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**THE TRANSFORMATION OF BLACK SCHOOL EDUCATION IN  
SOUTH AFRICA, 1950-1994: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Thesis

by

Mafu Solomon Rakometsi  
(Magister Artium)

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree

**PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR**

in the Faculty of Humanities  
(Department of History)

at the

University of the Free State  
BLOEMFONTEIN

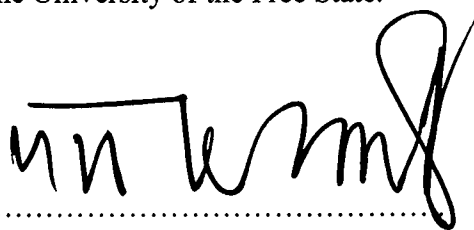
Promoter:	Prof. S.L. Barnard
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	Bloemfontein
	November 2008

**DECLARATION**

I, **Mafu Solomon Rakometsi**, affirm that the thesis, *The transformation of Black school education in South Africa, 1950-1994: A historical perspective*, for the degree of PhD in the Department of History, at the University of the Free State, hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all the material contained herein is recognised. I furthermore cede copyright of the thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

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## FOREWORD

This study explores the transformation of Black school education in South Africa from 1950 to 1994. The study examines the events that necessitated the transformation of the political landscape, which in turn led to the post-apartheid process of social and political change to establish democracy and social equality. In the context of this study a penetrating investigation of the events that necessitated transformation will be examined in order to lay the foundation for a proper understanding of the pressures for transformation.

The research and historical assessment of the transformation of Black school education in South Africa became necessary due to the fact that limited research has been conducted on this transformation process. Although social scientists and historians alike have written much on issues linked to the transformation of education in South Africa, a methodical, systematic analysis of the developments leading up to the transformation of education in South Africa from a historical and education perspective has thus far not yet been undertaken. A historical education viewpoint of the central theme of the transformation of education in South Africa, laying the foundation with the developments of the 1950s and 1960s, is crucial to the understanding of transformation in the decades to follow up to 1994.

The transformation of education can only be fully analysed and assessed by evaluating the reaction of the South African population and major role players to apartheid education legislation. An in-depth study of the changes introduced in the education arena in the 1950s and 1960s, the historical impact of the changes and the response of the South African population as a whole need to be described, analysed and assessed.

The study covers the period 1950 to 1994. The 1948 election results led to the ascension of the National Party to power with its apartheid policy of government. In 1953 the National Party government introduced *The Bantu Education Act*. The ensuing years witnessed efforts by major South African role players either to endorse or to oppose the

Party's approach to Black education. This study intends to explore the different calls for change and reform on the one hand and political repression on the other. The political impact of the resistance mounted by different groupings from 1976 through the 1980s, up to 1994 will be explored.

This study focuses on the continual interplay between action and reaction that evolved between the major role players during the apartheid years. It attempts to explain how these actions and interactions interlocked to forge a political environment that paved the way for the transformation of Black school education. The replicate spiral of uprisings and their suppression in education, formed an impasse which forced the main protagonists, the African National Congress and the South African government, to reassess their respective political stances and start the transformation process. This study explains how these actions and counteractions finally evolved to a peaceful settlement and a collaborative effort at facing the challenges of education in South Africa.

The study illustrates how numerous efforts to resolve the educational impasse failed to yield the desired results, and considers what could have led to the final acquiescence of the National Party government to negotiate a political settlement with Black extra-parliamentary organisation. The study weighs up the impact of sanctions against South Africa and international pressure generally. It is the contention of this study that all opposition against apartheid and apartheid education was crushed, but that the impact of international pressure against apartheid contributed significantly to the collapse of apartheid. The study scrutinises whether it was the negative attention South Africa drew internationally, manifested through indefatigable economic campaigns and implemented through disinvestment and sanctions that ultimately brought apartheid and apartheid education to its knees. Whilst South Africa was boiling internally with continued school and worker boycotts, much pressure was brought to bear on South Africa by its international peers. Moreover, the country faced intermittent sabotage of major economic installations with innocent civilians bearing the brunt of brutal, so-called 'terrorist' attacks. Public opinion in the country was so divided that the corporate world intervened in Black education, and White opinion was not always supportive of the repressive

government policy. The government's engagement of the 'reform' and 'repression' agenda is evidence of its vacillating stance on apartheid policies and its preparedness to re-examine its position. This resulted in the unbanning of political organisations, the release of political prisoners, allowing the re-entry of exiled and self-exiled South Africans into the country and the negotiations that led to a political settlement that would benefit the establishment of democracy and social equality. Education in particular benefited immensely from these developments.

The study brings an understanding of the events of the 1950s up to the 1980s in education, in order to bring an appreciation of the transformation of the 1990s and the events that precipitated and acted as a vehicle for transformation in education.

The study contributes to the appreciation of a complicated, yet interesting, period that heralded the advent of a completely new and transformed system of education. The most evident value of the study is that the issues that it highlights are topical and a subject of much discussion and debate. The study furthermore brings a fresh perspective on education transformation issues. Debates in this area have not nearly been exhausted. The political upheavals related to education in the period under review were a political weapon for both the government's apartheid education proponents and opponents; as a result it affected all sectors of South African society. During the apartheid years, South African schools reflected in microcosm the tensions and discord of society at odds with itself. Schools for White children were hot-houses for prejudice and fertile beds of privilege. Schools for Black children seethed with discontent. Learners were struggling to extract the best from an inferior education. An understanding of these pressures will equip South Africans and members of the international community with an appreciation for the achievements of the transformation process in South African education. Current and future education administrators and planners will be equipped with the necessary tools to help them avoid the pitfalls of the past and appreciate new approaches to education in the multi-cultural, diverse South African society.

The study was conducted thematically and chronologically. The research followed traditional method of historical research focusing on primary, secondary and oral sources. Whilst emphasis was on primary and secondary sources, the research also focused on special reports, archival collections, newspapers, the Internet, magazines and journals, eye witnesses and key figures that were involved in politics and education of the relevant period.

The contemporary nature of this study makes it both fascinating and problematic. While researching this study, the writer encountered numerous impediments brought about by the eye witnesses and key figures of the period under review. Some role players approached by the researcher for interviews were reluctant to discuss their perceptions of the period, with the threat of retribution still very real for many of them. Some interviewees were very sceptical about academics who wanted to reflect on the events with them, only to find such discussions being elevated to some sort of public debate or depiction. They were apprehensive that the study may suddenly put them in the limelight and bring them unwanted media and political attention. With some of them still employed by the government or earning a government pension, there was fear that granting such an interview may result in them forfeiting their source of living. It is unfortunate that those perspectives and versions of events are lost to this study. The researcher is very appreciative to have been able to interview the people he did. It has to be appreciated, however, that it was no easy undertaking to convince the interviewees to allow the researcher to hold discussions with them. Each interviewee had a set of preconditions that had to be met before an interview could be granted.

The resources at the Robben Island Mayibuye Archives at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town are a priceless source of information containing a plethora of historically important information dealing with almost every aspect of liberation history in South Africa. The researcher gained important insights that would have otherwise have been lost. Indeed any attempt to write a comprehensive history of the transformation of Black schools education in South Africa without access to the Robben Island Mayibuye Archives would have proved difficult. This is also true of the sources obtained at the

William Cullen Library Archives at the University of the Witwatersrand. The sources obtained at this library archive proved valuable to the history of education in the 1950s with specific reference to the reaction of the Anglican Church to Bantu Education; and the history of the Soweto learners' uprising of the latter part of the 1970s.

Important sources were obtained at the Documentation Centre of African Studies at the Unisa Archives. The African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA) collection proved crucial to tracking the interactions of the teachers with the government on Bantu Education and in pursuing the history of teacher unions. Correspondence between ATASA and the National Party government was perused from these resources. It gave the researcher a good sense of the relations between the government and teachers during the apartheid years. This added value to the discernment of the approach the government had to the challenges that plagued the education system at the time.

The information collected at the Alan Paton Centre and Archives at the University of KwaZulu Natal, in Pietermaritzburg, the Killie Campbell Africana Library at the University of KwaZulu Natal in Durban, the Free State Archives Depot and the National Archives Depot proved very useful in tracing the reaction of political parties and extra-parliamentary organisations to Bantu Education and apartheid legislation in general. The information gleaned from the sources proved invaluable in helping to gain important insight into the perceptions of important role players on the National Party education policies. The researcher gained worthwhile conception into the reaction of the general South African populace to Bantu Education and apartheid legislation in general by going through the sources of these archives. The electronic Liberation Archives housed at the University of Fort Hare proved critical in tracing the history of the African National Congress and its interaction with the National Party government with regard to educational matters. The fact that the documents at these archives can be retrieved electronically made access to the sources uncomplicated.

The censorship of press in South Africa during the period under review created limitations for the use of newspapers for this study. Newspapers, although used, proved



not to be the most effective historical source. It is inestimable how much information has been concealed through the relentless government sponsored censorship of press. This shortcoming, however, should not be misconstrued to suggest that the researcher did not use newspaper articles in this study.

The reader is warned that because of racial polarisation in South Africa during the period under review, it is possible to come across racially insensitive terms and classifications. These should be seen as within the thematic context of the study.

Reverting back to the challenging nature of conducting a contemporary research report like this it has to be emphasised that the political processes that are considered in this study are by no means the only political processes of the period. Another predicament with considering such a thematically broad history is that it has the possibility of growing into a never-ending story. There was basically not sufficient time to even endeavour to encapsulate every single political activity or occasion that had a bearing on the process explored in this study. Some events and developments, which had a direct effect on the process of actions and counteractions, were simply too huge or too multifarious to try and coalesce in this research project. There are many examples in this regard and these include, the history of university education and the upheavals in this sector of education, South Africa's military action in Lesotho, Namibia and Angola, the co-operation between the South African Police Force and the South African Defence Force in suppressing the involvement of the youth in fighting for equality in education, the South African Police Force as the enforcer of National Party policy, to mention but a few.

This study does not masquerade as a prototypical last word on educational and political developments in the period 1950 to 1994 in South Africa. This is not the intention of this study. It is instead the objective of this study to act as a catalyst and launch pad for further study and continuous reinterpretation of the period 1950 to 1994 in education and its accompanying political processes. This research report must be understood as creative, scientifically researched, historical assessment of the main political processes of the period under review. This report is a broad, holistic abridgment of the main political

processes of the period 1950 to 1994 that had a bearing on education, and does not claim to be an all-encompassing appraisal or narrative of the whole period.

It is only if the history of education in the apartheid years is understood that the transformation of the 1990s and beyond can be appreciated. This study will contribute to our understanding of the complex period that paved the way for the new education dispensation, and what influence it had on some education policy positions in the new South Africa. Without this background some policies will be meaningless and without justification in the new dispensation.

The most visible value of this research is that it is a topical and inventive appraisal of a subject around which debate has still not nearly subsided. The educational wrangling of the time became a political device, commodity and a nuisance – almost all at once, depending on which side of the table the protagonists sat, and influenced almost every sector of the South African society. Comprehending the historical context and nature of the occurrence and the *raison d'être* for bickering around educational issues equips leaders and society with the means to deal with educational problems more effectively in the present.

\*\*\*\*\*

I owe a great deal to the many people who have helped me with information, documentation, warmth, generosity, encouragement, critique, and the arduous task associated with preparing the final product of this thesis. The concern and camaraderie of those who helped me as colleagues and informants, often assuming both roles simultaneously, cannot go unnoticed.

I wish to record my gratitude to Mr Papi Kganare, former Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in the Free State, who initiated a bursary scheme for aspiring historians in the Free State Department of Education. The visionary leadership of

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I wish to place on record my gratefulness to my mother, Masabata Alinah Rakometsi, and my late father Mpho Frans Rakometsi, for inculcating the love for education and proper work ethics in me through their relentless discipline, training and upbringing.

The unwavering and selfless support of my beloved wife, Palesa, throughout my study period is acknowledged. Without her jovial and efficient help, the uninterrupted work periods at home and long hours of research in the archives and libraries, would not have been possible. Her encouragement and care through difficult times inspired me to keep focus on my research.

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To my promoter Prof. S.L. Barnard, and co-promoter, Prof. N.C. de Wet, who offered crucial stimulus and supervision during the initial steps of the study, until it was well

under way in the field, I owe a special debt. Their painstaking care in the reading of the manuscript and their resulting comments invariably proved fruitful. Without their encouragement and reassurances that what I was attempting was worthwhile, this study would not have taken off the ground. They put a great deal of effort into ensuring that the project was conducted to the best of my ability. Their assistance is immeasurable.

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This thesis is dedicated to my wife Palesa, and the children: Mpho, Thato and Nyakallo. May they one day understand why their father failed to give them attention during the most delicate years of their growth and development, and instead spent hours on end in the study room writing this thesis.

M.S. Rakometsi

Bloemfontein

28 November 2008

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The research and historical assessment of the transformation of Black school education in South Africa became necessary due to the fact that limited research has been conducted on this change. Education in South Africa was a contested terrain between the state and those whom the education system intended to serve. This resulted into a predicament which drew the attention of a wide range of concerned parties, each of which was concerned to concoct their own scenario and solution to how education had to be run in South Africa. This made education a hotly disputed arena in South Africa.

In an environment where education became so contested, the government became the first target whenever education battles were fought. This is not astonishing as throughout the world, governments are the greatest providers of any school based education. The problem in the South African Black education arena was compounded by the fact that the government was in reality not the government of the majority, and was therefore not accountable to the majority. As such it was capable of doing things that ran counter to the hopes and aspirations of the mass of the people with absolute impunity. The majority did not have the democratic power of dislodging the government whenever it ceased to operate in their best interests. Historically, Black people never had a say in the planning, structuring and implementation of education in South Africa.

A famous Flemish educationalist, Father de Hovre, says:

It is only when we trace educational aims down to their roots that we can fully understand educational tendencies. Only when we are initiated into the philosophy of life from which they spring, when we have viewed their very foundations, can we follow their development and understand the course they adopt. Then only can we rightly judge and convince ourselves of the marked bias

that governs their progress. Our views on the education of man are dependent upon our opinions about man, his nature and his purpose.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason it is the contention of this work that the educational system of any country cannot be studied to any purpose without due regard to the people and the history that have helped to shape it. According to Behr all nations have distinctive educational systems linked to some representative education pattern. Each pattern has a dominant educational objective, specific administration, organisational and an institutional structure with the latter informed by the political overtones of the ruling political party.<sup>2</sup>

South African schools during the apartheid years reflected in microcosm the tensions and discord of a society at odds with itself. Schools for White children were comfortable institutions of privilege, whilst schools for Black children seethed with discontent. Learners were struggling to dig out the best from a mediocre education. The provision of second-rate education to the under-privileged and dominated Black children became a political weapon that made running battles with authorities a reality. Education may be described as an issue affecting and affected by ideological, political, economic, social and personal preferences and pronouncements. As a result of this, education in itself is loaded with often divergent expectations of different interest groups. It is not surprising that educational provisioning in South Africa was fraught with intense debates and even a subject of conflict in a fragmented society.

In harmonised homogeneous and relatively prosperous societies, education often accomplishes obscure results without excessive and unwarranted controversy. The opposite was true of South Africa which had one of the most disproportionate citizenry. According to Behr, almost from the day Jan van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape in 1652, two sets of conflicting forces have been in continuous operation, one tending to draw the races together, the other tending to keep them apart. The problem of segregation or

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<sup>1</sup> The Implications of the Tomlinson Report on African Education: Bantu Education a Technique of Domination, (nd.). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/4/4/1.

<sup>2</sup> A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988, p. 9.

integration has been a recurrent theme throughout South African history. The core of this problem concerns the relationship between the different ethnic groups in the various fields of human endeavour, namely domestic, economic, political, religious, social and educational.<sup>3</sup> This study focuses on segregation in education.

During the four decades under review South Africa witnessed sweeping changes in the field of education. In retrospect, it would appear that education was one of the most disputed terrains in South Africa. If we wish to understand and correctly appraise the transformation that has manifested itself during the past four decades in the province of education it becomes imperative to reflect on the context in which South Africans lived throughout this period. This milieu reflected the social status, interests and ideals of different groups of people whose objective was either to protect and sustain, or attack and transform, a social reality with its institutions. Context therefore played an important role in the interpretation of educational matters.

Both the government and the extra-parliamentary organisations in South Africa agreed that Black education was central to their respective undertakings. The former tried to use schools to inculcate and reinforce political, economic and ideological domination, while the latter at different intervals and with varying degrees of intensity canvassed against specific policies and for the transformation of the structure and content of education. It is for this reason that education became an amphitheater of conflict.

It is the aim of this study to investigate the approach of the National Party to Black education and different views on the future of Black education. It has therefore been logical to explore the ascension of the National Party to power in 1948, the political context in which it gained its electoral victory and the racial policies that earned it victory. The population of South Africa is divided into four main racial groups. One-fifth of the population is White and four-fifth is Black. According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary Whites are light skinned people of European ancestry.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> The Dictionary Unit for South African English (eds.), South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, p. 1338.

Blacks on the other hand, are members of a dark skinned people, especially of African descent.<sup>5</sup> The Black people were called Natives and Bantu at different times in the history of South Africa. In this work, however, the term Native or Bantu is strictly intended to reflect the usage of a writer being quoted or official references to Native or Bantu education. Otherwise, the term *Black* is used to refer to Black South Africans.

Afrikaners and English-speaking South African each controlled a sector of the economy. The Afrikaners were still farmers, but many had become urbanised. Urbanisation had generally been speeded up by the world economic depression in the 1930s. English-speaking South Africans, a broad term used to distinguish Afrikaner groups from other Whites who had British descent or connections, were mostly urbanised, usually more wealthy than the Afrikaners, and professional and managerial by occupation. They were separated from the Afrikaners by history, area of settlement, language, religion and tradition.<sup>6</sup> In South Africa the White minority controlled the political and economic structure; the Black majority provided cheap labour within this dichotomy. This was deliberately created and maintained. The Blacks were mainly, although not completely, unskilled or semi-skilled. They worked in the mines and in industries in the main towns. A few had succeeded in entering law, liberal studies and journalism. Some Black people were employed on White farms or living in the homelands.

The other population group in South Africa is the Coloureds. They are South Africans of mixed ancestry, usually with Dutch, Malay, African and Khoisan heritage.<sup>7</sup> They were mainly semi-skilled or foremen and some held junior managers' jobs in industry, particularly in the Cape Town area. Some still worked in agriculture, but most had shifted to better paid urban jobs. The Asians, also referred to as Indians, were mainly descendants of the indentured Indian labour recruited for sugar plantations. Some free immigrants, mainly Moslems, had become traders and shopkeepers. The study will

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> M. Madelung, *Black Lives Under Apartheid*, 14.

<sup>7</sup> D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.  
[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2.



mainly explore how Black education was intended to support the White dominated economy. It will also take a cursory look at Coloured and Indian education, and how they fitted into the White controlled economy. It will survey the education systems intended for different racial groups and the economic underpinnings thereof, as well as resistance to segregated education. This work seeks to determine the extent to which Bantu Education resembled or differed from Coloured and Indian education. What is important is whether what happened with Black education was a pattern or was unique. An understanding of the centrality of education and the educational struggle in South Africa requires an unravelling of the links between education and capitalist society in general. It is for this reason that apartheid intended to demarcate specific economic sectors for each of the population groups.

This work documents the Calvinist principles that underpinned the National Party's education policies as propounded by Christian National Education and explores the influence of the government's appointed Eiselen Commission in reinforcing the Christian National Education principles and the resultant passing of *The Bantu Education Act, Act No. 47 of 1953*. The objections of the National Party government to missionary education are explored and the closing of the majority of missionary schools is analysed. The study goes on to investigate the closing of the missionary schools and to determine whether this was beneficial to Black education or not. This work documents resistance to Bantu education. It looks at the different stakeholders that were involved in this resistance. It further looks at the alternatives that they were proposing to the South African government.

The study delves into the epoch making events of the early 1960s, namely, celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union of South Africa, the creation of the Republic of South Africa, the Sharpeville shooting and the banning of Black extra-parliamentary organisations. The reaction of Blacks to these events is dealt with. The impact of these events on the resistance of Black people to apartheid education is explored

This work assesses the development of the homelands, as a support base for Bantu Education. It documents how Bantu Education was intended to support the Bantu economy as a separate economy to that of the Whites, in support of the policy of separate development. The homeland system led to the 'migrant' labour system which in effect separated one or both parents from their children as they sold their labour in the urban centres leaving their children with women or the elderly in the homelands. The absence of the parents had negative implications for family life and in turn affected education negatively as the much needed support the teachers required to run the schools was absent.

The study explores the much contested policy of the medium of instruction in Black schools. It was the contention of most Black education stakeholders that learners must be taught in English as the language of business and an international language. The government on the other hand wanted learners to be taught in both English and Afrikaans in order for them to communicate effectively in these official languages. Afrikaans is the modified form of Dutch spoken in South Africa. It was the argument of both parents and learners that whilst the knowledge of Afrikaans was valuable, learners should not be forced to study content subjects in both English and Afrikaans. They maintained that the value of Afrikaans was limited as it was not a commercial language and was spoken only in South Africa. The insistence of the government that English and Afrikaans should receive equal attention in Black schools led to the 1976 Soweto learners' uprisings. This study will investigate whether the government erred or was correct in not yielding to the opposition of Black education stakeholders to the learners being taught in Afrikaans. It will look at the Soweto learners' uprisings and analyse the support the learners' course of action enjoyed from different sectors of the community, including the church. This study looks at the reaction of the Afrikaner community to the Soweto uprisings.

The granting of independence to the homelands is dealt with. The loss of South African citizenship by the homeland citizens implied that their children would not have the right to learn anywhere else in South Africa, except at the designated homeland. This arrangement gave the education authorities outside the allocated homelands the right to

refuse such learners admission at their schools. The effects of this policy position on learners who were already at schools in areas outside their homelands are looked into. The general implications of these artificial restrictions on education are considered.

The Soweto learners' uprising ushered in a new era of militancy in learner politics. The Black schooling system was used to fight political battles on broader socio-economic front that had nothing to do with education in some instances. This led to sporadic school disruptions that brought the education system to paralysis. The situation was compounded by the formation of national learner bodies, namely the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM). The events that precipitated the formation of these organisations are surveyed. The impact of these learner bodies on increased learner militancy is reviewed. The approach of the government to these developments that would further destabilise normalcy in schools is assessed.

The government's response to the learners' militancy is scrutinised. The study examines the use of force by both the authorities and the learners with regard to whether it did or did not indirectly teach South Africans that disputes can only be resolved through the use of violence. In the process children lost education at the most opportune time of their lives. The worst situation in Black South African schooling system prevailed when learners called for the suspension of all learning activities with the slogan "liberation first and education later." This suicidal stance of the learners led to the intervention of the parents through the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee. This study documents how attempts of the parents to salvage education through this structure mutated into the National Education Crisis Committee. The establishment of the National Education Crisis Committee led to the conceptualisation of "Peoples' Education for Peoples' Power." This was the new form of education that was intended to replace Bantu Education. The activities of the National Education Crisis Committee were given impetus by the formation of the United Democratic Front, a mass based movement with a 'Charterist' approach of the banned African National Congress. The United Democratic Front came as a result of the creation of the 1983 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that

created the tri-cameral system of government that accommodated the Coloureds and Indians in the legislative making processes of the country, leaving the Black people outside this system. This work will analyse the activities of the National Education Crisis Committee and the United Democratic Front in education.

With pressure mounting following the Soweto learners' uprisings and the subsequent intermittent disruption of schools, the government started with the 'reform' programme. The government's 'reform' programme saw the government change the name of the Department of Bantu Education to the Department of Education and Training. This work scrutinises the reaction of the education stakeholders to this change. In pursuit of its reform programme the government appointed the De Lange Commission to conduct an in depth investigation into all facets of education in South Africa. This research report examines the recommendations of the De Lange Commission and the reaction of the government and the Black education stakeholders to its recommendations. The government's willingness to involve big business in education is investigated as a further indicator of the government's willingness to reform Black education. Whilst the government is commended for its reform programme it engaged in a 'repressive' programme simultaneously with its 'reform' agenda to contain civil disobedience. The government strategies in this regard are explored.

The developments in Black education in South Africa caught the attention of the international community through mass media. This resulted in mounting external pressure against the maintenance of apartheid and calls for far reaching reforms in education for Blacks. The international community was divided on the best intervention strategy. This resulted in the outside world being divided into those who backed punitive sanctions and disinvestment against South Africa, and those that did not. This resulted in the South African government engaging in a propaganda campaign to project a positive image of the country. The whole debate of sanctions and disinvestment saw the Black political organisations pitted against each other on the merits and demerits of sanctions and disinvestment, and therefore the endorsement and opposition thereof. This study

surveys the impact of sanctions on South Africa, and whether or not they contributed to the demise of apartheid, and therefore the new education dispensation.

This study documents 'unionism' in the South African education system. The history of the 'established' and conservative teacher unions is reviewed and contrasted with that of the 'emergent' and militant ones. The negative implications of the militant unions on teaching as a profession are scrutinised plus the influence of the militancy of the emergent unions on the already radical learners is looked into. The attempts of the Congress of the South African Trade Unions to merge all teacher unions into one organisation are considered. The failure of the merger processes is discussed and the reasons for this fiasco are reviewed. The background and the ethos of each racial group in the unions' merger process played a significant role in the success or failure of unity, where the amalgamation was a success or failure. The nature and structure of teacher union politics in South Africa showed the imminence of the democratic dispensation in South Africa.

The South African government started engaging the African National Congress (ANC) leadership in exile and in prison. This was a sign of the looming release of political prisoners and unbanning of the Black political organisations. The release of political prisoners and the unbanning of Black political organisations are discussed, so too are the negotiations between the government and the different political organisations through the Convention for Democratic South Africa, commonly called CODESA. The challenges facing negotiators at CODESA are explored, together with the problems facing South Africa. The initiatives to reform education in South Africa and the models recommended for the new education dispensation are discussed.

This research will look at the legacy that these turbulent times in education have left for South Africa and its posterity. It will highlight the inheritance that can be celebrated by education stakeholders, and will point to those parts of education history which are to be regretted. Difficult times produce enterprises that are worth preserving because of their utility and some that have been discarded and denounced because of their worthlessness. A

recording and analysis of these efforts may be useful to posterity. This is intended for education officials and stakeholders to obviate the possibility of repeating the mistakes of the past whilst their antecedents have presented lessons to learn from. It is solace for education officials and practitioners to know that they do not have to experiment in things that have been tried and tested, and proved to either be working or failing by their precursors. In doing this, this research report will not be doctrinaire and pretend to have a panacea for future education leaders. Prudent observations will be made and positions taken. These standpoints will in themselves not masquerade as universal remedies to the challenges facing education.

## CHAPTER 2

### EDUCATION UNDER APARTHEID: THE REACTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION TO APARTHEID LEGISLATION, 1948 TO 1960

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter sketches conditions prior to the 1948 elections and reviews the contributing role of Afrikaner cultural institutions and the Dutch Reformed Church to the establishment of the doctrine of apartheid.<sup>1</sup> It then reviews the spate of legislation passed by the National Party (NP) government to promote Afrikaner interests at the cost of Blacks in particular and how this suppressive legislation spiralled into action and counter action; how the new apartheid government's progressively more repressive policies and legislation evoked responses by Black organisations; and how Black education was primarily targeted to achieve government segregationist goals.

This chapter explores Afrikaner unity and it gives a background to the 1948 NP election victory. It looks at the formalisation of the apartheid policy by the NP and the role of the Broederbond. It reviews the role of Christian National Education (CNE) in determining the future education policies of South Africa. It reassesses the issues affecting Black education in historical perspective. It evaluates the establishment of the Eiselen Commission of enquiry into Black education. It looks at the response of the Black people to the Eiselen Commission report. This chapter checks how the Eiselen Commission

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<sup>1</sup> Apartheid was the system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race in force in South Africa from 1948-1991. The word originates in the 1940s. Its English equivalent is separateness. See The Dictionary Unit for South African English (eds.), *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p. 48.

report and the CNE influenced the NP government to pass *The Bantu<sup>2</sup> Education Act, Act No. 49 of 1953*. It examines the how *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* diminished the role of missionaries in education provisioning with the government taking overall control and financing of Bantu Education. This chapter assesses resistance to Bantu Education by various education stakeholders and the extent to which school boycotts and civil disobedience were successful.

## 2.2 The National Party election victory and control of government

With the elimination of the Ossewabrandwag as an effective rival of the United Party in 1943, the NP, with the support of the Broederbond and its wide network of related associations, was able to concentrate on the task of uniting the Afrikaner *volk* under its leadership. The programme of winning over Afrikaner workers was vigorously pursued. In 1944 the apparent disregard of the industrial colour bar in a Germiston clothing factory provided Afrikaner nationalists with a grand opportunity. The factory that employed White women workers engaged some Coloured<sup>3</sup> women as well. Although they were physically isolated from the White women, their presence was discovered and some of the White women demanded strike action. The Clothing Workers' Union, a multi-racial union led by a radical socialist, Solly Sachs, refused to support the move. Two of the White women who had demanded the strike eventually lost their jobs and Afrikaner nationalists whipped up an emotional response. The Dutch Reformed Church, the NP and the Afrikaner Cultural Association united to denounce the threat to their wives and

<sup>2</sup> In South Africa, the term "Bantu," considered offensive by Blacks, had been used to characterise the people who speak Bantu languages. When Dr Verwoerd became Minister of Native Affairs, the collective noun, *Bantu* (the people), came into vogue in Nationalist and subsequently general parlance to describe the African population of South Africa, succeeding *Native*, which itself had succeeded *kaffir*. Black South Africans considered these terms offensive. In this work, however, the term is strictly intended to reflect the usage of a writer being quoted or official references to Native Education. Otherwise, the terms *Black* or *African* are used to refer to Black South Africans. In 1978, in response to Black people's intense resentment of the designation *Bantu*, the Government changed Department of Bantu Education to the Department of Education and Training. See M.O. Nkomo, *The Contradictions of Bantu Education*. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change, and Development), p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Coloureds are South Africans of mixed ancestry, usually with Dutch, Malay, African and Khoisan heritage. Most Coloureds speak Afrikaans as their mother tongue. Coloureds have a lighter complexion than that of Blacks, and usually have straight and soft hair. See D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2.



mothers who, they claimed, were in danger of being placed at the same level as Coloureds in accordance with the Communist doctrines of racial equality. In June 1944 the Broederbond founded a new organisation, the *Blanke Werkers Beskermingsbond* (White Workers' Protection Society) to fight for greater segregation in industry. In May 1945 the Dutch Reformed Church issued a pamphlet calling on White South Africans to support the White clothing workers and to fight for upholding the colour bar and Christianity.<sup>4</sup> These were the first spontaneous moves towards Afrikaner nationalism and the entrenchment of segregationist policies. It is fascinating to see that this was sparked by the wish to protect White workers interests, but it ended up representing Afrikaner unification and provided platform for the NP election campaign.

In preparation for the 1948 election, the NP was determined to concentrate on the key issue of the future pattern of race relations in South Africa. In this regard it developed the doctrine of apartheid into an explicit political policy. The concept of apartheid was first introduced by a group of Afrikaner intellectuals in the 1930s and elaborated on by Afrikaner thinkers during the Second World War. Apartheid theory owed much to the theological tradition of the Dutch Reformed Church that had contributed to the ideals of Afrikaner nationalism developed by the Broederbond and its affiliated bodies.<sup>5</sup> According to Sithole the defining features of apartheid were of a political ideology based on racial

<sup>4</sup> J.D. Omer-Cooper, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 190-191. L. Witz, Separation for Unity: The Garment Workers Union and the South African Clothing Workers Union 1928 to 1936. *Social Dynamics*. Vol. 14, Issue 1, June 1988, p. 35. S. Coupe, Divisions of Labour: Racist Trade Unionism in the Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Industries of Post-War South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol. 21, Issue 3. Department of Economic and Social History, University of Hull, September 1995, pp. 451-452. N.L. Clark, Gendering Production in Wartime South Africa. *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 106, No. 4, October 2001, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 6. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Dr Mochubeloa Seekoe, ANC member and former South African Ambassador to Russia. Bloemfontein, 16 August 2008. J.D. Omer-Cooper, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 190-191. R. Meyer, The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 8. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. S. Marks and S. Trapido, The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism. In S. Marks and S. Trapido (ed.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century South Africa*, p. 20. R. K. Muir, Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 39.

superiority, segregation of races and distribution of resources based on racial determinants.<sup>6</sup> Apartheid was also influenced by the pseudo-scientific racism that was widespread in the inter-war period and that had formed much of the foundation of German Nazism. According to apartheid doctrine, every race and nation had its own distinct cultural identity and had been created to fulfil a unique destiny established by God. To fulfil its unique potential, every nation must remain pure and be allowed to develop freely along its own lines. Excessive contact among races, particularly racial interbreeding, would corrupt and destroy the unique potential of both races involved.<sup>7</sup> It is fallacious to conclude that apartheid was conceptualised in 1948 with the NP election victory. The concept had been there before 1948. It will perhaps be safe to assert that apartheid was merely formalised beyond 1948.

The apartheid policy that Dr Malan's government started implementing in May 1948 was not a novel one. It was an old policy that can be traced back to the time when Jan van Riebeeck, as Commander of the refreshment station at the Cape, planted a lane of almond trees to indicate the boundary between the Hottentot and Dutch areas. Yet the pre-1948 and post-1948 apartheid policies were not quite the same. The difference lay in the precision, steadfastness, consistency and unpleasantness with which apartheid was implemented in South Africa after 1948. What had hitherto been a largely unwritten custom was now enforced by the governments of Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd with the

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<sup>6</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Fani Sithole Fani, ANC Activist and currently Deputy Director General in the Free State Department of Education. Bloemfontein, 5 August 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. J.D. Omer-Cooper, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 190-191. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 8. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, pp. 17-18. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10. S. Schoeman, *Die Invloed van die Calvinistiese Lewensbeskouing op die Onderwys in Suid-Afrika – 'n Historiese-Pedagogiese Deurskouing en Evaluering*. *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, July 1995, pp. 97-99.

aid of legislation.<sup>8</sup> Pampallis and Unterhalter maintain that the NP government transformed the practice of *laissez-faire* racial segregation into a systematic racial ideology. Pampallis and Unterhalter agree that education was to be the principal instrument in achieving the goal of separate development.<sup>9</sup> According to Hartshorne, all over the world, modern states, whatever their forms of government and underlying constitutions, use the education system as an instrument of general policy and social control, designed to a greater or lesser extent to further their own ends. Education in the modern state is not neutral. The state is not an impartial provider of education. The particular political, social and economic context in which education exists is used by the state to achieve purposes which it considers to be advantageous and expedient.<sup>10</sup> The assertion that segregation was only introduced in South Africa in 1948 is invalid. The racial stereotypes that led to segregation had been there before 1948. The NP was more systematic and structured in using the education system as a vehicle of attaining its racial policies.

Fear of racial mixture and White determination to preserve racial purity were of crucial psychological significance for the appeal of apartheid at that stage. Thus, at the 1944 *Volkskongres* (Peoples' Congress) organised by the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings* (FAK) (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations), Professor Cronjé claimed to have scientific proof that racial fusion led to racial degeneration. The Afrikaner poet, Totius (JD du Toit), arguing from the Calvinist point of view, claimed that the separation of races was part of God's creation plan and that racial mixture was

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<sup>8</sup> C.F.J. Muller, *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa*, p. 481. M.O. Nkomo, *Apartheid Education in Crisis*. *Trans Africa Forum*, A Quarterly Journal of Opinion of Africa and the Caribbean. Vol. 3, Fall 1985, p. 74. A. Odendaal. *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 168. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *Journal for Christian Scholarship, Special Edition*, p. 17. G.S. Were, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 163-164. M. Madelung, *Black Lives under Apartheid*, p. 13. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. E. Unterhalter, *The Impact of Apartheid on Women's Education in South Africa*. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> K. Hartshorne, *The Making of Education Policy in South Africa*, pp. 5-6.

contrary to God's will.<sup>11</sup> Based on these assumptions, every race and nation in South Africa was to have its own territory in which to develop along its own unique lines; social contact among the races was to be restricted to the absolute minimum and sexual relations rigorously prohibited. It was believed that this physical and social separation would not only secure the preservation and purity of the White race, but would also emancipate the Black nations. They would be liberated from White cultural domination and would enjoy the opportunities for autonomous cultural and political self-expression that Afrikaner nationalists had long struggled to gain for their own people.<sup>12</sup> Hartshorne maintains that across the world, education has variously been directed at maintaining the status quo, either in terms of 'transmission of culture' or a more straightforward protection of privilege. In such cases emphasis is placed on the needs of the state instead of on the needs of the individual and the society of which he or she is part of.<sup>13</sup> It is fascinating to observe that the proponents of apartheid asserted that they did not only selfishly look at the interests of the White people. They claimed that it was their express wish to emancipate the Black nations from White cultural domination. The authenticity of this philanthropic assertion is doubted in the light of the racial policies of the time. It could be that the proponents of apartheid saw an advantage of putting their position in the positive light to divert attention from their self-centred interests.

<sup>11</sup> P. Tobias, Change Should Begin in the Hearts and Minds of Children. The Transvaal Educational News. Vol. 77(2), February 1990, p. 12. B. Pottinger, The Botha Era: An End or a Beginning? In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 14. J.D. Omer-Cooper, History of Southern Africa, pp. 190-191. S. Schoeman, Die Invloed van die Calvinistiese Lewensbeskouing op die Onderwys in Suid-Afrika – 'n Historiese-Pedagogiese Deurskouing en Evalueer. Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, July 1995, pp. 97-99.

<sup>12</sup> B. Pottinger, The Botha Era: An End or a Beginning? In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 14. J.D. Omer-Cooper, History of Southern Africa, pp. 190-191. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. Journal of Third World Studies. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 8. M.O. Nkomo, Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities: The Roots of Resistance, p. 46. R. K. Muir, Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 37. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Dr Mochubeloa Seekoe, ANC member and former South African Ambassador to Russia. Bloemfontein, 16 August 2008.

<sup>13</sup> K. Hartshorne, The Making of Education Policy in South Africa, p. 6.

It was in the context of these racial debates that the 1948 elections were conducted. The victory of the NP at the polls in May 1948 marked a turning point not only in politics, but also in Black education in South Africa. Ashley, Parker and Pfukani suggest that, with the assumption of power by the NP, the state became the vehicle for the implementation of CNE policy.<sup>14</sup> The NP victory in the 1948 election brought Dr D.F. Malan to power as Prime Minister, with Havenga, leader of the Afrikaner Party, as his Deputy.<sup>15</sup> The NP came to power, cloaked in the political ideology of apartheid, which was directed at establishing their own identity and based on the removal of Black people either geographically or socially from them. At the Congress of the Free State NP on 13 October 1921 General Hertzog had emphasised in his speech that,

It is our firm policy that segregation must take place. To the Black man the right will not be given to live where he wishes, but land will be set aside for him ... also industrially there must therefore be separation between the two races, otherwise there will be no peace in South Africa.<sup>16</sup>

This apartheid perspective and policy was expanded by Afrikaner leaders, notably Dr D.F. Malan, at the NP Congress in Bloemfontein in November 1938 when he related the NP's *Groot Beslissing* which was, in his own words,

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<sup>14</sup> M. Ashley, *Ideologies and Schooling in South Africa*, p. 12. G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 216.

<sup>15</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 216. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 41. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *Journal for Christian Scholarship, Special Edition*, p. 17. *Case Studies in Sanctions and Terrorism*. Institute for International Economics. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.  
<http://www.iie.com/research/topics/sanctions/southafrica.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 15.

Om Suid-Afrika veilig te maak vir die blanke ras en om die blanke ras, suiwer en bewus van sy roeping, veilig te bewaar vir Suid Afrika ... ons wil seker maak dat Suid-Afrika witmansland sal bly.<sup>17</sup>

The same sentiments were expressed in the NP Manifesto published in September 1947, entitled, *Die Nasionale Party se Kleurbeleid*, the foundation for the NP's victory on 26 May 1948.<sup>18</sup> It is not surprising that the NP election victory was epoch-making. The thrust of their election campaign was on segregation. The influential leaders of the Party were in agreement on this policy.

Apartheid affected all areas of life for South Africans, and, as a result, determined which South Africans were given privileges and which ones were oppressed. The effects of apartheid were visible in all areas of life, but specifically in the areas of education, employment opportunities and places in which people lived.<sup>19</sup> During the election campaign the NP promised the White electorate that it was determined to introduce the policy of apartheid in South Africa. The NP victory at the polls was a turning point, politically, socially and economically. The new government's first actions were to enact their declared policy of apartheid. By means of policy, law and decree the single-minded Nationalists would attempt to construct a state and society in which Black people would be relegated to insignificance in the political, economic and social life of South Africa. The unexpected election victory of D.F. Malan's Nationalists ended the era of more moderate Afrikaner leaders such as Jan Smuts, whose race policies were patronising and

<sup>17</sup> Die Groot Beslissing: die Afrikanerdom en die Kleurvraagstuk. *Federale Raad van die Nasionale Party*. Johannesburg, 8 November 1938, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. *Journal for Christian Scholarship, Special Edition*, p. 17. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> D.C. Hill, Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2. R. Meyer, The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 8. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

bigoted, but not deliberately vindictive and malicious.<sup>20</sup> The change in approach is evident in the emphasis of these leaders on key policy issues. Where racial issues were previously concealed and not legislated they were then more formalised and overt.

The South African government had determined that its sacred mission was the preservation of White domination in perpetuity. They interpreted their electoral victory in the 1948 general elections as an endorsement of apartheid policies.<sup>21</sup> The NP acknowledged the sovereignty and guidance of God in the destiny of countries and sought the development of the South African nation's way of life along Christian national lines, with due regard for the individual's freedom, conscience and religion. As for relations with Blacks, the NP recognised that Black and Coloured people are permanent members of the country's population, and maintained that they were under the Christian trusteeship of European races. It strongly opposed every attempt that might lead to mixing European and Black blood. Moreover, it also wished to protect all groups of the population against Asiatic immigration and competition, among others, by preventing further encroachment on their means of livelihood and by an effective scheme of segregation and repatriation.<sup>22</sup> The perceived God-given role of the White members of the South African community

<sup>20</sup> S. Nkiwane, *Military and Political Destabilization in Southern Africa*. In R.A. Siddiqui. Sub-Saharan Africa: A Continent in Transition, p. 180. M. Morris, Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa, p. 159.

<sup>21</sup> P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 1. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. Journal for Christian Scholarship, Special Edition, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Programme of Principles of the Nationalist Party of South Africa: Character and Purpose. National Archives Depot. Source UOD, Vol. 1937, Ref. E176. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 6. R.K. Muir, *Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education*. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa*. African Studies Programme. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 39. S. Schoeman, *Die Invloed van die Calvinistiese Lewensbeskouing op die Onderwys in Suid-Afrika – 'n Historiese-Pedagogiese Deurskouing en Evaluering*. Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, July 1995, p. 99. S. Theron, *Die Wet op die Nasionale Onderwysbeleid*, no. 39 van 1967: *Vordering in dié Verband Gedurende die Afgelope Ses Jaar*. Speech Delivered at the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU) Stellenbosch Branch Meeting on 17 April 1973. Die Unie. Vol. 70(1), July 1973, p. 19. G.N. Visser, *Enkele Opvoedkundige Doelstelling vir die Christelike Skool*. Die Unie. Vol. 84(7), January 1988, p. 194.

influenced their approach to racial matters and the role Blacks could play in the governance structures of the country.

The letter of Malan's Private Secretary to the African National Congress (ANC) in response to its request for power sharing clearly shows that the NP government was determined to ignore this request,

You demand that the Union should no longer remain a State controlled by the Europeans who developed it to the advantage of all groups of the population. You demand that it should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Bantu, Indian<sup>23</sup> and other non-European groups together with Europeans without any distinction whatsoever, and with no restriction on the possible gradual development of a completely mixed community. Nevertheless you apparently wish to create an impression that such demands should be regarded as a generous gesture of goodwill towards the European community of this country. It is quite clear that the opposite is true. This is not a genuine offer of co-operation, but an attempt to embark on the first steps towards supplanting European rule in the course of time ... It should be understood clearly that the government will under no circumstances entertain the idea of administrative or executive or legislative powers over Europeans, or within a European community, to Bantu men and women, or to other smaller non-European groups. The government therefore has no intention of repealing the long-existing laws differentiating between European and Bantu.<sup>24</sup>

From the foregoing it is evident that it was inconceivable at that time that different racial groups could have any power sharing arrangement in government in South Africa.

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<sup>23</sup> People of Indian descent, most of whom came to South Africa as sugar plantation workers in the 1800s. See D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Letter dated 29 January 1952 from the Prime Minister's Private Secretary to the ANC. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>



It was the view of the NP government that the road to peace and goodwill lay in the acceptance of the existence of separate populations groups, and in giving every group the opportunity of developing its ambitions and capacities in its own area, or within its own community along its own lines, in the service of its people. It was their view that, should Blacks be exposed to full competition without the protection of discriminatory laws, they would lose their land that was safeguarded and being increased for them by discriminatory laws. They maintained that the masses would indeed suffer misery if they lost the many privileges that the Union of South Africa, in contrast to other countries, provided for them. They would pay the price in order to satisfy the political ambitions of the few who were prepared to tear loose from the background of their own nation.<sup>25</sup> What the NP failed to realise was that the Black population of South Africa had come into contact with Europeans, changing them from what their ancestors had been three centuries before; they were unlike the people even of fifty or sixty years before. There had been a constant stream of missionaries, traders, recruiting officers and government officials who had been demolishing their tribal life. Large numbers had been forced to migrate to towns, forming a permanent urban population. As such, no education policy for Blacks could be developed without taking into account the environmental differences of rural and urban Blacks.<sup>26</sup> It was the express intention of the NP government to protect not only the interest of Whites with segregationist policies, but also of Blacks. What they did not appreciate was the fact that over the years Black people had developed to a point where they could fend for themselves without the need for the government to protect them against White competition.

The concept of apartheid, also known as *separate development* or *multi-national development*, must be clearly understood in order to recognise why separate education

<sup>25</sup> M.P. Mncwabe, Philosophy of Education and a Conflict of Beliefs in the South African Educational Scene. *Paidonomia*. Vol. 16, No. 2, July 1990, p. 53. Letter dated 29 January 1952 from the Prime Minister's Private Secretary to the ANC. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>

<sup>26</sup> Y. Golombick, Educating the Native Along his Own Lines. *The Nusas Journal*, p. 36. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 46.

facilities were provided for the four main ethnic groups, *viz.* Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians, who all constitute the nation of the Republic of South Africa.<sup>27</sup> The term apartheid literally means apartness, separateness or distinctness. It constituted an elaborate policy of racial segregation and discrimination driven by a government whose foundation was a crude philosophy that not merely differentiated, but also classified in a hierarchical fashion, human beings by skin colour. According to apartheid policy, the population of South Africa was divided into the four races, *viz.* the superior White race; the semi-superior Coloured and Indian races; and the inferior Black race. As a result of the apartheid policy, all facets of life in South Africa, including daily relations among the four races, were supposed to strictly comply with this policy. The Black population was the real object and victim of apartheid,<sup>28</sup> being designed to ensure that the Afrikaans-speaking voters remained the majority, although a White minority, with the Whites-only parliament creating the impression, if not the substance, of a Western-style democracy.<sup>29</sup> The aims of apartheid were to ensure the continuation of White supremacy, while at the same time controlling the pace and direction of African nationalism; and to guarantee the expansion and competitiveness of South African business, Afrikaner in particular, by means of a lowly paid, docile and highly mobile reserve of Black workers.<sup>30</sup>

Under the policy of apartheid, a comprehensive system of laws and controls were established to ensure that in all matters social, economic, political and personal, Whites

<sup>27</sup> A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa: Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652-1988, p. 12. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. Journal of Third World Studies. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> S. Nkiwane, Military and Political Destabilisation in Southern Africa. In R.A. Siddiqui, Sub-Saharan Africa: A Continent in Transition, pp. 180-181. D.C. Hill, Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, p. 32. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008.

<sup>29</sup> B.J. Barker, P. Bell and A. Duggan, Illustrated History of South Africa, p.367.

<sup>30</sup> M. Madelung, Black Lives Under Apartheid, 13.

and Blacks forever enjoyed the best and worst respectively, that the State could offer.<sup>31</sup> Under apartheid, Blacks were not only discriminated against but the government machinery totally dehumanized them, denying them both their humanity and natural dignity. Simply put, in South Africa the Black person was denied or deprived of all those natural rights that were guaranteed by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>32</sup> The latter was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. It stated, amongst others, that:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.<sup>33</sup>

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...<sup>34</sup>

Following this historic adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the General Assembly called upon all member countries to publicise the text of the Declaration and to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries and territories.<sup>35</sup> It is doubtful whether the South African government would allow the distribution, exhibition and reading of the Universal Declaration of

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<sup>31</sup> S. Nkiwane, *Military and Political Destabilisation in Southern Africa*. In R.A. Siddiqui, *Sub-Saharan Africa: A Continent in Transition*, p.181. J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> S. Nkiwane, *Military and Political Destabilisation in Southern Africa*. In R.A. Siddiqui, *Sub-Saharan Africa: A Continent in Transition*, p.181.

<sup>33</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Adopted and Proclaimed by the General Assembly Resolution 217 III of 10 December 1948. Retrieved on 4 August 2008. [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved on 4 August 2008. [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Rights](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved 4 August 2008. [www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/blunhr.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/blunhr.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Human Rights, as the latter was in conflict with its racial policies. It is ironical that the NP election victory was in the same year as the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The NP victory in the 1948 elections finally ended any hope of a move towards racial co-operation. The NP policy of apartheid stood for everything that the ANC had been fighting against.<sup>36</sup> The ANC was established in 1912 to protect the interests of the Black people in all matters affecting them and to attain their freedom from all discriminatory laws whatsoever. To this end, the ANC, since its establishment, endeavoured by every constitutional method to bring to the notice of the government the legitimate demands of the Black people and repeatedly pressed, in particular, their inherent right to be directly represented in Parliament, Provincial and Municipal Councils and in all Councils of State.<sup>37</sup> This attitude was a demonstration not only of the willingness and readiness of the Black people to co-operate with the government but also evidence of their sincere desire for peace, harmony and friendship amongst all sections of the South African population. It is unfortunate that the government did not see any light in these overtures at the time.

It would be interesting to note the role of the Broederbond in government policy formulation and implementation at that time. The Broederbond, meaning the fellowship of brothers, was a secret Afrikaner organisation that had emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century, came into its own once the NP took power. Broederbonders in the civil service and armed forces, in the teaching corps and professions, were committed to advancing the interests of an 'Afrikanerdom' that was defined by the exclusion of others, of English-speakers and anyone who was not White. The Broederbonders were against the conciliatory attitude of Smuts's and Botha's politics and the emphasis on building a sense of a shared South African nation among Afrikaans- and English-speaking people. In 1945, Smuts had tried to break their power, ordering civil servants who were members of the secret organisation to resign or face dismissal. A little more than 1 000 resigned,

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<sup>36</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 219.

<sup>37</sup> Letter dated 21 January 1952 from the ANC to Prime Minister D.F. Malan. University of Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>.

and two were dismissed. One of them, Wentzel du Plessis, had the satisfaction of taking Smuts's Standerton seat in the 1948 election.<sup>38</sup> From the preceding it may be deduced that government policy was informed by influential groupings like the Broederbond, who were protecting the interests of Afrikaners.

From May 1948, the 'affirmative action' of the time, called by another name then, was vigorously applied and the Broederbond was the pool from which the NP drew recruits for top government posts. And through the Broederbond, the government reached deep into civil society to consolidate its national mission. The cohesion of Afrikaner nationalism was vital to the government in its first years in power. The men who ran the armed services, government departments and big state corporations such as the South African Railways were soon Broederbond appointees. They became increasingly powerful in business too, especially in institutions that were formed in the years before the Second World War with the express goal of establishing an independent Afrikaner stake in the economy. In education there were few towns and villages where the Broederbond had not made a little nest for itself which was to serve as a centre of the *Bond* propaganda.<sup>39</sup> According to Radebe the Broederbond was an organisation of elite consultative groups, the members of which were selected to ensure representivity of all sectors of Afrikaner activity. Members were to be mission-conscious Afrikaners who desired to represent and serve the best interest of Afrikaners. The names of such members, as well as all proceedings of the Broederbond were strictly confidential.<sup>40</sup> The NP government entrusted the government machinery with dependable individuals who shared its vision on the future of South Africa. This must have been done to ensure that their policies in government were not sabotaged.

It was through legislation that the policies of the NP were actualised. These laws were passed through parliament. Black South Africans were denied the vote, the South African

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<sup>38</sup> M. Morris, Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa, p. 159. N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> M. Morris, Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa, pp. 159-160. E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 18.

parliament was a White parliament elected by Whites. The Blacks had no constitutional means of influencing the policies by which they were governed. Their efforts to make their voices heard, both before and after the advent of the apartheid government in 1948, were put down by increasing repressive legislation, detentions and arrests. A battery of security laws had been passed, from *The Suppression of Communism Act, Act No. 44 of 1950*, through to the 12-day, 90-day, 180-day no-trial detention laws, *Sabotage Act, Act No. 76 of 1962*, *Terrorism Act, Act No. 83 of 1967* and *Internal Security Act, Act No. 74 of 1982*. A Communist was defined as 'any person whom the Minister deems to be a Communist.' Distribution of propaganda could become 'sabotage,' and under *The Terrorism Act of 1967* persons needed only to be suspected of knowing about 'terrorist activities' to be detained. If they survived the customary interrogation and torture and were brought to trial and convicted, sentences ranged from five years' imprisonment or more to the maximum penalty of death. Section 6 of *The Terrorism Act of 1967* provided for the indefinite detention in solitary confinement without access to family, friends or a lawyer. The Minister was under no obligation to inform the family or the public about the detainees and in many cases the whereabouts of a detainee had only been known when he or she was brought to court, either as defendant or state witness.<sup>41</sup> All these pieces of legislation were passed with the aim of suppressing any form of dissension from the prevailing government view or official decision.

The Communist Party was banned in 1950; the two major Black political organisations, the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), were banned in 1960 under *The Unlawful Organisations Act*; and in 1966 the multi-racial Liberal Party was forced to dissolve with the passing of *The Prohibition of Political Interference Act, Act No. 51 of 1968* that banned multiracial political organisations. *The Riotous Assemblies Act, Act No. 17 of 1956* banned political meetings. Under these and other laws thousands of South Africans were banned, placed under house arrest, banished to remote areas, detained indefinitely without trial and imprisoned. A banning order, usually for five years and renewable on expiry, prohibited a person from attending gatherings, from entering certain premises, such as factories, education institutions or areas reserved for members of a

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<sup>41</sup> R. Ainslie, *Children of Soweto*, pp. 26-27.

different racial group. It carried severe restrictions on movement, usually confinement to a specified magisterial district and sometimes to a house or flat for 12 or 24 hours a day. This was known as house arrest. Nothing written or spoken by a banned person could be published or quoted.<sup>42</sup> In spite of this massive array of legislation, the resistance of Black South Africans to racism and repression continued, albeit at a slow and subdued pace. Their militant opposition to the apartheid system that denied them all basic human rights was emasculated. Needless to say, these laws and their implementation put resistance of Blacks to discriminatory laws in disarray and enfeebled the strength of their resistance.

### 2.3 The CNE and the laws affecting Black education

Education policies and laws in South Africa were influenced by the CNE policies. In the heated nationalist climate engendered by the Great Trek centenary celebrations in 1938 and under the auspices of the FAK, an institute of CNE was established to formulate a detailed education policy for South Africa. In the CNE Committee sat men representing the Dutch churches, the teaching profession, Afrikaans Universities and Afrikaans Cultural leaders.<sup>43</sup> After years of preparation, a pamphlet with the distillation of CNE principles was published in February 1948. Before the end of that year the NPs were in power and in a position to start implementing their education policy.<sup>44</sup> According to Ashley the CNE was the official ideological position of Afrikaner Nationalists on education. There have consistently been two central features in its development, the first being that all education should be based on the Christian gospel and the second that humanity was divided into nations and that education should reflect these national differences. He asserts that CNE received its formal codification in 1948 with the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> J.C. Coetzee, Christian National Education. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 18. J.M. Manganyi, The Genesis and Development of Religious Education as a School Subject in Gazankulu. Unpublished Master of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1992, pp. 70-71.

<sup>44</sup> T. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid, pp. 18-19. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 29. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, pp. 10-11. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 7. D. Bixby, The Roman Catholic Church and Apartheid in Education: A Study of the African Catholic System, 1953-1973. Unpublished Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Extended Essay, University of Cape Town, 1977, p. 27.

publication of the Policy Statement by the Institute for Christian National Education in Potchefstroom. He depicts the Policy Statement as marking a historical shift from an education occurring in private, confessional schools towards a system organised on Christian National principles.<sup>45</sup> CNE was discussed in Parliament early in 1949. Members of the Opposition vehemently contested it, with the ruling party members defending it. This was followed by the declarations of support for CNE by teacher unions.<sup>46</sup> According to those who drew up the policy, including Dr Dönges and Prof. J.G. Meiring, the word *Christian* was defined as 'according to the creed of the three Calvinist Afrikaner Churches.' *Nationalist* was defined as *imbued with love of one's own, especially one's own language, history and culture*.<sup>47</sup> Whilst it may be true that not all what the CNE proposed was accepted by all political parties, it has to be admitted that the crafters of this education policy went out of their way to ensure that it was in line with the NP policy and vision.

According to CNE, God had earmarked South Africa for the Calvinist Nationalists who were to have the final say in all race matters as being 'the senior partner.' This, according to them, was a divinely appointed task. Nothing that was in conflict with the fundamentalist doctrines of the Afrikaner Churches, or that did not actively support it, was to be tolerated. Any teacher not imbued with these doctrines and theories was 'a

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<sup>45</sup> M. Ashley, *Ideologies and Schooling in South Africa*, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> C. Van Heyningin, CNE – Step-by-Step. *The Black Sash*. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 6. Programme of Principles of the Nationalist Party of South Africa: Character and Purpose. National Archives Depot, Source UOD, Vol. 1937, Ref. E176.

<sup>47</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 19. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 7. J.C. Coetzee, *Christian National Education*. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 20. R. K. Muir, *Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education*. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 37. J.H. van Wyk, *Opvoedkundige Denke in die Republiek van Suid-Afrika – Strominge en Teenstrominge: 'n Waardering*. In J.J. Bingle, *Besinning en Verantwoording*, p. 10. *Christian National Education: Report to the Executive Committee of the Transvaal Teachers' Association. The Transvaal Education News*. Vol. 80(10), November/December 1980, p. 9.



deadly danger' to the community.<sup>48</sup> Munro, the Organising Secretary of the Christian Education Movement (CEM), to which many schools were affiliated, insisted that government schools, supported as they were by all sections of the community, were distinct from church schools, and should not be called upon to propagate the views of any particular denomination. His movement supported the policy of the provincial education departments, and in particular the clause in the Transvaal Education Ordinance which stated that "no specific doctrine or dogma which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination or sect shall be taught in any public school. The CEM also upheld freedom of conscience for the teacher and the learner<sup>49</sup> and opposed any kind of religious test for entry into the profession.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the objections of the CEM, *The Potchefstroom University Act* was passed, in accordance with the second main principle of CNE, namely that "all teachers who are not Christian Nationalists are a deadly danger to us." This Act abolished the Conscience Clause for teachers at the University of Potchefstroom even though it was not a Church institution. The Conscience Clause had made it illegal to enquire into teachers' or learners' religious convictions – except in teaching institutions that were paid for by a Church. The three Churches would exercise the necessary discipline over the doctrines and lives of the teachers. Parents were to appoint teachers and keep a watch on the teaching and, through parents, Church vigilance over the doctrine and lives of the teachers was to be effected. Teachers' training colleges were also to be Christian National. All authority in schools was 'borrowed from God' and this implied that there was no appeal against the discipline of the Church, nor could any criticism of the Church

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<sup>48</sup> Christian National Education: Report to the Executive Committee of the Transvaal Teachers' Association. *The Transvaal Education News*. Vol. 80(10), November/December 1980, p. 10. S. Schoeman, Christelike-Nasionale Onderwys in die Nuwe Millennium: Uitgestorwe of Herrese Onderwysideaal? *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 1999, p. 123. S. Theron, Die Wet op die Nasionale Onderwysbeleid, no. 39 van 1967: Vordering in dié Verband Gedurende die Afgelope Ses Jaar. Speech Delivered at the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU) Stellenbosch Branch Meeting on 17 April 1973. *Die Unie*. Vol. 70(1), July 1973, p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> In this work the word 'learner' is used to refer to a child of school going age; and the word 'student' to refer to a person studying at a university. The word 'student' will be retained only in instances where it refers to a historical body, like the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) and Congress of South African Students (COSAS).

<sup>50</sup> W. Munro, The Church and Education – What of the "English" Churches? *The Transvaal Educational News*. Vol. 59(5), May 1963, p. 11.

or State be allowed. Religion was to be the key subject and was to permeate all the others. History and Geography were to be used primarily to inculcate 'the love of one's own, which is nationalism.'<sup>51</sup> Whilst it may be true that some of these principles might have been sound when viewed against the doctrinal positions of some Christian denominations, what they did not take into account was the fact that South Africa was a heterogeneous country, with a diversity of beliefs, with some individuals openly atheist. Such people's belief systems were not taken into account.

During a secret Silver Jubilee Conference of the Broederbond in Bloemfontein, a Free State school inspector declared,

... A nation is born by having its youth impregnated at school in the traditions, customs, ways and ultimate destiny of its people.<sup>52</sup>

Prof Van Rooy, Rector of Potchefstroom University and Chairperson of the FAK, had this to say in support of CNE,

Our schools must not only be mother-tongue schools, they must be Christian and National schools in the truest sense of the word; they must be places where our children can be steeped in the Christian National spiritual 'kultuur' stuff of our (Boer) people.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> S. Schoeman, Christelike-Nasionale Onderwys in die Nuwe Millennium: Uitgestorwe of Herrese Onderwysideaal? *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 1999, p. 123. The Essence of CNE. *The Black Sash*. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 5. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10. C. Van Heyningin, CNE – Step by Step. *The Black Sash*. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 6. D. Quilp, Education's Progress Backwards. *Fighting Talk*. Vol. 10, No. 9, p. 10. T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 19. Programme of Principles of the Nationalist Party of South Africa: Character and Purpose. National Archives Depot. Source UOD, Vol. 1937, Ref. E176. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, pp. 10-11. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. J.H. Drummond and A.N.M. Paterson, *Apartheid and Geography Textbooks. Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 65-76. 1991, p. 65. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> J.E.G. Malherbe, Separation in Schools. *The Black Sash*. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

From the foregoing it may be deduced that the CNE did not take the spiritual and cultural orientations of other population groups into account.

According to CNE there had to be mother-tongue schools, and there was to be no mixing of cultures, religions and races. As such, White children were separated into English- and Afrikaans-speaking groups, and they in turn could not be mixed with Black, Indian or Coloured children. History, for instance, could not be taught in mixed schools, because the Afrikaans children could not be taught the history of their own heroes if there were English children in the class. In a mixed class of English and Afrikaans children there would be two sets of historical 'facts'. Children were to be imbued with their own brand of sectional and secular ideas. CNE encouraged home, school and State to work together. Coloured and Black education was to be Christian National and self-supporting; children were to be taught that their real happiness lay in being separate and inferior.<sup>54</sup> The CNE did not take into account the fact that the children in the schools would be adults one day, who would have to work in the same environment with people from other racial groups in South Africa. It was therefore important for them to be taught the same subject content and values in order for them to build a united South Africa.

Article 15 of the Manifesto of the Institute for CNE stated that,

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<sup>54</sup> S. Schoeman, *Christelike-Nasionale Onderwys in die Nuwe Millennium: Uitgestorwe of Herrese Onderwysideaal? Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 1999, p. 123. The Essence of CNE. *The Black Sash*, Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 5. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, pp. 10-11. C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 23. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 7. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, pp. 50-51. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. Education Beyond Apartheid. SPRO-CAS Publication No. 5. Report of the Education Commission of the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society. Johannesburg, 1971, p. 80. S. Schoeman, *Die Calvinistiese Onderwysleer: Pedagogies Normatief of Anti-Normatief? Hervormde Teologiese Studies*. Vol. 50/4, 1994, p. 985.

Native education should be based on the principles of trusteeship, non-equality and segregation; its aim should be to inculcate the White man's view of life, especially that of the Boer nation, which is the senior trustee... Owing to the cultural infancy of the native, the State, in co-operation with the Protestant Churches, should at present provide Native education. But the native should be fitted to undertake his own education as soon as possible, under control and guidance from the State.<sup>55</sup>

The perception that the culture of Black people was underdeveloped led to the contention that the education of Blacks must be administered by White people on behalf of Blacks.

Articles 14 and 15 of the Manifesto extended CNE principles to cover the Coloured child too:

The Coloured man... must be educated according to Christian National principles... only when he has been Christianised can he and will he be truly happy and secure against his own heathen and all kinds of foreign ideologies which promise sham happiness, but in the long run make him dissatisfied and unhappy. With regard to the National principle, we believe that the Coloured man can be made race-conscious if the principles of apartheid are strictly applied to education just as in his church life. The task of White South Africa to Christianise the native and to help him on culturally... has already found its closer focus in the principles of trusteeship, non-equality and segregation. Hence Native education

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<sup>55</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 20. P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 3. C. Van Heyningin, CNE – Step-by-step. *The Black Sash*. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 6. E. Unterhalter, *The Impact of Apartheid on Women's Education in South Africa*. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 66. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2. R.K. Muir, *Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education*. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa*. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 41.

must be grounded in the life- and world-view of the Whites, more especially of the Boer nation as the senior trustee of the native...<sup>56</sup>

It was explicitly stated that neither Coloured nor Native education must develop at the cost of White education.<sup>57</sup> It was presumptuous for the CNE to believe that Coloureds could get true happiness only when they had been Christianised. Whilst such a belief can be justified when viewed through a Christian prism, it will be successfully contested by other religious groupings that are entitled to venerate their belief systems.

Children were to be taught in their own language. The Transvaal, the Free State and the Cape all had ordinances that eliminated parental choice of language of instruction until beyond Standard VIII. The provincial administrations were permitted to disestablish parallel-medium schools without reference to parents, school committees or school boards. In the Natal Provincial Council the NPs were still in a minority and it was the only Province that had parental option.<sup>58</sup> The suspension of parallel medium schools without the consent of the parents was undemocratic. It would only be reasonable to have the input of the parents body of a school when such major decisions were taken.

According to the NP, the education of the Natives was not to be academic, as this would make them potential Europeans. Their education had to be a manual-type of education to ensure subservience to Europeans. Education for Blacks would be restricted to

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<sup>56</sup> T. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid, p. 20. C. Van Heyningin, CNE – Step-by-step. The Black Sash. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 6. E. Unterhalter, The Impact of Apartheid on Women's Education in South Africa. Review of African Political Economy, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 66. D.C. Hill, Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> T. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid, p. 20. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 30. C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> Education for Isolation. The Black Sash. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 3. E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, pp. 50-51.

opportunities for life.<sup>59</sup> This implied that the acquisition of certain skills by Blacks would be taboo as they were expected to be labourers. Education for Blacks had to be within and among them; this would preclude the possibility of Blacks even trying to venture outside their areas. It was believed that separate education for Blacks would enhance and strengthen better race relations between Blacks and Whites. Schools were to channel learners to serve their own communities. The focus of the NP education policy was on how Blacks could best be managed and not so much on education. The education policy moved from the premise that Blacks were different and separate, therefore different and separate education was supposed to be designed for them. The view of knowing Blacks, understanding what they wanted out of life and where they belonged, was overemphasised.<sup>60</sup> From the foregoing it is clear that the NP education policy was strongly segregationist and based on cultural differences intensified by racial superiority. The efforts of the authorities to limit the development of the latent abilities of Blacks deprived South Africa of the skills and abilities that could have been tapped to the full for the benefit of the whole country.

It is not surprising that there was widespread opposition to the policies propounded by CNE and the NP. The Black Sash repudiated the policy of the CNE because it was a

<sup>59</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157. N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 20.

<sup>60</sup> S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157. N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 20. Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. J. Hyslop, *A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis*. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1. N.O. Nkomo, *The Contradictions of Bantu Education*. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change and Development), p. 127. *The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education*. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116, p. 2.

negation of all that it believed education should be. The Black Sash was formed in 1953 to rouse public opinion against apartheid legislation. Organised by women, the Black Sash, so called because of the emblem they adopted, conducted silent protests outside the Houses of Parliament and by their dignity and bearing won a good deal of sympathy for their cause.<sup>61</sup> The Black Sash maintained that whilst it respected the desire of the Afrikaans-speaking section of the South African population to protect and maintain its language, culture and traditions, it believed that the restricting influence of government policy would increasingly have the effect of destroying the rich heritage of both English and Afrikaans culture. It believed that education should be training for the young to think for themselves, to seek the truth and to follow wherever it may lead; to be tolerant of ideas and ways not their own; to welcome knowledge and culture from whatever source so that they may eventually pass it on enriched with their own contribution. The Black Sash maintained the ideas proposed by CNE would destroy provincial autonomy and facilitate the regimentation of the minds of South African children.<sup>62</sup> It is interesting to note that there was opposition to the NP and CNE approach to education among the members of the Black Sash, an organisation that had members of the White community. It would therefore be fallacious to claim that all White South Africans supported CNE policies.

Indeed, as its South African critics have often pointed out, CNE was neither Christian nor national, nor was it truly education.<sup>63</sup> The proponents of CNE, on the other hand, argued that far-fetched explanations and interpretation were being offered by persons who, through lack of knowledge or through prejudice, failed to grasp and appreciate the basic principle of the policy. They argued that CNE was similar to the philosophy that was readily accepted in almost any civilized country in the world. They argued that the basic

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<sup>61</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 219. The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> The Record of the Government. *The Black Sash*, p. 44. A Summary of the Work of the Christian Education Movement, 1942 to 1956. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Christian Education Movement, AB1014.

<sup>63</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 20. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 9.

principle of CNE was that it is the hereditary right of all children to be educated in their mother-tongue and in the religious atmosphere to which they are accustomed and that only in this way would they realise their potential and develop into complete human beings. Examples of similar practices in the British Isles, Belgium, Sweden, Australia and Russia were cited.<sup>64</sup> The fact that there were similar approaches to education in other countries did not justify the CNE's approach to education in the South African context. It has to be appreciated that South Africa was and continues to be a multi-racial country, and this may not be the case with the other countries.

Van der Walt, arguing in defence of the CNE, acknowledges that the non-Afrikaans-speaking sections of the South African community were distrustful of the CNE. Van der Walt concedes that it is the English speaking community that revealed this inclination. Van der Walt attempts to come to some possible historical reasons for this perpetual misunderstanding of the CNE by the non-Afrikaners. Van der Walt argues that South Africa is one of a number of countries in the world boasting of a pluralistic society in terms of ethnicity and religion. The fact that this is the case constitutes the country's power as well as its weakness. People of different ethnicity and religious background can inspire and assist one another to greater achievement. Conversely, they can be suspicious of and hostile to one another and can have their national strength sapped by fighting and jostling among themselves. Van der Walt says one of the dangers lurking in a pluralistic or multiracial society is the possibility that one of the cultural or ethnic groups may feel that it is busy losing its identity. The CNE principles enable the Afrikaner to protect that which he feels he has a right to: his culture, his language, his religion, his say in education; but at the same time it recognises the demand that non-Christian and non-Afrikaner sections of the South African community have a right to protect that which they respectively regard as valuable. Van der Walt further argues that the two wars

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<sup>64</sup> W.J. du Toit, In Defence of Christian National Education. The Black Sash. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 8. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, pp. 9-10. R.K. Muir, Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 38. S. Schoeman, Die Calvinistiese Onderwysleer: Pedagogies Normatief of Anti-Normatief? Hervormde Teologiese Studies. Vol. 50/4, 1994, pp. 971-973.



against the “English aggressor,” the squalid conditions in the concentration camps and the subsequent anglicising policy of the “Milner regime,” forced the Afrikaner to defend what he held dear.<sup>65</sup> Govender disputes the points made by van der Walt, he asserts that whilst the latter argues that, properly understood, CNE means equality of opportunities for all; in practice it has been widely experienced as an oppressive system of educational segregation operating to the advantage of a privileged few and the disadvantage of the majority.<sup>66</sup> The arguments of both van der Walt and Govender are sound, and could be supported by South Africans depending on which side of the racial divide they found themselves.

In addition to the passing of the laws that ensured that the security of the apartheid government was not jeopardised, the government passed the laws affecting the social life to reinforce apartheid. Black leaders such as Chief Albert Luthuli and Z.K. Matthews remembered that they were not particularly excited by the elections; whichever party won, they felt, it would be business as usual. However, they were surprised by the intensity with which the new government set about its task. Existing inequalities and racial discrimination were institutionalised and entrenched in law. The NPs lay a minefield of laws affecting every area of life from interracial sexual relations to separate living areas and education.<sup>67</sup> Black political organisations, which had traditionally been moderate in their approach, now became more assertive and moved to challenge directly the whole system of discrimination, not merely seeking modification of it. The most conspicuous example of this new approach was the adoption of a Programme of Action by the ANC in 1949. The programme rejected traditional methods of protest, such as petition and deputation, and proposed the use of direct action through boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience in a ‘mass struggle for national freedom.’<sup>68</sup> Any hopes or positive

<sup>65</sup> J.L. van der Walt, Christian National Education is Misunderstood – Why? *Pedagogiekjoernaal*, Vol. 4, October 1983, pp. 155-157.

<sup>66</sup> L. Govender, Education and Democracy. *Woord en Daad*. Vol. 34, Issue 350, Summer 1994, p. 21.

<sup>67</sup> E. Unterhalter, The Impact of Apartheid on Women’s Education in South Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 67. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa*. 1948-1994. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>68</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa*. 1948-1994. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, pp. 168-169. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008.

[www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

dreams that Blacks may have had for the NP before they came into office were soon shattered. Their threat to put Blacks in their place was not an idle one. With the victory of the NP in the polls in 1948 the age of institutionalised apartheid had dawned. Work toward entrenching its position began almost immediately and within two years Malan was able to offer his followers a legislative programme for perpetual domination. Henceforth, the policy of the government would be framed around the single immutable goal of preserving White power in general and the power of the Afrikaner in particular.<sup>69</sup> The resoluteness of the NP government in implementing apartheid legislation did little to ameliorate race relations in South Africa. Whilst it is true that any form of resistance was suppressed, it cannot be argued that in that environment race relations were not polarised.

The battery of race laws introduced in the early 1950s, and extended in the following years, affected every aspect of life for South Africans. They provided Whites with access to the most privileged suburbs, education, jobs and positions, even to exclusive access to beaches, theatres, parks and public toilets. Blacks, by contrast, were excluded from these by law, enforced by the police. Coloureds and Indians enjoyed more privileges than Blacks, but all Blacks were politically disadvantaged and disenfranchised. Discrimination occurred at two levels: 'Grand Apartheid' established separate homelands and residential areas, and 'Petty Apartheid' segregated everyday places.<sup>70</sup> Apart from *The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949, The Immorality Amendment Act, Act No. 21 of 1950*, which outlawed marriage and sexual intercourse between Whites and Blacks, two other laws passed in 1950 formed the cornerstone of apartheid and separate schools,

<sup>69</sup> N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 114. B.J. Barker, P. Bell and A. Duggan, *Illustrated History of South Africa*, p.367.

<sup>70</sup> Apartheid: Petty Apartheid, p. 1. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. [www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_petty.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_petty.htm). P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, p. 142. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1. C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 32. S. Marks and S. Trapido, *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism*. In S. Marks and S. Trapido (ed.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century South Africa*, p. 21.

namely *The Population and Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950* and *The Group Areas Act, Act No. 40 of 1950*.<sup>71</sup> The former Act officially authorised the government to classify all South Africans according to race. If it had not already been so, race now became the *sine qua non* of South African society. The arbitrary and meaningless tests to distinguish Black from Coloured or Coloured from White often resulted in tragic cases where members of the same family were classified differently, all depending on whether one child had a lighter or darker complexion. Where people were allowed to live, work and take children to school could be decided by such absurd distinctions as the curl of their hair or the size of their lips.<sup>72</sup> Pampallis argues that the pattern of legislation was intended to support Bantu Education. *The Population and Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950* laid the foundation for the implementation of apartheid in education. The classification of racial groups permitted the government to design and implement distinctive education for Whites, Blacks, Indians and Coloureds.<sup>73</sup> It will be inaccurate to claim that all legislation was crafted to support Bantu Education. It can, at least, be safely argued that all the legislation of the time, including legislation on segregated education, was fashioned to support separate development. Arguing that education, and not separate development, was the focal point of all other pieces of legislation is misleading.

*The Group Areas Act of 1950* was the foundation of residential separateness. It provided for a particular district to be proclaimed as an area for a particular racial group; no member of another racial group was permitted to own land, live or trade there. If members of another racial group were already established in that area they could, in time,

<sup>71</sup> M. Madelung, *Black Lives under Apartheid*, p. 14. M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*, pp. 161-162. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 17. L. Tikly, *Levelling the Playing Fields Whilst Moving the Goal Post: Changing Discourses on 'Race' in Apartheid Education*. Paper Presented to Kenton at Olwandle Conference, pp. 9-17. V.G. Hiemstra, *An Analysis of the Group Areas Act. Group Areas and Residential Separation*. Papers Read at the Third Annual Conference. *South African Bureau of Racial Affairs*, 1952, pp. 52-53.

<sup>72</sup> C.F.J. Muller, *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa*, p. 482. G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 216-217. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 114. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.  
[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

be compelled to move out. This Act was later supplemented by various other acts aimed at enforcing residential apartheid.<sup>74</sup> This further implied that children could also attend schools only in areas designated for occupation by their race. Black children in Coloured schools were moved to Black schools; this applied to all children who attended schools not designated for their own racial groups.<sup>75</sup> *The Group Areas Act of 1950* ran contrary to all the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights. The enforcement of this Act caused mass uprooting of non-European people from areas and homes that they had built and acquired through the efforts of many generations; it terminated progress in every sphere of life; and it brought about economic degeneration and impoverishment with all the concomitant evils of crime and degradation.<sup>76</sup> This indicates the all encompassing nature of legislation passed by the NP government in support of its vision of enforced apartheid. This prepared the way for segregation in education.

Prosecutions under *The Immorality Act of 1950* continued. Reports of court cases involving mixed race couples frequently appeared in newspapers. In the 1950s the pass

<sup>74</sup> B.J. Barker, P. Bell and A. Duggan, *Illustrated History of South Africa*, p. 377. C.F.J. Muller, *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa*, p. 482. G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 216-217. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 114. F.A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to Vorster 1652-1974: An Introduction to the History of the Republic of South Africa*, p. 334. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.

[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>75</sup> Letter from J.T. Heyns, Inspector of Bantu Education to the Regional Director of Bantu Education on *Bantoeleerlinge in Kleurlingskole*, dated 26 September 1955. Free State Archives. Doc. SOO, Ref. N8/104, Vol. 1/1/57. Letter from J van Zyl, Acting Regional Director of Bantu Education to the Director of Bantu Education, dated 10 February 1958. Free State Archives. Doc. SOO, Ref. N8/104, Vol. 1/1/57. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.

[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Letter dated 20 February 1952 from the South African Indian Congress to Prime Minister Malan. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.

<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php> Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.

[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

laws were most zealously enforced. Convictions exceeded 300 000 annually, about one-tenth of the entire Black urban population. Under *The Urban Areas Act, Act No. 21 of 1923* a Black person might reside on White premises only if employed there; neither wives and husbands, nor children could legally reside with their working kin unless they could prove legitimate employment. Some Whites turned a blind eye, preferring to pay the police fine rather than evict close relatives, but most guarded their servants' quarters against infringements of this Act.<sup>77</sup> These deviations from the observance of these laws illustrate lack of unanimity in the White community to the justification of apartheid. That there were some defaulters amongst Whites indicates lack of support in some quarters for segregation.

