. Black academic personnel are put at 421 of whom over 100 are professors and senior lecturers as compared to 18 in 1960.³⁰ It should be noted, however, that these universities do not cater for a number of faculties: engineering, architecture, nuclear physics, astronomy, etc. which exist in the universities reserved for Whites.

Positive responses by the State were climaxed by its commitment in 1986 to a ten year plan aimed at providing equal education for all population groups. This was, however, on condition of economic growth. On the face of it, steps taken, as indicated by the figures, represent a considerable improvement over a few years ago, especially in view of the rapid expansion of African pupil numbers. Whether these responses served to stem the tide of student dissatisfaction and disaffection with the education system or not, will come under close scrutiny in the chapter that follows.

³⁰ Ibid: p. 3.13.

Addendum

The following growth statistics have been supplied by the Department of Education and Training: Public Relations Directorate Pamphlet June 1989. N.B. These figures, if viewed in isolation, paint a very rosy picture of growth. Further analysis and comparisons with figures pertaining to the race groups give an entirely different picture.

(Includes Self-Governing Territories except where otherwise indicated).

1. Teacher: Pupil Ratio (DET only).

	Primary	Secondary
1983	1 : 43	1 : 32
1984	1 : 42	1 : 33
1985	1 : 41	1 : 33
1986	1 : 40	1 : 32
1987	1 : 39	1 : 32
1988	1 : 39	1 : 33

2. % Percentage of Children of School-Going Age at School (6-16 Years Old)

1951 : 36,7%

1975 : 75,2%

1980 : 79,2%

1986 : 86,3%

3. Secondary Population as Percentage of Total School Population.

1949 : 2,6%

1981 : 16,1% (Transkei, Venda and Bophuthatswana excluded)

1982 : 16,9% (the three States above plus Ciskei, excluded from
1982).

1983 : 17,8%

1984 : 18,8%

1985 : 19,8%

1986 : 21,0%

1987 : 22,6%

1989 : 24,1%

4. Number of Full-time Candidates for Std. 10 (Grade 12).

1953 : less than 500

1979 : 23,200

1981 : 49,900

1982 : 60,170

1983 : 72,168 (Transkei excluded from this year).

1984 : 83,000

1985 : 90,331

1986 : 107,000

1987 : 142,000

1988 : 171,000

5. Full-time University Students (Five Predominantly Black Universities only).

1960 : 481

1965 : 919

1970 : 2,022

1980 : 8,220

1982 : 11,010

1983 : 14,977

1984 : 19,231

1985 : 22,287

1986 : 27,639

1987 : 30,669

1988 : 37,000

CHAPTER III

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

In the previous chapter we saw how the State reacted to student protests over the past fourteen years. We saw a violent response that was characterized by arrests, bannings, closure of schools, etc. This kind of reaction was on the whole, ill-advised, unwise and miscalculated. As a consequence, it yielded negative results to what was supposed to be achieved. State violence resulted in hardened attitudes against Bantu Education and a general mobilization to reinforce communal solidarity to signify to the authorities popular revulsion against a segregated educational system, as well as against the entire apartheid structure. Student protest had metamorphized into a dynamic, broadbased, political mass movement of resistance, outright rejection and revolt.

The other manner in which the State responded was through a re-evaluation of the Bantu Education system -- a very positive move. A look at some aspects of the overhauled system gives an impression of considerable improvement. Attention has been given to finance, syllabuses, management, conditions of service, pre-primary education, university education, technical education, both at tertiary and secondary levels, etc. In the light of reforms in these aforementioned areas, one would have expected acceptance and acquiescence. Instead, there is an almost unrelenting criticism of the entire education system with its innovations by politicians, academics and educationists as not addressing itself adequately to satisfying Black educational aspirations. This brings us to the question as to what do Africans want from education? The answer to this question can best be given in the words of an African educationist as a quest "for integration into the democratic structure and institutions of the country. To them, one of the most effective ways of

achieving this is by education -- an education essentially in no way different from or inferior to, that of other sections of the community."¹

Apart from the criticism, there is still a sustained air of restiveness in the school yards and campuses of colleges and universities. The reasons for this situation seem to be deeply rooted in both the origins of the educational system as well as in the nature of reforms introduced.

The Department feels it has done enough to rectify the situation. There is no reason to be complaining any longer. Complaints by students are now being viewed as coming through agitation from 'external forces'. The Department's main contention is that education is being used as a political weapon. In the words of one of the officials of the DET, Mr. J.A. Schoeman;

Such accusations originate either in ulterior political motives with education being used as a convenient lever, or in total ignorance of the actual situation. The real tragedy is that the Black pupil, continually confronted with these allegations, eventually comes to believe that everything offered to him is inferior and that he is the victim of a vicious conspiracy.²

While there might be some merit in Mr. Schoeman's argument, the point is that it is the Department itself, with its policies, which is stigmatizing and politicizing education by running it along racial lines. The Black pupil is obviously wondering why she or he cannot walk into any school and learn. There are schools reserved separately for Coloured, Indians, Whites and Blacks. The pupils get curious and want to know (without being instigated by anyone) what there is in the education of the other pupils that he or she cannot share. What officialdom should know also is that the stereotype view of the Black pupil is

¹ M'Timkulu, D.G.S.: "The African and Education" *Apartheid*; UNESCO Publication, Paris 1972, p. 35.

² Schoeman, J.A.: "Black Education: A Soft Target." *The South African Foundation News*. Vol.10, no. 6, June 1984, p. 1.

antiquated. The Black pupil of the eighties is not similar in outlook and perception to the Black pupil of twenty years ago when there was no exposure to modern media such as the television that gives visual and auditory information and opinions on contentious issues. Pupils from the older generation were somewhat indoctrinated into the policy of unquestioning obedience. The present day pupil is not prepared to accept authority without question. After all, was it not the pupils themselves who had felt they had had enough of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction? The pupils had felt that the use of Afrikaans was an impediment towards the learning process as well as towards their academic and educational aspirations. They took up the cudgels for their own rights and had done what they did. The pupils were rejecting prescription, for prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another's, in this case being ideologically oriented education. Paul Freire has this to say, "every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another's; transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness."³

Rebellions and upheavals in the eighties exceeded previous protests in their scope, intensity and frequency, creating a situation in which no meaningful and effective teaching takes place in the schools. Student leaders contend that the reforms which were instituted were half-hearted, and, upon scrutiny, appear to be further tightening of the screws and do not touch the core injustice of the apartheid education system.

The government rendered itself a big disservice by going as far as repudiating some of the recommendations of its own de Lange Commission report which it referred to as "unscientific, imbecile and educationally irresponsible."⁴ Hopes were dashed and gloom set in among students and educationists when the then Minister of National Education

³ Paulo, Freire: As Quoted in Absalom Vilakazi's: "The Dilemmas of African Education", *Energos*, no. 8, 1983, Aviation Publishers (Pty. Ltd.), Sandton, S.A. p. 13.

⁴ Nkomo, M.: "Apartheid Education in Crisis", *TransAfrica Forum*, Vol. 3, no. 1 Fall '85, p. 79.

(White), Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, in a parliamentary debate in May 1983, reiterated the government's rejection of a unitary non-racial school system in South Africa.⁵ However, in November 1983, the Government issued a "White Paper" formally committing itself to the eleven principles of the Report. Foremost among the principles was a commitment to equal educational opportunities for every inhabitant of South Africa. The State also accepted several major recommendations with some being implemented already. These measures have not helped in any way to facilitate acceptance of introduced reforms. These measures have seemingly failed to come to the nitty-gritty -- a unitary system. As a point of illustration, during the Commission of Inquiry into the Vaal unrest, the Chairman, Professor Tjaart Van der Walt, found that the most militant body involved in the school boycott, COSAS, had three main demands: the replacement of the prefect system by a system of student councils, the abolition of corporal punishment, and the abolition of the age limit.⁶ In addition, he says extensive discussions revealed that aside from the grievances listed above, there were further complaints:

generally speaking -- irrespective of what COSAS might think or say -- the basic reason for their dissatisfaction is probably the Black pupil's feeling of inferiority when he compares the quality of his education with that of his White counterpart. Not only does this disparity make him feel that an injustice is being done to him, but it also offends his dignity. This is why comparisons with education elsewhere in Africa are futile: the Blacks are concerned with how they compare with Whites.⁷

Nothing can be further from the truth. Impairment of dignity and a feeling by the Black student that he is being short-changed seem to be the central issues. It appears that nothing short of a non-racial unitary system of education will work. The students' argument is that separate but equal will not work. Chapter 5 of the de Lange Report, which deals with a programme to attain education of equal quality for all inhabitants, proposes

⁵ Ibid: p. 79.

⁶ Van der Walt, T: "Report of the Inquiry on Education for Blacks in the Vaal Triangle with Special Reference to Events of 3 September 1984 and Thereafter." S.A. 10425, p. 14.

⁷ Ibid: p. 14.

four guidelines, the second of which states, 'no person will on educationally irrelevant grounds be debarred from available educational opportunities from which he might benefit.'⁸ The moot question remains whether equality in education can be achieved in systems that are separate in a segmented, discriminatory society. The answer to this question can best be given by quoting judgement of a case involving a similar issue that was given in a United States court in 1954 by Chief Justice Earl Warren. This judgement is important in that it addresses the central issue parallel to the one in the Black education system. Important lessons can also be learned from it. In delivering judgement Chief

Justice Warren said:

We come to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of equal opportunities? We believe that it does...To separate (children in grade and high schools) from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. The effect of this separation on their educational opportunities was well stated in the Kansas case... 'Segregation of White and coloured children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the coloured children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn.

Segregation with the sanction of the law, therefore, has a tendency to (retard) the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefit they would receive in a racially integrated school system'...We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.'⁹

The judgement given has a great relevance to the present day educational impasse.

If it were not for ideological dogmatism and expediency, the policy guidelines would have

⁸ Auerbach Franz: "No Equal Opportunities Without Equal Treatment": *Energos*, no. 13, 1986, p. 80.

⁹ *Ibid*: p. 80.

been governed by sound educational principles as outlined in Justice Warren's judgement, as well as by the de Lange Report. This would have gone a long way in depoliticizing education, and the benefits from such a move would be educationally and politically incalculable. Otherwise, for as long as there is separate education for the different race groups, suspicion about inherent differences in quality will persist and, therefore, opposition to it will remain.

Devolution of Power

The quest for desegregation of the school system, though crucial, should not be viewed in isolation. There have always been other areas which give rise to serious problems with regard to broad acceptance of the education system; e.g., there is too little decentralization of authority regarding decision making.

Following the new dispensation, the highest level of Black representation is vested in the South African Council for Education (SACE) whose chief function is to advise the Minister of National Education on policy concerning formal, non-formal and informal education but excluding university and Technikon education. The council's biggest drawback lies in its lack of executive powers. The Council for Education and Training, the highest body for parental representation, is also devoid of any decision-making powers. Both these bodies are merely advisory. Experience from the past has always indicated that bodies formed in this way automatically lose credibility in the eyes of Blacks and are always viewed with suspicion and regarded as one of the many 'crude devices' meant to perpetuate the present educational system. What is puzzling and inexplicable is the fact that Black education, although separate, still has all top and key positions in the hands of Whites. The Minister, the Secretary and other key personnel are Whites. There is no meaningful decision-making body comprised of Blacks. All of this is so because:

Whites have always been at the helm of things; they plan, direct, control and run it their way, because they know or assume to know what is good

for Black people. It has never dawned on their minds that Black people have a notion of what they might desire in their education -- this has always been found unnecessary.¹⁰

Funding

Another of the thorniest educational issues giving rise to a great deal of criticism and dissatisfaction is funding. What gives rise to dissatisfaction is not so much how much money has been allocated as how this allocation is made. Admittedly, there are improvements in the financing of Black education. The fly in the ointment remains, however, the structure of allocations which is based along racial lines. Keen observers of financial allocations remain very skeptical of the State's attempt to achieve parity in funding.

One of the main contributory factors of South Africa's educational inadequacies is that, unlike the practice with many other countries, the State spends a small fraction of the national income on education today as was the case thirty-five years ago. For example, in 1953, 3.5 percent of the gross domestic product was spent on education; the figure rose to 3.8 percent in 1963 and 4 percent in 1973. In 1978, the total education expenditure was R1,553 million, while the GNP was R38,000 million, giving a figure of 4.1 percent. In contrast, the United States, from 1956 to 1966, increased its spending on education from 4.0 to 6.4 percent, the Netherlands from 4.6 to 7.6 percent (1955 to 1965). Zambia, a relatively young and poor third world country raised its spending from 2.6 percent in 1960 to 7.8 percent in 1968.¹¹ This then leaves one with an impression that Black education is not rated highly on the scale of national priorities. This kind of allocation invariably leads to the problem of inequality in educational expenditure. The figures as supplied by the Department of Education and Training (see Chapter II) gave an impression of a great

¹⁰ Kambule, T: *Aspects of the South African System*. (Paper), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p. 1.