Politics had invaded the lives of South Africans. Previously it had been possible to draw a line between public affairs and private life. With the passing of different pieces of apartheid legislation, individuals were wide open to outside interference, affecting where one lived, with whom one played tennis or rugby, the job one held. These Acts were gradually infringing on even parents' fundamental right to choose the education they wanted for their children. It was soon to be dictated by a political doctrine that could talk of the South African nation one moment and deny its existence the next.<sup>78</sup> Some apartheid laws were easy to define and explain on paper, but difficult and inconvenient to implement, not only for Blacks but for all racial groups.

In the light of the policy positions postulated by the NP and CNE, it had become necessary for the government to reconsider laws affecting Black education. Before proceeding to consider the system of Bantu Education that was introduced in 1953, it may be useful to review the situation of the preceding years. In the period before and after World War II (1939-1945) there was agitation from the Afrikaner intellectuals for a different approach to Black education philosophy. As early as 1945, three years before the NP came to power, two prominent Nationalist Members of Parliament spoke up about

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<sup>77</sup> H. Holland, *The struggle: A History of the ANC*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>78</sup> Nusas: *The Citizen, Politics and Education*. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/4/5/1.

the desired type of education desirable for Blacks. Mr M.D.C. de Wet had this to say in the House of Assembly:

As has been correctly stated here, education is the key to the creation of the proper relationship between European and Non-European in South Africa... Put Native education on a sound basis and half the racial questions are solved... I say that there should be reform of the whole education system and it must be based on the culture and background and whole life of the Native himself in his tribe... This (present) policy is also a danger to Western civilisation.<sup>79</sup>

Viewed superficially and in isolation one may be tempted to believe that this statement was a step in the right direction. In essence it was not, as the issues affecting Black education were discussed without their participation in the House of Assembly. Reading the statement made by de Wet with that made by Mr J.N. le Roux paints a different picture in the same House Assembly debates. In support, Mr J.N. le Roux had this to say:

We should not give the Natives an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this, we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and Non-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.<sup>80</sup>

Reading the two statements together clarifies the overt intentions of the authorities to limit Black education.

In the period preceding the ascension of the NP to power on 26 May 1948, Native education was managed by the United Party (UP). The NP and UP differed in their views of what Native education should constitute; what its curriculum should be and how it had

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<sup>79</sup> House of Assembly Debates. 2 April 1945. Cols. 4494-4499.

<sup>80</sup> House of Assembly Debates. 2 April 1945, col. 4527.

to be controlled. The UP rejected apartheid in education because it believed that "... the only hope that the country has is to raise the Native to our level."<sup>81</sup> Prior to the introduction of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*, arrangements for the administration of education for Blacks was complicated, control being divided among the State, the provincial administrations, missionary societies and the people themselves. There was, however, a growing desire among Blacks for their schools to be administered in the same way as Whites'. Several authorities had suggested a transfer of control from the provinces to the State Department that would then be ultimately responsible for the education of learners of all racial groups.<sup>82</sup> The funds for Black education were totally inadequate. Generous voluntary contributions had been made by missions and by Black people themselves. Conditions in most of the elementary schools left much to be desired; teachers were greatly overloaded and poorly paid; the majority of them were poorly qualified and about 18% were unqualified. Many school buildings were very primitive

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<sup>81</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 12.

<sup>82</sup> Union of South Africa. Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, *The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation*. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP to J.C. Grant of Adams College. 11 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. M. Horrel, *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 295. *The Star*, 10 November 1960. Philosophy of Bantu Education. Unisa Archives. Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA. Accession No. 150, File 14. Education for Blacks. Unisa Archives. Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA. Accession No. 150, File 14. Achievements of ATASA. ATASA Diamond Jubilee, 1981. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. O.D. Dhlomo, *A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 113. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 17. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 45.

and there was a serious shortage of furniture, books and other equipment.<sup>83</sup> Christie, Moroe and Pampallis, in their individual works and inputs, agree that the role of missionaries in education has been complicated and often contradictory. As a result, there are different views about church involvement with some arguing that the church has done a lot of good in education. This school of thought asserts that missionaries were humane people who spread the Christian faith among Black tribes, and at the same time they brought education and Western medicine. The other school of thought maintains that missionaries actually helped in the conquest of the Black chiefdoms. It argues that they helped to break down Black culture and imposed Western culture and work patterns. According to this view most Black people did not get schooling at all. Those who did get to school became the elite, privileged group. They contend that mission education actually divided people.<sup>84</sup> Govender, on the other hand, argues that for much of Africa Christian schools meant mission schools with close association with colonialism. Even where the mission school was not openly allied with colonial authority, the fact that it was controlled by people of European origin linked it with European control of Black affairs.<sup>85</sup> It is not surprising that Blacks, at that time, were clamouring for their schools to be administered the same as that of the White people. The glaring shortages of resources and under funding raised this demand. This was compounded by the suspicion with which some people view missionary education.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP to J.C. Grant of Adams College. 11 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. M. Horrel, Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa, p. 295. The Star, 10 November 1960. Philosophy of Bantu Education. Unisa Archives. Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA. Accession No. 150, File 14. Education for Blacks. Unisa Archives. Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA. Accession No. 150, File 14. Achievements of ATASA. ATASA Diamond Jubilee, 1981. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, pp. 32-33.

<sup>84</sup> P. Christie, The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa, pp. 61-62. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. J. Pampallis, The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden, p. 18.

<sup>85</sup> L. Govender, Education and Democracy. Woord en Daad. Vol. 34, Issue 350, Summer 1994, p. 21.



There were, however, many admirable secondary schools and teachers' training schools being conducted by missions with financial assistance from the government, establishments with sound traditions. The South African Native College, later called Fort Hare, was rapidly attaining a standard that would warrant the status of a full university. Towards the end of the Second World War General Smuts of the United Party, then in power, realised that some concessions should be made to the growing aspirations of Blacks. He made various proposals, most of which were not executed because of the change of government in 1948. But one major reform was made in 1945: it was decided that all funds for Black education would be drawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, expansion no longer being dependent on the amounts Blacks contributed in direct taxation. As a result, the expenditure rose to R10 083 820 by 1950/51 and R15 712 388 in 1953/43, when the system of financing was changed again. From the perspective of the achievement of mutual goodwill, one of the most encouraging features of the old system was the interest being taken in Black education by large numbers of private institutions and individuals besides the missions. Although central government provided the major portion of the funds, it had little control of how the money was spent. Every province had its own syllabus and policy; the numerous missionary societies each followed its own way.<sup>86</sup> A Union Advisory Board for Native Education had been created, but, because its function was purely advisory, it could do little to achieve uniformity of policy and clarity

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<sup>86</sup> C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, pp. 34-35. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. M. Horrel, Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa, pp. 295-296. M. Horrel, Bantu Education to 1968, p. 2. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 17. S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 109.

of aims.<sup>87</sup> Prior to and during the Second World War there had been much debate among Whites on the future position of Blacks: Were they to be part of a common, westernised society or were they to be segregated? By implication, should the aim of *education* for Blacks be to assist them to adjust to a Western environment or should it be to lay the foundation for separate communities?<sup>88</sup> It is commendable that despite the racial challenges facing South Africa then, there was some serious thought in some quarters to give a momentous boost to Black education. It is however regrettable that this view was not espoused by the NP government.

#### **2.4 The Eiselen Commission on Black education and its recommendations**

By 1949 the country's 4 500 Black mission schools were increasingly being suspiciously watched by the NP government. The State was unconcerned that the facilities at these institutions were often woefully inadequate to cope with the influx of children wanting an education. To NP ideologues, Natives were different from their White counterparts and therefore had to be taught differently; they claimed that at the mission schools,

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<sup>87</sup> Union of South Africa. Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. M. Horrel, Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa, pp. 295-296. M. Horrel, Bantu Education to 1968, p. 2. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 17.

<sup>88</sup> M. Horrel, Bantu Education to 1968, p. 4.

“dangerous, liberal ideas were being fed into untrained minds by outsiders.”<sup>89</sup> Pampallis on the other hand, argues that the mission school were not necessarily teaching liberal ideas; as part of their efforts to convert Blacks to Christianity the missionaries established mission schools which provided an academic and religious education. He agrees though that the government was not comfortable with mission schools because they did not have full control over them.<sup>90</sup> According to Sithole the design, philosophy and provision of education in any country are a political matter as the education system must reflect the dominant state ideology of the time. The approach, philosophy and design of missionary education threatened to undermine the race based dominant philosophy of the apartheid government.<sup>91</sup>

In January 1949, soon after the newly-elected NP government under Dr D.F. Malan took office, it set up a Commission on Native Education, under the chairmanship of Dr W.W.M. Eiselen, a former inspector of Native Education in the Transvaal, a faithful member of the NP, a former professor of Social Anthropology at the University of

<sup>89</sup> B.J. Barker, P. Bell and A. Duggan, *Illustrated History of South Africa*, p. 379. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 114. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 156. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 16. Policy Statement of the Minister of Native Affairs, Debates of the Senate of the Union of South Africa, 7 June 1954, Col. 2898. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1. C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 32. S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 109. Apartheid and Education. 20 January 2005. <http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/Apartheid.html>

<sup>90</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. J. Pampallis, The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 18.

<sup>91</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Fani Sithole Fani, ANC Activist and currently Deputy Director General in the Free State Department of Education. Bloemfontein, 5 August 2008.

Stellenbosch and later a Secretary of Native Affairs. The instalment of this commission barely a year after the NP came into power serves to indicate the importance of education in the view of the new administration and their long-standing simmering dissatisfaction with the manner in which education for Blacks was conducted under largely the missionary system.<sup>92</sup> The Commission was asked to develop plans for "education for Natives as an independent race," taking into account "their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under ever-changing social conditions."<sup>93</sup> In a country where there was no equality before the law there was very little possibility that the Eiselen Commission could recommend a better system for educating Blacks.

The main terms of reference of the Eiselen Commission were:

- The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under ever-changing conditions could be taken into account;
- The extent to which the existing primary, secondary and vocational education system for Natives and the training of Native teachers could be modified in the content and form of syllabuses in order to conform to the proposed principles and aims to prepare Natives more effectively for their future occupations; and

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<sup>92</sup> M.O. Nkomo, Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities: The Roots of Resistance, p. 50.

<sup>93</sup> B. Rose and R. Tunmer, Documents in South African Education, p. 244. Cape Times, 20 February 1952. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. P. Buckland, HSRC Investigation into Education: Another Brick in the Wall? In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 68.

- The organisation and administration of various branches of Native Education and the basis on which such education should be financed.<sup>94</sup>

It is the view of Pampallis that Eiselen produced Bantu Education. He was the designer of the aims and principles of education for Blacks. He designed primary, secondary, vocational and teacher training education. He produced for the NP a model that would fit into their segregation policies.<sup>95</sup>

Looking at the terms of reference of the Eiselen Commission, it can be argued that it began its work on the premise that a distinction should be drawn between White and Black education. The notion of an integrated type of education was not envisaged by the Eiselen Commission.

The Eiselen Commission invited input from various education stakeholders, among them the Church, which recommended that primary education should be expanded as widely as possible. With regard to secondary education, the Church emphasised the desirability of increasing or expanding opportunities offered to Blacks in secondary school education. It was clear that there were many boys and girls who were capable of profiting from secondary education. The experience with secondary schools was that there was a far greater demand for secondary education than the schools could meet. Such lack of opportunity was liable to lead to the most bitter kind of hostility and frustration by

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<sup>94</sup> Union of South Africa. Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951. P.H. Molotsi, Liberation Education: Politics of Knowledge. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 7. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 114. M.O. Nkomo, Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities: The Roots of Resistance, p. 50.

<sup>95</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

Blacks.<sup>96</sup> The willingness of the Commission to invite inputs from various stakeholders allowed it to get divergent inputs. Unfortunately they were constrained by the government policies of the time in sifting the inputs presented to them.

The 'principles and aims' of education had in fact already been laid down in outline by NP theorists. To understand what the Eiselen Commission was trying to do, the ways in which Afrikaner Nationalists had mapped out the principles for implementing apartheid in education need to be examined. Already, in 1948, the De Villiers Commission on Technical and Vocational Training, while allowing in theory that the education system should be the same for all races, said consideration must be given to background, environment and occupational opportunities. This euphemism cloaked a key argument, namely, that Blacks should receive an education tailored to the limited job opportunities available to them. This idea became part of the rationale of discrimination and inferior education for Blacks in South Africa.<sup>97</sup> It was limiting to provide education in order to prepare Blacks for certain job categories only. Needless to say, this denied children the full development of their latent abilities.

The Eiselen Commission Report was released in 1951. The Commission's voluminous report 'verified' in almost every detail the earlier findings of the Institute of CNE. It was no coincidence that Dr Eiselen provided the academic rationalisation in support of the theories of apartheid, which Dr Verwoerd later implemented in *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*.<sup>98</sup> It also led to much of the ensuing legislation that classified the inhabitants of

<sup>96</sup> Memorandum Presented to the Commission of Enquiry on Native Education. August 1951. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Diocese of Southern Rhodesia, Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB690f.

<sup>97</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 18. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 109. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 547. Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, pp. 1-2. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, p. 11. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82.

South Africa into airtight ethnic compartments. Both Dr Verwoerd and Dr Eiselen had studied in Germany while there had been a great emphasis on racial differences and on the superiority of the White Aryan race.<sup>99</sup> It can therefore be safely assumed that Dr Verwoerd and Dr Eiselen had been influenced by their exposure to the ideological thinking of some German institutions at that time.

Some of the main points of the report were:

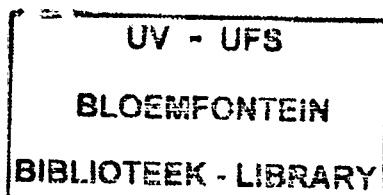
- A Division of Bantu Affairs should be set up and control of Black education be transferred from the provinces to a Bantu Education Department;
- Missionary control of schools should be gradually abolished;
- Black education should be made compulsory in future, and
- Mother-tongue instruction should be provided beyond Standard 2 in the course of time.<sup>100</sup>

From the foregoing it is evident that there was a lot of concurrence between these recommendations and the principles laid down by the CNE. The CNE had earlier recommended mother-tongue instructions and the Christian national focus of education.

The Commission on Native Education stated that there were two schools of thought in South Africa: those who believed that Black culture was inferior and must gradually disappear; and those who believed that, while the old traditional Bantu cultures could not

<sup>99</sup> E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, p. 547. Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, pp. 1-2. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 11. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Union of South Africa. Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 45.



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cope with modern conditions, they nevertheless contained in themselves the seeds of a developing modern Bantu culture. It was as a result of such perceptions and debates that the Commission listed religious knowledge and attitudes as the first need education had to provide for. It recommended that religious instruction should be made a compulsory subject in all schools.<sup>101</sup> This recommendation did not take into account that not all Blacks were Christians. Some Black people had their own belief system that did not necessarily agree with Christian principles, yet religious instruction was made compulsory for all children attending schools regardless of the religious affiliation of their parents.

The recommendations of the Eiselen Commission, though expressed in the cool and apparently objective language of officialdom, were in fact aligned with the emotive CNE programme. It recommended that all education, excepting foreign languages, should be through the medium of the mother-tongue for the first eight years and mother-tongue instruction should gradually be extended upwards to secondary schools and training institutions; but both official languages should be taught from the earliest school days, "in such a way that the Bantu child will be able to find his way in European communities; to follow oral or written instruction; and to carry on a simple conversation with Europeans about his work and other subjects of common interest." Handwork taught in the first few

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<sup>101</sup> S. Schoeman, *Christelike-Nasionale Onderwys in die Nuwe Millennium: Uitgestorwe of Herrese Onderwysideaal?* *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 1999, p. 122. A.W. Hoernle and E. Hellmann, *The Analysis of Social Change and its Bearing on Education*. South African Institute of Race Relations, 1952. National Archives Depot. Source BO, Vol. 88, Ref. NE 41649. *Education Beyond Apartheid*. SPRO-CAS Publication No. 5. Report of the Education Commission of the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society. Johannesburg, 1971, p. 79. S. Schoeman, *Die Calvinistiese Onderwysleer: Pedagogies Normatief of Anti-Normatief?* *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*. Vol. 50/4, 1994, p. 986.



years of school should aim at inculcating “the habit of doing manual work.”<sup>102</sup> It can be safely argued that the recommendation that the Eiselen Commission made had already crystallised in the policy positions of the government. The Commission’s recommendation on the issue of mother tongue instruction only served to ratify what the CNE had already postulated.

The Commission’s other recommendations were that Bantu Education should be integrated organically with all other State efforts designed to raise the level of Bantu life; that, to secure efficient co-ordination of planning, it should be removed from provincial control and be administered by a Department of Bantu Education; and that Bantu communities should gradually take over local control from religious bodies, but only when the Bantu governing bodies had achieved the threefold test of cash, competence and consent.<sup>103</sup> The removal of education for Blacks from Provinces to a national government department was commendable as it would ensure uniformity, better coordination and control of education. It is unfortunate that this single national department would only cater for the educational needs of Blacks and not all the people of South Africa.

The Eiselen Commission further recommended that all post-matriculation training should be planned in conjunction with development schemes. For this reason the subsidisation of

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<sup>102</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 21. W.W.M. Eiselen, Opening Address: 1969 Conference on Bantu Education. Paper Presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education – South African Institute of Race Relations, 16 to 17 January 1969. Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa’s Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008. S. Theron, *Die Wet op die Nasionale Onderwysbeleid*, no. 39 van 1967: *Vordering in dié Verband Gedurende die Afgelope Ses Jaar*. Speech Delivered at the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU) Stellenbosch Branch Meeting on 17 April 1973. *Die Unie*. Vol. 70(1), July 1973, pp. 20-21.

<sup>103</sup> Circular from W.W.M. Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-Aided Bantu schools, 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 21. O.D. Dhlomo, *A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 115.

institutions providing such training should be controlled by the Department of Bantu Education and not by the Department of Education. Blacks should be allowed to attend White institutions only to study such subjects that were temporarily not provided at their own institutions.<sup>104</sup> It was awkward that Blacks would only be allowed to study at White institutions in instances where a subject was not provided for in their own institutions. This would constrain integration.

It will be fascinating to look at how the people reacted to recommendations of the Eiselen Commission. The Eiselen Commission's report provoked widespread protest by the Black people. Blacks who had given evidence showed an extreme aversion to any education specifically adapted for the Bantu. The teachers, particularly Zephaniah Mothopeng of the Transvaal African Teachers' Association, provided a bold and dynamic lead, setting the tone of resistance to NP education schemes. In a spirited Presidential address in 1953, Mothopeng told a conference of Black teachers in Pretoria that there was a great struggle in the offing throughout the continent of Africa. He noted that on the one hand were the ideas of the "ruling classes as represented by the Eiselen Commission Report, and on the other, those of the struggling masses."<sup>105</sup> This and other comments made by the Black people planted seeds of resistance to apartheid education.

Other sections of the Black community soon picked up this torch. Needless to say, this was a true reflection of widely held feelings. Dr AB Xuma, then National leader of the Black people, told the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Blacks that,

Native education is as much a problem for the African parent as Native Policy itself is. South African Policy is a policy of deficiencies, disabilities, restrictions and denials for the African Native education, whatever that means, is an attempt by the powers-that-be, to evolve a new

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<sup>104</sup> T. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid, p.21.

<sup>105</sup> P.H. Molotsi, Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 9. Achievements of ATASA. ATASA Diamond Jubilee, 1981. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. The Journal for Christian Scholarship, p. 23.

type of education, distinct and apart in aim, purpose and results from European education and from all education as it is known in the civilized world.<sup>106</sup>

Dr Xuma denounced the proposed Bantu Education that could only be 'inferior' in quality and quantity in order to stifle the progress that the Blacks could make in education. He noted that inadequate finances always plagued Native education, with a consequent lack of accommodation, understaffing and overcrowded classrooms. He lamented the fact that Blacks were excluded in law from free and compulsory education solely on the basis of their colour.<sup>107</sup> From the foregoing it is evident that Black education was rapidly becoming an emotionally charged and highly politicised issue. This is not surprising as the aims of the NP government were in stark contrast with the aspirations of Black communities.

Nelson Mandela<sup>108</sup> asserted that in its effort to enslave the Black people, the government had paid particular attention to the question of education. He argued that the control of Black education had been removed from the provincial administrations and missionaries and vested in the Bantu Affairs Department so that it should conform to State policy. He averred that instead of free and progressive education calculated to prepare him for his responsibilities as a fully fledged citizen, the Black was indoctrinated with a tribal and inferior type of education intended to keep him in a position of perpetual subservience to Whites. He called upon the entire South African nation to close ranks and to make a

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<sup>106</sup> P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 10. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 147. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 2. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 110.

<sup>108</sup> Nelson Mandela. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. 29 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson\\_Mandela](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela). Retrieved on 29 May 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mandela.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mandela.html) Nelson Mandela. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. [www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html)

supreme effort to halt the Nationalists and to win freedom.<sup>109</sup> In the midst of consistently passing laws that had serious racial undertones, it was difficult for Black political leaders to see value even in innocent policy positions recommended by the Commission. The centralisation of education management and control might have been appreciated in a politically neutral environment.

In 1952 the South African Institute of Race Relations convened a national conference at the University of Witwatersrand to study the epoch-making report of the Eiselen Commission. At this Conference a note of doubt, uncertainty and even anger was repeatedly sounded by speaker after speaker. It could not have been otherwise, the recommendations made by the Eiselen Commission's Report seemed to strike at the very roots of what Black people had embraced as Native education under the control of the Christian missions, a system that had been known in South Africa for a century and a half. It was cause for serious concern for the conferees that the Commission had recommended that Black education be removed from the administration of the provinces, whose machinery had become familiar to Blacks, and be placed in charge of an untried central Department of Native Affairs, a Department that had not always been highly regarded by Blacks. The mood at the Conference of 1952 was understandably permeated

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<sup>109</sup> Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. Appeal to Students and Scholars, Leaflet issued by the All-in African National Action Council, signed by Nelson Mandela, Secretary of the All-in African Action Council. April 1961. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/mandela/1960/pr6104.php>

with grim forebodings.<sup>110</sup> The gripe of the conferees on the removal of Black education from the Christian missionaries is understandable because of the high quality of education the latter provided. It was, however, unjustified for the conferees to lament the removal of education from the Provinces to the Department of Native Affairs only on the basis of familiarity with the former arrangement in education. The fact that the Department of Native Affairs was known for under-performance could be a valid reason for the dissatisfaction, and not the question of familiarity.

The Commission was criticised for recommending that education was the means of turning the Black into a more efficient labourer, fitted to play a static and preconceived role in the community, a role which ignored the degree of industrialisation of South Africa and the economic integration of the Black into it. The Commission recommended a content of education that was meagre, narrow and so insignificant that it could be fobbed off to a department that dealt with other aspects of Bantu life.<sup>111</sup> Whilst the centralisation of education had some merit, the fact that Black education was placed in the Department of Native Affairs was problematic, as the said Department did not specialise in education, but dealt with all aspects of Black life.

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<sup>110</sup> Union of South Africa. Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 17. Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. M.W. Kgwane. *Primary and Secondary Schools in African Education in South Africa*. Paper Presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education – South African Institute of Race Relations. 16 to 17 January 1969. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, *The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation*. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. D. Bixby, *The Roman Catholic Church and Apartheid in Education: A Study of the African Catholic System, 1953-1973*. Unpublished Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Extended Essay, University of Cape Town, 1977, p. 27. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 45.

<sup>111</sup> *The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education*. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

The most objectionable and revealing recommendation was the proposal that English and Afrikaans were to be taught in such a way that the Bantu child would be able to find his way in the European communities; to follow oral or written instruction; and to carry on simple conversation with Europeans about his work and other subjects of common interest. This clearly revealed the intended role the Blacks would be moulded to play in South African society. It was a negation of every fundamental aim of education and it was a policy that would ensure that the Black doctors, teachers, scientists, trained agriculturalists and nurses who were so desperately needed, would never be produced.<sup>112</sup> As far as possible, the vernacular was to be the medium of instruction in educating the Bantu. The Commission argued that "the question of mother-tongue medium is vital to the whole system." The Commission did not differentiate between urban and rural schools; it did not go into detail on the multiplicity of schools which would be required to carry out this policy in an urban area; nor did it consider that such a policy in rural schools would only serve to perpetuate tribal animosities.<sup>113</sup> Limiting the scope and depth of the education for Blacks in order to prepare them for subservience did not serve the objectives of education in any positive way.

After the NP came into power, it attempted to impose its apartheid policy with total disregard for the feelings of the people it affected and with disastrous consequences for the country as a whole. Race relations reached a most critical stage in the history of South Africa. There was unbridled incitement of racial animosity and prejudice among the different population groups and unremitting racial propaganda; there was a steady increase in police violence and intimidation, and in race riots hitherto unknown. There was a constant tendency to place unlimited and arbitrary powers in the hands of

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<sup>112</sup> The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, p. 1. The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10.

Ministers, powers that were being used to crush the rights and liberties of Black people under the provisions of the various laws enacted by the government.<sup>114</sup> These circumstances provided fertile breeding ground for racial polarisation in South Africa. This could have been avoided had the authorities adopted a more reconciliatory stance on major policy matters like education that affect the lives of people directly.

## **2.5 Bantu Education and reaction to its legislation**

In 1953 the NP government of Dr Malan was returned to office with an overwhelming majority. This implied that the majority of White South Africans favoured the policy and practice of the NP. The demoralising wrangle within the United Party was further proof of this. It was the view of the ANC that when it came to the so-called 'Native policy', the two major parties thought along similar lines, but used different words to express their common thoughts.<sup>115</sup> After coming to power the NP government tried to use education policy aligned to its general policy of apartheid, as an instrument for isolating the Black people, and eventually the Coloured and Indian people from South African society as a whole, and from one another. Before the advent to power of the NP, despite general adherence to racially segregated schools and divergences in standards in the four provinces that comprised South Africa, the education offered to Blacks was the same as that offered to Coloured people, Indians and Whites as regards content and academic standards. Though the opportunities and the facilities available to Blacks, Coloureds and Indians were inherently inferior, a universal education system applicable to all the people

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<sup>114</sup> C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, p. 32. Letter dated 20 February 1952 from the South African Indian Congress to Prime Minister Malan. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php> M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 149.

<sup>115</sup> "A Challenging Situation" Presidential Address to the Annual Conference of the ANC, Natal Branch, Ladysmith. 31 October 1953. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/lutuli/sp531031.php>

of South Africa was the cornerstone of education policy.<sup>116</sup> The unequivocal return of the NP to power in 1953 was an unmistakable vote of confidence in their policies. This gave the ruling party impetus to continue to consolidate its racial policy. Armed with the CNE and Eiselen Commission report, education was the next logical area to focus on.

The instrument formulated by the government in the 1950s to restructure Black education was *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*. The restructuring was part of a policy aimed primarily at protecting White workers from the threat of Black competition for skilled jobs that emerged as a result of economic expansion and Black rural-urban migration during the Second World War; and secondly, at meeting the demands of White farmers for unskilled Black labour; and finally to stem rural-urban migration. It was also the stated purpose of the Act to implement CNE in the sphere of Black education.<sup>117</sup> *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was aimed at bringing Black education, previously dominated by missionaries and State-regulated at provincial level, under direct central State control in a strictly segregated system informed by the values of Afrikaner Nationalist ideology. This development must be understood as part of the State's drive to restructure the social reproduction of the urban Black working class in response to the social and political crisis that had developed during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Union of South Africa. Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 17. B. Nannan, *Discrimination and Segregation in Education in South Africa*. March 1971. Unit on Apartheid, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116. C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 32.

<sup>117</sup> *The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa*. Research and Education in South Africa. Paper Number 3, pp. 1-2. J. Hyslop, *A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis*. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

<sup>118</sup> T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 47. J. Hyslop, *A Preface to People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-56 School Boycotts*. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers: Collin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.2.



To fully understand the notorious system of Bantu Education, it is important to note its historical and ideological underpinnings. In 1936, 18 years before *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was passed, the Welsh Commission foreshadowed the Act when it stated,

From the evidence before the Committee, it seems clear that there still exists opposition to the education of the Native on the grounds that it makes him lazy and unfit for manual work. It makes him cheeky and less docile as a servant. It estranges him from his own people and often leads him to despise his own culture.<sup>119</sup>

There were views that good education given to Blacks would result in them not wanting to do certain kinds of jobs and thus lose his potential for manual labour. This limiting view was in conflict with the general educational principles that seek to tap the full potential of people. This was an artificial way of determining the socio-economic structure of society.

In 1935 a Departmental Committee on Native Education declared,

The education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for subordinate society... The limits of Native education form part of the social and economic structure of the society.<sup>120</sup>

*The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was to form the basis for the control and provision of Black education for four decades. It brought all Black education under the control of the Department of Native Affairs. When Verwoerd in his capacity as Minister of Native Affairs explained the Act in the House of Assembly, he said, among others,

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<sup>119</sup> S. Mkatshwa, Keynote Address at the First Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee National Consultative Conference held at the University of Witwatersrand on 28 and 29 December 1985. Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> P.H. Molotsi, Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 2.

Racial relations (in South Africa) cannot improve if the wrong type of education is the creation of frustrated people who, as a result of the education they receive, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled immediately, when it creates people who are trained for professions not open to them, when there are people who have received a form of cultural training which strengthens their desire for white-collar occupations to such an extent that there are more such people than openings available.<sup>121</sup>

Verwoerd was wary that developing Blacks to the full would create racial tension. The opposite was, in fact, true. It was the creation of people with inferior education that would create frustrated people, as their prospects for good opportunities in life would be restricted.

As the Minister of Native Affairs, Verwoerd had been clear in explaining the objects of *The Bantu Education Bill*. According to him, the aim of this proposed law was to teach Black children that Blacks are inferior to Europeans. Blacks' education would be taken out of the hands of the people who taught equality between Black and White.<sup>122</sup> The aim of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was, as W.A. Maree put it in the House of Assembly, to yield "good Bantu instead of imitators of western civilization." This attitude was criticised by the opposition as being calculated to retard the development of the Black

<sup>121</sup> Address by the Minister of Native Affairs, H.F. Verwoerd. House of Assembly Debates. 17 September 1953. Col. 3576.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. "No Easy Walk to Freedom" Presidential Address by Nelson R. Mandela to the ANC (Transvaal) Congress. 21 September 1953. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/mandela/1950/sp530921.php> Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, pp. 1-2. Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 45.

man in order to keep him in a permanently subordinate position.<sup>123</sup> It was feared that conflicts might arise should the intellectual development of Blacks be such that their ambition was to integrate with a more developed group. Bantu Education was designed in such a way that it would not alienate the child from his own culture.<sup>124</sup> The objective of Bantu Education was to limit the tuition of Black children to an inferior curriculum sufficient merely to serve the White economy. It created the foundation for mass education for the first time, geared at imparting low-level skills to meet the requirements of post-war industry. It shifted responsibility for Black schools away from provincial education authorities to the Department of Native Affairs. This Act all but terminated independent schooling for Blacks by extensively reducing the role of mission schools that had been instrumental in producing articulate, confident Black leaders since the 1800s.<sup>125</sup> The intentional retardation of the education of Blacks was meant to serve a bigger political agenda of the NP. The panic of conflict arising out of Blacks being given equal education with the other racial groups was misinformed.

Within two years the government had formulated its legislation in *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*. Among the NP's professed objections to the existing system was the fact that

<sup>123</sup> C.F.J. Muller, *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa*, pp. 483-484. Memorandum of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Secretary for Bantu Education. 27 September 1976. Unisa Archives: Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA. Accession No. 150, File 14. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, pp. 157 and 160. H Wolpe and E Ulterhalter. *Reproduction, Reform and Transformation: The Analysis of Education in South Africa*. In E Unterhalter and H Wolpe (ed.). *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 4. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18. J. Hyslop, *A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis*. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> *The Friend*, 5 October 1963.

<sup>125</sup> M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*, p. 164. M.K. Peloo, "The Bantu Back-to-Barbarism" Act. *Fighting Talk*, p. 8. Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. *Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters*, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, p. 1. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 156. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008.

the central government provided most of the funds for Bantu Education, but it had little control over the way they were spent; there was no uniformity under provincial control and missions tended to follow their individual ways; schools were not part of the communities they served; parents had little say in their running and therefore took little interest. The Act was ostensibly designed to give Blacks an education conforming to their needs and opportunities as a separate community.<sup>126</sup> The notion of parents having more say in education was progressive, as they would thereby develop interest in the development of their children. Education could only benefit from the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

The government decision to take over the control of Black education coincided with a demand by Black teachers' associations for a transfer of the control of Black education to the Union Department of Education. The teachers' demand arose from expectations that if Black education resorted under the Department of Education it would be better financed than under the joint control of missionaries and provincial administrations; they also expected that conditions of service would improve. However, Verwoerd as the Minister wanted control transferred to his Department of Native Affairs. He stated that the aim of Bantu Education was to improve race relations; its control should be

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<sup>126</sup> Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to J.C. Grant of Adams College. 11 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. T. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid, pp. 21-22. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 115.

transferred to the Department of Native Affairs that was in contact with the Black people.<sup>127</sup>

Some leaders of White public opinion used every opportunity to present Blacks to the world as sub-human beings, incapable of assimilating civilization. This vilification continued since the Whites had first met Blacks. Some commentators on the other hand, viewed belittling of the Black personality and trying to make them believe that they were insignificant as the worst sin committed against the Blacks.<sup>128</sup> The position of the NP government on the differences between Blacks and Whites was clearly stated in a letter from Prime Minister Malan's Private Secretary to the ANC; it amplified the differences between Blacks and Whites as,

You will realise, I think, that it is self-contradictory to claim as an inherent right of the Bantu who differ in many ways from the Europeans that they should be regarded as not different, especially when it is borne in mind that these differences are permanent and not man-made. If this is a matter of indifference to you and if you do not value your racial characteristics, you cannot in any case dispute the European's right, which in this case is definitely an inherent right, to

<sup>127</sup> G. Mbeki, The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa: A Short History, p. 68. Achievements of ATASA. ATASA Diamond Jubilee, 1981. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. P. Kallaway. Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans, p. 171. M.K. Peloo, "The Bantu Back-to-Barbarism" Act. Fighting Talk, p. 8. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 155. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 45.

<sup>128</sup> Speech Made by Albert Lutuli in Durban. 16-19 December 1954. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/lutuli/lutuli6.php>

take the opposite view and to adopt the necessary measures to preserve their identity as a separate community.<sup>129</sup>

It was the view of the ANC that the abolition of differentiating laws was not based on biological differences, but on a question of citizenship rights which were granted in full measure to one section of the population and completely denied to the other through man-made laws artificially imposed, not to preserve the identity of Europeans as a separate community, but to perpetuate the systematic exploitation of the Black people. The ANC further maintained that the Black people yielded to no one as far as pride of race were concerned, and it was precisely for that reason that they were striving for fundamental human rights in the land of their birth.<sup>130</sup> The diametrically divergent views of the NP leaders and ANC leaders brought no relief to the ever present conflict of ideas on racial issues and how future relations should be managed. Groups on the opposing sides of the debate remained steadfastly unyielding to the other.

The NP government also doubted the intellectual capacity of Black people generally. This perception was based on research conducted by various White scholars.<sup>131</sup> The works of V. Hunkin entitled "Validation of the Goodenough Draw-a-man Test for African Children" compared the performance of American and Zulu children; the research of B. Notcutt entitled "The measurement of Zulu intelligence"; "The investigation of certain aspects of Zulu intelligence" by G.R. Dent; "The educability of the South African Native" by M.B. Fick; "The learning ability of the South African Native compared to that of the European" by J.A. Jansen van Rensburg; and "The measurement of intelligence and aptitudes of African peoples" by Dr S. Biesheuvel all pointed to the low capability of

<sup>129</sup> Letter dated 29 January 1952 from the Prime Minister's Private Secretary to the ANC. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.

<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>

<sup>130</sup> Letter dated 11 February 1952 from the ANC to Prime Minister Malan. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

Blacks to learn.<sup>132</sup> Broeder educationists expressed the view that Blacks were inherently inferior. Jansen van Rensburg authoritatively declared that the demand by Blacks for equal education was absurd and uninformed because:

...the South African native has not the learning ability to be able to compete on equal terms with the average European, except in tasks of an extremely simple nature.<sup>133</sup>

Whilst these authors could claim scholarly and scientific accuracy, the authenticity of their conclusions is doubtful. The real test to their findings would have been to give all racial groups equal educational opportunities and to work on the basis of empirical facts. It will be fallacious to believe that all White people subscribed to the notion of the inferiority of Black people. Not all Whites supported these stereotypes.

The majority of these scholars argued that, "the curve of attention clearly showed a divergence between White persons and Negroes." Senior government officials believed that if these scientific conclusions were generally accepted it would be significant for much of what was said on the colour problem in general and on the Native policy of the Union government in particular.<sup>134</sup> These misconceptions contributed to the biased approach to issues related to the advancement of Black people in South Africa. Such false impressions dictated the decisions of the government to structure a sub-standard type of education for the Black people. Obviously, Blacks and liberal educationists held completely opposed views on education for Blacks.

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<sup>132</sup> Letter from Diepkloof Reformatory to the Chief Inspector, Mr Grobber: Naslaanboeke and Toetse. 29 April 1952. National Archives Depot, Source NRSN, Vol. 194, Ref. N/I/A/10. Letter from the Secretary of Education, Arts and Science to the Secretary of External Affairs: Intellectuele Bekwaamhede van Naturelle, 21 May 1952. National Archives Depot. Source NRSN, Vol. 194, Ref. N/I/A/10. Letter from Dr W.F. Williams of Rhodes University to W.J. Weeden, Assistant Director: Commonwealth Office of Education. 11 August 1951. National Archives Depot. Source NRSN, Vol. 194, Ref. N/I/A/10.

<sup>133</sup> P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> Letter from the Secretary of External Affairs to the Secretary of Education, Arts and Science. 23 April 1952. National Archives Depot. Source NRSN, Vol. 194, Ref. N/I/A/10.

The government dismissed the appeals of the Liberal Party to create a Black middle class with corresponding rights and privileges as 'sickening liberal ideas.' According to Mbeki there was no escape for any Black from the dragnet of apartheid laws; these conditions applied equally to the unskilled and often illiterate worker, the medical doctor, lawyer, the teacher, professional categories of all sorts, business people and ministers of religion.<sup>135</sup> The Liberal Party expressed its profound sympathy with the aspirations of all non-European peoples for their economic, social, education and political advance and desire for liberation from the restrictions and humiliations that should not be suffered by any human being. It deplored the fact that Blacks enjoyed no adequate constitutional means of expressing their just grievances or of having them redressed. The party pledged itself to work for the provision of such constitutional means.<sup>136</sup> Any differentiation of Blacks on the basis of their educational qualifications and social status would still constitute human rights violations of the less privileged. It would be prudent to strive for equality before the law to the point where they would have equal representation in the legislative, executive and judicial structures on merit.

Education in South Africa, in concert with the dictates of apartheid, was divided into four divisions, namely White, Indian, Coloured and Black. Education for Blacks was further subdivided into ten ethnic groups that correspond to the so-called homeland authorities. These divisions were created because the government claimed that they would ensure the maintenance of cultural and social integrity and, moreover, were in accord with the 'divine will'. The 'divine will' argument, while used frequently in the early days when these racially separated education departments were being created, was later changed to the 'preservation of cultural uniqueness' proposition.<sup>137</sup> By dividing the people according

<sup>135</sup> G. Mbeki, The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa: A Short History, p. 70.

<sup>136</sup> Relations with Non-European Organisations (nd.). Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/2/4/3.

<sup>137</sup> M. Nkomo, Education for Blacks in South Africa: Deconstructing the Myths. United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, p. 3. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 142. T. Nxesi, General Secretary – South African Democratic Teachers' Union. Address to the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association (USA), 4 July 2000. Retrieved 12 June 2008. [www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html](http://www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html), p. 2. K. Maguire, Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk, p. 18.



to race and ethnicity, the government had started a process that would be difficult to manage and keep under control.

The official South African theology claimed that the dominant-subordinate relationship between Whites and Blacks was divinely ordained. Since the separation of nations and races is God's desire, any attempt to alter the arrangement is to defy God and his will. These ideas were inculcated in the youngsters to ensure the continued existence of apartheid. Courses in citizenship and good conduct emphasised submissiveness to employers, territorial authorities and central government institutions.<sup>138</sup> It will be misleading to propagate the idea that all Whites accepted the notion of a divinely predestined inferior position of Blacks. Some White South Africans, English and Afrikaans speaking, accepted Blacks as fellow human beings endowed with God given aptitudes given to all other human beings.

Prior to the introduction of Bantu Education many schools flourished under the Church. There were numerous missionary societies, each with its own agenda. Many of the English medium schools were steeped in English or Continental liberalism. They believed and preached that all men are equal in the eyes of the Lord and some of their schools were replicas of certain schools at 'home.' They imported White staff members from the mother-church and most of them were outspoken critics of the government of

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<sup>138</sup> N.O. Nkomo, The Contradictions of Bantu Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change and Development), p. 129. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10. *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 May 1959. Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

the day.<sup>139</sup> Most of the mission schools had to close down as it was beyond their material resources to provide education for great masses of very poor children without grants-in-aid from the State. Churches had to make great financial provisions at such short notice that it was impossible. Even had the money been available, there was no guarantee they would be permitted to continue their work for long. Many of the Churches had already had to abandon cherished institutions because they happened to be situated in areas that were designated for Whites in terms of *The Group Areas Act of 1950*. They accepted the inevitable and surrendered or closed their schools.<sup>140</sup> The closing down of twenty-four Catholic mission schools since the passing of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* led to great hardships and posed many problems. Hundreds of learners had to find alternative schooling, Native teachers were left without jobs and valuable properties built up over many years were standing dormant. The closing of these schools, either through withdrawal of the State subsidy or because their registration had not been renewed,

<sup>139</sup> Philosophy of Bantu Education. Unisa Archives. Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA. Accession No. 150, File 14. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 35. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 116. S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 109. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008.

<sup>140</sup> E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 550. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008. Statement to Adams College Inc. Authorised by Vote 4, Special Meeting of the American Board Mission Council, 25 September 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC56/11. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html) S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 116. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, pp. 155-156.

prevented many of the Native learners from continuing their education.<sup>141</sup> The closing of missionary schools that gave quality education and taught the people principles of equality was regrettable. The government could have utilised the base that they had laid to further develop the skills of the people of South Africa.

There were three types of schools: Bantu community schools, established or maintained by Bantu Authorities, tribes or communities and, in approved cases, subsidised by the State; other State-aided schools, including mission schools, which were allowed to exist provided that in the Minister's view such a school did not hinder the establishment of a community or government school; and, finally, all existing provincial schools which would become government schools. More government schools could be established. All schools were to be registered and it would be illegal for anyone to establish, conduct or maintain a Bantu school without registration, which was solely at the discretion of the Minister. This struck more seriously at the mission schools.<sup>142</sup> The fact that the Act allowed for the establishment of different types of schools is praiseworthy. It is, however, unfortunate that restrictive conditions were put that would make it almost impossible for the mission schools to be established. One of the matters the Minister could consider in

<sup>141</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008. The Sunday Times, 11 January 1959. The Star, 7 January 1959. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 113. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, pp. 155-156.

<sup>142</sup> T. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid, p. 23. Letter from the Archbishop of Cape Town to the Archbishop of Canterbury. 28 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 1095. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, p. 116. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, pp. 154-155. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 45.

giving his approval was whether the school conflicted or overlapped with a Bantu community school in the area concerned, as the latter took precedence.

The Act stipulated that all Black schools would have to be registered with the government, and the registration would be at the discretion of the Minister. This measure enabled the government to close any education programmes that were not in line with its aims. Mission schools could only operate with government permission after consultation with the Black communities concerned. In 1955 the State enacted legislation to restrict the operation of mission schools even further, with the result that mission education was drastically reduced and replaced by State schools. Whereas in 1953 there were more than 5 000 State-aided mission schools, in 1965 there were only 509 out of a total of 7 222 Black schools.<sup>143</sup> Under *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*, any Church or other body that wished to continue running or establish a school for Blacks was free to do so, but without a State grant, unless the Minister approved of the school. The Bill gave the Minister the authority to proclaim a date after which no one could establish or conduct a school for Natives other than the government, unless it was registered. Registration was subject to the Minister's opinion that it was being run in the interest of Black people.<sup>144</sup> The Act gave the Minister wide-ranging powers over education. These powers if not properly exercised could smother alternative positive initiatives by other education providers. The fact that education institutions not geared to promoting government interests were not

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<sup>143</sup> Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. P. Kallaway, *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, p. 171. M.K. Peloo, "The Bantu Back-to-Barbarism" Act. *Fighting Talk*, p. 8. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. O.D. Dhlomo, A Survey of Some Aspects of the Educational Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Natal as Reflected in the History of Amanzimtoti Institute 1835-1956. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Zululand, 1975, pp. 113-116. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 159. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 45.

<sup>144</sup> *Daily News*, 13 August 1953. Statement to Adams College Inc. Authorised by Vote 4, Special Meeting of the American Board Mission Council. 25 September 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC56/11. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 45.

recognised suffocated other educational initiatives that were not aligned to government vision and thinking.

These extensive powers of the Minister, included control over teachers, syllabi and any other matter related to the establishment, maintenance, management and control over government Bantu schools. The Act made provision for community participation in the running of schools through school boards and committees, but ultimate power and control were firmly in State hands.<sup>145</sup> Even if the school boards had been given the measure of control they expected it is doubtful if they could immediately have taken control from the long-established and experienced missionary boards. In many rural areas the board members were illiterate and even an urban school committee might contain only two or three literate members. Thus the teachers, who were among the elite of Black society, could have no real respect for the committees and boards. Many parents who were originally willing to accept the Act were soon disillusioned.<sup>146</sup> The levels of education of the Black parents was a serious handicap to their effectiveness in participating in the decision making structures at schools.

Before the end of 1954 the Department of Native Affairs had notified missions that all training of teachers for State and State-aided schools would be undertaken by the

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<sup>145</sup> Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. P. Kallaway, Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans, p. 171. C.T. Wood, Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa, p. 32. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 149.

<sup>146</sup> Bantu Education. The Black Sash. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 40.

Department only.<sup>147</sup> The result of these measures was that education, and particularly teacher training, lost its most competent and dedicated White teachers. For the next decade the quality of education deteriorated considerably.<sup>148</sup> It was government policy to transfer most of the high school and teacher training facilities from urban areas to rural homelands. Many learners in 'Whites areas' had to go to the homelands as boarders for their high school and teacher training education. By the early 1970s, mission schools that had once been the mainstay of Bantu Education had been reduced to the care of about 63 000 learners, only about 1,8% of the Bantu learners in South Africa. In these mission schools the learner: teacher ratio was still lower than 40: 1; in government schools it exceeded 60: 1.<sup>149</sup> The option of mission schools to retain their schools with 75% of the government subsidy did not extend to training colleges. It was clear that if the mission schools maintained control of their training colleges, it would be at their own expense

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<sup>147</sup> S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 150. Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 550. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18.

<sup>148</sup> Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 2. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 550.

<sup>149</sup> Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 550. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18.

(assuming they were allowed to do so).<sup>150</sup> No teacher trained there would be allowed to teach at any government-aided school, limiting their future prospect of employment as they could only teach at private schools.<sup>151</sup> The government did not appreciate that the task of educating the South African population could not be undertaken by it alone because of its limited resources. Education is a joint venture that calls for the partnership of other stakeholders. The restriction that stipulated that student teachers who graduated at mission's training colleges would not be allowed to teach at government schools was a disincentive for prospective student teachers to attend these colleges as their prospects for employment as teachers would be limited.

The speech that Dr Verwoerd made before the Senate in 1954 was probably the clearest general statement of the NP government policy on Bantu Education,

It is the policy of my Department that (Bantu) education should have its roots entirely in the Native areas and in the Native environment and in the Native community. There Bantu Education must be able to give itself complete expression, and there it will have to perform its real service. The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open. For that reason it is of no avail for

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<sup>150</sup> R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 2. Letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Archbishop of Cape Town. 27 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 1095. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. Letter from Jack Grant of Adams College to Mr and Mrs Hill. 7 October 1955. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/7B. Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-Aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Archbishop of Cape Town. 27 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 1095. Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of Adams College. 12 July 1956. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/9a. Letter from Jack Grant of Adams College to Mr and Mrs Hill. 7 October 1955. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KCM55/7B. Circular from W.W.M Eiselen, Secretary for Native Education, to all Grantees, Superintendents or Managers of State-Aided Bantu schools. 7 June 1954. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC9A.

him to receive training which has as its aim absorption into the European community, while he cannot and will not be absorbed there. Up till now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him from his own community and practically misled him by showing him green pastures of the European but still did not allow him to graze there. This attitude is not only uneconomic because money is spent on education which has no specific aim but it is even dishonest to continue with it. The effect on the Bantu community we find in the much discussed frustration of educated Natives who can find no employment which is acceptable to them.<sup>152</sup>

These views were strongly contested in Parliament by members of the Opposition. For instance, Mrs Helen Suzman emphasised that "it was quite futile to try and keep Natives in perpetual intellectual twilight and lead them back to a tribal Eden." Bantu Education, whilst it was to be administered and financed separately as if it were a completely isolated entity in South African life, ignored the fact that Black manpower was inextricably bound up with the running of industry, agriculture and public service. It ignored the fact that all South African races were irrevocably interdependent. They had been so in the past, and would continue to be so in the future, as long as South Africa remained a unified Republic.<sup>153</sup>

According to Sithole education was used to indoctrinate children to accept their status in the South African community. The main policy change was the stripping down of the curriculum content to reflect the dominant ideology espoused by government.<sup>154</sup> In line with CNE principles, the structure and content of the education process in South Africa, particularly in subjects such as History and Geography, reinforced apartheid views. Explicitly ideological indoctrination in White schools was most often effected through

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<sup>152</sup> Policy Statement of the Minister of Native Affairs, Debates of the Senate of the Union of South Africa, 7 June 1954, Col. 2896-2925. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 546.

<sup>153</sup> E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 547. Apartheid and the Struggle for People's Education. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.3.

<sup>154</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Fani Sithole, ANC Activist and currently Deputy Director General in the Free State Department of Education. Bloemfontein, 5 August 2008.



the Youth Preparedness programme.<sup>155</sup> The object of Youth Preparedness was to teach the individual 'to withstand the onslaught against his spiritual and physical integrity.' Weekly Youth Preparedness classes in White high schools included films and lectures on the 'terrorist onslaught' and talks by ex-learners who had served in the Army. Militarism was most strongly inculcated through the cadet system, which was part of the Youth Preparedness programme. The cadet programme involved ideological training, intelligence and counter-intelligence procedures, methods of warfare and instruction in field craft, camouflage, tracking and marksmanship. The cadets were later directly controlled by the South African Defence Force which provided all the equipment, financed the units, trained the officers and ran holiday camps for the 'junior leadership' element.<sup>156</sup> Whilst the leadership skills given to children through these programmes were laudable; it was, however, regrettable that children at their young and delicate age would receive intelligence and ideological training.

According to Luthuli, President of the ANC, Dr Verwoerd with *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* attempted "to use the school as an instrument of dwarfing the human personality of Black people. Black children were made to feel inferior to White children."<sup>157</sup> There was a marked difference in the nature and scope of the indoctrination of Black children at

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<sup>155</sup> J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10. Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, pp. 1-2. G. Cawthra, *Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine*, pp. 55-56. Extract from the Primate's Presidential Address to the Convocation of Canterbury. 19 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 1095. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. *Education Beyond Apartheid*. SPRO-CAS Publication No. 5. Report of the Education Commission of the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society. Johannesburg, 1971, pp. 82-83.

<sup>156</sup> G. Cawthra, *Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine*, pp. 55-56. Extract from the Primate's Presidential Address to the Convocation of Canterbury. 19 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 1095. Titshala. *Bantu Education Makes its Bow*. *Fighting Talk*, p. 5. Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, pp. 1-2.

<sup>157</sup> Speech made by Albert Luthuli in Durban. 16-19 December 1954. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/lutuli/lutuli6.php>

school. The Bantu Education school curriculum reinforced the inferior status of Blacks. The Geography syllabus, for example, stressed the uniqueness of the various homelands within an interdependent economy and portrayed the role of Blacks as junior rather than equal partners. The History syllabus, in focusing on the building of a modern republic, emphasised White development and denigrated African values, customs, institutions and historical events. Religion classes (Religious Instruction or Bible Studies), a mandatory subject for Blacks in the lower classes, emphasised 'love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, justice, truth, inner compassion, humbleness and thankfulness.'<sup>158</sup> The education of Black children was designed to make them accept their inferior status. The virtues taught to Black children in Religious Studies classes were noble, but what is critical are the motives for teaching them, for these 'virtues' induced a passive and accepting mind set.

The government enforced mother-tongue instruction up to Standard VI in line with the CNE policy. Whilst instruction in the mother-tongue is a sound education principle, Blacks viewed it with suspicion and rejected it for political reasons. They wanted to acquire knowledge of English, become part of Western civilisation and learn the same things that Whites did and obtain the same opportunities and powers that Whites possessed. A Black person explained that isiXhosa or Sesotho was "no use in the world." But government policy was aimed at limiting the Black's knowledge of English, isolating him from the liberal ideas expressed in English language and literature and reducing his

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<sup>158</sup> Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, p. 4. N.O. Nkomo, The Contradictions of Bantu Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change and Development), p. 129. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 145. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 9. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008. S. Schoeman, Die Calvinistiese Onderwysleer: Pedagogies Normatief of Anti-Normatief? *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*. Vol. 50/4, 1994, p. 986.

communication with English-speaking people.<sup>159</sup> It is unfortunate that even positive government policies, such as mother tongue instruction, could not be appreciated because they were clouded by political undertones of a pernicious agenda.

According to Marumo the children who were at schools at that time were surprised by the abrupt switch over from English to their vernaculars. With the unexpected change and without the guidance of the Department, the teachers struggled with concepts in Black languages to an extent that in some schools there were special morning staff sessions where the translation of certain concepts from English to Black languages were discussed. Marumo says some consensus would be reached by the teachers and only then would normal classes commence. Teachers were in some instances confronted with situations where they would not know the Sesotho or IsiZulu equivalent of an English concept in the middle of a lesson. A teacher in that situation would have to figure out with the assistance of the children which word or words would be appropriate.<sup>160</sup> It was the haphazard manner in which the mother-tongue policy was introduced that led to these awkward arrangements. The teachers had been trained to teach their subjects of specialisation in English, had to then teach them in their vernaculars without proper training and the appropriate textbooks. With proper planning and ground work these anomalies could have been obviated.

It will be interesting to focus on the financing model for Bantu Education. An effective education system requires adequate expenditure and in South Africa woefully little was spent on Black education. The field of education finance clearly revealed the deliberate inadequacy and consequent inequity of Bantu Education which was administered and

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<sup>159</sup> Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 10. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008.

<sup>160</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008.

financed separately as a completely isolated entity.<sup>161</sup> The Sauer Commission of the NP in 1948, the CNE programme and frequently Ministers and politicians clearly spelled out the cardinal principle in financing Bantu Education, namely that the Black must pay for himself. This policy was obviously open to objection, expressed as follows at an Institute of Race Relations Conference in 1952,<sup>162</sup>

Africans should not be expected to pay a direct part in the funding of any portion of the funds used for their children... Most of the wealth of South Africa is in the hands of Whites... Future developments in education for Africans should be financed from general revenue... even if this involves additional taxation. Since South Africa's children are her real wealth, and since South Africa urgently needs the fullest development of every single citizen, no child should have its education hindered for purely racial reasons.<sup>163</sup>

In a normal society the assertion of the Institute of Race Relations would make absolute sense, but in the context of the South African society that was stratified along racial lines it sounded like wishful thinking. It is awkward that the NP government would not yield to Blacks being developed to the level of their White counterparts, as this could have assisted the economy of South Africa to grow in leaps and bounds.

With the introduction of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*, the government retracted the reforms of 1945 which had made Black education a general charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The amount spent on a child's education consequently rose from R7.78 in 1945 to R17.99 in 1954, but for several years there had been a steady decline in the amount that government spent on a Black learner – from R17.08 in 1953/54 to R15.68 in

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<sup>161</sup> E.G. Malherbe, *Bantu manpower and Education*. A theme paper delivered on January 17 at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education. *South African Institute of Race Relations*, p. 1. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 2. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 110.

<sup>162</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, pp. 25-26. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 147.

<sup>163</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, pp. 25-26.

1955 to R11.56 in 1962/63. Blacks became the only racial group that had to contribute directly to the cost of building schools; for the other races it was provided from general revenue. In rural areas applications for building schools were more likely to succeed if accompanied by an undertaking by the Black community to provide classrooms. Local authorities become responsible for interest and capital redemption and the costs of external maintenance while the school committees were responsible for internal maintenance and cleaning. In 1959 the rate of Black taxation was raised and from 1 April 1963 the full amount of tax collected went to the Bantu Education Account. In addition to taxation and local levies, Black parents were under pressure to raise considerable further sums to contribute to school funds, which they often managed by local activities such as bazaars, concerts and sales of work. Equipment for Science, technical classes and handicrafts was supplied, but parents had to pay for replacements. The children themselves had to undertake the daily cleaning of buildings and grounds as well as much of the care and maintenance of buildings.<sup>164</sup> It is unlikely that teaching and learning would thrive under these deprived conditions. The under-funding of Black education stifled the progress that children could have made academically and muffled teachers' efforts to educate the children placed in their care.

## **2.6 Resistance to Bantu Education**

The year 1953 was one of the blackest years in the political history of South Africa; it is a sorry catalogue of assaults upon people's rights, especially on voteless Black groups. The forced removal by armed soldiers and police; the virtually compulsory transfer of Black schools from unwilling Churches and missions to the Native Affairs Department; the introduction into Black schools of curricula designed to condition Black children to acquiesce to a state of permanent inferiority in their own country; the conversion of the status of Black teachers from being members of an honourable profession to that of humiliated beggars, fearing dismissal on the pretext of being 'unsuitable' or 'undesirable'; the introduction of ethnic groupings into urban locations which would promote tribal antagonism and internecine disputes; and the enforcement of the

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<sup>164</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, pp. 26-27. E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, pp. 554-555.

anachronistic *The Bantu Authorities Act, Act No. 68 of 1951*, to mention but a few.<sup>165</sup> It is the introduction of these oppressive measures that would promote general dissatisfaction amongst Blacks.

According to Pampallis *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* aroused strong condemnation from the Black people who were virtually unanimous in their opposition to it.<sup>166</sup> Most Blacks in South Africa believed in integration rather segregation and they objected to the principles underlying the new educational system introduced in 1953, and among many of them the very term 'Bantu Education' was opprobrious. Moreover Black leaders or organisations were never consulted about the proposed change. They would have resented this even if they had been in general agreement with the proposed plan. As a result of the circumstances in which the change was effected, there had been an atmosphere of increasing unrest among the learners, incidents of stoning or arson, and numbers of strikes. The government antagonised very many people from the beginning by insisting on assuming control, forcing out, one by one, most of the missions and various technical colleges. The vast powers entrusted to the Minister in charge of

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<sup>165</sup> Address by Prof Z.K. Matthews. ANC 44<sup>th</sup> National Conference, Bloemfontein, 17-18 December 1955. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/conf/zkadd44.php>. The Education Charter. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical papers: Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.3. Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. Achievements of ATASA. ATASA Diamond Jubilee, 1981. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 155.

<sup>166</sup> J. Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa*, p. 199.

education were feared and resented.<sup>167</sup> It was the vision the Black people had for South Africa that would put them at loggerheads with the government, as their visions were in opposition to one another.

To their credit, it can be truly said that the ANC and other member organisations of the Congress Alliance, together with other democratic groups such as the Liberal Party and progressive political freelancers, had continued to expose without fear and oppose most vehemently the policy of apartheid education. These groups and individuals were the watchdog of the nation. Many freedom lovers in the White community came out openly and boldly to champion the cause of making the Union a true democracy for all, and not a democracy for Whites and a police state for Blacks. There was evidence of a determined, not just sporadic, attack on apartheid from leaders of some sporting organisations, artist groups and religious leaders, when hitherto it was practically quiet in some of these sectors of the nation-community.<sup>168</sup> The 1953 ANC annual Conference resolved to totally oppose *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* and called upon the Black people to do everything possible to compel the government to repeal this Act.<sup>169</sup> Blacks were incensed by this policy of discrimination. Many Black parents regarded education as a door to personal advancement, an escape route for their children from the ditch of a racially

<sup>167</sup> Freedom in our Lifetime. Presidential Address to the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ANC. Durban. 12-14 December 1958. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/speeches/1950/lutuli58.php>. "No Easy Walk to Freedom." Presidential Address by Nelson R Mandela to the ANC (Transvaal) Congress. 21 September 1953. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.

<http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/mandela/1950/sp530921.php> Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html) C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 32. M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, *The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation*. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 149.

<sup>168</sup> Freedom in our Lifetime. Presidential Address to the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ANC. Durban. 12-14 December 1958. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/speeches/1950/lutuli58.php>. "No Easy Walk to Freedom." Presidential Address by Nelson R Mandela to the ANC (Transvaal) Congress. 21 September 1953. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.

<http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/mandela/1950/sp530921.php>

<sup>169</sup> Resolutions of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the ANC. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/conf/resol42.php>

divided society. The NP's plans seemed to shut this door and, even worse, might condition the next generation to a permanent acceptance of an inferior status.<sup>170</sup> *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was the pinnacle of a reprehensible policy of discrimination in education. It was hoped that through this Act Blacks would systematically be debarred from participating in equal measure in the life of the country and continue to act as cheap labour on farms and in mines.<sup>171</sup> It will be fallacious to believe that it was Blacks only who were opposed to Bantu Education. There were White members of the South African community that were opposed to the segregationist policies of the government, including Bantu education.

The situation of Blacks in a plethora of oppressive legislation was aptly captured by Chief Albert Luthuli in his Presidential address to the Annual Conference of the ANC in 1957,

The non-Whites, no doubt, are the main victims of national dictatorial rule. For them there has never been any attempt to rule by consent... With cruel rigidity and terrifying callousness the NP machine, ostensibly to protect White civilisation, rolls relentlessly, crushing all opposition to the NP until what there is of democracy, as known in the civilized world, disappears in the Union.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 22. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18. South African Institute of Race Relations. *Black African Education*. Memorandum Submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Urban Africans, 7 December 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 26.

<sup>171</sup> D. Quilp, *Education's progress backwards. Fighting Talk*. Vol. 10, No. 9, p. 10. J. Hyslop, *A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis*. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

<sup>172</sup> *We Have the Key to Freedom – Not the Oppressor*. Albert Luthuli's Presidential Address to the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ANC, Orlando, Johannesburg. 16 December 1957. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/speeches/1950/lutuli57.php>



The Blacks who were opposed to Bantu Education had no platform for airing their discontentment. It is thus not surprising that the failure of the initial resistance to Bantu Education did not mean the Black came to accept it. Even after the banning of the ANC in 1960, a strong but at times quiet resentment continued.<sup>173</sup>

Developments linked to the implementation of Bantu Education aroused widespread opposition and indignation among White liberals and Black political leaders. Many United Party members were infuriated by their party's token resistance to the mass of apartheid legislation and broke away to form the Liberal Party in 1953. Smuts had led opposition to these moves, but his death in 1950 triggered a change in approach in United Party tactics. Anxious to return to power, the United Party under its new leader, Dr J.G.W. Strauss, began to accept many of the less extreme measures of the NP in the hope of appeasing the White electorate and gaining support in the next elections. Thus, for fear of offending the electorate, opposition to the NP was considerably subdued. Mrs Margaret Ballinger who represented the Blacks in Parliament was persuaded to lead the new Liberal Party that stood for the eradication of all racial discrimination and the introduction of a non-racial franchise.<sup>174</sup> The dilemma of some political parties is appreciated in the context of the competition they had for votes among the White electorate. Their political stance on racial issues was one of the serious determinants of their survival at the polls.

The Liberal Party gave its unqualified support to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation in 1948, and adopted the principle that,

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

<sup>173</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 26.

<sup>174</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 216-218. Memorandum for the Conference of Administrators and Members of the Executive Committee: Transfer of Bantu Education to Central Government (Act 47 of 1953). National Archives Depot. Source BO, Vol. 88, Ref. NE 41649.

Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.<sup>175</sup>

This stance was obviously in direct conflict with the major tenets of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*. The Liberal Party stood for education that was directed towards the full development of the human personality, and strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. The Liberal Party maintained that education must promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, races and religious groups. In contrast to NP education principles, the Liberal Party believed that parents had a priority right to choose the kind of education provided for their children; it maintained that everyone had the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. The Liberal Party supported the principle of compulsory, State-sponsored or -assisted education for all racial groups.<sup>176</sup> Not all White political parties supported Bantu Education and the approach of the government to the development of Blacks.

The mixed reactions to the introduction of Bantu Education and apartheid legislation led to a change in the South African political landscape. It was aggravated by the intractable attitude of the NP government. The gravity of the issues being contested polarised race relations in South Africa. The Black Sash seriously repudiated Bantu Education. It had also renounced its precursor, the government's blueprint for White education, the CNE. The Black Sash asked parents to work for:

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<sup>175</sup> Report of the Education Commission (nd.). Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2. Statements of Policy for Consideration by the National Congress and Summary of Decisions Taken by National Congress. July 1953. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/2/4/3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Adopted and Proclaimed by the General Assembly Resolution 217 III of 10 December 1948. Retrieved on 4 August 2008. [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved on 4 August 2008. [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Rights](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved 4 August 2008. [www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/blunhr.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/blunhr.htm)

<sup>176</sup> Report of the Education Commission (nd.). Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2. Statements of policy for consideration by the National Congress and Summary of Decisions Taken by National Congress. July 1953. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/2/4/3.

- The establishment of schools where children of all language groups were given the opportunity to know one another;
- The restitution of the right of parents to decide on the language used as the medium of instruction;
- The revision of textbooks to ensure that they contained nothing harmful to good race relationships;
- Equal and compulsory education opportunity for all children, White and Black;
- The freedom of teachers and learners from the risk of victimisation on religious or political grounds; and
- Religious instruction, when taught in schools, should be free from denominational bias.<sup>177</sup>

The Black Sash was so determined to frustrate Bantu Education that it urged parents to read History and Social Studies textbooks and draw the children's attention to passages that were open to question. Parents were also encouraged to join their schools' parent-teacher associations and query any attempt at indoctrinating their children.<sup>178</sup> The Black Sash relentless stance on its fight against Bantu Education was in line with what the progressive Black political organisations stood for. Contrary to a widely held view that all Whites supported apartheid education, the Black Sash represented the White people who did not approve of the government's segregation in education.

Since the inception of Bantu Education, the Churches resisted and opposed it and urged Christians to demand the repeal of the Act. The Churches viewed Bantu Education as unchristian, educationally unsound and restrictive to Black people. Father Raymond Raynes, Superior of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection in London, declared that *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was designed to educate people for a certain status in life which had already been decided and delimited for them to make them subservient to Whites. The Church, therefore, condemned it as immoral and an expression of tyranny. In 1955 Father Trevor Huddleston openly challenged Dr Verwoerd, the Minister of

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<sup>177</sup> The Record of the Government. The Black Sash, p. 44.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Justice, Mr C.R. Swart, and Dr Eiselen on *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*. The Churches actively opposed apartheid in education and individual members were detained for their direct and indirect assistance to liberation movements. The repressive response from the government did not diminish the aim and intention of the Churches to fight apartheid education. The Churches stated unequivocally that it was morally wrong to follow a policy whose object was to keep any particular racial group permanently inferior. They further maintained that it was incompatible with the Christian principles embodied by the Church. In the 1960s, the Theological Commission of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in their document entitled "Message to the people of South Africa" reiterated the NP's hostility to Christianity and its objectives to separate people rather than to reconcile differences among them.<sup>179</sup> The church took a very extreme stance in its opposition to Bantu Education. It demanded that the Christians insist on the abrogation of the Act as it regarded what is stood for morally wrong.

With the exception of the Dutch Reformed Church that supported apartheid and the Lutheran Mission, all Christian Churches opposed the new policies, but the unity of the opposition extended only to condemnation of, not resisting the policies. Most of the Churches decided to close their schools rather than hand them over to the State or operate

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<sup>179</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 42. Speech made by Albert Luthuli in Durban. 16-19 December 1954. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/lutuli/lutuli6.php>

within the Bantu Education structures.<sup>180</sup> The Anglicans, the most fearless and consistent critics of the new approach, were divided. Bishop Ambrose Reeves of Johannesburg took the extreme step of closing Anglican schools, with their total enrolment of ten thousand children. Through anxiety to keep children off the streets, the Anglican Church transferred the rest of the schools to the government. Despite their protests, all the other Churches followed suit, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, the Seventh Day Adventists and the United Jewish Reformed Congregation who soldiered on without State aid.<sup>181</sup> The denominations that decided to keep their schools realised the importance of teaching their children very early in their lives about their belief system.

The decision to retain some of the schools run by religious denominations and the consequent need to avoid incurring government displeasure, led to a public strategy that appeared to compromise the Church's stand against apartheid. However successful the leaders of different Churches may have been in retaining their schools, they paid a price in both moral credibility and deteriorating relations with the government.<sup>182</sup> It would be interesting to speculate what government response would have been had all the other Churches chosen to resist. Indubitably the State would have faced a stalemate that would have obliged it to engage in some form of discussion with the Churches. The fact that some Churches yielded so readily weakened the cause of the few courageous ones.

The Church of England, through its leaders and in unison with the Church of South Africa, denounced the injustices of the policy of apartheid and warned its proponents that

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<sup>180</sup> P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 19. Apartheid and Education. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/Apartheid.html> M.E. Botha, "Christian-National: Authentic, Ideological or Secularised Nationalism?" *Our Reformation Tradition*. Institute for Reformation Studies, pp. 501-502. D.F.M. Strauss, Volk and Staat, 'n Ideologie-Kritiese Studie. In *Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap*, pp. 93-96.

<sup>181</sup> P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 156. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 154. J.G.E. Wolfson, The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 11. D. Bixby, The Roman Catholic Church and Apartheid in Education: A Study of the African Catholic System, 1953-1973. Unpublished Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Extended Essay, University of Cape Town, 1977, p. 13.

<sup>182</sup> B. Flanagan, Education: Policy and Practice. A Prior (ed.). *Catholics in Apartheid Society*, p. 88.

it would lead to unspeakable suffering and disaster. It is unfortunate that the Church itself was virtually silenced; under the Emergency Regulations almost any adverse comment on the state of affairs could be treated as an offence.<sup>183</sup>

The statement of the Archbishop of York to the Convocation of the Church of England illustrates how seriously the Church viewed the situation in South Africa,

Great and increasing concern has been felt in this country by reports on the policy of Dr Malan's government towards the coloured and dark people in the Union. This country has no wish to interfere in the domestic affairs of one of the members of the Commonwealth, and we who belong to the Church of England have every confidence in the Bishops of the Church of South Africa. We should, however, make it plain that we believe it to be contrary to the Christian faith to attempt to keep coloured and dark people in South Africa or elsewhere in permanent subjection and to deprive them of opportunities of education and progress... These policies and acts would be opposed to all that is best in our western civilization. They would cause unrest throughout the whole of Africa, resulting eventually in a terrible Nemesis in the uprising of the coloured peoples.<sup>184</sup>

The predictions of the Archbishop of York were to be realised in the constant attacks on innocent White civilians in South Africa and the intermittent uprisings by both adults and young people. The policies of the Malan government and its successors polarised race relations in South Africa.

The Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa also issued a statement that concurred fully with the position of their counterparts elsewhere,

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<sup>183</sup> Statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury on South Africa. 13 April 1960. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), AB 1095.

<sup>184</sup> From the Archbishop of York to the Convocation. 18 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA). AB 1095.

With regard to education we believe that it is morally wrong to educate one particular racial group in such a way as to fit its members only for subordinate and inferior positions... We believe that the only national policy which is morally defensible must be that which gives the fullest opportunity of development to the members of all racial groups. We believe that it is morally wrong to follow a policy which has as its object the keeping of any particular racial group in a permanent position of inferiority; and we believe that racial discrimination as it is practised in this country is directed to this end. In every racial group there are wide differences of ability between man and man, and it is wrong that the opportunities open to a man should be determined by the racial group to which he belongs and not by his own character and abilities. Such a policy seems to us to lead to a system of caste against which the Christian Church has always set its face.<sup>185</sup>

The Union government remained steadfast in its resolve to forge ahead with repressive education policies despite the frank and constructive criticism it received from the Church. The government appeared to be oblivious of the fact that the industrial, economic and cultural development of any country demanded the co-operation of all the racial groups that make up its population.

The resolution of the Church of England to categorically repudiate apartheid was motivated by, among others, the fact that ordinary Blacks thought of the Church as being committed to the doctrine of White domination as expressed by the Dutch Reformed Church and which they had never formally renounced. There was a great deal of anti-Church and anti-Christian feeling among Blacks. The Church of England, therefore, found it imperative for the Church to inform Blacks that it abhorred any idea of racial discrimination, not only in precept, but also in practice. It became the position of the

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<sup>185</sup> Statement issued by the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa. 13 October 1953. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA). AB 1095.

Church of England that if it were to be credible at all, it could not have official relations with any Church that did not similarly disavow apartheid.<sup>186</sup>

Initially the Act was readily accepted by most ordinary Black parents because of the attraction of the Minister's assurance that they would have a greater share in the control of their schools. Many Black parents did not understand the intricacies of the debates around Bantu Education because of their low levels of education. There were a lot of discussions around the laws that Malan had passed. The discussions, however, lacked depth because of the illiteracy of the parents.<sup>187</sup> The parents had, in some instances, to acquiesce to the stipulations of the Act not necessarily out of fear of those in authority, but because of lack of understanding of the implications of the Act. As such there was no consensus on side of the Black parent community on the merits and demerits of the stipulations of the Act.

The parents participated in the schooling of their children through the structure set up by the Act. The Act set up school committees controlling every school and a school board co-ordinating the school committees in a given area. The committees consisted chiefly of nominated members, except in urban areas where there were a few elected members; in rural areas the committees and the boards were nominated partly by Departmental officials and the rest by the chiefs and headmen. In all cases the Department could override the boards when they were critical of government policy. When Bantu Education was forced upon communities in 1954, teachers and learners resisted by boycotting schools. Some teachers were forced to resign; many joined industry and others were

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<sup>186</sup> P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 19. Letter from the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury to the Archbishop of Cape Town. 26 April 1960. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA). AB 1095. Extract from the Primate's Presidential address to the Convocation of Canterbury. 19 October 1954. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA). AB 1095.

<sup>187</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Jemima Marumo, a Retired Nursing Sister and a Student in the 1950s at Ermelo (former Transvaal). Virginia, 4 July 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008.



forced into exile.<sup>188</sup> Many teachers of long standing were dismissed from their posts on the mere whim of an official, without any specific charge being levelled against them, not to mention whether such a charge had even been established.<sup>189</sup> The nomination of parents to school boards was undemocratic, as this was in some instances based on their social standing and affluence.

Scant opposition was raised by the Black schools themselves. On one hand, teachers, although organised to some extent, were largely concerned with their own conditions of employment. Where teachers and officials were known to be unsympathetic to the government's concept of Bantu Education, their contracts were terminated. In his speech to the Senate, Verwoerd made a veiled threat to teachers,

I wish to express the hope that the teachers will not fail in this (that is, in accepting their duties as laid down in the Act) because for teachers who are not faithful in this regard there is no place in the service of the Bantu Education Department.<sup>190</sup>

The success of Bantu Education would depend a great deal on Black teachers. The ANC was apprehensive about where the first allegiance of the teachers would be – with the Native Affairs Department and Verwoerd's plan to educate Black children into inferiority, or with the future of the people fighting for freedom and against the effects of Bantu Education.<sup>191</sup> Black teachers trained by the missionaries had been moulded after an established missionary pattern that always emphasised religion and what the missionaries

<sup>188</sup> V. Brittain and A.S. Minty (eds.). Children of resistance: Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa, p. 105. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

<sup>189</sup> Address by Prof ZK Matthews: ANC 44<sup>th</sup> National Conference, Bloemfontein. 17-18 December 1955. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/conf/zkadd44.php>

<sup>190</sup> Policy Statement of the Minister of Native Affairs, Debates of the Senate of the Union of South Africa, 7 June 1954, Col. 2896-2925. Bantu Education. The Black Sash. Vol. IV, No. 5, pp. 22 and 40.

<sup>191</sup> Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, p. 1.

vaguely referred to as 'character training.'<sup>192</sup> At missionary schools, prefects and monitors were perceived as people that were selected to spy on their fellow students and to report on their activities outside the classroom. As such, the student-teachers had developed the mistaken impression that to be a leader a man must betray his people to a higher authority. Some people held the view that the training of teachers and their absolute dependence for their livelihood on the approval of the authorities had produced a generation of Black teachers that, with few exceptions, accepted their 'place' with humility.<sup>193</sup> It is disastrous that the positive role of monitors and prefects, who were helping the authorities with the maintenance of order and discipline, could indiscriminately be falsely linked to spying and betrayal. Such a view came as a result of the view that there had to be no cooperation with the authorities, even where such teamwork was positive. Such delusions were unfortunate as they could only stifle progress.

Although there were many regional and local learner organisations, they were not politically significant owing at least partly to the fact that there were very few secondary school learners, that is, learners who were likely to have the knowledge and maturity to conduct independent political work; moreover, they were scattered throughout the country. Of the 860 000 Black learners at school at this time, only some 35 000 were in secondary schools. Given this situation, opposition to the proposed Act was organised by the ANC outside of schools in the Black communities.<sup>194</sup> There was no significant learner

<sup>192</sup> C.T. Wood, *Where We Stand - Archbishop Clayton's Charges 1948-57: Chiefly Relating to Church and State in South Africa*, p. 32. Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. E Mphahlele. African Teachers. *Fighting Talk*, p. 6. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

<sup>193</sup> Letter from Arthur Hopewell, MP, to Adams College (Arthur and Owen). 7 September 1953. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/1. E. Mphahlele. African Teachers. *Fighting Talk*, p. 6. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: the Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 6.

<sup>194</sup> *The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa*. *Research and Education in South Africa*. Paper 3, pp. 2-3. J. Hyslop, A Preface to People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-56 School Boycotts. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers: Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.2. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 158.

opposition to *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* as there was no national learner organisation within the schools.

The ANC, on its part, was initially slow to respond to the government's moves in implementing Bantu Education. However, at an ANC conference in Durban in December 1954, a decision was taken to launch an indefinite boycott of primary schools beginning on 1 April 1955.<sup>195</sup> This conference resolved on 'total rejection' of the Act and called on Black parents to prepare to withdraw their children from primary schools indefinitely as from April 1, 1955.<sup>196</sup> The ANC tried to win broad support to prevent the Bill from becoming law, but when the Act was nonetheless passed, the ANC called for a boycott of the Bantu Education Schools and attempted to provide alternative schools. Although many learners observed the boycott at the behest of their parents, its support was by no means unanimous. Furthermore, the alternative schools could not be sustained because of a lack of resources and because the State used its powers under the Act to close such schools or 'cultural clubs',<sup>197</sup> and prosecute the teachers. As a result, organised opposition to Bantu Education petered out and the State was able to impose its control over the education of Black people.<sup>198</sup> The poor network and organisation among learners made opposition to Bantu Education unsuccessful. Attempts of the ANC to organise boycotts

<sup>195</sup> J. Hyslop, A Preface to *People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-56 School Boycotts*. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers: Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.2. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

<sup>196</sup> J. Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa*, p. 199.

<sup>197</sup> 'Cultural clubs' were pseudonyms for schools run by the ANC, they were given this designation for the purposes of evading the law. See Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

<sup>198</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 26. *The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa. Research and Education in South Africa*. Paper 3, pp. 2-3. J. Hyslop, A Preface to *People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-56 School Boycotts*. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers: Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.2. Letter from Jack Grant of Adams College to Mr and Mrs Hill. 30 September 1955. Killie Campbell Africana Library: Adams College Collection. File 1, KMC55/7A. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 158. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

were also not successful because of the reluctance of the parents to support such initiatives. It could be that parents realised the high price that their children would pay if they yielded to the option of school boycotts.

Because of the lack of membership response, the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC) in March 1955 decided to postpone the boycott of schools and instead to concentrate on a boycott of school boards and school committees, but in the Transvaal there was considerable pressure from members and local leaders for the school boycott to go ahead. A new conference to consider the issue was consequently held in Port Elizabeth on 9 to 10 April 1955 where the principle of an indefinite boycott was supported. It was decided that the date for the national implementation of the boycott would be left up to the NEC, but that local boycotts might begin earlier with the NEC's permission. On 12 April 1955 a boycott was launched on the East Rand, spreading to those townships nearer central Johannesburg. From 23 April 1955 boycotts took place in the Eastern Cape. Thousands of learners participated, but the boycotts did not spread significantly beyond these two regions. The 'cultural clubs' sustained vigorous functioning well into 1956, but except for a few areas of particular militancy, the vast bulk of the Black school-going population stayed inside the school system. Gradually support for the boycott waned and by late 1956 the ANC decided to abandon the strategy.<sup>199</sup> Attempts by the ANC to organise boycotts did not enjoy popular support throughout the country, as it would be the case in subsequent decades. This may be attributed to lack of communication and political awareness among the masses of the people.

The daunting prospect of boycotting government-controlled schools, far beyond the material resources of the ANC, seemed to leave parents with the unfortunate dilemma of exposing their children to Bantu Education or giving them no education at all. Since only one Black child in every two of school-going age was actually attending school in the

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<sup>199</sup> J. Hyslop, A Preface to People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-56 School Boycotts. Wits University William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers: Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.2. Apartheid and Education. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/Apartheid.html>. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

mid-1950s, parents were understandably loath to sacrifice an opportunity even for inferior education for those fortunate enough to have it.<sup>200</sup> Then the government intervened to compound the boycotters' difficulties. It announced that all children out of school on 25 April 1955 would be expelled and that unlicensed schools were illegal, with a fine of R100 or imprisonment for those found running them. Under this pressure the school boycott rapidly collapsed, although ANC supporters managed to run several 'cultural clubs' to evade the prohibition of unlicensed schools. At the end of 1956 there were seven such 'clubs' in the Transvaal catering for some 2 000 children.<sup>201</sup> The ANC did not have the material resources to fully support its programme of alternative education to Bantu Education. It is only reasonable that parents opted for their children to continue imbibing Bantu Education, rather than having no education at all.

Whilst the Liberal Party agreed with the ANC that the apartheid education legislation was inequitable, and even reminded the ANC and its supporters that the NP would not necessarily be in office forever, it was opposed to the ANC's attempts to organise education and cultural services to substitute government-controlled schools. The Liberal Party saw no possibility of the ANC applying an alternative education system. It maintained that education, which was a national service, could not be organised effectively on a voluntary basis. They argued that even Europeans, with much more experience and background and greater resources than the Black population could command, could only in extreme circumstances successfully achieve an enterprise of this magnitude.<sup>202</sup> The Liberal Party was totally opposed to *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*, which it viewed as pernicious and oppressive, but it was also apprehensive about the

<sup>200</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 26. T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 22. Report on the Conference on Bantu Education held by the ANC. 9 April 1955. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2.

<sup>201</sup> T. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 22. Report on the Conference on Bantu Education held by the ANC. 9 April 1955. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

<sup>202</sup> Notes by Mrs Ballinger for the Executive Meeting, Re-ANC Conference on Bantu Education. 2 April 1955. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2. Report on the Conference on Bantu Education held by the ANC. 9 April 1955. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2.

means that the ANC proposed to adopt. They maintained that a boycott of the magnitude envisaged would be impossible in practice. The difficulties of organisation alone were prohibitive, but when these were combined with the urgent desire of all parents to ensure that their children receive whatever education they could, the difficulties would become insurmountable. Parents could not be blamed for their opposition to the boycott.<sup>203</sup> At the April 1955 ANC Conference on Bantu Education, it was clear that if a boycott of government-controlled schools was to be successful, it would have to be confined to a limited area, preferably where the ANC was strong and well-organised, such as Port Elizabeth. In the Western Cape, by contrast, where the regional branch had become a plaything of politically interested persons and had no power whatsoever, such a boycott would be impossible. All the resources of the ANC would then be concentrated on a boycott in an area such as Port Elizabeth. In the remainder of the country the situation would be accepted, as there would always be an opportunity for review at a later date.<sup>204</sup> It is not astonishing then that school boycotts were a fiasco and the ANC leadership was compelled to get back to the drawing board. It was perhaps good that these mass boycotts did not succeed, as they could have harmed the future prospects of many children. School boycotts were not a panacea to the challenges posed by Bantu Education.

At the 1955 Annual Conference of the ANC Dr AB Xuma appealed to the conferees to rescind the 1954 resolution of a school boycott. He argued that without an effective alternative system of education, the boycott of schools with its interference with children and teachers was bound to be more detrimental to Black progress than Bantu Education. He emphasised that a boycott would not only be negative, but harmful; in the long run it would cause the Black people to turn against the ANC. He appealed to all delegates to make the Conference one of the most constructive conferences for examination and re-

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<sup>203</sup> Report on the conference on Bantu Education held by the ANC. 9 April 1955. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 158.

<sup>204</sup> Report on the conference on Bantu Education held by the ANC. 9 April 1955. Alan Paton Centre and Archives: South African Liberal Party Collection. PC2/1/2/2.

assessment of their methods, policies and attitudes.<sup>205</sup> There were some Black political leaders who realised the recklessness of school boycotts and advised the ANC to take a more moderate approach to dissatisfaction with Bantu Education. Focusing the attention of the conference on more strategic issues was admirable.

The ANC led Black resistance to apartheid education and Freedom Day, 26 June, became an annual day of protests and demonstrations against apartheid restrictions. The programme of action represented a fundamental change of policy and method. Representations were made with countrywide demonstrations. Strike action and civil disobedience replaced negotiations and words. The ANC drafted a letter to the Prime Minister, notifying him of its decision to conduct nationwide protest meetings if the government refused to repeal the discriminatory laws. It further warned that the protest would be a prelude to a greater plan that would involve the defiance of all unjust laws. The ANC explained that Blacks had unsuccessfully explored other channels to gain justice and therefore had no alternative but to embark on the campaign of mass action. In response, D.F. Malan indicated that his government had no intention of sharing power with 'non-Whites' and reminded the Blacks that the difference between Whites and Blacks was permanent and profound. He further warned that his government would use all its available force to defeat the planned action.<sup>206</sup> By its intractable stance the Malan government had missed the opportunity of ameliorating relations with Black people.

The ANC viewed *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* as a profoundly sinister measure designed to stifle the progress of Black culture as whole. The ANC maintained that the mental outlook of all future generations of Blacks was at stake. Professor Matthews wrote at the time, "Education for ignorance and for inferiority in Verwoerd's schools is worse

<sup>205</sup> Letter on "Certain Tendencies" from Dr A.B. Xuma to the 44<sup>th</sup> ANC Annual Conference, Bloemfontein. 17-18 December 1955. University of Fort Hare, The Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/conf/xuma44.php> *The World*, 28 January 1956. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 157.

<sup>206</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, pp. 219 and 247. The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116, p. 2. P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 23.

than no education at all."<sup>207</sup> The stance of Professor Matthews is contestable. Giving children education whilst waiting for the challenges brought about by Bantu Education to be sorted out was prudent. Suspending educational activities until Bantu Education was revoked would have been suicidal.

When examining youth politics in the 1950s, it is startling to realise that urban young people at the time seem to have been relatively unpoliticised and proved difficult for the ANC to organise. It may be argued that this was partly the result of organisational problems by the ANC, but it was mainly due to the structural position of urban youth of the 1950s, a position that made them far less open to politicisation than their counterparts of the 1970s and 1980s were. Social and particularly educational changes may help to explain why the boycotts of the 1950s proved far less explosive than those coming later, and why they were more clearly and abruptly terminated. From the early 1950s the ANC endeavoured to recruit substantial numbers of young people. However, it faced a significant organisational difficulty. Its youth wing, the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) had emerged in the 1940s essentially as an intellectual splinter group of young leaders who were trying to veer ANC policy in a more militant direction. The ANCYL thus entered the 1950s as an organisation ill adapted to attracting young people to its ranks.<sup>208</sup> As a Congress document of early 1959 states, the ANCYL

consists mainly of intellectuals who feel they must watch over the policy of the ANC and no attempt is made to organise sections of young African workers, scholars and peasants.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 156. Comparison of the Syllabus of the Bantu Education Department with that of the Transvaal Education Department and other Related Matters, (nd.). Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14, p. 1.

<sup>208</sup> J. Hyslop, A Preface to *People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-56 School Boycotts*. Wits University: William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers: Collin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.5.2.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*



Consequently, a situation prevailed where, as a Youth League publication admitted, the ANCYL had but scratched the surface in its efforts to create a genuine mass movement in the country.

In 1954 leaders of the various Black political movements met in Natal and, under the chairmanship of Chief Albert Luthuli, agreed to call a People's Congress. Police raided meetings such as the People's Congress, leaders were harassed and documents seized. The People's Congress met at Kliptown near Johannesburg on 25 and 26 June 1955 and adopted the Freedom Charter,<sup>210</sup> drawn up in response to the NP's post-1948 apartheid legislation and demanding an end to discrimination. The Freedom Charter urged the abolition of racial discrimination and the achievement of equal rights for all. It welcomed all who embraced freedom to participate in creating a democratic, non-racial South Africa. It captured the hopes and dreams of the people and acted as a blueprint for the liberation struggle and the future of the nation.<sup>211</sup> The Freedom Charter declared that,

All shall be equal before the law... All laws which discriminate on the grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.<sup>212</sup>

The Freedom Charter contained a clause specifically devoted to education and culture, in which the ANC and other organisations that endorsed the Charter set out their vision for education in a democratic country. This included the belief that education should be

<sup>210</sup> The Freedom Charter, Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html) and Text of the Freedom Charter, Kliptown, 26 June 1955. Retrieved on 17 June 2008. [www.africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/c/FreedomCharter.htm](http://www.africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/c/FreedomCharter.htm)

<sup>211</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 219. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 162. J. Dugard, N. Haysom and G. Marcus, *The Last Years of Apartheid: Civil Liberties in South Africa*, p. 123. Speech Delivered by Thabo Mbeki, Member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, at a Seminar Held in Ottawa, Canada, from 19-22 February 1978. University of Fort Hare: Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/tmbeki/pre-1994/sp780219.php> M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, pp. 62-64. K. Asmal, D. Chidester and C. Lubisi, *Legacy of Freedom: The ANC's Human Rights Tradition*, p. 60.

<sup>212</sup> Freedom Charter of the Congress of the People. June 26 1955. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: University of the Western Cape. MCH 76: 5. J. Dugard, N. Haysom and G. Marcus, *The Last Years of Apartheid: Civil Liberties in South Africa*, p. 164. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, pp. 62-64.

“free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children.”<sup>213</sup> According to Pampallis the Freedom Charter became a symbol of popular aspirations around which the liberation movement mobilised people for the next four decade, and its demands became internalised in the consciousness of the ANC.<sup>214</sup>

The Freedom Charter became the only South African document of its kind that firmly adhered to democratic principles as accepted throughout the world. The Freedom Charter challenged the very foundation of the apartheid laws and Bantu Education and among South Africans it became the most widely accepted programme for a post-apartheid country.<sup>215</sup>

It will be fascinating to note how South Africa’s neighbours and the international community were affected and reacted to Bantu Education. Although apartheid was primarily aimed at the Black population within South Africa, its implications and negative effects extended beyond the borders of the country. The entire international community took up the issue of apartheid at the United Nations and other international forums. The most dramatic example in this regard took place at the 1963 Summit of the Organisation of African Unity. Section B of the first set of OAU resolutions stated that the Summit had “considered all aspects of the questions of apartheid and racial discrimination” in South Africa, and that it was unanimous in its conviction of the “urgent necessity of co-ordinating and intensifying their efforts to put an end to the South African government’s policy of apartheid and wipe out racial discrimination in all its forms.” It is therefore not surprising that the newly independent states of Southern Africa were committed, right from the beginning of their sovereign existence, to the elimination

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<sup>213</sup> Freedom Charter of the Congress of the People. 26 June 1955. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: University of the Western Cape. MCH 76: 5. J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden, p. 26.

<sup>214</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden, p. 26.

<sup>215</sup> J. Dugard, N. Haysom and G. Marcus, The Last Years of Apartheid: Civil Liberties in South Africa, p. 167. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, pp. 62-64.

of apartheid and all that it implied. Neither is it surprising that the South Africa government battled to maintain cordial relations with its neighbours. These relations were so tentative that South Africa felt itself compelled to conduct raids into neighbouring countries to stem the rising tide of attacks that South African exiles launched from there.<sup>216</sup> South Africa's neighbours did not approve of apartheid policies. As such its immediate neighbours were determined to assist in the elimination of apartheid. This made the security of South Africa vulnerable as some of its neighbours were willing to cooperate with South African exiles who went into their countries.

Despite public demonstrations, UN resolutions and opposition from international religious societies, apartheid was applied with increased rigour in the 1960s. In 1961 South Africa withdrew from the Commonwealth of Nations rather than yield to pressure about its racial policies; in the same year the three South African Sister Churches of the Dutch Reformed Church left the World Council of Churches rather than abandon apartheid.<sup>217</sup>

## 2.7 Conclusion

Education under apartheid was influenced by the epoch-making events of that time. Bantu Education was conceived in the context of intensification of Afrikaner unification and the rise of the NP to power. Influential NP policy making structures, who were predisposed to protecting the interests of White Afrikaners, dictated the policy positions of the NP on racial issues. Education, as a critical and contested terrain between the state and those whom the education system was intended to serve, received priority attention.

The ascension of the NP to power saw a plethora of racially motivated legislation passed. This was with the view of crystallising the perception that White people were divinely ordained to lead the Black people in South Africa. It was the view of the NP that the acceptance of the existence of separate population groups and allowing each group to

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<sup>216</sup> S. Nkiwane, Military and Political Destabilization in Southern Africa. In R.A. Siddiqui, Sub-Saharan Africa: A Continent in Transition, p. 181.

<sup>217</sup> Apartheid: Opposition and Repeal. Retrieved on 15 February 2008.  
<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0856655.html>

develop along its own lines, would bring peace and stability in South Africa. This was unfortunately not true as South Africa was to later experience internicine and sporadic opposition to separate development. This came as a result of Blacks aspiring for the same life opportunities as the rest of the other South Africans. This led to instability in South Africa. The apartheid policies were in direct conflict to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly and what the ANC stood and fought for. It will be misleading to propagate the idea that all Whites supported separate development. Some White people challenged the government policy of apartheid education.

The CNE put policy positions that were to be the cornerstone of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953*. These were later endorsed by the Eiselen Commission. Some of the principles propounded by the CNE were educationally sound. To the credit of the CNE the enforcement of mother-tongue instruction in the early years of schooling was beneficial to the children. There were, however, some principles that were inequitable and perpetuated the notion of the inferiority of Black people. The imposition of Christianity on the Black children attending government schools was done arbitrarily and without due regard to the preferred belief system of the parents. The subtle teaching of Black children to accept their position of subservience, while teaching White children to accept a position of superiority was unwarranted. The political climate in which these policies were postulated did not allow for an objective assessment of the merits and the demerits of these policies by Black people. They rejected some policy positions that would be beneficial to the education of their children on the strength of the fact that they were crafted by a government that did not seem to have their interests at heart. This perception was magnified by the fact that Black people did not participate in the legislative processes that preceded the formulation of the laws intended for them. Politically Black people were disadvantaged and disenfranchised. They had no constitutional means of influencing government policy by which they were governed.

The government entrusted the government machinery to the members of the Broederbond, who occupied key government positions. This was intended to ensure that

NP policies were not sabotaged in government. It is not surprising then that, even in the Department of Native Affairs, senior positions were not occupied by Black people. The latter could not be assigned the responsibility of implementing policies that were intended to stifle their progress. This delicate responsibility could only be delegated to the people who were loyal to the NP policies, and perhaps who stood to benefit from them.

The endeavours of the government to constrain the education of Black children would have far-reaching implications for skills development in South Africa. South Africa, with the requisite human resources, would have had phenomenal economic growth. The fact that competition across racial lines was discouraged through the intentional provision of inferior education for Blacks created serious economic backlogs for the country and stifled the potential of many individuals who would have otherwise excelled in different fields that are key to the industrial and economic machinery of the country.

The concerns of the NP with the education provided by the missionaries were not egalitarian. The government was suspicious that the fact that Black people were getting quality education ensconced in liberal ideas could create a class of Black people with demands that the government would not be able to meet. It is against the background of such considerations that the government was not comfortable with the missionary education. The closure of missionary schools was done haphazardly and without proper planning. This left a serious vacuum in education. The government did not appreciate the fact that it needed partners in education because of its limited financial resources. The gap left by the closure of missionary schools was not only evident in the lack of physical resources, but also in the quality of education that government schools provided as opposed to what the mission schools provided. Mission schools had produced articulate and confident Black leaders. With the closure of mission schools, South Africa would be deprived of such citizens.

*The Bantu Education Act of 1953* gave wide ranging powers to the Minister of Native Affairs. This limited the space for the other education service providers and it created a bureaucracy that would discourage the continued existence of mission schools, as their

establishment was at the discretion of the Minister. The fact that mission schools could not be allowed to operate in close proximity to government schools further discouraged their institution. It was unfair for the government not to create an enabling environment for all schools, public and private, to operate. The creation of different kinds of schools would have created a healthy competition on the nature, quality and financing of these institutions. The parents would have had a broad and democratic choice to make on the type of schools they would want their children to attend. They would choose the values that they want their children to be exposed to and the world view that they want inculcated in their children.

It is not surprising that there was strong opposition to Bantu Education. It is interesting to note that this opposition was not limited to Black people or Black political organisation. Black people, the Liberal Party, young people, teachers, the Black Sash and the Church were all opposed to Bantu Education. The methods and thrust of these different categories of opponents of Bantu Education were not the same. Their goals were, however, the same. It was their goal that there should be equality in education and that Bantu Education should be dismantled.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE HOMELAND SYSTEM AND THE EXTENSION OF APARTHEID LEGISLATION TO COLOURED AND INDIAN EDUCATION

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the formulation and implementation of the Black homeland<sup>1</sup> system, and the arguments for and against this system as a further mechanism implemented to ensure the institutionalisation of separate development. It concentrates on the Tomlinson Commission that investigated the socio-economic development of the Black areas in the Union of South Africa. The chapter explores forced removals and their impact on education. It deliberates on the resultant migrant labour system and its impact on family life and education. It further sketches how Bantu Education contributed to the homelands, as the latter depended on the creation of the Black elite and a bureaucracy in the homelands that would support the policy ideologically and in their operation.

The chapter explores how South African schools for Blacks were designed to fulfil the goal of preparing Blacks for their role in the homelands. The political developments in South Africa in the 1960s and their impact on Bantu Education are looked into. A cursory view of the evaluation of the impact of Bantu Education is undertaken, and how the principles of Bantu Education were extended to Coloured and Indian Education with the passing of *The Coloured Persons' Education Act, Act No. 47 of 1963* and *The Indians Education Act, Act No. 61 of 1965*. The reaction of the Coloured and Indian people to the new education policies is looked into. The chapter further explores calls for improvements in the education for Blacks.

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<sup>1</sup> The "homelands," commonly called Bantustans, were government designated areas for Black settlement. They represented approximately 13 per cent of the land area to which more than 70 percent of the South African population was assigned on the basis of ethnic affiliation. It was in these overcrowded, economically depressed and fragmented areas that Blacks were to exercise their political rights. Of the nine homelands, four – the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei – were granted "independence." According to the 1970 census, less than half the Black population, 46,6 percent lived in the homelands. See M.O. Nkomo, *The Contradictions of Bantu Education*. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change, and Development), p. 126.

### 3.2 Political developments in South Africa in the early 1960s

In 1959 a militant group of 'Africanists' split from the ANC and formed the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), led by Robert Sobukwe. For the first time the ANC was challenged as the leading voice against apartheid.<sup>2</sup> This indicated some Black people's wish to a more radical approach to the problems that plagued the South African community. This was not a good sign for the political developments in South Africa. The radicalization of the liberation movements was a direct response to the unyielding attitude of the government with regard to policies on Black people.

The year 1960 saw the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The NP government called upon all the people of South Africa to celebrate this anniversary under the slogan of "Unity," and had arranged, for this purpose, what was described as a "Union Festival" or "Jubilee." The Black extra-parliamentary organisations argued that for the majority of the people of the Union there was nothing to celebrate. They argued that the union was conceived in bloodshed and war, and it was fathered by the lust for gold and greed for money. As such it was reared in betrayal and falsehood. They regarded the formation of the Union as betrayal of the promises made by the British to the Blacks, in lies told by the fathers of the Union who had promised to honour the constitutional rights of Blacks and Coloured people in the Cape and Natal. The political rights enjoyed by the Black people at the time of Union, meager though they were, had been completely destroyed; those of the Coloured people whittled down almost to nothing; whilst the Indians were denied even the right to call themselves citizens, and were treated as stateless pariahs. The period of Union had witnessed the degradation of the Blacks, Coloured and Indian peoples of South Africa at the hands of the ruling Whites.<sup>3</sup> It was a result of the deterioration of the situation of Blacks in South Africa in general that there was open reluctance to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of the

<sup>2</sup> Life under Apartheid. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.

<http://www.markmclaughlin.ca/southafrica/pages/research/SAHistory/apartheid>.

<sup>3</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-1. Appeal to Students and Scholars, Leaflet issued by the All-in African National Action Council, signed by Nelson Mandela, Secretary of the All-in African Action Council, April 1961. University of Fort Hare, The Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/mandela/1960/pr6104.php>.



Union of South Africa. A period which could have otherwise been a time to reflect on national achievements and project into the future was turned into a phase of political contestation.

The Liberation organisations argued that in the 50 years of Union the non-White peoples experienced oppression and exploitation almost without parallel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They contended that the policy of apartheid had been devised to maintain White supremacy. They illustrated how one law after another had been passed to hold back the natural development of the Black people, even at the expense of the progress of the country as a whole. To them the 50 years of Union had been a period of torment, humiliation, anguish, ceaseless labour and endless struggle. In the words of Chief Luthuli, President General of the ANC:

The Union Festival is a festival of racialism, of the triumph of White supremacy government over the rights of the majority of South Africans. The 50 years of Union have taken away our land and our rights, have tightened the screw of the pass laws when we asked for freedom, given us Bantu Education and tribal colleges where we proved our equality. And now the Nationalist government asks us to sing and feast, eat meat and drink beer to rejoice over the 50 years of Union. We have nothing to rejoice over. To us the festival period must be one of mourning. We cannot make merry or celebrate the loss of our rights. Stay away from the official Festival celebrations... Join in the Freedom Fight instead.<sup>4</sup>

It is an overstatement to argue that Blacks did not benefit anything during the period in question. The expansion of Black education with the introduction of Bantu education could have been something to commemorate. This achievement was, however, clouded by the perception that Bantu education was of inferior quality. There could have been other achievements that could be singled out and celebrated, but these were smothered by

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<sup>4</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-1.

the observation that most of policy positions of the government about Blacks were tilted to their disadvantage.

The preparations for the declaration of the Union of South Africa as a republic were complicated by the killing of Blacks by the police at Sharpeville in 1960. These people were protesting against the pass laws that restricted the movements of Blacks and other minorities. Sixty-nine Blacks were killed. This incident provoked worldwide condemnation of the South African government.<sup>5</sup> This episode fuelled protest against the proposed republic. An event that was supposed to be an occasion for celebration was marred by the violence at Sharpeville and created fears of worse brutality under the Republic's administration.

The leaflet issued by Nelson Mandela on behalf of the All-in African National Action Council calling on students and scholars in Black, Coloured and Indian communities as well as European democrats not to co-operate with the proposed republic or with any government based on force was the first indication that the involvement of learners in the liberation struggle was key to the liberation movements. The leaflet was a result of an All-in African National Action Council conference held in Pietermaritzburg from 25 to 26 March 1961 attended by 1 500 delegates from town and country representing 145 political, religious, social, sporting and cultural organisations. Its aim was to consolidate unity amongst Blacks and to consider the decision of the government to proclaim a republic on 31 May 1961. It was the opinion of the conference that the government was not entitled to take such a decision without first seeking the views and obtaining the express consent of the Black people. Delegates felt that under the proposed republic, the racial policies of the government would be intensified resulting in a further deterioration in the living conditions of the Black people. In this situation the All-in African National Action Council called on all students and scholars to have an important role to play and to:

- Participate in full in the demonstrations.

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<sup>5</sup> Case Studies in Sanctions and Terrorism. Institute for International Economics. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://www.iie.com/research/topics/sanctions/southafrica.htm>. S. Otfinoski, Nelson Mandela: The Fight against Apartheid, pp. 54-55. P. Calvocoressi, South Africa and World Opinion, pp. 1-2.

- Refuse to participate in the forthcoming republican celebrations and in all ceremonies connected with them.
- Popularise the Pietermaritzburg resolution among other learners, the youth in factories, farms and in the streets, to their parents and relatives and to all people in their neighbourhood.<sup>6</sup>

An appeal was made to all learners that if they heeded the call and took these measures seriously they would have made an important contribution to the historic mission of transforming South Africa from a White dominated country to a free and prosperous nation.<sup>7</sup> The intentions of South Africa to sever ties with England and declare itself a republic were noble as this would remove external control of South Africa by another country, thereby attaining freedom from colonialism. These developments would have been appreciated by all South Africans if they were going to ensure equality of all South Africans beyond the declaration of the envisaged republic. In the absence of such guarantees Black people feared that this would mark the intensification of separate development.

It is interesting to note that in that year of the Festival, 1960, many countries of Africa were celebrating their newly-won independence from imperialism. As such there was an expectation from Black people that it would not be long before the peoples of South Africa likewise would be able to celebrate their liberation as free men. With events elsewhere in Africa highlighting the rapid awakening of the 'African giant,' and with the increasing political consciousness of the Blacks in South Africa, the situation seemed desperate for the government.<sup>8</sup> The Black people were increasingly becoming politically conscious and the developments in other African countries were raising their expectations for political liberation.

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<sup>6</sup> Appeal to Students and Scholars, Leaflet issued by the All-in African National Action Council, signed by Nelson Mandela, Secretary of the All-in African Action Council, April 1961. University of Fort Hare, The Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/collections/anc/people/mandela/1960/pr6104.php>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-1. B. Turok, The Pondo Revolt. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-3.

The 1960s ushered a new era in South African politics. On 31 May 1961 South Africa celebrated the inauguration of the new South African Republic, an ideal long cherished by the Afrikaner people.<sup>9</sup> This happened in the atmosphere of intensifying apartheid legislation and resolute protests by South African Blacks. By the end of 1960, the stayaways, the boycotts, the pressure of moral rectitude, growing international dismay and the horror of Sharpeville had failed to sway the National Party (NP) government from its chosen course of apartheid. 1963 was the year of the Rivonia Campaign. Many Black activists reasoned that the only avenue left was to fight to save the lives of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu,<sup>10</sup> Govan Mbeki,<sup>11</sup> Ahmed Kathrada,<sup>12</sup> Denis Goldberg<sup>13</sup> and their comrades who were charged with organizing armed rebellion against the government. In October 1963 the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution by a record 106 votes to 1 (South Africa), demanding the release of all South African political prisoners.<sup>14</sup> The intensifying opposition to government programmes, both locally and internationally, was meeting with resolute government clampdown on any form of opposition to its policies.

The Liberal Party had warned that the new Republic would have no friend in the world as its apartheid policies were unacceptable everywhere. They warned that it would receive little support from the Black people, who were moving from passive to active opposition. They condemned the costly schemes of racial separation while the country grew poorer and poorer, while the government was spending more and more on precautions and defense.<sup>15</sup> The advice of the Liberal Party was labeled as deserving no reply because of

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<sup>9</sup> Letter to the Prime Minister from Alan Paton, Jordan Ngubane and Peter Brown, 9 May 1961. Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/2/6/2.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Sisulu. Retrieved on 8 August 2008. [www.africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-WalterSisulu.htm](http://www.africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-WalterSisulu.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Govan Mbeki. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>12</sup> Ahmed Kathrada. Retrieved on 8 August 2008. [www.kathradafoundation.org/biography.html](http://www.kathradafoundation.org/biography.html)

<sup>13</sup> Denis Goldberg. Retrieved on 8 August 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/goldberg-d.htm](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/goldberg-d.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Life under Apartheid. Retrieved on 16 January 2005.

<http://www.markmclaughlin.ca/southafrica/pages/research/SAHistory/apartheid>. World Campaign for the Release of South African Political Prisoners. *Sechaba: Official Organ of the ANC of South Africa*. Vol. 1, No. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Letter to the Prime Minister from Alan Paton, Jordan Ngubane and Peter Brown, 9 May 1961. Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/2/6/2.

its distorted outlook and wrong statements of facts.<sup>16</sup> Whilst apartheid was disliked everywhere it was exaggeration for the Liberal Party to claim that South Africa would not have any friends in the international arena. South Africa was still able to enter into bilateral and multilateral agreements.

### 3.3 The Tomlinson Commission and the homeland system

The ideas behind the moves for the socio-economic development of Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa came from the report of the Tomlinson Commission that was appointed in 1951 under the chairmanship of Professor F.R. Tomlinson, to investigate the development of the Bantu areas.<sup>17</sup> The report provided the blueprint for Verwoerd's scheme of independent self-governing Black homeland states, the first of which was the Transkei. The commission reported in 1954 and recommended: the enlargement and consolidation of the Reserves, an intensive drive on soil conservation to halt the spread of erosion, and the establishment of industries on the borders of the Reserves to employ surplus labour and prevent the influx of Blacks to the White urban areas. The commission argued that if their recommendations were followed tribal states would be able to support the increasing Bantu population. If this was not done, the Commission argued, the vast majority of Blacks would become concentrated in the industrial areas, creating even greater social problems.<sup>18</sup> It was the view of the Commission that Blacks should not be

<sup>16</sup> Reply from Dr. Verwoerd's Private Secretary, 12 May 1961. Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/2/6/2.

<sup>17</sup> M.O. Nkomo, *Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities: The Roots of Resistance*, p. 52. G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 221. The Implications of the Tomlinson Report on African Education: Bantu Education a Technique of Domination, (nd). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/4/4/1. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: The Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.

[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 221. The Implications of the Tomlinson Report on African Education: Bantu Education a Technique of Domination, (nd). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/4/4/1. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: The Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 5. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22. J. Hyslop, *A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis*. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, pp. 1-2.

integrated into the general population of South Africa. The evolution of South Africa into a non-racial, unitary and integrated state was not recommended. This was in line with the plan for education in South Africa. The whole state machinery was to function in tandem with this notion.

The Tomlinson Commission believed that there was no effective middle course between complete integration, which is economic, political and social, on the one hand, and complete racial separation on the other. It further believed that the Whites would never voluntarily abdicate their power and accept government by the Black majority. It argued that rapid industrialisation of Black areas, together with modernisation of agricultural methods, was essential to the success of separate development. The Commission recommended that towns and industrial cities be established in the Black territories; and that the government, assisted by private White capital entrepreneurship, should accelerate the industrialisation of these areas. The government rejected the idea of White participation in industrial development within the Black homeland areas on the ground that this would tend to defeat the whole objective of separate development.<sup>19</sup> The deployment of White capital in the homelands would in no way dilute the objective of separate development. It was, in fact going to strengthen apartheid, as it would make the homelands viable. Blacks would continue with their lives without any hindrance and without socially interacting with the Whites. The only concern for the officials could have been the injection of White capital in instances where such potential existed among the Black people themselves.

The primary assumption was that South Africa would not evolve into a common, unitary society, chiefly because Whites would never abandon their position of dominance. The commission had therefore limited itself to examining how best the Reserves might be developed to support the Black population.<sup>20</sup> The Tomlinson Commission's report aroused heated argument, some maintaining that too much was being given to the Blacks, and others believed that this was a blueprint for the positive apartheid that would silence

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<sup>19</sup> A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> B.J. Barker, P. Bell and A. Duggan, Illustrated History of South Africa, p.378.

world critics. The opposition parties offered only mild criticism and generally welcomed the new developments. The government went ahead and introduced the homeland system.<sup>21</sup> It was the view of the ANC that the cumulative effect of this policy was to destroy the economic position of the people and to create a reservoir of cheap labour for the farms and gold mines and to prevent the unity plus the development of the Black people towards full nationhood.<sup>22</sup> The view of the Commission that Blacks should not be given the status of full citizenship in South Africa was not sustainable. The majority of Blacks were born and bred in the urban areas and for them to suddenly lose their citizenship of the rich urban South Africa would not be easily attainable.

The Black people in South Africa had never been given the opportunity to vote on the issue of "separate development." However, protests over the imposition of the policy had been made for as long as the NPs were in power. In early 1956 a widely representative convention of Blacks rejected the "ultimate separate development" of the Tomlinson Commission, because it was part of the process whereby Blacks were losing their rights in South Africa as a whole. The South African liberation movements, the ANC and the PAC, had repeatedly condemned the Bantustan policy and those chiefs who were collaborating with the government.<sup>23</sup>

The expansion of primary and secondary education for Blacks in the homelands in the 1960s and 1970s occurred in the context of the development of the Bantustan policy, in which Black political aspirations were to be redirected to artificial and economically

<sup>21</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 222.

<sup>22</sup> Letter dated 21 January 1952 from the ANC to Prime Minister D.F. Malan. University of Hare, Liberation Archives. S. Biko, *I Write What I Like: A Selection of His Writings*, p. 88. J. Noruwana, *Through the Keyhole – Education in South Africa for the Future*. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, *Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration*, p. 17. Letter dated 29 January 1952 from the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister to the ANC. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. J. Hyslop, *A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis*. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, pp. 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, pp. 12-13. *Sanctions against Apartheid South Africa should Inspire the Palestinian People*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article3429.shtml>, p. 2.

nonviable homelands.<sup>24</sup> The history of the exclusion of the indigenous population of South Africa goes back to the early days of White settlement, and at the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 when *The South Africa Act of 1909* confirmed the effective disenfranchisement of Blacks in the Transvaal, the Free State and Natal, and left the Cape African franchise very vulnerable. By 1936 *The Representation of Natives Act, Act No. 12 of 1936* had deprived even the limited number of Blacks who had been enfranchised of their right to vote on the common roll. Exclusion from decision-making and exclusion from land rights went hand in hand. *The Native Land Act, Act No. 27 of 1913* allocated scheduled areas of Native Reserves, denied Blacks the right to buy land outside of these areas, except from other Blacks, in the Cape or by special dispensation. Successive legislation over the years laid down machinery governing the territories that became the Bantustans that became in turn, or were intended to become, independent national states. As the Black population became increasingly a landless proletariat, regulations were introduced for the control of this labour force. Section 10 of *The Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, Act No. 25 of 1945* enacted the conditions under which Black people may live and work in the proclaimed areas. Pass laws of one kind or another had existed, at least in the northern provinces, since before the Union.<sup>25</sup> These were the forerunners for the establishment of the Bantustans and then the independent national states, and for further control of the movement of workers from the Reserves. The way was prepared for the trends that were to obtain in the homelands as a final refinement and sophistication in the control and exclusion of the majority of the population. This made it even harder to work towards a truly democratic society.

<sup>24</sup> S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, Violence in South African schools. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, p. 1. J. Noruwana, Through the Keyhole – Education in South Africa for the Future. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, *Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration*, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> M. Burton, State Strategy: The Bantustans. Beyond Reform: The Challenge of Change, Speeches Presented at the Nusas July Festival held at UCT, July 1983. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.6. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, pp. 1-2.



Racial segregation and the supremacy of Whites had been traditionally accepted in South Africa prior to 1948, but in the general election of that year, Daniel F. Malan officially included the policy of apartheid in the Afrikaner NP platform, bringing his party to power for the first time. Although most whites acquiesced in the policy, there was bitter and sometimes bloody strife over the degree and stringency of its implementation. The purpose of apartheid was separation of races; not only Whites from Blacks, but also of Blacks from each other along tribal lines.<sup>26</sup> South Africa would as a result lack national cohesion because of this segregation.

The 1958 elections saw both major parties with new leaders. Strijdom died in 1958 and Dr H.F. Verwoerd was elected as the new leader of the NP, while the United Party had abandoned Strauss in 1956 and elected Sir de Villiers Graff as the new leader. In an attempt to rid itself of a left-wing image the United Party ended its electoral agreement with the Labour Party. But even this move failed to stem the NP advance, the NPs gained 103 seats, the United Party 53, and Labour did not gain a seat. The Verwoerd government was to see the next stage in the evolution of apartheid with the introduction of homeland system. The homeland system was Verwoerd's master plan for apartheid.<sup>27</sup>

The Liberal Party believed that the Bantustan policy was devised as a cover for the NP intention to oust the Native Representatives from Parliament. It would have looked too bad to the so-called "intellectuals" of the NP if Verwoerd had just summarily dismissed the Liberals. So he concocted the Bantustan Bill to show that there is "after all something in apartheid."<sup>28</sup> The homelands policy was an important part of the NP's plan for South African Development, and its accompanying ideology. The NP desired to give Blacks

<sup>26</sup> S. Biko, *I Write What I Like: A Selection of His Writings*, p. 90. Separate Development Policy. Retrieved on 15 February 2008. <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0856652.html>. J.S. Guseh, Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p.219. H. Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC*, p. 124.

<sup>28</sup> Liberal Party Statement on Second Reading of Bantustan Bill, 21 May 1959. Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/5/1.

the opportunity to develop themselves, each race in its own field, in both the material and spiritual spheres, in keeping with their natural gifts and abilities. The Party declared itself in favour of the territorial and political segregation of the Blacks, of separation between the Europeans and Blacks in general, in the residential, and as far as practicable, in the industrial spheres.<sup>29</sup> It was the genuine view of some Whites that the homeland system and the accompanying separate development were a solution to the complex South African race situation. Viewed in retrospect, this was not correct as South Africa continued to experience racial problems ever after the formal creation of the homelands in the statute books.

Pursuant to this ideal the NP government passed the 1959 *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, Act No. 46 of 1959*, which provided for the establishment of separate Black governments in the geographically fragmented homelands, under the influence of an all White South African government. Under this act homelands were offered a form of internal self-government. This was the foundation of what the state called *groot* or grand apartheid.<sup>30</sup> The so-called homelands were ten tribal territories carved out of the scattered patches of Black reserves that remained after the White conquest of South Africa in the nineteenth century and the subsequent *Native Land Act of 1913*. They were all fragmented pieces of land and none of them, with the exception of QwaQwa, Transkei and Lebowa, comprised as single and integrated land unit.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Programme of Principles of the NP of South Africa: Character and Purpose. National Archives Depot, Source UOD, Vol. 1937, Ref. E176. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> D.W. Krüger, *The Making of a Nation: A History of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961*, pp. 317-318. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 217. Muller, *Five Hundred Years*, p. 486. G. Parker and P. Pfukani, *History of Southern Africa*, p. 220. R. Ainslie, *Children of Soweto*, p. 20. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. S. Marks and S. Trapido, *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism*. In S. Marks and S. Trapido (ed.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century South Africa*, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> *Separate Development Policy*. Retrieved on 15 February 2008.

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0856652.html>. R. Ainslie, *Children of Soweto*, p. 20.

The homelands, commonly called Bantustans, were government-designated areas for Black settlement. They represented approximately 13 percent of the land area to which more than 70 per cent of South African population was assigned on the basis of ethnic affiliation. It was in these overcrowded, economically depressed and disjointed areas that Blacks were to exercise their political rights.<sup>32</sup> The homelands comprised of the territories of the Transkei, Ciskei, Kwa-Zulu, Bophuthatswana, Lebowa, Venda, Gazankulu, QwaQwa, Kangwane and Kwa Ndebele. They comprised ten Black reserve areas: rural territories inhabited almost entirely by Blacks following traditional patterns of life. Of the nine homelands, four – Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei later opted for ‘independence.’<sup>33</sup> This was ‘pseudo independence’ as these territories relied almost entirely on the South African government. These ‘bogus homelands’ created untold problems for their ‘citizens,’ as acquisition of citizenship in these territories implied that their inhabitants relinquished their South African citizenship. In fact, all Blacks, including those born in the urban areas, were expected to eventually find their way to one of those Bantustans.<sup>34</sup> The policy of apartheid did not only separate Blacks from Whites, it separated Blacks from Blacks, based on their ethnicity. That is why it was not possible to create one homeland for Blacks, but separate ones along tribal lines.

Less than half the Black population, 46,6 per cent according to the 1970 census, lived in the homelands. The majority of Blacks who lived outside the homelands were opposed to the homeland system, which was the backbone of apartheid or separate development policies. The latter was a more ‘elegant’ reformulation of apartheid, and purported to encourage equal and parallel social, economic and political development with White

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<sup>32</sup> J. Seidman, *Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto*, p. 6. M.O. Nkomo, *The Contradictions of Bantu Education*. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change, and Development), p. 126.

<sup>33</sup> P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, pp. 16. R.T.H. Dolamo, *Using Political Power to Serve Rather than to Dominate*. CTC Bulletin. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm](http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm)

<sup>34</sup> *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students’ Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. R.T.H. Dolamo, *Using Political Power to Serve Rather than to Dominate*. CTC Bulletin. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm](http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm)

South Africa based on the unique cultural heritage of the races.<sup>35</sup> It was the considered view of the majority of Blacks that losing their South African citizenship was tantamount to losing their livelihood because of the depressed economic situation in the homelands.

As part of the implementation of separate development, the government was trying to 'reduce, halt and then reverse' the flow of the Black labour from rural to urban areas. The slogan was '*back to the homelands.*' This was in spite of the fact that many of the Black people living in the so called White areas had become detribalised and knew no other home than the urban one.<sup>36</sup> The forced removals to the homelands of people who had never been there was creating problems for people who had to part with areas where they had stayed all their lives for areas least known to them.

Whilst the government was putting up the pretence of preparing the Reserves for autonomy, it was determined to ensure that real power would remain in the hands of its officials. The technique employed was that of seizing hold of the tribal machinery and subverting it from within. Bantu authorities came to mean the conversion of the tribal system that had been evolved by the Black people over centuries, and which was basically democratic, into a government-run institution. The chiefs who were previously the respected spokesmen of the people were turned into puppets of officialdom. Many chiefs showed reluctance to accept the new set-up, but these were either coaxed with promises of greater authority or intimidated into conformity with threats of deposition or even banishment.<sup>37</sup> The position of many tribal chiefs was put in a precarious situation.

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<sup>35</sup> Separate Development Policy. Retrieved on 15 February 2008.

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0856652.html>. M.O. Nkomo, The Contradictions of Bantu Education. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 51, Number 1, 1981. (A Special Issue: Education as Transformation: Identity, Change, and Development), p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> E.G. Malherbe, Bantu Manpower and Education. A Theme Paper Delivered on January 17 at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education. South African Institute of Race Relations, p. 20. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, pp. 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> B. Turok, The Pondo Revolt. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-3. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 144. S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 42.

Embracing the system was as unsafe as rejecting it. This made many chiefs ambivalent on the question of the homeland system.

The breathtaking boldness of the NP leaders misled many Whites. Here was the straw they could grasp in the hope that European privilege and domination could be maintained in the developed areas of the Union at the cost of ceding the poverty stricken reserves, which were valueless to them in any case. They accepted NP arguments that this policy fully justified the government's attitude of 'no concessions' to the vociferous demands for political rights by urban Blacks. The poverty-stricken Reserves were to be their 'homelands' and they would be expected to find their political emancipation in these overcrowded backwaters of civilization.<sup>38</sup> The position of the NP was clearly articulated by the Private Secretary to Malan:

It should be clearly understood that while the government is not prepared to grant the Bantu political equality within the European community, it is only too willing to encourage Bantu initiative, Bantu service and Bantu administration within the Bantu community, and then to allow the Bantu full scope for all his potentialities.<sup>39</sup>

The granting of some form of self government to Blacks in the homelands would not satisfy their political and economic aspirations as the White electorate was made believe by the ruling party. Instead the fragmentation would lead to a plethora of challenges that would be costly to manage.

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<sup>38</sup> B. Turok, *The Pondo Revolt*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-3. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 41. J. Noruwana, *Through the Keyhole – Education in South Africa for the Future*. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, *Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration*, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Letter dated 29 January 1952 from the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister to the ANC. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>

It was the view of the ANC that the Reserve land policy had always been designed to protect European rather than Black land rights, as even with the so-called Reserves, Blacks held only occupancy privileges at the discretion of government. It was these discriminatory laws that were preventing the Black people from developing their ambitions and capacities along the lines satisfactory to themselves.<sup>40</sup>

An eminent African educationist, Govan Mbeki, has characterised these homelands as,

South Africa's backwaters, primitive rural slums, soil eroded and under-developed, lacking power resources and without developed communication systems. They have no cities, no industries and few sources of employment. They are congested and permanently distressed areas where the inhabitants live on a narrow ledge of starvation... their chief export is labour... their people pursue primitive agriculture incapable of providing subsistence...<sup>41</sup>

Homelands were virtually devoid of industry, its soil was barren and eroded, and most of its roads remained tracks designed for ox carts. It was in these deprived and arid parts of South Africa that the Black population was to be permanent citizens, and not in the arable and developed parts of the country.<sup>42</sup> The Bantustans contained few major mineral deposits compared with the rest of the country, and a few commercial and industrial centres. There was no way in which they could support the populations assigned to them. It is not surprising then that apartheid hit worst those who were "removed" from the cities to the Bantustans. These people were settled on the land, without resources, sometimes with only tents as shelter, sometimes in "resettlement camps" without adequate food or

<sup>40</sup> Letter dated 11 February 1952 from the ANC to Prime Minister Malan. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.

<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>

<sup>41</sup> G. Mbeki, *South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt*, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> H. Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC*, 124. P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 18. J. Noruwana, Through the Keyhole – Education in South Africa for the Future. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, *Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration*, p. 17. R.T.H. Dolamo, Using Political Power to Serve Rather than to Dominate. CTC Bulletin. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm](http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm) The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7.

water. Policy determined that these people were the economically unproductive, so they tended to be the old, mothers, children and the sick. Much of the land set aside for the homelands was poor, but even where it was potentially productive it was too drastically overcrowded to enable people to live off it. As a result, the Bantustan population lived on the brink of starvation.<sup>43</sup> Some Blacks chose to live in the homelands despite their economic challenges, some because they did not have a choice, some because it was the only area where they could exercise some amount of political independence in South Africa, and some still because of the minimal economic benefits they could derive from such a move.

In the homelands a combination of tribal and bureaucratic authority structures would help to retribalise, and thus further fragment, Black South Africans. The homeland policy depended on the existence of a Black elite and a bureaucracy in the homelands that would both support these structures ideologically and also provide the means for their operation. One of the functions of Bantu Education was to contribute to the homeland policy in both these ways.<sup>44</sup> The Eiselen Commission perceived the two-way relationship between schooling and the homelands as follows:

The reserves, being areas in which Bantu culture functions most completely, have a special task to perform in the furtherance of the development of Bantu culture and schools. Many educated Bantu feel that the reserves are fast becoming economic and cultural slums; places to be avoided by the educated and enterprising. Your Commission feels that special steps should be taken to facilitate and encourage the evolution of a progressive, modern and self-respecting Bantu order of life. Cosmopolitan areas in industrial centres where people of many languages and customs are herded together, provide particularly

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<sup>43</sup> J. Seidman, Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto, p. 8. P.G. Schoeman, South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. The Journal for Christian Scholarship, p. 18. J. Noruwana, Through the Keyhole – Education in South Africa for the Future. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> P. Kallaway, Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans. p. 172 F. de Clercq, High-skilled Manpower, Education and Work in Bophuthatswana. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 113.

difficult conditions for the orderly and progressive development of Bantu cultures. But if the reserves are to play their part they must be developed so that there can be a harmony between the schools and the way of life of the people; a way of life which will give scope for the expression of talent and ambition. The best schools in the world cannot keep people in an area if there is no opportunity for satisfying their desires and ambitions. On the other hand, if the reserves can be developed economically and culturally, those who come to labour centres will have a background sufficiently rich and respected to prevent their demoralisation.<sup>45</sup>

The interdependence of the homeland system and Bantu Education centred on the importance Blacks educated through Bantu Education were to find expression of their career aspirations in the homelands. The South African schooling system for Blacks was designed to fulfil this goal of preparing Black for their role in the homeland system.

Each of the homelands had a Department of Education headed by a Minister of the cabinet. There was collaboration between the education department of the Black states and the Department of Bantu Education, and later the Department of Education and Training, which were responsible for the education of Blacks residing in the urban areas of the Republic of South Africa.<sup>46</sup> The Department of Bantu Education, and its successor, ensured that the homeland Ministries of Education complied with the grand scheme of apartheid, in terms of policy directives of this philosophy of education. The creation of a Ministry of Education for each homeland was a costly duplication to the South African taxpayer.

There was a deliberate move by the government to concentrate secondary schools as far as possible in the reserves, and not in the urban areas. Black learners who were in secondary schools in the urban areas were moved to secondary schools in the homelands

<sup>45</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Native Education Commission 1949-1951 (The Eiselen Report) UG53-1951.

<sup>46</sup> A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988, p. 17. F. de Clercq, High-skilled Manpower, Education and Work in Bophuthatswana. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 112.



where the state wished them to be.<sup>47</sup> In January 1970, for instance, the Department of Bantu Education threatened to crack down on school principals in Soweto who were reported to have enrolled as many as 70 learners in a class, as regulations were clear in laying down a maximum intake of 55 learners in a class. In looking at this problem the Secretary for Bantu Education, Dr H.J. van Zyl said:

We shall have to check up on this. The teaching cannot be effective under such conditions. Untold numbers of Black children presumably living illegally in Soweto, have swollen the demand for education to something far beyond the capacity of the 200 big schools provided in the area.<sup>48</sup>

Whilst it is true that learners cannot be taught effectively in big classes, the government was not insisting on this sound educational principle for the proper development of Black children. The government was pushing for this policy to ensure that few Black children remain in the urban areas.

It was a known fact that the majority of Black parents were reluctant to send their children to secondary schools in the Bantu homelands. Dr van Zyl said schools were provided on a formula of one secondary school for every 3 000 families living in an area. He reiterated government policy that post-primary institutions should go to the Black homelands where they can be of economic significance and where the state wanted development for Black people. Van Zyl indicated that learners who did not find places in Soweto schools should apply to rural schools. According to him the policy of the government was that future secondary education would be mainly provided in the homelands. When asked what would happen to a family that could not afford to send a child to a boarding school in the homeland, he said that if parents were determined to see

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<sup>47</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. P. Kallaway, *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, p. 174. P.H. Molotsi, *Liberation Education: The Politics of Knowledge*. Paper Presented at the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, pp. 18.

<sup>48</sup> *The Star*, 28 January 1970.

their children educated they would do anything possible to get the money.<sup>49</sup> In a meeting held in Soweto on 20 January 1976 the Circuit Inspector told the School Board that the Secretary for Bantu Education stated that all direct taxes paid by the Black population of South Africa were being sent to the various homelands for educational purposes there.<sup>50</sup> The ratio of one secondary school for 3 000 families living in the urban area would not meet the educational needs of the Black people. This forced parents living and working in the urban areas to send their children to secondary schools in the far-away homelands. Needless to say, this created socio-economic problems for both parent and their children. This was compounded by the fact that children had to, in some instances, stay on their own without adult supervision.

The government saw many other advantages to be gained from their scheme. *The Bantu Self-Government Act, Act No. 46 of 1959* provided for the stratification of Black society into a complex system of tribal, regional and territorial authorities. With this machinery the government hoped to so enmesh the Blacks in the various levels of 'authorities' that they would lose their perspectives on issues of national importance. By giving these homelands very limited local powers it was hoped that Blacks would concentrate all their attention on tribal matters and turn away from larger political issues. According to Govan Mbeki in this the government was following the traditional policy of the Native Affairs Department:

They had hoped that the Africans would be so absorbed in the discussion of petty matters of local and tribal interest that they would cease to aspire to have a place in the political sun.<sup>51</sup>

It has to be acknowledged that wage earners, intellectuals, clerks and business men did not easily fit into tribal life or readily accept rule by hereditary chiefs. Political

<sup>49</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 18 November 1970. The Star, 28 January 1970.

<sup>50</sup> J.G.E. Wolfson, *South Africa in Travail: The Disturbances of 1976/77*. Evidence Presented by the South African Institute of Race Relations to Cillie Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and other Places during June 1976, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> B. Turok, *The Pondo Revolt*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-3. G. Mbeki, South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt, p. 21.

movements were bound to arise to challenge the dominant position of the chiefs and demand a democratic, people's government. If the chiefs resisted, they would find themselves being brushed aside. Popular movements of this kind would not limit their demands to the Reserves, they would continue the offensive against racial discrimination in all parts of the South Africa. This would assert claims to take part in the government of the whole country.<sup>52</sup> The government did not win the support of urban Black intellectuals. This can be attributed, amongst others, the liberal missionary education that Blacks had received before the advent of the Bantu Education plus the economic benefits they stood to gain with their stay in the urban centres.

Realising its failure to win supporters among the Black people in the towns, the government was making concerted efforts not to suffer the same handicap in the Reserves. Their first step to gain supporters was the winning over of the chiefs and their installation as puppets within the Bantu Authorities hierarchy. The second step was to foster the growth of a middle-class consisting of professional men and traders.<sup>53</sup> The third was to encourage the emergence of a new class of comparatively well-to-do peasants, farming on large pieces of land. These three categories were to be privileged, but dependent on government favour. They were to perform a dual function, to act as the authority over the mass of the Blacks, and serve as a constant reminder that collaboration with the government pays off. In addition the NPs would use this upper-crust to disarm their critics. Here, in the Bantu "homelands," they could say, "the Bantu can develop to the highest levels."<sup>54</sup> That the homeland system succeeded for some time can be attributed to the use of such strategies. This was, however, accompanied by serious resentment and divisions among the Blacks who would not easily acquiesce.

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<sup>52</sup> Verwoerd' Crown Colony: The Transkeian Scheme and the Future of the Chiefs, p. 4. Fighting Talk. Vol. 16, No. 2. March 1962. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 144.

<sup>53</sup> S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 42. B. Turok, The Pondo Revolt. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-3. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 142.

<sup>54</sup> B. Turok, The Pondo Revolt. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Congress of Democrats Collection, MCH 229-3. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 142.

Blacks were only allowed to live on the 'White land,' which constituted 87 per cent of South Africa, if they were economically productive. The unemployed, the old and the very young were to be sent away to the homelands. To enforce this the government strengthened the rigid system of control over the population's movement, known as the pass laws. Every Black over the age of 16 had to carry a pass, a small book containing the holder's official life. The pass showed where the holder was permitted to live, and in what job he or she was permitted to work; whether he or she was in school or had permission to seek work; whether he or she was allowed to travel to a particular place. The Blacks were particularly restricted from living in urban areas. The government called this 'influx control.' Anyone found illegally in an urban area was liable to be 'endorsed out' – 'deported' to his homeland.<sup>55</sup> The restrictions imposed on people through the pass laws were intended to ensure that Black people that remained in the urban areas were productive and were able to serve as workers in the White labour market. Failure to fit into this category would imply the withdrawal of the privilege to stay in the urban area.

A survey of residents of Soweto, South Africa's largest city, which was released in January 1974, showed that two-thirds refused to regard their "real" homes as the Bantustans to which they were assigned according to official tribal classification. The majority of them saw Soweto as their home, where they would always live. Another study, released in December 1974, was the first attempt to assess attitudes of people living in the Bantustans. 58% of those asked were reported to be in favour of the idea of a homeland, mainly because they were relatively "free of whites." However, the report stated that the more educated the inhabitants, the more critical they were of every aspect of the homelands. They expressed deep distrust of the White man's intentions, and there was resentment at the omnipresent White control of Bantustan affairs, as well as forced tribal separation and removals. The greatest criticism, however, hinged on the lack of

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<sup>55</sup> J. Seidman, *Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto*, pp. 6-7. B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, pp. 7-8. J.S. Guseh, *Democracy and Economic Growth in Africa: The Cases of Ghana and South Africa*. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3821/is\\_200510/ai\\_n15641255/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200510/ai_n15641255/print), p. 3.

economic and social advances.<sup>56</sup> It will be deceptive to believe that literate Blacks were the only people who were critical of the homeland system. Criticism and support for the homeland system must have been across the educational divide, depending on how the homeland system was experienced and impacted on an individual. It will therefore be erroneous to suggest that all illiterate people indiscriminately supported the homeland system.

### **3.4 Bantu Education for a Bantu economy and the migrant labour system**

At the core of South Africa's system of apartheid was the need for a cheap and constant supply of labour in order to ensure the continued exploitation of, and profit from, the country's great mineral wealth. Gold, diamonds, uranium, copper, manganese, platinum and vanadium lie in critical quantities beneath its soil, making South Africa vitally important to most of the industrialised countries of the world. The labour force used to extract these resources has been found within the Black population, and in order to maintain it, the South African government had found it necessary to exert considerable control over its Black population. The system of apartheid had therefore evolved, with its extensive laws, in order to establish control over every facet of the lives of the Black members of the population. The fundamental characteristic of this system was that its legal structure, as well as its political and economic structure, was firmly based on racial discrimination. The ideology of racism provided justification for, and reinforced, the extreme inequalities that persisted in South Africa.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that the 'Bantu areas,' owing to their economic backwardness, had failed to provide enough opportunities and incentives for educated as well as uneducated Blacks to work, was used as an argument to put a brake on to the education system of the Bantu.

<sup>56</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, pp. 12-13. Sanctions against Apartheid South Africa should Inspire the Palestinian People. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article3429.shtml>, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. E. Unterhalter, *The Impact of Apartheid on Women's Education in South Africa*. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 48, Autumn 1990, pp. 66-67. Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>.

This was effectively done by the method by which Bantu Education was financed. As an illustration of this type of thinking in influential government circles, Mr G.F. van L. Froneman, M.P., Deputy Minister of Justice, of Mines and of Planning, said that:

If we now have compulsory education we will also have unnatural growth which we will have to take into account. Compulsory education will mean that an enormous number of learners will be produced which will be out of all proportion to the Bantu economy and which that economy will not be able to absorb... When one looks at Bantu education, one should view it firstly from the point of view of the Bantu economy and not from the point of view of a multi-racial state... Bantu education must only meet with those requirements.<sup>58</sup>

This argument, which appeared to have become basic to the concept of separate development, had several fallacies. The first fallacy was the underlying assumption that the economy of the Republic of South Africa was split up into separate economies on racial lines, that is, a Bantu economy, an Indian economy, a Coloured economy and a White economy, each run with its own supply of manpower to be educated and trained only as and when required to meet the particular needs of each of these racial groups by themselves separately. This assumption ignored the obvious fact that the goods and products which the country consumed or exported were produced by the combined labour of the whole economically active manpower of all the races living in this country. The country's imports were used by the whole population comprising all races. The revenue of the country came from taxes, direct and indirect, levied on the whole population. These are fundamental economical facts.<sup>59</sup>

At the conference of South African Institute of Race Relations, held to look at the progress that Bantu Education had made, the conferees were reminded that:

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<sup>58</sup> Address by Mr G.F. van L. Froneman, MP. Deputy Minister of Justice, of Mines and of Planning. June 1967, cols. 1682-1683.

<sup>59</sup> E.G. Malherbe, Bantu Manpower and Education. A Theme Paper Delivered on January 17 at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education. South African Institute of Race Relations, p.13.

...however intelligent and highly trained we whites may be, we cannot, for long or effectively, run a country of eighteen million people on the skills and aptitudes of three million whites and possibly a handful of non-whites.<sup>60</sup>

This comment, though in many respects flawed, raised critical questions around skills development, education and training in South Africa. It called for government to critically look at its stance for shoddy training for Blacks against the backdrop of its economic needs.

If expansion of educational provision did not come at a sufficiently rapid rate, it was likely that there would be a complete economic breakdown in South Africa. There was going to be a growth of inefficiency and incompetence. It was therefore imperative that there would be an increase in the amount of money spent on education so that people of races could be able to make use of the opportunities which South Africa, if it had wanted to maintain its economic growth, would have to give them. As a country becomes more industrialised, the structure of the labour force undergoes considerable change. Industrialisation means considerable increase in workers at the professional, technical, administrative, clerical and skilled industrial levels; and a reduction in the numbers of unskilled industrial workers, in those working in agriculture and domestic service, and a complete disappearance of the peasant farmer.<sup>61</sup> It has to be appreciated that whilst South Africa was becoming industrialised, it would still need unskilled industrial workers and peasant farmers, as a developing country. The total elimination of these segments of the labour force would create other challenges as the country had not attained the levels of the first world countries.

The creation of a strong Native peasantry within the reserve could only mean a policy of extreme segregation. To some commentators keeping the Native down was eventually synonymous with dragging South Africa down. To limit the education of the Native, to

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<sup>60</sup> J.W. Macquarrie, *The Main Needs for the Future in Bantu Education (Theme Paper)*. Paper Presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education – South African Institute of Race Relations, 16 to 17 January 1969.

<sup>61</sup> R. Tunmer, *Education in South Africa*. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa*. African Studies Programme. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, pp. 2-3.

segregate him, would ultimately mean national bankruptcy. South Africa's ultimate economic future lay in her secondary industries; these could find a market in the Native population of South Africa, only if this population is an educated one with greater needs and higher education. This showed lack of foresight or the unwillingness to see into the future.<sup>62</sup> The whole trend of Native legislation was retrogressive, and therefore its education policy could hardly be progressive. The effects of separate education would be felt in the lack of skills in South Africa in later years.

The country's real gross domestic product is dependent on the productivity of the whole population and not merely on that of one or two racial groups. If there was to be a recession the whole population would suffer. Similarly, if there was inflation, the whole population would be affected. In short the South African economy was one economy. This idea, therefore, that the training of Bantu manpower was to be limited to what the Bantu economy could absorb did not only do semantic violence to the word 'economy,' but was completely unrealistic as long as the Republic remained one country, politically and economically, and was so regarded by other countries, politically and economically. The absurdity of Froneman's point arose out of a completely unrealistic view of the geographic distribution of the Bantu population in the Republic and a lack of appreciation of the forces that determine this distribution. In 1966 there were 1 705 116 Black learners in the Republic of South Africa. Of these, about 800 000 were attending schools in 'White areas' and about 900 000 were in the 'Bantu areas' or homelands. When these 900 000 Black learners in the homelands were trained as fully as they ought to be trained, it is doubtful whether these homelands would be economically able to absorb all of them effectively, let alone absorb any of the 800 000 Black learners from the 'White areas.'<sup>63</sup> Froneman and the South African government ignored one cardinal point about multiracial South Africa, namely that it has one economy, and the development of the whole is determined by the degree to which each individual realises his capacity, irrespective of colour.

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<sup>62</sup> Y. Golombick, *Educating the Native Along His Own Lines*. The Nusas Journal, p. 35.

<sup>63</sup> E.G. Malherbe, *Bantu Manpower and Education*. A Theme Paper Delivered on January 17 at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education. South African Institute of Race Relations, pp. 13-14.



The fragmented, unequal and undemocratic nature of the education and training system that the NP developed had profound effects on the development of the economy and society. It resulted in the destruction, distortion and neglect of the human potential of South Africans, with devastating consequences for social and economic development.<sup>64</sup> The homeland system resulted in the migrant labour system. This had far reaching implications on family life and education. As indicated earlier the homeland system was based on the premise that Blacks can live in a White urban or rural area only in order to sell their labour. When no longer considered economically productive, they were expected to return to the reserves to live with their families, who were not allowed to accompany them to the White areas but remain in the reserves, subsisting on the land. The homelands were enclaves located in various parts of the country; together they constituted only 13.5 per cent of the territory. Because it was impossible to live off the land, which was generally non arable, and because of heavy taxation, Black men were forced to seek work in the 'White areas.' This need was backed by laws that required every adult male to register for work with a labour bureau. Those Black men who had permanent residential status in urban areas represented a small minority and had to, in general, live without their families, since their wives were seldom given permission to join them.<sup>65</sup> These were intended to regulate the movement of Blacks from the homelands to urban areas and vice versa. These laws would have been tolerated had they applied to all population groups in South Africa. The fact that they limited the movement of people in South Africa would presumably not make them popular even if they applied to all racial groups in the country. What made them more unacceptable was the fact that they applied only to Black people.

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<sup>64</sup> A Policy Framework for Education and Training. Education Department, ANC, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Separate Development Policy. Retrieved on 15 February 2008.

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0856652.html>.

Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.

<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>. J. Hyslop, A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis. African Studies Seminar Paper Presented on 25 September 1989. Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, African Institute, 1989, pp. 1-2.

Anyone who dared to express any doubt regarding the infallibility of government officials or the wisdom of government proposals and schemes ran the risk of being banned or deported or fired from his job. The freedom of Blacks to meet and discuss matters affecting their welfare had been so severely curtailed that only at religious services, weddings or funerals where Blacks expected to talk freely to one another, and even on such occasions they could never be sure that members of the Special Branch in some disguise were not present.<sup>66</sup> It has to be admitted that South Africa was not a free and open democracy where everyone had freedom of expression. The curtailment of freedom is somewhat exaggerated as it was still possible for Black people to discuss matters affecting their welfare through appropriate arrangements even though some of these structures, like the tribal authorities, were themselves not effective.

The rapid deterioration of the economic and social role of women since the establishment of apartheid increased their workload to inhuman proportions as they tried to produce enough from the land to feed their families. With the men working as migrant labourers, the women faced an arduous existence, working at their daily chores in the home and in the field.<sup>67</sup> The absence of men from the rural areas when they were 'on contract,' working as poorly paid migrant labourers, had an extremely adverse effect on women and children left behind in the reserves. One of the rationales for paying such extremely low wages to Black migrant workers was the assumption that the wives and children of these so-called migrants remained in the reserves and secured their families' subsistence from the land. The employers were able to get away with these low wages, which were consistently below the Poverty Datum Line – that is, not enough for basic subsistence, because the wives and children of the workers lived in the reserves and were expected to provide for their subsistence. It has to be pointed out that it was virtually impossible for four million women, children and old people who lived on the reserves, which constituted

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<sup>66</sup> Address by Professor Z.K. Matthews: ANC 44<sup>th</sup> National Conference, Bloemfontein, 17-18 December 1955. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/conf/zkadd44.php>.

<sup>67</sup> E. Unterhalter, The Impact of Apartheid on Women's Education in South Africa. Review of African Political Economy, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 69. Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>.

only 13,5 per cent of the total area of South Africa, to subsist on them. Land hunger was chronic in these areas, with the result that agricultural production had stagnated or declined over the years. In addition, women's work had been extended to include all of the work involved in cultivation, as well as such tasks as preparing mud for hut walls and thatch for roofs and raising cattle, a time-consuming task, since, in addition to milking the cows twice a day, the cattle need to be taken to graze every morning, brought back at sunset and closed in byres at night.<sup>68</sup> These socio-economic ills were bound to have a negative effect on the already scanty Bantu Education that the Black children were receiving from the government. These daily chores had negative implications for school going children living in the homelands because some of them were delegated to them. The poverty levels of some of their parents would not allow them to employ people to fulfil these tasks.

The effect of migrant labour on women and their families did not stop at economic hardships. Women also experienced considerable emotional stress living apart from their menfolk and having to bring up their children alone. The disruption of family life was one of the unkind results of apartheid. Men were forced to stay away for months on end, at best returning for a few weeks a year, but often not seeing their families for years. They became alienated and set up a new life in the towns, while their families waited month after month hoping for a letter and for money.<sup>69</sup> Needless to say, this situation did not augur well for the educational support that children would need from their fathers. Old people and mothers, in the main, had to be relied upon to support schools where it concerned issues of governance and matters of discipline.

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<sup>68</sup> Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>.

<sup>69</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>

Blacks living outside their designated areas were forcefully removed and resettled in the areas selected for them. Blacks have for centuries lived across the face of their country, and not only in the small areas determined by apartheid. One of the most inhuman expressions of the policies of the apartheid government was the programme of resettlement, under which over two million people were removed to remote, underdeveloped areas of the reserves. This was done by the government to eliminate so called "black spots," pockets of land owned by Blacks in areas declared "White" by the government or areas considered too close to White-owned farms or towns. Forced removals also took place under the influx control laws, in order to reduce the number of Blacks living in White urban areas. "Non-productive" Blacks were forced to leave, and if such individuals had no homes or families, the only alternative was a resettlement camp. It was estimated that resettlement camps or villages held close to four million people. Once more it was Black women and children who were the hardest hit by these policies. Considered fundamentally non-productive, women constituted the majority of those being expelled from the urban areas. When communities were uprooted, the already small male population was further diminished as men left to seek work because of the increased levels of poverty. All these forced removals were implemented without due regard to the availability of amenities, including schools, where people were moved.<sup>70</sup> People could by a stroke of the pen be deprived of property rights which they had acquired legally, without offer of adequate compensation, and be removed to some place in which they were not granted rights similar to those of which they had been deprived.<sup>71</sup> It is unfortunate that such resettlements, inhuman as they might have been, were implemented at the expense of education in some instances. The situation was aggravated by the

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<sup>70</sup> R.M. Mmutlana, *Forced Removals in Northern Natal: A Comparative Study of the Steincoalspruit and Roosboom Communities in Historical Perspective*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, pp. 1-2. Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>. Black Dispossession in South Africa: The Myth of Bantustan Independence. Africa Fund, Southern Africa Perspective2/84. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://richardknight.homestead.co/bophuthatswana-ns4.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Address by Professor Z.K. Matthews: ANC 44<sup>th</sup> National Conference, Bloemfontein, 17-18 December 1955. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/conf/zkadd44.php>. Sanctions against Apartheid South Africa should Inspire the Palestinian People. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article3429.shtml>, p. 2.

tearing apart of communities and families. There was no way in which education could thrive under the circumstances.

The list of inequalities suffered by Black South Africans is a lengthy one. Whites, for an example, consumed 60 per cent of the nation's income, occupied 86,5 of its land, were eligible for free and compulsory education, enjoyed extremely good health and lived, for the most part, in luxurious homes with the service of poorly paid domestic workers.<sup>72</sup> Blacks on the other hand, did not have free or compulsory education. A limited number of schools catered to only a small percentage of the Black population and followed a different and grossly inferior syllabus. The housing provided for Blacks in the towns was inadequate, lacking running water or electricity. The overcrowded and sparse conditions added to the hardships of town life in general. Poverty caused extensive malnutrition and disease. The medical service provided in the towns was inadequate, while that provided for the rural population was extremely limited. The effect of this situation was reflected in the high infant mortality rate, which was estimated at five times that of the White population.<sup>73</sup> Although the policies of apartheid were detrimental to the whole Black population, it was the women who were the most affected. Men constituted the majority of the cheap labour force, while women were relegated to a shadowy position, expected to remain in the reserves and to support their families without the help of the men folk. This created special problems for women, who already suffered discrimination based on their sex.

The decade after the passing of *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* saw considerable economic expansion in South Africa. Many economists and businessmen, however, argued that the country's economic potential was being seriously hampered by the

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<sup>72</sup> R. Tunmer, Education in South Africa. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 7. Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>

<sup>73</sup> Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa. Extracts from Paper Prepared by the Secretariat for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, July 1980. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005.  
<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/women/effects.php>

shortage of trained and skilled manpower. The limitations on the use of Black labour and the organisational defects of the Bantu Education system were frequently used in these arguments as the main cause for the failure of South Africa to live up to its economic potential. These arguments were repeated with growing frequency throughout the decade of the sixties and into the seventies. It was the contention of many commentators that the country's economic needs could not be satisfied by relying so heavily on White skills and that there would have to be a considerable expansion of Black education.<sup>74</sup> It is surprising that the South African economy was able to expand in the midst of inferior education given to Blacks. The opposite would have been expected. It can therefore be expected that the economy could have expanded threefold had the government given equal education to all South Africans.

In pursuance of the homeland system, Bantu Education had a special provision for schools for the sons of chiefs and headmen. It was a Junior Certificate<sup>75</sup> course in Bantu Administration. It was indicated that there was a need for ever more enlightened men to guide the destinies of their tribes. The aim of this 'sons-of-the-chiefs' course was to train learners up to the general Junior Certificate level in the basic school subjects to equip future chiefs and cultivate a sympathetic attitude towards the Christian way of living. The entrance qualifications were a Bantu Higher Primary Schools certificate (Std. VI), a minimum age of 15 years, a satisfactory health certificate and they were supposed to be sons of recognised chiefs, headmen or councillors of a specific tribe and should belong to the ethnic group which was served by the school. Admission would be granted only on the recommendation of the Native Commissioner of the specific territory and should the enrolment be too small for the effective functioning of the school or for other reason the Native Commissioner could, in consultation with the Inspector of Bantu Education, recommend other eligible candidates for admission. By 1959 only one such school was functioning, it was at Tsolo in the Transkei, it had been opened in January of 1959.<sup>76</sup> The

<sup>74</sup> Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA by R.L. Peteni, 4 January 1982. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. B. Rose and R. Tunmer, *Documents in South African Education*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>75</sup> Junior Certificate was Standard 9 in the 1960s, and later became Standard 8, it is equal to Grade 9 in the current South African education system.

<sup>76</sup> *The Star*, 3 September 1959.

privileged education of the sons of the chiefs had elements of class distinction in the Black community. The education of the sons of the chiefs was controlled by the government as the Native commission could recommend eligible candidates for admission. The fact that their curriculum was limited to Bantu Administration constrained their future prospects to the development of Blacks.

Between 1960 and 1976 apartheid dictated all aspects of life to a large proportion in South Africa, and all opposition was silenced. The NP imprisoned or banished many of its major opponents. Even the Liberal Party, co-founded by the author Alan Paton, was dissolved in 1968 under *The Prevention of Political Interference Act of 1968* that prohibited multiracial parties. The laws were so draconian that members of the women's organisation the 'Black Sash' could only stand alone on street wearing their sash, as two or more would have constituted an 'illegal gathering.' The opposition movements, notably the PAC and the ANC, felt they had no alternative but to turn to armed resistance. The police, however, were highly effective in suppressing their activities. Intelligence, counter-intelligence and policing were coordinated through the powerful Bureau of State Security (BOSS). Further laws increased police powers. *The Sabotage Act of 1962* enabled the Minister of Justice to impose house arrest. The 'ninety day' Act permitted detention without trial, or access to a lawyer, for ninety days. A blind eye was drawn to how police treated suspects, gathered intelligence and enforced control. Detention without trial and deaths in police custody became more frequent. Robben Island in Table Bay was used by the government as a high security prison and became a reminder to South Africans of suppression of dissent.<sup>77</sup> The government had no choice but to intensify and consolidate its security measures to sustain the complex apartheid system that did not enjoy the support of the majority of the people of South Africa. It can be argued that the South African government did not fully succeed in silencing the opponents of apartheid. It is true that resistance was emasculated, but not to an extent of a complete clampdown.

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<sup>77</sup> Apartheid: Silent Years. Retrieved on 16 January 2005.  
[http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_silent.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_silent.htm)

When the NP came to power in 1948, there existed a relatively weakly developed extra-parliamentary political terrain that was, to some extent, protected by law. That terrain was immeasurably strengthened by the mass struggles in the 1950s, and became defined by a matrix of organisations – trade unions, ANC, PAC, Indian Congresses to name but a few, through which the struggles were conducted. The reaction of the government was to continuously attack the constituents of the extra-parliamentary structure and to reduce such legal and judicial protection as they enjoyed. Increasingly, legal protection was undermined, the organisations subjected to harassment and restrictions and the ‘relative’ autonomy of the judiciary narrowed not only by legal enactment but also by the shift from parliamentary supremacy to executive domination over both parliament and the judiciary. Within the executive, the cabinet assumed dominance over both the bureaucracy and the coercive apparatus of the state. In the sphere of education, the policy-making powers of the provincial councils were limited and those of the Department of Education increased. These and other developments contributed significantly to the establishment of the dominance of the executive over other state structures. At the same time, proscriptive legislation, the enlargement of the bureaucratic apparatus involved in controlling the political sphere, and the expansion of powers and size of the state coercive apparatus, resulted in the virtual abolition of the sphere of extra-parliamentary politics. For instance, the banning of the ANC and the PAC, rendering inoperative all other extra-parliamentary organisations. Thus, a structural closure was effected which severely limited the formation of new, and the functioning of existing, extra-parliamentary oppositional organisations, whether legal or illegal. The possibility of mass politics was drastically curtailed and, instead, organized activity became confined to small-scale underground work and the actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC.<sup>78</sup> In turn, this narrowly circumscribed the political demands that could be made. In this situation, the armed struggle and the underground work could only pose directly, and abstractly, the goal of overthrowing apartheid.

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<sup>78</sup> The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People’s Education in South Africa. Research and Education in South Africa. Paper Number Three, p. 3.



### 3.5 Evaluation of the impact of the Bantu Education system

Bantu Education, since its inception, achieved fair results. In certain respects progress had exceeded expectations but in others it had been somewhat disappointing because of certain retarding factors. Most Blacks and a large proportion of the White population were opposed to the concept of apartheid and, accordingly, objected to a system of Black education that had been developed within and for the promotion of such a concept. Long and bitter experience had convinced Blacks that differential systems means inferior facilities for them. It was not only the centralized control of schools that was resented on many sides, but also the very strict regulations introduced for the control of teachers and learners. While the expansion in Black school enrolment was welcome, it was most unsatisfactory that the financial provision was extended at a much slower pace. Many Black parents were willing to make great financial sacrifices in order that their children may be educated, but members of other racial groups were not required to do so to anything like the same extent. There were obvious financial advantages resulting from the system of centralized control and administration and centralized purchasing of supplies. But because of the past pegging of the State contribution, and in spite of the contributions of parents, there had to be a great deal of financial stringency in many directions.<sup>79</sup>

Pampallis says whilst it may be true that the quality of Bantu education was not good, it has to be appreciated that Bantu education, unlike the sometimes elitist missionary education, was more accessible to Black learners. Bantu education was mass based; as a result many children were educated.<sup>80</sup> The new syllabi introduced in primary and secondary schools were generally considered to be an improvement. There was, however, a serious shortage of suitable qualified Black teachers for the secondary and high schools.

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<sup>79</sup> Secretary-General's Report Presented to the Annual Conference of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa, Held at Bodibeng High School, Kroonstad on 17 and 18 December 1968. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre of African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, Files 4.10-4.12. The Natal Mercury, 6 March 1964. S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 147. M. Dagut, South Africa: The New Beginning, p. 48.

<sup>80</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

Because of the lack of funds the Department was unable to pay the salaries of an adequate number of teachers. As a result overcrowding was common in very many classrooms.<sup>81</sup> It should be obvious to even the most biased but intelligent observer that there was a phenomenal and ever increasing rate of educational development in the South Africa since about 1961, which was incidentally the inception date of the Republic of South Africa. The lower number of learners in 1953 can be attributed to the elitist missionary education that was not accessible to many children. Bantu education, despite its poor quality, was accessible to many children.

This accelerated growth in educational development was primarily manifested in the unprecedented increase in the school population as indicated above, particularly the primary school population of the Black and Coloured population groups. At the root of this ever increasing growth were the most glaring and perplexing problems of the population explosion within the borders of the Republic of South Africa and the resultant demands for more and better educational facilities. This population explosion was exacerbated by poverty, famine, unemployment, crime and racial disharmony.<sup>82</sup> It is encouraging that where missionary education could not cater for the needs of the majority of Black learners, Bantu Education was able to address their educational needs at the time when the population was also increasing. In retrospect the number of learners that would be out schools in the context of growing population would have been more under missionary education.