¹¹ Van der Horst, Sheila, and Reid, John, June ed; "A Review: Race Discrimination in South Africa." David Philip, Publishers Cape Town, Rex Collings, London. p.67.

improvement in Black education. However, the Department did not go further to reflect the allocation on a comparative basis with other racial groups in South Africa. There is a large financial discrepancy in both the amounts budgeted for education, as well as in the per capita expenditure. Despite the fact that there are almost five times as many Africans as Whites in South Africa, the de Lange Commission reported that in 1978/79 16.4 percent of total public spending on education was spent on Whites. Although per capita figures can be misleading, the amount spent on each White child has over the past several years averaged about 10 times as much as the amount spent on each African child. This trend still persists, as can be clearly seen in the tables that follow, illustrating differentiated expenditure along racial lines up to 1984. The 1988 figures appear separately below the tables.

TOTAL PUPIL ENROLMENT 1974-1982

	Whites	Coloureds	Indians	Africans
1974*	890 695	616 544	181 337	1 312 273
1975	903 877	636 424	183 659	1 360 534
1976	922 120	660 428	188 264	1 420 896
1977	935 423	686 499	195 591	1 428 115
1978	943 805	722 095	205 190	1 372 619
1979	950 583	743 584	212 851	1 476 033
1980	959 422	752 178	218 498	1 518 922
1981	966 743	756 565	221 833	1 590 664
1982**	975 414	767 340	224 322	1 626 875

Sources:

- * S. Blignaut, *Statistics on Education in South Africa, 1968/79*. SAIRR, Johannesburg, 1981.
- ** SAIRR, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1983*. Johannesburg 1984.
All other figures: Central Statistical Services, Government Printer. Pretoria 1982.

Total Expenditure on Education from the State Revenue Account 1974-1984

	White Education	Coloured Education	Indian Education	African Education
1974/75	R 381 800 000	R 88 600 000	R 39 300 000	R 59 200 000
1975/76	R 451 400 000	R 102 900 000	R 43 800 000	R 66 300 000
1976/77	R 586 900 000	R 132 800 000	R 55 900 000	R 90 700 000
1977/78	R 623 495 000	R 144 173 000	R 60 801 000	R 110 382 000
1978/79	R 724 864 000	R 179 454 000	R 74 602 000	R 144 213 000
1979/80	R 791 200 000	R 174 500 000	R 83 200 000	R 173 700 000
1980/81	R 957 500 000	R 247 100 000	R 122 700 000	R 261 00 000
1981/82	R 1188 700 000	R 294 300 000	R 154 600 000	R 365 300 000
1982/83	R 2736 808 000	R 390 180 000	R 195 376 000	R 475 758 000
1983/84	R 2062 624 000	R 450 736 000	R 225 052 000	R 561 318 000

Source: SAIRR. A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1976/1983. Johannesburg.

The Following Table Illustrates Per Capita Expenditure

	Whites	Coloureds	Indians	Africans
1976/77	R 654	R 157.59	R 219.96	R 48.55
1977/78	R 551	R 185.16	R 236.13	R 54.05
1978/79	R 724	R 225.54	R 357.15	R 71.28
1979/80	R 1,169	R 234.00	R 389.66	R 91.29
1980/81	R 1,021	R 286.08	not available	R 176.20
1981/82	R 1,221	R 418.84	R 798.00	R 165.23
1982/83*	R 1,395	R 593.37	R 871.87	R 192.34

*Estimate.

Source: SAIR, A survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1976/1983. Johannesburg.

The 1988 African education budget exceeded that for White education, but, even so, per capita expenditure figures given by the Minister of Finance, Barend du Plessis, for 1988 were:

Whites	Coloureds	Indians	Africans
R 3,887	R 1,748	R 2,040	R 540

Source: *The Sunday Times*, May 7, 1989 Leader page, col. 3.

It can be seen from the tables that the current racial gap in educational expenditure is very large. The allocation is structured in such a way that the scale is tilted in favour of the White pupil, the Indian pupil, the Coloured pupil and lastly, the African pupil. This is a structure heavily tinted with political and racial overtones. The government's propensity to equivocate when confronted with need to act against its own doctrinal learnings is quite legendary. For example, in trying to justify the difference in per capita expenditure, the Department argues that consideration should be taken of the following factors:

- the dissimilarity in historical background between education for Blacks and education for Whites;
- dissimilar enrolment; and
- the dissimilar age composition of both the teachers and pupils.¹²

Dr. G. van N. Viljoen, then Minister of Education and Development Aid, explained this by the fact that 80 percent of any educational project goes to salaries and the vast majority of African teachers are underqualified; they therefore earn relatively less than their qualified counterparts. Another reason is that the cost of a high school pupil is virtually double that of one in primary school. Due to the drop-out rate, a relatively low percentage of African pupils progress into high school.

These are not adequate justifications for the discrepancy in per capita expenditure. The reasons are certainly not valid. The authorities' conception of justice and equity, as applied to the Black person, is quite confusing. The government lost no time in introducing a uniform tax system. This is in proportion to capacity and income. If this criteria could be imposed for the collection of taxes, why is the same criteria not being used in education funding? Why should Blacks get less in education funding? "Of the

¹² Bot, M.: Facing the Challenge of Equal Education: *Sunday Times*; May 17, 1989, Johannesburg: Leader page, col. 4.

nearly one billion rand of additional expenditure on education in 1986, only 29 percent was allocated to Black education while 56 percent was spent on White education."¹³ How then does the Minister justify this?

In early 1988, the then Minister of National Education, now State President F.W. de Klerk, said the ten year programme of upgrading black education had been stalled by slow economic growth. In April 1989, he announced that the State would be forced to spend less money on each child in future. de Klerk said that economic growth would be given priority, and education made more efficient while maintaining standards already achieved. Some of the measures under consideration include: setting higher university admission requirements; defining standards 4 and 7 as exit points from the school system, after which the pupil can receive occupational-related education; and the introduction of compulsory tuition fees for Whites. The implications of this are very serious, and the impact of decreased finance will be greatly felt in black education just when hopes were raising due to increased and improving financial allocations. This is most unfortunate when one realizes the fact that in 1987, 1,051,189 African children, between the ages of seven and sixteen, did not attend school.¹⁴ The Black students believe in their hearts that they are being unjustly deprived of that to which they have a claim. This spoils relations which become worse and worse in the course of time. Most Third World governments aim at wiping out illiteracy as quickly as possible and establish free and compulsory education; the South African government's approach has the effect of delaying the achievement of these goals. Instead of going forward in its policies and attitudes towards funding, South Africa seems to be going back to the sixties. The State, on occasion, asserts the superiority

¹³ Bot, Monica and Lawrence Schlemmer: "The Classroom Crisis: Black Demands and White Responses", *Indicator Project*: South African Centre for Applied Sciences: University of Natal, Durban, p. 6.

¹⁴ Figure given is in an article by Monica Bot in the *Sunday Times* May 7, 1989.

of education for Blacks in South Africa over education offered in other African States. This is a weak argument for two reasons. First, the most important comparisons are between education for Blacks and Whites within South Africa. Second, in objective comparisons of South Africa's educational system with that in other States, South Africa frequently, although not uniformly, comes up short. For instance:

The number of university students per 100,000 population is substantially greater in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Nigeria than for Africans in South Africa. Taking some fields randomly, Kenya has approximately five times as many students in the fields of agriculture, engineering, and architecture as there are Africans studying these subjects in South Africa.¹⁵

The State's excuse that it has budgetary constraints is viewed by many analysts as invalid and unacceptable. A lot of money is being spent in very peculiar ways and for programmes that are highly questionable. For example, money spent on 'Wilderness programmes' that were organized for Black students after the 1985 student riots for indoctrination under the guise of youth camping is sheer wastage of money that could be put to good use in financing educational programmes. In almost every classroom in Black schools (which mostly lack in basic library facilities), there are glossy propaganda posters and placards which were produced under very questionable circumstances and, worst of all, at the taxpayers' expense. (N.B. A commission of inquiry was set up to look into, inter alia, this particular issue.)¹⁶ Furthermore, millions of Rands, as exposed in the information scandal, have been secretly channelled to programmes whose benefit for South Africa is very obscure. Vast sums of money are spent on defence, and to think that defence

¹⁵ "Black education in South Africa": *Africa Bureau Document Paper*, no. 32, March-April 1983. Publication Trust MEIN & Fowler, Montangu House, High St., Huttington, Cambridgeshire, p. 1.

¹⁶ Citizen, Friday 23 June, 1989 This refers to the Van Den Heever Commission held in Pretoria to look into misuse of funds involving White Senior Officials of the DET and a son of one of the officials. Johannesburg, p. 4.

has precedence over education underlines how the State views its priorities. Regional military exploits cost an estimated R3.0 billion¹⁷ in direct military and related economic subsidies for Namibia alone. Speculation going on presently in North America (Cable News Network, Nov. 6, 1989) that South Africa, in collaboration with Israel, has built and tested a nuclear missile (even though denied) is indicative of the fact that South Africa has the technological know-how, the ability, and the funds to do so successfully. If this speculation were proven true, it would mean that a great deal of money is being spent on such a costly project despite the fact that over a million Black children forfeit their right to education.

Facilities

In as far as physical facilities are concerned, the State responded by upgrading existing facilities -- making improvements on standing buildings and in most cases, adding additional classrooms and staff rooms with offices for heads of departments in primary as well as in secondary schools. Additional schools were built at a faster rate than before. Notwithstanding this, there are still very acute problems regarding: (a) the quantity of available facilities and, (b) the standard or quality of such facilities.

Concerning quantity, the biggest problem was caused primarily by earlier rigid execution of the policy of discouraging provision of facilities in the urban areas and channelling it to the rural areas and homelands in pursuit of the government's policy of regarding Blacks as sojourners in the urban areas. This freezing of school-buildings in areas such as Soweto has had a debilitating effect on education. With the sharp increase of the pupil population, coupled with government neglect and cutbacks in expenditures, existing schools cannot cope.

¹⁷ Figure given as \$1.5 billion by Marcum, J.A., *Education in South Africa: Key or Chimera*: CSIC Africa Notes, no. 41, April 15, 1985, p. 6. A publication of the African Studies Programme

Even though enough schools have been built by the State to accommodate all White pupils,¹⁸ school building for Black pupils seldom keeps up with demand, particularly in newly built-up areas and where there is a rapid population growth. In addition, classrooms, in schools for White, Coloured and Indian children, are calculated on the basis of one room per thirty-five pupils, while for African pupils it was one per forty-five in 1980.¹⁹ The rooms involved are no bigger; thus, the authorities apparently have found greater crowding in African classrooms acceptable.

Apart from many other quality facilities, primary schools for White pupils have large assembly halls and libraries, whereas African schools up to the present do not have these. This is not surprising when one takes into account that in 1978, the cost of a large primary school for White children was over R600 000 in the Transvaal, while schools for about the same number of African pupils cost between R40 000 and R50 000.²⁰

As a result, where school-building does not keep pace with growth in school enrolment, schoolrooms are, in some cases, used by two shifts of pupils daily (commonly called the Platoon System). One set of pupils come in the morning and the other set in the afternoon. Though an innovation, this system does not make for sound educational practice. In addition, most parents are forced to leave their 'afternoon' children unattended in the morning, which can result in more social problems. In 1978, 104,859 pupils in the first four school years, representing 5.3 percent of the enrolment in those classes, were involved in this system.²¹

18 There is already a decrease in White enrolment as will be seen later.

19 van der Horst, Sheila: ed.; *A Review Race Discrimination in South Africa*: David Philip, Publisher, Cape Town, Rex Collings, London. p. 69,

20 Ibid: p. 70.

21 Ibid: p. 70.

Apart from the Platoon System, there is also what one can call the 'double session' system whereby two different classes are taught consecutively by a single teacher. Teaching time is curtailed from four and a half to three hours in the first two standards.

The backlog in provision of classroom space which the Department has to contend with can be illustrated by the following tables:

The Total Current Shortage of Pupil Places and the Cost Implication

Type of School	Places Needed	Lowest Limit Cost	Highest Limit Cost
Primary	1,583,748	1,444,378	1,764,295
Secondary	283,851	397,164	557,029
Total	1,867,599	1,841,542	2,321,324

Source: Human Science Research Council 1981 @: 80-86; 1981

The Projected Additional Pupil Places Needed and the Cost Implication

Period	Type of School	Places Needed	Lowest Limit Cost	Highest Limit Cost
1980-85	Primary	391,049	356,637	435,629
	Secondary	228,274	319,401	447,965
Total:		619,323	676,038	883,594
1985-90	Primary	320,711	292,488	357,272
	Secondary	246,960	345,546	484,634
Total:		567,671	638,034	841,906

Source: Human Science Research Council: 1981 @: 80-86; 1981

While such a situation (overcrowding and lack of space) prevails in the Black schools, the irony is that White schools are emptying as Black pupils are struggling and vying for limited space -- the unfortunate consequences of segregated education. There is a serious White-enrolment decline in certain areas of Johannesburg. Soweto schools were hard-put to cope with numbers in 1988 and by 1989, they were turning away those who had failed more than once, those who had not attended school the previous year, and those living outside the designated zone. Above and beyond that, school principals were enjoined by the Department of Education and Training to stick to a quota of 40 pupils per classroom with the result that many children were turned away because their local school was full. Calls on the authorities by, among others, the parents of some of the White children to open these schools to Black pupils fell on deaf ears. Up until now, the Minister in charge of White education, Piet Clase, has rejected the suggestion out of hand. Johan Muller, co-ordinator of the Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, laments the situation:

Clearly something will have to be done to deal with the consequences of both under subscription in the 'White' and oversubscription in the 'Black' schools of larger Johannesburg.