The government made much of its education programme for Blacks. The Minister for Bantu Administration and Development, and the Minister for Bantu Education, claimed that South Africa was doing more for the education of Blacks than any other country on the African continent. They claimed a phenomenal increase in the number of scholars, an increase in expenditure, tribal colleges at which academic standards were equal to those

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<sup>81</sup> The Natal Mercury, 6 March 1964. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>82</sup> H.C.A. Venter, Some Salient Facts Concerning Educational Development in the RSA until 1978, p. 431. R. Tunmer, Education in South Africa. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, pp. 7-8.

at White universities, and participation by Blacks themselves in the management of their own education.<sup>83</sup> Whilst this may be true; there was, however, no evidence to show that Blacks were better off under Bantu Education than they would have been under the same system of education as Whites. On the contrary there was evidence to show that they were far from satisfied with the government's system of apartheid education.

Pampallis maintains that Bantu Education was inferior in quality to that provided for Whites. Despite this, though, school enrolments grew rapidly. Between 1953 and 1965 primary school enrolments in Bantu Education schools more than doubled, from approximately 852 000 to 1 833 000. By 1975 the enrolments had almost doubled again to 3 379 000. Secondary school enrolments increased from 31 000 in 1953 to 66 000 in 1965 and 319 000 in 1975.<sup>84</sup> This growth of generally poor quality education needs to be seen against a background of a growing economy requiring a basis level of education for unskilled migrant workers in industrial and mining enterprises. The increasing sophisticated needs of industry which could not be met by White workers alone, as such the increasing enrolments would assist the economy.<sup>85</sup>

That the number of Black children attending school had been increasing by more than 120 000 a year may sound like tremendous progress. But increasing enrolments were no great achievement in a rapidly industrializing country with a rapidly rising population, particularly if hundreds of thousands of those enrolled gained little or nothing from their brief term at school.<sup>86</sup> In fact the quality of education provided was inferior, with teacher-learner ratios of 1:42, with worse situations experienced in areas like the Transkei where the teacher-learner ration was 1:70. This scandalously inadequate official provisioning

<sup>83</sup> Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

<sup>84</sup> See Appendix 1 on p. 447.

<sup>85</sup> J. Pampallis, The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden, p. 21.

<sup>86</sup> S.M. Du Rand, From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 147. W.G. McConkey, The Failure of Bantu Education, pp. 4-5. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

for education resulted in some ill-fed families throughout South Africa contributing to the payment of salaries of extra teachers who were hired privately.<sup>87</sup> The reasons for this growth include the need for primary school teachers, the increasing sophisticated needs of industry which could not be met by White workers alone, and the need to develop a bureaucracy and other aspects of the Bantustan economies. The growth in both primary and secondary schools was in the Bantustans.<sup>88</sup> Whilst tremendous progress had been made in terms of learner enrolment, the fact that the education of Blacks remained separate from that of the other racial groups created serious racial inequalities. Needless to say, in an integrated education system, where children of all races were able to share resources, the problem could have been obviated.

In order to cope to some extent with a constantly increasing enrolment, a system of double sessions for the lower classes of the primary school was introduced in or about 1955. This was a system by means of which two completely separate groups of children in the same class were taught in succession in one day by the same teacher. It necessitated a reduction in the length of the school day for each group. Sometimes both groups were together for a short time, perhaps for an assembly and for religious instruction, the end of the school day for one group and the beginning for the other, or they would not come together at all. For the teacher the system meant a teaching day of at least six hours. This system had many disadvantages. Children from the same family often had to come together to school in the morning, but if they were in different groups or if some were in the higher classes, many children had to wait and play around the school for about three hours while the first session was being held, until it was their turn to attend the second session. It was inevitable that a teacher would be less fresh for the second session than for the first. There was additional wear and tear of furniture, equipment and books with this 'platoon' system. The employment of privately paid

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<sup>87</sup> W.G. McConkey, *The Failure of Bantu Education*, pp. 4-5. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. Y.M. Dadoo, *South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid*, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>88</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 21. H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, p. 372.

teachers could provide a palliative, but these were often less than fully qualified, and in general of somewhat doubtful value.<sup>89</sup> Under the circumstances this was the best way out of the situation, except for integrating schools for all racial groups. It has to be appreciated that the government was improvising to accommodate children who could not access education under the missionary schooling system.

In 1969 there were 8 203 schools for Blacks in South Africa, excluding the Transkei, and at 4 246 of these schools double sessions were being held. The number of learners taught under the double session system was 750 428 under 8 361 teachers. The magnitude of the task of providing adequate educational facilities for the Black population of South Africa was colossal. It was a pity therefore that the double session system in the lower primary schools was introduced as though it were a great educational discovery instead of a regrettable temporary necessity.<sup>90</sup> Politicians could have found it desirable to boost enrolment figures in the early years of the new system of Bantu education in order to show what great advances were being made, but the greatly increased enrolment should not be allowed to obscure the education cost involved, which came as a result of shoddy planning. The identified constraints should not be taken to imply that the education the children obtained under the double session system was worthless, but it was considerably less good than it was supposed to be. Obviously the crux of the problem was the lack of adequate funds, but the problem could not be overcome in a year or two at the stroke of a pen.<sup>91</sup> The fact that more children were receiving education has to be appreciated. The challenges of resources could be overcome with time. The choice of having education

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<sup>89</sup> G.W. Sneesby, *The Education of the Bantu in South Africa*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116, p. 15. Y.M. Dadoo, *South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid*, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html) M.C. O'Down and J.M. Didcott, *The African in the Universities: A Survey of the Facilities for the Higher Education of Non-European Students in South Africa, with an Examination of the Systems of the University Segregation and Non-Segregation*. Written on Behalf of the National Union of South African Students, p. 16.

<sup>90</sup> G.W. Sneesby, *The Education of the Bantu in South Africa*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116, p. 15. S.M. Du Rand, *From Mission School to Bantu Education: A History of Adams College*. Unpublished Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, p. 147.

<sup>91</sup> G.W. Sneesby, *The Education of the Bantu in South Africa*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116, p. 15. M. Dagut, *South Africa: The New Beginning*, p. 48.

under these circumstances as opposed to having no education at all was better. The strides that Bantu education was making with regard to access have to be applauded.

Inadequate state financing placed a heavy burden on the Black community. One-fifth of the Black teachers in South Africa were privately paid. Over a quarter of these were employed in church and other private schools. The rest, some 4 600 were in State and State-aided schools and had to be paid by the parents and the community. There was further difficulty brought about by the fact that the Department did not furnish classrooms that were staffed by privately paid teachers and it was usually impossible for the school boards to provide adequate furniture and equipment. The appalling situation in Black schools was compounded by the fact that just over 3% of Black teachers had qualifications comparable to those of teachers in White schools. Nearly a fifth had no recognizable qualifications. One third had two years training beyond Standard VIII. Just over two-fifth had three years training beyond Standard VI. Less than 1,3% had a degree plus professional training. The percentage of this last small group in secondary and high schools had dropped from 36,3% in 1961 to 25,5% in 1965. The Africanisation of education through the appointment of several hundreds inspectors, assistant inspectors and school boards secretaries had no doubt affected high schools but had also been a move in a commendable direction. After the introduction of Bantu Education many White teachers were lost to African work partly because of deliberate government policy and partly through distaste for the new order.<sup>92</sup> The level of development of South Africa at that stage allowed for the existence of these challenges. The lack of adequately qualified teachers has to be linked with the much appreciated massification of Black education. With time South Africa would build an adequately qualified teaching corps.

Nearly six years since *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* came into operation the storm of opposition that met the Act seemed to have died down. The 'Bantu Education Journal,' widely distributed by the new Department of Bantu Education breathed an air of happy achievement. The State Information Office released with some show of pride reports that

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<sup>92</sup> J.W. Macquarrie, *The Main Needs for the Future in Bantu Education* (Theme Paper). Paper Presented at the 1969 Conference on Bantu Education – South African Institute of Race Relations, 16 to 17 January 1969.

close on 1 500 000 Black children were at school and that over R20 million was spent on their education.<sup>93</sup> This communication did a lot to appease the people that were initially sceptical about Bantu Education. The people whose children could previously not access education were happy that the problem of admission had been obviated.

Viewed superficially, these figures could deceive one into believing that good progress was being made in Black education, but in essence the situation was not as good as depicted. Since 1953, when *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* was introduced, the quality of Black education had been deteriorating. The percentage of matric passes had dropped from 37,6 per cent in 1958 to 19 per cent in 1959.<sup>94</sup> From the foregoing it is evident that the percentage of passes declined since the operation of Bantu Education. There were far too few matriculants to provide students for the three tribal colleges. It is important to note that not all who passed were suitable for higher education. In 1962, of 128 passes, only 28 obtained matriculation exemption, which is the standard required for entrance to the university.<sup>95</sup> The Matriculation pass rate dropped since the introduction of Bantu Education. There were concerns that large sums of money were being poured into a bottomless pit to produce a handful of graduates. In 1960 the Matric learners registered a failure rate of more than 82 per cent, with only 18 per cent of those who wrote passing. The high failure rate came as a result of the resignation or discharge of a host of dedicated teachers, the fanatical insistence on the use of a Bantu language medium, the double shift system in the class rooms which was exhausting to the available staff. Some schools had three sessions per day: the first session starting at 07:30 and ending at 10:00; then the next session starting at 10:00 and ending at 12:00; the final session was from noon to 15:00. Good teachers were being lost to the system because they got better salaries in industries. Some teachers were paid as little as R10. Black teachers with the same qualifications were paid half as much as Coloured teachers, Coloured teachers were in turn paid less than European teachers. Teachers in Black schools were not in a position

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<sup>93</sup> *The Star*, 3 January 1961.

<sup>94</sup> See Appendix 2 on p. 448.

<sup>95</sup> Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

to speak their minds freely on these matters. They feared victimisation.<sup>96</sup> It was not uncommon to find as many as 70 Native children to a class in a lower primary on the Witwatersrand – in two separate sessions. This meant that some teachers had to cope with a class of 70 in the morning and similar class in the afternoon. This unfavourable situation resulted in a lot of children dropping out of schools. The fact that of the 426 827 of the learners that started schooling in 1962 in Sub-Standard A only 6 732 went through to Form V in 1974<sup>97</sup> illustrates the serious challenges facing Black education in South Africa.<sup>98</sup> The situation in Black schools did not allow for proper teaching and learning taking place. Teachers would, under the circumstances not be able to access the struggling learners. Faced with these unfavourable situations such learners easily dropped out of school. It has to be appreciated that with the expanded system of education and overstretched resources the system would not perform the way it had at the time it was accessible to fewer children. Whilst low pass rates cannot be condoned, it has to be appreciated that the government was facing other serious challenges with the system of education. The teething systemic problems would be solved with time.

The 'Bantu Education Journal' gave different reasons for the high failure rate. It mentioned amongst others, the following: The high standard required by the Joint Matriculation Board; the requirement that one of the official languages must be offered at the higher grade; the incompetence of some teachers, and slackness and lack of earnestness on the part of teachers; weak control by principals who placed too much confidence in their assistants; laziness and indifference on the part of learners; lack of suitable text-books; too little written work by learners; and too little private reading and lack of reading matter.<sup>99</sup> The reasons advanced by the Department of Bantu Education may be educationally valid. The education process cannot be executed without the

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<sup>96</sup> The Star, 10 March 1961 and The Cape Argus, 2 March 1961 and 9 March 1961. Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>97</sup> See Appendix 3 on p. 449.

<sup>98</sup> The Star, 7 February 1961. Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. F. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid. p. 66.

<sup>99</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 6 March 1961.



commitment of all role players. The government alone would not be able to turn the situation around.

On its part the government contributed to the stifling of Black education by

- The introduction of compulsory mother-tongue instruction up and including Standard 6;
- Equality of the official languages through Junior Certificate, that is teaching half the subjects through English medium and half through Afrikaans medium when hitherto all subjects were taught through the medium of a Bantu language;
- Introduction of useless subjects such as needlework, tree planting, clay modelling, gardening for boys and girls;
- Abolition of subjects such as Latin, which was essential for legal studies;
- Lowering of the educational requirements of teachers to three years' training after Standard 6.
- Compulsory withdrawal from school of children who fail Standard 2 twice, no matter for what reason; and
- Prohibition of 3<sup>rd</sup> class passes in Standard 6 from proceeding to Junior Certificate.<sup>100</sup>

It has to be appreciated that the government faced with so many challenges had to introduce certain measures to mitigate the challenges. The abolition of Latin as Legal Studies would not be pursued by all children was a meaningful cost-containment measure. The lowering of educational requirements for teachers were intended to provisionally mitigate the shortage of qualified teachers.

The Liberal Party, on the other hand, maintained that the only factors discriminating salaries and service conditions should be on the grounds of qualifications, experience, responsibility of functions. They believed that teachers should enjoy full citizen rights, including that of participating freely in political affairs, provided they did not use their

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<sup>100</sup> Memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Urban Africans, 7 December 1977. South African Institute of Race Relations. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA, Accession No. 150, File 14.

positions for purposes of party political indoctrination. They supported the notion that teachers and learners in State educational institutions should enjoy freedom of conscience.<sup>101</sup> The policy positions of the Liberal Party might have been true, but the latter would not be able to win any elections in South Africa at that time with that kind of approach and views about Black teachers in the context of the South African politics.

A positive development was that by 1965 the number of Black school children in South Africa topped the two million mark, doubling the figure of 10 years before. They were to be taught by 34 000 teachers. The Department of Bantu Education expressed concern for the small number of Black recruits who applied to be trained as teachers. The Department was particularly worried about the alarming shortage of teachers trained to teach Mathematics and Science up to Matric.<sup>102</sup> It would be unfair to expect the government to solve the problems that plagued education in South Africa alone. The government needed Black communities to partner with it for meaningful and long-lasting solutions to education to be achieved. An increase in Black recruits to the teaching profession would help alleviate the challenges.

The NP government had always argued that education for all national groups in South Africa was of equal quality. In order to test the "equality claim," it would be prudent to simply compare the pattern of resource allocations for the various groups. For the White children, education was free and compulsory to the age of 16; for Coloured and Indian children it was free and it was planned that it would be compulsory by 1979; for Blacks it was neither free nor compulsory.<sup>103</sup> The disparities on funding in education remained serious cause for concern. Relative to Whites, the per capita spending on Bantu Education had not increased. In 1968, the ration was R14,50 to R228; in 1975, it was R42 to R644. In 1952, it was 14% of the White figure, in 1968, 6,4% and in 1974, 6,5. These figures were public knowledge, and therefore tended to lend credibility to those who

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<sup>101</sup> Report of Education Commission, (nd). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/1//2/2. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>102</sup> *The Natal Mercury*, 19 January 1965 and *The Star*, 22 January 1965.

<sup>103</sup> R. Ainslie, *Children of Soweto*, p. 8.

alleged that nothing important had changed in the quality of the Bantu Education system. It was quite true that there had been many improvements, but there was certainly no evidence whatsoever that any attempt was being made to redress the gross imbalance in spending between the two systems.<sup>104</sup> Black parents, unlike those of other racial groups, were further burdened in that they had to pay for stationery and textbooks and contribute towards school fees.<sup>105</sup> Black parents paid three times as much as Whites to educate their children up to Junior Certificate. From Grade 1 to the Junior Certificate examination, the education of a Black child cost a parent R16 in tuition fees and R52 in books and stationery. White parents paid nothing in tuition fees but R22 for books.<sup>106</sup> Black parents had to contend with high fees despite the fact that they earned meagre salaries and were doing unskilled jobs in the main. The assertion that education was separate but equal could not be substantiated.

The ideology of separate education systems was unacceptable to a great many Black people. They were suspicious that the aim of the system continued to be the perpetuation of the idea that 'Blacks should be educated to understand that there is not place for them in the White community above the level of certain forms of labour.' This quotation was twenty years old, but had sunk very deeply into Black consciousness, validly or otherwise, and remained a point of discord that could be capitalised upon by extremists. To dislodge it, repeated commitment at the very highest levels to equalisation and visible moves to that end were required. As long as the financial position obtained, policy

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<sup>104</sup> Memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Urban Africans, 7 December 1977. South African Institute of Race Relations. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA, Accession No. 150, File 14. M.A.S. Corke, Headmaster of St. Barnabas College. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. E. Unterhalter, *The Impact of Apartheid on Women's Education in South Africa*. Review of African Political Economy, No. 48, Autumn 1990, pp. 67-68.

<sup>105</sup> R. Ainslie, Children of Soweto, p. 8. M.A.S. Corke, Headmaster of St. Barnabas College. *Some Approaches to the Relief of Problem Areas in South African Education*. Johannesburg, April 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>106</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 4 March 1961. African Teachers' Association of South Africa, Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary for Bantu Education, Pretoria, 1 September 1972. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA, Accession No. 150, File 14.

statements would not be believed, even if they were made with sincerity and much greater clarity.<sup>107</sup>

The calls for the improvement of Black education were persistent. The bitter fruits of Bantu Education were being harvested and the resentment of parents against the system was growing daily. Parents had seen the wholesale dismissal of excellent teachers who were not suited to the system, the expulsion of hundreds of learners from schools on the slightest pretext, massive failures annually, insistence on vernacular instruction and the strangulation of English. Black people witnessed the abortion of normal education to something inferior to fit them for their inferior place.<sup>108</sup> The people that were opposed to Bantu education only focused on the negative elements of the system, without mentioning anything positive about it. They ignored even the rationale behind even the negative elements of the policy. They viewed anything separate in education as inferior.

Dr McConkey, former Director of Education in Natal, argued that the economic future of the Black people would continue to lie in the general South African economy. Their economy should therefore be designed to help them to prosper in that economy. He argued that the education given to the Blacks should be modern, preparing them for skilled and responsible work to the extent that they would be individually capable of doing such work. It should be modern also in being designed to help them to cast off traditional social and intellectual habits that stood in the way of their adjustment to the life in a modern community. He called for a comprehensive revision of all syllabi in the light of this principle.<sup>109</sup> It is erroneous to assume that all White government leaders supported racially based education and economy. There were some like Dr McConkey who saw long-term negative effects of such segregation.

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<sup>107</sup> Memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Urban Africans, 7 December 1977. South African Institute of Race Relations. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>108</sup> Transfer of Tribalism: The Transfer of "Coloured" education to the Coloured Affairs Department, (nd). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/1/2/3.

<sup>109</sup> Natal Daily News, 21 December 1962. Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA by R.L. Peteni, 4 January 1982. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25.

There were calls for the policy of financing Black education from a fixed grant to be abandoned. Black education, like European or Coloured education, should be a direct charge on the general revenues of the country. The financing of Black education, as of other education, should be regarded as top priority investment in the Republic. An outward looking, future oriented plan should be prepared for the systematic expansion and systematic improvement of the quality of education given. This was to embrace the following:

- Improved salaries for teachers;
- A greatly expanding teaching service, making possible the substantial reduction of the size of classes, the abandonment of any course of teacher training below the level of Higher Primary Teacher's Certificate (Junior Certificate plus two years);
- The systematic building up of a corps of fully qualified high school teachers;
- The abolition of school fees;
- The removal of the ban on the expansion of secondary schools in urban areas, and the vigorous development of such schools;
- A comprehensive bursary scheme for secondary education and for professional and technical training;
- The earliest possible introduction of compulsory education.<sup>110</sup>

This seemed to be a balanced approach to the many problems that plagued education in South Africa. A great industrial economy requires a highly developed system of education, turning out well-trained people at all levels for the ever-increasing number of skilled and responsible tasks. South Africa, no doubt, needed a vigorous expansion of its education services, lengthening and diversifying secondary education and doubling facilities for university and higher technological education.

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<sup>110</sup> *Natal Daily News*, 21 December 1962. African Teachers' Association of South Africa, Memorandum submitted to the Secretary for Bantu Education, Pretoria, 1 September 1972. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA, Accession No. 150, File 14. Secretary-General's Report Presented to the Annual Conference of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa, Held at Bodibeng High School, Kroonstad on 17 and 18 December 1968. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre of African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, Files 4.10-4.12.

South Africa's claims of progress in education and the provisions of education that is "second to none" and of "equal quality" have shown to be false. If these claims were true, school boycotts would not have been as rife as they were in South Africa. Unfortunately school boycotts became a common feature of the Black South African school system.

### **3.6 The education of the Coloureds and Indians**

Until 1950 the Coloured population was largely governed by the same laws that applied to White society, although their legal position differed with regard to such important matters as the franchise and access to schools. With the introduction of apartheid they were deemed to be a separate "volk" and a wide variety of legislative measures were passed to bring about separation in almost all aspects of their daily lives. Once classified as Coloured, they were subjected to exclusion from the common society in all but their working lives and provided with separate but not equal rights, facilities and services. It should be stressed that the Coloured population was not homogeneous. It was made up of very different social and economic groups of people who had different living and working conditions. All these groups were affected in distinct ways by the separate development legislation and by the indignities and hardships they faced in their daily lives. Yet what was significant was that both the Black and Coloured population shared common grievances and it was these that lay behind their continued clash with the law. Such grievances reinforced and interacted with one another and they cumulatively built up a sense of deep-seated injustice and hurt.<sup>111</sup>

As discussed earlier by 1960, the NP government began to stress the idea of 'separate development,' and made plans for a number of homelands in which some political rights were granted. Similar ideas began to be applied to the Coloured and Indian groups. For some years there had existed a purely Advisory Council of Coloured Affairs. In 1961, it was announced that this was to be expanded into a representative body with its own budget and with legislative and executive powers over such matters as education, health

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<sup>111</sup> J.G.E. Wolfson, *South Africa in Travail: The Disturbances of 1976/77. Evidence Presented by the South African Institute of Race Relations to Cillie Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and other Places during June 1976*, pp. 100-101.

and welfare. When the detailed changes were debated in parliament in 1964, it became clear that a major difficulty lay in the lack of any geographic area which could be made a Coloured 'homeland.'<sup>112</sup>

Earlier, in 1958 Coloured male voters had been deprived of their franchise rights. They could no longer participate in the election of members of Parliament or of the Provincial Council in the Cape. In 1972 they were also excluded from exercising the Cape Municipal franchise. The bitterness and resentment of the Coloured population following upon their exclusion from the exercise of political rights was particularly great in the Cape, where such rights had been enjoyed for over a century.<sup>113</sup> The Coloureds were gradually beginning to feel the pinch of apartheid legislation in their social lives. This was to later impact on the education of their children.

CNE, like separate development, was intended to include Coloureds and Indians just as much as Whites and Blacks, and it was extended to these groups by *The Coloured People's Education Act of 1963* and *The Indian Education Act of 1965*. The Coloured people comprised 9.3% of the total population and Asians 2.8%.<sup>114</sup> 1963 saw the passing of the Coloured Persons Education Bill, which transferred Coloured education from the Provincial authorities to the Department of Coloured Affairs. Resistance to this transfer and to the whole concept of separate development for Coloured people as epitomised by the Coloured Affairs Department brought school children and teachers into open and, at times, violent conflict with the authorities. Parents, teachers and learners were concerned for the effects of this Bill on the future of the Coloured community.<sup>115</sup> At Belgravia High School leaflets appeared protesting against the system of Coloured education and concern

<sup>112</sup> R. Tunmer, Coloured Education in South Africa. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 108.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>114</sup> F. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*. p. 49.

<sup>115</sup> C. Legum and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, 198. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: The Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.

[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 5. R. Tunmer, Coloured Education in South Africa. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 110.

was expressed for the future of learners. Learners at Salt River High School reacted strongly against the arrest of teachers under the 90-day Act. Illegal leaflets were issued and the children went on strike. From March 1963 onwards, after the introduction of the Coloured Persons Education Bill, slogans were painted on school buildings. These slogans protested against Coloured education. Over a period of two month, leaflets dealing with Coloured education were distributed among the children. The motives behind Coloured education were analysed and the need was expressed for learner and teacher resistance. They attacked Coloured education, racial indoctrination and the suppression of ideas of equality.<sup>116</sup> There was dislike of the concept of 'Coloured' education being something apparently different from 'education' in general. There were fears about transferring responsibility from the experienced provinces to a new inexperienced department.<sup>117</sup> From the foregoing it is evident that any form of separate education would be viewed with suspicion, no matter how noble the intentions of the government might have been. The fact that parents would have more say in the education of their children, the introduction of compulsory education were all relegated into the periphery.

The resistance amongst children and teachers was not limited to their opposition to government interference with Coloured education. Teachers and learners were totally opposed to the whole conception of apartheid and they saw *The Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963* as one of the many weapons the government was using to stifle all opposition to its racialists policies. In 1961 Coloured school children demonstrated in Adderley Street. They were carrying posters which read: "Down with White Supremacy," "Uhuru," "Freedom for All." In his presidential address to the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Teachers' League of South Africa, the Rev. D.M. Wessels emphasised that parents

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<sup>116</sup> Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: The Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 5. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82.

<sup>117</sup> R. Tunmer, *Coloured Education in South Africa*. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa*. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 111.



and learners must combine together to prevent indoctrination and “to bring a completely democratic South Africa.”<sup>118</sup> To the Coloured people any form of education that was exclusively meant for them as a separate group was not acceptable. This position was taken without weighing the advantages of the proposed education against the disadvantages endured by other population groups.

*The Coloured Persons' Education Act of 1963* removed control of all Coloured education from the Provincial and government departments. It provided that the control of education for Coloured persons was to be vested in a Division of Education within the Department of Coloured Affairs. The Division would take over all Coloured primary, secondary and teacher training schools previously controlled by the provincial administrations. No one was allowed to manage a private school at which more than fourteen Coloured learners were enrolled unless the school was registered with the Department and complied with prescribed requirements. Compulsory and free school attendance would be introduced in any area or kind of school when the Minister was satisfied that sufficient and suitable accommodation was available. During the Assembly debates on this Act, the Minister said there was no intention of taking over all mission schools at once, but from time to time a church found itself unable to continue providing education services. The Act would make it possible for negotiations to take place in such instances. If land and property were taken over from a church the provisions of the common law in regard to compensation and arbitration would apply.<sup>119</sup> These moves were almost similar to those taken in the introduction of Bantu Education.

The conditions of service for teachers were laid down. The Minister could ban them from membership or from furthering the objects of any party-political or other organisation, while resistance to any laws and the public criticism, except at a meeting of a recognised teacher's association, of any state department would be deemed misconduct to be

<sup>118</sup> Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: The Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008.

[www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 5.

<sup>119</sup> M. Horrell, *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 327. M. Madelung, *Black Lives Under Apartheid*, 14. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. C. Legum and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, p. 198.

answered for before an enquiry. These measures reflected the increasing activity of teachers as leaders of the Coloured people's political opposition to apartheid. An advisory Education Council for Coloured Persons was to be set up, consisting of an officer of the Department and at least eight Coloured members appointed by the State President. The Minister would decide the medium of instruction in schools, but parents would have the final decision if doubt arose as to the home language of any child.<sup>120</sup> In Natal there were 40 000 Coloured people who were unlike the Coloured people of the Cape because they did not speak Afrikaans. They had in the past attended the University of Natal. Under the new legislation they were forbidden admission and forced to go to the Cape and receive instruction in Afrikaans at the University College of the Western Cape.<sup>121</sup> The problems facing the implementation of separate education were enormous. Some of the challenges were not foreseen. The fact that not all Coloureds spoke Afrikaans was a complication that would not be easy to preclude. The Coloured people were not homogeneous, the language identity was determined by the geographic location in South Africa in the main.

This legislation was introduced against much opposition, both in and out of parliament. Though some Coloureds accepted public ministerial suggestions that better educational facilities would become available, most Coloureds and educationists of other groups opposed the changes, wanting 'education, not Coloured education,' and expecting that a separate and inferior type of education would be devised. Fears were expressed that a special Coloured Education department would lead to a different standard from that of Whites and would involve the unnecessary expense of duplication. The Council for Coloured Affairs had only agreed to the transfer of control on certain conditions, including the introduction of compulsory education, the raising of the school leaving age, equal pay for Coloured and White teachers and parallel-medium education in all Coloured schools. Unfortunately none of these were complied with. The South African education landscape was to be according to racial lines. The Liberal Party viewed the transfer of the education of the Coloured people as a threat to the Coloured section of the

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<sup>120</sup> F. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid. p. 49.

<sup>121</sup> The Cape Times, 19 January 1961.

population. They argued that, according to the logic of apartheid, all groups were to be driven into separate "kraals." The Coloured, who was not yet suited for first-class citizenship in the land of his birth, was being given an education suited to his "inferior" attainments. The Coloured was given a place in a society designed to maintain "baaskaap" and White supremacy, therefore he was given an education that would prepare him for his position of servitude. It was the view of the Liberal Party that if "baaskap" was to be perpetuated, as the NP devoutly hoped, then whole generations of South Africans were to be brain-washed into accepting this as the natural order of things.<sup>122</sup> The Liberal Party took this position against the background of numerous official records that confirmed this position. The Interdepartmental Commission on Native Education as far back as 1936 had declared that 'the education of the white child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society.'<sup>123</sup>

The pamphlet of CNE, a blue-print for apartheid in education, made these points, amongst others:

The education of Coloureds should be seen as a subordinate part of the Afrikaans task of Christianising the non-White races of our fatherland. It is the Afrikaner's sacred duty to see that the Coloureds are brought up Christian-Nationalists... he will then be proof against foreign ideologies which give him an illusion of happiness but leave him in the long run unsatisfied and unhappy... He must be nationalist. The welfare and happiness of the Coloured lies in his understanding that he belongs to a separate racial group and in his being proud of it.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Transfer of Tribalism: The Transfer of "Coloured" Education to the Coloured Affairs Department, (nd). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/1/2/3. C. Legum and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, p. 198.

<sup>123</sup> Transfer of Tribalism: The Transfer of "Coloured" Education to the Coloured Affairs Department, (nd). Alan Paton Centre and Archives, South African Liberal Party Collection, PC2/1/2/3.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

The Coloured people were being attacked in a sphere by which they had always set great store, often hoping that by education they would be able to surmount the innumerable barriers thrown up by racial prejudice and racial legislation.

The Education Council was appointed early in 1964 to advise, particularly, on the training and salaries of Coloured teachers. The Minister warned members not to give information to the Press, and no decision of the Council could be published without his authorisation. Regional boards, of which more than half the total members were government-appointed and the rest elected, acted as liaison between the school committees and the Department's local representative and to advise on appointments and other such matters. The committees consisted also of some nominated and some elected members. *The Coloured Persons' Representative Council Amendment Act, Act No. 52 of 1968*, created a partly nominated, partly elected Coloured Council with limited powers, including some control over education. The Council could draft laws, but they could only be introduced with the approval of the Ministers of Coloured Affairs and of Finance. A number of Coloured community members began to play a far greater part than previously in educational affairs, though legislation and finance remained in White control. Education for the Coloured community in South Africa was financed from three sources: the Revenue vote of the Department of Coloured Relations and Rehoboth Affairs, this Department has replaced that of Coloured Affairs, the Loan Vote of the Public Works Department and the Revenue and Loan Vote of the Coloured Persons' Representative Council. The total expenditure budgeted for 1972-1973 was R65.2 million. Expenditure in 1972-1973 per learner in primary and high schools respectively was R91.21 and R124.52.<sup>125</sup> Whilst some elements of Coloured education were discriminatory, it has to be appreciated that a greater number of people in the Coloured community were playing an active role in the education of their children. The fact that there were some negative implications does not in any way imply that all the changes were negative.

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<sup>125</sup> F. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*, p. 50. C. Legum and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, p. 198.

Education for Coloured children, unlike that for Black children, was free and the only direct contributions to school funds required from parents were voluntary. This was despite the fact that Coloured parents were at a higher level of earning generally. All children in Coloured schools were provided with free text books, stationery and basic equipment. All school libraries were supplied with a certain number of books annually. Some Coloureds supported the political framework in which education operated, others merely accepted or tolerated it under duress. As far back as 1956 the Botha Commission recommended seven years' compulsory education for Coloured children in the Cape. But the government only began the progressive introduction of compulsory education in 1974, starting with children aged 7 years who live within 5 km of a suitable school or transport route. By raising the age by one year each year it was expected that by 1979 education would be compulsory for all Coloured children up to 13.<sup>126</sup> The fact that Coloured education was compulsory was a step in the right direction for government. Whilst not all population groups enjoyed this, it was an indication that government was gradually going to extend this to them.

Indian education was the next system to face the influence of apartheid education. It was the view of the NP that Indians are a foreign and outlandish element that could not be assimilated in the South African community. They were regarded as not being part of the country and were therefore treated as an immigrant community. The party accepted as a basis of its policy the repatriation of as many Indians as possible and proposed a proper investigation into the practicability of such a policy on a large scale in cooperation with India and other countries.<sup>127</sup> Having eventually come to accept the Indian community as irreversibly a part of the total population, the South African government, in line with apartheid and CNE thinking, made provision, as it had for the Coloureds, for an administrative ethnic separation and for a degree of community autonomy.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> F. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*. p. 50.

<sup>127</sup> Letter dated 20 February 1952 from the South African Indian Congress to Prime Minister Malan. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/defiance/correspondence.php>.

<sup>128</sup> F. Troup, *Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid*. p. 52. J.G.E. Wolfson, *The Ideology and Provision of Racially Segregated Education in South Africa, 1948 to 1972: A Survey of Some Aspects of Bantu Education*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 13.

*The Indians Education Act of 1965*, provided for the control of other forms of education for Indians to be transferred from the provinces to the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>129</sup> The Minister of Indian Affairs was empowered to institute courses of training, and cause examinations to be conducted and certificates issued to those who passed. As was the case with *The Coloured Persons' Education Act of 1963*, the Minister could enforce compulsory and free schooling where he was satisfied that sufficient and suitable accommodation was available to cater for all Indian children in a specific area.<sup>130</sup> The South African Indian Council was set up under a Minister of Indian Affairs, initially as an advisory body nominated members only; but in 1972 it was enlarged to include a few elected members and given limited powers to handle matters such as education and community welfare. *The Indian Education Act of 1965* provided for the establishment at all schools of school committees on which parents served, and by 1971, 329 of these were functioning. An Indian Education Advisory Council, of up to 20 members, was instituted in 1969 to advise the South African Indian Council. During 1970 free education for all Indian learners up to matric was introduced, with a consequent increase in the per capita grants which stood at R102.93 for primary school learners, R135.19 for high school learners and R632.80 for Training college students. The general position of Indian education was somewhat better than that of Black or Coloured because of the greater financial resources of sections of the Indian community. The education of Indian children, like that for Whites and Coloureds, but not for Blacks, was financed from General Revenue. In 1972-73, according to the Minister, a total of R26,4 million was budgeted from the Revenue account, of which R3,9 million was for the University and

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<sup>129</sup> C. Legum and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, p. 200. M. Horrell, *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 339. M. Madelung, *Black Lives Under Apartheid*, 14. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. Y.M. Dadoo, *South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid*, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>130</sup> M. Horrell, *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 339. M. Madelung, *Black Lives Under Apartheid*, 14. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82. Y.M. Dadoo, *South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid*, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

R1,1 million was for technical education.<sup>131</sup> This was a positive step in the development of the education of the Indian people. The government had come to accept that Indians were not temporary sojourners in South Africa and there was therefore a need for their education to be properly planned in order for their children's education to be catered for adequately.

When *The Indians Education Act of 1965* was introduced in the Assembly, the Minister of Indian Affairs said that Chinese children would be allowed to attend the schools that were suited to them best in the area where they lived, meaning either Indian or Coloured schools. A number of Chinese people lived, under group areas permits, in areas zoned for Whites. Private or church schools run mainly by Whites accepted some of their children, but they were not admitted to provincial schools catering for White learners. In Johannesburg, where there was a large concentration of Chinese people, these people themselves raised money for the establishment of a school for their children, which was opened in 1950. It received a small provincial subsidy.<sup>132</sup> It was very difficult to handle education based on race, as the Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloureds were not the only population groups in South Africa. As a result makeshift arrangements had to be made for the Chinese children. The government would not have to deal with such complications in an integrated system of education.

In 1960 the Group Areas Board, responsible for the implementation of the Act, declared that the only high school for Indian children in Johannesburg would no longer serve as a high school, but as a teacher training college. Parents were asked to send their children to the high schools in the Indian group area of Lenasia, some 30km away. Despite widespread protest by the children and the community, the Board refused to change its ruling. By 1963 children were forced to travel a round trip of 60km daily. With a view to

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<sup>131</sup> M. Horrell, *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 347. S. Vally, Y. Dolombisa and K. Porteus, *Violence in South African schools*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Witwatersrand, 15 November 1999. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/Archives/2.1/21vally.pdf), p. 82.

<sup>132</sup> M. Horrell, *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 347.

the welfare of their children, many Indian families moved to Lenasia.<sup>133</sup> Previously, the Indian community, led by the Transvaal Indian Congress, had resisted by establishing a school financed entirely by the community. This multi-racial venture in teaching, with the staff composed of Indians, Blacks, Coloureds and Whites was eventually forced to close down because of persistent intimidation by the Security Police, bannings of members of staff, and a serious lack of funds after about eight years.<sup>134</sup> The establishment of a school financed entirely by the community would not be sustainable because of the community dynamics and the unavailability of a constant flow of funds into the finances of such a school. The government's interference alone would not have led to the closing down of this school. There were already many variables militating against its sustainability.

With the passing of *The Indian Education Act of 1965*, a structurally uniform pattern of education for the "non-White" peoples of South Africa was consummated. The Act was the logical extension of *The Bantu Education of 1953* and *The Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963*, and hence the general policy of apartheid. The Act provided for the control of the education of Indians by its appropriate racial institutions, the Indian Affairs Department. A cursory examination of some of the clauses of the Act can leave no one in doubt as to its intentions, that of rigorously policing the education of the Indians within the framework of the government's basic policy. The Act stated that a teacher could not be a member of any party, political organisation or group which the government deemed undesirable, nor could he participate in its activities or further its aims in any way deemed to cause an embarrassment or danger to the State as a whole. Furthermore he could not publicly criticise the administration of any State Department. The Act did not provide for the real participation of Indian people in the formulation and

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<sup>133</sup> L.F. Sangaran, A Historical Evaluation of Indian Education in the Transvaal. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, *Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 82. Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)

<sup>134</sup> Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)



execution of educational policies.<sup>135</sup> There can be no doubt that the principle of non-equality of provisions and opportunities in education was a grave threat to the well-being and development of the Black peoples. At the same time, however, the deliberate imposition of non-equality formed the basis of the intensification of the underdevelopment of the “non-White” majority, and hence the maintenance and continuation of White supremacy.

### **3.7 Combating subversion among Blacks and the medium of instruction in Post-Primary schools**

The Department of Bantu Education tried to enlist the aid of Black teachers to combat subversion among teachers and to prevent the use of schools for subversive activities. There was an official appeal to Black teachers to ‘behave like men’ when they see indications that the schools are being used to bring discord in the country. School committees and school boards were asked to help teachers in the difficult struggle against undermining activities.<sup>136</sup>

The Department of Bantu Education drew up a rigid code of conduct for Black teachers at state schools, under which political activity was regarded as misconduct. The rules formed part of general regulations covering the conditions under which the government would give grants-in-aid to schools in mines and factories, on farms and at hospitals. The teachers who broke the regulations ran the risk of dismissal or their salaries could be reduced for a specified period. Teachers were not, through their acts or behaviour, to encourage disobedience or resistance to the laws of the state. They were not allowed to identify themselves actively with a political party or body or actively take part in political affairs or in the nomination or election of tribal authorities. According to these

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<sup>135</sup> Y.M. Dadoo, South African Indian Congress Memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, June 1968. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/history/dadoo-07.html)  
Y.M. Dadoo, *South Africa's Freedom Struggle: Statements, Speeches and Articles including Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 193. Supplement: *Focus on Education*. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. D.C. Hill, *Apartheid: The Engrained Effects of Institutionalized Racism, and its Involvement in South Africa's Struggle Towards Unity*. Retrieved on 9 June 2008. [www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf](http://www.forms.gradsch.psu.edu/equity/sroppapers/2003/HillDominiqueC.pdf), p. 5.

<sup>136</sup> *The Friend*, 7 August 1963.

regulations teachers could not contribute to the Press, by interview or any other manner, or publish in any other way anything criticising or making unfavourable comments on the Department of Bantu Education or Bantu authority. It was made clear that the annual increment could not be claimed as a right as they were granted subject to the availability of the necessary funds. A teacher whose zeal, discipline, punctuality and sobriety had not been satisfactory, could forfeit his increment.<sup>137</sup> Viewed superficially, one may be tempted to conclude that these measures were misplaced, but in essence the government was compelled to have them in place to sustain its policy of separate development. Otherwise the government would not be able to contain rebellion among Blacks who were not satisfied with its policies.

In March 1971 the Advisory Board for Bantu Education wanted the opinion of a number of organisations on the medium of instruction in Bantu post-primary schools. They wanted to know who should decide on the medium of instruction, whether the use of vernacular languages or Afrikaans was desirable, whether the dual concurrent media of both English and Afrikaans was recommended. ATASA advised that the choice of a medium of instruction at any stage of education before university, in the schools of any country, could not be left in the hands of individual parents, schools, boards or circuits. They argued that such a course could result in any administratively, economically and culturally unviable multiplicity of choices. The choice of the medium of instruction was the right and duty of the community in the widest possible sense. ATASA went on to indicate that they did not recommend vernacular languages because they were seriously inadequate in the terminology and technical literature necessary for the pursuit of knowledge of any content subject in depth at any level of education. Any attempt to prepare terminology and technical literature in the vernacular languages was going to be a monumental and expensive task. Even if it were to be successful, it would create still more problems such as the immense multiplication of services and institutions and educational personnel, merely to satisfy the demands of small population groups using different media of instruction. ATASA further argued that the use of the vernacular would not be in the best interest of Blacks as it would hamper the scope of

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<sup>137</sup> The Star, 11 February 1963.

communication with one another to promote, for example, greater political, economic and cultural aggregation. Communication with the outside world for educational, cultural and economic reasons would similarly be impaired.<sup>138</sup> The arguments advanced by ATASA were in many ways flawed. The development of all languages started somewhere. To argue that any attempt to prepare terminology and technical literature in the vernacular languages was going to be expensive did not take into account that a start has to be made somewhere. South Africa lost an opportunity to develop Black languages to the required levels.

On the use of Afrikaans ATASA indicated that, like the use of English, Afrikaans had for the Black child the disadvantages associated with being taught in a language which is not the mother-tongue, especially when it is introduced as a medium late in the schooling of the child. Unlike English, however, Afrikaans was spoken and written almost exclusively in South Africa, and even then by a limited section of the population. For this reason the use of Afrikaans was not recommended. ATASA recommended the use of English. English presented the overwhelming advantage of being an almost universal language rich in all terminology and in technical and cultural literature. Once having opted for it, the Black people would face no other problem than that of a foreign medium.<sup>139</sup> It was at this stage not certain whether the Department of Bantu Education would take this advice seriously. This matter was very sensitive and very close to the heart of Black parents and learners. It has to be admitted that a person who knows many languages has a broader world view than a person who knows only one language. The knowledge and mastery of Afrikaans by Black children would make it possible for them to know and appreciate Afrikaners culture and heritage, which is an advantage in a multi-racial community. It would be prudent if this were to be done out of choice rather than coercion.

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<sup>138</sup> Reply of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Opionnaire of the Advisory Board for Bantu Education (dated March 1971) on the Media of Instruction in Bantu Post-Primary Schools. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre of African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No.150, File 14.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

### 3.8 Conclusion

The period under review witnessed militancy of some Black political groupings, as was evidenced by the formation of the PAC. It was an indication of the impatience of some radical Blacks with the recalcitrant attitude of the NP government to end apartheid and not a good omen for the amelioration of race relations in South Africa. This was compounded by the different responses of the South African population to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the creation of the Union of South Africa. The government urged all South Africans to celebrate the anniversary. The Black extra-parliamentary organisations, however, argued that there was nothing to celebrate in the midst of apartheid. It is unfortunate that the South Africans had other issues to contest so much that they would not freely celebrate what would otherwise be an achievement for everybody. The perceptions of the Black political leaders were compounded by the declaration of the Union of South Africa as a republic, thus severing ties with England. The Black people had hoped that England, as the third party, would intervene on their behalf in ending apartheid. With the declaration of a republic this would no more be applicable.

The resoluteness of the NP government to continue enforcing apartheid by insisting on the hated pass laws led to the infamous Sharpeville shooting. The political developments of the early 1960s did not give a positive outlook to the political situation in South Africa. It is no wonder that there was an apparent radicalisation of the approach of the Black extra-parliamentary organisation. This development did not augur well for race relations in a country where there was polarisation of relations because of the apartheid.

The stance of the NP government that Blacks should not be integrated into the general population of South Africa precipitated the creation of Black homelands. This 'balkanisation' of South Africa into homelands was not good for equal access to education and the economy. This resulted in Black people not getting a fair share of the resources that they would have otherwise enjoyed. The creation of homelands also led to the migrant labour system which in effect led to the disintegration of family life, and this in turn had negative implications for education. Learners cannot learn and grow properly

with one of their parents forced to be away from home for extended periods of time. Men were in the main missing from their homes in the homelands as they had to look for employment in the urban areas. As a result women in the majority of cases, and elderly people in some instances, had to bring up children single handedly. The homeland schooling system could not function properly, with old people and mothers having to be relied upon to support schools where issues of governance and matters of discipline were concerned. The general absence of able bodied men in the homelands made the situation untenable.

The NP government was compelled to devise an education plan for Coloureds and Indians because of its racial policies. The latter racial groups, like the Black people, also viewed any form of separate education with suspicion. It, however, has to be mentioned that the fact that Coloured education was compulsory put their education a step higher than Black education. With the passing of *The Indian Education Act of 1965*, a structurally uniform pattern of racial education was consummated. This did not, however, imply that their work was completed as an attempt by the NP government to have race based education proved complex, as the Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloureds were not the only racial groups in South Africa. The NP government's racial policies implied that provisional arrangements would have to be made for any other group that presented itself as a recognisable and sizeable racial category. For instance the Chinese do not fall into any of the above racial groups in South Africa. As a result an arrangement had to be made for Chinese children to be allowed to attend schools that were suited to them best in the area where they lived, meaning either Indian or Coloured schools. This was despite the fact that a number of Chinese people lived, under group areas permits, in areas zoned for Whites. As a result of the failure of the White schools to accommodate their children, where there was a large concentration of Chinese people, these people themselves raised money for the establishment of a school for their children. This shows how complex it was to run a racially based education system.

Bantu Education on the other hand proved a success in the Black communities. The majority of learners who could not access education when the schools were run by the

missionaries were able to attend schools. It is regrettable that the framework within which Bantu Education was compelled to operate had been determined by political considerations. The economic and social realities of the time demanded that Blacks, like other sections of the South African population, be educated so as to develop their innate potential to the full. The fact that more learners had access to education under Bantu Education would have implied that more people were enjoying quality education, had the same quality education been provided for all racial groups.

It defies logic that the South African economy continued to thrive at a time when inferior education was given to the majority of South Africans. It is not far fetched to expect the opposite to prevail. The skills and expertise of people enjoying inferior education cannot help the economy to expand. The perception of an expanding South African economy was created by the fact that it was the few that had a full share and access to the economy, thus creating a false sense of growth. If all South Africans had full access to the economy, with the inequalities that existed in education the claimed prosperity would not have been realised. On the other hand, had all South Africans been given equal education from the onset, this would have translated into true economic prosperity for the country. This shows how important the provision of quality education to all the citizens is for the development of any country.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE 1976 SOWETO LEARNERS' UPRISING, ITS AFTERMATH AND THE GRANTING OF 'INDEPENDENCE' TO HOMELANDS (1975-1979)

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the events leading to the 1976 Soweto<sup>1</sup> learners uprising, the uprising itself and the aftermath of the uprising. This turning point in the history of South African education was principally caused by the government's policy on the medium of instruction in Black schools. The reluctance of the government to heed calls by the stakeholders in Black communities for a more equitable language policy in Black schools is explored. This chapter evaluates the events that led to the eruption of the learners' revolt, the rioting that followed and the ensuing lawlessness. It examines the impact of the uprising on teachers and learners in Soweto in particular and on South African education in general. The chapter further investigates the aftermath of the Soweto learners' uprising and the reaction of key sections of the South African population to the revolt. It examines the government's 'reform' programme, its repressive agenda and the earnest calls for learners to return to school. The granting of 'independence' to the homelands is considered as well as the reactions of those affected. The chapter delves into the impact of the independence of homelands on education.

#### 4.2 Background to the 1976 Soweto learners' uprising

Opposition to *The Bantu Education Act of 1953* began in the 1950s and, after a hiatus in the 1960s, erupted in the 1976 learners' uprising in Soweto and countrywide. The outbreak in Soweto in 1976 was a turning point in two ways. Firstly, together with the industrial workers' strikes of 1973, it sparked the process that led to the revival of organised mass political opposition to the apartheid system. Secondly, although in 1976 the focus was on opposition to Bantu Education, the objectives of the struggle were soon

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<sup>1</sup> Soweto is an acronym for South Western Townships.

extended, ultimately culminating in demands for 'People's Education.'<sup>2</sup> According to Hartshorne, because of their very nature and function, schools and the education system in general are open to divisions, dissent and protest in society. If the authority of the state is questioned at any level, this will be reflected in the school as surely as the school itself also in essence reflects the value of the state that controls it. So the school becomes a 'site of struggle' and a centre of resistance in which opposing forces and ideas strive for dominance. At this point it will be claimed that the school is politicised, and repressive measures will often be used to try to restore the full hegemony of the state.<sup>3</sup> The dissatisfaction of the South African Black population with government policies manifested itself in education. The schools in South Africa became the sites of the struggle.

In the 1950s the struggle against Bantu Education was initiated by non-student organisations outside education institutions. In the 1970s learners and their own organisations initiated the struggle against apartheid within schools and universities and by their own organisations. Owing to the banning of political organisations in the early 1960s there was virtually no political organisation outside South African education. In the 1950s communities, through the ANC, made the school boycott part of their broader struggle, but in the 1970s learners incorporated communities into their own struggle. Learners tried to mobilise parents, workers and other members of communities. In the early 1970s the ideological and political debate began to translate into organised political action, directed against education as an instrument of White domination. This may have been due to increasing unemployment and reduced living standards brought about by economic recession and the deteriorating condition of Black education resulting from its 'massification' without adequate funding. Schools became actively involved against the conditions of Bantu Education through protests, strikes, sit-ins and demonstrations in the

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<sup>2</sup> The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa. Research and Education in South Africa. Paper Number Three, p. 1. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 33. The Background to The Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education. An Education League Publication. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives: B. Bunting Collection. MCH 07-116, p. 2. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 15. N. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> K. Hartshorne, K, The Making of Education Policy in South Africa, p. 9.



period from 1969 to 1976. The objective was not only to defeat Bantu Education by setting up alternative schools, but also to dismantle apartheid and its education system. These opposition struggles erupted in the Soweto learners' uprising of 1976, finally triggered by the imposition of Afrikaans as a language of instruction in Black schools.<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to note that eleven months prior to the riots of 16 June 1976, the opposition parties were still fighting a futile battle against the National Party's (NP) segregation policy in education. Members of opposition parties wanted to know what progress the NP was making in addressing the shortage of classrooms, introducing compulsory education for Black children, providing free education and in establishing secondary schools in urban areas. The NP in response declared that the backlogs in classrooms had been inherited from the United Party government. The NP argued that introducing free and compulsory education would aggravate the shortage of classrooms and would have financial implications for teachers and their salaries. As such, therefore, free and compulsory education was not in their immediate plans. The NP stated that secondary schools for Blacks were to be increased in the homelands, not in urban areas.

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<sup>4</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. E. Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu: *In our Lifetime*, p. 363. The Soweto Massacre. Retrieved on 18 January 2005.  
<http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/04/kister/kister.htm>. V. McKay (ed.), *A Sociology of Educating*, pp. 7-8. Statement Made under Oath by Kenneth Hlaku Rachidi to Lieutenant A.A. Struwig of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 3. Statement Made under Oath by Mpapa Wauchope to Lieutenant Colonel J.N. Zwart of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 25 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, pp. 2-3. Statement Made under Oath by Aubrey Dundubele Mokoena to Kaptein D.L. Aspeling of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, nd. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 7. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later*, p. 9. Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. *The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 27. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 114.

Building secondary schools in urban areas was in conflict with the stated policies of the NP.<sup>5</sup>

During a parliamentary debate, Punt Janson, Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, offered the following defence to the failure of the government to introduce compulsory education:

If we were to introduce compulsory education today [in 1975] from the age of seven, it would mean that a total of 97 000 teachers and as many classrooms would have to be made available. This is calculated on the basis of one teacher for 30 learners, a basis which is in line with those of the other departments. The cost involved is R126 million in respect of salaries, and R330 million to provide the classrooms which will have to be made available to these people.<sup>6</sup>

The Party's reluctance to seriously address the issues raised by members of the opposition parties further precipitated the 1976 learners' uprising. Although the NP's reluctance to promote Black education may have been endorsed by budgetary constraints, members of the opposition were unsympathetic in this regard. Negativity was compounded by the government's introduction of both Afrikaans and English as the media of instruction in teaching content subjects in Black schools, in an attempt to expand the use of Afrikaans.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> House of Assembly Debates, 5 and 6 May 1975, cols. 5463-5502. Statement by the Honourable M.C. Botha, M.P, Minister of Bantu Education. Pretoria, 29 December 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary for Bantu Education. Pretoria, 1 September 1972. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>6</sup> Punt Janson. Deputy Minister of Bantu Education. House of Assembly Debates, 6 May 1975, col. 5477.

<sup>7</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 27. B. Nasson, *Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid*, p. 40. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 42.

The background to the policy on the medium of instruction in Black schools began in the early fifties when government took over the education and training of Black learners from provincial authorities and church organisations. At that stage there was no uniformity on the medium of instruction in the existing schools. After a thorough investigation by both departmental and outside experts, a policy on the medium of instruction was formulated. Under the new policy, learners' mother tongue became the medium of instruction in the primary classes that ran up to standard VI. In secondary classes, the mother tongue was still to be used in non-examination subjects; in language as subjects the medium of instruction was the language itself; as far as possible, Afrikaans and English had to be used for content subjects. The Department of Education argued that apart from educational considerations, one of the objects of dual or triple medium of education was to give learners not only an academic education, but also, as far as their ability to communicate was concerned, to prepare them for the spheres of employment they were likely to enter. This policy was not universally welcomed. Some educationists and politicians, both White and Black, sharply criticised this policy, while it was praised by others.<sup>8</sup> The ability of learners to speak, read and write their mother tongue, plus English and Afrikaans, would stand them in good stead in the world of work as the latter two were the official languages. In some quarters this policy directive was not positively received because of the politically charged atmosphere in which education was taking place in South Africa.

Pampallis and Ndaba agree that the two official languages<sup>9</sup> could not immediately be equally implemented as the media of instruction because in several parts of the country there were simply not enough teachers who could teach half the content subjects through

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<sup>8</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. B. Nasson, *Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid*, p. 40. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillie Commission, Vol. 1, p. 42. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later*, p. 13. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres. The Journal for Christian Scholarship*, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> In South Africa at that time only English and Afrikaans were considered official languages. No African language enjoyed this recognition.

the medium of Afrikaans. Natal and the Eastern Cape, in particular, lacked sufficient teachers with the necessary language proficiency.<sup>10</sup> The transfer of teachers, the greater emphasis of instruction in Afrikaans as a subject for learners and the in-service training of teachers in Afrikaans did not offer any sustainable solution to the problem. A system was then adopted of granting certain schools permission to depart from the fifty-fifty rule (as it came to be called) on the equal use of the official languages. There was considerable discord and confusion about the basis on which permission was granted for departure or exemption from this rule. Although several justifications for departure from the rule were mentioned, it had never been official policy to grant such permission simply because parents, school boards, schools or learners so desired. Initially, only the lack of teachers with the necessary language proficiency was sufficient reason for departure from the rule.<sup>11</sup> As far back as 1958, however, with the publication of the syllabi for that year, an indication was given that permission would also be granted in cases where there was a shortage of textbooks in the language specified for a particular subject. Regional directors and other parties concerned were usually informed by Departmental circulars or directives on the application of policy, especially with regard to the medium of instruction. Permission and the reasons for departing from the rule were frequently referred to in such circulars. Regional directors themselves also sent out circulars to

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<sup>10</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

<sup>11</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, pp. 42-43. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, pp. 40-41. Statement Made under Oath by Kenneth Hlaku Rachidi to Lieutenant A.A. Struwig of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 3. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later, p. 14. Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education. Pretoria, 26 April 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

inspectors, boards and schools in their areas of jurisdiction.<sup>12</sup> The inconsistency of the Department of Bantu Education in implementing the language policy was primarily caused by its failure to prepare adequately for this major policy shift. It might have been more prudent for the government to have taken some time to prepare adequately for a policy change that its recipients would see as controversial. Such preparation might have reduced the discontent in Black communities.

Earlier, on 29 December 1959 regional directors and inspectors had issued a directive on the medium of instruction in Black schools. From this directive it is evident that government was facing serious backlogs in implementing this policy, especially because the majority of Black teachers had to use their second or third language as a medium of instruction. As a result, most of the secondary schools applied for exemption from the requirement, which was granted in most cases. From 1960, exemption from the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was not granted readily; it was expected that every effort would be made to install Afrikaans in 'its rightful position' as a medium of instruction.<sup>13</sup> This was the beginning of government's tightening its resolve to implement its policy on using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. However, its implementation did not fully take into account the state of readiness of South African schools.

On 24 January 1973 the Department of Education issued a circular to various groups of persons and bodies, including regional directors, circuit inspectors, school boards, school committees and principals of junior secondary and secondary schools, to announce

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillie Commission, Vol. 1, pp. 42-43. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, pp. 40-41. Statement Made under Oath by Kenneth Hlaku Rachidi to Lieutenant A.A. Struwig of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 3. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later, p. 14. Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education. Pretoria, 26 April 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>13</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillie Commission, Vol. 1, p. 43. P.G. Schoeman, *South African Education 1948-2002: Five and a Half Decades of Ideological Agendas, Stratagems and Manoeuvres*. The Journal for Christian Scholarship, p. 27.

preparations for the change-over to the new education structures. Considering that the focus of the circular was the medium of instruction in secondary schools and standard V classes in 'White areas', it is strange that it was not sent to the principals of higher primary schools and the standard V and VI classes that were both hosted at primary schools until 1975. According to this circular, the mother tongue was to remain the medium for teaching non-examination subjects in all secondary classes. It was further laid down in mandatory terms that the medium of instruction was to be one of the following: exclusively Afrikaans, exclusively English or Afrikaans and English on a 50-50 basis.<sup>14</sup>

The directive read as follows with regard to the decision on the medium of instruction to be used for teaching content subjects:

In order to determine whether English, or Afrikaans or both, should be used as a medium of instruction at a particular secondary school (or Std 5) the criterion to be used shall be which of the two languages is dominant in the White community of the city/town/area where the school is situated.<sup>15</sup>

While it may have been true that the mastery of the two official languages would be beneficial if a compromise were reached, the criterion for the compromise policy directive as communicated in Departmental circulars failed to address this objective. Instead, it emphasised the importance of the language used by the White community in the area where the school is located as though Black children would be limited to the areas where they grew up when they entered the world of work. What the government

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<sup>14</sup> S.M. Mahuma, *The Development of a Culture of Learning Among the Black People of South Africa: 1652-1998*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, p. 81. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillie Commission, Vol. 1, pp. 47-48. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later*, pp. 13-15. Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education. Pretoria, 26 April 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>15</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillie Commission, Vol. 1, p. 48.

failed to realise was that these children were free to work anywhere in South Africa within the prescripts of the influx control laws.

In pursuance of this directive, school boards and school committees, circuit inspectors and regional directors were asked for a recommendation on the medium of instruction in the secondary schools and standard 5 classes in the areas under their jurisdiction. These recommendations had to be 'backed up by sound argument.' On the enclosed forms that had to be completed for every school concerned there were separate spaces for the suggestions and reasons given by the boards, circuit inspectors and regional directors. In addition to considering the language of the dominant White group in the area where the school was located as their most important criterion when making recommendations, they had to consider (1) the desirability of uniformity at feeder and recipient schools; (2) the media of instruction of other schools in the same administration board area within which learners could move freely for school attendance; and (3) the desirability of single-medium schools and of learners' using one medium only. It is worth noting that the boards could only make recommendations; the final decision on the medium of instruction of a school lay with the Department of Education.<sup>16</sup> The expanded criterion attests to the complexity of implementing this policy directive. This would not be an easy, uniform arrangement. The unique circumstances of every school and administration board area had to be considered.

#### **4.3 The learners' uprising of 16 June 1976**

The immediate causes of the Soweto learners' uprising were that the national government announced in 1974 that certain school subjects would have to be taught through the medium of Afrikaans, followed by the Regional Director of Bantu Education for the Southern Transvaal, Mr W.C. Ackerman, issuing a directive that Afrikaans and English

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<sup>16</sup> S.M. Mahuma, *The Development of a Culture of Learning Among the Black People of South Africa: 1652-1998*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, pp. 81-82. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillie Commission, Vol. 1, pp. 48-49. Reply of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Opinionnaire of the Advisory Board for Bantu Education on the Media of Instruction in Bantu Post-Primary Schools, March 1971. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

were to be used on a 50-50 basis in junior secondary schools. Up to this time secondary schooling for Blacks was in English. Half the subjects would now have to be taught in Afrikaans. This circular also stated that Arithmetic, Mathematics and Social Studies had to be taught in Afrikaans; Science, Woodwork, Arts and Crafts would be taught in English. That neither language was the home language of South Africa's four million Black learners had not been taken into account; nor that the switch to Afrikaans was vehemently opposed. Learners were outraged by the announcement that changes in the language of instruction would commence in 1976, perceiving that this move would aggravate the high failure rates (especially in Mathematics), already a source of considerable Black discontent. Teachers who had to teach in Afrikaans did not know the language themselves. Learners found the mixture of Afrikaans and English in the lessons confusing to the point where it had become pointless to attend classes.<sup>17</sup> Learner activism had been simmering for several years along with rising labour unrest and the growing power of Black consciousness organisations. With the announcement of the Afrikaans language policy, dormant learner opposition erupted in the Soweto uprising of 1976, led by the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC). The Afrikaans issue rapidly escalated to a call for the disestablishment of Bantu Education.<sup>18</sup> The general discontent with Bantu Education found a trigger in this language policy announcement. That this directive was in conflict with an earlier compromise position that the medium of

<sup>17</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. Drum, 14 June 2001. Memorandum on the Medium of Instruction in African Schools under Bantu Education, African Teachers' Association of South Africa, 25 June 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies. ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. The Sunday Times, 20 June 1976. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. M.O. Nkomo, Apartheid Education in Crisis. Trans Africa Forum, A Quarterly Journal of Opinion of Africa and the Caribbean, Vol. 3. Number, Fall 1985, p. 72. J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 311. The World, 18 June 1976. R. Ainslie, Children of Soweto, p. 8. Apartheid: The 1976 Uprising. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. [http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_1976.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_1976.htm) Statement Made under Oath by Kenneth Hlaku Rachidi to Lieutenant A.A. Struwig of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 4. Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.



instruction would be decided by the individual school boards exacerbated the levels of discontent.

Teachers saw this directive as a contradiction of the statement made the year before by the then Secretary for Bantu Education, Dr H van Zyl, that the medium of instruction would be decided by individual school boards in consultation with the Secretary himself. He had also stated that it was not in the learners' interest to have two media of instruction. Following the 50-50 language directive from the Regional Director of Bantu Education in 1974, school boards and teacher bodies made representations to the Minister of Bantu Education for a change in this policy. The appeals were turned down.<sup>19</sup> Protesting headmasters and teachers put forward arguments explaining why they opposed the new ruling; they argued that having two media of instruction was far too arduous for learners.<sup>20</sup> It is not surprising that learners and teachers were in some instances collaborating to fight Bantu Education and its policies. Teachers and learners maintained solidarity in their fight against apartheid education and challenged many of the expressions of manipulation in the system.<sup>21</sup> The indecisive approach of the government in advocating and implementing the language policy created discontent among principals and teachers alike. The failure of the government to win the support of the latter created a situation where those in authority, who were supposed to support the government effort, collaborated with the learners instead of their employer.

On 20 January 1976, at a meeting of the Meadowlands Tswana School Board, the Circuit Inspector told the School Board that the Secretary for Bantu Education had stated that all direct taxes paid by the Black population of South Africa were being directed to the

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<sup>19</sup> S.M. Mahuma, *The Development of a Culture of Learning Among the Black People of South Africa: 1652-1998*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, p. 81. *The World*, 18 June 1976. Reply of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Opinionnaire of the Advisory Board for Bantu Education on the Media of Instruction in Bantu Post-Primary Schools, March 1971. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>20</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 20 June 1976.

<sup>21</sup> New Year Message by Comrade President Oliver Tambo on the Occasion of the January 8, 1979, the 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ANC of South Africa. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/anniversary/jan8-79.php>

various homelands for education purposes. In urban areas the education of Black children was being funded by the White population, that is English and Afrikaans-speaking groups; the Secretary for Bantu Education therefore had a responsibility towards satisfying English- and Afrikaans-speaking taxpayers. Consequently, as the only way of satisfying both groups, the medium of instruction in all schools would have to be on a 50-50 basis.<sup>22</sup> It is disconcerting that such arguments were used to justify a policy that would have far-reaching implications for the education of the majority of the South African population. The facile justification for this policy shows how determined government officials were to implement an indefensible policy.

As early as January 1975, the African Teachers' Association told Minister M.C. Botha that the policy of compelling Black schools to instruct in Afrikaans was 'cruel and short-sighted.' In May 1975 the joint Northern and Southern Transvaal school boards elected a committee to take up the issue with the Department of Bantu Education again. The Committee had one meeting with the Secretary for Bantu Education but returned dissatisfied. During 1975 several school boards ordered their schools to ignore the language instruction and to teach in English only. Department of Education officials reprimanded the school boards at several meetings and instructed them to comply with the policy. Most school boards capitulated, but the chairpersons of at least five dissident school boards lost their positions. The dispute erupted again in February 1976 when two dissident members of the Meadowlands Tswana School, Messrs Joseph Peele and Abner Letlape, were dismissed by the Regional Director of Bantu Education, Mr W.C.

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<sup>22</sup> J.G.E. Wolfson, *South Africa in Travail: The Disturbances of 1976/77. Evidence Presented by the South African Institute of Race Relations to Cillie Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and other Places during June 1976*, p. 1. Rand Daily Mail, 21 April 1976. Statement Made under Oath by Mpapa Wauchope to Lieutenant Colonel J.N. Zwart of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 25 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 2. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), p. 18. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 332.

Ackerman; the entire school board resigned in sympathy.<sup>23</sup> The learners then took up the issue on 17 May 1976 when the Form 1 and 2 learners at Phefeni Secondary School in Orlando West refused to attend classes until their demands were met to have Afrikaans dropped as a medium of instruction. Within a week three schools had joined Phefeni in their class boycott, affecting about 1 600 learners. At this stage the circuit inspector for Bantu Education responsible for these schools refused to become involved in the issue, stating that the policy had been laid down by government. By the end of May 1976 seven schools involving more than 2 000 learners were on strike but most returned to school, leaving only the Phefeni learners to still uphold their boycott.<sup>24</sup> Opposition to the Afrikaans language policy was intense. The willingness of school board members to lose their prestigious positions shows how steadfast Black communities were in their opposition to government on this policy; government, however, chose to ignore these growing signs of opposition.

Responding to the question raised by the members of the opposition in parliament, whether his Department had consulted Black parents concerning the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, the Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, Punt Janson, replied,

Between 60% and 65% of the White population are Afrikaans-speaking. However, we agreed to give full recognition to the two official languages. A Black man may be trained to work on a farm or in a factory. He may work for an

<sup>23</sup> T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 102. Statement Made under Oath by Mpapa Wauchope to Lieutenant Colonel J.N. Zwart of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 25 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 3. E. Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime*, p. 363. *The World*, 18 June 1976. *The Sunday Times*, 20 June 1976. D. Herbstein, *White Man, We Want to Talk to You*, p. 18. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 18-19. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 332.

<sup>24</sup> Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 4. E. Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime*, p. 363. *The World*, 18 June 1976. *The Sunday Times*, 20 June 1976. D. Herbstein, *White Man, We Want to Talk to You*, p. 18. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008.

employer who is either English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking and the man who has to give him instructions may be either English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking. Why should we now start quarrelling about the medium of instruction among the Black people as well?... No, I have not consulted them and I am not going to consult them. I have consulted the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa... The leaders of the various homelands can in due course decide what they want to do in their own homelands where they are the masters. However, as far as the white areas are concerned this is a decision that has been taken and I am going to stand by it.<sup>25</sup>

Another official was quoted as having said,

If students are not happy, they should stay away from school since attendance is not compulsory for Africans.<sup>26</sup>

It is unfortunate that the politicians and government officials chose an unyielding approach, despite clear signs of opposition to its language policy.

The Minister of Bantu Education, Mr M.C. Botha, insisted that his Department had certain responsibilities to consider in its approach to the medium of instruction and could not simply accede to a policy by "popular request." He emphasised that his Department was obliged to endorse the equal treatment of Afrikaans and English as the two official languages as entrenched in the Constitution. Employment opportunities for school leavers were to some extent dependent on a proficiency in both official languages. The Department had been lenient in the practical application of the 50-50 principle of the use of Afrikaans and English as the predominance of one language over the other varied

<sup>25</sup> Punt Janson. Deputy Minister of Bantu Education. House of Assembly Debates, 6 May 1975, cols. 5506-5507. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 17-18. L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, p. 378. June 16<sup>th</sup> Student Uprising. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsaJune16decree.htm>. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, pp. 331-332.

<sup>26</sup> June 16th Student Uprising. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsaJune16decree.htm>

among regions. He indicated that his Department was ready to implement the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction as teachers were employed under the explicit assumption that they were proficient in both languages.<sup>27</sup> It is against the background of such policy statements that the government did not adjust its stance in time to the mounting pressure of young people, their parents and teachers. Government's resolute position had far-reaching political consequences, as it created a fertile breeding ground for learner protest politics. The tragic events in Soweto could have been averted if the government had been willing to scrap its regulations that compelled Black learners in urban secondary schools to be taught on a 50-50 Afrikaans-English basis.

Tensions had been intense in Soweto for several months and they were mounting. On 8 June 1976 police went to Naledi High School to make enquiries about 'subversive' material. The lieutenant's car was burnt out and he had to be rescued by police reinforcements armed with tear-gas. On the same day, 15 learners from Thulasizwe Higher Primary were detained, but released after questioning. On 9 June learners at Naledi High School again stoned policemen who had come to investigate the previous day's disturbance.<sup>28</sup> On 10 June learners at Emthonjeni refused to write their Social Studies examinations in Afrikaans and the following day learners at Orlando West Junior Secondary refused to write their June examinations. Learners at Morris Isaacson High School posted a placard at the main gate reading, "No Special Branch allowed. Enter at risk of your skin." According to a teacher, antagonism towards the police at the school was strong. It was also reported that learners at Senaoane Junior Secondary School were

<sup>27</sup> Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education. Pretoria, 26 April 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 162. S.M. Mahuma, *The Development of a Culture of Learning Among the Black People of South Africa: 1652-1998*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, p. 82. *Rand Daily Mail*, 8 June 1976.

<sup>28</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Bignaut and S. Moroney, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 56. D. Herbstein, *White Man, We Want to Talk to You*, p. 12. Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 12. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later*, p. 9.

purportedly beaten for 'allegedly betraying others in the fight against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.'<sup>29</sup> Learners' attitude against the government was hardening and they were increasingly inclined to use violence to vent their anger.

The Director of the South African Institute of Race Relations sent an urgent telegram to Mr R. de Villiers on 11 June 1976, stating that the situation in Soweto schools was deteriorating rapidly, that violent incidents had already occurred and asking that Dr Andries Treurnicht<sup>30</sup> should be approached. Dr Treurnicht, on being informed of the contents of the telegram, said that he did not think there had been an escalation of the incidents, but that he would make further enquiries. He later told Mr De Villiers that he had spoken to his officials and had reason to believe that the matter would be amicably settled.<sup>31</sup> In the Urban Bantu Council on 14 June, Councillor Leonard Mosala warned that the enforcement of Afrikaans in schools could result in another Sharpeville. He also said that police interference in schools should be avoided at all costs, as learners might become aggressive at the sight of the police. Speaking of the learners, he said,

They won't take anything we say because they think we have neglected them. We have failed to help them in their struggle for change in schools. They are now angry and prepared to fight and we are afraid the situation may become chaotic at any time.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Blignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 56. L. Callinicos, Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains, p. 378. E. Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime, p. 364. Statement Made under Oath by Aubrey Dundubele Mokoena to Kaptein D.L. Aspeling of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, nd. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 19. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 102.

<sup>30</sup> Andries Treurnicht. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki)

<sup>31</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 96. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Blignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 56.

<sup>32</sup> M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Blignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 57.

That these authentic early warnings had been ignored, ultimately led to catastrophe. The fact that Black people did not have direct representation in Parliament and other government structures contributed to the unwillingness of the government to pay attention to the open disgruntlement with the imposed language policy.

Another learner body increasingly started playing a role in rallying learners. The African Students' Movement (ASM), established in three secondary schools in Soweto in 1970, developed into the extended South African Students' Movement (SASM) in 1972 when links were established with schools in the Eastern Cape and Eastern Transvaal. The main aim of SASM was to co-ordinate the activities of high school learners. Their major areas of operation were their informative programmes on injustice in society and schools and their campaign to promote Black Consciousness. It was the SASM branch in Soweto that initiated the actions that led to the momentous events known as the Soweto Revolt in June 1976; the move to introduce Afrikaans as the language of instruction was fuel to the fire.<sup>33</sup>

On Tuesday 15 June 1976 a meeting of the leaders of the learners was held at the Naledi High School and particulars of the protest march were furnished, detailing the objectives and the preparations that had to be made.<sup>34</sup> Evidence that subsequently emerged revealed that similar meetings had been held at other schools in Soweto. The only advance information the police obtained on the contemplated procession was received at 16:00 on

<sup>33</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. W.J. Pomeroy, Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom, p. 182. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 38. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 1. Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 12. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, pp. 64-66. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), p. 25. S.M. Ndlovu, The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa, p. 338.

<sup>34</sup> Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 12. M. de Witt Dippenaar, The History of the South African Police 1913-1988, p. 502.

15 June, when Major G.J. Viljoen, station commander of Jabulani Police Station, was informed of a protest march that Naledi High School learners were planning for the following day. A Black officer simultaneously relayed the same information to Colonel J.A. Kleingeld of the Orlando Police Station. The police still had no suspicion that a mass protest march would take place and they had no knowledge of the decisions taken at the various meetings.<sup>35</sup> The learner leaders managed to conceal their plans from the authorities despite the South African government's highly sophisticated intelligence network. Even where the plans had been leaked, the authorities underestimated their magnitude.

Although Soweto had always been a barometer of South Africa's Black urban political climate, Pretoria failed to recognise the signs pointing to general disgruntlement with its policies. All over Soweto the graffiti warned, "*We don't want Afrikaans,*" "*Away with Bantu Education,*" "*Away with slave education,*" "*Afrikaans is the oppressors' language,*" "*Abolish Afrikaans,*" and "*Blacks are not dustbins – Afrikaans stinks.*"<sup>36</sup> This is the level to which matters had degenerated. A respectable language of South Africans had been reduced to scorn by the unwillingness of the government to yield to appeals not to impose Afrikaans on Black schools.

On Wednesday 16 June 1976 thousands of placard-waving high school learners marched through Soweto towards Phefeni Junior Secondary School in Orlando West singing the African national anthem amid cries of "Power! Power!" With their posters held high, they waited outside, blocking the entire street along the school. Learners were whistling, singing, chanting, greeting friends with the clenched-fist salute of Black brotherhood, shouting "Amandla, Awethu!" (*Power to the People*). Cardboard posters proclaimed,

<sup>35</sup> M. de Witt Dippenaar, *The History of the South African Police 1913-1988*, p. 502. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), p. 30. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 343.

<sup>36</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, p. 23. W.J. Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom*, p. 182. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008.



“Afrikaans is oppressors’ language” and “Asengeni” (*We won’t go in*).<sup>37</sup> They were protesting against the enforced use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, demanding to be taught in English and waving slogans such as “away with Afrikaans,” “Afrikaans Pollutes our minds,” “Afrikaans for Afrikaners,” “Afrikaans retards our progress” and “Afrikaans will spoil our future.”<sup>38</sup> A contingent of police, most of them Black, stood nearby, facing the demonstrators. Some learners started picking up stones. A shot fired by the police scattered the demonstrators in all directions; some of them to a hill behind the school, some fleeing into the side streets. Others remained standing. A Black police sergeant was explaining to a group of parents that there would be no shooting as the children were not fighting anybody; their only grievance was they did not want Afrikaans. A police officer suddenly opened fire.<sup>39</sup> The situation had reached boiling point, creating a confrontation that was to claim many lives.

In the aftermath of the confrontation the area around Uncle Tom’s Hall in Orlando West resembled a war zone. Police cars in a convoy carried many of the injured to Baragwanath Hospital. It was risky for news reporters to venture anywhere near the crowd at the hall. All the cars driving towards Uncle Tom’s Hall were stopped by

<sup>37</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. D. Herbststein, White Man, We Want to Talk to You, p.11. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 30. J. Seroto, The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 162, p. 162. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 3. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 30. Rand Daily Mail, 17 June 1976. Apartheid: The 1976 Uprising. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. [http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_1976.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_1976.htm) Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 30. Rand Daily Mail, 17 June 1976. Apartheid: The 1976 Uprising. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. [http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_1976.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_1976.htm) Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 13.

learners and the drivers questioned. The contents of commercial vehicles were taken; every Black driver had to raise his fist and shout "Power!" before being allowed through the barricades. An army helicopter later sprayed tear-gas over the crowd and most dispersed.<sup>40</sup> A near crisis situation had been created. In the ensuing chaos learners took the law into their hands. The lives of many people, Black and White alike, were at risk.

Black hands stretched out to save the lives of at least some Whites as anti-White feelings gripped the smouldering Soweto township. A terrified Johannesburg municipal pest controller, Mr J. Beeby, was sheltered by a Soweto family for 12 hours after the car in which he and two other men were travelling was stoned by rioters. It is certain that Mr Beeby would otherwise have been killed. He escaped with cuts and abrasions and after his discharge from the South Rand Hospital, he celebrated his lucky escape with friends. In another incident, Mr D.J. Millela, an official of the Rand Bantu Administration Board, was also saved from a crowd of rioting learners who stoned his car, dragged him out of the vehicle and kicked and punched him. A few Black men charged the children and succeeded in pulling Mr Millela to the safety of a nearby shop from where he was later taken to hospital by ambulance. An SABC television reporter, Mr Freek Robinson,<sup>41</sup> spoke emotionally of how his life and that of his cameraman colleague, Mr Chris Schutte, had been saved by the quick action of a Black driver. Robinson and Schutte were confronted by thousands of children blocking the road in Orlando. As Robinson ordered Schutte to turn their car around, a rock hit Schutte on the temple. The car went out of control, smashed into a tree and, in the collision, the ignition key broke off. Robinson pulled Schutte from the car and together they stumbled away from the advancing crowd of children as rocks hailed down on them. They were saved by five passing Black men who opened a car door and allowed them in before speeding down a side-street. Banner newspaper headlines read, *Good Samaritan Blacks*, with a report on people who had

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<sup>40</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 June 1976. W.J. Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom*, p. 182.