It will be a cynical state indeed that allows valuable capital and skill resources to run down and disappear in one region while so desperately needed in another.²²

The following table will indicate capacity and enrolment in some White schools in

Johannesburg - East.	1985	1989	
School	Capacity	Enrolment	Enrolment
L.H.Harris Primary	529	378	190
John Michael Primary	539	238	145
Observatory East Primary	549	350	173
Kensington Ridge Primary	499	352	250
Malvern West Primary	459	194	137
Athlone Girls High	709	345	257
Malvern High	874	411	303

Source: *Sunday Star*; Johannesburg, August 27, 1989, p. 19.

²² Muller, Johan: The Lesson the Nats Won't Learn. *Sunday Star*, Johannesburg, August 27,

From the preceding table, 2303 spaces in seven schools in one area in Johannesburg are lying fallow -- at the expense of the taxpayer. Ideological considerations are proving very costly. A minor gesture, such as availing these unutilized spaces to school-less Black pupils, would go far in terms of human relations and would indicate the government's commitment to meaningful educational reform.

(b) Equipment and Textbooks

Non-existence of electricity in most Black schools, especially the primary, is the biggest problem. This implies that the most modern and sometimes effective and time-saving teaching aids cannot be used. The supply of free stationery and textbooks is always bogged down by bureaucratic bungling and ineptitude. One often hears of textbooks not arriving on time, or in sufficient numbers. A decentralized system of supply like the one being used in White schools would go a long way in alleviating this problem. Principals of White schools order from booksellers from approved lists of titles, and send accounts to their departments for payment. The DET does its own buying and supplies its own schools from a central point. Given the size of the country, there are bound to be delays. The system used by the White schools could be followed to forestall such delays.

Farm Schools

Meaningful improvements, as far as farm schools are concerned, go only in as far as upgrading of teacher-qualifications is concerned. Otherwise, the educational needs of farm workers' children leaves much to be desired.

- The DET stipulates that farm schools should be situated in such a way that no pupil travels for more than 5 kms. This is the ideal. Reality is that very

few pupils are favoured by their circumstances to make this possible. The majority walk distances of more than 5 kms. every day to and fro while there is a regular bus system for White school children of the White farmers.

- Very few of these pupils ever reach secondary school education, as provision for this level of education is almost non-existent in the farm areas.
- Physical facilities such as buildings, equipment and related necessities leave much to be desired. There is the usual lack of desks, windowpanes in windows, etc.
- The system is an enlightened form of indenture and use of child labour. Pupils are often made to assist with certain farm activities supervised by their teacher on instruction from the farm owner or manager of the farm.²³
- Most of the time, the schools are built by voluntary African farm labour, but at the end of the day the farmer gets a subsidy from the DET for the school. See (Education for Blacks in S.A. DET. 3.5. farm schools).
- The White farmer has almost total powers over the educational future of the farm workers' children. He is the final word on appointment

²³ This practice was encouraged in the policy statement in 1954 by Dr. Verwoerd who said, *inter alia*, "...who has a farm school on his farm and who wishes to make use of the school children under the supervision of the teacher to assist with certain farm activities, this can be arranged in a proper manner to fit in with the curriculum." (During my research I did not come across any DET guidelines in rebuttal of this practice).

of personnel at the school. He can, if he so desires, close the school. The case of the farmer who closed the school run by school principal, Mr. Khumalo of Krugersdorp, who had succeeded his father as principal is a classical example of these povers. The farmer closed the school and converted it into a pigsty. The Department of Education and Training did not intervene, nor did it provide an alternative for the school children.

Technical Education

Of all the recommendations of the de Lange Report, the State lost no time in implementing the one concerning vocational and technical education. What is worthy of note is that even before the de Lange recommendation, the then Minister of Manpower Utilization, Mr. Fanie Botha, announced in December 1979 that the government intended to allocate R50 million for the training of Black workers. By 1981, sixteen 'technical centres' had been established by the Department of Education and Training in urban townships: "The purpose of these centres was to introduce Black schoolboys to elementary technical training which would lead to technical high school where a variety of training skills would be offered."²⁴

By 1981 four technikons, catering exclusively for Blacks, had also made an appearance. These were built in Umlazi, Pietersburg, Pietermaritzburg and Soshanguve, (called The Northern Transvaal Technikon) which is the show piece of the Department of Education and Training's reformist initiative in technical education.

The solicitous manner in which the Department responded was quite unprecedented, and as such, warrants closer scrutiny. Was the Department motivated by

²⁴ Maseko, Sam: Plan for Black Education to Cost R63m. *Rand Daily Mail Jhb.* 17/9/81. Statement by Mr. G.J. Rousseau, Director General: DET as Reported in *Sowetan* 17/3/81.

benign designs to upgrade the Black worker in technical skills? The answer to this question can best be obtained by looking at Britain and the reasons why it introduced compulsory schooling:

The introduction of compulsory schooling in nineteenth century Britain, for example, had more to do with the production of skills appropriate to the needs of industry (manpower), the ideological control of workers, and the entrenchment of middle-class ideological hegemony, than with the need to uplift and advance the interests of the working class.²⁵

There is a parallel between the reasons which motivated Britain and the apparent reasons which motivated the State to respond so vigorously in the field of technical education after two decades of neglect. (1956-1976).

As already stated, in the early days at the Cape, Sir George Grey, with large Colonial Office subsidies, had introduced industrial education for Africans and Coloureds, long before such training existed for White youth. But, this withered away and both employment opportunities and suitable technical and vocational training for Africans were severely limited as they expanded for Whites. This trend (neglect of vocational and technical education for Blacks) was allowed to continue unabated as the State did not want to encourage competition in technical related skills between Blacks and Whites. This trend was also congruent and compatible with South Africa's political development under the hegemony of Afrikaner Nationalist ideology throughout the years. The trend did not threaten the basic tenets of apartheid policy. Moreover, the government had hoped that by implementing an aggressive recruitment drive for skilled artisans, technologists and engineers from overseas countries, enough European skilled manpower would always be available to sustain the economy²⁶ while the Blacks would remain in the reserves as a reservoir of cheap unskilled labour whenever and wherever it would be needed.

²⁵ Kallaway, P.: ed. "Education for Blacks in South Africa", *Apartheid and Education*. p. 6.

²⁶ This recruitment was also aimed at increasing the White population to try and maintain a

The change in approach only came after realization had dawned that:

- (i) the best recruitment efforts available could not and cannot provide the necessary manpower as envisaged;
- (ii) instead of increasing, the White population was actually on the decline;
- (iii) the Black population was growing at a fast rate;
- (iv) there would soon be large-scale unemployment among the Black population with its accompanying social and political consequences; and
- (v) technology was multiplying the demand for skilled, trained workers.

Much as Nigeria relied on a single source of national wealth (oil) and neglected vital food production, South Africa for many years relied heavily upon gold and neglected development of its human resources: "It was only as the price of gold sank from \$800 down to \$300 an ounce that the country's political leadership began to give serious consideration to the economic consequences of racial policies that left up to 50 percent of the total population (nearly 70 percent of Africans) functionally illiterate."²⁷

It is against this background that the government's new found interest in vocational and technical education can be viewed. The interest lies largely in sobering demography. According to the Institute for Future Research at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa's population may leap to 45 million by the year 2000, only ten years from now, with Whites down from 16 percent to 10 percent of the total²⁸ thus:

Standing alone, the relatively static White minority of less than 5 million cannot hope to provide the cadres of high professional, technical, and managerial manpower necessary for the development and sustenance of a sophisticated modern economy.²⁹

favourable White/Black ratio.

²⁷ Marcum, J.A.: Black Education in South Africa: Key or Chimera CSIS Africa Notes, No. 41, April 15, 1985, p. 2.

²⁸ Ibid: p. 2.

Speaking at the National Education Conference examining the de Lange Report on future education in South Africa, Dr. Johannes van Zyl, Chairman of the Federated Chamber of Industries, also explained that an additional 300,000 jobs requiring technical skills will have to be filled if South Africa hopes to continue to grow at an average rate of 5% per annum over the next twenty years.³⁰ It was further estimated that in order to meet South Africa's industrial needs, the educational system must produce 23,000 artisans a year. At the moment, only 10,000 per year are produced.³¹

In the light of these unexpected changing circumstances, particularly in the late seventies, the State had been forced to make 'adjustments' to its policy regarding technical education. Added to this could be:

- (a) response to pressure for reform both from within the country, and from overseas, (external pressure); and
- (b) the need to satisfy demands of commerce and industry.

The reforms introduced were not 'blind' to the dictates of nationalist ideology. Despite such worrisome statistics, institutions that sprouted are run strictly along racial lines. African students are still not allowed into existing White institutions. Institutions available to Blacks are few -- only four at tertiary level for a Black population of some 30 million.

What comes out clearly from this situation is the need to maintain a balance between educational policies and the dictates of political ideology. The State wants to have its cake and eat it too. While it needs to train enough Blacks in technical skills as fast as possible,

29 Ibid.

30 van Zyl, Q.: *Paper delivered at the National Education Conference Examining Future Education in South Africa*, p. 19.

31 Ibid: p. 19.

the State cannot use existing under-utilized White institutions for this purpose because of ideological considerations. The policy of precluding Blacks from utilizing existing "White" institutions in the face of obvious lack of adequate facilities for Blacks is thus a contradiction in terms, hence the call for the private sector to be involved in the financing of technical education.

What is so unsettling is that some of the technical institutions, (Black), even after almost a decade of existence, have not yet justified their existence. For example, the showpiece of the Department of Education and Training, The Northern Transvaal Technikon, has been plagued by continuous closure and student strikes. In its lifespan of nine years, very few students have managed to complete their diploma courses. The reasons for this are many and diverse, ranging from poor administration to poor quality of recruited White personnel. Complaints concerning a number of allegations, including mis-spending of millions of rands of the taxpayers' money, have been handed to the Advocate-General. A document outlining these allegations has also been sent to the Van den Heever Commission in Cape Town which is investigating the Department of Education and Training.³²

The *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg, April 16, 1989) published a secret report that was scathing of the technikon staff. Among some of the disclosures made were that:

- qualification levels of some personnel at the technikon are inadequate for the senior and executive positions they fill;
- a senior director, in office since 1987, has no degree or any advanced technikon qualification;
- another senior director was appointed as director in 1982 on condition that he completes a Masters degree. He still has not done so (1989 April);

and

³² Potgieter, de Wet: Secret Report Slates Staff: *Sunday Times* Johannesburg 16/4/89.

- a woman lecturer promoted to a post of associate director (a post equal to that of an associate professor at a university) has no degree.³³

This picture given above concerning this particular technikon should not, however, be viewed in isolation. It should give an idea of what goes on generally in the other institutions, the difference being that of scope and scale.

On the whole, there has been considerable improvement in African education compared to the pre-1976 period (the period of neglect). The rate of improvement and reform was somewhat begrudgingly activated by the "shock treatment" of student action which led to acceptance by the state of the need to overhaul the educational system for Blacks, plus the sobering demographics. The only problem, which proves insurmountable, remains however, how to bring in meaningful reforms without tampering with the principles governing the policy of separate development (apartheid). It seems as though unless this attitude is changed, all reformist efforts from both the industrial and government front will come to naught in the eyes of the Black student.

³³ Note should be taken of the fact that most of the allegations listed have been featuring prominently among the list of grievances in the short life of the technikon. However, chief among the complaints was the high handed attitude of the previous rector, Mr. Marinus Wijnbeeck, who eventually resigned.

CHAPTER IV

Positive Effects of Student Protests

Corporate Intervention

The convulsions flowing from student protests of the seventies and eighties can be felt over a wide area in the sphere of education in South Africa. Much as the Sharpeville massacres of the sixties helped to draw attention and sympathy of the international community towards political injustices, the student protests of the seventies and eighties drew sympathy and concern of the international community towards injustices inherent in the black education system. Protests by black students catapulted the South African black educational scene into world-wide prominence overnight. Some good was to come out of this situation.

Foreign governments, the private sector, multi-national corporations, mining houses and organizations, both inside as well as outside the country, felt obligated to redress the deficiencies in the educational system for blacks. Although these groups have differed in respect of the modus operandi, they nevertheless made significant moves towards the same direction. The reasons for their contribution seem to have been:

- (i) to improve the quality of education for blacks in general,
- (ii) to accelerate and to give impetus to the process of graduating blacks through institutions of higher learning,
- (iii) to offer an alternative paradigm to an education system that was evidently being rejected as inferior, and
- (iv) to uplift and to enrich the standard of education of the black community as a whole.

The contribution of the private sector took three main forms. Firstly, there were education projects established and administered by independent education trusts. These were either directly assisted by private firms, such as the South African branches of multinational corporations or local companies, or they were funded by foreign aid. Secondly, there were the joint ventures with the Department of Education and Training and thirdly, there were independent employers involved in "in-house" training.

An example of corporate intervention is the Education and Skills Training on the East Rand (The Easter Project), which has as its objectives, "the promotion, furthering and provision of education and skills training of all persons in all fields and in the interest of the community as a whole."¹ The main thrust of this programme is the offering of literacy classes to adults and the improvement of their formal schooling. This project also caters for technical training in a variety of short-term courses which last from a few weeks to six months on an "employer-release" scheme. The centre was boosted up financially by funding from local industry, by foreign sources like Miserer, a Church Aid foundation in West Germany, as well as by one of the largest corporations in the world, ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph corporation of the United States of America).

The American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa also came with another project -- the Pace College in Soweto. The college was built primarily to cater for pupils who would be committed to a future in the commercial field. This college was initially run and administered by the Chamber, but, after experiencing some problems at the administrative level, the Chamber decided to hand the project over to the Soweto Community where it is still serving the needs of the community as originally envisaged, though in a slightly modified way. The emphasis is no longer necessarily placed on a commercially oriented education. Despite the problems experienced, the importance of such a project lies in the fact that it provided a model for many others of its kind over the years.

¹ Kallaway, Peter: ed., *Apartheid and Education*, p. 29.

Joint ventures between the Department of Education and Training and the Anglo American Corporation resulted in the birth of the Soweto Teachers College. The Anglo American Corporation built and equipped the College and thereafter handed it over to the DET to run. This venture is serving a great need of providing the much needed manpower in the teaching field. Other efforts came from the Urban Foundation, Ford (South Africa), Old Mutual (insurance), Siemens, and Philips (electronics) which contributed grants of over R2 million to provide for workshops in electronics, motor mechanics, fitting and turning, woodwork, welding, building construction and basic training for some 800 students at the Jabulani Technical High School in Soweto.

Another educational venture linked to the private sector came into existence -- the "In-House Training Project." This is a project whereby large companies have launched training and literacy programmes for their own employees in which employees are given on-the-job training to promote their job related skills, as well as affording them a reasonable amount of literacy. To this end, qualified artisans, as well as qualified teachers, are employed on a permanent basis. The benefits of such a scheme to the employees need not be over-emphasized. Most blacks get hired having no formal education nor acquired skills but with lots of potential. At the end of the day some of the workers end up having gained skills and a reasonable amount of literacy to end higher up in promotion positions within those companies. Among some of the major companies involved in this kind of project are the Anglo American Corporation, Barlow-Rand, Barclays Bank (now called The First National Bank), as well as State Corporations such as Escom, Sasol and the South African Transport Services.

In pursuance of the policy of education upliftment and enrichment, other organizations have decided to use overseas universities for this purpose. Among these organizations can be mentioned The British Council and the Education Opportunities Commission which is funded by the Ford and Carnegie Foundations through the Institute of International Education. Through a programme devised by these organizations, many

black students are afforded the opportunity to study for their undergraduate and post-graduate degrees at universities, mainly in the United States of America and, to a lesser extent, in Britain. In this way, many black students are enabled to study for degrees in fields which are not being catered for in universities that have been set aside for them in South Africa. One of the stipulations for acceptance of such bursaries and scholarships is that upon completion of their studies, the students are expected to return to South Africa in order that they can be able to make use of their acquired skills and expertise to the general benefit of the black community as a whole.

Another of these groups is the South Africa Education Trust Fund (SAETF). This Trust was established in September 1987 in order to provide educational opportunities in Canada for black South Africans. The council members of the Trust comprise of notable Canadians, among them Edward Scott, Anglican Archbishop of Toronto, who was also a member of the Eminent Persons Group.² In a preamble the Trust states:

Black South Africans suffer serious educational disadvantage under the Apartheid system. A white child has one hundred times more chance of becoming a university graduate than a black child. Improved education and training for South Africa's black majority will contribute to replacement of Apartheid by a non-racial and democratic South Africa. The Trust was established to increase the contribution of Canadians in this process.³

The Trust is currently providing assistance for two types of training:

- (i) A bursary scheme for study in formal certification programmes

² This was a group comprising of eminent persons sent by the Commonwealth nations with a brief to assess the situation in South Africa.

³ "Education and Training in Canada for Black South Africans": Pamphlet entitled *South Africa Education Trust Fund*, 63 rue Sparks Street, Suite 806, Ottawa (Ontario), p. 1.

at accredited Canadian universities and colleges. Priority being given to post-graduate study.

- (ii) Short term or informal training which includes vocational on-the-job training up to a period of one year in Canadian institutions.

The importance and value of the contributions of all these various groups need not be emphasized. The contributions of these governments and corporate bodies have brought about new dimensions to black education as a whole in South Africa. However, despite this input to education, there are criticisms levelled at how some of these groups operate. The main criticism of some of these ventures is that the parameters within which they operate ensure that those who are upgraded are drawn from elite or relatively privileged groups, and that "despite the good intentions of the dedicated people who man these projects their overall effect is to bolster the vested interests of the 'new middle class' in the status quo."⁴ While there may be some merit in this argument, the fact remains, given the complexity of the South African political and educational situation, this is a step in the right direction and the input in the educational area is quite laudable. Besides, the private sector has within its power the capacity to speed up the changes so desperately needed. So long as progress is made, it matters little whether the motivation is pure social responsibility or naked self interest.⁵ At the rate at which things are going, it will not be long before there is a radical change in the academic and technical spheres in Black education.

OTHER DIMENSIONS

Alternative Education

⁴ Kallaway, Peter: ed., *Apartheid and Education*, p. 31. (Rowen Press, Johannesburg), p. 31.

⁵ Editorial, *Financial Mail*, Johannesburg 16/2/79.

The post-1984 education scene has also developed into an era in which "the expression of the resistance has changed from the early reluctant compliance and strategic use of resources, to outright rejection and revolt."⁶ New dimensions in the educational area have seen the State's grip on monopolization of the control of education being challenged. Since the uprisings of 1984, it seems that the state is steadily being driven back from any claim to being the only legitimate source of educational policy.

During the 1984-86 uprisings, the slogan around which a more or less indefinite boycott became organized was, "liberation first and education later." This had implied the breakdown of the schooling system whereby large numbers of high school students were being deprived of further schooling and, therefore, of even the limited opportunities offered by black education. This situation had meant that, invariably, a whole generation of young blacks would be lost to education by going uneducated. The intervention of parents and other concerned organizations such as the National Education Crisis Committee led to a reappraisal of the whole approach towards educational liberation. There was also the realization that student structures were increasingly being weakened by almost two years of stay-aways, and a general breakdown in discipline. As a result, local, regional and national crisis committees were formed, and developed the slogan: "People's education for people's power." This slogan, contrary to that of "Freedom now and education later," was urging the students to educate themselves for the future, to make most of what they could get from the current system of education. The slogan was also, by its very nature, advocating and calling for an alternative education to the existing one. The problem, however, became the difficulty with defining what "People's education" really was, "whether it was an ideology, a concept, a document or a syllabus. The average parent

⁶ Morphet, Tony: "People's Education: What can be expected?" *Reality*, Vol. 19, no. 2, March 1987, p. 3.

wanted to know if today there is a machinery ready to put it into action."⁷ In the course of my investigation, I came across a few interesting definitions of what "People's Education" is supposed to be. Tony Morphet defines it as:

the most prominent grouping which has moved into the open space and it is busy working with issues of policy, without having the political capacity to implement its decisions through an established legislative process. The movement openly and explicitly anticipates that, within a reasonable period of time, it will gain the necessary political capacity through the formation of a new state authority. At present it appears as a part of the embryo of the new order.⁸

Another notion of "People's Education" as defined at the Education Crisis Conference states:

"Peoples education" is education which serves the people as a whole, which liberates, which puts people in command of their lives and which is determined by and accountable to the people (Sisulu, Keynote Speech).

Or in slightly different terms, an education which prepares people for total human liberation and for full participation in all social, political or cultural spheres of society, helps people to be creative, to develop a critical mind and to analyze (Mkhatshwa, Keynote Speech, Dec. 1985).⁹

A Soweto educationist, Fanyana Mazibuko speaks of:

the roots of "People's Education" in the deep yearning of the people for an education which was theirs; which they could depend upon to nourish, support, enlighten and advance them. The yearning is nothing new since the mission schools tapped the same source. What is new is the intensity of the feeling, spurred as it is, by the denial and deformation of Bantu Education and now by the hope of some form of change after the bitter struggles of the last decade.¹⁰

7 Mathiane, Nomavenda, "Quiet collapse;" *South Africa: Diary of Troubled Times* (Freedom House, 48 East 21st Street, New York, N.Y. 10010), p. 35.

8 Morphet, Tony, "People's Education: What can be expected?" *Reality*, Vol. 19, no. 2, March 1987, p. 3.

9 Wolpe, Harold: "Education Resistance": *South Africa in Question* (University of Cambridge African Studies Centre 1988), p. 212.

10 Morphet, Tony: "People's Education: What can be expected?" *Reality*, Vol. 19, no. 2, March 1987, p. 4.

The proponents of "People's Education" assert that the black education system has never won the support of the people who have been compelled to use it. Both by its envisaged structure and definition, the "People's Education" was bound to incur the wrath of the black education authorities who regard it as a challenge to the existing educational system. The State has thus lost no time in responding to the challenge. "A measure of the current position of the State is given in the 'notice' published by the former State President (P.W. Botha) under the Public Safety Act (December 1986) which makes any form of 'alternative' education within the schools punishable by fines of R4000 or two years imprisonment."¹¹

This decision by the State to make "People's Education" punishable by law seems a bit ill-conceived. By making this type of education punishable, the State creates suspicions of its motives. Blacks will interpret this as a way by the State to force its system of education down the throats of the recipients. Should the State persist in suppressing the quest for self determination of the type of education the community desires, the lessons from 1976, over the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, have not been learned. By merely using coercion in this regard, the action by the State will be interpreted as saying that it is clinging to the control of the education system so that it can control the destiny of the black pupils by giving them the type of education which it deems suitable for them. This kind of approach is likely to be counter-productive in the end, for the trend of the history of student protests is a good pointer as to what might happen in such a case. The State should rightly be encouraging any initiative towards contributing to the type of education that the blacks want for themselves. After all, they are supposed to be the recipients and users of that education and they seem to have a clear notion of what type of education it is that they want. The blacks seem to want an education system that is

11 *Ibid* : p. 3

rooted in "democratic" principles, and which will help its recipients achieve common national aspirations.

The concept or tradition that is evident in the spirit of the "People's Education" is the spirit of nationalism -- the same spirit of nationalism which the Afrikaner nation was infused with in the 1930's:

The people or ("die volk") is a key concept within the nationalist framework and "Volksonderwys" (People's education) was well-known to deprived Afrikaners in the 1930's as People's education is to the deprived black people now. Nationalism's answer to the key problems of choice is to provide a very strict and very limited definition of "the people." In the nationalist universe "the people" are those who can be said by birth, blood and belief to share in an exclusive inheritance. Anyone else is, by definition, not of the people and therefore, a real potential enemy. Thus, the resources are delivered to the chosen ones and support lies in the tight bonds of patronage interpreted through the semi-mystical categories of "the people."¹²

Thus, the suppression of the spirit of nationalism among blacks while that of the Afrikaners themselves was encouraged seems to be a contradiction in terms. For the sake of harmony and fairness, "People's Education" should be nurtured and systematized in such a way that it could benefit those that would want to use it. The right of the individual to choose cultural and ethnic values, other than those dictated by governmental race classification, should not be denied. In order to avoid unnecessary confrontations, all of South Africa's peoples should be coming together to decide on what the "good" education for all South Africans should be. It should be human beings cooperating with human beings.

Negative Effects of Student Protests

Student protests, and uprisings connected with them, have had a very negative and debilitating effect on education as a whole. This phase in student protests has become more

¹² *Ibid* : p. 5.

pronounced in the period after the 1984 revolts -- a period of decline, chaos, and disintegration of education and discipline in the schools, especially in the PWV area. There are obvious signs of a crisis in black education. As in the 70s, the 80s continue to be characterized by a series of school strikes, closures and generally, a situation in which very little effective education is taking place. Teachers and parents are complaining, that for various reasons, pupils are no longer receptive and have in the main, lost interest in learning. This could be the case because the student protests of the last decade and a half had spillages, created ripples and had a crippling effect on education per se. One thing led to another. As a matter of fact, many students in Soweto lost or missed two or three years of their schooling due to boycotts and stay-aways. This has, for now, created bottlenecks in schools.

The State initially tried to cope but has now turned around to say it is in a "tight spot" and can no longer meet the cost of upgrading black education. This "tight spot" led to reduction of the presently inadequate teaching staff; the reduction of teaching staff led to unfavorable teacher/pupil ratios; unfavorable teacher/pupil ratios led to overcrowding and an unattractive teaching environment for both teachers and pupils; overcrowding invariably led to a breakdown in discipline, chaos, and a crisis situation was thereby precipitated. It is no exaggeration to state that in many schools in the PWV area, students come into the school yards and go out as they please. The teachers are unable to do anything about it. Gangs of pupils have become a law unto themselves. Parents, teachers and anyone else who dares to stand up against unruly elements have been intimidated. "Once pupils take up the battle-cry 'Siya-Inyova' -- we are spoiling for trouble -- no one dare stand in their way."¹³ What exacerbates this situation is that detentions and bannings of those involved in bodies such as the National Education Crisis Committee have thwarted attempts to address the situation. One Soweto journalist and author laments the situation:

¹³ Sekola Sello, "Education Crisis Point" *Drum* (Johannesburg, December 1985), p. 29.