<sup>41</sup> Frederick "Freek" Robinson. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.whowhosa.co.za/pages/profilesfull](http://www.whowhosa.co.za/pages/profilesfull)

saved the lives of many Whites trapped in the riot.<sup>42</sup> They had risked their lives to hide and smuggle out Whites whose presence invited immediate attack from the stone-throwing crowds. That some Soweto residents did not think of race and colour where the lives of innocent Whites were threatened was a clear sign that race relations were not as bad as some commentators apparently believed. That Soweto residents intervened to save the lives of helpless people, showed how much human life was respected by ordinary, forward-thinking adults in the community.

Not all White people who were in Soweto were that fortunate, however. Two White Board officials were killed by a mob in Soweto on 16 June 1976. Ironically and tragically, one was Dr Melville Edelstein, a man very sympathetic to the plight of Soweto youngsters. Dr Edelstein, more than many other whites, knew and understood the political and sociological tensions that had been building up in Soweto. In September 1971 he was awarded a Master's Degree by the University of Pretoria for his survey of opinions and attitudes among Soweto's matriculants, the young people he had identified as the "leaders of tomorrow", whose successors killed him. His dissertation showed "significant antipathy" towards non-Black racial groups in South Africa generally and to Afrikaans-speaking South Africans in particular. He had described the city as a political and sociological hothouse.<sup>43</sup> That any single White person was killed for a government policy that was not supported by Black communities was senseless and irrational, as no individual White person could change government's stance on the education of Blacks. In the ensuing anarchy common sense escaped the rioters.

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<sup>42</sup> Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 14. Sunday Tribune, 20 June 1976. The Sunday Times, 20 June 1976.

<sup>43</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 14. E. Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime, p. 369. D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, Soweto: Portrait of a City, p. 26. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 103. H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, New History of South Africa, p. 362.

Melville Edelstein was very concerned about the results of the survey because, as a sociologist, he knew that the "social distance" between Blacks and all other groups was too great for real racial harmony. He found that his respondents did not like the tribal divisions in Soweto's residential area make-up, wanted to be taught in English, wanted to live in South Africa under a multiracial government and would rather work in an urban environment than a homeland. Most complained of poor education facilities. If notice had been taken of Dr Edelstein's conclusions, the Soweto riots might have never taken place, and Dr Edelstein might not have died at the hands of rioting Soweto learners.<sup>44</sup> It is a sad paradox that someone who had championed the cause of the people of Soweto was killed by the very ones he so eloquently spoke up for. Such were the implications of the riotous situation.

The Soweto learners' uprising triggered riots, violence and unrest that spread throughout South Africa in the following months. Unrest persisted for some eight months by which time 575 people had been killed, at least 3 907 injured and massive damage caused to State and private property.<sup>45</sup> What started in Soweto on 16 June 1976 as Black learners demonstrating against the forced use of Afrikaans and as a rejection of an education system that applied only to the Black population, became a significant milestone in the struggle by Blacks to be treated as full citizens of South Africa with all the attendant

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<sup>44</sup> B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, 30. The Sunday Times, 20 June 1976. The Star, 18 June 1976.

<sup>45</sup> A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988, p. 37. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 6. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to Mr R. Aviram, 30 August 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to the Managing Director of T.W. Beckett and Company, 3 January 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. Statement issued by the Honourable W.A. Cruywagen, M.P., Minister of Education and Training. Pretoria, 18 August 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

rights and obligations.<sup>46</sup> The fact that the Soweto uprising led to rioting and violence overstretched police resources, making it difficult to manage the ensuing turmoil.

It was hard to maintain law and order and protect citizens, important social functions that are normally carried out by the police in civilised countries. The situation was compounded by South Africa being a multiracial country where all issues of national importance were viewed through a racially tinted lens. During the Soweto unrest it became evident that policing was a risky, if not a hazardous job, that demanded caution, restraint and an understanding of the people living under conditions of strain caused by poverty, ignorance, unemployment, an unhealthy environment and frustration. Many South Africans were saddened by the number of children being maimed or killed during the unrest.<sup>47</sup> The loss of lives and damage to property was unprecedented in the history of South African education. This may be attributed to the fact that the situation was unexpected and hence had no ready remedies.

Even the South African Police, who boasted a highly effective security branch that was made aware of political rumblings through a wide network of township informers, were caught unawares. The fact was that while the *impimpis*<sup>48</sup> had their ears to the walls of older activists' houses, learners were plotting on the playing fields. The Bantu Education authorities and the police were apparently unprepared for the impending uprisings and so had no timely and effective counter-measures in place. It must be concluded that both these arms of the State were out of touch with Black learners and their communities in the townships. The police and Department of Education officials had no inclination of the

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<sup>46</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. R. Timol and T. Mazibuko, *Soweto: A People's Response*, p. 4. The Soweto Riots. Retrieved on 18 January 2005.

<http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/save/mcaulay/mcaulay.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. The Soweto Riots. Retrieved on 18 January 2005.

<http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/save/mcaulay/mcaulay.htm>. Memorandum of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Secretary for Bantu Education. 27 September 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>48</sup> A derogatory label given to police informers in the townships.

depth of the resentment caused by forcing Afrikaans on young Blacks. As far as the police were concerned, it may logically be deduced that neither the security police nor the Bureau for State Security seemed to have been in a position to warn the police of what was brooding. A few days before the start of the unrest Soweto police learnt that preparations for demonstrations were being made in Soweto, but they evidently did not take the matter seriously enough to inform their divisional superiors. Similarly, Bantu Education officials in the Transvaal were complacent about the situation.<sup>49</sup> Only a few black reporters knew that on that day the Soweto learners would attempt to march to Pretoria to protest against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools. But nobody, not even learner leader Tsietsi Mashinini and his lieutenants, could foresee that Soweto would be identified later that day by the bodies in its streets and the columns of black smoke billowing into the sky. Over the next few months, scores of black young people would be gunned down in Soweto. Many fled the country, some to return later as trained guerrillas.<sup>50</sup> That both the effective State intelligence machinery and the learner leaders were caught off guard by the events of 16 June, shows how the whims of a riotous mob could direct the turn of events.

In the ensuing chaos of June 16 1976, at least one young boy was shot dead and many were wounded. Suddenly the names of thirteen-year old Hector Peterson<sup>51</sup> and Soweto

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<sup>49</sup> Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to the Managing Director of T.W. Beckett and Company, 3 January 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later, p. 27. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 30. The Cape Times, 1 March 1980. African History: June 16<sup>th</sup> Student Uprising. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa060801b.htm>

<sup>50</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. N.L. Robertson and B.L. Robertson, Education in South Africa. p. 5. D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, Soweto: Portrait of a City, pp. 24-26. E. Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime, p. 369.

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix 4 on p. 450.

made headlines in the international media.<sup>52</sup> Hector Peterson's death was probably the most highly publicised of all the deaths in the unrest that started on 16 June. Many Black people saw him as a martyr that personified the uprising by Black youngsters against the hateful education system.<sup>53</sup> Moroe contends that the heroism bestowed on Hector Peterson is about the symbolism of the mood that the killing of a thirteen year old presented. The picture of his lifeless body captured the disposition of determination, defiance and the anger of the learners of Soweto.<sup>54</sup> It can be argued that Hector Peterson was not the martyr that many claimed him to be; he just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Considering his age at the time of his death, he would not have been involved in the struggle for better education in any significant way. However, being the first child to be shot bestowed an honour on him by coincidence.

At the time, some commentators argued that the police involved in the first confrontation with demonstrating Soweto learners on 16 June 1976 found themselves in mortal danger and fired their guns out of desperation. It had appeared to them that Hector Pieterse was killed by a stray bullet. These were the most controversial questions that faced the Cillie

<sup>52</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, Soweto: Portrait of a City, p. 23. A. Odendaal, The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994. In Y.N. Seleti, Africa since 1990, p. 177. S.M. Mahuma, The Development of a Culture of Learning Among the Black People of South Africa: 1652-1998. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, p. 82. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 31-32. S.M. Ndlovu, The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa, p. 344. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. The Soweto Riots, 1976. Retrieved on 17 June 2008. [www.enrager.net/history/modules](http://www.enrager.net/history/modules). The Star, 29 February 1980. Pace, June 1989. Address by President Nelson Mandela on the Anniversary of the Soweto Uprising, 16 June 1994. Retrieved on 8 August 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/schools/mandela/1994/sp940616.html>. H. Pohlandt-McCormick, Doing Violence to Memory: The Soweto Uprising, June 16 1976. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.c1p1.html](http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.c1p1.html), p. 7. United Nations Security Council Resolution. Situation in South Africa - Killings and Violence by the Regime in South Africa in Soweto and Other Areas, S/RES/392 (1976), 19 June 1976. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 102.

<sup>54</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

Commission appointed by the government to probe the Soweto uprising.<sup>55</sup> In the first stages of the Soweto revolt, learners themselves were the sole actors with their demands more or less narrowly focusing on education, but broad sections of the population were rapidly drawn into confrontation with the State. The learners' actions were providing a stimulus that accelerated the formation and regeneration of extra-parliamentary political organisations and, in due course, the intervention of the masses as a political force.<sup>56</sup> The momentum of Black communities' insistence to participate in and control their education gathered force. This was met with the government's determination to maintain control of the schools.<sup>57</sup> A period of extreme violence followed. Rampant youngsters burnt down schools, board (municipality) -owned beer halls, administration board offices, clinics, community halls and any building that had even the most tenuous links with the government. Black policemen in the city discarded their uniforms when returning home to Soweto. Some of these policemen were known for their zealotry in carrying out the hated laws of apartheid and their houses were petrol-bombed.<sup>58</sup> Moroe maintains that any

<sup>55</sup> The Soweto Riots, 1976. Retrieved on 17 June 2008. [www.enrager.net/history/modules](http://www.enrager.net/history/modules). *The Star*, 29 February 1980. *The World*, 18 June 1976. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Blignaut and S. Moroney, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, p. 58. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. United Nations Security Council Resolution. Situation in South Africa - Killings and Violence by the Regime in South Africa in Soweto and Other Areas, S/RES/392 (1976), 19 June 1976.

<sup>56</sup> V. McKay (ed.), *A Sociology of Educating*, p. 9. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 22-23.

<sup>57</sup> R. McGregor (ed.), *McGregor's Education Alternatives*, p. 27. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), p. 9. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 324.

<sup>58</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, p. 24. *Drum*, 18 July 2002. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. *Soweto Riots*, A2953, p. 6. E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later*, p. 9. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to Mr S.R. Booth, Marketing Manager of Sasol (Fuels), 21 June 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), p. 34. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 346. Statement issued by the Honourable W.A. Cruywagen, M.P., Minister of Education and Training. Pretoria, 18 August 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.



government institution that the learners had access to was linked to oppression and therefore became a target of their anger.<sup>59</sup> During the riots, the offices of African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA) in Jabavu, Soweto, were completely destroyed by fire. Police records indicate that during the following months of unrest about 300 people were killed and some 11 000 injured. This does not include the many who did not turn up for treatment at clinics for fear of being arrested.<sup>60</sup> By the end of 1977, the government's concentrated efforts had outlawed most Black political organisations and thousands of learners had gone into exile.<sup>61</sup> A number of young South Africans were scattered across various African countries, attending school and joining the military wing of liberation movements. These thousands of refugee learners crossed the borders to join the freedom movement and undergo military training.<sup>62</sup> When most political organisations were outlawed, it drove many organisations underground and thousands of learners into exile.

Some officials of the Department of Bantu Education were intractable on the uprisings and the use of Afrikaans. Mr Thys de Beer, Soweto Circuit School Inspector, believed that the Department should not stand down on the language issue. He maintained that the

<sup>59</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

<sup>60</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, p. 23. Letter from H. H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA, to The Manager of Ellis and Company, dated 18 August 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to the Managing Director of T.W. Beckett and Company, 3 January 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to the Manager, Ellis and Company, 18 August 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. A Statement from the African Scholars of Cape Town, 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>61</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 312. L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, p. 381. Statement Made under Oath by Aubrey Dundubele Mokoena to Kaptein D.L. Aspelung of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, nd. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA, to the General Secretary of Nigerian Union of Teachers, dated 9 August 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 178. L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, p. 382. Statement Made under Oath by Aubrey Dundubele Mokoena to Kaptein D.L. Aspelung of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, nd. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 20.

strikes would dwindle and parents would eventually force their children back to school. He maintained that the unrest was a result of the politics of Soweto school boards, where being a chairperson meant prestige. He maintained that yielding to learners on the Afrikaans issue would soon encourage them to demand something else.<sup>63</sup> Hartshorne maintains that when the state declares its intention to depoliticise education, its concern is to preserve the existing social, political and economic base for education, and to remove conflicting viewpoints that might endanger that base.<sup>64</sup> What Mr De Beer did not realise was that the Afrikaans issue was only the detonator; the dynamite was the policy of apartheid. While it is true that Soweto learners did not want to be taught in Afrikaans, there were many other issues in the education system and the political order that rankled.

Obviously the loss of life and wanton destruction in Soweto appalled the whole of South Africa. This disaster called for calmness, restraint, wise counsel and leadership and the determination to act promptly to rectify the situation. There was a need for the government to review the situation and, from that, just and humane redress and consideration for those who were affected. It was evident that in Soweto frustrations lay deeper than the flare-up of an isolated education crisis. Township distress about social, economic, political and education issues was a blight on the South African way of life and a grave impediment to harmonious race relations. These issues needed to be discussed; but it needed more than talk, it also needed being listened to. One-way communication with talking at people, ordering them how to live their lives, would bring about a silent rage and a frustration exacerbated by an inability to change the course of official direction. It would be simplistic to blame agitators and hooligans for the unrest in Soweto, although those elements may well have played a role, but the undercurrent of discontent that caused such havoc must have run deeply. It was not the time for recriminations, however; there were substantial grievances that needed to be dealt with. Law and order had to be fully restored before the task of re-examination could commence. In such an exercise the entire world would be watching and the conscience of

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<sup>63</sup> *The Star*, 18 June 1976.

<sup>64</sup> K. Hartshorne, *The Making of Education Policy in South Africa*, p. 9.

South African society would judge whether the right decisions were being taken.<sup>65</sup> The results of the unprecedented chaos called for sober counsel and the willingness to resolve issues. The view that the strike would peter out and that yielding to learner demands would create more demands was unrealistic and short-sighted.

In the aftermath of the Soweto uprising, the ANC appealed to citizens from all walks of life – factories, townships, mines, schools, farms - to embark on massive protests, actions and demonstrations against White supremacy, against the murder of children, against Bantu Education, Bantustans, the pass laws and all the hated policies of apartheid.<sup>66</sup> In a flyer distributed in Johannesburg on 8 July 1976 the call was made:

Sons and daughters of Africa: Stand together firm and united and show the oppressor that we will not be intimidated. We have the strength to hit back. Our organised strength, unity and militant actions will give us more power than Vorster<sup>67</sup> and all his guns. Rally to the call of the ANC – the tried and trusted organisation of all our people that Vorster and his police can never crush! United in this task we will smash the brute force of the oppressor!<sup>68</sup>

Such calls further incensed people who were already angered by the unwillingness of the government to accede to their demands for better education.

The decision that the 'language of the White oppressor' had to be utilised in schools had an enormous effect on Black consciousness movements, causing the revolt to spread to

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<sup>65</sup> *Pretoria News*, 17 June 1976. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to Mr R. Aviram, 30 August 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to the Managing Director of T.W. Beckett and Company, 3 January 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2.

<sup>66</sup> People of South Africa – The ANC Calls on You. Amandla Soweto! Flyer distributed by 'Leaflet Bomb,' Johannesburg, 8 July 1976. University of Fort Hare, The Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/pamph/pam760708.php>

<sup>67</sup> John Vorster. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>68</sup> People of South Africa – The ANC Calls on You. Amandla Soweto! Flyer Distributed by 'Leaflet Bomb,' Johannesburg, 8 July 1976. University of Fort Hare, The Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/pamph/pam760708.php>

various parts of the country as learners came out in solidarity with Soweto.<sup>69</sup> Within twenty-four hours the sparks that had ignited Soweto caused a conflagration of protests and resistance across the country. Daily news reports described incidents of unrest from unheard of places that news editors could not find on any maps.<sup>70</sup> The unrest included the burning of schools and other government buildings, the resignation of teachers, successful ultimatums to the members of school boards to resign and consciousness raising programmes.<sup>71</sup> Those June days were the beginning of an extended period of the greatest insurgence that had ever occurred against apartheid, continuing to the middle of 1977. Solidarity protests against the Soweto Massacre and in support of the Soweto learners began within days in the Black and Coloured townships of the Cape Province, particularly around Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Marches and demonstrations of between 300 and 4 000 learners, in some cases along with parents, took place during June and August in the Transvaal, Free State and the Bantustans of Ciskei<sup>72</sup> and Transkei, in Brakpan, Dobsonville, Kagiso, Mhluzi, Mdantsane, Uitenhage, Zwelitsha (King William's Town), Lady Frere, Genadendal, Graaff-Reinet, Idutywa, Stutterheim, Kimberley, Uptington, Bloemfontein and Kroonstad. The demonstration march of 500 in Lady Frere in the Transkei turned into a protest against the proposed 'independence' of that Bantustan to take place in October.<sup>73</sup> Across the country learners used stones and fire to attack the government, who responded with a modern arsenal ranging from tear-gas machines to guns and helicopters, and with widespread shootings. By December 1976, 499 Blacks were listed as dead from gunshot wounds in funeral parlours and police and

<sup>69</sup> V. McKay (ed.), *A Sociology of Educating*, p. 8. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

<sup>70</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, p. 28. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, p. 66.

<sup>71</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 311-312. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 6. Letter from E.D. Moerane, Teacher Representative to the Secretary of the Federal Council of African Teachers, 30 April 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2.2.3 – 2.2.5.

<sup>72</sup> The name Ciskei means "on this side of the Kei River," and is in contrast to the neighbouring Bantustan of Transkei. See Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei)

<sup>73</sup> Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to Mr R.L. Peteni, President of ATASA, 31 December 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2. W.J. Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom*, p. 183.

hospital records; unofficial estimates of the number of dead rose to as high as 5 000. Yet protests continued sporadically until 1978: Soweto followed by Cape Town, East London and Port Elizabeth. Even such remote places as Sibasa, 'capital' of the Venda Bantustan, faced learners' uprising.<sup>74</sup> An echo of the Soweto massacre occurred on 16 August when 33 people were killed by police gunfire in Langa. After repeated shootings, both Black and Coloured learners for the first time organised marches into the centre of Cape Town, demanding equal education and an end to police violence.<sup>75</sup> The problems that plagued education in Soweto represented a microcosm of the challenges facing the Black education system all over South Africa. It is not surprising therefore that the uprisings spread to other towns and provinces.

Arsonists struck at the University of Natal's Black Medical School in Durban in the early hours of 19 June 1976. They set fire to the dining room and library of Alan Taylor Residence. Eighty-seven Black students from the Medical Faculty of the University of Natal were arrested after a group of about 200 placard-waving students had marched from the Medical School in Umbilo Road towards the city centre. The students marched for about one kilometre, stopping cars and buses and distributing pamphlets before about 30 policemen stopped them. During the march the students chanted and sang but apart from disrupting traffic they did not resort to violence. They called on Blacks waiting at the bus stops and walking along the pavement to join them. The students were dispersed by the police and some of them were arrested.<sup>76</sup> The Medical School closed a week early following that march. In solidarity with the arrested students, the others indicated that they would not attend classes. The University decided that it would be better to extend the holiday period by one week to allow everyone to calm down.<sup>77</sup> The uprisings spread to universities all over the country. This may be attributed to South African Blacks never having embraced an education system meant for them.

<sup>74</sup> The Soweto Massacre. Retrieved on 18 January 2005.  
<http://www.cds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/04/kister/kister.htm>. J. Seidman, *Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto*, p. 5. Letter from H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA to Mr R.L. Peteni, President of ATASA, 31 December 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2.

<sup>75</sup> W.J. Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom*, p. 184.

<sup>76</sup> *The Star*, 19 June 1976.

<sup>77</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 June 1976.

At the University of the North near Pietersburg, 2 000 students boycotted classes and stoned a lecturer; at the University of Zululand angry students burnt down the University library and other buildings. Both universities were closed indefinitely.<sup>78</sup> In Grahamstown more than 800 Rhodes University students and staff, as well as school teachers, signed a petition asking the Minister of Bantu Education, Mr M.C. Botha, to “rethink the process and policies of Bantu Education.” The Christian Community of the University of the Witwatersrand suggested in a statement that a Black Member of Parliament for Bantu Education would not be “particularly outrageous” as an immediate step to heal the alienation and hate caused by the Soweto tragedy. Mr Alan Paton,<sup>79</sup> former president of the defunct Liberal Party, said Soweto had exposed the depth of Black hatred as Sharpeville never had.<sup>80</sup>

While all was quiet along the Reef by 21 June 1976, two schools to the north and south near Mabopane, north of Pretoria, were set on fire. A college was closed and more than 1 300 students sent home. Tshepo-Themba Secondary School in Evaton, near Vereeniging, was also set alight on 20 June 1976.<sup>81</sup>

Dr Selma Browde, Progressive Reform Party member of the Provincial Council and the Johannesburg City Council, was served with a warning against involving herself in the unrest on the Witwatersrand. Dr Browde was the third leading citizen known to have been served with the warning signed by the Chief Magistrate of Johannesburg, Mr AH de Wet. Earlier, Dr Beyers Naudé,<sup>82</sup> Director of the Christian Institute, and Mr John Rees, Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), received notices that read,

<sup>78</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 19 June 1976. The Star, 18 June 1976. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Blignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 58.

<sup>79</sup> Alan Paton. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan\\_Paton](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Paton) and Alan Paton – A Short Biography and Bibliography of this KwaZulu author. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.literature.kzn.org.za](http://www.literature.kzn.org.za)

<sup>80</sup> The Sunday Times, 20 June 1976.

<sup>81</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 21 June 1976.

<sup>82</sup> Beyers Naude. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyers\\_Naude](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyers_Naude) and Beyers Naude. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/bnaude](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/bnaude)

“You are hereby warned to please dissociate yourself totally from interfering with the present situation of unrest in the Witwatersrand areas.” Dr Browde was prominent in bringing the plight of Soweto residents to the attention of the authorities in June 1975. She appealed to fellow councillors to hear Soweto social workers talk on the problems of the sprawling Black township.<sup>83</sup> The fact that some members of the White community had to be served with restraining orders shows that the plight of Blacks enjoyed support across the colour barriers. Some Whites had been very vociferous about the dilemma of the Blacks in general.

The police came under fire for their handling of the riots in Soweto and other Black townships because they used guns and not the kind of equipment used overseas. Although police abroad were always armed with service pistols, on principle firearms could never be used to quell riots and demonstrations. The police could use guns only in self-defence or to stop an escaping suspect or criminal. In quelling riots they relied mainly on verbal appeals; the formation of ‘human chains’; rubber truncheons on command of the senior officer or at the discretion of the officer in the form of a baton charge; motorised water cannons that sometimes contained tear gas mixed with the water jet; highly trained dogs like Alsatians and Boxers. The use of live ammunition by the South African police in Soweto was strongly criticised in Britain, France and Germany.<sup>84</sup> Allegations of excessive use of force by the police were not immediately forthcoming from White politicians, even if they opposed the government. Colin Eglin, for example, in a speech before Parliament on 17 June 1976 said:

We believe it is the duty of the authorities to act against those who commit acts of violence, of thuggery and of murder.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> The Sunday Times, 20 June 1976. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Bignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 58.

<sup>84</sup> E. Brink, G. Malungane, S. Lebelo, D. Ntshangase and S. Krige, Soweto 16 June 1976: Recollected 25 Years Later, pp. 58-59. Rand Daily Mail, 24 June 1976.

<sup>85</sup> Colin W. Eglin, House of Assembly, Hansard Vol. 20 (17 July 1976), 9631-32.

The repressive laws in South Africa at that time did not allow even peaceful demonstrations nor had they allowed the authorities to develop humane mechanisms to deal with the situation that confronted the police in Soweto. They had to act on the spur of the moment without the advantage of proper guidelines. As a result serious mistakes were committed. It can in the same breadth be argued that the police could not stand idle in the wake of unprecedented disruptions of community life in Soweto as claimed by Colin Eglin in parliamentary debates.

Whenever there was rioting in South Africa and there was heavy loss of life and property, many disbelieving Whites invariably asked, "Why do the Blacks always destroy facilities provided for their use?" Another favourite cry was, "Look at them. We Whites built everything for them and they burn it all down." Many Blacks argued that this was a typical reaction from people who do not always understand the issues involved, or if they did, chose not to see reality. They argued that Blacks did not destroy facilities; they destroyed symbols of the entire system devised for them by Whites. The system entailed pass laws with all their repugnant manifestations, Bantu Education, job reservation, unequal pay for equal work, no security of tenure, no land ownership rights, poor living conditions, migrant labour, inequitable distribution of the country's wealth and a denial of the democratic right to decision making. This was a system that had virtually ruined the fabric of Black society, particularly in urban areas. They talked about issues among themselves and with trusted friends, but were powerless as they did not have the vote. Thus frustration, despair, anger and a frightening vengefulness began building up. And when riots erupted, as they did in Soweto and elsewhere, all the institutions and services that bore the stamp of White authority became prime targets. Mr Manie Mulder, chairperson of the West Rand Bantu Affairs Administration Board, made a significant remark in a radio interview at the height of the Soweto eruptions, "They are destroying all the White man's properties." Black anger, like any anger, does not always pause to reason. It knows few boundaries. The killing of Dr Melville Edelstein, as discussed earlier, was a shameful and tragic affair. It is doubtful whether those who brutally ended his life knew the good work he had done for the people of Soweto; as far as they were



concerned, Dr Edelstein was just another white face.<sup>86</sup> Frustrated people who choose rioting to vent their anger seldom reason; much of what happened in Soweto and elsewhere is indefensible. It is illogical to kill an individual or destroy property in the name of fighting an unjust system.

In a lengthy statement the SACC, while acknowledging the past failure of churches to join in the struggle for justice, expressed its support for the learners' protest against the offending regulations and deplored "the totally unwarranted actions against them." The SACC called for a meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr B.J. Vorster,<sup>87</sup> and the Minister of Bantu Administration and Education, Mr M.C. Botha, and called on learners to use the SACC as mediators. There were also calls to all churches to guide and support a shocked and bereaved society and to observe the next Sunday as a day of prayer. The stance of the SACC was informed by the fact that the confrontation involved learners. This, according to the SACC, had the frightening implication that Black grievances were not just a matter of politics; it had become a matter of intense and widespread agony, felt even by children. The SACC feared that this could escalate into a national catastrophe. The Council affirmed its solidarity with the Soweto learners on the issue of language of instruction. It urged that the regulations immediately be repealed.<sup>88</sup> The SACC was only then realising its failure to intervene on issues of justice and principle. Having been awoken to the seriousness of the situation by the Soweto uprising, the SACC became so determined to influence the way forward that it even intended taking the matter up at the highest level.

The Afrikaner community had mixed reactions to the Soweto uprising. Dr Andries Treurnicht, Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, maintained that it was government's right to decide what languages should be used and that children should not be sent to schools where the language dispensation did not suit them. He said that the policy that Afrikaans should take its place alongside English in Black schools in 'White South

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<sup>86</sup> H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, p. 362. The Soweto Massacre. Retrieved on 18 January 2005. <http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/04/kister/kister.htm>. Ilanga, 21 June 1976.

<sup>87</sup> John Vorster. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>88</sup> *The World*, 18 June 1976.

Africa' had been applied with great tolerance and circumspection.<sup>89</sup> In a snap debate on the Soweto riots the Opposition speakers called for the resignation of the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and Bantu Education, Mr M.C. Botha, and his Deputy Minister, Dr AP Treurnicht. The Opposition also urged government immediately to review its education policy for Black learners and to seek to address their grievances.<sup>90</sup> The Prime Minister explained in Parliament that the police were actively engaged in restoring order and that there was definitely no reason for panic. He assured the public that it would be kept informed of the developments in the crisis as frequently as it could be necessary. He went further to indicate that the government would not be intimidated and that law and order would be maintained at all costs.<sup>91</sup> Afrikaans academics and newspapers stressed the need for greater sensitivity on the part of government in dealing with Black resentment toward Afrikaans. Not all Afrikaners shared government's position on language policy; some academics felt that Dr Treurnicht was the wrong man in the wrong job at that critical time. They argued that he had been high-handed and insensitive at a time when government should have acted with prudence. His attitude that the government built the schools and should therefore know what is best for Blacks was unacceptable. Dr Treurnicht further compounded resentment against him by arguing that, if Blacks did not like the language policy of the government, they could stay at home.<sup>92</sup> The reaction of some in the Afrikaner community to the Soweto learners' uprising dispels the myth that all Afrikaans-speaking people were insensitive to the needs of Black people in South Africa. It confirms the long-held view that some Afrikaners were opposed to the unacceptable policies that were applied to Blacks.

Prof. Johan Heyns, Dean of the Faculty of Theology (of the Dutch Reformed Church) at the University of Pretoria, expressed deep shock at the events in Soweto. He argued that either the concept of *détente* was not understood, or that it had failed completely. He insisted that there was no solution to South Africa's problems through revolutionary

<sup>89</sup> The Natal Mercury, 18 June 1976. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Bignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 58.

<sup>90</sup> Colin W. Eglin and R.M. Cadman, House of Assembly, Hansard Vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9639.

<sup>91</sup> John B. Vorster, Prime Minister, House Assembly, Hansard Vol. 62 (18 June 1976), 9696.

<sup>92</sup> The Natal Mercury, 18 June 1976, Rand Daily Mail, 18 June 1976. M. Horrell, T. Hodgson, S. Bignaut and S. Moroney, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, p. 58.

violence and the Church rejected it categorically. Prof. Willie Esterhuyse, Head of the Department of Philosophy at Stellenbosch University and a recognised expert on homeland matters, said he was worried that Whites as rulers of South Africa were insensitive to Black human needs. He said,

I am upset that we as the rulers do not show the sensitivity for the potential for unrest among our Black population. I have the impression that even when we have this sensitivity we ignore it. We must do something. We must go into the legitimate grievances of these people at once. We must stop failing to see the reality by looking only at the ideological aspects of the situation. We are obsessed with ideology instead of the humanity of the whole situation.<sup>93</sup>

Prof. Johan Boshoff, Rector of the University of the North, which had been racked by unrests the previous year, expressed deep shock. He said,

The sad thing is that it is Afrikaans that will suffer because of this. I can only hope that common sense will triumph over violence.<sup>94</sup>

The reaction of Prof. JD van der Vyver, Head of the Department of Philosophical Jurisprudence at Potchefstroom University is most revealing. He stated that violence should not be seen as a purely Black phenomenon. Whilst he admitted that what had happened was deplorable, he stressed that this sort of incident was not typical of the Blacks. He argued that the lesson to be learnt from the unfortunate events was that problems that give rise to grievances should be investigated before the stage of inevitable violence is reached.<sup>95</sup> The fact that academics from Afrikaans universities were condemning government's approach in handling the Soweto learners' riots is testimony to the willingness of some White South Africans to accommodate the needs and political aspirations of Blacks.

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<sup>93</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 18 June 1976.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

*Die Transvaler*, an official mouthpiece of the NP in the Transvaal, stated in a front-page editorial that there were elements in the Soweto unrest that could dangerously disturb race relations in South Africa. The elements that *Die Transvaler* was concerned about were Black resistance to Afrikaans, emotional reaction by Afrikaners to the rejection of their language and agitators who use delicate situations to ruin race relations in South Africa. *Die Transvaler* maintained that after the establishment of law and order, which was the first priority, further negotiations on the language dispute were essential.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, *Die Beeld*, an Afrikaans newspaper that supported the Vorster government, questioned why the language dispute had been allowed to develop over weeks to reach a flash point. *Die Beeld* of 17 June 1976, the day following the uprising, had asked, "Has our government really no effective weapon other than bullets against children who run amok?"<sup>97</sup> A Nationalist commentator likened the language dispute to the hated policy of Lord Milner when, after the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaans children were forced to learn through the medium of both English and Dutch.<sup>98</sup> These balanced approaches to the problems that had overtaken the South African community indicated that all was not lost in settling the long-standing racial disputes in South Africa. Such rational voices in the midst of chaos brought common sense and understanding to a situation that was potentially catastrophic.

The attacks on the symbols and institutions of the apartheid government were a momentous challenge to the state's authority, as Eglin pointed out, and they pointed out a political crisis that called into question the structures of apartheid and the system of thought it was premised on:

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<sup>96</sup> *Die Transvaler*, 17 June 1976.

<sup>97</sup> *Die Beeld*, 17 June 1976. D. Herbstein, *White Man, We Want to Talk to You*, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. D. Herbstein, *White Man, We Want to Talk to You*, p. 18. M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, p. 160. R. K. Muir, Some Critical Comments on the Theory of Christian National Education. In R. Tunmer and R.K. Muir, Some Aspects of Education in South Africa. *African Studies Programme*. University of Witwatersrand, December 1968, p. 34. Christian National Education: Report to the Executive Committee of the Transvaal Teachers' Association. *The Transvaal Education News*. Vol. 80(10), November/December 1980, p. 9.

A city like Soweto could not, within the space of a few hours, be turned into a cauldron of violence and hatred unless there was something fundamentally wrong with the society and unless there was something wrong with the relationships between the Black society and the authorities.<sup>99</sup>

Colin Eglin was supported by Sir De Villiers Graaff in this view, the latter maintained that the disruptions exposed “the full inadequacy of the government policy for the urban African.”<sup>100</sup>

In the aftermath of the Soweto learners’ uprising, to suggest that resistance in education had a limited impact on education *per se* does imply that the riots had been a failure. In education, they had focused on underlying areas of anguish in Black society. The riots opened a debate on alternative visions of society and education. While the events demoralised some teachers, they challenged many more to reassess their role in the system, and to assert themselves in bringing about transformation in education.<sup>101</sup> The uprisings forever changed the balance of power in South Africa. Minority rule in South Africa entered a deep-seated structural crisis. Existing institutions could no longer resolve the strains and contradictions within South African society. The Soweto riots shattered the myth of White invincibility and made it impossible for the White minority to continue ruling as they had. Quelling the revolt could not hide the crisis. In the late 1970s, the government began to seek ways of restructuring and modernising its policies and institutions. The Prime Minister, P.W. Botha,<sup>102</sup> warned that White South Africans would

<sup>99</sup> Colin W. Eglin, House of Assembly, Hansard Vol. 20 (17 June 1976), 9632.

<sup>100</sup> Sir De Villiers Graaff, House of Assembly, Hansard (24 June 1976), 10429-30.

<sup>101</sup> V. Maphai, The Future of Education in South Africa. Head of Department Political Science, University of the Western Cape, on the Occasion of the National Education Symposium on 19 April 1991 in Bloemfontein.

<sup>102</sup> Pieter Willem Botha. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008.  
[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

have to “adapt or die”. *Reform* became the new catchword.<sup>103</sup> Ever since then, actions toward democratic education have had greater cogency. The short-sighted policies pursued by the authorities resulted in the education system being plunged into crisis.<sup>104</sup> The Soweto learner riots assisted in bringing about transformation in the South African education system.

The Black residential city of Soweto was brought into the living rooms of people all over America and Europe; for some time it became the favourite word of lobbyists in the United Nations corridors.<sup>105</sup> Newspapers in various countries carried headlines about the uprising. Critics in South Africa and around the world had been predicting this social upheaval for years, but few had anticipated the form it took in June 1976. In retrospect, the signs had been there for years.<sup>106</sup> The event sparked intensified international condemnation of the apartheid government and raised concerns among foreign investors about stability in South Africa. Some companies that had been reinvesting profits began to repatriate them.<sup>107</sup> The uprisings created negative perceptions about South Africa, both locally and abroad.

ATASA presented a memorandum, signed by the Secretary-General, Mr H.H. Dlamlenze to the Department of Bantu Education on 25 June 1976, condemning the Department’s unsympathetic, inflexible attitude in enforcing teaching through the medium of Afrikaans. The Association indicated in the memorandum that the Department had ignored warnings in the press and from various leaders in the Black community on the

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<sup>103</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 177. B. Pottinger, *The Botha Era: An End or a Beginning?* In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 15. D. Posel, *The Language of Domination, 1978-1983*. In S. Marks and S. Trapido (ed.), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century South Africa*, p. 419.

<sup>104</sup> Keynote Address by the Deputy President of the ANC, Nelson Mandela at the Launch of SADTU, 6 October 1990. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16.

<sup>105</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, p. 23.

<sup>106</sup> Robertson, N.L and B.L. Robertson, *Education in South Africa*, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> Case Studies in Sanctions and Terrorism. Institute for International Economics. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://www.iie.com/research/topics/sanctions/southafrica.htm>.

use of Afrikaans as a second medium of instruction in Black schools.<sup>108</sup> This was despite representations by parents through School Boards that went unheeded and unresolved.<sup>109</sup> Black learners' compulsory use of both Afrikaans and English as media of instruction could not be justified on educational grounds. They argued that the choice of a medium of instruction based on the predominant local White population was wrong. Whilst ATASA agreed that Afrikaans should be taught to Black learners as a language (it was an official language entrenched in the law), they also believed that the choice of a medium of instruction should ultimately be vested in the parents of a particular child. They further argued that, for Black learners, English satisfied the greatest number of purposes: it was an official language entrenched in the law like Afrikaans; it was the language of commercial and industrial communication; and it was an international language in commercial, diplomatic, intellectual and artistic communication. ATASA requested the Department of Bantu Education that English should be used as the only medium in all Black schools from standard 5 to matriculation, and that Afrikaans be dropped as a medium with effect from 20 July 1976. Further, that all school board and school committee members who had been removed because of their objection to the use of Afrikaans as another medium of instruction be reinstated with effect from 20 July 1976. ATASA requested that Black people should be involved in the decision-making bodies that affect the education of their children.<sup>110</sup> The views of ATASA, which had the majority of Black teachers as members at that time, were supposed to be taken seriously

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<sup>108</sup> Memorandum on the Medium of Instruction in African Schools under Bantu Education, African Teachers' Association of South Africa. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education, Pretoria on 26 April 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 16-17. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 333.

<sup>109</sup> Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 2.

<sup>110</sup> Memorandum on the Medium of Instruction in African Schools under Bantu Education, African Teachers' Association of South Africa. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education, Pretoria on 26 April 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Reply of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Opinionnaire of the Advisory Board for Bantu Education on the Media of Instruction in Bantu Post-Primary Schools, March 1971. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

by the government. That the Secretary of ATASA found it fitting to write directly to government in this charged atmosphere shows the gravity of the issues at hand.

There were calls for appointing Blacks who qualified in senior administrative posts. It was strongly recommended by various teachers' organisations that the Regional Director and circuit inspectors for the Region of Soweto should be Black. White officials held all senior positions in the Department of Bantu Education. It was difficult to claim self-determination for Blacks, as was supported by apartheid policy, when their education was controlled by a Department that was directed and manned in the higher echelons by White officials. If the majority of officials holding top posts in Black education were Blacks, there would be some justification for claiming self-determination for the Black group. As such, a call for the prompt elimination of colour discrimination in education administration was justified.<sup>111</sup> While it may have not been ideal, had South Africa achieved full integration of communities, the appointment of Black officials in the higher ranks of a Black Department of Education would have meant that education was led by officials who could empathise with the challenges facing Black education.

One of the most significant outcomes of June 16 and its aftermath was that, with the impatience of youth, the learners of Soweto, and consequently young Black children throughout South Africa had passed a vote of no confidence in their parents. For the first time in the history of township resistance, no prominent politician had featured in the protests. None of the Black political parties could claim credit for the education protest. The learners knew it was their moment; teenagers issued press statements. For the first time politicians and civic leaders took a back seat as teenagers virtually took over the running of the country's largest city. It was only later that adults and politicians

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<sup>111</sup> Memorandum of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Secretary for Bantu Education, 27 September 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Natal Daily News, 21 December 1962. Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA by R.L. Peteni, 4 January 1982. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 - 25.



entered.<sup>112</sup> Like everyone else, political movements were taken by surprise themselves as the plans for the riots had been such a well-kept secret, as elaborated on elsewhere. Some adult Black journalists, who felt guilty that such an important issue had been left to the children to resolve, held talks with learner leaders.<sup>113</sup> The learners, however, warned that,

What you know about Bantu Education is dangerously academic. You have never felt the pinch. Please leave it to the victims of this evil system to sort out; because the pangs of the system are real to us, we have felt them.<sup>114</sup>

One learner wrote to *The World* newspaper,

Our parents are prepared to suffer under the white man's rule. They have been living for years under these laws and they have become immune to them. But we strongly refuse to swallow an education that is designed to make us slaves in the country of our birth.<sup>115</sup>

Learners had had a taste of power. Within three weeks the government agreed to change the language ruling, a controversial issue that parents and teachers had failed to address successfully.<sup>116</sup> From the foregoing it is evident that a new generation of Black children had been born in South Africa, children who could not adjust to apartheid.

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<sup>112</sup> R. Levin, People's Education and the Politics of Negotiations in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, p. 1. D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, pp. 29-30. M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*, p. 199.

<sup>113</sup> R. Levin, People's Education and the Politics of Negotiations in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, p. 1. D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, pp. 29-30. M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*, p. 199. S.M. Ndlovu. *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter-memories of June 1976*, p.37.

<sup>114</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, p. 30.

<sup>115</sup> African History: June 16<sup>th</sup> Student Uprising. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.  
<http://africanhistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa060801b.htm>.

<sup>116</sup> Letter from Miss W.R. Berriman, Member of the Institute of Race Relations, to Chairman of ATASA. 6 November 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. The Soweto Massacre. Retrieved on 18 January 2005.  
<http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/Africa/04/kister/kister.htm>. *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 September 1984.

Since 1976 the anti-apartheid struggle was shouldered by Black learners. With the elaboration and intensification of repression, Black schools remained key sites of resistance to apartheid.<sup>117</sup> During the unrest, learners formed the SSRC, which was a body of Soweto learners from different high schools under the leadership of Tsietsi Mashinini, Khotso Seatlholo and Daniel Montsisi. Tsietsi Mashinini was a matric candidate at Morris Isaacson High School in 1976, and he became the first President of the SSRC. Khotso Seatlholo was a matric candidate at Naledi High School who took over from Mashinini when the latter was forced into exile. Khotso Seatlholo led many demonstrations for the release of detained learners and calls for the scrapping of Bantu Education; in one such demonstration police shot him in the arm. Continued police harassment forced Khotso to leave the country. Sechaba Montsisi succeeded Khotso as the third President of the SSRC. He was a matric candidate at Sekano-Ntoane High School and his anti-government efforts saw the disintegration of the Urban Bantu Council in Soweto, which the Soweto community had regarded as an arm of the apartheid government.<sup>118</sup> The Soweto uprisings caused learners to organise themselves beyond their individual schools. Their opposition to Bantu Education spilled over into community and administrative issues that were afflicting their society. Their struggle was no longer limited to education matters.

The crisis continued in Soweto and South African schools. Police patrolled the townships every day. In some ways, the townships never returned to the normality of pre-1976. The

<sup>117</sup> R. Levin, Conceptualising 'The People' in People's Education: People's Education and Democratic Transformation in South Africa. Context: A Journal for Contemporary Social and Cultural Theory and Practice in the South African Context, Vol. 2, p. 50.

<sup>118</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. Our First Leaders, Soweto Students' Representative Council, (Ed.) Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188. In Retrospect: A look at the 1976 Soweto Uprising. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://www.alternatives.ca/article1244.html>. P. Hopkins and H. Grange, The Rocky Rioter Teargas Show: The Inside Story of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, p. 87. E. Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime, p. 369. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 2. Statement Made under Oath by Lucas Zwelinzima Sizani to Captain M.B. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 12 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 12.

school boycott that triggered the demonstrations stopped in early 1979, but secondary schools in Soweto never fully regained their previous enrolments. In the aftermath of the Soweto upheavals the initiative in Black education had passed from the authorities to learners. In various parts of the country such as Venda, Port Elizabeth, Mdantsane (Zwelitsha), Cape Town and particularly in and around Pretoria and Johannesburg, adolescent and other learners had, either by visits or intimidation, been emptying more and more higher and lower primary schools. In some cases, learners burnt down principals' homes. Learners were forcibly prevented from writing year-end examinations and were threatened with physical harm if they attempted to write secretly, as a number of learners in fact did at decentralised venues.<sup>119</sup>

It was clear that many learners were caught between two feared forces. On one hand, threatening learners emptied entire schools; on the other, police attempts to stop intimidation had also acted as threats. The State, it would appear, had been hoping that parents and possibly learners might start reacting to disrupted schooling, but after June 1976, Soweto parents continued to stress that they had lost control of their teenage children. Even if they had wanted to, they lacked the power to persuade their children to return to school. Apart from their powerlessness, it was doubtful whether many parents did in fact wish to exert such an influence, since learners' demands for 'scrapping Bantu Education' echoed the requests they had been making for two decades. Moreover, many parents and moderate Blacks had lost all confidence in the ability of the government and the Department of Bantu Education to save the situation.<sup>120</sup> The environment in which the

<sup>119</sup> P. Hopkins and H. Grange, The Rocky Rioter Teargas Show: The Inside Story of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, p. 87. E. Sisulu, Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime, p. 369. Letter from the Principal of Mapetla Junior Secondary School to the Secretary General of ATASA, 22 September 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File No. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Urban Africans, 7 December 1977. South African Institute of Race Relations. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Memorandum of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa to the Secretary for Bantu Education, 27 September 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. B. Nasson, Turning Points in History: People, Places and Apartheid, p. 30. Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

majority of Black schools operated did not allow for proper teaching and learning taking place; consequently many learners lost essential schooling opportunities.

There were serious calls for learners to return to schools. Parents maintained that the government would never allow itself to be dictated to by children. They believed that the best would be for learners to return to their schools and teachers, find comfort there and press their teachers into taking up policy change with the authorities - a futile approach in the past. For government to yield to learners' demands by changing its policy would be tantamount to apologising for causing the unrest and violence, which government would hardly do. If learners returned to school after the recent events, it would be on government's terms and conditions. There was a fear that if learners continued to demand a change of policy, they would lose sight of their most pressing need, i.e. the need for getting an education.<sup>121</sup> It was an anomaly that children were pressing for change in education; in any normal society adults drive initiatives for policy change; children ought to be the passive beneficiaries of the outcome of any positive policy review.

In October 1976 the SSRC issued a statement that all workers were to stay at home for five days, from 1 to 5 November 1976. Only nurses and doctors were allowed to continue with their daily routine. Black shops selling groceries, meat and dairy products could open only from 08:00 to 12:00 during the stay-at-home period. There would be no buying from White shops for the entire week. Those who needed to buy had to do so from Black shops. All shebeens were to shut down. The SSRC argued that there could be no drinking and celebrations of any kind while the entire Black community was in mourning. Parents, workers and all learners were instructed to remain indoors and to avoid loitering in groups on the streets. Churches and families were to conduct prayers on 31 October 1976 in commemoration of Black children who had been shot and killed by police all over the

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<sup>121</sup> Letter from Miss W.R. Berriman, Member of the Race Relations Institute, to the Chairman of ATASA dated 6 November 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 9. A Statement from the African Scholars of Cape Town, 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

country. People were told that there would be no Christmas shopping, no Christmas cards and decorations, no Christmas parties. Black people would be mourning their dead over the festive season. People were urged to heed this call to avoid violence and bloodshed.<sup>122</sup> Where Soweto learners had had some degree of control in the upheavals of 16 June 1976, they were extending their influence to other areas of community life, to the point of declaring consumer boycotts. Thus children, with the influence of politicians, were dictating to an entire community, young and old, where and when to buy. This was intended to exert more pressure on government for accelerated positive education change.

Learners had overwhelming support from businesspersons who complied with the request to close down. The National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) took a brave step to show solidarity with the Black people's struggle for liberation by closing the season early. Learners hailed this move, indicating that they and adult Black people are the main supporters of soccer and other sport, so it was appreciated that the NPSL, one of the largest organisations in the country, receiving thousands of rand from White industrial capitalists, did not succumb to the pressure from their sponsors to ignore the call.<sup>123</sup> The support for the consumer boycott was not only the result of overt threats, but was also a pledge of solidarity with learners in their quest for positive social change in South African society.

With their 'increased power' Soweto learners attended to other concerns. They began wielding such power that they started focusing on other issues plaguing Black communities, going beyond questioning and protesting against education issues. They

<sup>122</sup> Azikhwelwa, Issued by the Soweto Students' Representative Council, October 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188. Press Statement, 4 November 1976, Soweto Students' Representative Council. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188. Statement Made under Oath by Kenneth Hlaku Rachidi to Lieutenant A.A. Struwig of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 6. Letter from Miss W.R. Berriman, Member of the Institute of Race Relations, to Chairman of ATASA. 6 November 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. Statement Made under Oath by Mafison Morobe to Lieutenant A.P. van Niekerk of John Vorster Square, Detained under Section 6(1) of Act 83/1967 of Terrorism Act, 9 August 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953, p. 17.

<sup>123</sup> Press Statement, 4 November 1976, Soweto Students' Representative Council. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188.

strongly objected to the rent increase that was proposed by the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB). They argued that Soweto had been an unhygienic slum since its beginning; that their parents' salaries had not improved to accommodate any rent increase; and that the proposed high rents would be used to build bottle stores and beer halls that would not add value to struggling Black communities. The learners were adamant that the increased rents would be used to buy guns and machine guns, tear gas canisters and sneezing machines that would be used to harass and kill Blacks. They further claimed that the rental increases would be used to build more jails throughout the country; jails that would be used to confine genuine Black leaders. The WRAB had no alternative but to evict rent defaulters, and learners in turn threatened to deal harshly with anyone found paying the proposed increase, causing others to be evicted.<sup>124</sup> Learners now wielded so much power that they were even commenting on their parents' low salaries that could not accommodate increases in rent. Their power was extended to commenting on how destructive the use of alcohol was in their communities. They also created a non-existent link between the increased rent and the national defence machinery that was, in fact, funded from taxes and not from rent.

The system of Bantu Education was closely linked with the government's policy with regard to the homelands and the ethnological and political doctrines that cohere therewith. It was part of the government's grand plan to ultimately grant these homelands independence.<sup>125</sup> Learners rejected the acceptance of independence of the Transkei by Chief Kaizer Matanzima<sup>126</sup> on 26 October 1976. They saw this as the ultimate product of the policy of separate development. They regarded Chief Matanzima as a traitor to Black people's political aspirations by selling their birthright to the White minority government. They were opposed to the fragmentation of South Africa into ethnic political entities that

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<sup>124</sup> Rent Increment, (ed.). Soweto Students' Representative Council. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188. L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, p. 378.

<sup>125</sup> Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22.

<sup>126</sup> Kaizer Matanzima. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

were neither politically nor economically viable. Besides being opposed to the division of the Black nation into ethnic sovereign states, they saw this policy as the basis for creating tribal colonies that would still remain dependent on the main colonial power, so-called White South Africa. They feared that the balkanisation of the country might lead to tribal rivalries that might cause tribal conflict in South Africa. The independence of the Transkei undermined Black solidarity and power. Blacks in the homelands would forever remain subservient to the White government, and they would be used as reservoirs of cheap labour for maintaining the White man's economic power and political domination. Young people saw Matanzima's acquiescence as a grave political blunder that they and future generations would possibly never forgive. They labelled Matanzima a 'political coward', a 'stooge' and a 'puppet' who could not hold his own in the fight for and defence of their birth-right.<sup>127</sup> These young people's views on the independence of the Transkei were shared by the majority of Blacks who did not see the government homeland policy as a panacea for the social challenges facing South Africa.

South Africans from all walks of life were searching for solutions to the school crisis. In November 1977 the Advisory Council for Bantu Education made some suggestions to the Department of Bantu Education on possible solutions. It remained to be seen whether the government would implement these suggestions and, if so, how soon these recommendations would be put into operation. The Advisory Council for Bantu Education, with its headquarters in Pretoria, was composed of Black educationists, businessmen and political and religious leaders. It not only advised the central government and the Minister of Bantu Education on all matters referred to it, but it could also investigate and offer advice on its own initiative.<sup>128</sup> The members of the Executive Committee of Advisory Council for Bantu Education were Dr R Cingo,<sup>129</sup> Mr A.I.

<sup>127</sup> Press Release by Khotso Seatlholo, 29 October 1976. Soweto Students' Representative Council. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188. R.E. Gordon and C.J. Talbot, *From Dias to Vorster: Source Material on South African History (1488-1975)*, pp. 435-436. South Africa: Homeland Militaries. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html), p. 2. H. Campion, *The New Transkei*, p. 141.

<sup>128</sup> Education for Blacks. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>129</sup> J.S.M. Setiloane, *The History of Black Education in Maokeng, Kroonstad*, pp. 49-51.

Molefe, Prof. M.E.R. Mathivha and Mr R.N. Gugushe.<sup>130</sup> The Advisory Council suggested renaming Bantu Education to Black Education. They argued that the designation 'Bantu' had never been fully accepted by Black people since it came into official usage after the Eiselen Commission. According to the Advisory Council for Bantu Education when Bantu Education was launched by an act of Parliament in 1953, the philosophy on which it was based was unsound. It seemed to brand Bantu Education with perpetual inferiority. Moreover, the designation 'Bantu Education' had become most offensive despite the marked improvements and great changes that had punctuated the progress of education for Blacks since 1950. The fact that Dr Verwoerd's statement in the Senate in 1954 had not been repealed, added to the stigma attached to Bantu Education. The Advisory Council suggested that Black Education should be renamed so that no reference is made to 'ethnicity' at all, for it was this designation that had become offensive and objectionable.<sup>131</sup> The Secretary for Bantu Education was insistent that Bantu Education did not offer a different or inferior 'system' of education. The standards set and syllabi followed were on a par with those of the other fifteen departments of education. There was no difference in the content of the education; the only difference was for control or administration.<sup>132</sup> The renaming to Black Education, without the much anticipated change in the administration, funding and content would be both cosmetic and futile. The situation in education demanded a complete overhaul.

The education of Blacks was administered by the Department of Administration and Development that also handled the regulations of pass laws, influx control, housing and taxes, all of which were incompatible with education. The general consensus among Black people was that their education should be separated from Administration and

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<sup>130</sup> Advisory Council for Bantu Education (36th Executive Meeting), Summary of Proceedings of Executive Committee Meeting held on 9 December 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>131</sup> Advisory Council for Bantu Education, Executive Committee's Memorandum on Suggested Solutions to the Schools' Crisis. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre of African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>132</sup> Report on a Meeting of ATASA with the Secretary for Bantu Education and Officials of the Department on 22 October 1976 in Pretoria. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.



Development forthwith to capture and construct a new image. The Advisory Council was convinced that this strategy would facilitate defusing the impasse in Black education that had resulted in thousands of learners' not attending school and not writing their examinations. According to the Committee, this was a national tragedy whose aftermath would have far-reaching consequences. They suggested that Black Education be given a separate portfolio under its new name or be placed under the wing of National Education.<sup>133</sup> The latter would obviously be the more popular of the two alternatives. The former would still encourage separate development, while, in the latter case, education for Black and White children would be administered by the same Minister, with the possibility of reducing and eventually eliminating the inconsistencies between these two systems. This step would certainly pacify the Black population.

The Advisory Council on Bantu Education also strongly recommended free and compulsory education. This would eliminate the recurrence of school boycotts that had been used as a weapon of coercion to attain certain desired objectives. It would also call for increased funding which was the key to the entire predicament around Black education. They argued that substantial funding for Black education was vital to reduce and eventually eliminate the physical and professional inequalities between it and the other population groups. It would furthermore ensure that every child became literate. Literacy would improve the quality of individual standards of living by allowing access to the instruction generally required for industrial efficiency, increased social competence and improved rational cohesion. The Council argued that it was the responsibility of education authorities to provide schools, adequately trained teachers, books and other school requisites for learners and to bring the school within the reach of every child. It is interesting to note that the South African Institute of Race Relations and ATASA had made similar recommendations in their respective memoranda to the Cabinet Committee

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<sup>133</sup> Advisory Council for Bantu Education, Executive Committee's Memorandum on Suggested Solutions to the Schools' Crisis. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre of African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

on Urban Africans and the Secretary for Bantu Education.<sup>134</sup> While the recommendations of the Advisory Council on Bantu Education were beginning to touch more on the substantial issues of increased funding for Black education, provision of school infrastructure and adequately trained teachers, their recommendations would not fully address the situation as long as education administration and provisioning continued along separate racial lines.

The Secretary said that it would cost the Department a vast amount to build schools and appoint more teachers, so it could not be launched fully right from the beginning. To start with, parents would sign a contract to keep their children in school for four years. The same parents would then sign another contract when their children entered the higher primary level. The Secretary pointed out that preparation for compulsory education would take at least four to five years and that it would be necessary to think about implementation in terms of geographical areas and in phases.<sup>135</sup> The Department of Bantu Education officials who met members of the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council accepted the recommendation that education for Blacks should be renamed, hopefully during the next Parliamentary session. The Department fully agreed with the separation of the Department of Education and Administration and Development. The matter had already been drawn to the Minister's attention, and the views of the Executive Committee of the Advisory Council corresponded with the complaints already submitted to the Minister. It was further agreed that the Department of Education would constitute a separate portfolio or, alternatively, fall under National Education. The Department also conceded that free and compulsory education was the ultimate intention. To this end,

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<sup>134</sup> Advisory Council for Bantu Education, Executive Committee's Memorandum on Suggested Solutions to the Schools' Crisis. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre of African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Urban Africans, 7 December 1977. South African Institute of Race Relations. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. A Statement from the African Scholars of Cape Town, 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with the Secretary for Bantu Education: Pretoria on 22 October 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Report on a Meeting of ATASA with the Secretary for Bantu Education and Officials of the Department on 22 October 1976 in Pretoria. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

education would accordingly be allocated the biggest budget of all other government departments.<sup>136</sup> It is encouraging to note the Department's agreement with the Executive Council of the Advisory Committee on Bantu Education. Although the points of agreement were substantial, they were nowhere near resolving the age-old problems of separate education systems and the unequal distribution of resources.

The SSRC issued pamphlets to all the residents of Soweto, hostels, the Reef and Pretoria, asking for unity among Black people, urging them not to fight and kill one another. They advocated that Black people should not allow themselves to be divided, but united in facing the common enemies of apartheid, exploitation and oppression. They warned against political opportunists who would incite Black people to their own ends and urged people to listen to their leaders. In the same pamphlet they called for Blacks to join hands in forcing the government:

- to release all learners and Black leaders in detention;
- to scrap Bantu Education as it was poison to the minds of Black people; and
- to fight apartheid and separate development.

In conclusion they called on parents and Black leaders to settle the school and political crisis.<sup>137</sup> These kinds of statements put learners at the control of events while parents and Black leaders played a subsidiary role in shaping the transformation agenda of education in South Africa. It seems ironical that children had to call upon their parents and leaders to settle the school and political crisis; under normal circumstances parents and political leaders would have initiated any serious interventions.

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<sup>136</sup> The Advisory Council for Bantu Education (36<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting), Summary of Proceedings of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 9 December 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>137</sup> To all Residents of Soweto, Hostels, Reef and Pretoria, 7 September 1976. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC), AD 2188. A Statement from the African Scholars of Cape Town, 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

The pamphlet issued by the SSRC called on all learners in primary and secondary schools to return to their classrooms. It called on all teachers to start teaching and stop wasting time discussing learner affairs without them. It stated too that the learners' struggle was non-violent and told learners that they were neither the "duplicate nor carbon copy" of their fathers and mothers. Where their fathers had failed, they would succeed and the future was in their hands.<sup>138</sup> This makes it clear that learners believed they were in charge and in control. It is significant to note that children were determined not to give in where their parents passively acquiesced. The question remains, however, whether it was appropriate for learners, at this stage of their development to be so deeply involved in education politics. Was this good for instilling discipline among learners? Needless to say, the deep involvement of learners in education politics eroded order and discipline at schools.

White reporters who were known to support the Black cause were also asked to leave Soweto while anti-White tensions were running high. This was before the authorities ordered all Whites, except members of the security forces, out of Soweto for their own safety.<sup>139</sup> The Minister of Justice, Mr Jimmy Kruger,<sup>140</sup> was so certain that *The World* and *Weekend World* newspapers, and their editor, Mr Percy Qoboza,<sup>141</sup> were responsible for fomenting the unrest, that he closed down *The World* before first questioning the editor. He then incarcerated Qoboza for more than five months without trial. This was part of government's concentrated effort during and after the riots.<sup>142</sup> The period 1976 to 1980 was characterised by a series of disturbing events that resulted in unrest in Black schools following the Soweto school riots of 1976. As a result of this unrest, it became clear by 1978 that an impasse in the education system of Blacks in South Africa had been reached.<sup>143</sup> The Soweto uprisings created an atmosphere of mistrust; White reporters who were known to support the Black cause were asked to leave Soweto because of anti-

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi, *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, pp. 31-33.

<sup>140</sup> James Thomas "Jimmy" Kruger. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>141</sup> Percy Qoboza. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>142</sup> *The Argus*, 5 March 1980 and *The Natal Witness*, 4 March 1980.

<sup>143</sup> A.L. Behr, *Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988*, p. 36.

White sentiments. Government on the other hand closed down newspapers that it suspected of fomenting violence. Individuals or institutions that would normally have trusted one another developed a blanket mistrust of all.

In the 1970s the South African government began easing some of its racial restrictions, but the rate did not satisfy the ANC and wide-scale violence committed by extremists on both sides took hundreds of lives. Even though P.W. Botha's<sup>144</sup> government seemed committed to ending apartheid, opponents of the system demanded greater and accelerated reform.<sup>145</sup> The promulgation of *The Education and Training Act, Act No. 90 of 1979* that came into effect on 1 January 1980, and which initiated a new dispensation for Black education, was without doubt an outcome of the 1976 school disturbances.<sup>146</sup> The Act was part of government's reformist approach; it was trying to meet some of the Black population's demands on issues of education.

In the aftermath of the Soweto upheavals there were large scale resignations of teachers in Soweto. The Department of Bantu Education was worried that some teachers had played a role in the outbreaks of unrest and called on such teachers to be disciplined

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<sup>144</sup> Pieter Willem Botha. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008.

[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>145</sup> Letter from R.E. Mthinyane, a Farm School Teacher, to H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA, 13 August 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. Sanctions Against South Africa (1986). Retrieved on 11 June 2008. <http://exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/PUBS/AmLnC/BR56.htm>, p. 1. Statement by the Honourable M.C. Botha, M.P., Minister of Bantu Education. Pretoria, 29 December 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>146</sup> Statement issued by the Honourable W.A. Cruywagen, M.P., Minister of Education and Training. Pretoria, 18 August 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Statement issued by Mr G.J. Rousseau, Secretary for Education and Training. Pretoria, 9 November 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008.

through a code of conduct that ATASA had been commissioned to establish.<sup>147</sup> Of the teachers that resigned in protest against Bantu Education, some withdrew their resignations shortly thereafter, acting on the advice of the Secretary for Education and Training and the Regional Director of Soweto, Alexandra Township and Klipspruit. These returning teachers had been assured of continuous pay after withdrawing their resignations. This promise was never honoured and these teachers were left without pay.<sup>148</sup> The fact that some teachers wanted to resign shows how polarised the situation was. In the majority of instances teachers would not resign their secure positions without alternative and concrete job opportunities being available to them, revealing the untenable situation in which they found themselves.

Repression was accompanied by attempts at ameliorative reform. Government abandoned Afrikaans as a compulsory language of instruction; changed the title of the Department of Bantu Education to a more palatable Department of Education and Training (DET); upgraded certain aspects of teacher training; began compulsory education in some areas; allowed some racial integration in private schools; and permitted businesses to institute employee-training programmes. These reforms, intended to further address the needs of the private sector as well as to quell the rebellion, proved insufficient for either goal. Faced with the increasing breakdown of apartheid rules and regulations intended to control labour; confronted by Black rebellion and a hostile international environment; yet determined to modernise the structures of racial domination to meet the needs of greater industrialisation, the government headed by PW Botha launched a series of more far-

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<sup>147</sup> Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Advisory Council for Bantu Education (36th Executive Meeting), Summary of Proceedings of Executive Committee Meeting held on 9 December 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Letter from E.D. Moerane, Teacher Representative, to the Secretary of the Federal Council of African Teachers dated 30 April 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2.2.3-2.2.5.

<sup>148</sup> Memorandum Submitted to the Honourable Minister for Education and Training. Pretoria, 15 March 1979. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Letter from E.D. Moerane, Teacher Representative, to the Secretary of the Federal Council of African Teachers dated 30 April 1978. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2.2.3-2.2.5.

reaching reforms in the late 1970s and the early 1980s.<sup>149</sup> Increasingly after 1976 the private sector was allowed to become involved in education and encouraged to contribute its resources to education needs. For the first time government opened its doors to Black educationists, businessmen, politicians, religious leaders and those concerned with Black education to form an Advisory Council.<sup>150</sup> This was a positive move that would serve to pacify the rising political temperatures in the country. Even though this did not go far enough to deal with the political issues that troubled the Black population, it was a positive gesture indicating the willingness of government to engage Black people in matters that concerned education.

Although for a long time June 16 did not appear on the official list of national commemorative days, it was deeply engraved in the consciousness of more South Africans than any other day. For some, the anniversary of the Soweto riots in 1976 was a day of mourning and of renewed dedication to firmly-held aspirations and ideals; for others it was a time of apprehension and defensiveness against forces that threatened the existing order; for yet others, a small but increasing radical minority, it was a focal point for the incitement of violence and insurrection. It was a day on which all South Africans, whatever their personal convictions might have been, became actively aware of the powerful dynamics of change that permeated daily life and every now and then erupted into the open. For this reason, recurring mid-year tensions would not be easily dispelled. It became clear that the patience of the law-abiding majority throughout South Africa was wearing thin after years of empty promises. It was evident that, if the trauma associated

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<sup>149</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 312. J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 137. B. Pottinger, *The Botha Era: An End or a Beginning?* In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 15. 1. Statement by the Honourable M.C. Botha, M.P., Minister of Bantu Education. Pretoria, 29 December 1976. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008.

<sup>150</sup> R. McGregor (ed.), *McGregor's Education Alternatives*, p. 26. N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 61. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 15. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 8.

with 16 June was to be diminished, government would have to act quickly and decisively to secure willing co-operation of Black South Africans in a fair and just partnership with Whites.<sup>151</sup>

Subsequent to the Soweto uprisings many learners fled to neighbouring countries. They vowed never to come back to South Africa until the country had been fully liberated. Some of the learners who were interviewed in the offices of the ANC in Dar-Es-Salaam said that they had fled South Africa because they found that they were on the 'wanted list' of the police. If they had remained in the country and had been arrested, they would have been "tortured and perhaps killed."<sup>152</sup> According to the Security Police, an estimated four thousand Blacks had fled South Africa for guerrilla camps to the north by the end of 1978, and thousands more were continuing to leave.<sup>153</sup> That some learners sought refuge in foreign countries shows the extent to which the situation in the country was polarised.

The second wave of banning people's organisations in 1977 forced many activists underground and created new conditions for the development and growth of various grassroots organisations and community groups.<sup>154</sup> The violent suppression of the 1976 learner riots in Soweto to protest against the inferior Bantu Education system had produced an unprecedented outflow of young people from South Africa. The ANC decided to accommodate them, and Tanzania was one of the countries where they could. In exile the learners had a choice between military training and schooling. According to Pampallis the ANC persuaded them to finish school first before going for military training, but did not insist.<sup>155</sup> Towards the end of 1977 the first ANC members arrived to clear and renovate an abandoned sisal estate near Morogoro. The area had been made

<sup>151</sup> A Statement from the African Scholars of Cape Town, 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. The Natal Mercury, 19 June 1980 and Cape Herald, 28 June 1980.

<sup>152</sup> Drum, 14 June 2001.

<sup>153</sup> J. Seidman, Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto, p. 5.

<sup>154</sup> S. Morrow, B. Maaba and L. Pulumani, Education in Exile: SOMAFSCO, the ANC school in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992, p. 3. F. Chikane, The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>.

<sup>155</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.



available by the supportive Tanzanian government, and the first study classes started early in 1979, while the foundation stone was being laid for the planned secondary school. The secondary school was at the core of the settlement, and around it grew a crèche, infant school, primary school, a productive modern farm, a small but well-equipped hospital, workshops and factories making furniture and other goods and other divisions. There were extensive boarding accommodation and housing for teachers and workers. There were sports facilities, an excellent library, a large meeting hall, a network of roads and other infrastructure.<sup>156</sup> The Tanzanian schools were closed in 1992. In the course of these thirteen years, some 6 000 learners had benefited from the education at the Solomon Mahlangu<sup>157</sup> Freedom College (SOMAFCO), named after a freedom fighter who was executed by the South African government in 1979.<sup>158</sup> Learners received secondary education and were able to continue with their academic careers in exile. Some stayed for years, others only for months while passing through to scholarships elsewhere. Close to 1 000 passed their O-levels, which was as far as one could go at SOMAFCO.<sup>159</sup> Others left school after a while, but stayed in Mazimbu or Dakawa for vocational training and to gain practical experience by working in building brigades or joining the various factories and workshops. For hundreds of adults, Mazimbu and Dakawa became 'a home in exile', offering them a place to live and work and be part of the movement while waiting for opportunities to return home.<sup>160</sup> The vision of establishing ANC schools and

<sup>156</sup> S. Morrow, B. Maaba and L. Pulumani, Education in Exile: SOMAFCO, the ANC school in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992, pp. 2-3. S.P.P. Mminele, History of Education: Its Nature, Value and Research, p. 68. P. Kallaway, The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994, p. 158.

<sup>157</sup> Solomon Mahlangu. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mahlangu](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mahlangu)

<sup>158</sup> R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 1. K. Lund Larsen, A Summary of a Decade of Danish Support for the ANC Schools in Tanzania, including the support from the Nordic Operation Dayswork. Harare, May 1993. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Tikley Mohammed Collection, MCH 54. P. Kallaway, The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994, p. 156. S. Badat, Higher Education Transformation Post-1994: Towards a Critical Assessment. Solomon Mahlangu Education Lecture 2007. Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, 12 June 2007, p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008. K. Lund Larsen, A Summary of a Decade of Danish Support for the ANC Schools in Tanzania, including the support from the Nordic Operation Dayswork. Harare, May 1993. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Tikley Mohammed Collection, MCH 54.

<sup>160</sup> K. Lund Larsen, A Summary of a Decade of Danish Support for the ANC Schools in Tanzania, including the support from the Nordic Operation Dayswork. Harare, May 1993. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Tikley Mohammed Collection, MCH 54. P. Kallaway, The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994, p. 156.

exile settlements in Tanzania was the answer to a practical problem and revolved around an alternative non-racial society by creating a new type of South African, dedicated to democracy and social justice. The practical problem was how to make sure that thousands of young South Africans fleeing the apartheid system would receive proper education and political training and find a home in exile within the ranks of the ANC. SOMAFCO, Mazimbu and Dakawa fulfilled this aspiration.

Over the years many who had left to be educated abroad returned to Mazimbu and Dakawa to teach and work as there was always a lack of qualified South African teaching staff. Others joined ANC settlements in Zambia, Angola or Zimbabwe. Support for the two ANC settlements in Tanzania had been generous from sections of the international community, particularly from Nordic countries. Support from the Dutch government acted as seed money in the beginning when the first buildings at the abandoned sisal farm were renovated. Later more than thirty donors were involved, entailing large investments, with the Swedish government's donation to the ANC being substantial. At its peak, the total number of residents at Mazimbu was around 3 000, and the total number of learners at SOMAFCO institutions, including the nursery, primary and secondary schools plus adult education, was more than 1 400.<sup>161</sup> Pampallis submits that at the beginning the processes at SOMAFCO were chaotic. It was the student union that helped the authorities to establish order with the establishment of a disciplinary committee.<sup>162</sup>

The ANC's education policy at SOMAFCO was guided by the following three principles: it must prepare the cadres to serve in the National Liberation Struggle; it must produce cadres who would be able to serve in all fields of society; and its priorities would be dictated by the needs of the liberation struggle. The ANC was guided by these principles

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<sup>161</sup> K. Lund Larsen, A Summary of a Decade of Danish Support for the ANC Schools in Tanzania, Including the Support from the Nordic Operation Dayswork. Harare, May 1993. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Tikley Mohammed Collection, MCH 54. S. Morrow, B. Maaba and L. Pulumani, *Education in Exile: SOMAFCO, the ANC school in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992*, p. 4.

<sup>162</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

in determining the curriculum for the exiled South Africans in Tanzania.<sup>163</sup> Pampallis says SOMAFCO presented the ANC with the opportunity to develop an alternative to Bantu Education, and that model could be brought back to South Africa at the time of the envisaged liberation.<sup>164</sup> This ideal had its limitations. SOMAFCO was a microcosm and could therefore not create a model for the entire South African education system. The circumstances in South Africa are too varied to be compared with the controlled environment of SOMAFCO. It has to be appreciated, however, that the fact that the international community was prepared to support these projects indicates the extent to which the Soweto learners' uprising had been able to draw their attention to the plight of South African learners.

Pampallis indicates that the ANC never saw SOMAFCO as a permanent institution as they would not be in exile forever. Learners at SOMAFCO were being prepared for ultimate reintegration into the South Africa community. This is evidenced by the manner in which the assessment and certification of learners was structured. The learners at SOMAFCO wrote their O-level examinations in Mathematics, Science and English with the University of London. The ANC Examination Board in Lusaka set the remaining four subjects, namely History, Geography, Development of Societies and Marxist Theory mainly in Literature and English. The intention with this approach was to give the South African context to the studies. The moderation of the question papers was done by academics at the University of Zambia and the United Nations Institute for Namibia. This also made it possible for the learners graduating from SOMAFCO to get accreditation in order to study in other countries. The Scholarship Committee at SOMAFCO created the opportunity for the products of SOMAFCO to study further at overseas universities. The majority of the learners went to the Eastern countries as it proved difficult to get scholarships from the West. The most popular destinations for university education were

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<sup>163</sup> P. Kallaway, The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994, p. 169. K. Lund Larsen, A Summary of a Decade of Danish Support for the ANC Schools in Tanzania, Including the Support from the Nordic Operation Dayswork. Harare, May 1993. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Tikley Mohammed Collection, MCH 54. S. Morrow, B. Maaba and L. Pulumani, Education in Exile: SOMAFCO, the ANC school in Tanzania, 1978 to 1992, p. 4.

<sup>164</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic. In the first six months in these countries they would learn languages and in the second six months they would learn the concepts and contents of their subjects.<sup>165</sup> Whilst it is true that the ANC did everything in their power to ensure that the products of SOMAFCO are accredited by reputable institutions and they can be easily integrated into the South African society, it has to be noted that the O-level qualifications were below the Matric qualification that is on offer in South Africa. Their makeshift arrangements of ensuring that the exiled learners continue with their studies in banishment, however, remain commendable.

On the home front, the period following the 1976 learner riots saw the crystallisation of two contradictory structures: on the one hand, the increasing centralisation and militarisation of state power; on the other, the increasing strength and breadth of the terrain of civil society expressed through the developing organisational structure of the opposition. The widespread organised political opposition that began after Soweto 1976 and included the development of an independent trade union movement posed for the government a question of control and stability. The political stability of the decade between 1963 and 1970 appeared to be at an end. For government the only way to contain the opposition, given changes within the economy and division within the White power bloc, seemed to be through a vast reinforcement of the centralised power of the Executive. This took shape as part of the 'total strategy.'<sup>166</sup> The situation in the country drove government to strengthening its administrative and security machinery, but the effects of the 1976 learners' uprising had been so vast that the South African government did not wish ever to have a repeat.

As a first step, Parliament was further subordinated to the Cabinet and consequently control of the NP conference over policy was weakened. Centralisation was accompanied by strong divisions among branches of the Executive on the direction of policy, particularly on Black administration, security policy and the economy. Certain branches

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa. Research and Education in South Africa. Paper Number Three, p. 9.

of the Executive acted autonomously, without reference to collective Cabinet decisions. This was brought to an end by an increase in the power vested in the Office of the Prime Minister and a reduction in Cabinet control of policy. The Prime Minister's control of Cabinet was fully consolidated by the end of the period. At the same time the military and security forces were brought centrally into the organs of civilian administration.<sup>167</sup> These measures were meant to ensure stability in the country. However, the government did not only focus on repressive measures; some degree of reform was also introduced. In 1978 PW Botha proceeded with the apartheid blueprint of 'homelands' and influx control, but promised reform and a new constitution. As domestic and international pressure increased, Botha relaxed aspects of 'petty apartheid' such as the strict segregation of sport, hoping to avoid international sanctions. Hotels, restaurants and theatres could apply for 'international' status that would allow them to admit anyone who could pay. Although petty apartheid was on the wane, the segregation of residential locations and schooling remained firmly entrenched throughout the 1980s.<sup>168</sup> These measures attest to government's commitment to bring about reform that would preclude a possible repeat of the Soweto learners' riots. Government also intended to deal with a range of internal and external critics.

After the violence of 1976 there was a growing sense of impatience and indignation from the government's international and domestic critics. Government attempts at 'reform' apartheid did not impress its increasingly militant opponents who regarded the reforms as manipulative and refused to endorse 'token' measures. Thus, when government tried to 'unify' sport, the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) declared that, in the spirit of the Soweto uprisings, all Blacks should be given a clear mandate not to co-operate in the new sporting dispensation. Talks on the possibility of uniting the South African Cricket Association were abandoned. The SACOS stance was 'no normal sport in an abnormal country' and their members refused to use facilities operating under the new permit

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> B. Pottinger, *The Botha Era: An End or a Beginning?* In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 15. Letter from R.E. Mthinyane, a Farm School Teacher, to H.H. Dlamlenze, Secretary General of ATASA, 13 August 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 2. Apartheid: Post 1976 Reform, p. 1. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. [http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_reform.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_reform.htm).

system.<sup>169</sup> Their response to government's initiative was typical of a new era of hostility that had been caused by the earlier lost opportunities for transformation. The upheavals that started in education were beginning to have an impact in sport and other civil structures.

Following the Soweto protest of June 1976, many appeals were made to government to set up a government Commission to investigate the state of education in South Africa. The government appointed Mr Justice PM Cillié to investigate the causes of the unrest on 24 June 1976. By Government Notice No. 1187, dated 2 July 1976, the appointment of the Commission was notified for general information and its terms of reference and constitution were announced. The Commission's terms of reference were:

- To enquire into and report on the riots at Soweto and other places in the Republic during June 1976, and the causes that gave rise thereto.<sup>170</sup>
- The Commission shall consist of the Honourable Mr Justice Petrus Malan Cillié, Judge President of the Transvaal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa, as Chairman and sole member.<sup>171</sup>

In terms of Government Notice No. 1862, dated 8 October 1976, the Commission's terms of reference were extended to include an inquiry, not only into the riots in June 1976, but also into the subsequent riots. The Commission's name was amended accordingly.<sup>172</sup> The establishment of this Commission of Enquiry shows government's concern about the Soweto learners' uprising and its determination to deal with the situation.

<sup>169</sup> Apartheid: Resistance in the 1980s. Retrieved on 16 January 2005.

[http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_1980s.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_1980s.htm), p. 1.

<sup>170</sup> Government Notice No. 1187, 2 July 1976. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 2.

<sup>171</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> Government Notice No. 1862, 8 October 1976. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 2. Government Notice No. 1862, 8 October 1976.

The Cillié Report was tabled in Parliament on 20 February 1980. Policy makers, business leaders and other concerned citizens had long since made up their various minds on the causes of the Soweto upheaval and had accordingly taken reformist action, whatever the consequences. Although the Report was considerably overdue, it was not without value. It illuminated certain disturbing truths that had yet to be properly absorbed. The report brought home certain truths that could be pondered with profit, even at that late stage.<sup>173</sup> It is important that the Commission's report brought some truths about the real causes of the Soweto uprisings. This would allow the government space to put systems in place to obviate the recurrence of similar disturbances elsewhere in the country.