The well-off children have left the township schools. The poor have stayed in the townships where they have long forgotten liberation too. They just roam the streets and sometimes visit the classroom, where they meet their friends and play and chat. There is no secondary education anymore in Soweto, and other main townships. Every parent who could by any means afford it, has removed their children. They have gone to private schools, homeland schools, or to live with relatives. It's a wreck, and the time has come to stop turning the blind eye.¹⁴

The authority of teachers and principals has been greatly eroded. It is not uncommon to get a principal consulting with the Student Representative Council president before taking important decisions concerning issues that are primarily the principal's prerogative. In one instance H.H. Dlamenze, General Secretary of the African Teacher's Association and himself a school principal, says:

I took a visiting American to a school and asked the principal if we could chat with students. The principal said it was alright by him but he first had to check with the SRC. My heart was sore. What happened to authority? Who is leading who? The teachers are powerless pawns in the game. The students want change and want it now. The parents want the children out of the house and in someone else's care. The government wants to see them in the classroom to save face. Nobody is winning.¹⁵

The teachers find themselves in an ambivalent position because quite frequently pupils see them as part of the oppressive system or accuse them of being "sell-outs." The pupils lack the respect for teachers that is quite normal at a white school, where a power imbalance between staff and pupils is almost taken for granted. The teacher has become a target of both parents and pupils since 1976. On the other hand, there is the wrath of the Department of Education to worry about. The pupils view the teachers as part of the problem and not part of the solution. This makes the ability of teachers to exercise authority very limited.

¹⁴ Mathiane, Nomavenda: "The Quiet Collapse" *South Africa: Diary of Troubled Times*, p. 137.

¹⁵ *Ibid* : p. 138.

Discipline and the authority of the teacher are further eroded by the popular dictum or slogan being used in regular monotony - "an injury to one is an injury to all." What happens in this particular case is that school authorities are intimidated against taking steps or punitive measures against any wayward pupil in that the rest of the student body can easily be rallied around in a concerted way to prevent any such measures being taken against that particular student. This attitude penetrates very deeply -- it even affects the grading of students' performance in class. Teachers are sometimes afraid to fail students who have not made the grade. In some cases, students have demanded to be promoted en bloc to the next class after they had missed examinations as a result of boycotts. The DET also adds to this corrosion of the teachers' authority. One teacher spoke of "letting the stream flow" which she claimed was a directive from the DET that "they should allow the kids to proceed to the next class so as not to create bottlenecks at high school."¹⁶ To confirm this, "In November 1988, several Soweto primary school headmasters claimed that an official of the department had ordered that 20% of the standard five pupils be failed as there was insufficient classroom accommodation for pupils moving into the next class."¹⁷

As can be made out from the above, there are two "forces" which are at work, busy corroding the authority of the teacher. The third "force" can be found within the teaching fraternity itself. This "force" cannot be ignored. Some of the products of these boycotts and protests are themselves teachers now, and have an unfinished agenda:

The new incoming teacher is a product of 1976. He has been fighting the system as a student and did not get very far. He has an unfinished agenda which he passes on to the children. At times we cannot take important decisions that will affect the students, for fear our colleagues might tell on us.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Ibid* : p. 143.

¹⁷ Shindler, Jennifer: "African Matric Results: 1955 to 1983." *South African Institute of Race Relations publication*.

¹⁸ Mathiane, Nomavenda: "The Quiet Collapse" *South Africa: Diary of Troubled Times*, p. 139.

This situation is likely to persist in that the black leaders (doctors, lawyers and lecturers who would have been in a better position to articulate the feelings of the Black parents), feel uncomfortable to intervene in that they have themselves taken their children from the township schools to private schools where their children do not suffer any deprivations. It is the "small man" who seems to be worst affected by the debilitating effects of student protest on education.

In another revealing episode, a reporter from the Johannesburg newspaper, "*The Weekly Mail*, Thandeka Gqubule spent two days disguised as a pupil in a week when students were writing the half-yearly exams of the DET. Among some startling revelations she disclosed that:

- . Examination papers did not arrive, and when they did many had missing pages, were illegible or riddled with errors;
- . Neither students nor teachers knew the exam time-table and the tests were postponed at random, regardless of the fact that pupils would be able to get the papers from friends at other schools. Sometimes they did not even know in what language the exam would be written;
- . Teachers, with up to 42 classes a week in four different subjects and fifty pupils per class, were unable to prepare for any of their classes;
- . Conditions in schools were worse than ever, with pupils sharing desks and classrooms without lighting and

Nobody seemed to care. Pupils and teachers said they were powerless to deal with "DET inefficiency."¹⁹

This seems to indicate that there is something fundamentally wrong somewhere. There seems to be a deep malaise in the Soweto schools that bodes very badly for the future. Indifference seems to be running very deeply on the part of the students, teachers and the education authority. A group of students whom I had met loitering in the streets of one of the townships in Soweto, told me bluntly that it made no difference to them

¹⁹ Gqubule, Thandeka "Inside our Chaotic Schools". *Weekly Mail* Johannesburg, Vol. 5, no.21, Friday, June 2, 1989 to Thursday, June 8, 1989 - front page

whether they wrote examinations or not. They said that the interruptions during boycotts have had a demoralizing effect on them. These students evidently had no goals, no values and no direction. They were not aspirant to anything and were merely drifting along.

Thandeka further revealed that it is apparent that security considerations are taking priority over education. She says security policemen visit the schools routinely, while DET officials are hardly ever seen. (DET officials have been threatened with physical harm and their government vehicles have been damaged in some schools in Soweto. Perhaps this has something to do with this reported non-appearance of officials in schools). Thandeka's assertion was corroborated by a DET representative, Solomon Moshokwa, DET regional public relations officer, who agreed that the securocrat-controlled Joint Management Centres "were very involved in the schools. They are involved in the decision-making. They see to it that schools run smoothly - in the way they want them to run."²⁰ Strangely, Moshokwa said that that "was an indication the education department was concerned with the "democratization" of the schools and the involvement of the community"²¹ -- a very puzzling explanation indeed.

Moshokwa went on to say that as far as he knew, examinations were going ahead smoothly in most schools. He did not know of any schools in which there were not enough examination papers and was also unaware of any errors in papers given out to students. Yet, two weeks previously, in the *Sowetan* of May 23, 1989, it was reported that the Soweto Progressive Teachers' Committee and the Soweto Students' Co-ordinating Committee and school principals had urged the DET to postpone the exams until after July 4, when schools would reopen for the third term. Among the reasons advanced for the request was that because of the late notification for centralized exams, most schools were not ready; teachers in some schools had already set their papers rather than use the DET

20 *Ibid*:: p. 2, column 2.

21 *Ibid* :p. 2, column 3.

papers; while at other schools, teachers had made an undertaking to "look" at the exam papers first before students sit for them, and if the papers would prove to be beyond what the students could manage, to set them papers in the same subjects. Rightly, this should have indicated to officials that problems were to be expected in the exams; the authorities should have risen to the occasion and attended to the complaints objectively and sympathetically. Instead, police repeatedly broke up meetings planned by the Progressive Teachers' Committee to address the crisis. "Two meetings due to be held at Funda Centre to discuss this issue recently were disrupted by police."²²

Thandeka Oqubule's revelations were to be endorsed and reinforced at the end of the year (1989). The results of the matriculation examinations, which were marked under controversial circumstances as revealed in an exposé by Phil Molefe of the *Weekly Mail* (15-20 December and 21 December-18 January 1990) were a disaster and revived controversy over segregated education in South Africa.

According to the results released by the Department of Education and Training, 74,249 student-candidates, or 42 percent, earned a matriculation certificate, which is equivalent to a high school diploma. Of those, 17,553 did well enough to qualify to go on to a university. The showing was said to be the worst in five years. The Soweto schools had the worst performance -- showing a pass rate of only 14 to 29 percent. "By comparison, 96,7 percent of the White students passed the same national examinations in the Transvaal, South Africa's most populace province and the first to announce the matriculation results."²³

22 *Ibid* : column 2.

23 Wren, Christopher: "Failure rate of Black high school seniors fuels education controversy in S. Africa"; *Globe and Mail*, Toronto 1/1/90 A5.

The Director General of the DET attributed the high failure rate to the lenient promotion policy of previous years which he said had been tightened. He further blamed the disruption of classes by political boycotts and a 13 percent rise in secondary school enrolment. However, parents and critics of the segregated school system do not see it that way. They attribute this, among others, to the inequalities in education funding (in 1989 the governments spent five times as much on a White student as on a Black one), to the overcrowded classrooms and squalid conditions, and to the lack of proper laboratory equipment, teaching aids and sometimes even electricity. In addition, the parents and the critics blame it on the segregated system of examinations and marking procedures. Hailing the exposé of irregularities at the marking centre, parents and teachers said the DET should address the issue more seriously and urged that the whole system be changed to a one education department because "it is only then that our children will be treated fairly."²⁴

One Orlando West (Soweto) parent whose daughter had sat for the controversial examination urged :

The same examination paper for all matriculants, irrespective of race, and marked at the same centre by properly appointed examiners is the only answer, because no one can distinguish the difference between Black or White students' script.²⁵

Roger Burrows, a member of Parliament who watches education for the Liberal Democratic party, said the results signalled "a potential disaster for the country" and urged the government to begin a crash programme to reverse the poor results. Burrows hit the nail on the head. If the cataclysmic events of the past decade and a half in the high school yards of Soweto and other areas are to be avoided, the DET will have to take urgent and serious steps to address this issue. A very significant, but very sad comment, was made

²⁴ Molefe, Phil: DET follows up Weekly Mail marking probe; *Weekly Mail*, Johannesburg, Dec. 15 - Dec. 20, 1989, p. 4, col. 5.

²⁵ Ibid: p. 4, col. 5.

by Johan Muller of the Wits University Education Policy Unit: "just one badly set and badly marked paper could mean the difference between passing or failing for a student. It is well known that reputable universities pay very little attention to DET matric marks." This I regard as a very strong indictment of the examination system as well as the Department of Education and Training. If pass rates continue to show the present trend, anxiety and subsequent frustration after failure will increase among the affected students with very serious consequences for stability among students.

Student protests had wide-ranging effects on education as a whole. They were also very costly educationally. Students who could rightly have completed their high school education either to get into industry or to proceed to tertiary institutions are still grappling with matric. Many others gave up on the way and are swelling the ranks of the unemployed, having been lost to education, and to the country. Some are still plodding along high school education in special schools called "finishing schools." Many a potential engineer, scientist, doctor or lawyer have been lost to education.

One of the features of student uprisings has been the destruction of school property. The ripple effects of this phenomenon are still being felt. Before the insurrections, members of the community and students, showed very great respect for school property. Schoolyards were "sacred cows," jealously protected and guarded by the community as a whole. However, ever since the uprisings, school property has been wantonly destroyed and vandalized. School fencing, roofing, plumbing, fixtures and fittings such as doors, ceilings, etc., are always ripped off, either to be sold or to be used domestically. Teaching-aids such as T.V.'s, tape recorders, stoves and equipment used in the home economics centres are always carried away. Most people that I questioned seem to blame the youth who were cut off from the mainstream of schooling by the uprisings. This group seems to be angry at their exclusion and express their anger by destroying school property, and more provocatively, attack their school-going counterparts, their teachers and even principals.

More than 210,000 Primary and Secondary pupils in Soweto attend classes under derelict roofs in classrooms without doors and windows.

During a recent cold snap, pupils at Lavela Secondary School burnt scraps of paper in dustbins to warm up their classroom which had no door. In another case, it was reported that pupils chopped up a desk for firewood.

Many classroom doors have been stolen by squatters to reinforce their shanties in the sprawling township.²⁶

Other problems, though not directly related to the examination crisis, are the sorry state of maintenance of buildings and facilities which sometimes interfere with the smooth-functioning of schools. To highlight the extent of this crisis, the *Sowetan* reported that lessons at the Immaculata High School were suspended for a day because the school had been without water for a month. Blocked toilets were posing a health hazard for about 1400 students at the school and there was a heavy stench from the toilets. According to the report, one teacher had remarked that "it was unimaginable that white schools could experience such problems without someone in the corridors of power doing something to remedy the situation."²⁷ Naturally, such conditions have a very negative or adverse effect on education. They do not make for a conducive situation in which effective teaching and learning can take place.

Impact on "White" Education

It would be naive to think that the effects of black student protests are confined to black education only. White education in a way is feeling a fair share of the effects of student uprisings. Since 1976, especially in the 80's, many white students, particularly in

²⁶ Comment: "The Soweto school system breeds a new kind of anger" *Sowetan*, Johannesburg, Tuesday, August 22, 1989, p. 6, column 2.