The Cillié Commission stated that among the Black community there was considerable dissatisfaction with Bantu Education. Besides the objection to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in some subjects in secondary schools, there was discontent about the standard of education, the quality of teaching and the school buildings and equipment. Many respondents described the object of Bantu Education as a premeditated effort to educate Black learners in such a way that they would be submissive to Whites or, to put it more strongly, remain slaves of the oppressor.<sup>174</sup> The Cillié Commission report appropriately drew attention to the important fact of township conditions and frustrations as powerful background factors to the Soweto upheavals. Among others, the issues of influx control, poor housing, trading and employment restrictions and exclusion from political rights, were the factors which the Cillié Report identified as helping to create a mood of unrest. The Commission refused to draw a comparison between the financing of White and Black education and hence failed to emphasise the signal point that the least well financed educational system was the one which, according to the Commission's own figures, was under the greatest strain of dramatically increasing numbers of learner-

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<sup>173</sup> K. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*, p. 150. H. Pohlandt-McCormick, *Doing Violence to Memory: The Soweto Uprising*, June 16 1976. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.c1p1.html](http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/PM.c1p1.html), p. 4.

<sup>174</sup> A.L. Behr, *Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988*, p. 37. *The Friend*, 24 June 1980.

entrants.<sup>175</sup> The Cillié Commission Report, while succeeding in drawing attention to the factors critical to the Soweto uprisings, failed in its refusal to draw comparisons between the financing of White and Black education; thus ignoring one of the most critical elements of the functioning of any education system. This immediately casts doubt on the Commission's willingness to deal sincerely with the challenges the South African government was facing in education.

The Commission found that there were divergent opinions among witnesses about who committed the first violent act in the first confrontation. The most salient points were whether the crowd threw stones because the police had opened fire or whether the police opened fire because the crowd had thrown stones. Various witnesses took up a position somewhere between these two poles. The Cillié Commission's findings argued that, having considered all the evidence on the incidents of the morning of 16 June 1976, the Commission could not accept that the police used firearms when the situation was still quiet and calm. The Commission accepted that, on the arrival of the police, the crowd threw stones to taunt them. The procession was not peaceful and orderly at all times; there was an uncontrolled or poorly controlled advance. The Commission also found that before the shooting, there had already been public violence that was highly likely to erupt again. The Commission further found that the procession was illegal and the police were forced to disperse the crowd to curb unrest. The Commission stated that it appeared that Hector Peterson had died of a bullet not intended for him. It rejected allegations that he was shot in cold blood by one of five black policemen in a car.<sup>176</sup> The findings of the Commission were to be expected; the possibility of unprovoked stone throwing, challenging the police and being generally unruly in a mob is very high. That Hector Peterson was hit by a bullet not intended for him is also not surprising, as there was a

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<sup>175</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 96. The Cape Times, 1 March 1980, Sunday Tribune, 2 March 1980 and The Friend, 24 June 1980.

<sup>176</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 to the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1977 – Cillié Commission, Vol. 1, p. 73. The Star, 29 February 1980. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 1.



high possibility of random firing as opposed to targeted shooting in the ensuing commotion.

However, the Cillié Commission also found that the police had to bear collective responsibility for the first outbreak of violence in Soweto on 16 June 1976. The Commission found that, although the direct cause of the riots was the learners' organising an illegal mass protest march, the inability of police to anticipate the imminent rebellion on 16 June and to take counter measures, was a 'concurrent circumstance' causing unrest. The Commission stated that, while learners had been widely organising for at least three days, police first received intelligence of the planned protest march late on the afternoon of 15 June. At about 16:00, Major G.J. Viljoen, commanding officer at Jabulani Police Station, received information that learners at Naledi High School were going to protest the following day. At the same time, a Black lieutenant, unnamed in the report, told Colonel J.A Kleingeld, Commanding Officer at Orlando Police Station, of a rumour that learners were planning to hold a meeting at one of the high schools in Orlando. All this information, no matter how vague and incomplete, was never conveyed to the Divisional Commissioner or Headquarters. It was only at 07:45 on 16 June 1976 that Colonel Kleingeld told the men at his police station to get ready. Despite numerous cases of violent opposition that demonstrated growing tension, the police did not recognise the significance of the warning signals. The Commission concluded that the police were 'completely unprepared' when they received the first report of trouble and it added that, barring the police failing to anticipate unrest and to take counter measures, there was no acceptable evidence that police action was responsible for the further development of rioting or for rioting incidents.<sup>177</sup> The Minister of Police, Mr Louis le Grange, stated that the South African Police, like everyone else, had learnt from the Soweto experience. Speaking in the debate on the report of the Cillié Commission, Mr Le Grange said he disagreed with the Commission's finding that the police had to share responsibility for the outbreak of the riots.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 1 March 1980.

<sup>178</sup> The Citizen, 8 March 1980.

The finding of the Commission on the unpreparedness of the police, despite their intelligence on learners' plans three days before the riots, raised questions on the efficacy of police intelligence gathering mechanisms. That they had not taken seriously even the vague information received the previous day, illustrated their complacency and incompetence.

The Cillié Commission found no evidence that any action of the press was directly responsible for the Soweto unrest in 1976. The majority of leading articles and commentaries dealing with the unrest were marked by a sense of balance, impartiality and clear insight. This finding was in marked contrast with the attitude of the ex-Minister of Justice, Mr Jimmy Kruger, who was so certain that *The World* and *Weekend World* newspapers and their editor, Mr Percy Qoboza, were responsible for fomenting the unrest that he closed down *The World* and first questioned and then incarcerated the latter for more than five months without trial. After the Cillié Commission findings had exonerated the press, there were calls from particular sections of the media to revoke the orders banning certain newspapers. The general feeling was that these newspapers had been unfairly silenced.<sup>179</sup> The fact that, despite the Commission's exoneration of the press, *The World* had been shut down and its editor imprisoned, emphasised the irresponsibility and danger of acting impetuously in chaotic situations.

According to the Cillié Commission's Report, a total of 575 people died in the unrest that swept through various parts of South Africa from 16 June 1976 to 28 February 1977. Police estimated that 3 907 people were injured in the unrest, 2 389 of them by the police. It is worth noting that the Commission considered these figures as incomplete. The inaccuracy of these figures was compounded by the number of people treated by private doctors who did not keep records or those who did not seek medical aid. Of the people that were killed in the unrest, 494 were Black, 75 Coloured, five White and one Indian. A total of 451 died as a result of police action and 124 as a result of the action of others. Of the 575 who died, 258 were killed in Soweto. The Commission reported that 134 of the

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<sup>179</sup> *The Argus*, 5 March 1980 and *The Natal Witness*, 4 March 1980.

dead were under the age of 18 and 431 were over 18. The Commission indicated that it was confident that its figures were comprehensive.<sup>180</sup> It must be admitted that compiling a list of people killed must have been very difficult under the circumstances. There must have been people who died as a result of accidents or crimes that had nothing to do with the unrest. It seems a paradox that while the Commission was confident that its figures were comprehensive, it also considered them to be incomplete. The unrest, like all other upheavals, was chaotic. It would also be hard to distinguish between the people who died as a result of the learners' uprising and those who died as a result of criminal and other activities.

Whatever its shortcomings, the Report was a damning indictment of the effect of apartheid education, although Bantu Education itself and fundamental government policies were not considered as causes of the events. The Cillié Commission's Report, with its chronicle of disaster and tragedy, was undoubtedly one of the factors that persuaded the government that it was necessary to make some public response to the education crisis documented so fully in the report. On 13 June 1980, four years after the events, the Prime Minister announced in the House of Assembly that it had been decided to place the investigation totally in the hands of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which was to report to Cabinet within twelve months.<sup>181</sup> The decision to place the investigation totally in the hands of the HSRC, four years after the Soweto uprising, did not bode well for the decisiveness of the government on a matter so delicate.

On every incident of an outburst of Black violence, the government had appointed a commission of enquiry to investigate the cause. It had heard from the Wessels (Sharpeville), Diement (Langa), Snyman (University of the North and Paarl) and the Cillié (Soweto) Commissions. In every case the root cause of the problem had been apartheid policy. It was the policies of government that provided the fertile soil in which the seeds of unrest germinated and grew, but government would hardly ever admit this.

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<sup>180</sup> *The Star*, 29 February 1980. R.C. Lubisi, "The Quests for Free Education in South Africa: How Close is the Dream to the Reality?" Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture. Johannesburg, 17 June 2008, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup> K. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*, p. 151-152.

Instead it would blame agitators for fomenting anti-White sentiment.<sup>182</sup> Ironically one of the most notable features of the NP rule since 1948 had been the tendency to set up expensive and time consuming commissions and then ignore their findings. Had the government heeded the warnings of imminent violence that was conveyed by the Opposition and other concerned groups, the Soweto uprising need never have happened.

Karis and Gerhart contend that the Soweto uprising took both the rulers and the ruled by surprise and, by the time its course was run, left both sides with as many political dilemmas as before. Karis and Gerhart argue that the uprising deepened existing disagreements in the NP over how best to defend and legitimise Afrikaner power, and ultimately set the party on an uncertain course of reform which led to its eventual fall from power two decades later. Blacks were forced by the uprising to confront their failure to find a strategy for liberation, they emerged from the confrontations of 1976 with a deeper appreciation of the need for thorough political organisation.<sup>183</sup> It is not surprising that the South African history beyond the Soweto learners' uprising is punctuated by a continual interplay of actions and reactions that arose between the main protagonists. Each of the main political players in education were trying to claim their space and come with a solution to the challenges that were facing the country.

#### **4.4 The granting of 'independence' to homelands**

Under *The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959* the homelands were offered a form of internal self-government; and *The Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971* extended this concept to include the possibility of eventual 'independence.' *The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act, Act No. 26 of 1970* declared that all Blacks in South Africa were citizens of a homeland, whether they lived in one or not. All Blacks in a White area were therefore deemed to be migrants from Black areas, even if they had never been

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<sup>182</sup> S.M. Mahuma, *The Development of a Culture of Learning Among the Black People of South Africa: 1652-1998*. Unpublished Masters of Education Dissertation, University of South Africa, p. 82. *The Natal Witness*, 10 March 1980.

<sup>183</sup> T.G. Karis and G.M. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990*, p. 156.

there. This meant that Blacks whose homeland became 'independent' were deprived of their South African citizenship. The Black people of South Africa had never had the opportunity to vote on any of this legislation and the entire concept of *Bantu homelands* had been imposed on them by the White government.<sup>184</sup> The South African government, in an attempt to consolidate its position in the aftermath of the Soweto uprisings, pursued its long-standing policy of granting independence to homelands. This would push Black people into homelands where they could not press for claims to some rights, such as the right to equal education.

By the end of 1979, three of the Bantustans, the Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda were officially 'independent'. Although not recognised by any other country in the world, the South African government presented them as independent states with all the accoutrements of a president, parliament, flag and even a diplomatic service. This was supposedly a crowning achievement, a vindication of the Bantustan policy and a model for the future development of the other territories.<sup>185</sup> These false independences were not sustainable because the independent homelands still acquired their political mandates on serious political matters from the South African government. Even their education system continued to be controlled by South Africa. Their schools used the syllabus that was devised by the curriculum designers of the DET. The matriculants in these independent homelands wrote the same examinations as the Black learners in the urban areas, and their qualifications were certified by the South African Certification Council also. As such these machinations did not bring any thing substantive to the perceived

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<sup>184</sup> J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. R. Ainslie, *Children of Soweto*, pp. 20-22. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 10. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 322.

<sup>185</sup> M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, p. 148. B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 22. R.E. Gordon and C.J. Talbot, *From Dias to Vorster: Source Material on South African History (1488-1975)*, p. 442. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22. Venda. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venda](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venda)

independence. These artificial arrangements came at a great cost to the citizens of these independent homelands as they had little or no claim to the education rights outside their designated areas.

In 1974 the Transkei was set on the path of 'independence' with Chief Kaizer Matanzima's announcement, under pressure from the South African government, that he had "changed his mind," abandoning the position that independence was unthinkable unless the Bantustan was given more land. He said it would then take place within five years. Less than a year later the government had set the date for October 1976, reducing the transition from five years to two.<sup>186</sup> The speed with which the independence of the Transkei was concluded is indicative that the South African government was anxious to make the independence of the homelands a success. This would have far reaching implications for education for the people living in the Transkei.

The leadership of the Transkei had been pressing the demand for independence since 1944. The *Bhunga*<sup>187</sup> unanimously carried motions to this effect in 1946, 1948, 1952 and 1953. Then came a new constitution that held out a promise of Black control of the council system. Two years later the Bhunga agreed to accept the principle of Bantu Authorities. It was the view of the NP government that progress towards Black independence in the Transkei would accelerate similar movement in the other Reserves. Chiefs everywhere would clamour for more powers and for the replacement of White officials by Blacks. The chiefs would see this as greater opportunities for the employment of educated men and women in public services, commerce and industry and the subsequent anticipated rapid growth of a Black middle class.<sup>188</sup> The Transkei, as a

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<sup>186</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 22. J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, p. 372.

<sup>187</sup> The Transkeian Parliament was called the *Bhunga*.

<sup>188</sup> Verwoerd's Crown Colony: The Transkeian Scheme and the Future of the Chiefs, p. 4. *Fighting Talk*. Vol. 16, No. 2. March 1962. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 43. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22.

forerunner to independence, was to be made a success story and the envy of other homelands, facilitating the effort of the South African government to declare other homelands independent. Their education system, under an independent homeland administration, would be made to look like a great accomplishment.

The Bantustans had become essential catchment areas for people 'endorsed out' of the cities. The fact that, once a Bantustan became 'independent' those whom the government deemed to be its 'citizens' lost all rights to South African, provided the legal framework for a much more vigorous practice of influx control. In terms of *The Admission of Persons to the Republic Regulation Act, Act No. 59 of 1972*, all non-South African citizens, such as those deemed to be 'citizens' of 'independent' Bantustans, if found to be illegally resident in a city, would be subject to summary 'deportation' or imprisonment for six months without the option of a fine.<sup>189</sup> It is against the backdrop of being thus deprived of South African citizenship that many Black people were opposed to the homeland system, and worse still, to their 'independence.' The success of the government in implementing the independence of homelands would in future imply that Blacks would have no claim to socio-economic and political rights in urban areas, including the right to equal education. Blacks who designated homelands had accepted independence could not claim educational rights for their children in the urban centres.

An attempt by Mr Knowledge Guzana, leader of the opposition party, to make independence contingent on a referendum of all Transkeians was defeated; Chief Matanzima claimed that the elections of 1968 and 1973 had given his party a mandate to call for independence. This was despite the fact that his party had not received a majority of the vote, and that their strength had declined between the two elections. Mr Vasted Kobo, a spokesperson of the opposition Democratic Party, said that the independence plan could result in economic disaster at a time of an estimated unemployment figure of

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<sup>189</sup> E. Unterhalter, *Forced Removal: The Division, Segregation and Control of the People of South Africa*, p. 19. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 322.

half a million people. He added that the Transkei could not "afford to rely on guarantees given by White South Africa, because promises had been made in the past and nearly all of them had been broken."<sup>190</sup> Strong criticism of Chief Matanzima's decision to request 'independence' was also expressed by the other Bantustan leaders at a summit meeting hosted by Chief Matanzima himself in Umtata, on the grounds that he was breaking their united bargaining front. They had agreed that if any Bantustan leader wanted to seek independence, they would decide on their course of action in consultation.<sup>191</sup> Chief Matanzima had failed to do this. He claimed that independence would make no difference to people in the Transkei, or its nominal 'citizens' outside:

The only practical difference independence will make to the average Transkei citizen is that they will carry Transkei passports instead of Republican passes.<sup>192</sup>

Needless to say, this was a very superficial analysis of a decision that had far-reaching implications. The advice of other homeland leaders, who were unfortunately also assisting the South African government in its policy of separate development, was more considered and prudent. The other homeland leaders and the leaders of the opposition, like Guzana and Kobo, must have realised how limiting independence would be on the educational prospects of the learners whose assigned homeland had opted for independence, since they would not have free access to educational amenities in the urban areas.

On 26 October 1976, the independence ceremonies took place in the face of a total international boycott; even the Rhodesian government had failed to send a representative. Eight of the other nine Bantustans ignored the occasion. *The London Times* reported,

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<sup>190</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 23.

<sup>191</sup> M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa*, p.

149. B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 23.

<sup>192</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 23.



“Transkei is destined to remain a pariah among nations.”<sup>193</sup> Most of the official opposition were detained before the ceremony, as were two internationally known actors, John Kani and Winston Ntshona. A few days before independence, at least 10 000 Basotho living in some areas attached to the Transkei, the Glen Grey and Herschel Districts, under the leadership of Malefane and Tseki, at the last minute fled in panic at the prospect of living under the Transkei establishment. Leaders of the minuscule QwaQwa Bantustan, officially designated for the Basotho, called for a national day of mourning for Transkei’s Independence Day.<sup>194</sup> According to Mokoena the leaders of QwaQwa saw the route that the Transkei had taken as suicidal, and they would not celebrate something that they did not support. The leadership of QwaQwa had decided that their homeland should remain an integral part of South Africa as this homeland did not have land and economic resources to sustain independence. As such their homeland would be compelled to rely on Pretoria based leadership for financial sustainability for an independent QwaQwa. This to them would not be independence.<sup>195</sup> The lack of support for Transkei’s independence by other countries and homelands was indicative of the seriousness with which they viewed the ill-considered decision of the Transkeian and South African government leaders. The arrest of opposition leaders and the flight of the Basotho living in the Transkei demonstrate how unpopular the decision was, and how repressive the authorities were towards popular and progressive political viewpoints. The escape of the people of Glen Grey and Herschel disrupted education in the area. This would leave children without proper education supervision, where they were not taken along during the getaway. Those that left with the parents had their schooling programmes disrupted at a critical time in the year when the end of the year examinations were about to commence.

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<sup>193</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa’s Bantustans*, p. 23. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 43.

<sup>194</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Secretary General of the Dikwankwetla Party of South Africa and Minister of Education in the QwaQwa Homeland. Tseseng Village, QwaQwa, 6 October 2008.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

When the Transkei became 'independent', it launched a massive public relations campaign in favour of international recognition as a solution to its pariah status. The campaign was backed with all the resources of South Africa's Department of Information whose advertising campaign in international newspapers, promoting Transkei 'independence', cost nearly R500 000. In pursuit of the elusive goal of international respectability, hundreds of thousands of rand were spent directly from the Transkei's own budget on a handful of overseas agents. Despite all this effort and expense, and considerable success in gaining a hearing for the Transkei in the world's press through favourable comment and advertisements, along with extensive foreign travel by representatives of the Transkei, the prospect of any country recognising it as an independent state seemed to become even more remote.<sup>196</sup> It was unfortunate that the government was willing to spend so much money to propagate an unpopular political decision; the money could have been used to improve the education of the Black people of South Africa. Spending all this money on misinformation may be regarded as fruitless expenditure as it would not yield the desired results, either domestically or internationally.

Bantustan politicians were somewhat wary of accepting independence as it was an irrevocable step and one that was not conducive to good relations with their people. As late as 1974 the Bophuthatswana government made it clear that it would not accept independence until a claim for more land had been met. Following a meeting of all except the Transkei in 1976, they issued a joint statement to the effect that, with the exception of Bophuthatswana, the leaders wished to reiterate that they had no intention whatsoever of opting for so-called independence, as they did not want to abdicate their birthright as South Africans nor forfeit their share of education, the economy and wealth they had jointly built. This was by no means the end of the debate. Three months later, Mr A.J. Raubenheimer, Minister of Water Affairs, told a NP meeting that the South African government would cut off financial aid to those Bantustans that did not ask for independence. Since about 80% of the Bantustans' budgets derived directly from

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<sup>196</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, pp. 23-24. K. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*, p. 132.

Pretoria, the threat was serious.<sup>197</sup> The government had to use some menacing tactics and strategies to ensure that other homelands followed the Transkei. Although there were other options for non-repressive approaches to persuade homeland leaders to accept independence, the South African government did not find it appropriate to follow non-threatening persuasion.

Independence was imposed on Bophuthatswana and all Blacks officially classified Tswana despite massive rejection of the idea. The Black People's Convention (BPC) met with ten other legal Black organisations at Hammanskraal a few months before the threatened independence of Bophuthatswana, and resolved to launch a campaign against Bantustans, particularly the proposed independence of Bophuthatswana. They followed up with an open letter, the first of its kind, to Chief Lucas Mangope,<sup>198</sup> leader of Bophuthatswana, appealing to him not to negotiate with the South African government for independence.<sup>199</sup> The letter challenged him to put the issue involved to the people in a referendum, otherwise:

... you and the people like you, like Matanzima, are being used as pawns in the white man's intention of the continuation of the status quo in our country, by the use of power, and power only. You will be overtaken by the forces of justice and freedom, which have never been quenched in the hearts of the black people of South Africa.<sup>200</sup>

The intractable stance of the South African government on the acceptance of independence by Bophuthatswana, instigated dissension in the homeland. Where Mangope had previously been in agreement with his people on independence, he now found himself at loggerheads with them. The people who opposed Mangope's

<sup>197</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 33.

<sup>198</sup> Lucas Manyane Mangope. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>199</sup> A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 43.

<sup>200</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 27. South Africa: Homeland Militaries. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html), p. 2.

repositioning to independence must have considered the consequences of losing their South African citizenship and the claim to the educational rights in South Africa.

The attitude of the Bophuthatswana government began to change; the precondition of more land before independence was dropped. Chief Lucas Mangope indicated that he was convinced that independence for 'his country' would give him more leverage in his quest for more land, as well as a satisfactory consolidation of his territory. He also believed that an independent Bophuthatswana would not be isolated from the rest of South Africa but would use its new position to press the Republic of South Africa to improve conditions, both socio-economic and general, for the Tswana and other Blacks.<sup>201</sup> The first major step in mobilizing support for independence was a meeting of chiefs and headmen in Mafikeng on 4 November 1975 where an overwhelming majority voted in favour of sovereign independence. Four days later, all 400 delegates at a national congress of the ruling Bophuthatswana Democratic Party (BDP) voted in favour of independence. Ten days later the proposals for independence were laid before a special session of the Legislative Assembly. A motion was introduced asking that the Cabinet of Bophuthatswana be given a mandate to initiate negotiations on independence with the government of South Africa.<sup>202</sup> The change in the attitude of the Bophuthatswana government and the consultations made with the governance structures of the homeland, did not in any way legitimise the independence of Bophuthatswana in the eyes of the South Africans who were opposed to the independence of homelands.

The South African Institute of Race Relations, a respectable body with a mainly White membership, issued an unusually strong statement on the issue, calling on Mangope and the South African government to "halt all plans for the independence of Bophuthatswana until such time as the future direction of the whole country could be decided by truly

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<sup>201</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and Later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008. B. Norman-Smith, The Republic of Bophuthatswana, p. 204. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 148.

<sup>202</sup> B. Norman-Smith, The Republic of Bophuthatswana, p. 204. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, p. 148.

democratic processes.” At about the same time, the SACC attacked the Bophuthatswana move and said that independence would deprive Bantustan’s residents of their “basic rights to share in the political, economic and social ordering of life in South Africa.”<sup>203</sup> The Bophuthatswana National Seopesengwe Party (BNSP), under the leadership of Chief Maseloane, opposed all moves towards independence from the outset. They walked out of the Legislative Assembly when a mandate was asked to commence negotiations with South Africa. Later the opposition called for a referendum to give the people an opportunity to decide whether they wanted independence or not. The BNSP argued that after independence, Bophuthatswana would be subjected to the South African government and therefore rejected independence in favour of communal development of Black and White in South Africa as a whole.<sup>204</sup> Opposition to the independence of Bophuthatswana did not deter the authorities in either South Africa or Bophuthatswana in their resolve to make the homeland independent. From this it may be deduced that the ‘success’ of the Transkei in attaining independence made the independence option attractive to the government of Bophuthatswana. It is doubtful whether the political leadership of Bophuthatswana considered the experiences of the Transkeians in education since they opted for independence.

According to Rogers and Maele this broad opposition had no effect on the independence plans, nor did the very low turn-out for elections immediately beforehand. Only about 375 000 of the more than one million eligible voters registered, and of those only half turned out to vote. The most direct form of opposition was violence; the proposed Bophuthatswana Legislative Assembly in Mafikeng was burnt to the ground in mass demonstrations a year before independence, and Mangope’s own son was among those

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<sup>203</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa’s Bantustans*, p. 27.

<sup>204</sup> J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. B. Norman-Smith, *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, p. 205. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and Later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008.

arrested. However, Chief Mangope remained steadfast in his resolve.<sup>205</sup>

Arsonists can destroy buildings, but they will not destroy the will and courage of the Tswana people and their leaders to continue on their present political path.<sup>206</sup>

The people who actively and passively opposed the independence of Bophuthatswana realised that their citizen rights, like access to education amenities in South Africa, would be lost. The resolute position of Chief Mangope, and his support from the Republic of South Africa, thwarted the plans of those opposed to independence. His determination to press ahead with independence was evident in the arrest of his own son who must have been among those opposed to independence.

The passing of *The Status of Bophuthatswana Act, No 89 of 1977* by the South African Parliament, which provided, *inter alia*, for the transfer of sovereignty from South Africa to Bophuthatswana, sealed the fate of Tswana-speaking people living in both urban and rural areas in South Africa.<sup>207</sup> On 6 December 1977 Bophuthatswana celebrated its independence in Mmabatho,<sup>208</sup> an instant capital, created in six months, just outside Mafikeng. Its main features on independence were a red and yellow Parliament Building, a mansion for Mangope, complete with bullet-proof windows and steel-lined walls, a luxury hotel with a casino, a garage and a stadium constructed of scaffolding, all at

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<sup>205</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 27. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and Later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008.

<sup>206</sup> B. Norman-Smith, *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, p. 205.

<sup>207</sup> K. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*, p. 132. B. Norman-Smith, *The Republic of Bophuthatswana*, p. 205. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22. A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 43.

<sup>208</sup> *Mmabatho* means 'Mother of the People'.

various stages of construction.<sup>209</sup> The leaders of Venda and the Ciskei were the only Bantustan representatives to attend the Bophuthatswana celebrations. The Department of Information in South Africa spent considerable sums on the travel and accommodation costs of foreign visitors to the independence event. Many learners and teachers boycotted the event; some found it repulsive that a feast should be prepared in their midst while they were mourning Steve Biko's<sup>210</sup> death in detention. Urban Tswana-speaking people complained that they had not been informed of independence or its consequences, let alone consulted, although they were being forced to become citizens of the newly independent Bantustan.<sup>211</sup> The political consciousness of learners at the time dictated that they should not support the Bophuthatswana independence celebrations. That the celebrations happened at the time when South Africa was mourning the death of Steve Biko seemed to suggest that Black South Africans were not united in the fight for a united and free South Africa. The money that was spent on the amenities that symbolised independence and the cash used on the travelling and accommodation of guests could have been used to improve education in South Africa.

<sup>209</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and Later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008. J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, pp. 28-29. *The Birth of a Nation, Bophuthatswana Independence*, 6 December 1977. Private Collection of Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Minister of Education, QwaQwa Homeland. *A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2.

<sup>210</sup> Steven Biko. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>211</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and Currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, pp. 28-29. *The Birth of a Nation, Bophuthatswana Independence*, 6 December 1977. Private Collection of Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Minister of Education, QwaQwa Homeland. *A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. R.T.H. Dolamo, *Using Political Power to Serve Rather than to Dominate*. CTC Bulletin. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm](http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm) *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 322. J. Steyn, *Managing Change in South Africa*, p. 9. L.M. Mangope, *A Place for All*, p. 35.

The Republic of South Africa consisted of four provinces. The new 'Republic of Bophuthatswana' consisted of about eight pieces of territory, with undefined borders in a state of continual change, spread over three of the provinces, the Cape, Transvaal and Orange Free State.<sup>212</sup> The fact that the independent Bophuthatswana consisted of eight pieces of territory spread over three provinces made the administration of education complicated. Officials would have to move into South Africa and back into the Bophuthatswana territory several times in order for them to access circuit offices and schools belonging to the Bophuthatswana Department of Education. This is by any standards abnormal for a country that claims to be independent.

In his independence celebration speech, Mangope promised his people that in an independent Bophuthatswana there would be no room for Bantu Education. He promised the people of Bophuthatswana that the first major programme of reform after independence would be in the 'painfully troubled field of education.' The post-independence priorities were to replace Bantu Education and improve the quantity and quality of schooling; education was to be geared to meet the manpower requirements needed to assist in the future development and modernisation of Bophuthatswana. He indicated that a commission was already hard at work to prepare a blue-print for educating the children of Bophuthatswana.<sup>213</sup> Bophuthatswana schools continued to use the syllabus planned by the curriculum designers of the Department of Bantu Education and its successor, the DET.

According to the erstwhile Bophuthatswana administration, there was good progress in education. Total learner enrolment increased from some 380 000 in 1976 to nearly 580 000 in 1990. In that year, the average number of learners per teacher was 33,1 in primary schools and 29,9 in high schools. In 1991, the pass rate for the matriculation examination

<sup>212</sup> B. Rogers, *Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans*, p. 26. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2.

<sup>213</sup> L.M. Mangope, *A Place for All*, p. 40. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and Later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008. F. de Clercq, High-skilled Manpower, Education and Work in Bophuthatswana. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, *Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration*, p. 110.



was 65,6 percent. By contrast, the matric pass rate in the schools in South Africa administered by the DET was less than 40 percent.<sup>214</sup> According to Dikgole, Maele and Jeffery the Bophuthatswana administration attributed its good education results, particularly for matric, to the stability which the territory experienced. Dikgole, Maele and Jeffery argue that whereas school boycotts had become endemic in many areas in South Africa, including the Pretoria metropolis neighbouring parts of the territory, normal schooling continued in Bophuthatswana. As a result, the stability of Bophuthatswana schools attracted great number of learners from South Africa, placing considerable strain on Bophuthatswana's limited resources.<sup>215</sup> Stability and discipline in education produces good academic results. Bophuthatswana is commended for this achievement. The question arises, however, whether the stability and discipline in the Bophuthatswana education thrived in an environment of democracy or repression. The stability that comes as a result of suppressive measures is not good for an educational environment, as children indirectly learn that order can only be maintained through authoritarian methods.

Critics of the Bophuthatswana homeland government charged that education was elitist and beyond the means of the majority of residents. The members of the Mafikeng Branch of Lawyers for Human Rights argued that there was 'gross misallocation' of education funds, with far too much emphasis being placed on the prestige schools in Mmabatho. Most perturbing in this regard was the International School, intended to attract learners from all parts of Africa, built at a cost of some R60 million and funded annually at the rate of R6 million to R11 million to defray running costs. By contrast, schools in other

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<sup>214</sup> A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 27. Survey of Race Relations in South Africa. South African Institute of Race Relations, 1992, p. 482.

<sup>215</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Confidence Dikgole, Former Student of Mmabatho High School and Currently a Manager at Umalusi Quality Assurance Council for General and Further Education and Training. Pretoria, 30 June 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Merriam Maele, Retired Inspector of Schools in the Orange Free State and the Northern Cape and Later Political Leader of the United Christian Democratic Party. Atamelang (North West), 29 June 2008. A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 27. Survey of Race Relations in South Africa. South African Institute of Race Relations, 1992, p. 482.

parts of Bophuthatswana were dilapidated.<sup>216</sup> The creation of social stratification in education in Bophuthatswana was a travesty of justice. This is compounded by the fact that Mangope had made a commitment to the people of Bophuthatswana that with the independence of Bophuthatswana he was going to eradicate Bantu Education. If the creation of elite schools 'in the sea of poverty' in Bophuthatswana was what Mangope meant with the elimination of Bantu Education, then this was mockery to his constituency.

In brief, it is clear that, particularly after 1970, hundreds of thousands of Blacks in urban areas were subjected to relocation. The granting of 'independence' to Bophuthatswana had an impact on the settlement of Basotho people in Thaba 'Nchu,<sup>217</sup> which was part of Bophuthatswana. In the Free State Sesotho-speaking people were relocated to QwaQwa,<sup>218</sup> but many from the central and southern Free State initially went to Thaba 'Nchu. Here they were persecuted by the Bophuthatswana authorities, particularly after 'independence'; the logic of ethnic nationalism against 'outsiders' ruled and it

<sup>216</sup> A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 27. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mrs Confidence Dikgole, Former Student of Mmabatho High School and Currently a Manager at Umalusi Quality Assurance Council for General and Further Education and Training. Pretoria, 30 June 2008. F. de Clercq, *High-skilled Manpower, Education and Work in Bophuthatswana*. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, *Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration*, p. 110.

<sup>217</sup> Thaba 'Nchu was the stronghold of the Barolong Boo-Seleka tribe who migrated there in the 1830s from Phitsana. This tribe was led by Chief Moroka who negotiated with and was given permission to settle in Thaba 'Nchu by Chief Moshoeshoe. Tribal authorities continued to be recognised in the Thaba 'Nchu area. In 1961 the South African government instituted a process of constitutional development by establishing the Tswana territorial authority. Self-governing status was conferred in June 1972 with the inauguration of the Bophuthatswana legislative assembly and gained independence in December 1977 under the leadership of Dr LM Mangope. See C. Twala and L. Barnard, *The Incorporation of Botshabelo into the Former QwaQwa Homeland: A Logical Consequence of the Apartheid System?* *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 31, No. 1, June 2006, pp. 162-163.

<sup>218</sup> QwaQwa was formerly the Witsieshoek reserve situated in the eastern part of the Free State province, at the juncture of Lesotho, Natal and the Free State. Two tribal authorities, namely the Bakwena and Batlokwa tribes, were established in the area while it was still a reserve in 1953. In line with the South African government's homeland policy, QwaQwa was proclaimed a self-governing territory for the Basotho on 25 October 1974. See M.S. Rakometsi, *The Witsieshoek Rebellion (1940-1950): A Community in Crisis*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1992, pp. 7, 17 and 22; and C. Twala and L. Barnard, *The Incorporation of Botshabelo into the Former QwaQwa Homeland: A Logical Consequence of the Apartheid System?* *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 31, No. 1, June 2006, p. 162.

precipitated the establishment of Onverwacht, later called Botshabelo,<sup>219</sup> in 1979.<sup>220</sup> With the independence of homelands, South Africa was 'balkanised' along racial lines. The Basotho could not settle in Bophuthatswana territory as it was meant for the Batswana only. This ethnic segregation disrupted education as Basotho learners had to leave schools in Thaba 'Nchu.

The creation of Botshabelo led to unrests in the area as the people opposed the notion of incorporation into the Basotho homeland of QwaQwa. Pretoria officials had learned to treat the proposed incorporation as a most sensitive issue because of the events that surrounded the incorporation of Moutse. When Moutse was incorporated against the residents' will into the central Transvaal Bantustan of KwaNdebele in 1986, more than 160 people were killed in clashes among residents, vigilantes and security forces. Despite warnings of bloodshed as the result of the incorporation of Moutse, Pretoria went ahead and excluded 110 000 mainly Sepedi-speaking people from South Africa, handing them over to the undeveloped, overcrowded Ndebele ethnic unit. And, in spite of the KwaNdebele legislative assembly being forced by popular pressure to abandon its plan for 'independence' in 1986, officials and members of the assembly were still determined to become 'independent.'<sup>221</sup> Bophuthatswana's independence created a similarly explosive situation in the Free State and government had to develop strategies for managing the situation in Botshabelo. For some time Basotho learners did not know whether they belong to the DET which controlled schools in Botshabelo, after being removed from the schools managed by the Bophuthatswana Department of Education; or to the QwaQwa Department of Education and Culture which wanted to control the Botshabelo schools. Trying to control education along ethnic lines proved politically horrendous.

<sup>219</sup> Botshabelo means a place of refuge. It was so called because it provided a safe haven for the Basotho who were persecuted by the Batswana in Thaba 'Nchu. See Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Secretary General of the Dikwankwetla Party of South Africa and Minister of Education in the QwaQwa Homeland. Tseseng Village, QwaQwa, 6 October 2008.

<sup>220</sup> J. Sharp, Transition and the Problem of Survival: Relocation in QwaQwa. *Africa Seminar*. Centre for African Studies, 1983, p. 3. C. Twala and L. Barnard, The Incorporation of Botshabelo into the Former QwaQwa Homeland: A Logical Consequence of the Apartheid System? *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 31, No. 1, June 2006, p. 162.

<sup>221</sup> Botshabelo: Incorporation Now, Independence Next? *National Committee Against Removals*, p. 1.

On 3 February 1987 the Ministers of Constitutional Development and Planning, Chris Heunis, and Education and Development Aid, Gerrit Viljoen, and the Chief Minister of QwaQwa, T.K. Mopeli,<sup>222</sup> issued a press statement denying rumours in the Botshabelo area that Botshabelo was allegedly going to be incorporated into QwaQwa on 18 February 1987. On 18 February it was reported that Minister Heunis had confirmed in Parliament that Botshabelo would be incorporated into QwaQwa. Confusion and rumours spread.<sup>223</sup> Obviously there was confusion among Botshabelo residents on the implications of incorporation for them. The fact that some homelands were opting for 'independence' added further confusion to this situation. They did not understand the administrative implications of Pretoria and QwaQwa; they asked themselves what the connection was between incorporation and 'independence.' The situation in Botshabelo created an environment of suspicion that threatened years of peace among the Basotho and Batswana in the Free State. Unfortunately, this also created confusion in education.

According to Mokoena, despite peaceful co-existence over many years, the Batswana and Basotho found themselves in conflict as a result of the establishment of the 'independent state' of Bophuthatswana. The taking of 'independence' by one group meant that some had more access to resources than others, purely because of their ethnic classification. For example, Basotho children could not attend schools in Thaba 'Nchu which was part of Bophuthatswana. Mokoena says the Basotho were labelled 'foreigners' in the newly established 'independent state' and severely harassed by the Bophuthatswana police.<sup>224</sup> Pretoria officials intervened as 'impartial outsiders' in this case, which was portrayed as 'inter-tribal' conflict and they presented the only option permissible within the apartheid policy, namely the establishment of a piece of a Bantustan for the Basotho. Pretoria's

<sup>222</sup> S.V. Hayes, *Who's Who of Southern Africa, 1990-1991*, p. 376.

<sup>223</sup> Botshabelo: Incorporation Now, Independence Next? *National Committee Against Removals*, p. 1. C. Twala and L. Barnard, The Incorporation of Botshabelo into the Former QwaQwa Homeland: A Logical Consequence of the Apartheid System? *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 31, No. 1, June 200, p. 163.

<sup>224</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Secretary General of the Dikwankwela Party of South Africa and Minister of Education in the QwaQwa Homeland. Tseseng Village, QwaQwa, 6 October 2008. Botshabelo: Incorporation Now, Independence Next? *National Committee Against Removals*, p. 1.

solution to the problem was further to divide people and created Botshabelo, which would ultimately be incorporated into QwaQwa. Botshabelo reflected the mainstay of apartheid policy, influx control and its successor, 'orderly urbanisation.'<sup>225</sup> Granting independence to Bophuthatswana necessitated the further advancement and expansion of homeland policy. The fact that the Basotho could not live in Thaba 'Nchu meant that makeshift arrangements had to be made in Botshabelo. Provisional arrangements had to be made in education also.

Mokoena contends that this created confusion among the teachers, some of whom resigned their teaching posts in Botshabelo out of fear of being swallowed into QwaQwa with the incorporation, and opted for appointment at schools under the Department of Education and Training. The QwaQwa government in turn encouraged teachers in QwaQwa to take up teaching posts in Botshabelo. This was intended to consolidate the position of the Pretoria and QwaQwa authorities over the Botshabelo incorporation. At some point the teachers in Botshabelo were not sure whether they were employed by the DET or by the QwaQwa Department of Education and Culture. The move to incorporate Botshabelo into the QwaQwa homeland was thwarted by the resentment of some Botshabelo residents who won the High Court case that ruled against the incorporation of Botshabelo into QwaQwa.<sup>226</sup> The fact that at some point the teachers at Botshabelo were not sure who their employer was shows the extent to which attempts to impose the incorporation of Botshabelo into QwaQwa had created confusion in education. That some teachers abandoned their teaching posts in Botshabelo out of resentment to the notion of being associated with a homeland shows how controversial the homeland system was in the eyes of some Black South Africans.

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<sup>225</sup> Botshabelo: Incorporation Now, Independence Next? National Committee Against Removals, p. 1. C. Twala and L. Barnard, The Incorporation of Botshabelo into the Former QwaQwa Homeland: A Logical Consequence of the Apartheid System? Journal for Contemporary History. University of the Free State, Vol. 31, No. 1, June 2006, pp. 164-166.

<sup>226</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Secretary General of the Dikwankwetla Party of South Africa and Minister of Education in the QwaQwa Homeland. Tseseng Village, QwaQwa, 6 October 2008.

The next homeland to deal with the challenges of independence after Bophuthatswana was the Venda, surrounded by the Transvaal. It adjoins the Kruger National Park in the east and Gazankulu in the south, while a narrow strip of land in the north separates it from the border of Zimbabwe. It was at a distance of about 450 km north of Johannesburg.<sup>227</sup> The Venda Bantustan became 'independent' on 13 September 1979.<sup>228</sup> A month earlier a group of journalists was taken on a tour of the territory, where they saw evidence of massive and rapid construction work, including a parliament building costing R5 million, a training school for police, army and prison officers, a large stadium for independence celebrations and residences for Cabinet Ministers and civil servants. When Venda gained 'independence' the South Africans made little attempt to promote the idea as they had with the Transkei and Bophuthatswana. Venda's independence took place despite the ruling party having lost the 1978 elections to the opposition, retaining power only through nominated members and South African support. On 30 August 1978 the South African Minister of Manpower Utilisation, in a move designed to consolidate Mphahlele's tribal and political dominance, installed Chief Minister Patrick Mphahlele<sup>229</sup> as Paramount Chief of Venda. Thousands of residents were accommodated in tents for the independence ceremonies that culminated in a 100-gun salute as State President Viljoen conferred Venda's new status at a midnight ceremony. The following morning the stadium was found to be strewn with pamphlets issued by the ANC denouncing the Bantustan.<sup>230</sup> Venda as the third homeland to be granted independence, revealed the unwavering stance of the South African government to pursue the policy of independent homelands despite its rejection by the citizens of South Africa. The fact that huge

<sup>227</sup> Venda in Brief. Publication Division, Republic of Venda. Private Collection of Dr R. Ndou, Former Ambassador of the Republic of Venda in South Africa. R.E. Gordon and C.J. Talbot, From Dias to Vorster: Source Material on South African History (1488-1975), p. 442. Venda. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venda](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venda)

<sup>228</sup> K. Maguire, Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk, p. 22. B. Rogers, Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans, p. 32. J. Seroto, The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. Venda. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venda](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venda)

<sup>229</sup> Patrick Mphahlele. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>230</sup> B. Rogers, Divide and Rule: South Africa's Bantustans, p. 32. J. Seroto, The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135. South Africa: Homeland Militaries. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html), pp. 2-3.

amounts of money were spent on duplicate infrastructure to facilitate false independence at the time when Black education was under funded in South Africa is worrying.

The ANC was opposed to the Bantustan policy; granting of independence to these homelands was viewed even more seriously. The Freedom Charter categorically states that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it."<sup>231</sup> The ANC argued that South Africa belongs to all its inhabitants and no one has the right to balkanise it. While the Bantustans continued to serve the political purpose of controlling the rural population, they acquired new roles with 'independence' and 'self-rule.' They featured centrally in attempts to decentralise the economy and establish regional growth and new urban areas. Politically their 'independence' became the façade behind which the central government shed its responsibility for the political aspirations of millions of citizens, then deemed 'citizens' of 'independent' states. The government used this fiction to try to justify the denial of political rights, freedom of movement, access to education and underdevelopment. The Bantustans, whether 'self-governing' or 'independent', remained financially and administratively and militarily dependent on Pretoria.<sup>232</sup> Each of the nominally independent homelands; namely, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, maintained small defense forces that were effectively under the South African Defence Force control, despite each government's claim to national sovereignty.<sup>233</sup> Black South Africans could not claim any right to equal education in the urban areas without being reminded that they had that right guaranteed in the homelands.

<sup>231</sup> Freedom Charter of Congress of the People, June 26 1955. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, United Democratic Front Collection, MCH 76: 5. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, pp. 62-64.

<sup>232</sup> E. Unterhalter, Forced Removal: The Division, Segregation and Control of the People of South Africa, p. 24. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa, p. 322.

<sup>233</sup> South Africa: Homeland Militaries. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html), p. 1. F. de Clercq, High-skilled Manpower, Education and Work in Bophuthatswana. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 111. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr John Pampallis, a Former Teacher at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO) and currently Director of Centre for Education Policy Development. Braamfontein, 21 August 2008.

The homelands included none of the industrialised areas of South Africa. Apart from large platinum deposits in Bophuthatswana, they depended on income from migrant labour and on direct grants from the South African government. Even the 'independent' homelands depended on grants from Pretoria. More than 50% of 'homeland citizens' were in fact living in White South Africa and, of those resident in the homelands, more than 40% of the economically active men were mostly absent, working as migrants in 'White areas'. A study on the Transkei in 1978 found that 67% of all households were headed permanently by women; more than 70% of all families earned less than R600 annually; nearly 7% had no cash income whatever; and only 8,4% produced enough food to feed their families every year.<sup>234</sup> When residents of independent homelands demanded education rights in the urban areas they were reminded that the funding for their education had been sent to their homeland through the grant from the South African government, as such there would be no budget to cater for their educational needs in the urban centres.

Upon independence on 13 September 1979, the Venda Department of Education was established with the purpose of catering for the education and training needs of Vhavenda children and citizens, preserving their cultural heritage and fostering their cultural development. A Commission of Inquiry into the system of education in Venda was instituted in May 1981. This Commission submitted its report to the government of Venda in October 1982 and it was accepted with minor amendments by the National Assembly of the Republic of Venda in 1983. The Department of Education established the University of Venda in 1981 with 186 students. It was regarded as a tangible symbol of independent statehood and advancement on the road to progress.<sup>235</sup> The University was to develop civil servants who would manage the Venda civil service. With the creation of the homeland system, South Africa would have independent education departments for every homeland. This resulted in poor service delivery through duplication and poor

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<sup>234</sup> R. Ainslie, *Children of Soweto*, p. 22.

<sup>235</sup> Venda on the Move. Department of Information and Broadcasting, Republic of Venda. Private Collection of Dr R. Ndou, Former Ambassador of the Republic of Venda in South Africa. J. Seroto, *The Impact of South African Legislation (1948-2004) on Black Education in Rural Areas: A Historical Educational Perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, p. 135.



planning. The money spent on a Commission of Enquiry into the system of education in Venda was fruitless expenditure as all the independent homelands continued to get their directives on educational matters from the DET. The findings and recommendations of the commission would add very little value, if any, to education in Venda. The money spent on this commission could have been spent on a worthwhile project in Black education.

The Ciskei, designated for Xhosa-speaking people, was the last homeland to be granted independence by South Africa on 4 December 1981.<sup>236</sup> It bordered the Indian Ocean on the south-east and was bounded by the Republic of South Africa on the south-west, north-west and north-east. In 1961 Ciskei became a separate administrative territory and in 1972 was declared 'self-governing'. During the 1970s Xhosa-speaking people were relocated to this homeland. Interestingly, among the usual pressure groups that were always opposing the independence of homelands, the Ciskeians independence was also opposed by the Transkei government as it divided the Xhosa people of Ciskei and Transkei.<sup>237</sup> The two homelands were divided by a narrow strip of land containing the towns of East London and King William's Town, where many of the inhabitants of Ciskei worked. The Van Der Walt Commission on Bantustan land consolidation recommended that King William's Town be included in Ciskei, but the South African government ignored the advice after a referendum among the town's White voters had overwhelmingly rejected cession. Subsequent to the Ciskei's gaining independence from

<sup>236</sup> K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22. Ciskei, South African Political Geography. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopaedia/C/Ciskei.html>. Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei>.

<sup>237</sup> Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei) K. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*, p. 127. South Africa: Homeland Militaries. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html), p. 2. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 10.

South Africa in 1981, its residents' South African citizenship was revoked.<sup>238</sup> Ciskei, like all the other homelands, was not recognised as an independent nation by the international community. They were regarded as South African puppets and they failed to gain membership of any major international organisation.<sup>239</sup> Ciskei had a succession of capitals during its brief existence. Originally, Zwelitsha served as the capital with Alice anticipated as eventually becoming the region's capital. However, it was Bisho that became the capital until the Ciskei's reintegration into South Africa.<sup>240</sup> The abrogation of South African citizenship was a strategy to exclude South African Blacks from political claim to the rest of South Africa. The fact that the Transkei and the Ciskei were so close to one another but their respective citizens could not have access to the education facilities in another territory was a serious impediment to progress. This is worsened by the fact that the two homelands were inhabited by the Xhosa speaking people. They could not freely access educational facilities in the narrow piece of land containing King William's Town and East London because they were deemed to be in the White areas. This was an obstruction to education.

Giliomee and Mbenga argue that as with the other homelands, the driving force behind Ciskei's independence had been South Africa's apartheid regime that wanted to deprive large sections of its Black population of their South African citizenship.<sup>241</sup> Both economically and politically, the Ciskei was dependent on South Africa. The population

<sup>238</sup> Ciskei, South African Political Geography. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopaedia/C/Ciskei.html>. Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei>. K. Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*, p. 127. South Africa: Homeland Militaries. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html](http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12196.html), p. 2. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 10. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 322. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 22. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 44.

<sup>239</sup> History of Ciskei 1961-1994. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.

<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/southafrica/ciskei.html>.

<sup>240</sup> Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei>.

<sup>241</sup> H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, p. 373.

of Ciskei at independence was about 660 000, but a further 1,4 million Blacks were deprived of South African citizenship and declared Ciskei nationals, although permanently resident in the Republic of South Africa.<sup>242</sup>

In July 1983 President Sebe curtailed a visit to Israel, following rumours that an attempted coup was being planned against him in Ciskei. On his return to the homeland, he accused his brothers, General Charles Sebe, then Head of the Ciskei Central Intelligence Service (CIS) and Security, and Namba Sebe, then Minister of Transport, of plotting against him, and both were arrested.<sup>243</sup> Sebe was deposed in 1990 by Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, who ruled as a dictator despite an initial promise of a swift return to civilian rule.<sup>244</sup> Ciskei had turned into a comic story amidst the many educational challenges that needed serious and urgent attention. The alleged plan of a coup shows how unstable the independent homelands were. Needless to say, this instability would negatively affect all the aspect of civil life, including education, in the territory.

Economically, Ciskei had limited natural resources and relied on earnings of migrant labourers in South Africa for 65 percent of its national income. At independence South Africa provided 77 percent of the Ciskei government's revenue in direct aid. The dry climate made agriculture difficult and the area was not self-sufficient in food, although pineapples were grown quite successfully.<sup>245</sup> These economic challenges would affect any prospects of running an effective education system in the territory. That is why it was imperative for the South African government to give substantial support to the area.

<sup>242</sup> History of Ciskei 1961-1994. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.

<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/southafrica/ciskei.html>. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 2. The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, The Soweto Uprising. *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 322.

<sup>243</sup> History of Ciskei 1961-1994. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.

<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/southafrica/ciskei.html>.

<sup>244</sup> S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 45. Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei), p. 2.

<sup>245</sup> Ciskei. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei), p. 2.

Without such support it might have been difficult to sustain the homeland's social responsibility programmes like education.

Granting independence to homelands was a state strategy to exclude South Africa Blacks from the political life of their country through the loss of their South African citizenship and the denationalisation of those who were compelled to be citizens of the 'independent states.' When a Bantustan accepted independent status, every Black South African who spoke the language of that Bantustan ceased to be a South African citizen on the day of independence. This implied that even their children had education rights in their designated homelands. In the five years from October 1976 to December 1981, over 8 million South Africans lost their citizenship. In granting independence to the Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda, South Africa no longer had Xhosa-, Venda- and Tswana-speaking South Africans. They were all aliens.<sup>246</sup> This also meant that South Africans could not educate their children at institutions of their choice. There were arrests and harassment of 'illegal' Black people in the prescribed 'White' areas. 'Urban Black people' recognised by the government to live permanently in the urban areas were a small and relatively privileged minority. Large scale arrests and punishment of people whose presence in urban areas was regarded as illegal continued unabated. During 1982, 206 022 Black people were arrested for offences in terms of influx control legislation.<sup>247</sup> They were allowed only in prescribed urban areas and places that were deemed 'Black spots,' that is, places that were 'inconveniently situated' in mainly White populated areas. People were told to leave and were forced to move to the Bantustan to which they were allocated. Mention was made of "people coming to seek work in South Africa," as if their place of origin was not South Africa.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> M. Burton, *State Strategy: The Bantustans. Beyond Reform: The Challenge of Change*, Speeches Presented at the NUSAS July Festival held at UCT, July 1983. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.6. *The Youth Struggle: The 1976 Students' Revolts*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/june16/extract-soweto-uprising.html), pp. 6-7. S.M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising. The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, p. 322.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

The so-called independence did not change the basic economic function of the homelands as a labour reservoir for White-owned mines, farms and industry. Thousands of people who lived in the homelands commuted to work in the White areas because they were not allowed to live there, while those in the 'independent homelands' were overwhelmingly dependent on outside employment. The Bantustans were the poorest parts of South Africa, with only about 3% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product generated in all the Bantustans combined. In spite of Bophuthatswana being the only Bantustan with significant mineral wealth, its annual average income was very low compared to the South African annual average income.<sup>249</sup>

South Africa took control of all 'independent' homelands in 1994 and they were reincorporated into South Africa on 27 April 1994, after the first post-apartheid elections.<sup>250</sup>

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

From the foregoing it is evident that South African Blacks wanted the same opportunities that were a right for others. They wanted security and a sense of truly belonging, instead of living like pariahs in their own country. If all these were given, South Africa might have been on its way to a peaceable society where all its citizens co-existed in harmony. The Soweto learners' uprising was an unprecedented and epoch-making event.

This turning point in the history of South African education was primarily caused by the government's unyielding stance on implementing Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Black schools in spite of calls for a more equitable language policy by various education and other bodies in Black communities. It is unfortunate that the government was reluctant to seriously address the concerns of the Black stakeholders in education on the implementation of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Black schools. The situation was compounded by the politically charged atmosphere in which education was taking

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<sup>249</sup> Black Dispossession in South Africa: The Myth of Bantustan Independence. Africa Fund, Southern Africa Perspective 2/84. <http://richardknight.homestead.co/bophuthatswana-ns4.html>.

<sup>250</sup> Ciskei. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciskei>.

place in South Africa. Despite this political opportunity in South African education, the government did not attempt to capitalise on the economic advantages that Black learners would yield in mastering both Afrikaans and English over and above their mother-tongue. It can also be argued that the government was not adequately prepared for the implementation of such a major shift in policy. The majority of teachers were not trained to teach their subjects of specialisation in Afrikaans; consequently this policy was bound to fail as it did not enjoy the support of the people who were supposed to implement it.

The absence of Black officials in key positions in education in South Africa, and in Soweto in particular, prevented the government from fully understanding the earnest opposition of Black communities to the Afrikaans language policy. The participation of Blacks in decision-making committees would have stood the government in good stead in assessing the challenges that would face the country in implementing this major change in policy.

The implementation of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction exacerbated the general discontent of Black people about Bantu Education. Where some learners had resigned themselves to the fact that they would never have the same type of education as the White South African population, their resentment erupted on the impending implementation of the language policy. This suggests that government may have not been compelled to change from running the Department of Bantu Education to introducing the DET. It moreover suggests that, while it is true that reform in South Africa would ultimately take place, the events of June 1976 expedited the need for reform. The Soweto uprising permanently changed the South African political landscape.

This chapter further focused on the role of the police and learner organisations before, during and particularly after the uprising when young people had gained enough confidence to assume decision-making, adult roles in organising countrywide shop boycotts, a stay-away from work and protests against municipal rent increases. The role of learners in South African politics was expanded to political issues that were otherwise not their territory. The role that the learners played before the Soweto uprising changed

overnight and was sustained into the 1980s and 1990s. It was the learners who were now directing communities on issues that would otherwise remain outside their sphere of influence. The criticism of the reaction of the police changed the way they would operate when facing similar uprisings. While the police continued to suppress any form of civil disobedience, there was more circumspection and prudence on their part after the Soweto uprising. The police were in subsequent years to use less brutal measures to suppress demonstrations and boycotts.

The unanimity of the majority of South Africans, regardless of race, to the possible solutions for the plight of Black learners is significant. It could be expected that the more privileged members of South African society would be less sympathetic to Black learners' attitudes and the common state of education. The general agreement to solutions to the predicament shows that race relations in South Africa were not highly polarised. While it has to be admitted that there were some extreme viewpoints on this matter, it has to be appreciated that the points of divergence were not that serious and irreconcilable. This gave hope for a future non-racial democratic dispensation for South Africa.

The willingness of the government to start with a 'reform' programme assisted in ameliorating race relations in South Africa. The appointment of the Cillié Commission and the promulgation of *The Education and Training Act of 1979* were clear indicators that the government was taking the situation seriously. Although it is true that Black education in South Africa continued to be plagued by serious challenges, the changes that did occur in the aftermath of the Soweto uprisings served to appease some people in the Black communities, albeit for a very short time - as the impatience of the 1980s was to show.

Finally, the acceleration of the granting of 'independence' to the Homelands, was a way of ensuring that the demands for equality by Blacks was channelled to the areas where there was some degree of self-governance in line with the policy of separate development. This was not acceptable to the majority of Blacks as it meant immediate forfeiture of their South African citizenship. It is worth noting that the granting of

independence to homelands had other ramifications and unintended consequences. The 'balkanisation' of South Africa along tribal lines meant that individuals who had been neighbours for years had to be separated on the basis of their tribal origins. The granting of 'independence' to some homelands did not necessarily guarantee better education for Blacks in the Reserves. One of the aims of Bantu Education, in line with apartheid ideology, was to concentrate Black education as far as possible in the Black reserves. This involved stifling educational expansion in the working-class Black townships, especially at secondary level. Education in the homelands continued to be plagued by the same challenges as Black education in the urban areas. The only difference was that the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was eliminated as policy makers in the homelands could make their own decisions on the matter. This was not much of a gain for the Blacks who decided to move to the homelands in the aftermath of the Soweto uprisings, as the government abandoned this policy in the urban areas.

The 1976 Soweto uprisings will remain an important milestone in the history of South African education. It directed the shape of debates and discussions in education, and it served to inform education in South African in a future democratic dispensation.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE PERIOD OF MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT AND EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION (1980-1993)

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the 1980s as a critical turning point in the political history of South Africa. It focuses on this period as the time of massive intensification of the struggle against the apartheid state by both the learners and young people and how the major urban centres were key sites for such a struggle. This is a sequel to the culture that developed in the aftermath of the Soweto learner uprising discussed in Chapter 4. It explores the transformation of the political culture in South African townships, with unparalleled political radicalisation among broad sections of township residents, including learners and young people.

This chapter will also focus on calls for reforms in education, in the midst of the recently scrapped Bantu Education that had just been replaced by the Department of Education and Training (DET). The latter was still a department for Black education only, and the people believed that there could be no equality in separation. The period was characterised by continuous school boycotts and protests. These internecine protests were accompanied by the sabotage of key government installations. The government appointed a Commission of Enquiry to conduct an in depth investigation into all facets of education in South Africa. This chapter will concentrate on the De Lange Commission of Enquiry into education and how the government's failure to implement the Commissions' recommendations resulted into intensified opposition. The government introduced a Constitution in 1983 that would usher a 'new deal' for Coloureds and Indians with the introduction of a tri-cameral parliamentary system. This chapter will examine the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) as a response to the introduction of the tri-cameral system through the 1983 Constitution. It also pays attention to the introduction of compulsory education for Blacks, and its rejection, ostensibly because it was not free and compulsory; and to crown it all education remained separate and therefore unequal.

This chapter also evaluates the formation of the learner bodies, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM). With the intensification of

opposition to the unwillingness of the government to bring wholesale reforms in education, there were calls for learners to stop going to schools and pursue the freedom of the country. This chapter will look at the slogan “liberation first, education later.” The intervention of parents in a situation that was becoming almost chaotic is explored. The activities of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and the conceptualisation of “People’s Education”<sup>1</sup> are also looked into. It will also take a cursory look at the antecedent of the NECC, the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC); and how it evolved into a national body.

## **5.2 The formation of national learner bodies, calls for reforms in education for Blacks and the 1980 school unrest**

The decade of the 1980s in South Africa saw the eruption of unprecedented popular resistance in the Black townships, irrevocably transforming society and politics. This development represented the culmination of struggles at three levels; namely, learners’ education struggles, civic struggles and national political struggles. COSAS had been at the centre of this intersection of struggles.<sup>2</sup> In June 1979 COSAS was formed, as was AZASM, in the Black consciousness tradition. COSAS was formed with the aim of organising Black high school learners nationally.<sup>3</sup> Pampallis argues that COSAS was originally oriented to Black consciousness ideology, and that it was only by 1981 that they changed their thinking to become more aligned with the non-racial, pro-Freedom Charter<sup>4</sup> thinking of the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Civil unrest during the period 1984 to 1987 was characterised by an assault on local town councils, which were rendered inoperative. At the height of civil unrest, once local government had effectively collapsed, township residents began to “govern” themselves by establishing parallel state structures or organs of people’s power such as street and block committees, people’s courts and other informal organisational structures designed to provide “medical and health services” as well as “non-formal education and other social welfare services.” It was in this context that the concept of People’s Education, its definition and meaning slowly began to emerge. The primary objective of People’s Education movement centred on the development of an education system which, in both structure and curricula, reflected the principles of non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy. See N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students’ Perceptions of People’s Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, pp. 20-21 and A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 1. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Thabo Masukela, Former Member of the South African National Students’ Congress (SANSCO) and Former Free State Provincial Secretary of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). Bloemfontein, 19 September 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President’s Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Papi Kganare, ANC Activist and Former Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in the Free State. Bloemfontein, 5 September 2008.

<sup>4</sup> The Freedom Charter, Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html) and Text of the Freedom Charter, Kliptown, 26 June 1955. Retrieved on 17 June 2008. [www.africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/c/FreedomCharter.htm](http://www.africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/c/FreedomCharter.htm)

The initiative to form COSAS originated from ex-learner activists who regrouped after state suppression of the 1976-1977 learner revolts. Initially COSAS was slow to grow and was largely unknown among the learners it sought to organise, partly because of state attempts at suppression. Soon after it was launched, the state detained almost its entire national leadership. COSAS's first president, Ephraim Mogale, was subsequently charged with furthering the aims of the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), and was sentenced to eight years in prison on Robben Island.<sup>6</sup> It is inconceivable how COSAS survived beyond the 1980s, as the government was quick to identify it with the banned organisations, thereby putting an almost complete clampdown on its activities.

Through its participation in the campaign of the early 1980s, COSAS became part of, and in essence pioneered, the revival of national political opposition, marking the end of the quiescence that followed both the banning of the ANC and PAC in 1960 and the suppression of the 1976-1977 revolt. In 1980, COSAS adopted the Freedom Charter and was followed by a host of other emergent organisations in a development which represented the rise of an ANC inclined legal extra-parliamentary movement.<sup>7</sup> COSAS seemed to fill the void left by the banning of the ANC and the PAC, albeit with a direct thrust on educational issues, unlike the latter two organisations which were focusing on a whole range of socio-economic and political issues. Unlike in the 1960s, where it took time before the replacement of the banned ANC and PAC, the void left by the suppression of the 1976 to 1977 revolt, was quickly filled by COSAS's formation in 1979. This gave immediate impetus to what the learners were fighting for in the mid 1970s, without losing momentum.

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<sup>5</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 313. V. Brittain and A.S. Minty (eds.), *Children of Resistance: Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa*, p. 102. T. Matona, *Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985*. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 4. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

<sup>7</sup> T. Matona, *Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985*. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 5. C. Twala, *The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics?* *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 39. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, *School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia*. *Perspectives in Education*, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.

Despite the passage of the new *Education and Training Act* of 1979, calls for reform in Black education continued to be made by educationists and laymen. The major grievances were the perceived disparities between Black and White education, and most importantly, the continuation of the separate nature of the education system once more legislatively enshrined.<sup>8</sup> The government outlined its aims of achieving compulsory education through the Minister of the Department Education and Training, Mr Punt Janson. He also promised eventual parity in expenditure and raising the qualifications of teachers. Mr Janson acknowledged that Blacks were suspicious of his department and that there was great room for improvement in the field of Black education.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that the government did not lose sight of the fact that Black people were not happy with the education they were receiving. Their vigilance attests to its willingness to do something about the situation. It has to be appreciated that drastic reforms in education at the stage, would probably not go down well with White South Africans. This was compounded by the fact that they were the only people who were eligible to vote. As such, any drastic move on the side of government would jeopardise the standing of the National Party (NP) as the ruling party in the eyes of its voters.

Attacking Bantu Education for having been designed to make 'Blacks hewers of wood and drawers of water,' Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi<sup>10</sup> said it was natural for Blacks to clamour for a uniform education system but that this did not necessarily mean uniform curricula. Dr Nthato Motlana,<sup>11</sup> chairman of the Committee of Ten, addressing a gathering to mark the Year of the Child, echoed this sentiment when he said that one of the main objectives of the NP when it

<sup>8</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. L. Gordon and C. Cooper, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979*, pp. 488-489. South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

<sup>9</sup> L. Gordon and C. Cooper, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979*, pp. 488-489. South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 115. E. Mokgokong, *A Reformational Perspective of Educational Systems in Southern Africa*. In *Educational Challenges in Southern Africa in a Christian-Reformational Perspective. Papers Delivered at a Conference of the Institute for Reformational Studies*. University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1987, p. 318. F.E. Auerbach, *Measuring Educational Development in South Africa*, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>11</sup> S.V. Hayes, *Who's Who of Southern Africa, 1990-1991*, p. 380.

came to power was “to stunt the mind of the black child in order to stay in power for ever.” Calling for an end to the separation of education systems in South Africa, Dr Nathan Molohe, vice-chairman of the Soweto Teachers’ Action Committee representing teachers who resigned in protest against Bantu Education during 1976, said that as long as there were separate education systems for White and Black schools, Blacks did not expect any equality with White education.<sup>12</sup> R.L. Peteni, the President of ATASA, argued that prosperity for South Africa would come only if solutions were found to provide a diversified system of education designed to produce a skilled, well-motivated manpower of all people with the ability to benefit from it. But if the education provided was discriminatory and frustrating, and sought to develop one section of the population at the expense of another, disaster was inevitable.<sup>13</sup> These were amongst the many calls made by prominent Black leaders for a complete overhaul of the education system. Pressure began to mount on the government to do something about the situation. It is worth noting that even opinion makers amongst Blacks did not fully agree on the nature and extent of the reform needed in Black education. It will be misleading to think that Black people were in agreement on the form the revamp of the education system had to take.

The new Minister of Education and Training, Dr F. Hartzenberg,<sup>14</sup> committed himself to carry out his tasks “with the greatest consultation and co-operation with those concerned.” In January the Education Commission of the South African Institute of Race Relations presented its report, ‘Education for a New Era,’ setting out alternate education policy guidelines for South Africa. The Commission’s report was sent to all members of parliament and many educationists. The principles on which the Commission based its recommendations were:

- An emphasis on equality of opportunity with supplementary allocation of resources for disadvantaged groups;
- No legal separation of the various race and language groups in South Africa and positive efforts to encourage integration;

<sup>12</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Matthews Ndaba, a Former Teacher at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto and currently Circuit Manager at Sedibeng West Education District in Gauteng. Vereeniging, 11 July 2008. L. Gordon and C. Cooper, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979*, p. 489.

<sup>13</sup> L. Gordon and C. Cooper, *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979*, p. 489. A New Era in Education, Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA on 4 January 1982 by R.L. Peteni. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22-25.

<sup>14</sup> S.V. Hayes, *Who’s Who of Southern Africa, 1992-1993*, p. 249 and Ferdinand Hartzenberg. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 26 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

- Curriculum content should stress, in addition to the learning of basic linguistic, mathematical and scientific skills, the development of the critical ability of learners;
- A single education department and administrative system.<sup>15</sup>

These recommendations served to amplify the persistent calls that numerous prominent Black leaders were making to the government. The fact that theirs was not a lone voice added pressure on the apparently reluctant government to implement what was evidently the desire of Black South Africans. The call for the development of the critical ability of learners seems to have been the wish to do away with the perception that government was giving Black children inferior education to stunt their minds in order to stay in power forever. Even these proposals were not in tandem with the views of the other opinion makers in the Black community. This refers to the views of Buthelezi, Motlana, Molohe and Peteni discussed earlier. This amplifies the fact that Black leadership was not in full agreement on the desired education system.

While there was sporadic action in Black schooling in Soweto, Pretoria and Cape Town in January and February 1980, the mass boycott developed out of protests at appalling conditions in two schools in Cape Town, namely Livingstone and Crystal High Schools. Learners at the schools voiced their grievances through a one-day boycott in February and then through a series of meetings with parents, and a mass protest meeting. When three teachers from Crystal High School were dismissed for attending the protest meeting, representatives of nineteen Coloured schools in the Cape met. They threatened a class boycott if the grievances of the Crystal learners and other demands for the reduction of educational inequalities were not met and the teachers were not reinstated. In an unsuccessful attempt to allay the boycott action the Minister of Coloured Relations said that attention would be given to grievances concerning textbooks and school repairs. The dismissed teachers were, however, not reinstated. Meeting to discuss the Minister's move, representatives decided to institute a class boycott if their demands were not met within a week. Despite the recommendation to wait a week, learners began boycotting immediately and within a week 25 000 learners in Cape Town and Johannesburg were out of classes. The demands were not met and 248 representatives of 61 Western Cape educational

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<sup>15</sup> L. Gordon and C. Cooper, Survey of Race Relations in South Africa: 1979, pp. 489-490. E. Mokgokong, A Reformational Perspective of Educational Systems in Southern Africa. In Educational Challenges in Southern Africa in a Christian-Reformational Perspective. Papers Delivered at a Conference of the Institute for Reformational Studies. University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1987, p. 319.

institutions decided unanimously on 19 April 1980 on a school boycott.<sup>16</sup> The pledge of solidarity with the learners of the two Coloured Schools in Cape Town by nineteen other schools in the area was perhaps an indication that the learners felt that the challenges that plagued Livingstone and Crystal High were the same as theirs. The spread of the protests in Cape Town and Johannesburg attests to a new trend of fighting political battles as a united front. The fact that teachers were involved in this protest shows a new and evolving dimension to education politics in South Africa. The involvement of teachers in learners' protests undermined the discipline at schools. It is fair to expect teachers to be on the side of government when learners boycott classes. This developing trend would go a long way to weaken the culture of teaching and learning in schools as learners acted with the confidence of enjoying the support of teachers. This situation is regrettable for any education system.

By 28 April 1980 130 000 learners were taking action, including Indian learners in Johannesburg and Durban. It was only in Northern Natal and the Northern Free State where the police did not report incidents. At nationwide protest meetings, parents', Cape and Transvaal teachers' and principals' associations, the Labour Party and many other civic and religious bodies expressed 'total support' for the learners' rejection of an inferior educational system. Black learners in Grahamstown, Pretoria and Durban were soon participating and so were university students at the Universities of Fort Hare and the North. This was followed by the closure of Fort Hare and the police ill treatment of learners in Grahamstown. The boycott continued to spread. The QwaQwa bantustan was affected, as was the Transkei where a state of emergency was declared. With the boycott still in force, several educational institutions closed early for the holiday. Shortly after the new term began in July, and after some confusion and signs of division as to whether to continue, a boycott of Coloured schools was called by the so called Committee of 81. The Department of Coloured Affairs said that a number of short-term demands presented at the start of the boycott had been met, referring specifically to the establishment of SRCs, delivery of textbooks and the institution of a programme of repairs.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The Star, 17 May 1980. The Cape Times, 14 April 1980. N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), pp. 15-16. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.

Whilst it is true that in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising the rioting spread to the other areas in South Africa, the extent and magnitude of the spread of violence to other areas in the 1980s were much higher. This may be attributed to the network that had been established between the organisations throughout the country. The growing pattern of parents, teachers and community leaders supporting learners' strike actions emasculated the authorities and undermined discipline and order in the schools. Without order and discipline in schools it is not possible for proper education to take place.

During the period of confusion and with some learners still boycotting, the Department closed five Coloured schools in the Western Cape and learners were told to reapply for admission. Parents had to sign an undertaking that their children would abide by the regulations. Parents who signed were given an identity tag without which their children would not be readmitted. This caused considerable anger amongst parents who complained that they had no option but to comply. The boycott by Black learners continued after Coloured and Indian learners returned to classes. From the start of the new term there were almost total stayaways from Secondary to Higher Primary schools in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Bloemfontein, and by the end of June classes were boycotted in Kimberley.<sup>18</sup> Against the background of mounting tension and conflict, and with considerable police violence, the boycott continued and spread, in the Eastern Cape in particular. The Port Elizabeth Students Committee (PESCO) formed in the course of the boycott made it clear that a return to school could not be considered before 2 September when

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<sup>18</sup> The African Teachers Association of South Africa Memorandum Submitted to the Director-General for Education and Training, Pretoria, 11 July 1980. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6. Daily Dispatch, 15 July 1980 and 2 August 1980. The Cape Times, 16, 17, 22, and 31 July 1980. Rand Daily Mail, 31 July 1980. C. Twala, The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics? Journal for Contemporary History. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 41. C.P. de Kock, South Africa in the Nineties: Violence as an Option? In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhoodie and M. Wiechers, South Africa in the Nineties, p. 39. N. Moola and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.



the ban imposed in June on meetings of more than 10 expired.<sup>19</sup> With school boycotts having become commonplace in South Africa, the government seems to have developed strategies to deal with the situation. The closing of schools and forcing learners to reapply for admission with the consent of the parents yielded some positive results for government as it brought stability to the Coloured schools in the Western Cape. It is not amazing to see the government insisting on parents signing an undertaking that their children would abide by the regulations. This was because some parents supported the learner strike action. It is shocking that parents were angered by the requirement to give their consent that their children would abide by the school regulations. Parents in all communities have to be willing to take responsibility for the education of their children. It is strange that the government did not implement this strategy all over the country. It can therefore be concluded that because of the new challenges the government was facing, it was adhoc and inconsistent in its approach to crisis situations. Needless to say, this strategy may not have been a panacea to all school boycott situations that prevailed, as some parents had succumbed to the mounting pressure from the militant groups.

The learner grievances, articulated with the disruption of school classes in 1980 in the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, Bloemfontein and Durban, as well as the boycott of lectures at Black universities, underlined what ATASA and other organisations had over the years brought to the attention of the Department in the form of memoranda, namely:

- One uniform system of education for all population groups under one Minister of Education.
- Equal per capita expenditure for learners of all race groups.<sup>20</sup>
- Equal and adequate school and teacher training facilities.
- Opening of all institutions of higher learning to students of all race groups.
- Free and compulsory education for all race groups, including free books for all learners.

<sup>19</sup> T. Matona, *Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985*. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6. *Daily Dispatch*, 15 July 1980 and 2 August 1980. *The Cape Times*, 16, 17, 22, and 31 July 1980. *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 July 1980. C. Twala, *The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics?* *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 41. C.P. de Kock, *South Africa in the Nineties: Violence as an Option?* In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhoodie and M. Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 39. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 5 on p. 452.

- Reduction of the present learner: teacher ration.<sup>21</sup>

The failure of the government to immediately implement these reforms in education gave impetus to students' unrest. This could have been obviated had the government introduced meaningful changes. There had been progress with the erection of new schools and furnishing them with the necessary equipment and supply of textbooks. These positive innovations were dwarfed by the failure of the government to deal with the reforms that Black people viewed as most pressing, like one uniform system of education for all population groups under one Minister of Education. Whilst it is true that calls for reform in education presented divergent positions, a pattern was beginning to emerge of calls for one uniform system of education. Such a dispensation would dispel the perception of an inferior education given to Blacks in a separate Department of Education.

Almost simultaneous with the learner unrest in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, Bloemfontein and Durban, on the night of Sunday, June 1 1980, the most stunning act of sabotage in South Africa's history occurred when an attack was made on storage tanks and plant at the country's massive oil-from-coal undertaking, Sasol.<sup>22</sup> It was the most destructive and audacious act of sabotage in South Africa's history. Sasol is an internationally known multi-billion rand operation, which is the world's foremost exponent of fuel synthesis. The attack was part of the total assault focusing on the economy, the military and the psyche of South Africans that was directed against the country. For the purposes of terrorism, it was well conceived and well planned. The proscribed ANC claimed responsibility. It was assisted by Joe Slovo,<sup>23</sup> the South African Communist Party leader stationed in Maputo, and the Soviet ambassador in Lusaka, Dr Solodovnikov. The device for the sabotage was the Russian made limpet bomb, a bomb which attaches itself magnetically to its target. The scene that followed the sabotage "...resembled a volcanic eruption as enormous clouds of orange flame billowed into the night

<sup>21</sup> The African Teachers Association of South Africa Memorandum Submitted to the Director-General for Education and Training, Pretoria, 11 July 1980. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14.

<sup>22</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. J. Pampallis, *Foundations of the New South Africa*, p. 264.

<sup>23</sup> Joe Slovo. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/) and Joe Slovo. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. [www.africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-joeslovo](http://www.africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-joeslovo)

sky.”<sup>24</sup> The terrorists got their publicity in vivid newspaper coverage and in television pictures flashed through satellite. The Cape Times commented:

There have been riots before in the black townships. And deaths... but the flames of Sasolburg are different. This is terrorism at its most precise, efficient and spectacular. South Africa has suffered nothing like it before.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that the sabotage at Sasol happened with the heightened learner unrest at the major centres in South Africa may not be viewed as innocent coincidence. It can be safely argued that this was intended to mount pressure on the South African government to bring meaningful reforms to the socio-economic situation of Blacks, including education.

For the purposes of terrorism, the attack was well timed. It was all part of the programme to whip up anti-South African sentiment and to cause confusion at the time when South Africa was commemorating the June 16 upheavals. Even before the Sasolburg sabotage there was more British anxiety about the outlook for South Africa than at any time since the Soweto riots of 1976. For several months before the Sasol attack, both friends and foes of the Republic had waited to see how events in South Africa, planned or unplanned, would respond to the change over in Zimbabwe. There was a feeling that the final collapse of the white bastion in Rhodesia was leading to a smouldering race crisis in South Africa. Mr Mugabe's victory in Zimbabwe had whetted the appetites of South Africa's 15 million Blacks. It had divided Whites even inside the ruling NP. The liberals urged an early dialogue with Black leaders. The hardliners demanded a tougher apartheid ideology. What was fascinating was the fact that in 1979 Mr Botha had warned the White South Africans 'to adapt or die,' that if they refused to change they would face a Black revolution.<sup>26</sup> The developments in South Africa were happening in the context of events elsewhere in the region. The fact that Zimbabwe had just gained its independence, made Black South Africans see their freedom as imminent. The ripple effect of changes in other parts of the world persuaded them to mobilise more rigorously for transformation. Leaders in government, on the other hand, must have grappled with daily developments in the country fully

<sup>24</sup> RSA World, 31 July 1980 and Sunday Tribune, 8 June 1980. M. Madelung, Black Lives Under Apartheid, p. 86.

<sup>25</sup> The Cape Times, 6 June 1980.

<sup>26</sup> V. Taylor, Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement, p. 30. To the Point, 13 June 1980 and The Cape Times, 6 June 1980. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 8. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

conscious of what was happening in the region. Their observations made them either amenable to change in South Africa or hardened their resolve to entrench apartheid even further.