²⁷ Pela Mokgali: "No Water, So School Closes" *Sowetan*, Johannesburg, Wednesday, June 7, 1989, p. 3, column 3.

the English speaking universities, have proved to be awakened to the realities of the South African black educational situation. They have sought and found many ways in which they could demonstrate their concern and solidarity with their black counterparts. Apart from being seen in the front rows of many protest marches, these students have initiated philanthropic development programmes that are aimed at preparing black matric candidates for the end-of-year examinations. Some of these programmes (winter schools) take place during the winter vacation, while some are projects undertaken throughout the course of the year.

One other way in which the students articulate their concern is by organizing boycotts and stay-aways, and raising and registering their objections to any negative legislation affecting their black counterparts and generally pledging solidarity with them. The University of the Witwatersrand has seen many a disruption in its educational programmes and timetable as a result of organized protest activities on campus. As an illustration, universities such as Witwatersand, Rhodes, Cape Town and Natal have suspended formal lectures every year on June 16 -- the commemoration day of Hector Peterson, the first pupil to be shot during the 1976 student uprisings.

Even white high school pupils are now showing a remarkably high degree of awareness of the plight of their black counterparts when, earlier, they had generally been apathetic. The feelings of some concerned white pupils can best be expressed in their own words. When it was revealed that their school faced closure, matric pupil, Melissa Taylor (17) had this to say:

It's ironic that the government always says blacks cannot be equal because they are not educated, but it won't let them come to our school. We want our school to be African without complexion.²⁸

²⁸ Macdonald, Katy: "'Save our School: Open it to all races,'" plead students" *Sunday Star*, Johannesburg, Sunday, June 25, 1989, column 3, p. 6.

Pupil Dianna Louw (16) said the school should "immediately" recruit 400 pupils of all races:

It's a tragedy the school survived the First and Second World War, but will now close because it can't survive the war in society.²⁹

It is doubtful if a white child of the same age of the pre-1976 era would have been so perceiving of the wrongs and injustice inherent in his or her society.

Education for Emigration

Student protests have also resulted in a psychosis of demoralization, uncertainty of the future and rejection which has driven many white educationists and professionals to emigrate from South Africa. This has resulted in what is now termed "Education for Emigration." What is so sad is that these people, who rightly should have been contributing to the education of the nation, have been educated at the South African taxpayers' expense. The loss to the country in the form of the "brain-drain" is incalculable.

Disheartening emigration statistics for 1985 recording a net immigration deficit of several thousands, pointing out that the greatest loss was among professional people, including some 246 doctors alone. We face the devastatingly ironic prospect that the better education which we provide is, or becomes, the better we may be preparing people to leave.³⁰

The African student protests of the seventies and the eighties had profound and wide-ranging positive and negative educational dimensions. On the positive side, we saw the concern and involvement of the private sector, making an input by financing a variety of projects in education. We also saw joint ventures between firms and the Department of Education and Training. Furthermore, we saw foreign governments and multi-national corporations initiating some projects inside South Africa, as well as granting bursaries and

²⁹ *Ibid.*: p. 6.

³⁰ van Wyk Smith: "What are we educating them for?" *Reality*, vol. 19, no. 2, March 1987, p. 7.

scholarships to South African black students for study at universities and other institutions of higher learning abroad.

The other feature flowing from student protests saw the infusion of the spirit of black nationalism in education as expressed and articulated through the quest for a "People's Education." This notion, as we saw, has brought about a confrontation between its proponents and the state. The negative effects on education are manifested in a demoralized student and teacher, the total disintegration of order and discipline among students, the near collapse and chaotic situation of the education system in the PWV area, especially Soweto, the wanton destruction of school property by faceless perpetrators, and the emigration of educators and professionals at considerable expense to South African education, the taxpayer, as well as to the country as a whole.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

This thesis began by giving a brief background on the upsurge of student militancy in the late seventies and eighties. This militancy was rooted in the high-handedness of authorities and in the inadequacies in finance and curriculum; it was also rooted in demands for a new system of education, linked to the liberation struggle, democratic in content and organization, grounded in popular demands for educational transformation not as a distant objective to be attained after the abrogation of segregation (apartheid) but as something to be struggled for in the process of the liberation struggle.

The thesis has also dealt with the period immediately after the first student insurrections of 1976 which saw response by the State characterized primarily by repression in the form of mass arrests, brutalization of students, bannings of student leaders, house arrests, closure of schools, misinformation, and generally a situation where every possible repressive means aimed at quelling student unrest available to the security forces of the South African regime was made of use. This strategy, as was indicated in Chapter II, did not yield the desired effect -- that of quelling student unrest and securing their cooperation. Instead, this strategy yielded results almost opposite to what was supposed to be achieved. The students' resolve to articulate their grievances became strengthened and their strategies became better organized and more sophisticated. The scrapping of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, though a minor concession, was very significant in its own way. The students realized that pressure through revolt could yield them fruitful results. After all, before the revolt, all avenues at negotiating for the scrapping of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, through peaceful means, had earlier fallen on deaf ears. The attitude of the authorities then, especially as embodied in people like the then Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, Andries Treurnicht, was highly authoritarian, inflexible and rigidly modelled along the Verwoerdian line of thinking -- that

of making the Black man to "know" his place. Educational policies had to be rigidly enforced strictly along ideological lines at all costs.

It was, however, with the relentless multi-faceted strategy of resistance to educational policies by students that pressure was brought to bear on the State to change its strategies and approach towards resolving student grievances. The State's new approach involved the "carrot-and-stick" method. While still using strong-arm tactics of securing acquiescence, reformist approaches and softening of attitudes came to be discernible. Reforms and softened attitudes were primarily aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the aggrieved students. This change in tactics came to characterize strategies of the eighties and can be seen in the context of the development of the so-called "total strategy."

What characterizes the "total strategy" so much is a discernible and perceptible preparedness on the part of the present education authorities to distance themselves from the earlier Verwoerdian line of approach towards educational policies. For example, on 2 May 1986, the then Minister of Education and Development Aid, G. van N. Viljoen, made the following announcement in the House of Representatives:

I have been requested by the Chairman and the Executive Committee of the Council for Education and Training to state clearly my point of view in connection with certain restrictions placed on Black education by Dr. Verwoerd in 1953 and 1954 on the occasion of the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act

I wish to state unequivocally that the approach, as reflected by the much maligned statements of Dr. Verwoerd which I have just quoted, have long since been abandoned and that this does not reflect the present approach of the Department of Education and Training or of other departments responsible for education of Black people. I also wish to dissociate myself quite clearly from those points of view.¹

It is important to note that in the same pamphlet, other earlier Ministers who had something to do with Black education, M.C. Botha, W.A. Gruywagen, T.N.H. Janson, F. Hartzenberg, are quoted as commenting on Dr. Verwoerd's pronouncements on Black

¹ DET Pamphlet entitled "Black Education: A Historical Perspective" (with specific reference to the evolution of education policy), May 1988, p. 6.

education; none of them is on record as denouncing or dissociating themselves from his views.

Apart from the changed views, attitudes and approaches, words were now, for the first time, being matched by deeds. As a point of illustration, total spending on education in the eighties increased nearly tenfold compared with the seventies (if, however, inflation is taken into consideration, this increase was four times the size of the 1975 expenditure). A further indication of the State's consideration of education as a priority could be discerned from the figures on spending on African education as a proportion of total government spending. Black education, which was once a minimal item of expenditure in the state budget, became an item of paramount importance. This can be illustrated by the fact that in 1985/86 and 1986/87 the State spent more on education for all races than it spent on the South African Defence Force.² (The figures illustrating this phenomenal rise in expenditure on education can be seen in Chapters II and III).

It is quite laudable that the increase in finance of Black education has in part occurred because of a decrease in the proportion of State funding for White education. "While in absolute terms more money is still spent on the education of the numerically smaller White population, the proportion of State finance for White education has declined from 67% of all educational spending in 1975 to 52% in 1985. The proportion of all educational funds spent on African education has increased from 17% in 1975 to 31% in 1985."³ While this is a commendable and positive approach to Black education, funding along racial lines is still a fact and remains a great source of grievance among Black students and educationists alike and should be done away with. As can be seen from the figures indicated in Chapter III, per capita expenditure remains grossly unfair. The figures for 1988 are reflected thus: (i) Whites: R3,887 (ii) Indians: R2,040 (iii) Coloured: R1,748

² "Bantu Education as a Reformist Strategy of the South African State": *Research on Education in South Africa*, Vol. 2, Dept. of Sociology, University of Essex, Colchester, CD4 3SQ, p. 15.

³ *Ibid*: p. 15.

and (iv) Africans R540. Now that South Africa's costly military exploits in Angola have ended and Namibia (which had been carried at considerable cost by South Africa) is independent, the State should lose no time in redirecting more funds from the military and security budgets towards financing education. The de Lange Committee estimated that in order to achieve a balance at a teacher:pupil ratio of 30 in 1990 for all, an expenditure of almost R4,030 m. will be required. This implies that 30 percent, instead of the current 15 percent, will have to be allocated to education. Since it is already 1990 and classroom conditions in Soweto are as described in the previous chapter, the utmost should be done by all concerned to address this issue. It is important for authorities to realize that education is a pre-condition for social, economic and political stability. Education for all races should be perceived and recognized as the most critical area requiring drastic reform and attention, if not the most fundamental priority. Without education, the economy will suffer and the legitimate aspirations of growing millions of Black children will be completely negated.

Besides improvement in the financing of Black education, the 80s were characterized by a more systematic effort to recast education policy with the appointment of a commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of Professor J.P. de Lange, a former rector and vice-chancellor of the Rand Afrikaans University. The recommendations of the Commission resulted in a number of meaningful but not fundamental changes. For example, the 1984 Educational Affairs Act resulted in the removal of the White population's right to free education, while expanding provision for free stationery and textbooks for all Black schools in response to one of the demands of COSAS. This was a step in the right direction which was further endorsed by the government's pledge to place "a high premium on improved provision of education with a view to attaining the ideal of equal educational opportunities for all communities in South Africa."⁴

⁴ Botha, P.W.: "Black Education: A Historical Perspective." *Pamphlet compiled by the Public Relations Section of the DET.* May 1988, p. 4.

The de Lange Commission, which is generally regarded as a milestone in Black education, can also be regarded as a watershed in the government's policy regarding Black education. In its report, the Commission recommended inter-alia:

- (i) A shifting away from academic education to vocation and technical ("career") education which should begin in Standard six in secondary schools;
- (ii) adaptation of the entire school system to prepare for two different streams -- academic and vocational after junior primary level, with emphasis on the vocational stream, with education closely geared to the "needs of the economy";
- (iii) development of a close relationship between formal and non-formal education;
- (iv) development of a close link between the private sector and the State in terms of education;
- (v) the creation of a single, unified department of education for all races.

There are two key elements which seem to be embodied in these recommendations. The first is a strong recommendation for a move towards parity of education, while the second, and seemingly the most important element, is the restructuring of education so that it is relevant to the needs of commerce and industry. While the first element (movement towards parity) was widely acclaimed in all educational circles as educationally sound and acceptable to all, the second element (manpower needs) is generally viewed circumspectly and is suspected of being inspired by needs other than benevolent. Critics of this element see this as a preoccupation in accord with the priorities of the State to win the heart and minds of the Blacks by creating "a more skilled workforce and the corresponding political belief that skilled workers create economic growth which in itself is considered a condition for political stability."⁵ In my opinion there is nothing much wrong in training Blacks to

acquire skills for the reasons aforementioned. However, care should be taken not to channel children into vocational and technical fields at an early age as this might deprive them of a broad-based education which they need in life. In addition, most pupils would have discovered neither their natural academic nor vocational inclinations yet.

The recommendation that the private sector and the State share responsibility for non-formal education and that the State subsidize private education, though peripheral, was also positive and commendable. A very radical recommendation, which would in essence undermine the foundation of the Apartheid structure, was that the Group Areas Act had to be amended to allow under-utilized schools in areas designated "White" to be used to alleviate over-crowding and inadequate resources in Black education. This recommendation, though very fair and reasonable, was rejected out of hand as could be expected.

In so many ways, the de Lange report was an expression of the technocrat's desire to do away with those forms of racial segregation which hampered the necessary efficient development of industry in the country and to gain support among certain sectors of the Black community -- particularly skilled Black workers, urban residents and the emergent, but fast growing, Black middle class. This is particularly so because the package had nothing much to offer the rural and agrarian Black communities.

The government's response, which was contained in the White Paper, accepted most of the recommendations of the Commission's report except for a single, unified department of education. What was accepted, however, was the principle of non-racial policy-making structures which were incorporated into the National Policy for General Educational Affairs Act of 1984. The rejection of a unitary non-racial system of education is to be regretted. A unitary non-racial system would have gone very far in meaningfully addressing the grievances of the Black students. Thus, the inability of the bureaucrats in control of education policy to work outside of the parameters of the Nationalist party

⁵ *Research on Education in South Africa* (RESA), vol. no. 2, p. 18.

political ideology is a major handicap towards finding a solution to the present impasse in the Black education system. Black education cannot be effectively transformed without the undermining of the central pillars of discriminatory practices which include the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act, for it is these Acts which prescribe the necessity of segregated State education.