The bombings also seemed to lend considerable substance to Botha's warnings that a "total onslaught" was being prepared against White rule. To counter the rising militancy, the government introduced reforms. Botha's reforms, however, fell short of even moderate Black requests for parliamentary representation and an end to racial discrimination. The raids raised new questions about the vulnerability to terrorist attacks of South Africa's industrial complex. After years of sporadic hit-and-run attacks, the ANC guerrillas had stepped up their activity. The ANC guerrillas had shown that they were ready to go after South Africa's industry to back up their demands. In 1984 the ANC had kept up and even intensified its pressure on the South African government by bombing industrial targets. In the spring of 1984 the underground organisation had claimed responsibility for a number of bombings, especially in the port of Durban.<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that whilst the South African government was not moving wholesale with reforms, it at least was showing some consciousness of the need for reform, hence these gradual piece-meal reforms. On the other hand, this unwillingness to bring full reforms encouraged more sabotage by the ANC and other banned organisations.

The Sasolburg attacks and the ANC claims in London of responsibility for them, made far more impact than earlier urban terrorism and the infrequent reported arms caches. They also came when Coloured school unrests had been given an unexpectedly large United Kingdom coverage, partly due to media memories of Soweto. The British media also reflected a sense of South African government uncertainty in handling the troubles.<sup>28</sup> Many in Western Europe, who had been taking a sympathetic view of the P.W. Botha's reforms, were alarmed. They wondered whether this meant the end of reformism in South Africa because they expected most White South Africans, angry, apprehensive and armed, to feel that that was not the time to compromise with Blacks. There were fears that the South African government would become more alert then and, very probably, more repressive. In that kind of climate, with angry young Blacks erupting into the streets and bombs going off at strategic installations, it was not easy to sustain the

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<sup>27</sup> M. Madelung, *Black Lives Under Apartheid*, p. 86. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 178. V. Taylor, *Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement*, p. 176.

<sup>28</sup> *To the Point*, 13 June 1980. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 178. V. Taylor, *Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement*, p. 176.

concept of reform. Reform usually needs a relaxed climate, free of unrests and disturbances. Often, when it is made under duress, it merely generates new pressures.<sup>29</sup> The fact that South Africa was facing unpredictable situations on a daily basis made it difficult for government leaders to give their full attention to the reform programme unhindered. It may also be argued that without any form of pressure from Black people there would be little or no initiatives for reforms by government.

The government of Prime Minister P.W. Botha was careful to keep its reaction subdued and controlled. Only after the ANC had claimed responsibility for the acts did the government name two of the groups' expatriate leaders as the raid's presumed masterminds. They were Joe Slovo, a White Communist exile then residing in Mozambique, and Frene Ginwala, a radical woman lawyer believed to be living underground within South Africa.<sup>30</sup> Black South Africans were not happy with the state's limited reforms, as such a new wave of resistance emerged. A growing militancy was organised on three main fronts: the expanding trade union movement, the underground armed struggle of the banned ANC, and the re-emergence of legal, mass-based political movements. These different strands of resistance became increasingly interlinked in the 1980s.<sup>31</sup>

A mass meeting at the end of August 1980 to consider whether or not learners should return to schools was attended by representatives of learners and parents from all over the Eastern Cape and Cape Town. The outcome was a call to return to school but not to attend classes until the short term demands were met. Again learners were urged to stay in schools and avoid confrontation with police.<sup>32</sup> The demands of the parents and learners called for immediate action on:

- Disparity in expenditure for different race groups.<sup>33</sup>
- The absence of autonomous Student Representative Councils (SRCs).

<sup>29</sup> The Cape Times, 6 June 1980.

<sup>30</sup> M. Madelung, Black Lives Under Apartheid, p. 86.

<sup>31</sup> A. Odendaal, The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994. In Y.N. Seleti, Africa since 1990, p. 178. V. Taylor, Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement, p. 176.

<sup>32</sup> G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 8. Daily Dispatch, 23 August 1980 and 2 September 1980.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 5 on p. 452.

- The security police's free access to school premises.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the call for immediate action, they also had the following demands:

- A declaration of intent by the government to scrap Bantu Education.
- The establishment of a genuine committee of enquiry elected by parents to investigate education with a view to prescribing one educational system for all.
- Recognition of representative councils of learners.
- Return of transferred teachers to their respective institutions and readmission of expelled or suspended learners.
- Release of all those detained in connection with the boycotts and
- Better educational facilities.<sup>35</sup>

In the history of South African education, meetings of learners and parents from places as distant as the Eastern Cape and Cape Town were unheard of. These ground breaking developments illustrate the solidarity that parents were beginning to have on educational matters. It is doubtful whether the call for children to return to schools but not to attend classes was prudent, as children would not benefit anything academically. It was such calls that undermined the culture of teaching and learning. Encouraging learners to go to school but not to attend classes was a recipe for disaster. That such decisions were taken in the presence of the parents illustrates the extent to which the situation had degenerated.

The DET repeatedly refused to speak to the committees that asked the SACC to communicate their demands to the government. The SACC did so, and pressed the Department to negotiate with authentic representatives of affected communities, such as parents' committees. It also pointed out that the recent reforms introduced by the authorities in education were seen by most Black people as 'almost irrelevant' because the separate education system was 'totally unacceptable.' The result was an ultimatum from the DET that learners should return to classes

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<sup>34</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

<sup>35</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. A Statement from the African Scholars of Cape Town. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA, Accession No. 150, File 14.

by the following week or schools would be indefinitely closed, and that parents should bring children to school to register. Few parents or learners responded and 70 schools were closed indefinitely, increasing to 80 by mid-October. The day the Department closed the schools, the security police detained several leading members of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO). Schools throughout the Eastern and Western Cape were affected as well as in Bloemfontein and Kimberley and one in Johannesburg. 60 000 learners were affected and over 1 200 teachers. Although lower primary schools were not officially closed, the stay-away spread to them and 33 were effectively closed.<sup>36</sup> Looking at the situation from the perspective of the authorities, the closure of schools was prudent as few parents brought their children to schools. This would exert pressure on the parents to co-operate with the Department. Otherwise taking a conciliatory approach would result in continued defiance of the authorities by the parents and learners.

The closure did nothing to end the deadlock. The DET refused, as it had done throughout the boycott, to speak to parents and learners committees. The Department indicated that it was only "willing to meet with recognised elected bodies such as the community councils and school committees." The DET described the parents committees and others as "pseudo-committees."<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that the Education Ministry continued to rely on police to be boycott breakers and refused to speak to ad hoc parents groups that were trying to bridge the gap between the learners and the government. Needless to say, this could have been one of the most efficient deadlock breaking mechanisms. The unwillingness of the DET to speak to communities was bound to worsen the situation as communities could not find an appropriate forum to vent their anger and frustrations.

An attempt by the SACC to intercede, by representing the parents' interests to the government, was frustrated when the meetings at which Bishop Desmond Tutu<sup>38</sup> was to have reported back on his discussions with the Department, were banned.<sup>39</sup> The boycott continued to the end of the year in the face of intense police repression and the introduction of compulsory education along

<sup>36</sup> Financial Mail, 31 October 1980. The Cape Times, 10 and 23 September 1980. Rand Daily Mail, 2 October 1980.

<sup>37</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

<sup>38</sup> Desmond Tutu. Retrieved on 30 May 2008. [www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html)

<sup>39</sup> The Cape Times, 23 September 1980. R. Morrell, Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu. Transformation, Volume 7, 1988. p. 47.

with harsh new regulations to discipline protesting learners. It was only in February 1981 that the boycott was finally lifted, after some debate about whether to go on with it.<sup>40</sup> That the government was only able to listen to the concerns of Black communities with the intervention of the SACC did not create a good environment for quick and long lasting solutions to be found. This was worsened by the fact that the meetings where parents were to get feedback from the SACC were banned. Allowing these meetings to proceed would have eased the tensions.

The response of the government was broadly similar throughout the protests. Action to break the boycott by use of physical force against those taking action or by disrupting organisations by detentions, bans and censorship was combined with an insistence that any changes were to be on the government's terms and through the institutions of its choosing. The education protest constituted a challenge not only because of its educational demands, but also because it involved the formation of democratic organs of representation of learners, parents and others. Some of the deepest conflicts during the boycott were over the issue of representation. The government took steps to enlist parents as a force to control and discipline learners rather than act with them.<sup>41</sup> The repression carried out during the 1980 learners' boycotts was very severe. The drastic steps taken by the government to suppress the mass action fell heavily on those in education. Of nearly 1 000 people known to have been detained by the security police during 1980, 341 were learners, 117 college and university students and 32 lecturers, school principals and teachers.<sup>42</sup> The detention of so many people in one year for their opposition to apartheid education would raise the importance of the education agenda in the debates in South Africa and abroad. The unwillingness of the government to tread more cautiously in addressing these demands shows that the South African political landscape was not yet ready for any meaningful debates and reform.

<sup>40</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

<sup>41</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. P. Jordan, 'Monopoly Capitalism, Racism and the Mass Media in South Africa,' p. 3. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. *Perspectives in Education*, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 January 1981. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 55. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: *People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 6.



There were extensive bans on meetings. The ban on all outdoor gatherings except for sports meetings and one for which permission had been obtained, was renewed, having been in force since June 1976. In June 1980 all gatherings of more than 10 people of a political nature were banned for over two months. The bans on meetings were used to justify frequent attacks on meetings by police with batons, tear gas, whips and dogs. But in any event gatherings of learners in school grounds were also attacked by police and broken up, as this was taken to be a contravention of the ban on meetings. Thousands of school learners were arrested, many of them appearing in court on charges of riotous assembly or public violence.<sup>43</sup> Whilst the bans were intended to forestall boycotts and uprisings, it deprived communities, in some instances innocent, of a basic human right. However, in the light of the mounting pressure on government some control measures to contain the situation became necessary to avoid anarchy.

In July 1980 the government declared that it was taking preliminary steps to introduce compulsory education. In November 1980 it was announced that the first school committees, in Pretoria, had agreed to the introduction of compulsory education from 1 January 1981. When the schools reopened on 13 January 1981 201 schools catering for about 45 000 learners in 38 townships were involved. The plan was for compulsory education from Grade 1 to Standard 5 or age 16, translating into seven years of schooling. This arrangement was initially to be on an experimental basis only up to the age of 12. The Department claimed it had support from parents, in the form of the unanimous agreement of school committees. But opposition by parents and learners to the scheme had been voiced earlier and continued to grow because they suspected that it meant enforced racial education. Moreover, parents feared that it would be used to force them to act against their children when the children wanted to take protest action. These fears were reinforced by the fact that parents would face fines or imprisonment if they did not ensure their children attended school. The first opposition was expressed in Soweto where school committees in only two areas agreed to accept the scheme. In one of the two areas, Pimville, the school committee's acceptance was reversed at a meeting of 200 people. The

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<sup>43</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. R. Morrell, Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu. *Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988. p. 47. L. Schlemmer, South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhodie and M. Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 3. C.P. de Kock, South Africa in the Nineties: Violence as an Option? In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhodie and M. Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 39.

meeting called on the members of the school committee to resign immediately for having acted without the approval of the community.<sup>44</sup> Vosloorus learners threatened to boycott classes if the scheme was introduced and called on school committees in the area to withdraw their acceptance of the scheme. AZAPO launched a campaign to prevent children 'being forced into this abortive system' and COSAS called on parents to reject the scheme.<sup>45</sup> For the parents, the introduction of compulsory education had nothing to do with having to act against their children in the event of protest action. The fact that some parents thought these were linked shows the levels of mistrust and poor interpretation of new policy initiatives. Whilst it is true that compulsory education was not free, encouraging compulsory education was in itself a noble policy position. It could only be a problem to parents who could not afford to take their children to school due to poverty, as they would be acting in contravention with the law.

The school boycott, which lasted for eight months until January 1981, was part of a long and intensifying struggle against the apartheid system of education. It was also part of a year of nationwide resistance to the apartheid system on many fronts. The cost of housing and transport, wages and the rights of workers to organise in trade unions were the subject of protests, boycotts and strikes in a wave of working class and community action on an unprecedented scale. Intensified guerrilla activity by the ANC was received with evident support amongst the oppressed majority. The campaign against apartheid education in schools, colleges and universities was an integral part of this action. Learners sought and won the support of parents and some sections of the Black community.<sup>46</sup> The attempt to gain the support of parents, teachers and the rest of the Black community was a major aspect of the protest, and it had considerable success. The reaction of parents and teachers to all this had been in significant

<sup>44</sup> The Star, 2 December 1980. Rand Daily Mail, 28 July 1980. The Cape Times, 12 December 1980.

<sup>45</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. A New Era in Education: Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA by R.L. Peteni, 4 January 1982. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25.

<sup>46</sup> G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 6. South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. The Star, 17 May 1980. Daily News, 28 April 1980. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 9. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 3.

contrast to that of the previous four years.<sup>47</sup> In 1976, while sympathising with learners, Black parents and educators reacted to their protests and uprising with dismay. In 1980 existing community organisations, such as Residents' Associations and *ad hoc* committees of parents formed during the campaign, gave support, from statements of sympathy to more active support in the form of attempting to negotiate on behalf of learners. In Natal and the Cape parents called meetings and threatened action in the form of boycotts and strikes if learners were intimidated for their protest action.<sup>48</sup> The fact that calls for reform in education became the rallying point to many sectors of the South Africa Black population indicates the new dimension that the protest was taking. The apparent apathy of parents and teachers was replaced by active involvement on many fronts. This also brought vigilance on the part of Black people to issues purely socio-economic, and not strictly educational.

The 1981 school year began with the introduction of compulsory education, together with harsh new regulations to discipline learners taking strike action. There had been some increase of government expenditure on Black education, in response to the protests, but there was no apparent move to abolish racially segregated education. Although school boycotts were called off soon after the beginning of the 1981 school year, the protests continued, focusing more immediately on the fight against disparities in education. The most basic educational demand put forward was the demand for a non-racial education system, and the rejection of the racially segregated education system. When the government took steps to introduce compulsory education for Blacks, apparently meeting a longstanding demand, it was opposed. Ostensibly

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<sup>47</sup> J. Hyslop, Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Students and Youth Movements, 1976-1987. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 67. South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. *The Star*, 17 May 1980. *Daily News*, 28 April 1980. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. *The Star*, 17 May 1980. *Daily News*, 28 April 1980. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 9. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 3. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: *People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 6.

because compulsory education was unacceptable until racial education was abolished.<sup>49</sup> That the protests continued despite drastic repressive measures may indicate the extent to which disadvantaged communities were resolute in their stance against racially separate education. That the long standing demand for compulsory education was rejected when the government ultimately introduced it serves to illustrate the unwillingness of Black people to accept piecemeal reforms in education.

Blacks had for many decades welcomed education and had called specifically for the introduction of free and compulsory education. That an overwhelming majority of the Black community rejected the 1981 legislation was surprising. Blacks argued that accepting compulsory education was tantamount to "accepting inferior education." There was a prevailing general attitude that it was a 'cruel joke' for the government to introduce compulsory education without upgrading the quality of Black education to the same level as that for whites. But even that was beside the point, for it would still be segregated and therefore, by definition, unequal. Another extremely important element that the compulsory education law did not address adequately was the need for free education. Compulsory education without free education was meaningless in the context of South Africa, especially given the generally low wages for Blacks. Ironically, education for Whites who could afford to pay was free.<sup>50</sup> Enforcing compulsory education without free education was defeating the essence of this noble policy. To crown it all Blacks were looking for equality on all aspects affecting education.

The changes brought about by the government in response to the 1976 Soweto learners' uprising were generally regarded by the Black community as inadequate. Above all there was no change in the essential segregation of the system. To make it clear that the system had not changed, Blacks continued to call it Bantu Education even after the government changed the name of the Bantu Education Department to the DET. Through leaflets and other statements such views were heard repeatedly during protests from every section of the Black community. Learners described their education as "gutter education" and "inferior ethnic education," and as "education for

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<sup>49</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> M. Nkomo, Education for Blacks in South Africa: Deconstructing the Myths. United Nations Centre Against Apartheid. 20/86, October 1986. p. 10.

domination.” Equally important was the understanding that the education system was not only a preparation for a subordinate position, but that it owed its continued existence to the political oppression of the majority.<sup>51</sup> Such views provided the basis for linking the struggle in education to all the other struggles of the oppressed Black majority. Without equal education, the change of the name of the Department of Education with the attendant minor reforms was perceived as the old Bantu Education with a new name. This perception was justified by the failure of the government to bring fundamental changes to Black education.

The support of teachers was also sought and given at various stages. Over 1 000 teachers from Cape Town Coloured and Indian schools ‘stopped work’ for a time in May 1981 and involved themselves in non-curricular awareness programmes only. Teachers seen acting as agents of the authorities found themselves the objects of hostility and intimidation by learners. There were some attacks on teachers’ homes. In the Eastern Cape a teacher who tried to interfere with the boycott was stoned to death. However, learners’ organisations made it clear that they did not condone such actions, and also said that teachers opposed to their actions were a minority.<sup>52</sup> In some areas, when Black teachers were threatened with transfer out of areas in which schools had been closed, most were reported as saying they would resign rather than be transferred. They argued that to accept transfer would be tantamount to accepting Bantu Education, which their learners had totally rejected.<sup>53</sup> The direct involvement of teachers in some areas of the country in opposing apartheid education, albeit forced in some instances, was unheard of in South Africa. The condemnation of forced participation of teachers by learners’ organisation, if indeed it was honest, may show that the levels of desperation for support from these quarters were no longer high. Otherwise the learner leadership would not denounce the intimidation of teachers who were not willing to support them.

To its credit the DET had taken measures to remove the valid causes of learner grievances. It embarked on a spending spree which saw the budget increase fourfold from 1983/84 to 1987/88

<sup>51</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People’s Education in South Africa. Research and Education in South Africa. Paper Number Three, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 16 September 1980. The Star, 20 September 1980.

<sup>53</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

when it reached R1 487 million. This trend continued in 1988 with a 10% rise to R1 640 million. A major portion of the education budgets were spent on teacher salaries. The DET's 1986 budget allocated about 80% to salaries. The generous funding for education had been a spur to teachers pursuing promotion. Not only were they assisted with leave and financial grants to improve their qualifications, but there was a near automatic pay rise once this had been achieved.<sup>54</sup> It was difficult for many in the Black communities to see these benefits. The major aspect of reform that the people were clamouring for was seeing all racial groups operating in the same Department of Education; this would, in their view represent equal education.

In June 1985 the ANC called a meeting to review its policies. Held in Kabwe, Zambia, and known as the second consultative conference, it noted that Congress had achieved considerable success in the decade since the Soweto school children's revolt. The movement had established a formidable presence within the country; Umkhonto's sabotage attacks on government institutions and installations had won the support of disaffected township youth; and popular, legal protest in South Africa had become centred around ANC slogans and symbols. What the ANC lacked, delegates agreed, was internal organisation sufficient to exploit its popularity fully. Umkhonto's 'armed propaganda' campaign had been borne by a few hundred guerrillas, mainly trained abroad. The Nkomati Accord<sup>55</sup> had demonstrated the vulnerability of such a campaign, which relied on getting activists over the country's borders. Deciding on a new course in the future, the conference resolved to intensify the 'people's war' with a programme aimed towards arming the masses. The ANC particularly wanted to harness the energies of the autonomous insurrectionary movement that had grown out of street fights between township residents and the police.<sup>56</sup> The exiled ANC was confident that its programmes were having an impact in South Africa. It was planning to intensify its activities in the country, to amongst others, obviate the impact of the Nkomati Accord. The happenings at the Kwabe conference must have caught the attention of the South African government through its intelligence gathering machinery.

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<sup>54</sup> R. Morrell, *Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu*. *Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988. p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> The Nkomati Accord was a nonaggression treaty between South Africa and Mozambique concluded on 16 March 1984, under which they agreed not to give material aid to opposition movements in each other's countries. This in effect meant that South Africa pledged itself not to support Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), while Mozambique was committed not to help the then outlawed ANC. This event took place at the South African town of Komatipoort with the signatories being Samora Machel and P.W. Botha. See Nkomati Accord. Retrieved on 26 September 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/NkomatiAccord](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/NkomatiAccord)

<sup>56</sup> H. Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC*, p. 206.

The formation of national student bodies gave impetus to calls for reforms in education and student protest in South Africa. The fact that these student bodies had adopted the policies of the banned organisations, namely the ANC and PAC, lends credence to the fact that they received their mandates from their mother bodies. Black education was gradually becoming chaotic with sporadic and full blown school boycotts in some areas. The calls for reforms were consistent, and prominent among them was the call for a uniform system of education for all racial groups under one Minister of Education. It can be argued that the voting population in South Africa was not ready for such far-reaching reforms in education.

The sabotage of Sasol illustrated that the South African government was not only facing opposition internally, but from the exiled banned political organisations as well. This was accompanied by the gaining of independence by the neighboring states. It can be asserted that despite mounting pressure from both inside and outside the country, the government was not yet prepared to introduce any meaningful changes in education. This is attributed to the fact that instead of introducing reforms, the government was silencing dissenting voices through repressive measures and even went to an extent of entering into agreements with the neighboring states not to host banned South African extra-parliamentary organisations. It was evident that it would still take some time before the government yields to consequential reforms in education.

### **5.3 The De Lange Commission of Enquiry into education**

Following the stormy years from 1976 to mid 1980 the period to the end of 1983 was to prove a strange interlude in the history of education in South Africa. In June 1980 the cabinet requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct an in depth investigation into all facets of education in the Republic of South Africa.<sup>57</sup> The Council, in conjunction with all

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<sup>57</sup> Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council: Investigation into Education Provision in the Republic of South Africa. Commission chaired by Prof. J.P. De Lange, p. 1. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 6. M. Bot and L. Schlemmer, The Classroom Crisis: Black Demands and White Responses, p. 1. C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, p. 5. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 3. I. Moll, To Get Technical About Peoples' Education: A Response. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 86. J.A. Marcum, Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa, p. 115. E. Mokgokong, A Reformational Perspective of Educational Systems in Southern Africa. In Educational Challenges in Southern Africa in a Christian-Reformational Perspective. Papers Delivered at a Conference of the Institute for Reformational Studies. University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1987, p. 316.

interested parties, was to conduct a scientific and co-ordinated investigation and within twelve months make recommendations to the cabinet on:

- Guiding principles for a feasible education policy in the Republic of South Africa in order to allow for the realisation of the inhabitants potential, promote economic growth and improve quality of life.
- The organisation and control structure and financing of education.
- Machinery for consultation and decision making in education.
- An education infrastructure to provide for the manpower requirements of the Republic of South Africa and the self realisation of its inhabitants and
- A programme for making available education of the same quality for all population groups.<sup>58</sup>

The initiative of the government with this commission is commendable. The expected outcomes of the commission show its willingness to come up with far-reaching solutions to education in South Africa.

Members of the main committee were chosen to represent researchers, academics and decision makers concerned with the specific problem area being investigated. The leader of the investigation into education, Professor J.P. De Lange, Rector of the Rand Afrikaanse University, was appointed as a research leader. The main committee of the investigation into education had 26 members appointed in their personal capacity and the basis of their expertise in a particular research area. Members of the committee included representatives of interested government Departments, the private sector as well as eminent scientists from all the disciplines able to make a contribution to the development of education.<sup>59</sup> The broad selection of the members of

<sup>58</sup> M. Bot and L. Schlemmer, The Classroom Crisis: Black Demands and White Responses, p. 1. Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council: Investigation into Education Provision in the Republic of South Africa. Commission chaired by Prof. J.P. De Lange, p. 1. C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, p. 5. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council: Investigation into Education Provision in the Republic of South Africa. Commission chaired by Prof. J.P. De Lange, p. 2. C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, p. 7. A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988, p. 38.



the main committee illustrated the willingness of the government to hear diverse and meaningful views from people with the necessary expertise.

The HSRC investigation into education may be described as originating from widespread conflict and controversy surrounding education in South Africa at that time. Various matters were submitted to the Executive Committee during the three meetings that were held. The most important of these were the serious problems experienced in the education of Blacks and Coloureds and which resulted in the extensive school boycott during 1980.<sup>60</sup> The HSRC identified the following as problems giving rise to what had popularly been described as the 'education crisis' in South Africa:

- Unrest and upheavals, triggered by political and ideological differences and expectations, were apparent in Black and Coloured education.
- A period of economic prosperity led to the creation of many job opportunities in commerce and industry, resulting in trained teachers leaving their profession for more lucrative positions in other sectors, and a severe shortage of manpower in many sectors of the economy.
- The education system consisted of various Departments of Education created for different groups of users, but without adequate channels of communication and a basis for comparison between different authorities.
- There was also a need for communication between the providers of education and the users of education. The users of education who did not have access to education management by means of suffrage or direct representation were the most acutely affected by this lack of communication.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council: Investigation into Education Provision in the Republic of South Africa. Commission chaired by Prof. J.P. De Lange, p. 9. C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, p. 6. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, pp. 6-7. A.L. Behr, Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends: 1652- 1988, p. 38.

All these had been raised in different fora, debates and protests to varying degrees and emphasis. It was a bold step on the side of government to wish to unravel the challenges that plagued Black education in South Africa.

The executive committee decided to send a small delegation to those areas where the most serious education problems occurred – Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Bloemfontein, in order to investigate and report to the main committee concerning possible action. The visit lasted from Saturday, 1 November 1980 to Wednesday 5 November 1980. The delegation spoke to teachers, parents and other representatives of the population groups concerned, as well as officials of the education authorities concerned. Subsequently there was a further visit by the Chairman on 12 December 1980 to Cape Town in connection with the same matter. As a result of these visits a report was drawn up, which was discussed by the executive committee and submitted to the main committee. An important result of these visits was that the chairman of the main committee had an interview with the Minister responsible for DET, during which findings arrived at as a result of the investigation, were brought to the Minister's attention.<sup>62</sup> The interactive manner in which the Commission was gathering information would allow them to get to the bottom of the challenges in education. The fact that the chairman of the commission had access to the Minister would, no doubt, assist in the facilitation of the processes to arrive at possible solutions.

A seminar was held in August 1980 to which representatives from the public sector, the churches, education, professional organisations, employers, the mass media and community interest were invited. During the seminar a considerable degree of consensus on recognition of diversity and educational needs of the country was reached.<sup>63</sup> The principles, amongst others on which consensus was reached and which were recommended, were as follows:

- Equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education, for every inhabitant irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex, shall be the purposeful endeavour of the state.

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<sup>62</sup> Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council: Investigation into Education Provision in the Republic of South Africa. Commission chaired by Prof. J.P. De Lange, pp. 9-10.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

- Education shall afford positive recognition of what is common as well as what is diverse in the religious and cultural ways of life and languages of the inhabitants.<sup>64</sup>

It is fascinating to note that there was consistency in the reforms the Black South Africans wanted to see in their education. All seminars and debates were narrowing into the same recommendation, namely the provision of equal education for all regardless of race, colour or creed.

The work of the HSRC De Lange Committee has been viewed in many different ways: some saw it as a delaying tactic on the part of government; some as an attempt to dress up apartheid education in new structures – old wine in new bottles; some as an attempt to resolve at least some of the problems that had plagued education; others felt threatened by the direction it took. The De Lange Report was greeted variously with hope, caution, scepticism and cynicism. At best, most Black leaders, education and community organisations, adopted a wait-and-see stance, and not only in terms of what the committee would say, but more importantly how government would react and what it would do.<sup>65</sup> The school boycotts, however, continued, although the intensity abated and the numbers of learners involved, decreased. The period started with some hope, but ended with even greater frustration and with the renewal of popular resistance in even greater forms. Another opportunity on the part of government to address the fundamental issues in education had been lost.<sup>66</sup> The impasse in Black education, with its attendant protracted debates, had created an atmosphere of impatience and mistrust. This did

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), p. 7. K. Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990, p. 149. Rand Daily Mail, 24 November 1983. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6. A New Era in Education: Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA by R.L. Peteni, 4 January 1982. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. P. Buckland, HSRC Investigation into Education: Another Brick in the Wall? In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 66.

<sup>66</sup> K. Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990, p. 149. Rand Daily Mail, 24 November 1983. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6. A New Era in Education: Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA by R.L. Peteni, 4 January 1982. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22 – 25. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 6. P. Buckland, HSRC Investigation into Education: Another Brick in the Wall? In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 67.

not, however, justify renewed protests. The government had, with the establishment of the Commission, created a forum where all views could be heard.

According to Van Zyl the investigation was characterised by a sense of urgency because of the time limit imposed in the original cabinet request and also because of the socio-political circumstances that preceded and accompanied the investigation.<sup>67</sup> Several educationists and educational groupings working for educational and social reform supported the recommendations of the De Lange Commission. The principles that were supported included equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education for all population groups, and the establishment of a single Department of Education under one Minister to control all educational services. Organisations like ATASA noted with great disappointment that the government, in its White Paper, rejected outright the De Lange recommendation for a single Department of Education.<sup>68</sup> Even the harmless liberal, technocratic and ethnic recommendations of that Commission were partially rejected.<sup>69</sup> The White Paper provided for five Ministers of Education. There were to be three 'own affairs' Ministers in the proposed Coloured, Indian and White Councils of Ministers, a 'general affairs' Minister of Black education outside the homelands and a cabinet Minister administering 'general affairs' and 'macro policy.' Including the homelands, South Africa had 15 Ministers of Education and 19 education departments.<sup>70</sup> There would be no racial integration in schools. One race would not be allowed to use an empty

<sup>67</sup> C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, pp. 7-8.

<sup>68</sup> A New Era in Education, Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Conference of ATASA on 4 January 1982 by R.L. Peteni. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 4.22-25. R. Morrell, Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu. Transformation, Volume 7, 1988. p. 49. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 3. S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, pp. 115-116. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 11. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 3. F. de Clercq, High-skilled Manpower, Education and Work in Bophuthatswana. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, p. 112. E. Mokgokong, A Reformational Perspective of Educational Systems in Southern Africa. In Educational Challenges in Southern Africa in a Christian-Reformational Perspective. Papers Delivered at a Conference of the Institute for Reformational Studies. University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1987, p. 317.

<sup>69</sup> N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> A Policy Framework for Education and Training. Education Department, ANC, p. 20. Rand Daily Mail, 24 November 1983. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 9. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 3.

school or, more importantly, use existing empty training facilities of another race. This was eloquent lip service to the ideal of separate but equal education. Sustaining huge bureaucracies involved in the managing of separate education departments, required vast sums of money.<sup>71</sup> The disinclination of the government to implement the Commission's recommendations was a huge blow to the people who pinned their hopes on its outcomes. The failure of the government to implement these recommendations may be attributed to the fact that the South African voters were not ready for the implementation of these recommendations.

Reaction to the De Lange Report varied widely. Professor P.J. De Lange, who headed the Commission, described it as a 'major breakthrough,' while Black spokesmen and the Progressive Federal Party saw it as an entrenchment of apartheid.<sup>72</sup> Critics pointed out that this was compatible with separate education for different groups, and opposition to the enquiry was expressed from many quarters. One critical body was the newly formed National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA). At its conference in November 1981 NEUSA denounced the enquiry as "part of the Prime Minister's total strategy" and "a stalling tactic." It pointed out that the main committee directing the enquiry was top heavy with government supporters and that the enquiry was boycotted by most educational groups with Black grass roots support. NEUSA also said that the composition of the main committee and the mandate of the enquiry suggested that it would provide a solution to the problems of industry and commerce that did not tally with those of the learners.<sup>73</sup> The varied reaction to the Commission came as a result of the failure of the government to consult fully on the composition of the Commission's members. Whilst it is true that the Commission was made up of experts, it was perceived by some critics as not fully representative of the divergent ideological views in South Africa. This perceived shortcoming does not remove the fact that the De Lange Commission came up with the most progressive recommendations ever made by such a government sponsored structure in South Africa.

<sup>71</sup> The Star, 24 November 1983.

<sup>72</sup> The Star, 24 November 1983. Rand Daily Mail, 24 November 1983.

<sup>73</sup> South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. The Star, 17 May 1980. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 31.

The De Lange Commission report was tabled in 1981. The government's response was quick. Minister Gerrit Viljoen said, in substance, that the education dispensation could not be allowed to contradict the constitutional dispensation.<sup>74</sup> The message from the government's White Paper on the De Lange Report was that apartheid education was to stay, and so too was CNE. In so far as it accepted the enlightened recommendations of the De Lange Commission, the document represented some sort of progress. In other key respects it was a cynical rejection of the most crucial area of reform. When it asked the HSRC to investigate the nation's education services, the government was responding to Black rejection of Bantu Education and discontent in other groups. The White Paper did little to defuse those issues.<sup>75</sup> It is surprising that the government would initiate such a positive investigation, spend a lot of money on its operations, only to reject its recommendations. The failure of the government in this regard could be attributed to the state of unreadiness of the White voters to accept reforms of this magnitude.

#### **5.4 The 1983 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the formation of extra-parliamentary organisations**

Another major aspect of the Botha government's plan to create racial harmony in South Africa was the "new deal" to be offered to Coloureds and Indians. Unlike the Black population these groups had no "homelands" to which they could be sent and eventually, if South Africa wanted to evade world condemnation, some solution had to be formulated for them. In 1976 the Cabinet appointed a Committee chaired by the then Minister of Defence, Mr P.W. Botha, to investigate "possible and desirable adjustments to the existing constitutional order... in respect of the two political systems for the Coloured and Indian communities." The resulting constitutional plan was endorsed by the four White NP provincial congresses, rejected by the Coloured Representative Council (albeit by the chairman's casting vote), and rejected unanimously by the South African Indian Council. Nonetheless in April 1979 it was put as a bill before Parliament.

<sup>74</sup> L.J. Sebidi, *The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead*. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 3. J.A. Marcum, Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa, p. 130.

<sup>75</sup> The Star, 24 November 1983. Rand Daily Mail, 24 November 1983. South Africa: 1980 School Boycott – A Review of a Year of Protest Against Apartheid Education. International Defence and Aid Fund Briefing Paper on Southern Africa. No. 1, March 1981. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116. The Star, 17 May 1980. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 115. J.A. Marcum, Education, Race and Social Change in South Africa, pp. 131-132.

The government appeared surprised by the amount of opposition its proposals provoked.<sup>76</sup> That the artificial accommodation of Coloureds and Indians in the political dispensation, whilst Blacks were to have their political say in the homelands, was rejected is not surprising. It was a long cherished ideal that there can be no equality in a separate political dispensation in South Africa. South Africans were clamouring for an all inclusive political dispensation, as opposed to a racially fragmented arrangement.

This Constitution Bill proposed a government consisting primarily of a State President and three separate "parliaments," one for Whites (the Assembly), one for Coloured people (the House of Representatives) and one for Indians (the Chamber of Deputies). Each group would elect their "own" parliaments separately. Thus, under the new constitution, there were three nominally separate parliaments, but they were in fact neither separate nor equal.<sup>77</sup> On 2 November 1983, a Whites-only referendum endorsed the new constitution. In terms of the 'new' *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act No. 110 of 1983*, all education for Whites came under the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly. In terms of the 1983 Constitution all education for Coloureds fell under the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Representative; whilst education for Indians fell under the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Delegates. Education for each population group was an 'own affair', which fell within the cultural and value framework of the group.<sup>78</sup> The purpose of *The Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983* was chiefly to accommodate the political aspirations of Coloureds and Indians by including them in a parliament consisting of three houses. Realising that there was no separate house for Blacks and because Blacks were not represented in parliament, the affairs of Blacks were therefore always 'general' affairs.<sup>79</sup> The endorsement of a new constitution by a Whites only referendum shows that the South African voters were not ready for a fully democratic dispensation.

With the establishment of the new education dispensation, all the components of White education that had been controlled by various bodies since 1910 were consolidated into one coordinating structure. In this way, those components which had been the responsibility of the

<sup>76</sup> J. Seidman, *Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto*, p. 33.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>78</sup> *Education Realities in South Africa 1991*, Report: Nated 02-300 (92/07). National Education Policy Branch, pp. 1-2. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 177.

<sup>79</sup> D. Marais, *South Africa: Constitutional Development, A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*, p. 66. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p.178.

Department of National Education, such as tertiary education, post-school education and specialised education, and those that were the responsibility of the four provincial administrations, such as teacher training and ordinary school education, were all placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly. The administration of all the Acts concerning White education was assigned to the Minister of Education and Culture, House of Assembly, with effect from 17 September 1984. In the same way, the administration of all the provisions of the provincial ordinances that concern White education was entrusted to the Minister of Education and Culture with effect from 1 April 1986.<sup>80</sup> The result was that the Department then had to administer various Acts, ordinances and separate sets of regulations. This could easily lead to difficulties because the provisions of ordinances and the related regulations on the same topic could in some instances not be the same, and could even be contradictory in certain respects.

The constitution completely excluded Blacks, who comprised four-fifths of the population. According to Odendaal the logic of apartheid suggested that Blacks were not part of South Africa and had to find their political homes in the ethnic Bantustans, governed by often disreputable government collaborators. The government hoped to get rid of the 'Black problem' by giving the various homelands independence, and thereby turning Blacks into foreigners in the land of their birth.<sup>81</sup> In opposition to this over 600 of the extra parliamentary organisations came together in the UDF. This opposition was accompanied by an expansion and intensification of mass involvement in political action. Politics was conducted through mass funerals, consumer boycotts, rent boycotts, large-scale street demonstrations, very widely supported stay-at-home and similar activities. In this way the masses became a structural component of the political arena. During this period too, the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe increased its striking power and there was an escalation of armed actions. Political opposition to the government began to take the shape of an insurrectionary rebellious movement. This was expressed in two ways: firstly, by the rejection, in the Black townships, of the organs of local and central government, and secondly by the establishment of rudimentary centres of people's

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<sup>80</sup> The Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly) 1988 and its Related Regulations. Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly.

<sup>81</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 178.



power in street committees, people's courts and people's education.<sup>82</sup> The failure of the 1983 Constitution to accommodate all population groups in any meaningful way in the South African political dispensation was a recipe for intense political mobilisation. This resistance manifested itself in the rejection of state organs in Black townships and the creation of alternative centres of power.

The idea of forming a new popular front rather than a political organisation to unite protest inside South Africa was first discussed by the ANC in 1981. Two years later, when the government published its proposals for a constitution giving Coloureds and Indians a limited role in the legislature but excluding Blacks, a prominent Coloured priest, Dr Allan Boesak,<sup>83</sup> head of the Geneva-based World Alliance of Reformed Churches, called a meeting at Mitchells Plains, a township near Cape Town. It drew an enthusiastic crowd of 12 000, many clutching copies of the Freedom Charter and displaying ANC colours. Delegates representing some 300 civic associations, churches, trade unions, learner organisations and sport bodies launched the UDF, the widest alliance of anti-apartheid opposition ever seen in the country.<sup>84</sup> In January 1983 Allan Boesak, speaking at the conference of the Anti-South African Indian Council campaign, called for the formation of a front to oppose the government's tri-cameral constitutional proposals. This call was later expanded to include opposition to new influx control laws and

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<sup>82</sup> V. McKay (ed.), *A Sociology of Educating*, p. 16. M. Swilling, *The United Democratic Front and Township revolt*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/revolt.html>. V. Taylor, *Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement*, p. 62. M.O. Nkomo, *Apartheid Education in Crisis*. *Trans Africa Forum*, A Quarterly Journal of Opinion of Africa and the Caribbean, Vol. 3. Number, Fall 1985, p. 71. Looking Back on 1985: On the March to Peoples' Power. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Lalu Premesch Collection, MCH 62-4. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 13. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, pp. 3-4. J. Wright, *Popularizing the Precolonial Past: Politics and Problems*. History Workshop Paper. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 47.

<sup>83</sup> Allan Boesak. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/) and Allan Boesak. Encyclopedia Britannica online. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.britannica.com/eb/article-9080384/Allan-Boesak](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9080384/Allan-Boesak)

<sup>84</sup> W.J. Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom*, p. 193. H. Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC*, p. 199. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Papi Kganare, ANC Activist and Former Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in the Free State. Bloemfontein, 5 September 2008.

local government structures for Blacks, based on the 'Koornhof Bills.'<sup>85</sup> The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 was particularly isolated for attack: it provided for the establishment of autonomous municipal institutions in the Black townships.<sup>86</sup>

The UDF's aims, indistinguishable from those of the ANC, except in their repudiation of violence, were supported by underground ANC members as well as by many among the Black Consciousness generation of the 1970s. Sixty-nine year-old Archibald Gumede, an ANC veteran whose father, Josiah, had been founder member of the ANC in 1912, was elected president of the new umbrella organisation. Boesak was elected a patron, as were Nelson Mandela,<sup>87</sup> Govan Mbeki,<sup>88</sup> Walter and Albertina Sisulu<sup>89</sup> and Helen Joseph.<sup>90</sup> The General Secretary was thirty-one year old Popo Molefe,<sup>91</sup> the son of parents too poor to send him to school until he was ten. As head prefect at Soweto's Naledi High School during 1976, he was at the forefront of the learner rebellion, which resulted in his detention for seven months.<sup>92</sup>

Initially, the UDF was meant to be little more than the sum of its affiliated parts. But the vacuum of above-board, nation-wide resistance politics in the still repressive early 1980s, quickly propelled the UDF into becoming more than this. From the very beginning, it was an open secret that the UDF was ANC-aligned. It was a front of affiliates, but it was also a legal and more or less self-conscious front for the banned ANC, standing in, but without claiming to substitute for

<sup>85</sup> The Koornhof Bills included the Black Local Authorities Act; the Black Communities Development Act and the Orderly Movement and Resettlement of Black Persons Bill. The Black Local Authorities in the urban townships were given a degree of 'autonomy' and were presented as a partial substitute for representation at parliamentary level. These local authorities enabled the state to shift the administration of apartheid policies to the African councillors in the townships. The provisions of the Orderly Movement and Resettlement of Black Persons Bill entrenched divisions between urban and migrant African workers by providing stricter influx control measures. See C. Twala, *The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics?* *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 39. Piet Koornhof. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>86</sup> C. Twala, *The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics?* *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 39. M. Swilling, *The United Democratic Front and Township revolt*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/revolt.html>

<sup>87</sup> Nelson Mandela. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. 29 May 2008, [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela) Nelson Mandela. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mandela.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mandela.html) Nelson Mandela. 29 Retrieved on May 2008. [www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html)

<sup>88</sup> Govan Mbeki. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Govan_Mbeki)

<sup>89</sup> Albertina Sisulu. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albertina_Sisulu) and Walter Sisulu. Retrieved on 8 August 2008. [www.africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-WalterSisulu.htm](http://www.africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-WalterSisulu.htm)

<sup>90</sup> Helen Joseph. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Joseph)

<sup>91</sup> Popo Molefe. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popo_Molefe)

<sup>92</sup> H. Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC*, p. 200.

it. However, not all ANC-supporting structures inside the country joined the UDF, or initially accepted it as a national co-ordinating structure of Charterist forces. This was partly related to the initial campaigning focus of the UDF. While the UDF always acknowledged Black leadership prominent in the struggle of the Black people, defeating the apartheid government's tri-cameral initiative required significant emphasis on the Coloured and Indian communities. Following the overwhelming boycott of the tri-cameral elections, the UDF's prestige and standing were enhanced.<sup>93</sup> The government's strategy of creating a tri-cameral parliamentary dispensation led to the formation of the UDF, which whilst it was Charterist in character, it was preoccupied with frustrating tri-cameral elections. The UDF intensified the levels of mass mobilisation in the country.

The launch of the UDF in August 1983 came as a direct result of a strategic decision by the liberation movement to intensify the levels of mass resistance inside the country. This was one pillar of a four-pronged strategy to finally bring the apartheid government to its knees.<sup>94</sup> The other pillars were the armed struggle; sanctions and the mobilization of the international community against the apartheid government, and the development of the internal political underground. As the armed struggle was escalated and the international campaign to isolate the government gathered steam, the need for greater internal resistance became more and more urgent, although any link between the UDF and the ANC had to be publicly denied for security reasons. The immediate objectives of the UDF were to pressurise the apartheid government to release the leadership of the people from prison, to unban liberation movements and people's organisations, allow South African exiles to return home, and to start meaningful negotiations to establish a free, non-racial, non-sexist democratic society. The genesis of the UDF was a call by the ANC in exile under the leadership of O.R. Tambo,<sup>95</sup> for all South Africans to form a united

<sup>93</sup> Sowetan, 21 August 2003. J. Seekings, "The UDF – A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991." Retrieved on 26 January 2005.

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/history.html>. C. Twala, The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics? Journal for Contemporary History. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 39. N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), p. 4. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

<sup>94</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. F. Chikane, The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Retrieved on 26 January 2005.

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>.

<sup>95</sup> Oliver Tambo. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mahlangu](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mahlangu)

front to resist the government that was becoming more repressive and brutal by the day in the run up to the implementation of a new tri-cameral Parliament under a new South African constitution. In January 1983, cadres of the movement within the country held quiet discussions and made secret preparations. In January 1983 the internal movement made the public call for the formation of a united democratic front to resist the new 1983 apartheid constitution.<sup>96</sup> The fight for a free, non-racial, non-sexist democratic society was complicated by calls for sanctions, mobilization against apartheid, the armed struggle and internal political underground. This approach lent credence to the fear of Botha's government that a 'total onslaught' was being prepared against White rule.

An intense culture of resistance developed in the mid 1980s, with school children especially active. Campuses also became more radical, with university students active in protests. The End Conscription Campaign encouraged increasing numbers of Whites to refuse to serve in the armed forces, even at the risk of a six year prison sentence. At the same time, moral and active support was given to the anti-apartheid movement by Christian and Muslim bodies, especially the SACC led by Bishop Desmond Tutu<sup>97</sup> from 1978. The activities of learners, civil institutions and trade unions in the whole country reinforced one another in the intensification of the liberation struggle in the 1980s. The civics provided another base for resistance. In the seventies small organisations had developed in particular neighbourhoods to campaign for better living standards. They became known as 'civics' and fought for local causes such as better council-house maintenance or for changes in the due dates of electricity accounts. The growth in the number of civics and their common focus on rent increases, gave them a collective energy that was intrinsic to the formation of the UDF led by Allan Boesak. This organisation provided powerful coordination of the various organisations engaged in the struggle against apartheid during the 1980s.<sup>98</sup> It was this intense culture of resistance, with school children active, that brought vigilant political consciousness to civic, Christian and Muslim bodies. This solidarity

<sup>96</sup> V. Taylor, *Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement*, p. 62. F. Chikane, *The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF)*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>.

<sup>97</sup> Desmond Tutu. Retrieved on 30 May 2008. [www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html)

<sup>98</sup> Apartheid: Resistance in the 1980s. Retrieved on 16 January 2005.

[http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart\\_1980s.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/apart_1980s.htm), p. 1. W.J. Pomeroy, *Apartheid, Imperialism and African Freedom*, p. 193. H. Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the ANC*, p. 199. D. Masekela, 'Economic Change, Social Conflict and Education in Apartheid South Africa,' p. 2.

reinforced the intensification of the liberation struggle in South Africa. This new political dimension brought considerable pressure on the government.

In response to all the education struggles of the learners for an alternative system of education, AZASM and COSAS agreed to work towards the Education Charter in an attempt to put all the demands of the learners, parents, teachers, workers and churches together so that it can serve as an alternative in the present education system. The Education Charter emphasized that the separate and inferior system of education for the majority of the people of South Africa entrenched inferior and undemocratic ideas. It maintained that the unequal education, which learners continue to reject further, deepened the crisis in education. The learners argued in the Charter that the so-called reforms in education, including the De Lange proposals and the White Paper, were measures to ensure the continued survival of apartheid education. They argued that education must be based on the needs and serve the interests of the people, and must be accessible to all regardless of colour, creed, sex or age.<sup>99</sup>

It was the aim of the learners to collect the demands of the people regarding education, through the process of widespread consultation and to draw up a guideline for a future education system in a democratic South Africa that would satisfy the needs of all the people. Advocacy campaigns were run throughout the country to see that there was a general understanding and identification with the Education Charter. The Education Charter campaign was a project by learners and some teachers intended to make learners, teachers and the community to appreciate and embrace the ideals of the Charter. The ideas of the Education Charter were conceived against the background of a prolonged and bitter struggle against education and oppression. The Education Charter and the Education Charter campaign made a significant contribution to the education struggle and the final realization of 'People's Education.'<sup>100</sup> According to Hartshorne, given the dangers inherent in special interests gaining control of state education systems, the needs and

<sup>99</sup> S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 115.

<sup>100</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Thabo Masukela, Former Member of the South African National Students' Congress (SANSCO) and Former Free State Provincial Secretary of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). Bloemfontein, 19 September 2008. The Education Charter. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.3. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 13. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, pp. 3-4. J. Wright, *Popularizing the Precolonial Past: Politics and Problems*. History Workshop Paper. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 47.

aspirations of individuals will best be met where the form of the state is that of a democracy. Where the 'users,' namely, learners, teachers, parents and the community, of the education system have been involved and have participated in the process leading up to the decisions that are made on education, there is a greater likelihood of broad acceptance of the system.<sup>101</sup> It was a rare and unique situation that learners were to draw guidelines for a future education system that would satisfy the needs of all the people. This was no mean feat, under normal circumstances this was an assignment to be executed by education planners, academics and politicians. This highlights the abnormal situation in South African education at the time.

The year 1983 saw the emergence of two new legal political coalitions: the UDF and the National Forum (NF). Both were formed to confront the state's economic and political reforms, especially the Whites-only referendum on the proposed constitution for a tri-cameral parliament. Although careful to distinguish itself from the ANC, the UDF identified with longstanding ANC goals for a non-racial, unitary democratic government for South Africa. By 1986 the UDF had nearly 700 affiliates, including community organisations, women's groups, labour unions, youth leagues and religious bodies. Its structure was deliberately decentralised and diffuse. The National Forum was in the Africanist or 'black power' tradition of Black consciousness, and had considerably less following. COSAS affiliated with the UDF, and AZASM with the National Forum.<sup>102</sup> The fact that the government had banned the ANC and PAC in the early 1960s, and its continued unwillingness to bring meaningful reform, encouraged Black people to organise themselves into structures that espoused the same political ideals with the banned organisations.

The UDF grew by leaps and bounds, with community and developmental organisations from far and near heeding the call to unite against the repressive machinery of the apartheid system. The exponential growth of the UDF meant that by 1984 the seemingly invincible security police could no longer effectively monitor the activities of the UDF. Harsh repression gave impetus to the establishment of proper operational mechanisms for the organisation. The so-called "M-Plan," originally devised by Mandela in the 1940s, took on a new meaning with the creation of street and block committees in townships and suburbs across the country. In many ways this

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<sup>101</sup> K. Hartshorne, *The Making of Education Policy in South Africa*, p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 313. V. Brittain and A.S. Minty (eds.), *Children of Resistance: Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa*, p. 102. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, *School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education*, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.

system represented the best expression of participatory democracy and served as the most effective communication mechanism at the time when the repressive machinery of the government was at its worst.<sup>103</sup> The launch of the UDF filled a gap that had been left by the banning of the ANC and PAC. This is evidenced by the exponential growth of the UDF and the use of the strategies that had been used by the banned, exile or imprisoned leaders of the extra-parliamentary organisations.

Resistance became increasingly effective because of the UDF's capacity to provide a national political and ideological centre. However, the township revolt was not caused by strategies formulated and implemented by UDF national leadership. With the exception of key national campaigns, for an example, the Black local authorities election boycotts of 1983-1984 and the anti-tri-cameral parliament campaigns, the driving force of resistance came from below, as communities responded to their terrible living conditions and sub standard education provided by the government. As these local struggles spread, the UDF played an important role in putting forward common national demands for dismantling apartheid. Black communities were drawn into a national movement that believed the transfer of political power to representatives of the majority was a precondition for the realisation of basic economic demands. These included, but were not limited to, decent shelter, cheap transport, proper health care, adequate education, the right to occupy land and the right to a living wage.<sup>104</sup> Whilst it is true that Black people were fighting for the same socio-economic standing with the racial groups, equal education seems to be the common rallying point for which people were fighting. This is not surprising as education is the key that could unlock all other avenues of life.

As the state became more repressive, churches became a place of refuge for the movement, offering facilities for meetings, places for hiding and care services for the displaced. At other times some churches made available secret locations for those who were being hunted by the security police. When the publication of detentions and the naming of detainees were criminalised, churches used moments of prayer to announce the names of detainees and those

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<sup>103</sup> V. Taylor, *Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement*, p. 62. F. Chikane, *The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF)*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005.  
<http://anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>

<sup>104</sup> T. Matona, *Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985*. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 9. M. Swilling, *The United Democratic Front and Township revolt*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005.  
<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/revolt.html>

who had disappeared. And when calling protest marches was criminalised, the religious sector organised marches at which the leadership of the people were protected by the multitudes surrounding them.<sup>105</sup> The implementation of the 1983 constitution, designed to consolidate the apartheid system, and imposed against the will of the people in 1984, forced the UDF to move beyond just protest. The masses were mobilised to resist being governed by a government based on a constitution they had rejected. The Black townships terminated their relationship with the local government administrations and all institutions of the state, including Police Stations. They stopped paying rentals and service charges for water, refuse removal and electricity to the local administrations. Those who had housing bonds with the Black Administration Boards stopped paying their monthly instalments. This action spilled over to bonds held with private banks. To some extent, people also stopped paying other national taxes. A rousing slogan at the time was: "No cooperation with the oppressor" reflecting a determination to refuse to be governed by an illegitimate government.<sup>106</sup> The use of some churches as places of refuge by the freedom fighters resulted in the government losing a very important ally. The church, according to its founding principles, supports the government of the day in the execution of its responsibilities. The support of the church for the cause of freedom fighters gave impetus to the ideals for which the Black population was fighting for. This was to an extent that people in Black townships terminated their relationship with organs of state. The voice and influence of the UDF in the Black townships increasingly had more weight than that of the government.

The leadership of the UDF always saw themselves as the interim leaders of the movement in the context of the banning of the peoples' organisations and imprisonment of the leaders. The UDF leadership saw themselves as "holding the fort" for the leadership in jail or in exile. It is interesting to note that when the UDF leadership interacted with the leadership of the ANC outside the country, they discovered that the leadership also operated on the basis that it was an interim leadership waiting for the release of their imprisoned leaders. The leadership of UDF is credited for deferring leadership to other sectors of leadership of the movement as a whole

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<sup>105</sup> T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 11. F. Chikane, The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>

<sup>106</sup> J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 31. F. Chikane, The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>



rather than pursuing sectarian or sectional interests.<sup>107</sup> The fact that UDF leaders perceived themselves as interim leaders was created by the 'power vacuum' that came as a result of a breakdown of relationships between the state organs and the people in the townships.

The formation of the UDF in 1983 had a profound impact on NUSAS and students on its university campuses at the time. From the late 1970s, the Freedom Charter had become a key mobilising document for NUSAS, providing a compelling vision of non-racial, democratic South Africa for White students. But it was with the formation of the UDF that it became possible for NUSAS to turn to the non-racialism of the Freedom Charter from a matter of principle, to a matter of practice for large numbers of students. NUSAS joined the rapidly generated, unprecedented and nation-wide mobilization of the UDF against apartheid. NUSAS joined with hundreds of other organisations throughout the country to form the UDF. It faced the key challenge of ensuring that it retained the support of the majority of students on the White campuses for this decision, in the face of state-funded and organised right wing and liberal opposition.<sup>108</sup>

The reform programme of the 1980s began easing some of the racial restrictions, but the pace did not satisfy the ANC, and wide-scale violence committed by extremists of both sides took hundreds of lives. To a certain extent violence was seen as an effective means of achieving change on the side of State opponents, and a means of crushing resistance on the part of the state. Even though the government of P.W. Botha seemed committed to ending apartheid, opponents of the system demanded more reforms and at a faster pace.<sup>109</sup> The government, unable to offer a reform programme acceptable to the popular organisations, attempted to meet these developments by a further concentration of power. The state presidency was redefined.

<sup>107</sup> F. Chikane, The Origins and Significance of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/origins.html>.

<sup>108</sup> M.O. Nkomo, Apartheid Education in Crisis. *Trans Africa Forum*, A Quarterly Journal of Opinion of Africa and the Caribbean, Vol. 3. Number, Fall 1985, p. 71. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 12. K. Philip, NUSAS and the UDF. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo19/nusas.html>.

<sup>109</sup> C. Twala, The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics? *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 40. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 155. T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 22. Sanctions Against Apartheid. <http://exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/PUBS/AmLn/br56.htm>, p 1.

Considerable power was concentrated in this office and in a number of appointed committees, such as the President's Council, the State Security Council and Interdepartmental Committees comprising senior civil servants, military appointees and various designated experts. Legislation and policy formulation originated in these apparatuses.<sup>110</sup> The cabinet and the various houses of the tri-cameral parliament were accorded only the power to approve the decisions of these bodies and, if they failed to do so, could be overridden by the President's Council. In 1985 the government declared a state of emergency. This increased the already considerable powers of coercive apparatuses, rendering them virtually, although by no means completely, immune from judicial restraint.<sup>111</sup> In the light of the mounting pressure from the ANC and the Black community, and the apparent indisposition of the White voters to bring wholesale and far reaching reforms; the government was compelled to consolidate its position.

In 1985, the NUSAS July festival was due to be opened by Matthew Goniwe,<sup>112</sup> speaking about the remarkable levels of community organisation in the small towns of the Eastern Cape. Instead, the conference opened with the news of his disappearance. And then 'during the conference, that his body, together with the bodies of Fort Calata,<sup>113</sup> Sparrow Mkhonto<sup>114</sup> and Scelo Mhlauli had been found on a back road outside Port Elizabeth, assassinated by apartheid forces. Their funeral attracted hundreds of thousands of people to the small town of Cradock. The exuberant presence of mass organisation in early stages of UDF was forced into semi-clandestine forms of operations. Many activists were targeted and killed. Attending mass funerals of the victims of state violence became a form of solidarity in its own right. As community leadership was forced on the retreat, the state nurtured forms of vigilantism and

<sup>110</sup> V. McKay (ed.), *A Sociology of Educating*, p. 16. L. Schlemmer, South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhoodie and M Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> V. McKay (ed.), *A Sociology of Educating*, p. 16. C. Twala, The Emergence of the Student and Youth Resistance Organizations in the Free State Townships during the 1980s: A Viable Attempt to Reorganize Protest Politics? *Journal for Contemporary History*. University of the Free State, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2007. p. 40. L. Schlemmer, South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhoodie and M Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 3. C.P. de Kock, South Africa in the Nineties: Violence as an Option? In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhoodie and M Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 39. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 21.

<sup>112</sup> Matthew Goniwe. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders-list.asp?show=183](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders-list.asp?show=183)

<sup>113</sup> Fort Calata. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders-list.asp?shows=138](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders-list.asp?shows=138)

<sup>114</sup> Profile of Sparrow Mkhonto. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders-list.asp?show=140](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/orders-list.asp?show=140)

internecine violence.<sup>115</sup>

On 3 September 1984, the tri-cameral system and the executive President were inducted with pomp and ceremony. On the same day, rioting erupted in the Vaal Triangle. Angry crowds, which included the learners, took to the streets. They killed people who were viewed as government collaborators, stoned vehicles, burned government buildings and cars, and looted shops and businesses, many of which were owned by Black local government councillors. Newspaper reports called this the 'bloodiest day' since Soweto 1976. The Vaal uprisings, as they became known, ushered in a new phase of militancy and resistance in South Africa. Over the next few years urban insurrection became endemic. Militant youths, armed with stones and petrol bombs, embarked on a crude guerrilla struggle against well-armed government forces. State authority collapsed completely in many townships. South Africa was in the grips of low-intensity war. From its source in the Vaal Triangle, the hurricane swept from region to region, eventually touching every corner of South Africa. Black children crippled the Black education system, a source of chronic dissatisfaction since the Soweto uprising. By mid-1985, resistance was deepening into open insurrection. The State, its reform programme in tatters, was on the defensive. Following ANC strategy, the revolts were leading to 'ungovernability' in the townships.<sup>116</sup> The situation in the country had gone out of control. It had become increasingly impossible to govern. With many lives lost, the situation getting from bad to worse and the reform programme in shambles; the government was left with limited options. It is not surprising that the government implemented the state of emergency.

### **5.5 Calls for "liberation first, education later" and the deepening crisis in education**

Under pressure from learners, as well as out of the momentum of their own grievances, trade unions, community organisations, and other political groups were compelled to express their

<sup>115</sup> K. Philip, NUSAS and the UDF. Retrieved on 26 January 2005.

[http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo\\_19/nusas.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pubs/umrabulo/umrabulo_19/nusas.html). V. Brittain and A.S. Minty (eds.), *Children of Resistance: Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa*, p. 106. L. Schlemmer, *South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future*. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhodie and M. Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, pp. 181-182. T. Matona, *Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985*. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 22. V. Brittain and A.S. Minty (eds.), *Children of Resistance: Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa*, p. 106. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, *School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia*. *Perspectives in Education*, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 20.

solidarity with the learners. Gradually, and sometimes linking their struggles to those of the wider community, learners became 'the foot soldiers' of a battle for control of the township streets 'and the spearhead of a national political crisis,' the scope and intensity of which were unprecedented. The learners adopted the slogan "Liberation first, Education later," and their boycotts of schools were no longer a tactic, but a test of loyalty to the revolution and a way of life.<sup>117</sup> This slogan suggested that learners assumed that the apartheid state was on the verge of collapse and that the liberation was imminent, whereas in reality this was not the case. It also suggested that the learners regarded the boycott as an end in itself rather than a means to an end. The primary concern was that any political gains resulting from the boycott were overshadowed by its detrimental effects on the education of learners, both in the short and long term.<sup>118</sup> The more prolonged the crisis, the more militant were the learner reactions, widening to mass demonstrations and occupation of schools closed by the authorities, to burning of beer halls, government buildings and the homes of municipal councillors, to barricading streets and attacking police vehicles. The youth created a political culture that was characterised by ANC slogans, songs and symbols; together with the use of mock guerrilla uniforms and toy guns at funerals and demonstrations. The government responded by closing more educational institutions, by arresting massive numbers of learners and other youth activists, and by dismissing teachers or forcing their transfers. Troops occupied schools and then larger areas of the townships, and fired on demonstrators in the streets.<sup>119</sup> The unprecedented national political crisis and the suicidal stance of "liberation first, education later" created a situation of anarchy. The self-defeating approach of wanting liberation first and education later destroyed the academic prospects of many talented children.

<sup>117</sup> N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), pp. 15-16. J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 315. A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992, p. 4. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Thabo Masukela, Former Member of the South African National Students' Congress (SANSCO) and Former Free State Provincial Secretary of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). Bloemfontein, 19 September 2008.

<sup>118</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21. N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), pp. 15-16.

<sup>119</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 315. Sowetan, 19 September 1984.

The slogan 'liberation before education' was condemned as wrong by Curtis Nkondo, President of the National Education Union of South Africa, and other prominent Black leaders because it did not take into account the role of education in shaping society. Nkondo maintained that education could be used to fight for democracy and freedom, but governments could also use it to suppress the masses. According to Nkondo the White education system was far superior to that for Blacks, but both education systems were 'rotten.' With White education indoctrinating and preparing people to rule, govern or manage, with the result that the majority of Whites shun manual labour. Nkondo argued that the dividing line between manual labour and mental work should be removed. This was because as long as South Africa had this line, it would have a class society.<sup>120</sup> The calls of some leaders to respect the opportunity of children to learn brought moderation in an almost chaotic situation.

The unrest situation in the townships often turned ugly. This was because many people became victims of the thug element as some took advantage of the riot situation to settle old scores, or simply to rob or kill. People were dragged out of taxis and assaulted, cars were stoned indiscriminately by youth, the burning and looting of company vehicles continued, shops were attacked, tear smoke and rubber bullets were fired and confrontations between police and youth continued. Bus companies withdrew their buses in some areas and buses entered some areas escorted by police vehicles. Vans that delivered supplies to some Black townships could not enter, as many of those that dared to enter were stoned. Most businesses were closed and commerce came to a virtual standstill.<sup>121</sup> Tensions were rife throughout the townships hit by school boycotts and many homes were fraught with conflict. Many parents were sympathetic to the serious educational problems which learners faced daily at schools, but criticised the means used by their children to try and solve them. They felt learners were being misguided and misdirected to stay away from school and that their future was being jeopardised. Some parents were concerned that their children who were boycotting classes were unaware of their reasons for doing so. Some learners who did not take part in the boycotts feared reprisals from their classmates, who viewed them as 'traitors' or 'sell outs' who supported the system. Children were frightened to carry their schoolbooks and to wear school uniforms for fear of being

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<sup>120</sup> Sowetan, 14 October 1987. M. Nkomo, Education for Blacks in South Africa: Deconstructing the Myths. United Nations Centre Against Apartheid. 20/86, October 1986, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> Sowetan, 19 September 1984.

attacked on the streets.<sup>122</sup> Most responsible leaders, with a moderate political view, condemned any act of violence. There were fears that these acts of violence could end up being counter-productive, and smear the name and image of the organisations that set up acts of defiance.<sup>123</sup> Learner leaders had missed the plot on their stance of “liberation before education” as they lost the support of potential supporters because of their apparent recklessness. Education, however inferior, cannot be discarded without replacing it with any form of education that would satisfy the developmental needs of children. Leaving children idle, roaming the streets of their townships was suicidal. In the absence of parental and teacher supervision, many children would be prone to hooliganism, unwanted pregnancies and a plethora of deviant behaviour. Parents and community leaders would not support this situation. With this approach learner leaders were bound to lose some allies.

In resolute action extra parliamentary organisations had made parts of South Africa ungovernable and smashed the apartheid system of government in the Black ghettos by evolving their own rudimentary organs of people’s power. They engaged in mass action around all issues affecting Black people and created combat groups and mobile units to defend themselves and their leaders by confronting the army, police, death squads, agents and stooges in Black communities. It was the view of some in the extra parliamentary organisations that it was time to take the war to the White area. They maintained that White South Africa could not be at peace while the Black townships were in flames.<sup>124</sup>

Taking the war to the White areas meant, amongst others,

- Strengthening the workers organisations and engaging in united action in the factories, mines, farms and suburbs.
- Spreading the consumer boycott to all areas of the country.

<sup>122</sup> T. Matona, Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 6. Rand Daily Mail, 19 September 1984.

<sup>123</sup> L. Schlemmer, South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhodie and M. Wiechers, South Africa in the Nineties, p. 3. Sowetan, 18 September 1984.

<sup>124</sup> Take the Struggle to the White Areas: Make the Whole of South Africa Ungovernable! Paralyse Apartheid! Leaflet Distributed Inside South Africa in the Latter Half of 1985. University of Fort Hare. Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/pamph/pam8500.php>. V. Taylor, Social Mobilisation: Lessons from the Mass Democratic Movement, p. 176.

- Planning organised and well-planned demonstrations in the White suburbs and central business districts.
- Forming underground units and combat groups in places of work and taking such actions as sabotage in the factories, mines, farms and suburbs, and disrupting the enemy's oil, energy, transport, communications and other vital systems.
- Systematic attacks against the army and police and the so-called area defence units in the White areas.
- Well planned raids on the armouries and arms dumps of the army, police, farmers and so on to secure arms for the armed liberation forces.<sup>125</sup>

It can be argued that the strategy to take the war to the White areas could only succeed in the factories, mines and central business districts because of the number of Blacks in these areas and union organisation. Any attempts to employ the same strategies on White owned farms and suburbs would result in bloodshed as Whites could claim that this was an invasion of their private space.

It was the view of the liberation organisations that White democrats and all anti-apartheid Whites had a role to play in taking the war to the White areas. They therefore resolved to spread the voice of democracy far and wide through the anti-apartheid organisations and win over as many Whites as possible to the side of freedom and non-racialism. They planned to intensify their campaigns against conscription, repression, the tri-cameral system, racist education and the mass carnage by the army and police in the townships. They planned to dissuade those who served in the apartheid parliament and claimed to stand for democracy by making them realise that apartheid could not be changed from within. These were to be recruited into the democratic movement. An appeal was to be made to those that served in the armed forces to refuse to shoot their fellow country men, and turn their weapons against the apartheid engineers who kill and maim the Black majority.<sup>126</sup> Moroe says this period was also characterised by attacks on Whites

<sup>125</sup> T. Matona, *Student Organisation and Political Resistance in South Africa: An Analysis of the Congress of South African Students, 1979-1985*. Unpublished Honours in Political Studies Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 5. *Take the Struggle to the White Areas: Make the Whole of South Africa Ungovernable! Paralyse Apartheid!* Leaflet Distributed Inside South Africa in the Latter Half of 1985. University of Fort Hare. Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/pamph/pam8500.php>.

<sup>126</sup> *Take the Struggle to the White Areas: Make the Whole of South Africa Ungovernable! Paralyse Apartheid!* Leaflet Distributed Inside South Africa in the Latter Half of 1985. University of Fort Hare. Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/pamph/pam8500.php>.

with the public places patronised by them targeted for 'terrorist' assaults. The race relations in the country were polarised to an extent that the safety of ordinary civilians was not guaranteed.<sup>127</sup> The sympathy of Whites to the plight of Blacks could only be won through persuasion. Any attempts to use force in the suburbs and farms would lead into unprecedented mayhem and civil war, in a country where race relations were already polarised.

In mid-1986, after a decade and a half of increasing conflict and nearly two years of open rebellion, political analysts typified South Africa as being in a state of violent equilibrium. This was because of the attempts at the final push for democracy. The liberation movement held the political initiative, enjoying mass support and legitimacy, but lacked the power to topple the state. The government lacked legitimacy, but controlled the levers of an advanced industrial economy, and a strong state apparatus, including loyal armed forces. It was increasingly obvious that a political solution was needed to break the violent stalemate.<sup>128</sup>

It would be interesting to look at some of the editorial comment in the South African English and Afrikaans press about that time. *The Citizen* predictably defended the policies and actions of the government. The editorial of this newspaper said:

The radicals...pose a challenge to the government, which will force it to respond with drastic action to prevent the situation from getting out of hand...It cannot allow the economy of the country to be disrupted.<sup>129</sup>

Disruption of the economy of the country would have far reaching effects on South Africa and the other countries in the region. Looking at the hardships that would result from an economic collapse, the government had no option but to prevent the situation from getting out of hand.

Other papers took a different line. *The Cape Argus* called for an investigation into the causes of the unrest.<sup>130</sup> The Sunday Times of 11 November went further:

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<sup>127</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

<sup>128</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, pp. 185.186.

<sup>129</sup> *The Citizen*, 9 November 1984.

<sup>130</sup> *The Cape Argus*, 14 November 1984.



The times...demand from government bold moves to redress genuine black grievances.<sup>131</sup>

The *Sunday Tribune* of the same date was most forthright of all. It said:

The answer is simple: Blacks want a meaningful say in the future of the country. White decisions imposed on Blacks still continue, but should have stopped years ago when even the densest of politician realised the homeland policy was a disaster.<sup>132</sup>

The *Vaderland* under the heading "Vlak van politieke geweld nou hoer" "Level of political violence higher now" (Freely translated) made an observation that political violence in South Africa was high and had gone out of control. It stated:

Die algemene indruk is dat 'n hoër vlak van politieke geweld in Suid-Afrika tans aanvaarbaar geword het. Meer as twintig mense het in politieke geweld in die week van die wegbly-aksie gesterf...Die optrede van die Weermag in 'n ondersteuningsrol toe die polisie woonbuurte in die Vaaldriehoek deursoek het, dui op die vlak van konflik wat reeds bereik is... Swart leiers maak uitsprake dat geweld onafwendbaar mag wees, terwyl die Regering sterk standpunt inneem dat wet en orde gehandhaaf sal word... In ingeligte kringe word vermoedens al sterker dat die Regering van plan is om sterk teen die UDF en verwante organisasies op te tree...<sup>133</sup>

*(The general impression is that a higher degree of political violence in South Africa has currently become acceptable. More than twenty people died in political violence during the stay-away action in the week.... The conduct of the Defence Force in a supporting role when the members of the police were searching townships in the Vaal Triangle, indicates the level of violence that has already been reached... Black leaders make pronouncements that violence may be inevitable, while the government has taken a strong stance that law and order will be upheld... In informed circles persons are*

<sup>131</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 11 November 1984.

<sup>132</sup> *Sunday Tribune*, 11 November 1984.

<sup>133</sup> *Die Vaderland*, 12 November 1984.

*beginning to suspect that the government is planning to act strongly against the UDF and related organisations...)* (Freely translated)

*Die Burger* looked at mechanisms that could be employed to find a lasting solution to the unique political situation in South Africa and the stumbling blocks that still stand on the way. *Die Burger* put it this way:

Behalwe dat vier nasionale state reeds onafhanklik geword het, besef die Regering dat oplossings gevind moet word vir die probleme rondom die politieke toekoms van swartmense wat blywend in Suid-Afrika woon. Die spesiale kabinetskomitee wat die saak ondersoek, is ten volle bewus van die omvang van sy taak. Beraadslaging duur voort oor die breedste moontlike spektrum en heelwat werk is reeds verrig en word verrig om geskikte politieke meganismes te vind wat vir die swart gemeenskappe aanvaarbaar sal wees. Daar is egter elemente wat uit hulle pad gaan om pogings te belemmer om vreedsame oplossings vir Suid-Afrika se unieke probleme te vind.<sup>134</sup>

*(Although four national states have already obtained independence, the government realises that solutions must be found for the problems around the political future of black people who want permanent residence in South Africa. The special committee of Cabinet which investigated this matter, is fully aware of the magnitude of its task. Consultation along the broadest possible spectrum continues, and a large amount of work has been executed and is still being executed to find suitable political mechanisms which will be acceptable to black communities. However, there are elements which are going out of their way to impede these attempts to find peaceful solutions to South Africa's unique problems.)* (Freely translated)

Whilst *The Citizen* and *Die Vaderland* newspapers looked at measures to be taken to deal with the effects of the continued unrest, *Die Burger*, *The Cape Argus*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Tribune* were looking at addressing the root cause of the unrest. In spite of all these calls upon it, the answer the government made to the situation was to intensify repression.

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<sup>134</sup> *Die Burger*, 10 November 1984.

### 5.6 The government counteroffensive strategy against opponents of apartheid

The mid 1980s were disastrous for the apartheid government. There had been a deepening dissatisfaction with government policies. The government tried to fall back onto a new set of defensive structures, through a mixture of reform and repression. While the government remained militarily powerful, politically and economically it was in deep trouble. On the economic front, South African capitalism was experiencing its worst crisis since the 1930s. The 'reform' strategy too was hit by the economic crisis. The government's ability to pay for the 'reforms' it hoped to implement was curtailed. In turn the failure of the 'reforms' to gain any legitimacy worsened the economic situation by lessening the prospect of getting favourable terms for overseas loans and debt repayments.<sup>135</sup> The internal problems of South Africa were beginning to have a serious bearing on its international standing.

The government's reform programme was accompanied by a "counter-revolutionary strategy." According to the government opposition to its rule stemmed from the activities of a small number of revolutionaries or radicals who exploited the grievances that arose from inadequate living conditions. The answer was a three-pronged strategy: to remove the revolutionaries and radicals to restore law and order; to upgrade living conditions; and to create a constitutional dispensation in which the majority would participate without threatening white minority rule. The removal of 'radicals' was the key strategy as it would open the way for the 'moderates' who were ready to participate. On the political front the 'reforms' backfired disastrously. The attempt to co-opt into the ruling bloc a broad layer of middle strata from amongst the oppressed failed generally. The attempt, in fact, merely served to mobilize an unprecedented number of South Africans against the government. The Cape Peninsula and specifically the Coloured middle strata was a prime target for reformist co-option. The 96 per cent boycott of the 1984 tri-cameral elections in the Cape underlined the failure. The parallel attempt to develop a co-opted Black middle stratum was also in ruins with the near total collapse of the new Black Local Authorities structures.<sup>136</sup> The Black middle class was becoming increasingly wary of being identified with the structures of government.

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<sup>135</sup> Looking Back on 1985: On the March to Peoples' Power. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Lalu Premesch Collection, MCH 62-4.

<sup>136</sup> Looking Back on 1985: On the March to Peoples' Power. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, Lalu Premesch Collection, MCH 62-4. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, pp. 4-5.

Not unnaturally, the South African government engaged in a multi-faceted counteroffensive against apartheid's opponents and against young learner activists in particular. In the United States of America, the South African Information Service launched a high-powered public relations campaign in which New York and Washington law firms and public relations agencies were engaged to pedal South African propaganda. Public schools in the United States were not spared in this campaign, as evidenced by the distribution of glossy books such as: *South Africa: A Visual History*; *Stepping Into the Future*; *Education for South Africa's Black, Coloured and Asian People*; *Africa's Power House*; *South Africa: Workshop of a Continent*; as well as the dissemination of the curriculum set entitled *Mosaic of a Continent* freely distributed by the South African consulates in the US. Reading these books and reviewing the material in the *Mosaic of Progress*, readers were led to believe that all was quiet and peaceful in South Africa; that the government was committed to pursuing a beneficent educational policy designed to promote the socio-economic development of the national groups with their unqualified consent. The detail of the crisis in education that has thrown the education system into debilitating convulsions was swept under the carpet when dealing with foreign countries. South Africa embarked on a campaign to dissuade the US public from the disinvestment campaign, claiming that a corporate presence in South Africa was a force for progressive change. Added to this were individual businesses, both South African and US, which dispatched a steady stream of private citizens to the US to talk about the virtues of 'reforms,' education included, that were taking place in South Africa. This happened in spite of the clear evidence of the overwhelming rejection of the reforms as exemplified by the continuous turmoil in schools and universities.<sup>137</sup> The South African government had to deal with its image internationally, whilst resolving its internal problems. Having to deal with a hostile environment internally and externally would have spelled disaster for the country. As such the government approach of trying to create a good image of the country must be understood against the backdrop of a country that was trying to dispel the perception that it was failing to manage the contentious racial issues, and thereby lose allies.

In KwaZulu the task of mobilising and organising Black teachers proved very difficult and little headway was made. This may be attributed to the fact that teachers in this homeland were given

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<sup>137</sup> M.O. Nkomo, *Apartheid Education in Crisis*. *Trans Africa Forum*, A Quarterly Journal of Opinion of Africa and the Caribbean, Vol. 3. Number, Fall 1985, pp. 72-73.

a particular stake in the status quo, which Inkatha's<sup>138</sup> populist appeal rather than the UDF's anti-apartheid stance seemed likely to preserve. Teachers in the KwaZulu homeland and parts of Natal experienced many of the conditions common to Black teachers elsewhere in South Africa. But in important ways their situations differed. The most obvious difference lay in the presence of Inkatha and its impact on the politics of the region. The force of Zulu nationalism and the organisational power of Inkatha were major, and apparently insuperable, obstacles to openly competitive political organisation for teachers.<sup>139</sup> Inkatha made it exceedingly difficult for opponents, especially those within the KwaZulu civil service like teachers, to challenge or even criticise the government. To do so was to risk the denial of promotion or transfer to outlying areas. In 1987 the KwaZulu government forced teachers to sign a pledge of loyalty to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and its leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi. While the teachers could legally refuse to sign the pledge, the vigilante threat and the victimisation danger compelled KwaZulu teachers to sign the demeaning document.<sup>140</sup> By making civil servants sign a pledge of loyalty, it indicated that KwaZulu government did not have the support of their teachers.

Somewhat similar measures were introduced to curb militancy among teachers in other areas. In the Western Cape teachers who participated in school boycotts were charged with misconduct. In the Eastern Cape Bantustan of the Ciskei teachers who had opposed government policies found their career prospects blocked. Principals were given increased authority and many Black principals were removed and White supporters of the government appointed in their place. Many anti-apartheid teachers on short term contracts found their appointments were not renewed, some were not promoted, and some were demoted or retrenched. Appointments were often made on the grounds of teachers' political affiliations. In a number of cases teachers who supported the regime or the governing parties in the Indian and Coloured chambers of the parliament got jobs in preference to applicants with superior professional experience. Some teachers suspended for militant action and then reinstated after widespread protest, lost months of pay; others found

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<sup>138</sup> Inkatha is a political party in South Africa consisting largely of the Zulu speaking people. It originated in 1924 as a cultural movement under King Dinizulu. His grandson, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, revived it in 1974 as a political party after breaking with the ANC. Under Buthelezi, Inkatha advocated a struggle against apartheid but a willingness to accept power-sharing arrangements short of majority rule. From the late 1980s Inkatha and ANC followers were regularly involved in bloody clashes with strong ethnic overtones. See Inkatha Freedom Party. Retrieved on 28 September 2008. [www.answers.com/topic/Inkatha-freedom-party](http://www.answers.com/topic/Inkatha-freedom-party)

<sup>139</sup> R. Morrell, Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu. *Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988. pp. 47-47.