In pursuance of the principle of non-racial policy-making structures, a general Department of National Education was created. This department formulates policy and planning in the fields of educational finance, employment of staff and policy on examinations for all races in South Africa. Plans are advanced for the establishment of a single board for all races in South Africa and for a central registration body which will register all teachers. This arrangement is certainly a tinkering with fundamental issues. The de Lange report was pertinently asking for a single Ministry of education. Instead, there is still a lot of duplication with a number of education Ministries headed by their own Cabinet Ministers under an over-arching minister (of "White" education). Apart from this being an unnecessary duplication (there are 18 education departments with executive functions), this arrangement is a sheer waste of money and adds to the confusing state of affairs in education in South Africa. Nevertheless, it is required by the policy of segregation, which remains hanging like an albatross around the neck of the South African government.

The introduction of compulsory education in 1981, though a universally acceptable practice, was not an exciting event among Blacks (in 1983, the scheme was operating in 264 schools).⁶ Three reasons seem to account for this state of affairs:

(i) This arrangement does not cover all Black students. The rural and Bantustan students are left out. The general feeling and idea is that this is a way of breaking the neck of stay-aways and school-boycotts in urban areas such as Soweto, where it is currently enforced.

⁶ Figures from *Briefing Paper*: World University Services, p. 6.

(ii) The feeling is that instead of forcing a system of education that is roundly condemned and rejected, there should rather have been moves to upgrade the quality of education.

(iii) This is seen as a perversion of student demands for compulsory, free, equal, non-racial and 'democratic education.'

The involvement of the Blacks in the administration of schools, though a step in the right direction, smacks of sheer tokenism. As sketched out in Chapter II, the hierarchical structure is built up in such a way that the final say on all matters affecting educational matters and policy rests with a White official, in this particular case, the White Cabinet Minister responsible for Black education. The Black officials and Black members of the communities involved in the administration of schools are viewed by Black students as mere facilitators to make the system that was unacceptable to them run efficiently and smoothly. Even though it would still not appease the Black students, in the spirit of "own affairs", at least, a Black man should have been placed at the head of the ministry for Black education since, on the corollary, there is no Black minister in charge of White education.

Improvements which have been mentioned regarding farm schools do not go far when taking into account present conditions. Farm school management leaves much to be desired. As already mentioned, this system is largely an enlightened form of indenture and child labour. In this particular case, the State has totally abdicated its responsibility towards farm school education. Apart from paying the salaries of teachers, there is very little else done by the State. The system of payment of subsidies to farmers who erect farm schools and teachers' houses should be discouraged as it is largely abused. In addition, this system gives the farm-owner or farm-manager enormous, unsupervised powers and a big say in the running of the school; in most cases farmers are more interested in seeing the pupils planting or harvesting in the fields than in reading books. It is the duty of the State

to alleviate the schooling conditions of the Black farm-workers' children. The sooner energies are directed toward this, the better.

Physical facilities provided for Black school children underwent a radical transformation after 1976 and the rate of improvement was accelerated in the period after 1980. However, the aim of the Department of Education and Training, with its massive building programme of "eliminating all existing backlogs within a period of 10 years", is a pipedream. Already the then Minister of Education (now President) W. deKlerk has been on record as saying funds towards this target have ran out. The implication is that undesirable practices such as double sessions,⁷ platoon systems and unhealthy and over-burdening teacher/pupil ratios will be a feature of the Black education system for a long time to come unless some quick re-thinking is done. Apart from the aforementioned conditions, the biggest bone of contention among Black students is that there are marked contrasts in quality between the buildings and facilities provided for White and Black students. In the Black schools, the already low level of science and mathematics teaching is exacerbated by totally inadequate laboratories and other facilities. Most of the schools for White pupils are well laid out with lavish grounds; they have sport facilities, school halls and libraries that have to be seen to be believed. Schools for Black pupils hardly ever have such amenities except in rare cases of "show-pieces."

As far as teacher-training for Blacks is concerned there have been perceptible improvements which should rightly be acknowledged. It must be pointed out, however, that from the point of view of students and pupils, it is discriminatory for pupils of one racial group to be taught by less qualified teachers than those in other groups. These inequalities in teacher training came about as a result of a number of factors, among which are:

⁷ In 1983, a total of 41,720 African pupils were involved in double session system. As already explained, two groups of pupils each use one classroom, a teacher teaching the same subject twice.

(i) The legacy of the "years of neglect" (1953 - early 70s). Entrance qualifications for teacher-training during this period was standard eight, and in some cases standard six.

(ii) Salaries and conditions of service were so discriminatory and unfavourable for Blacks that recruitment was very difficult. There was also a tendency to discourage men from the teaching profession by employing more women teachers than men as the women were paid lower salaries.

(iii) There was too much "experimentation" by education-planners in charge of Black teacher-training. This is evident from the many changes in certification. In the short period from the 60s to the 80s, one finds a kaleidoscope of teaching qualifications; e.g., the Low Primary Teachers' Certificate (3 years duration); the Higher Primary Teachers' Course (2 years); the Junior Secondary Teachers' Course (2 years); the Senior Secondary Teachers' Certificate (3 years); the Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma (3 years); the Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma (3 years); Secondary Teachers' Diploma (3 years). Up to this year (1990), there is not yet a four-year teachers' diploma course to bring teacher-training for Blacks to par with that of the Whites.

This deliberate way of sustaining inequalities in teacher-training results in a lot of harm to the image of the Black teacher. The Black teacher's standing, even among his own students, gets lowered with the result that even his ability to maintain discipline is negatively affected. If these many certificates have to be kept for one reason or another, there should be options for those students who might want to embark on a four year teacher's diploma to be on a par with their White counterparts. Any arrangement like that would go a long way in removing the stigma attached to the Black teaching profession. The education authorities should know that what has been done so far about teacher-training is very little. A more aggressive line of action should be taken immediately, considering the fact that there are at present, more than a million Black children not attending school and also that the African education system is growing by some 250,000

pupils per year. Apart from building more teacher-training colleges than the present fourteen which are controlled by the DET, colleges for White teacher-training, which are lying fallow or running at half capacity, should have their doors thrown open for everybody. There is ample research evidence which indicates that there is a direct correlation existing between small class size and effective instruction as evidenced by better pupil performance. As a consequence, a core of educators at all levels of the education system is needed to carry the educational system of a new South Africa into the twenty-first century. What education planners should understand clearly is that "without a large core of well-trained and competent educators, not even the most progressive-seeming education programmes can be implemented with some hope of success."⁸

Universities are important institutions for higher learning and research, and are as such needed by every progressive country. South Africa, with its student population of around 100,000, has too many universities. (Canada has 47 for a student population of slightly more than 500,000). Had it not been for the need to have universities along racial and, worst of all, ethnic lines, students presently in Black universities could, if no fuss was made, be absorbed by one of the White universities without any inconvenience at all. The need to satisfy ideological demands has seen to the occurrence of unnecessary duplication with its accompanying wastage in terms of finance. To crown it all, the non-residence university of Vista was started under very strange circumstances. While the de Lange Commission report (advocating non-racial tertiary education) was still being studied, a bill was rushed through Parliament to pave the way for the establishment of this university which is run strictly along racial lines. The motives for such clandestine moves become quite transparent; first, to have a university composed of students who would be difficult to mobilize against the State as they would all be staying and living off campus; secondly, to have a university whose character would conform with

⁸ Alexander, Neville: "Educational Standards and Priorities in South Africa, 1989-2000," *Business Alert*, no. 105, February 1989, p. 4.

the State's ideology of apartheid; and thirdly, to form some kind of cordons sanitaires by absorbing Soweto students who would otherwise want to stake a claim at the White universities such as the University of the Witwatersrand which is less than twenty kilometers away from it. This university [Wits] advisedly, "would be able to absorb all prospective university students from Soweto for the foreseeable future without any strain."⁹

Analysis was again made of some effects or dimensions of student militancy of the seventies and eighties. Two important aspects affecting Black education became apparent: the need to redress deficiencies, coupled with a meaningful attempt at reform (these can generally be regarded as the positive dimensions of student protest), was recognized. The other effects or dimensions of student actions saw a deterioration of morale, discipline and generally a situation in which no meaningful teaching was taking place -- a situation which, on the whole, projects what one can regard as the negative effects of student protest.

On the positive side can be mentioned the intervention of foreign governments, trusts and the corporate world (private sector), both inside and outside the country in the education of the Black people in general. What is significant about the private sector's involvement is that it marked a turnaround by the government in its earlier policy regarding this type of intervention. During the 60s the State had totally discouraged initiative from the private sector in making any type of input in education. This was regarded as interference. Before firms and corporate bodies could undertake any kind of involvement in education, permission was required from the relevant State educational authority and this was rarely given. However, faced with political and economic crises in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising, the State embarked upon a major programme of reconstruction which, as earlier indicated, involved a dual process of repression and reform -- the "carrot-and-stick" method. This approach paved the way for foreign government and private sector's involvement. The Amendment to the Income Tax Act, making donations to educational

⁹ Kambule, T. W.: "Aspects of the South African System" *Pamphlet*. University of the Witwatersrand, p. 5.

charities and trusts tax-deductable, added impetus and incentives to this initiative. The initiative of the corporate world took three identifiable lines of approach:

- (i) the creation of independent trusts to administer funds for various projects including cholarships,
- (ii) the initiation of projects and ventures in close cooperation with the *Department of Education and Training*,
- (iii) and the inception of some kind of in-house training whereby employees could be trained for short periods while still under employment.

Foreign governments, operating through trusts and "councils," made it possible for Black students to pursue academic studies outside South Africa at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Other countries, for example the United States of America which had earlier concentrated on helping with political refugee education (outside South Africa), changed direction and focussed attention on improving the lot of the Black pupils inside South Africa itself. This policy line can be safely identified with the Reagan administration of "constructive engagement."

Although all these organizations and governments operated differently, the aims and objectives seemed to be in agreement -- to redress the deficiencies and inequalities inherent in the Black system of education brought about by a government that had largely neglected and under-resourced Black education. It is important and significant to note that education areas which had hitherto been overlooked or neglected began to receive attention: pre-school education, curriculum development, alternative education, school remedial programmes, special education, adult education, computer based education sciences, etc. Other projects were aimed at support for students preparing themselves to write the matriculation examination (equivalent of grade twelve).

A major effort was also focused on technical education and training (an area that had been largely ignored over the years as a way of protecting Whites against competition from Blacks in the spirit of the Job Reservation Act) following the de Lange

report. In 1980 the Anglo American Corporation had complained bitterly that only 5% of the State educational budget was spent on technical education and urged that a fundamental remodelling of the education system is urgently required. It is good that from the early 80's, emphasis was laid on the following:

- (i) construction of technical training facilities,
- (ii) the giving of financial backing to technical training institutions,
- (iii) building of the so-called Technikons (an institution like a Poly-technicon)
and
- (iv) planning for new training methods, especially in the field of technical education.

A more vigorous policy regarding technical education is highly recommended and what has been done so far by both the State and big business is commendable. There are, however, criticisms that private sector investment has failed to measure up to the expectations of the Black community especially in the failure to desegregate schools and colleges:

In their own terms, corporate interventions in education have blatantly failed either to reduce social conflict or improve the supply of skilled Blacks in the economy. For example, the proportion of Blacks taking physical science actually dropped between 1975 and 1985. Furthermore, there are still very few Blacks in senior managerial and professional positions. Despite the vast sums spent there has been little overall improvement in the quality of Black education. This is largely due to the total failure of the private sector and the State to face fundamental political questions like the dismantling of apartheid.¹⁰

The critics of this initiative should rightly acknowledge that given the complexity of the South African political, social, educational and economic situation, any effort directed at providing a solution to the present impasse should be encouraged, and not cut down into

¹⁰ Swainson, Nicola: "Corporate Intervention in Education and Training in South Africa 1976-1988." Paper presented at RESA Conference. Grantham 29-31 March 1989.

pieces. The spirit should be that "so long as progress is made, it matters little whether the motivation is pure social responsibility or naked self-interest."¹¹

A further analysis of educational dimensions of student protest brings us to the issue of "The People's Education," or what is generally regarded as alternative education. This initiative marks a climax in Black educational resistance to apartheid, hence, there is presently a confrontation between its protagonists and the State. This confrontation seemingly has its origin in the fact that the National Education Crisis Committee, which midwived the concept, can be located within the African National Congress tradition. As a result, the State identifies this initiative with socialism and revolution.

Another dimension of "the People's Education" lies with:

- (i) the concepts, "the people", and
- (ii) the key concept, "people's education". It seems to have an ambiguous connotation.

The reasons for the State to identify "people's education" with socialism and revolution seems to stem from the fact that "people's education" stresses the importance of political as well as general education while emphasizing the link between education, politics and social transformation. The hypersensitivity of the State with regard to "people's education" appears to be rooted in the "political" nature of the content of this type of education. Since People's Education is a response to an "Education question" which centres on the dismantling of apartheid education and the creation of a democratic system, the State has no legitimate reason to suppress this idea to a point of legislating against it on pain of harsh penalties. Added to this is the fact that Gerrit Viljoen, the then Minister in charge of Black education, who is already on record as dissociating himself from the Verwoerdian line of thinking, had commented on the content of Black education in 1986 that "alternative choices which kept the interests and aspirations of all communities in mind

¹¹ This was quoted in the previous chapter from the Editorial, *Financial Mail*, Johannesburg, 16/2/79.

could possibly be offered."¹² This line of thinking can be further endorsed by educationist Ken Hartshorne's argument that the State faces a simple choice:

It can either stand back and allow serious educationists the space to provide an educationally sound content for "People's Education" OR it can continue to nullify their efforts, thereby ensuring that what emerges in the township streets really is revolutionary propaganda. It will be another self-fulfilling prophecy.¹³

Johan Muller of the Witwatersrand's Educational Policy Unit also keenly observed:

Obviously a democratic objective is a revolutionary threat to apartheid. But in most other contexts, preparation for democratic participation is a precondition for political stability -- the antithesis of revolution.¹⁴

What should come clearly across to the authorities is that it is not easy nor desirable to suppress the minds and ideas of people. There should be freedom of expression and the State should not feel threatened when differing opinions are expressed. Differing opinions should be a subject of frank and open debate. The minds of the people cannot be "arrested." In my opinion, developments in Eastern Europe, especially in Romania, should be a lesson to all regimes which do not allow basic individual liberties.

Other problems regarding the notion of "the People's Education" are the concept "the people" and "curriculum content." As I have already stated, the concept, "the people", seems to have an ambiguous connotation. Richard Levin has this to say:

In the current period in the South African struggle, there are two predominant notions of "the people." The first, and more wide-spread, stems from the African National Congress (ANC) tradition within which the NECC and people's education can be located. Here the people refers to all oppressed groups -- African, Coloured and Indian, as well as to progressive White democrats. The second emanates from the tradition of Pan Africanism and Black consciousness and is confined to the oppressed (Black) sectors of South African society. While White democrats are not counted among the oppressors,

¹² Levin, Richard: "People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa," *Paper* presented at RESA Conference, p. 5.

¹³ *Ibid*: p. 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid*: p. 18.

they are not seen as being included within a political category of "the people."¹⁵

From the above one can clearly deduce or conclude that there is no consensus as to what the concept "the people" really implies. This is compounded by the fact that there is apparently no clarity as to the envisaged curriculum subjects that are already under review, namely, English, History and Mathematics. As a point of illustration, a number of academics involved in the preparation of the material for "people's education" have already come under fire from two eminent educationists; Johan Muller called the development of materials, "a premature delivery"¹⁶ while Eskia Mphahlele accused those involved of "intellectual dishonesty" for "writing alternative educational material before they could possibly have reflected sufficiently on the philosophical basis of an alternative educational system."¹⁷

Kros (1987), however, defends "the "feverish rush" to produce material as a well intentioned frenzy to take advantage of the gap created by the State's momentary dithering."¹⁸

It should not be construed however, from what Johan Muller and Eskia Mphahlele are saying, that they differ in principle with the notion of the "People's Education." They have already lauded the idea. Their misgiving is merely that of timing. Despite the elucidating definitions given by Sisulu, Mkhathshwa and Mazibuko as to what "the People's Education" is, I would like to conclude that this concept appears to be ambiguous to many educationists. More clarification is still needed. This concept appears very attractive

15 Levin, Richard; "People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa." *Pamphlet*. p. 19.

16 Johnson, David; "People's Education and the Politics of Writing: Issues Perspectives and Possibilities for a future South Africa." *Paper presented at Conference on Economic Change, Social Conflict and Education in Contemporary South Africa. Grantham 29-31 March, 1989*, p. 1.

17 Ibid: p. 1.

18 Ibid: p. 2.

however, in so far as it promotes or encourages an alternative education to the present Black education system. Its biggest handicap, however, will continue to be the unavailability of resources to make it viable nationally as well as a considerable lack of clarity over precisely what it means. However, for some Black activists, people's education is seen as the first step along the road to establishing control over schools and education in order to transform the entire State structure of education in a way that will make it compatible with the goals of a non-racial democracy -- hence its confrontational situation with the State. In my opinion, Gerrit Viljoen's spirit of "accommodation of choices which keep the interests and aspirations of all communities in mind,"¹⁹ should be the guideline to the government's attitude towards the "people's education." Instead of being harrassed, the NECC should be allowed to operate freely as they are articulating the educational aspirations of the Black community.

One of the reasons advanced for a search for alternatives in education is the resultant effect student protests, accompanied by violence, have had on education in certain urban areas. The impact of student uprisings have been profound and widely spread out in the sphere of Black education. The PWV area seems to have been affected the worst by student uprisings. While this area gained more than the others through intervention by the private sector, it was also the one to suffer most, the consequences of student uprisings. In the previous chapter an analysis was made of this situation. The education system, especially in the Soweto area, is in a state of total disarray. Classroom conditions are chaotic due to over-crowding which was created by a lack of proper advance planning on the part of education authorities. Bottlenecks were created as a result of stay-aways and the sudden removal or the abolition of the "extra" standard six class which the Black pupils had had to do for no apparent reason other than that they were Black. We saw also the side effects of stay-aways and boycotts and the State's back-tracking on provision of resources

¹⁹ Levin, Richard: "People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa." *Paper delivered at Essex University Conference. 29-31 March 1989, p. 5.*

for Black education, culminating in a situation where very little effective teaching is taking place. The latest matriculation results (std. 10, 1989) illuminates this unfortunate state of affairs very clearly. "In the schools of Soweto, only 14 to 29 percent of high school students passed, compared to 78 percent of students in Moutse and 72 percent in Vryburg, two rural towns."²⁰ If properly looked at, Moutse and Vryburg would normally not be expected to produce better results than Soweto, being rural; the two areas invariably lack superior facilities, the teachers in such areas are usually not the best equipped for their task and the students would normally lack sophistication and awareness compared with their Soweto counterparts. But such schools would normally have two identifiable strong points -- a reasonable teacher/pupil ratio and discipline. As has been proven, there is a direct correlation between teacher/pupil ratio and discipline. It is not easy for teachers in overcrowded classrooms to exercise control and manage meaningful teaching. Besides, political and social conditions, of which the Soweto students are acutely aware, affect their attitude towards the Black education system. The Soweto students were the first to vociferously articulate their grievances against the education system and they are still the most unrelenting in sustaining and articulating their grievances against the racial education system. In the absence of any alternatives, acceptance of the education system is, at best, begrudging. This kind of attitude leads to disregard for discipline.

What we also saw is the debilitating effect student uprisings have had on the "standing" of the teacher among the students. From most points of view, the teachers are an "extension" of the Black education system. Inextricably, they are the level at which students are delivered "education" with all the limitations and reduced quality as compared with that delivered to Whites, and to an extent, Indian groups. What I reject, however, is the further implications that teachers are willing agents, or for that matter, are tamely acquiescing in the goals and objectives of the higher authorities. His position in the present

²⁰ Wren, Christopher: "Failure rate of Black high school seniors fuels education controversy in South Africa," *Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Canada, 1 January 1990, p. A5.

education system is quite unenviable. The teacher is sandwiched between the Education Department -- which demands unquestioning loyalty and obedience -- and the student, who regards him as a tool and stooge of the government. The Department of Education can thus alter the image of the Black teacher radically by "liberating" him -- allowing the teacher the basic freedom of being able to express his feelings, to criticize, and to engage in open discussion and debate on contentious issues without fear of being penalized or harrassed overtly or covertly by the department.

Thandeka Qgubule's revelations (*Weekly Mail*, vol. 5, no. 21, June 2, 1989) about the chaotic conditions in the Soweto classrooms were quite revealing. From her report the following conclusions can be reached:

- (i) the attitude of the authorities towards education is lackadaisical;
- (ii) there is no rapport between the Education Department officials and the teachers (officials appear to be too high-handed);
- (iii) there is a low-key supervision of education by the Education Department officials and
- (iv) there is a very high profile of the securocrat-controlled Joint Management Centres in the Soweto school.

As a recommendation, the public relations wing of the department of Black education could do better by promoting rapport between the teachers and the education department officials. More frequent supervision by education officials would result in easy identification of problems and prompt rectification thereof. The involvement of the securocrat-controlled Joint Management Centres is highly undesirable and should be discouraged. In any case, with the "democratization" of education, there would be no need for such involvement.

Another sad but true reflection of the Society and the education system in South Africa is the prospect of having White schools closing while children in the townships have no schools because of over-crowding. According to Wits University's Education Policy

Unit, at least 13,000 pupils were excluded from the PWV secondary schools. Meanwhile, 192 White schools, under the Department of National Education, were closed because there was an insufficient number of White children to fill up the schools. Thousands of Black children living in the central Johannesburg area are denied access to the empty schools because of ideological considerations. For the same reasons, while thousands of teachers are needed, there are 3,567 vacant places at White teacher training colleges at present.²¹ The irony of it all is that while there is over-crowding and an unhealthy teacher/pupil ratio, education authorities announced in November 1989 that "a substantial number of teachers would be retrenched next year."²² The rationale behind this move is certainly difficult to understand. Pupil Dianna Louw hit the nail on the head with her remark that her school had managed to survive the two World Wars, but that it is sadly going to be destroyed by the war in society. In the name of sanity, the government should rightly take the bull by the horns and throw open the doors of learning to all, irrespective of what the rightwing Afrikaner groups will say. In this way, these groups may be persuaded to accept the hard realities of the complexities of the South African political and educational system. This would also emancipate the White child and adult from the vice of a racist education system that hampers the wholesome and maximum achievement of their potential as human beings.

Other recommendations could include giving serious attention to:

- improved teacher/pupil ratios;
- the upgrading of training facilities for teachers and bringing teacher-training on par with that of the Whites;
- the building of sufficient schools and the upgrading of facilities to be similar to those of the White groups;

²¹ All figures in *Weekly Mail*, December 21-January 18, 1990.

²² Molefe, Phil: *Weekly Mail*, December 21-January 18, 1990.

- the improvement of pre-primary education and
- the reform of the whole farm school system.

This should not, however, be construed as advocating a "separate-equal" kind of policy. These would be mere interim solutions to diffuse the already seemingly volatile situation in the Black schoolyards. There are already ominous signs of disaster!

Central to the whole issue of Black education is, and remains however, "apartheid education." The State wants to overhaul the Black education system within the framework of the system of segregation. The State seems to prize ideological considerations over and above universally acceptable norms and criteria for education. On the other hand, Black students regard a racially separated education system as inherently fraudulent and are no longer asking for superior "brick and mortar", teaching aids, and free textbooks, but are now demanding a non-racial unitary education system as well as a non-racial democratic society. The government is clearly not ready to entertain a policy shift of this magnitude and instead experiments with reforms which create a cruel illusion of change. Finally, it should be recognized by the State that:

Plural educational systems function well if, and only if, the various population groups desire separate education, if the facilities are truly equal across groups, and if the administration of the system is decentralized right down to community level. None of these features apply to South Africa's divided education and none are feasible, precisely because of the problems which segregated education has created. Black resistance to separate schooling has been irrevocably reinforced by the failure of the system to match Black aspirations.²³

²³ Bot, Monica and Lawrence Schlemmer; "The Classroom Crisis - Black Demands and White Responses." *Indicator Project*. South African Centre for Applied Sciences, Durban, Natal; p. 16.

APPENDIX

The 1978 figures exclude Transkei and Bophuthatswana. Figures for 1979 and 1980 exclude the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda. Those for 1981, 1982 and 1983 exclude the Transkei only.

	No.of Candidates	Matric Exemption	%	School-leaving Certificate	%	Total Pass	%
1955	595	90	15,1	169	28,4	259	43,5
1956	768	164	21,3	190	24,7	354	46,1
1957	745	135	18,1	157	21,1	292	39,2
1958	660	113	17,1	135	20,4	245	37,5
1959	629	43	6,8	75	11,9	118	18,7
1960	716	28	3,9	100	14,0	128	17,9
1961	635	42	6,6	104	16,4	146	23,0
1962	910	150	16,5	214	23,5	364	40,0
1963	882	245	27,8	286	32,4	531	60,2
1964	1033	298	28,8	338	32,7	636	61,5
1965	1339	323	24,1	504	37,6	827	61,8
1966	1547	411	26,6	460	29,7	871	56,3
1967	2034	485	23,8	482	23,7	967	47,5
1968	3236	948	29,3	690	21,3	1638	50,6
1969	2624	877	33,4	865	33,0	1742	66,4
1970	2846	1013	35,6	843	29,6	1856	65,2
1971	3818	1326	34,7	1062	27,8	2388	62,5
1972	4541	1801	39,7	1110	24,4	2911	64,1
1973	5492	1899	34,6	1327	24,1	3226	58,7
1974	6420	2087	32,5	1354	21,1	3441	53,6
1975	8445	3520	41,7	1880	22,2	5400	63,9
1976	9593	3404	35,5	4592	47,9	7996	83,4
1977	11095	2963	25,8	4834	43,6	7696	69,4
1978	9804	3236	33,0	4232	43,2	7468	76,2
1979	14574	4136	28,4	6570	45,1	10706	73,5
1980	29973	4714	15,7	11221	37,4	15935	53,2
1981	48571	6096	12,8	19894	40,7	25963	53,5
1982	60108	6336	10,5	24205	40,3	30541	50,8
1983	72168	7108	9,8	27768	38,5	34876	48,3

Source: Jennifer Shindler, Research Assistant, South African Institute of Race Relations, "Topical Briefing", PD 4/84

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