<sup>140</sup> *Sowetan*, 24 September 1987.

they had been blocked from getting another job. In terms of the amendments to the Education Affairs Act of June 1988 it was an offence for teachers to question, criticise or act against any law or state department<sup>141</sup>

All through this period of repression, the internal and exiled opposition groups continued to stress that only a political solution could bring peace to South Africa. As early as 1985, the ANC had started speaking to White business people and other interest groups from inside South Africa, and unbeknown to the outsiders the world's most famous prisoner, Nelson Mandela, had started informal talks with the state from his prison cell.<sup>142</sup> "Big Business" and especially the trans-national corporations operating within South Africa wanted more rapid change. As Mr Harry Oppenheimer, chief of the Anglo-American Corporation, South Africa's largest corporation, said:

In South Africa we need, for our security and for our development, a real unity in the country to resist events such as we have seen taking place in Angola, but it is surely intensely illogical to ask a lot of black people to stand together with whites in order to oppose Communist aggression if, at the same time, by law and custom, they are excluded from most of the benefits which are conferred by the free enterprise system.<sup>143</sup>

The disagreements in South Africa presented a fertile ground for negotiations. It would have been ideal for the earliest attempts to start negotiations with the banned ANC and its leaders to take place in an atmosphere free of disruptions internally and a good international reputation for South Africa.

Trans-national corporations were coming under attack in the mother countries and the rest of the world for investment in a racist system. The Commonwealth sent an Eminent Persons Group

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<sup>141</sup> J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, pp. 39-40. The Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly) 1988 and its Related Regulations. Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly. *The Cape Times*, 4 February 1986. *New Nation*, 12 February 1987.

<sup>142</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 186.

<sup>143</sup> J. Seidman, *Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto*, p. 11.

(EPG)<sup>144</sup> to mediate. The EPG was appointed under the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa, agreed by Heads of Government in Nassau in October 1985 as a united Commonwealth response to the challenge of apartheid. Emergency rule was lifted for three brief months in early 1986, coinciding with the visit to South Africa of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group. The failure of the State of Emergency to crush resistance was evident during these three months in the mounting confrontation of the police by township residents. The EPG urged the South African government to declare that the system of apartheid would be dismantled and specific and meaningful action taken in fulfilment of that intent; to terminate the state of emergency; to release immediately and unconditionally Nelson Mandela and all others imprisoned or detained for their opposition to apartheid; and to establish political freedom, specifically lifting the ban on the ANC and other political parties.<sup>145</sup> The EPG tried to persuade P.W. Botha to agree to internationally supervised negotiations, but the answer was Defence Force strikes against ANC targets in neighbouring countries while the Commonwealth Group was still in the country. A state of emergency was reimposed, covering not only the previous 36 "hotspots" but the entire country. The government turned its back on international opinion and embarked on the worst onslaught yet on the democratic opposition. Thirty thousand activists were rounded up in one year, equal to the total number held by the government under the security legislation and emergency regulations since Sharpeville in 1960. Among the detainees, approximately 3 000 were women, and an estimated 10 000 were children of seventeen years and under. There was widespread use of torture, but this could not be reported to the media according to the emergency regulations. The government had imposed a media black-out with the declaration of the state of emergency. It banned normal news coverage and it had become illegal to list

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<sup>144</sup> The Eminent Persons Group was appointed by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth comprises the English speaking world but for the United States and a few other countries. Its forty-nine sovereign member nations are located in every continent and ocean. Nearly one third of the states of the modern international community, their population are over a quarter of the world's people. The members of the EPG were Mr Malcom Fraser (Co-Chairman), General Olesgun Abasanjo (Co-Chairman), Lord Barber of Wentbridge, Dame Nita Barrow, Mr John Malecela, Sardar Swaran Singh and the Most Reverend Edward Walter Scott. See S. Ramphal, The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report, p. 19.

<sup>145</sup> S. Ramphal, The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report, p. 19. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 4.

detainees without state permission or to quote people from more than 100 organisations.<sup>146</sup> According to Moroe, after the EPG's visit to South Africa it became abundantly clear for the ANC that they would have to redouble their efforts to defeat apartheid. The ANC observed that the South African government would not easily capitulate and bring equality in the country. It was for this reason that it reinforced its efforts to convince the international community that 'apartheid was a crime against humanity.' The ANC also intensified its underground operations within the country.<sup>147</sup> It was the failure of the first state of emergency to contain resistance of the people in the townships and the banned organisations that forced the government to reimpose the emergency rule.

Besides detentions and gagging the media, the state intensified its usual methods of "formal and informal repression." These included, but were not limited to, the continued security force occupation of townships, intense police surveillance, political trials, bannings, listing, restrictions, deportations and, worse still, assassinations, attacks on homes and property, death threats and bombed offices. One regulation proscribed certain publications which were defined as 'any newspaper, book, magazine, pamphlet, hand-bill or poster, writing, letter press, picture, photo, print, engraving, lithograph, painting, drawing or other similar representations.' Further, no flags, banners, placards, pamphlets and poster could be displayed or distributed at or during the funeral ceremony. These actions forced legal anti-apartheid underground. Leaders disappeared from view. Overt opposition to apartheid was quelled, but it had not gone away. Activists from the wide range of restricted organisations started making statements in the name of an amorphous grouping called the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). Stay-aways and strikes continued and protests flared up again, with a Defiance Campaign, characterised by mass

<sup>146</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 186. J. Seidman, *Face-Lift Apartheid: South Africa after Soweto*, p. 12. S. Ramphal, *The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report*, pp. 19-20. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 4. A. Armstrong, 'Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil': Media Restrictions and the State of Emergency. *South African Review*, No. 4, 1987, pp. 204-205. Anti-Censorship Action Group (ACAG). Update May Briefing Paper, Reproduced by Index on Censorship, London, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>147</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.



street marches similar to those in Eastern Europe at the time.<sup>148</sup>

### 5.7 The National Education Crisis Committee and "People's Education"

The period 1984 and 1985 saw renewed state repression, the banning of COSAS and the breakdown of the final DET examinations. The black townships around South Africa once again erupted in a well co-ordinated spate of learners' protests, rent and consumer boycotts, schools and worker stayaways.<sup>149</sup> So effective and widespread were they that the only way in which the government could combat this grassroots resistance was to declare a 'State of Emergency' under which the police were given extra powers which circumvent the normal processes of law and order. This was a time of violent boycott enforcement; of tyrannical but efficient street committees that replaced docile black leaders and brazenly confronted the police with AK47s. It was a time of sickening witch hunts and necklacing<sup>150</sup> of 'sell outs' and informers, and a reactionary black backlashes, often with police protection and armed backup. The 'emergency'

<sup>148</sup> Proclamation No. 3964, Government Gazette, 12 June 1986. Proclamation No. 10292, Government Gazette, 13 June 1986. Proclamation No. 10302, Government Gazette, 19 June 1986. Proclamation No. 11343, Government Gazette, 10 June 1988. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 186. H. Barrell and D. Niddrie, 'The South African Mass Media in a Post Apartheid Society.' *Southern African Economy After Apartheid Conference*. University of York Centre for Southern African Studies, 29 September-1 October 1986, pp. 3 and 17. A. Armstrong, 'Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil': Media Restrictions and the State of Emergency. *South African Review*, No. 4, 1987, pp. 204-205. Anti-Censorship Action Group (ACAG). Update May Briefing Paper, Reproduced by Index on Censorship, London, 1989, p. 6. J.A. Collinge, H. Mabuza, M. Glenn, D. Niddrie, *The South African Media: Current Restrictions and Future Potentials*. Association of Democratic Journalists, Transvaal Branch, 1988, p. 1. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 53. G. Mashamba, *A Conceptual Critique of the People's Education Discourse*. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 50.

<sup>149</sup> G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 7. D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi. *Soweto: Portrait of a City*, pp. 34-35. M. Nkomo, *Education for Blacks in South Africa: Deconstructing the Myths*. *United Nations Centre Against Apartheid*. 20/86, October 1986, p. 2. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 3. G. Mashamba, *A Conceptual Critique of the People's Education Discourse*. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 48, Autumn 1990, p. 50.

<sup>150</sup> The practice became a common method of lethal lynching during disturbances in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. Necklacing sentences were sometimes handed down against alleged criminals by "people's courts" established in black townships as a means of circumventing the apartheid judicial system. Necklacing was also used to punish members of the black community who were perceived as collaborators with the apartheid regime. These included black policemen, town councilors and others, as well as their relatives and associates. The practice was frequently carried out in the name of the ANC, and was even interpreted to have been implicitly endorsed by Winnie Mandela, then-wife of the imprisoned Nelson Mandela and a senior member of the ANC, although the ANC officially condemned the practice. The first recorded victim of necklacing was the young girl Maki Skosana in July 1985. Archbishop Desmond Tutu once famously saved a near victim of necklacing when he rushed into a large crowd and threw his arms around a man accused of being a police informant, who was about to be killed. Tutu's actions, which were caught on film, caused the crowd to release the man. See Necklacing. Retrieved on 3 July 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necklacing](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necklacing)

regulations helped to clamp down on protests.<sup>151</sup> In the context of worsening violence, and parents desperately seeking some means to address the education crisis, the Soweto Civic Association called a mass meeting of parents, priests and teachers in October 1985, out of which arose the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC). Although previous attempts to form such groupings had failed, the success of this effort became the turning point in resistance efforts focused on education. This committee was mandated to initiate discussions with the DET with the aim of resolving an explosive schooling situation. At that time a great number of children had already lost their lives. The whole Black schooling system was grinding to a halt.<sup>152</sup> There was an urgent need for immediate intervention as allowing the situation to deteriorate without meaningful direction would make both the government and the people who were fighting for change in education to be losers. The intervention of parents was long overdue.

Growing despair over what was happening in education led many learners to favour the slogan: "Liberation before education." This slogan was premised upon the assumption that national liberation was imminent; an assumption not shared by any of the major organisations in South Africa, not by the ANC, and certainly not by the unions.<sup>153</sup> Keynote speaker Zwelakhe Sisulu spelt it out that:

<sup>151</sup> D. Bristow and S. Motjuwadi. Soweto: Portrait of a City, pp. 34-35. M. Nkomo, Education for Blacks in South Africa: Deconstructing the Myths. United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, 20/86, October 1986, p. 2. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 316. V. Brittain and A.S. Minty (eds.), Children of Resistance: Statements from the Harare Conference on Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa, pp. 106-107. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 29. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 13. M. Bot and L. Schlemmer, The Classroom Crisis: Black Demands and White Responses, p. 1. Report of the Main Committee of the Human Sciences Research Council: Investigation into Education Provision in the Republic of South Africa. Commission chaired by Prof. J.P. De Lange, p. 1. C. van Zyl, The De Lange Report: Ten Years On - An Investigation into the Extent of the Implementation of the 1981 HSRC Investigation into Education, p. 5. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 3. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 6. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 21.

<sup>153</sup> J. Muller, People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle. In Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 108. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 4.

We are not poised for the immediate transfer of power to the people. The belief that this is so could lead to serious errors and defeats.<sup>154</sup>

This remark was without doubt made against the background of the over zealousness shown by the learners, who seemed to have believed that they could postpone education as liberation was looming. This error of judgement, if allowed to continue unchallenged, could lead to many children forfeiting the opportunity of education in their youth. That there were leaders who were willing to correct this myth is commendable.

After recruiting the support of leaders of the conservative ATASA, and after sending a delegation to Harare to consult with the ANC, the SPCC held a national consultative Conference on the crisis in education at the University of the Witwatersrand on 28 and 29 December 1985. The consultative conference included people from all sections of the people: learners, teachers, parents, workers, community and political leaders. All sections of the oppressed community who detested apartheid and had interest in education attended the conference. They represented people from diverse political groupings.<sup>155</sup> The conference marked the beginning of a fundamental shift in the struggle to one of People's Education for People's Power. Rejecting further school boycotts, the representatives of over 145 organisations decided to use educational institutions as part of a larger effort to transform society. Those involved would engage in redefining 'the nature and direction of the education system.' People's Education would be one place from which those in resistance would draw new perspectives, skills and power to reshape their lives and their country.<sup>156</sup> It is fascinating to note the all-inclusive nature of the first

<sup>154</sup> Z. Sisulu, People's Education for People's Power, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 98.

<sup>155</sup> Z. Sisulu, People's Education for People's Power, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 96. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 4. S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 116. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 16. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 20.

<sup>156</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, pp. 316-317. R. Levin, People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa. E. Unterhalter (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, p.123 P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, pp. 13-14.

consultative conference, with over 145 organisations from all the sections of the oppressed community. The fact that the community was still pinning its hopes on the ANC is evidenced by efforts to consult with it in exile in Harare. It was only in such constructive engagements that a decision to reject further chaotic school boycotts could be taken.

But at the Wits National Consultative Conference in December 1985, speakers argued for transformation from within, using the state schools themselves. The theme of the conference 'People's Education for People's Power' captured the imagination of people with diverse political allegiances.<sup>157</sup> The education struggle of the 1980s involved a new challenge around the demands for People's Education. The question of providing a viable alternative to the racist system of education was sharply raised. This had as its core the demand for a unitary, democratic education system.<sup>158</sup> Moroe argues that Black people did not want White, Indian or Coloured education; they wanted education that would inculcate the culture that looks at benefits of the collective over an individual, education that would instil a sense of history and education that will open ones vistas to unimaginable heights. He maintains that none of the existing education systems in South Africa would be able to meet this standard.<sup>159</sup> It was the deepening crisis in Black schools and the nature of education in the country that led prominent educationists to examine alternative forms of education.<sup>160</sup> In the climate of open rebellion and the attendant chaos, these were the first attempts to come with meaningful and constructive solutions to the plight of education in South Africa by the parents.

People's Education was proposed by the NECC as a viable alternative to the apartheid schooling system in South Africa. Although some educationists had welcomed this new non-racial, community-based education system, others questioned its validity. Some educationists

<sup>157</sup> C. Kros, History for Democracy. Lengwitch: The Journal for Language Across the Curriculum, pp. 5-6. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 4. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, p. 13. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, pp. 3-4.

<sup>158</sup> Keynote Address by the Deputy President of the ANC, Nelson Mandela at the Launch of SADTU, 6 October 1990. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, pp. 13-14. H. Wolpe, Some Theses on People's Education. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, 81. M. Cross, Youth Culture and Resistance in South African Education: A Theoretical Review. Perspectives in Education, Vol. 12, No. 2, 33-48. 1991, p. 37.

<sup>159</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

<sup>160</sup> The Star, 8 December 1986.

questioned the education value of People's Education and expressed concern that it would merely politicise children.<sup>161</sup> Although much of the content would have a political overtone, a subject in political awareness would be offered in that model. It was the view of some proponents of People's Education that it demands ultimate discipline, dedication and hard work. The broad goals of People's Education included the setting up of a free, unitary, compulsory, non-racial and democratic system of education relevant to the establishment of a unitary non-racial, democratic South Africa.<sup>162</sup> The proponents of People's Education pointed out clearly that South Africa's segregated schooling system had been extremely damaging. It had divided Black and White children into different camps. It had generally been authoritarian in nature, influenced strongly by Christian National ideology. It had been marked by strong and often arrogant bureaucratic control with little freedom for parents, teachers and learners, particularly those outside of the Broederbond establishment, to exercise much influence. The supporters of People's Education agreed that South Africa had to be given an education system that was not racist, sexist or discriminatory in nature.<sup>163</sup> It was only in context of meaningful debates, with people with the necessary expertise in education, that consequential progress could be made towards some workable alternatives to apartheid education.

People's Education was a rejection of apartheid education for domination. It had an underlying assumption that education and politics are linked, and consequently, that the struggle for an alternative education system cannot be separated from the struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa. It was agreed that a new national body, the National Education Crisis Committee

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<sup>161</sup> M. Cross, *Youth Culture and Resistance in South African Education: A Theoretical Review*. Perspectives in Education, Vol. 12, No. 2, 33-48. 1991, p. 37. S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 117. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 32.

<sup>162</sup> S.W. Rembe, *The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 117. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 32. The Star, 8 December 1986. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, pp. 13-14. J. Hyslop, *Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Students and Youth Movements, 1976-1987*. Perspectives in Education. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 67. I. Moll, *To Get Technical About Peoples' Education: A Response*. In W. Flanagan, C. Hemson, J. Muller and N. Taylor, Vintage Kenton: A Kenton Education Association Commemoration, pp. 86-87.

<sup>163</sup> J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 32. The Star, 8 December 1986. P. Christie, Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986, pp. 13-14. H. Wolpe, *Some Theses on People's Education*. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 77.

(NECC), should help to organise parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs), which had already been emerging in the Western Cape, and that a return to schools should be conditional to the government lifting the ban on COSAS, ending the State of Emergency and releasing detainees. Like the UDF, of which it affiliated, the structure of the NECC was deliberately designed to be decentralised with regional crisis committees forming the basis of representation at the national level. By the time of the second National Consultative Conference in March 1986, the NECC had succeeded in generating a number of mass meetings with large crowds in attendance across the country. These supplied the organisational foundation for many local groups that began to take shape as an NECC network.<sup>164</sup> Early in 1986, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was launched to coordinate action in the educational sphere. The NECC worked with the trade unions and political bodies, emphasising clearly how the different strands of resistance were intersecting and giving shape to an increasing coherent national struggle. In local communities and at national level, workers, learners, unemployed youth, sports people, church members and others were working together in an increasingly coherent movement. A grid of resistance, reaching throughout the country and into every sphere of the struggle was in operation in the country. The initiatives of the NECC in attaining quality education for Black children added a new life to the running battles between the government and the Black community.<sup>165</sup> Some semblance of order in the struggle for equal education was beginning to take shape with the formation of the NECC. It has to be mentioned that some

<sup>164</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 317-318. B. Nzimande, 'Civil Society' and the Role of the NECC, p. 23. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 38. L. Daba, *Parents Teacher Student Associations*. *Black Sash*, 1988, p. 32. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, pp. 14 and 16. J. Wright, *Popularizing the Precolonial Past: Politics and Problems*. History Workshop Paper. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 47. J. Hyslop, *Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Students and Youth Movements, 1976-1987*. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 67. A. Manie and D. Meerkotter, *The Role of Computers in a People's Education for Liberation*. In Y. Da Costa, C. Julie and D. Meerkotter (ed.), *Let the Voices be Heard: Process and Practice in Education*, pp. 82-83. A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 4. J. Gerwel, *Constructing a New Education System*. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 12. P. Kihn, *Comrades and Professionals: Teacher Ideology and Practice in the Western Cape, 1985 to 1990*. In P. Kallaway, *The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994*, p. 332.

<sup>165</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 185. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, p. 13. J. Hyslop, *Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Students and Youth Movements, 1976-1987*. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 67. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Thabo Masukela, Former Member of the South African National Students' Congress (SANSCO) and Former Free State Provincial Secretary of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). Bloemfontein, 19 September 2008.

remnants of radicalism remained. This may be attributed to the participation of learners and radical elements from the communities in the processes.

The first consultative conference demanded the withdrawal of the South African Defence Force from townships, the release of detained learners, the repeal of emergency regulations, the constitution of Student Representative Councils and the deferment of examinations. If the government failed to meet these demands, the conference agreed to meet within three months to decide further action.<sup>166</sup> The return to school was halting and sporadic, partly due to lack of an effective national learners' organisation commanding loyal following. Nevertheless, the NECC was mainly responsible for redefining the nature and methods of educational resistance, away from the negative tactic of boycott to the more positive strategy of reoccupying and reorientating all educational institutions.<sup>167</sup> The NECC obtained a mandate to negotiate with the state for concessions in the education field. These developments provided the state with a golden opportunity to resolve the education crisis, particularly in view of the willingness shown by conservative black educational organisations to endorse the leadership of the NECC. The decision by ATASA to withdraw from the structures of the DET reflected the progress in Education for People's Power. This showed that the teachers fully identified with the aspirations and struggles of the people; more so after some teachers allowed themselves to be used as tools to victimise learner leaders and progressive learners. It was the view of many in the NECC that the struggle for People's Education was no longer a struggle of the learners alone. It had become the struggle of the whole community with the involvement of all sections of the community. It reflected a new level of development in the struggle as a whole. ATASA was part of the resolutions<sup>168</sup> of the first NECC conference.<sup>169</sup> All these events clearly demonstrated a broad consensus within the Black community for quality education and the readiness to do anything to disrupt the business-as-usual attitude taken by the government, in order to draw attention to the

<sup>166</sup> R. Levin, *People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>167</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 318. J. Hyslop, *Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Students and Youth Movements, 1976-1987*. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 67.

<sup>168</sup> See Appendix 6 on p. 453.

<sup>169</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 318. C.Y. van den Bos, *Peoples Education for People's Power: Political Wisdom and Educational Action*. Unpublished M. Ed Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1986, pp. 99-104. Resolutions taken at the First National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education: Johannesburg 28-29 December 1985. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 28. P. Christie, *Open Schools: Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986*, pp. 12-13.

dismal state of Black education.<sup>170</sup> The constructive approach of the NECC to the plight of education in South Africa was beginning to yield positive results for the pursuance of the course of the education activists. ATASA was now prepared to sever ties with the DET and join the mass democratic movement. Black voices were gradually uniting in challenging the approach of government to Black education.

ATASA and the Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CPTA) joined forces under the NECC leadership despite considerable anger in certain quarters at what was viewed as collaborators being absorbed into the struggle. Many learners and some in the progressive teachers unions worried about the danger of allowing themselves to be compromised by working with ATASA, whereas that body began to get a taste of the state's overt harsh responses that other organisations had long experienced.<sup>171</sup> The fact that ATASA had joined the NECC made it possible for the government to argue to its constituency that it could enter into negotiation with a moderate alliance. Instead it chose the option of repression, detaining all the NECC leaders it could find and forcing the rest into hiding. This included moderates such as the cautious chairman of ATASA, Hamilton Dlamlenze. NECC leaders who were released after a spell of detention and those hiding endeavoured to pursue the path of negotiation with the DET, urging the release of remaining leaders and learners, and the suspension of the prohibition on political meetings under the State of Emergency so that they could discuss issues of negotiation with their communities. The DET proved unyielding. Not only did it appear unwilling to bring pressure on the government security apparatus, but it also went further, arguing that the NECC was not a legally recognised representative body and had no authority to negotiate. These statements were made against the background of a concerted propaganda drive to discredit the NECC, including leaflets scattered in Soweto claiming that the NECC had decided that children must go back to school, not to learn, but to be taught in stone throwing, arson, necklacing and boycotting.<sup>172</sup> As the repression deepened learners chose to renew their boycotts rather than submit to new security regulations, thereby making the NECC's calls to return to school more

<sup>170</sup> M. Nkomo, Education for Blacks in South Africa: Deconstructing the Myths. United Nations Centre Against Apartheid. 20/86, October 1986, p. 3.

<sup>171</sup> R. Levin, People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa. E. Unterhalter (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, p. 124. B. Nzimande, 'Civil Society' and the Role of the NECC, p. 23. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 30.

<sup>172</sup> R. Levin, People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa. E. Unterhalter (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, pp. 124-125.



difficult to enforce.<sup>173</sup> The fact that some learners and teacher unions were suspicious about being seen to be working with ATASA shows the extent the levels of mistrust had developed among Black organisations. It is interesting to note that despite the reservations, ATASA was not spared by government when the government detained the leaders of the NECC. As such ATASA was mistrusted, on the one hand, by some members of the NECC as collaborators of the government, and by the government as working with organisations that were causing instability in the country on the other hand.

In March 1986 the second NECC was called to assess progress made with the resolutions of the first NECC conference. The conference was initially to convene at the University of Natal but moved to Rajput Hall in Chatsworth at the last minute when the politically timid university administration withdrew its facilities.<sup>174</sup> While registering, delegates were attacked by bus loads of men sent by Inkatha, the Zulu movement led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, which had often come into violent confrontation with UDF supporters.<sup>175</sup> The disruption was such that the conference sat for one night only. Nevertheless over 200 organisations were represented demonstrating the breadth of national concern. These included unions, although the absence of National Forum (NF) related groups, which decided to meet elsewhere at the same time, indicated that the NECC had not overcome the UDF-NF factionalism.<sup>176</sup> The NECC may have not been prudent with its choice of the venue for the second consultative conference. It was supposed to have foreseen that meeting in Natal, as an

<sup>173</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 319.

<sup>174</sup> J. Muller, People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle. In Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 108. L.J. Sebidi, The Traumas of Black Education in South Africa with People's Education as the Possible Way Ahead. Transvaal Education News, May 1989, p. 4. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 16. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 22.

<sup>175</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 318. J. Muller, People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle. In Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 108.

<sup>176</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 318. J. Muller, People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle. In Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 108. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 16.

organisation that is seen as ANC aligned, may result in their conference being disrupted by Inkatha because of the polarised relations between the latter and the ANC.

The disruptions severely curtailed time for discussion, leading to some learners' dissatisfaction. The NECC agreed that their demands made at the December 1985 conference had not been met, but the call for a return to class was reissued and learners were urged to reoccupy schools that had been closed and to demand the right to education.<sup>177</sup> The view of the key players in the NECC was that government had only lifted the State of Emergency because of the impending mass action beyond 31 March 1986. This perception was reinforced by the fact there was little difference from when the State of Emergency was in force. The South African Police and the South African Defence Force were given powers throughout the country, whereas the previous formal emergency only gave them powers in certain parts of the country. The NECC argued that the government had introduced the State of Emergency in the first instance because it was losing power. The people were angered by the brutality of police and soldiers. What made matters worse was that the demands of the December conference had not been met. COSAS remained banned, learners were still in detention, teachers continued to be dismissed and forcibly transferred, democratic SRCs were being stopped from functioning, school buildings were in a state of disrepair and troops were still in the townships. Boycotts had continued to take place throughout the country because of the unrelenting attitude of the authorities. It was the view of the leaders of the NECC that the time was a decisive historical moment. Pushing hard would ensure progress. If the NECC relented they would be reversing some of the gains already made and revert back to earlier overt oppression.<sup>178</sup>

The conference reaffirmed its earlier decision to end the school boycotts, even though the state had not met most of its demands, and plans were made for NECC governing bodies to be set up in the five regions, each with an office and support staff. Learners were prepared to return to

<sup>177</sup> R. Levin, *People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 124. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 16.

<sup>178</sup> Z. Sisulu, *People's Education for People's Power*, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. *People's Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, pp. 97-98. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 3. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 7. R. Morrell, *Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu*. *Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988, p. 47.

school not only because they realised the organisational gains that could be made, but also because the NECC undertook to give content to People's Education in the schools. The second NECC conference was able to come up with substantive resolutions<sup>179</sup> despite the disruption of their meetings.<sup>180</sup> For the first time after many years of struggling to get a meaningful form, the struggle for equal education was getting proper content, form and direction. The decision to end school boycotts, even though most of its December 1985 demands had not been met, brought hope that Black education would be salvaged from the morass of demonstrations and unrests. It was almost impossible to make any meaningful progress with the government reform programme in the context of continued school boycotts, as these disruptions divided the attention of the authorities. The government would deal with the reforms more speedily if it did not have to deal with disturbances at the same time.

It was the view of the NECC that in hundreds of schools learners had established democratic SRCs, and the state was doing everything it could to reverse those gains and turn them into defeats. The state conceded to the demands for free textbooks. Some detainees, learner leaders, were released, but were excluded from schools. In the Eastern Cape, the Department of Education fired one of the teachers who had been active in education politics. Through being organised, the people in that area were able to simply send that teacher back to school. They employed him by raising the funds among themselves and said that he was the people's teacher.<sup>181</sup> The situation where the parent community would act against the government by endorsing a teacher spurned by the government is worrying. Under normal circumstances it would be expected that parents should support the government in rejecting such a teacher.

Although the statutory parents' committees continued in name, they had been rendered unworkable in many parts of the country. The democratic people's committees had been

<sup>179</sup> See Appendix 7 on p. 460.

<sup>180</sup> R. Levin, *People's Education and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 124. J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 319. C.Y. van den Bos, *Peoples Education for People's Power: Political Wisdom and Educational Action*. Unpublished M. Ed Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1986, pp. 105-110. Resolutions of the National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education, Durban, March 1986. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, pp. 41-43. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, *School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia*. *Perspectives in Education*, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 22.

<sup>181</sup> Z. Sisulu, *People's Education for People's Power*, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 108. L. Daba, *Parents Teacher Student Associations*. *Black Sash*, 1988, p. 32.

established and were preparing to take more and more control over the running of the schools. They were the ones that were putting forward the learner's demands and negotiating with school principals. The government committees were ignored; they were in effect falling away. Their members abandoned them and joined the people's committees. Even the Regional Directors of Education were meeting with the people's committees. The central government was compelled to recognise the National Education Crisis Committee by meeting its representatives. It was exciting to the members of the NECC that the government appointed bodies were being replaced with people's structures at local, regional and national levels.<sup>182</sup> What the government had enforced for decades was being replaced in a period of three short months. The willingness of the government to recognise these non-statutory bodies may not be viewed as total capitulation, but as a strategy to win the NECC over in order to create an atmosphere of constructive engagement.

The mood of the South African mass democratic movement, in 'Building the Organs of People's Power,' and in 'making South Africa ungovernable,' was expressed by Zwelakhe Sisulu in his keynote address to the Second NECC in March 1986 in the following words:

The slogan 'Forward to People's Power' expresses the growing trend for our people to move towards realising people's power now in the process of struggle, before actual liberation. By this we mean that people are beginning to exert control over their own lives in different ways. In some townships and schools people are beginning to govern themselves, despite being under racist rule. These advances were only possible because of the development of democratic organs, or committees, of people's power. Our people set up bodies which were controlled by, and accountable to, the masses of the people in each area. In such areas, the distinction between the people and their organisations disappeared. All the people, young and old, participated in the committees from street level upwards.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Z. Sisulu, *People's Education for People's Power*, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 109.

<sup>183</sup> *The Struggle against Apartheid Education: Towards People's Education in South Africa. Research and Education in South Africa*. Paper Number Three, p. 15. Z. Sisulu, *People's Education for People's Power*, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 109.

It has to be indicated that the failure of the leadership of the NECC and the government to find a possible compromise position, would delay the attainment of the goals of the Black communities for equal education. It would have been prudent for both sides to work closely in an attempt to arrive at a more workable solution for South Africa.

Initially, the DET decided to negotiate with the NECC. After the meeting of 1986 several new policies were announced, including increased expenditures for black education. Thereafter the NECC was subjected to a disinformation campaign where helicopters dropped pamphlets in Soweto blaming the organisation for necklacing, violence and intimidation. Tens of thousands of learners who refused to re-register and carry identification cards were dismissed, and over 70 schools were closed.<sup>184</sup> The leadership of the NECC was angered by the divisions in government on how to deal with the situation. In their view there were some key people in government who were sympathetic to the plight of the Black South Africans, and there were some who were bent on maintaining the status quo. According to them it was the latter group that were pushing things to the point where negotiations between the DET and the NECC stalled.<sup>185</sup> The willingness of the government to cooperate with the NECC and to later reject this approach serves to highlight the fact that this was a new kind of challenge the government was facing, as such it was not sure footed as it had not traversed this route before. This unprecedented situation made the government vacillate in its approach.

The NECC's intervention entailed the development of alternative course content for two afternoon seminars each week. People's Education commissions were also established during 1986, and although some had hopes that they would produce entirely new curricula across all subjects, those involved had more limited ambitions of producing immediately usable textbooks in a few subjects, notably English, Mathematics and History.<sup>186</sup> It was the view of the members of the NECC that

<sup>184</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 318-319. L. Schlemmer, *South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future*. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhodie and M. Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 3.

<sup>185</sup> Z. Sisulu, *People's Education for People's Power*, Keynote Address, National Education Crisis Committee, 29 March 1986. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 99.

<sup>186</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 318. J. Wright, *Popularizing the Precolonial Past: Politics and Problems*. History Workshop Paper. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 47.

History as taught in South African schools...not only distorts the past, but maims it. In content it is exclusive, elitist and shallow; it is silent or misleading on the historical experience of the majority of South Africans.<sup>187</sup>

It was for this reason that the NECC found it fitting to develop alternate course content. It was their view that History presented in their books would present a balanced view of South Africa's past. This claim would remain contested as the interpretation of History is a highly disputed field of study. This will be more so when the interpretation of South Africa's past is left in the hands of activists.

The NECC leadership challenged the universities to make a contribution, and at least three did: Witwatersrand and Natal set up units to collect and disseminate information on curricula and wider aspects of People's Education, and Western Cape made similar commitments, also held workshops for teachers, as did some progressive teachers' unions for their members. In addition, the NECC launched the National Education Charter campaign, designed to stimulate discussions on educational needs and perspectives, and then distil findings into a well-publicised document. The NECC joined the UDF and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in wider national campaigns.<sup>188</sup> What the NECC had managed to establish by the end of the second conference was the formalisation of a network of parent, teacher and learner bodies, and, where possible, PTSAs, for consultation. If there was a word that described People's Education at this stage, it was probably consultation or "process."<sup>189</sup> According to Ashley the NECC saw the PTSAs as a means to the realisation of one of the goals of the Freedom Charter, namely that 'the people shall govern and that the doors of learning and culture shall be opened.' He says they viewed the PTSAs as the organs of people's power and part of the struggle to establish alternative structures on the road to the transfer of power to the mass of the people of South Africa. He further asserts that PTSAs were to the NECC what street committees were to civics and the UDF. They were the basic organs of power in that they democratically took decisions at

<sup>187</sup> C. Kros, History for Democracy. Lengwiche: The Journal for Language Across the Curriculum, pp. 9-10.

<sup>188</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, pp. 318-319. S. Maqetuka, 'Hands off the Press.' Sechaba: Official Organ of the African National Congress of South Africa, December 1988, p. 8. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>189</sup> J. Muller, People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle. In Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, p. 109. L. Daba, Parents Teacher Student Associations. Black Sash, 1988, p. 32.

school level. They connected the school with the community it served, involving parents and the community in the functions of the school. The school could therefore not pursue a line ideologically and academically hostile to the broad community.<sup>190</sup> This process received a serious setback when the state of emergency was reimposed on 12 June 1987, effectively preventing the township meetings for consultation.<sup>191</sup> The readiness of some universities and teacher unions to cooperate with the NECC in disseminating information about People's Education shows that the NECC was beginning to enjoy some measure of support in the country. This is further reinforced by its collaboration with the UDF and COSATU.

By November 1986, the third National Consultative Conference was banned and the government ordered that no discussions of unauthorised courses or syllabi were to take place at any gathering of the NECC or on its behalf. In February 1988, the NECC was one of the 17 resistance organisations banned in a comprehensive 'crackdown,' and affiliated members not already detained went into hiding. Such repressive actions only worsened existing tensions in the NECC. For example, those who sought a new set of parallel educational institutions, complete with new curriculum, were impatient with those who wanted to transform what existed already.<sup>192</sup> The clampdown of the government on the NECC activities stifled progress towards the resolution of the South African education challenges. It also created divisions within the NECC itself, with some members arguing for a radical approach in defiance of the government, whilst other supported a moderate advance working more collaboratively with the government with the view of appeasing the authorities.

The mass-based National Education Crisis Committee at the two historic consultative conferences of 1985 and 1986 adopted a new slogan. These conferences rejected the slogan of "liberation first, education later" and adopted instead the slogan 'People's Education for

<sup>190</sup> M. Ashley, *Ideologies and Schooling in South Africa*, p. 50.

<sup>191</sup> J. Muller, People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle. In *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 109. L. Daba, Parents Teacher Student Associations. *Black Sash*, 1988, p. 32. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: *People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 14.

<sup>192</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 319. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 38. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: *People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 24. J. Gerwel, Constructing a New Education System. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 12.

People's Power.<sup>193</sup> The NECC conferences recognised that in order to construct an alternative education system, it was insufficient merely to oppose and reject apartheid education through negative critique. What was required as an alternative was a conception of the meaning, content and organisation of a different education. The meaning given to People's Education was education which serves people as a whole, which liberates, which puts people in command of their lives and which is determined and accountable to the people. It was the view of the NECC that it had to be education which prepares people for total human liberation and for full participation in the social, political and cultural spheres of society. People's Education had to help people to be creative, to develop a critical mind and to analyse.<sup>194</sup> The notion of People's Education, regardless how progressive, would need the buy in of the government for it to take root in the government run institutions. In the light of the suspicion of the government on the motives of the NECC with this approach, it was almost impossible for the latter to get into any meaningful engagement with this alternative to what was viewed as apartheid education.

People's Education originated in a period of widespread mass opposition to the apartheid system. In Black townships, the resistance of communities to the apartheid system created the conditions for the emergence of rudimentary forms of 'people's power' in the shape of street and block committees. The capacity of the mass movement to render the townships ungovernable led to a situation in which alternative organs could be put in place.<sup>195</sup> By formulating People's Education in this way, the conferences of 1985 and 1986 laid the basis for

<sup>193</sup> N. Alexander, Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa: Essays and Speeches by Neville Alexander (1985-1989), p. 15. R. Levin, Conceptualising 'The People' in Peoples Education: People's Education and Democratic Transformation in South Africa. Context: A Journal for Contemporary Social and Cultural Theory and Practice in the South African Context, Vol. 2, 1989, p. 51. H. Wolpe and E. Ulterhalter, Reproduction, Reform and Transformation: The Analysis of Education in South Africa. E. Unterhalter and H. Wolpe (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, p. 10. A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992, p. 4.

<sup>194</sup> R. Levin, Conceptualising 'The People' in Peoples Education: People's Education and Democratic Transformation in South Africa. Context: A Journal for Contemporary Social and Cultural Theory and Practice in the South African Context, Vol. 2, 1989, p.51. H. Wolpe and E. Ulterhalter, Reproduction, Reform and Transformation: The Analysis of Education in South Africa. E. Unterhalter and H. Wolpe (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, p. 10. N. Moolla and S. Eckstein, School Students' Perceptions of People's Education: A Case Study of Bosmont and Lenasia. Perspectives in Education, Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1991, p. 22. F. Mentjies, Bringing Back a Culture of Learning. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992, p. 47.

<sup>195</sup> H. Wolpe and E. Ulterhalter, Reproduction, Reform and Transformation: The Analysis of Education in South Africa. E. Unterhalter and H. Wolpe (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, p. 11. J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. The Journal of Modern African Studies, p. 319.

<sup>195</sup> R. Levin, Conceptualising 'The People' in Peoples Education: People's Education and Democratic Transformation in South Africa. Context: A Journal for Contemporary Social and Cultural Theory and Practice in the South African Context, Vol. 2, 1989, p. 51.



the organisation of learner, teacher, parent and community action aimed at the immediate construction of alternative educational programmes and structures which would co-exist in contradiction with, and begin to displace the undemocratic and racist structures of apartheid education. The effect of the State of Emergency from 1986 to 1990 was to diminish the capacity of People's Education as a political movement.<sup>196</sup>

In addition to the ban on People's Education local order under the emergency regulations compelled attendance at school. Learners had to be in school during the school day. Any activity, other than education as defined in the Education Act, on school premises was prohibited, and any person who was not a learner at a school or an employee was forbidden entry to the school premises. These orders were specifically formulated to prevent school boycotts being organised. They were applied in specified areas in the Eastern Cape, the Western Cape, the Witwatersrand, the Northern Orange Free State, the Western and Eastern Transvaal, Northern Natal.<sup>197</sup>

It is fascinating to note that Gerrit Viljoen, the then Minister of Education and Training, initially argued in support of some elements of People's Education. He argued that,

In terms of the basic terminology of 'People's Education,' there are also positive aspects which have been part of our approach and which should be further emphasised and given effect. People should participate in the government of education. Parents and the community should be allowed to take part at local and regional levels and have a meaningful share.<sup>198</sup>

There were some leading members of the NP who were sympathetic to the plight of South African Blacks. They were prepared to bring about changes that would suit the political needs of all South Africans. Unfortunately the more conservative faction determined to preserve

<sup>196</sup> J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 34. H. Wolpe and E. Unterhalter, *Reproduction, Reform and Transformation: The Analysis of Education in South Africa*. E. Unterhalter and H. Wolpe (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>197</sup> J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, *Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule*. Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 17, 1990, p. 34. Proclamation No. 10357, *Government Gazette*, 13 July 1986. Government Notice No. 116, 9 January 1987.

<sup>198</sup> *The Star*, 19 February 1988.

traditional forms of apartheid offset 'enlightened' elements in the party.<sup>199</sup> The perception that all the White people were opposed to consequential reforms in Black education is mythical. There were Whites who wanted reforms in Black education. This gave hope that the aspirations of the majority of Blacks would be addressed.

The birth of People's Education was not easy. School attendance had not improved in the wake of the Durban conference. By April 1986 an estimated 100 000 learners were on boycott and the DET continued closing schools. In addition, the cautiously cordial relationship that had been developing between the NECC and the DET had begun to recede. There were several reasons for the cooling of relations between the NECC and the officials of the DET. The state, from its perspective at least, had been making an effort to address the problem. A ten year plan for education had been announced in April 1986, entailing substantial increases in expenditure for Black schooling but at the same time renewing a commitment to segregated education. The NECC predictably criticised the plan but managed in negotiations to have the date of the deferred examinations shifted from the sensitive 1 May to 2 May 1986. This was the probably the last successful negotiation they enjoyed with the DET. Although the state initially viewed People's Education in a cautiously neutral light, the increasingly bold and challenging public stance of the NECC and the People's Education Commission around midyear probably forced reconsideration. The anticipated socialist or revolutionary aims of People's Education had begun to alarm them. The first crop of state of emergency detentions therefore unsurprisingly included as many of the top NECC officials as could be found. The official state position was perceptibly hardening, reflecting the ascendant authority of the military and the consequent ineffectuality of the initially sympathetic DET within the state hierarchy. The NECC continued to try to set up meetings with the DET, to no avail. When Rejoice Mabudafhasi<sup>200</sup> was sent down to the Eastern Cape to fill the gap left by the detention of Ihron Rensburg,<sup>201</sup> she too was detained.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>199</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 311.

<sup>200</sup> Rejoice Thizwilondi Mabudafhasi. Retrieved on 26 May 2008. [www.info.gov.za/leaders/depmin/envtour/htm](http://www.info.gov.za/leaders/depmin/envtour/htm)

<sup>201</sup> Prof. Ihron Rensburg. Retrieved on 20 May 2008. [www.uj.ac.za/Portals/o/docs/IhronRensburg.doc](http://www.uj.ac.za/Portals/o/docs/IhronRensburg.doc)

<sup>202</sup> J. Muller, *People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle*. In *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 109. *Sowetan*, 16 September 1987. L. Daba, Parents Teacher Student Associations. *Black Sash*, 1988, p. 32.

The impatience of the NECC had to be understood in the context of an organisation that thought the government was dragging its feet in bringing about reform in education. The repressive approach of the government, on the other hand, can be attributed to the perception that the government the NECC agenda was socialist and revolutionary. These suspicions on both sides stalled the processes.

For the third school term starting in July 1986, various regulations, most notoriously the compulsory re-registration of all learner and the introduction of ID cards, similar in intent to passes, brought immediate reaction. 30 000 learners failed to register and were summarily dismissed. The NECC challenged the dismissals in the Rand Supreme Court, and lost.<sup>203</sup> Meanwhile the state continued to close schools, and 73 were shut by year end, 60 in the Eastern Cape, 10 in Soweto, 2 in Katlehong and 1 in Lamontville. A stalemate had been reached in areas like Soweto and the Eastern Cape. The National Students Crisis Committee had called for a continued stayaway in October 1986, and by the end of the year there was serious disruption in 70% (230 out of 328) of the DET secondary schools. Estimates suggest that about 250 000 learners enrolled at the beginning of 1986 were out of school by the end of it.<sup>204</sup> The government having an upper hand in the ensuing stalemate did everything in its power to thwart all the goals of the NECC. The dismissal of the Supreme Court challenge vindicated the government, and gave it impetus to continue with total clampdown of the activities of the NECC.

What all this meant for the NECC was that so much more now depended on the promised appearance of alternative People's Education materials. By October this had taken concrete form in subject committees in History and English, which had undertaken to produce 'teaching packages' for introduction in 1987. Whilst the committees understood their brief to mean producing supplementary material for no more than two afternoon periods a week for Standard 10 learners, the public expected the production of alternative English and History syllabuses. Given this prospect, the major organisations and unions across the political spectrum began to call vocally for a return to school in 1987. A barrage of restrictions began to descend on the

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<sup>203</sup> Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Soweto Riots, A2953. NECC v. State President of the Republic of South Africa, 9 September 1986. J. Muller, *People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle*. In *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 110.

<sup>204</sup> J. Muller, *People's Education for People's Power and the National Education Crisis Committee: The Choreography of Educational Struggle*. In *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 110.

NECC in the wake of their press conference held on 27 November 1986 to announce the third national consultative conference. This was to be held at Wits University on 29 and 30 November 1986. The restrictions led to its immediate cancellation of the third NECC national consultative conference.<sup>205</sup>

### 5.8 Conclusion

The mid 1980s were a turning point in the history of South Africa. Massive protest inside South Africa combined with escalating pressure internationally, were perhaps the greatest challenge to the continuation of White minority rule. In a total rejection of apartheid education, Black South Africans mobilised to make the townships ungovernable, Black local officials resigned in droves, and the government declared a State of Emergency in 1985 and used thousands of troops to quell unrest. Television audiences throughout the world watched almost nightly reports of massive resistance to apartheid education, the growth of democratic movement, and the police and military response.

What made the 1980s unique from the preceding period is the fact that, unlike the 1970s COSAS was formed in June 1979. The latter became the centre of the intersection of education struggles in South Africa. The detention of its entire leadership and subsequent incarceration of its first President on Robben Island did not deter it from growing among the learners it sought to organise. The fact that AZASM, with a Black consciousness tradition, was formed almost at the same time as COSAS which was 'charterist' in character meant that the government had to contend with two new student bodies, aligned to AZAPO and the ANC respectively. The organisation of learners in this manner was epoch-making in the history of South Africa. This meant that the silent years following the banning of the ANC and PAC in the 1960s were over.

The formation of COSAS and AZASM plus the apparent reluctance of the government to heed popular calls for a complete overhaul of education led to a spread of learner boycotts all over the country. These sporadic and widespread school boycotts increasingly took a new dimension with learners joining hands with parents and community leaders, not only to raise educational challenges, but to raise socio-economic and political challenges as well. These ramifications led

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<sup>205</sup> J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, *Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 319. B. Nzimande, 'Civil Society' and the Role of the NECC, p. 23. J. Wright, *Popularizing the Precolonial Past: Politics and Problems*. History Workshop Paper. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 47.

to politics being conducted through mass funerals for political activists, consumer boycotts, rent boycotts, large scale street demonstrations and widely supported stay-at-home over and above the school boycotts. This was unprecedented in South Africa. This new development saw uprisings happening all over the country, and in some instances supported by teachers. The situation was compounded by the guerrilla attacks on government institutions and economic installations by the banned political organisations. This created apprehension for the government to continue with its reform programmes. There were growing fears that the government was yielding to a social and revolutionary agenda.

The government, to its credit, appointed the De Lange Commission of Enquiry with a mandate to come up with recommendations for sweeping reforms in education. The members of the Commission, though viewed with suspicion by extra-parliamentary organisations, were credible researchers, academics and decision makers in education. The information gathering mechanism employed by the Commission were credible and intended to reach a broad spectrum of interested stakeholders. The outright rejection of the Commission's recommendations for one education Department for all racial groups dealt a heavy blow to the hopes of the majority in South Africa. Instead the government continued with a racially and ethnically based education system, with nineteen Departments operated under different cabinets. The fact that the government would institute a Commission of Enquiry, spend a lot of resources in its operation, only to reject its recommendations, was worrying to the people who pinned their hopes on the Commission.

The 1983 Constitution, with its tri-cameral dispensation intended to accommodate Coloured and Indians; endorsed by the Whites only referendum, led to further disillusionment amongst Blacks. This is because the tri-cameral dispensation completely excluded Blacks, who comprised four fifths of the population. In opposition to this development over 600 extra-parliamentary organisation came together to form the UDF. This brought a new dimension to mass democratic politics in South Africa. The fact that the UDF's aims were indistinguishable from those of the ANC meant that the South African government had to contend with not one but two national organisations – the UDF and COSAS – which espoused the some ideals and objectives as the banned ANC. The creation of the UDF intensified the levels of mass resistance in the country. The government had to face opposition from many fronts, namely mass resistance, armed struggle, sanctions and mobilisation of the international community and the internal political

opposition underground. Further, resistance became increasingly effective because of the UDF's capacity to provide a national political and ideological centre. It became increasingly difficult for the government to focus on its reform programme in this environment. In the meantime the schooling system had ground to a halt because of the 'ungovernability' in the township.

There was a growing trend of parents, teachers and community leaders supporting learners in the strike actions. This undermined order and discipline at the schools as the people who were supposed to assist the authorities in maintaining control in the schools were supporting chaos. Order and discipline are a prerequisite for the creation of the culture of teaching and learning. It is worrying to see the parent community supporting teachers whose conduct was not satisfactory to the authorities. Under normal circumstances parents would frown at the behaviour that authorities disapprove. That the parents and the authorities were not always in agreement created a vacuum that learners exploited for their political agendas.

The mobilisation of learners was not without limitations or weaknesses. The calls for "liberation first and education later" brought the deepening crisis in education sharply to the attention of parents as it had the potential to destroy the academic prospects of many children. This saw the call for "liberation first and education later" condemned by Black community leaders, with the result that some moderation prevailed in an otherwise anarchic situation. Many parents, whilst sympathetic to the serious educational problems that faced learners daily in schools, were critical of the means used to try and resolve them. It was against this background that parents organised themselves into structures that ultimately evolved into the National Education Crisis Committee.

The attempts of the parents to bring sanity and order through the NECC structures were not without flaws. The NECC tried to give form and content to the alternative to apartheid education with "People's Education." It was, however, plagued by differences of opinion on whether the current system of education was to be improved as propagated by the moderates, whilst the radicals wanted a complete overhaul of education. In the midst of these of these incongruent positions the NECC was slapped with a total ban by the government.

Whilst it is true that the complete overhaul of education that Black communities were calling for was long overdue, the disruptive events of the 1980s made it almost impossible for the government to focus its full attention on the reform of education.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE LAST VESTIGES OF APARTHEID AND SEGREGATED EDUCATION

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter takes a look at four seemingly unrelated sub-themes, namely corporate intervention in education, sanctions against South Africa, teacher unity and the introduction of democratic reforms. These sub-themes are to varying degrees critical to the demise of apartheid and the ultimate introduction of democratic reforms in the country, and therefore in education. These sub-themes became topical in the years preceding the end of apartheid, with a number of commentators either debating them as signs that apartheid is about to end or as factors that contributed to the downfall of apartheid. It is for that reason that their interconnectedness is not an accident.

The increasing participation of big business in education was a sign of the relaxation of restrictions of the government on the support Black education was receiving from corporate entities. The realisation of government that it needed partners to deal with the serious backlogs in education received a satisfactory response from big business. With big business support government was able to deal with academic as well as infrastructural backlogs. The notion of good schooling that would result in quality human resources for the country motivated business to venture into partnership with government in education. This chapter seeks to explore the initial reluctance of government for such support and the eventual change of heart that came as a result of the reform policy of the ruling party, plus the nature of spin offs emanating from such a partnership. It is imperative to note that this analysis cuts across different periods in the history of South Africa.

Business was in the main the vehicle different countries used to effect sanctions on South Africa because of its apartheid policies. This chapter will look at the views of different role players on sanctions and the impact of sanctions on the termination of apartheid and the introduction of democratic reforms. This chapter will take a cursory look at the sanctions against South Africa and how they impacted on expediting democratic reforms



in education. Sanctions affected the economy, which is inextricably linked to education. It was the gradual introduction of these reforms that led to militancy by teacher unions, hence the emergence of new and more militant teacher unions is explored and attempts to unite teacher unions are also evaluated.

This chapter appraises attempts to unite the fragmented teacher unions. It assesses the negative impact of the radical and militant teacher unions on the education system. It further examines why attempts to unite different unions remained fragile and ultimately failed. It further assesses how the racial, cultural and language issues with their attendant frenzy that animated the unified teacher unions ultimately undermined the amalgamation. It evaluates how the failure of some teacher unions to remain professional associations threatened unity, with the conservative teachers having a dim view of their preoccupation with worker issues at the expense of learners in some instances. This chapter scrutinises the implications of teacher unions aligning themselves with some political organisations and how this affected the education programme.

This chapter also delves into the introduction of political reforms in South Africa. The government reform programme is divided into different phases. It surveys the impact of political transformation on education restructuring. The chapter examines different initiatives to bring about changes in education.

According to van Zyl Slabbert the transition in South Africa requires an understanding of the complexity and uniqueness of the situation. First of all it has to be understood that the South African situation had no historical precedent. This is because the South Africa's White governing establishment was not, and never was, the instrument of any European colonial power; the procedures of ending White minority rule that were available to other African countries beginning in the late 1950s were not applicable. There was no possibility of a massive withdrawal of the White population to some kind of mother-land or of external intervention by some internationally recognized agent that could impose some resolutions. South Africa had the paradox of colonial rule without the option of resolving it according to the historical precedents by which colonial rule was resolved

elsewhere on the African continent.<sup>1</sup> This chapter seeks to assess the unique nature of the processes that led to the democratic dispensation in South Africa and their impact on education.

## **6.2 Corporate intervention in education and training and sanctions against South Africa**

The education crisis in South Africa was reflected in the lack of and disrepair of schools, overcrowded classrooms, high drop out-out and failure rates, lack of suitably qualified teachers, and low levels of literacy and numeracy. These visible symptoms hid the deeper consequences of the crisis and the profound effects it had had on the development of the economy and society. This had resulted in the destruction of the human potential of South Africa with devastating consequences for the economic development of the country. The levels of under development were so deep that the government alone would not be able to redress the situation. It was therefore imperative to involve the corporate sector in the development of education.<sup>2</sup> During the 1960s the apartheid state discouraged investment in education by companies and trusts. Before a company could undertake any kind of involvement in education, it was required to obtain permission from the relevant state education department. This was seldom given. The government was determined to maintain strict control over all services. The early 1970s saw state education policy for the first time permitting private sector investment in education and training facilities for Blacks in the urban areas in South Africa. Since 1976 in particular there was a massive increase in corporate investment in education and training. By the 1980s the ethos of 'social responsibility' was established. The private sector became increasingly involved. Large firms, most notably the Anglo American Corporation (AAC), which by the 1970s had come to dominate the South African economy, spearheaded private sector

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<sup>1</sup> F. van Zyl Slabbert, Why South Africa's Transition is Unique. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992, p. 2.

educational initiatives.<sup>3</sup> The willingness of the government to relax the restrictions on business involvement in education as a partner is commendable. This would allow business to partner with the government with its massive financial resources. At the end business would see the expansion of better qualified human resources, which business so badly needed for its survival.

The different forms of private sector intervention must be seen in the light of the overall reformist strategy. After 1980 an increasing proportion of funds went to Black education. The main thrust of corporate education investment during the 1970s was the funding of buildings and equipment in primary and secondary schools. Bursaries were also provided for tertiary education. After 1976 emphasis was given to technical education for Blacks in both urban areas and Bantustans.<sup>4</sup> *The Financial Mail* estimated that in 1987 the top 100 companies in South Africa collectively spent a higher proportion, about ten per cent, of their employee payroll on social responsibility. Afrikaner firms had generally a lower level of commitment to education except where it was closely tied to the human resource needs of the individual firm. Faced with a political and economic crisis in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising of 1976, the state and capital embarked upon a major programme of restructuring which involved a dual process of repression and reform. The government's 'total strategy' sought to neutralise opposition and restore legitimacy to the

<sup>3</sup> N. Swainson, *Corporate Intervention in Education and Training, 1960-1989*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 95. P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 5. G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott and K.A. Elliot, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy*, p. 246. B. Manby, *South Africa: The Impact of Sanctions*. *Journal of International Affairs*. Summer 1992, p. 22. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 3. Anglo American's Corporate Social Investment in South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.theparliament.com/Resources/epolitix/Forum%20Microsites/Anglo%20American/corporate-social-investment-brochure.pdf](http://www.theparliament.com/Resources/epolitix/Forum%20Microsites/Anglo%20American/corporate-social-investment-brochure.pdf), pp. 3-5. National Business Initiative: *Making the Markets Work for the Poor*. Retrieved on 6 June 2008. [www.nbi.org.za/print\\_page.php?pg=37&pgm=M&id=26](http://www.nbi.org.za/print_page.php?pg=37&pgm=M&id=26), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, University of the Western Cape, p. 3. N. Swainson, *Corporate Intervention in Education and Training, 1960-1989*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 96-100. P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 5. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 56. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008.

ruling class.<sup>5</sup> Without partnering with business in education the government would dismally fail with its reform programme. The resources of the government were limited to cover all the pressing needs in education. Without corporate intervention the government resources would be overstretched and it would not be able to meet all its obligations.

The Urban Foundation was established in response to the Soweto uprising. It was formed after a Businessmen's Conference in November 1976. The founders of the Urban Foundation wanted to promote new codes of employment practice based on non-discriminatory practices and effective training for Black employees. In the first phase of its operation (1976-1983), the Urban Foundation gave support to pre-school education, provision of school facilities, teacher development and upgrading, supplementary tuition, technical education, adult education, adult education and special education.<sup>6</sup> Corporate capital scored a major victory in 1981/1982 when an amendment to the *Income Tax Act, Act No. 58 of 1962 (amended annually)* made donations to educational charities and trusts tax deductible. This greatly increased the flow of resources into educational projects. The state at this time encouraged private investment in education following the De Lange recommendation in 1981 which called for a sharing of responsibilities between public and private sectors for the educational upgrading of Blacks. The major contributors to education charities and trusts were Anglo American Corporation, Barlow Rand, Caltex Oil, De Beers Consolidated Mines and

<sup>5</sup> N. Swainson, *Corporate Intervention in Education and Training, 1960-1989*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 96-100. P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 5. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> D. Smit, *The Urban Foundation: Transformation Possibilities*. *Transformation*. Vol. 18, 1992, p. 36. N. Swainson, *Corporate Intervention in Education and Training, 1960-1989*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 101. M.A.S. Corke, Headmaster of St. Barnabas College. *Some Approaches to the Relief of Problem Areas in South African Education*. Johannesburg, April 1977. Unisa Archives, Documentation Centre for African Studies, ATASA Collection, Accession No. 150, File 14. J. Steyn, *Managing Change in South Africa*, p. 5. L. Schlemmer, *South African Society under Stress: the Hazards of Inequality and Development in a Post-Apartheid Future*. In D.J. van Vuuren, N. E. Wiehahn, N.J. Rhodie and M. Wiechers, *South Africa in the Nineties*, p. 10.

British Petroleum (BP).<sup>7</sup> The government policies were gradually encouraging a climate of investment in education by the business community. This approach would unleash resources that would ensure that meaningful reform in education was ultimately realised.

The South African Institute of Race Relations received R4,22 million for bursaries to be awarded to Black South African learners in 1988. The grant came from the United States government, bringing to R11,9 million the amount the institute had received from that source for bursaries. The additional money meant that the number of the Institute's American funded Black learners would increase from 129 in 1987 to 219 in 1988. The agreement between the United States government and the institute made provision for Black, Indian and Coloured South Africans, including people in all the so called homelands, to attend any university, technikon or teacher training college of their choice.<sup>8</sup> Taylor contends that the expansion of the participation of local business and the international community in education shows that there was a sense of urgency in dealing with the backlogs created by unequal education in South Africa. There was an urgent need for skilled Black people in business.<sup>9</sup> The focus of the intervention on the previously marginalised groups shows that there was willingness to redress past imbalances. It can be argued that the government, by allowing such interventions, was showing signs of recognising the imminent equality which would be extended to all races in South Africa.

Black communities were increasingly questioning the motives and accountability of private sector projects. In these circumstances a major preoccupation of the more

<sup>7</sup> N. Swainson, *Corporate Intervention in Education and Training, 1960-1989*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 101-102. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008.

<sup>8</sup> *The Star*, 17 September 1987.

<sup>9</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008.

farsighted of the corporate groups and the Urban Foundation became the need for community participation. Community involvement would lend some credence to the perceptions that threatened to undermine the sometimes-genuine intervention of big business in community development projects. The Urban Foundation and many private firms, already concerned with the apparent ineffectiveness of a large number of their schemes, increasingly realised that they must involve Black leaders in the design and management of their projects. In the climate of mounting disinvestment and the threat of comprehensive sanctions, South African companies, and those foreign-owned companies that decided to stay in South Africa, intensified their social responsibility commitments.<sup>10</sup> In the climate of segregation it had become commonplace to question motives of any project that had been given approval by government. The oppressed people were so cynical that they suspected that every effort to help them was tinged with some hidden agenda. The levels of mistrust had grown so much that even innocent and well-meaning interventions had to be thoroughly explained. Whilst it is a virtue not to be gullible, the levels of mistrust and suspicion could easily derail progress. The involvement of community members obviated this shortcoming.

On the side of business another important and topical issue that preoccupied the minds of opinion makers in the country was the issue of punitive sanctions against South Africa. As early as 1958 Black South African political leaders were convinced that if nothing was done to bring pressure to bear upon South Africa in addition to what they were doing, so as to compel abandonment of apartheid policy, the stage would be reached where this policy would degenerate to bondage. In their view, it was becoming evident that the rule of law in South Africa was fast becoming a dead letter. It was evident that the internal pressures were not bringing about the peaceful changes that were desired. As such it had become necessary to supplement these pressures with what could be done from outside. So, in 1958, at the first meeting of the All African People's Conference the South African delegation tabled a resolution for an international boycott of South African

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<sup>10</sup> N. Swainson, *Corporate Intervention in Education and Training, 1960-1989*. E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 110. D. Smit, *The Urban Foundation: Transformation Possibilities*. *Transformation*. Vol. 18, 1992, p. 35. G. Braun and H. Weiland, 'Sanctions against South Africa: Punitive Action or Placebo Politics?' In J.D. Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa Survive? Five Minutes to Midnight*, p. 44.

goods. That resolution was adopted and picked up in a number of countries by various organisations.<sup>11</sup> The anxiety of the political leaders to bring political change in South Africa compelled them to use methods, which whilst it is true would pressurise the government to introduce meaningful change, had a negative impact on the economy. The ripple effect would be less business activity and less charity to education programmes.

In 1959, the Secretary-General of the United Nations was sent a memorandum by the ANC in South Africa, asking, amongst other things, for sanctions against South Africa. In 1960, at the Addis Ababa Conference, another delegation of South African political leaders submitted a memorandum to the conference of African Independent States. In that memorandum, they asked for sanctions and for the isolation of South Africa from Africa and the rest of the world. Their appeal was received by the African States there assembled. A resolution to that effect was adopted, and this was subsequently tabled for discussion at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly.<sup>12</sup> Moroe asserts that the ANC's argument was that the South African government was able to extend its life because of its capacity to get international capital support, and would thus continue with apartheid and segregated education. The withdrawal of such support would intensify its status as a 'pariah state,' and this would assist to bring it to its knees.<sup>13</sup> The mounting pressure for the international community to implement sanctions must be seen in the context of the view that the government was not willing to bring about political change,

<sup>11</sup> O. Tambo, *Apartheid and the International Community*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/international/html>, p. 10. B. Manby, *South Africa: The Impact of Sanctions*. *Journal of International Affairs*. Summer 1992, p. 22. P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999, Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), pp. 3 and 22. G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott and K.A. Elliot, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy*, p. 245. R. Knight, *Sanctions, Disinvestment, and U.S. Corporations in South Africa*. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://richardknight.homestead.com/files/uscorporations.htm> p. 1. The World is Against Apartheid. *Sechaba: Official Organ of the ANC of South Africa*. Vol. 1, No. 1. T. Lodge, *Sanctions and Black Political Organisations*. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> O. Tambo, *Apartheid and the International Community*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/international/html>, p. 10. O.R. Tambo, *Impose Comprehensive and Mandatory Sanctions Against South Africa*. Statement at the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa, UNESCO House, Paris, 21 May 1981. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or81-5.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or81-5.html), p. 4. K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>13</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Ike Moroe, Former Officer in the Department of Information and Publicity in the ANC President's Office - in Exile. Bloemfontein, 17 August 2008.

which would amongst others result in equal education. It has to be noted, however, that sanctions were not hurting the government and business alone. More than anybody else, the sanctions hurt the Black people as the people on the lowest rung of the social strata. It is natural for the negative economic consequences to impact negatively on the poorest people first. The injurious economic repercussions impacted harmfully on education as the government received less tax from big business and could therefore not spend as much on education.

The merits of economic and financial sanctions against South Africa as a way of bringing about desired changes in the political and social conditions, including improved conditions in education, were often debated in ethical terms. From this perspective, such questions arose as to whether it was morally justifiable to use penal measures to attempt to modify the behaviour of the South African government, well knowing that the negative impact of such measures could fall primarily on the Black population whose interests they were supposed to serve. There can be little doubt that economic sanctions, whether in the form of export and import boycotts, the withholding of new foreign investment, or disinvestment, must have had a markedly negative effect on the South African economy. Any form of negative impact on the economy automatically transmuted to detrimental consequences on education. This would result in further under funding on the already squeezed education budget. Foreign capital has always played an important role in stimulating growth and therefore employment opportunities in the South African economy.<sup>14</sup> There was an acknowledgement that sanctions would cause suffering. The fact that factories would be closed and people without jobs would affect education in

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<sup>14</sup> O.R. Tambo, *Impose Comprehensive and Mandatory Sanctions Against South Africa*. Statement at the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa, UNESCO House, Paris, 21 May 1981. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or81-5.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or81-5.html), p. 6. O. Tambo, *Apartheid and the International Community*. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/international/html>, p. 10. S.S. Brand, *How Economic Sanctions Could Cripple Reform*. *Business and Society Review*, p. 75. H. Nickel, *Will Sanctions Harm the Oppressed or the Oppressor?* *Business and Society Review*. Spring 86 Issue 57, 1974, pp. 82-83. D. Tutu, *A Plea for International Sanctions*. *Business and Society*, p. 67. H. Suzman, *The Folly of Economic Sanctions*. *Business and Society Review*. Spring 86 Issue 57, 1974, p. 87 and 89. Policy Speech by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu. Fifth Session of the Fourth KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, March 1987, p. 55. A. Spandau, *Economic Boycott against South Africa*, p. 132. D. Goldenhuys, *Sanctions Against South Africa*. Study Group Series, The South African Institute of International Affairs, p. 16. C. Legum and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, p. 297.



South Africa. This admission and the continued calls for sanctions show the levels of desperation for change in South Africa.

On 6 November 1962 the General Assembly called on all member states to take the following measures to bring about the abandonment of racial policies by the South African government: to break off diplomatic relations with Pretoria; to close their ports to South African shipping; to stop their own ships entering South African ports; to boycott South African goods and stop exports to South Africa and to deny landing and over flying facilities to South African aircrafts. Despite this United Nations move a number of countries, particularly Britain, the United States, France, Italy, West Germany and Japan ignored all or most of these decisions. They maintained their diplomatic relations and extended their trade with South Africa; continued to supply armaments; they continued to support South Africa to establish its own armament industry; and massively increased their investments of capital in the South African economy. But on the other hand a very large number of countries in fact broke diplomatic and commercial ties with Pretoria altogether. This include the majority of African countries, all the Socialist countries and (with the exception of Japan and Ceylon) all the Asian countries. The Organisation of African Union (OAU), that represented all the independent African countries, had virtually declared war on apartheid, and given most assistance to the freedom fighters.<sup>15</sup>

Suzman argues that the issue of sanctions and disinvestment was unfortunately reduced to a simple equation in South Africa, namely, if you were against sanctions you must be for apartheid and you must be racist.<sup>16</sup> Black nationalist politicians disagreed not just about the methods through which apartheid should be brought to an end but also what to

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<sup>15</sup> The World is Against Apartheid. Sechaba: Official Organ of the ANC of South Africa. Vol. 1, No. 1. Case Studies in Sanctions and Terrorism. Institute for International Economics. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://www.iie.com/research/topics/sanctions/southafrica.htm>. S. Lewis, The Economics of Apartheid, p. 178. T. Lodge, Sanctions and Black Political Organisations. M. Orkin, Sanctions against Apartheid, p. 35. South Africa: The Making of U.S Policy, 1962-1989. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/saintro.htm>. L. Phillips, South Africa's Future: "No Easy Walk to Freedom." Working Papers for a New Society, p. 34. J.D. Brewer, 'Introduction.' In J.D. Brewer (ed.), Can South Africa Survive? Five Minutes to Midnight, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> H. Suzman, The Folly of Economic Sanctions. Business and Society Review. Spring 86 Issue 57, 1974. p. 87.

replace it with. Inkatha was the only substantial Black political organisation which was critical of economic sanctions and disinvestments. Even before its formation, its founder and President, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, was the subject of considerable controversy for his appearance in foreign press advertisements urging investment in South Africa. By 1978, three years after the formation of Inkatha, the chief, was expressing doubt that disinvestments could take place on a significant scale. Buthelezi's open fall out with the ANC, and his and Inkatha's isolation from mainstream popular politics, helped to make more explicit the chief's opposition to sanctions. Increasingly, Inkatha was drawing the support of big business.<sup>17</sup> Inkatha's case against sanctions began with the argument that sanctions, either partial or total, were unlikely to be effective. They argued that South Africa was relatively immune from sanctions, being industrially fairly self-sufficient. Blacks would bear the brunt of the economic cost, because 'White power would be used to protect Whites preferentially if South Africa began to feel the effect of economic isolation.' Even if sanctions were successful in bringing about minority capitulation the consequences would be undesirable, for the emergent system would be one that favoured neither capitalism nor democracy. The final theme in the Inkatha argument was the long-term damage sanctions would inflict upon the economy. In their aftermath 'there would be not strong and vibrant post-apartheid economy capable of redressing the disparities caused by decades of apartheid neglect. The resultant black mass poverty would reduce South Africa to ungovernability. To Inkatha demanding sanctions was tantamount to demanding the circumstances in which violence would overtake democracy. Inkatha's own strategy therefore was directed at negotiations. Buthelezi and other Inkatha spokespersons called for increased Western economic and diplomatic involvement. They regularly praised Reaganite 'constructive engagement' and Mrs Thatcher's stand against

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<sup>17</sup> K. Maguire, *Politics in South Africa: From Vorster to De Klerk*, p. 91. T. Lodge, *Sanctions and Black Political Organisations*. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, pp.36-37. P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 6. Policy Speech by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu. Fifth Session of the Fourth KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, March 1987, pp. 53-55.

her Commonwealth colleagues.<sup>18</sup> There was indeed some merit in the stance of Inkatha. It would be self-defeating to destroy everything in the name of fighting apartheid. This would be tantamount to “scorched earth policy” where the destruction remains after all the wrangling and fighting is over. The route of diplomatic intervention would be more prudent and calculative.

Ostensibly, the ANC’s attitude to sanctions was uncomplicated. Since 1962, the ANC had advocated ‘comprehensive mandatory sanctions’ directed at the total isolation of the South African economy and administration, co-ordinated and enforced by the United Nations Security Council. Specifically the ANC called for the cessation of financial and trading links, oil and arms embargoes, the denial to South Africa of air and maritime facilities, and the ending of any nuclear cooperation. ANC statements in 1986 also placed fresh emphasis on the question of South Africa international legitimacy. If such sanctions were effectively imposed it would be impossible for the apartheid government to continue in power much longer. The ANC perceived itself as a revolutionary movement; sanctions were thus part of a broader strategy directed not at reform of the system but rather its replacement with a popular democracy. The ANC believed that total sanctions would be effective because South African trade was ‘critical to the survival of the racist regime.’ The ANC acknowledged that effective sanctions could impose economic costs on its own constituency although these were greatly exaggerated by anti-sanctions lobby groupings. The ANC regarded the boycott of South Africa as an invaluable aid to the struggle against apartheid.<sup>19</sup> The successful implementation of sanctions would mean less

<sup>18</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Dr Mochubeloa Seekoe, ANC member and former South African Ambassador to Russia. Bloemfontein, 16 August 2008. T. Lodge, *Sanctions and Black Political Organisations*. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, pp. 36-37. P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 6. O.R. Tambo, *Impose Comprehensive and Mandatory Sanctions Against South Africa*. Statement at the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa, UNESCO House, Paris, 21 May 1981. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or81-5.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or81-5.html), p. 5. S.J. Ungar and P. Vale, ‘Why Constructive Engagement Failed’. In M.A. Uhlig (ed.), *Apartheid in Crisis*, p. 251. Policy Speech by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu. Fifth Session of the Fourth KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, March 1987, p. 54. M. Fleshman and J. Cason, *The State of Apartheid: Assessing Sanctions at Year One*. *Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988, p. 66. S. Gelb, *Moving Forward on Sanctions: A View from Inside South Africa*. *Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988, pp. 71-72.

<sup>19</sup> P. Tlale, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, p. 3. T. Lodge, *Sanctions and Black Political Organisations*. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, pp. 38-39.

and less education resources for a system that was already struggling with unequal funding from the government. The continued support of the ANC for sanctions whilst acknowledging that its impact on the Black people would be severe is worrying. This is an apparent acknowledgement of the absence of alternative strategies and tactics that would be less harmful to its constituency and to the country they wished to govern in future.

The views of the United Democratic Front were less systematically developed than those of the ANC. Initially the UDF spokespersons expressed themselves obliquely on the subject so as not to risk legal prosecution, but as time went on such inhibitions disappeared. For instance in December 1985 Murphy Morobe felt that the UDF 'could not support the call for disinvestments because of legislation.' But in 1986 UDF spokespersons welcomed United States (US) sanctions and hoped that European countries would follow suit. In 1987 Dr Allan Boesak supported a call at a Canadian conference for comprehensive mandatory sanctions.<sup>20</sup> From its inception it was heavily critical of the US 'constructive engagement' policy. In 1985 the UDF's National General Council in a resolution on imperialism, repudiated the notion that foreign investment could benefit the oppressed and called for an end to the exploitation of South Africans by foreign investors. A lengthy UDF memorandum issued in August 1985 began with an assertion that 'an international conspiracy' existed between the South African government, certain foreign governments, foreign and local businesses, to continue the oppression and exploitation of the majority in South Africa.<sup>21</sup> The memorandum called for the diplomatic isolation of South Africa and extended sanctions and a sport boycott. Various UDF leaders had been strongly associated with the sport boycott. The Reverend

<sup>20</sup> P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 10. G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott and K.A. Elliot, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy*, p. 233. T. Lodge, *Sanctions and Black Political Organisations*. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, p. 40

<sup>21</sup> M. Bailey, *Barclays and South Africa. A Joint Haslemere Group Anti-Apartheid Movement Publication*, p. 1. T. Lodge, *Sanctions and Black Political Organisations*. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, pp. 40-41. P. Hain, *The Politics of Sport in South Africa*. *New Society*, p. 183. G.W. Sherperd, *Anti-Apartheid: Transnational Conflict and Western Policy in the Liberation of South Africa*. *Studies in Human Rights*, 150-151. J.M. Phelan, *Apartheid Media: Disinformation and Dissent in South Africa*, p. 196. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 10.

Arnold Stofile,<sup>22</sup> for instance, successfully visited New Zealand to oppose a forthcoming All Blacks tour. The NECC, in which UDF leaders participated, called for an intensification of the academic boycott. UDF views on sanctions, however, tended to be responses to initiatives taken outside the organisation. They did not reflect a unity of strategic purpose. Within the movement there were disagreements over, for example, the question of whether black businessmen should take over the assets of departing American companies. Such differences were an effect of the UDF's social and ideological complexities. Nevertheless, within the UDF there was general approval of all forms of sanctions which were widely understood as a means of shortening the conflict and limiting bloodshed.<sup>23</sup> The vacillation of the UDF on sanctions may be attributed to its preoccupation with the fear of being associated with the ANC. From the foregoing it is clear that the UDF policy position on sanctions was similar to that of the ANC. It, however, resolutely tried to conceal this fact.

Like the ANC, the PAC consistently supported sanctions since the inception of the international campaign. It too called for comprehensive mandatory sanctions. The chief difference was one of emphasis. PAC spokespersons did not regularly address their appeals to foreign businessmen or the representatives of Western governments. This was partly on the grounds of principle as well as being anti-imperialist. The PAC stressed that the main vehicle for change was united action through armed struggle. Occasionally, PAC spokespersons conceded that only sanctions would quickly bring an end to oppression. Within South Africa, AZAPO and its socialist allies within the National Forum adopted a roughly parallel standpoint. In conformity with its Black Consciousness predecessors, AZAPO supported disinvestments and sanctions. The motivation for sanctions by Western powers, though, was regarded with great suspicion. AZAPO, although in favour of economic sanctions, had never been conspicuous in campaigning

<sup>22</sup> Reverend Arnold Stofile. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 7 October 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>23</sup> T. Lodge, Sanctions and Black Political Organisations. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, pp. 40-41. P. Hain, *The Politics of Sport in South Africa*. *New Society*, p. 183. G.W. Sherperd, *Anti-Apartheid: Transnational Conflict and Western Policy in the Liberation of South Africa*. *Studies in Human Rights*, 150-151. J.M. Phelan, *Apartheid Media: Disinformation and Dissent in South Africa*, p. 196. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 10.

for them.<sup>24</sup> From the foregoing it is clear that there were ideological differences among Black political organisations on sanctions. The emphasis and intensity of campaigning for or against sanctions differed from one organisation to the other, with the moderate political organisations not supporting sanctions and the more militant ones strongly supporting them.

It would be fascinating to explore the impact of sanctions in ending apartheid, and therefore bring equality in education, as this was an area of serious contestation between its proponents and opponents. Determining the precise impact of international moves against apartheid remains difficult; those endeavours cannot be judged in isolation of internal pressures from South Africa's Black population. There is, however, evidence to suggest that the economic pressures of the 1980s, in particular, played a critical part in bringing about the demise of apartheid. As even the most optimistic advocates of external pressure acknowledged at the time, external pressures before the 1980s resulted only in 'token moves' and 'cosmetic changes' from Pretoria. Probably the most positive result of international anti-apartheid moves was their psychological impact on both Black and White South Africans. White South Africans, despite protestations to the contrary, were concerned about world opinion, and feared being abandoned by those they considered their friends, particularly America. For that reason, 'constructive engagement' approaches to relations with South Africa could never be as effective as stronger measures.<sup>25</sup>

The precise effects of economic pressures on South Africa were always difficult to measure, although one South African observer noted that:

<sup>24</sup> T. Lodge, Sanctions and Black Political Organisations. M. Orkin, *Sanctions against Apartheid*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>25</sup> A. Hirsch, The United States and South Africa since 1948. *Social Dynamics*, 15(2), p. 75. Ö.A. Özgür, *Apartheid: The United Nations and Peaceful Change in South Africa*, p. 148. G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott and K.A. Elliot, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy*, p. 246. P.I. Levy, Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do? Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), 7. G. Braun and H. Weiland, 'Sanctions against South Africa: Punitive Action or Placebo Politics?' In J.D. Brewer (ed.), *Can South Africa Survive? Five Minutes to Midnight*, p. 44. A. Spandau, *Economic Boycott against South Africa*, p. 166.

Increasingly one hears South African government Ministers who are admitting to the powerful effect of sanctions in constraining their political options. For instance, Minister of Finance Barend du Plessis said at a public meeting, and I quote him, 'Our economic problems began with the imposition of the arms embargo in 1964.'<sup>26</sup>

These concerns reinforced White South African fears about their future. Those fears were not so much about whether economic activity could continue at existing or slightly diminished levels, but also about the barrier to growth which lack of foreign investment and capital obviously was.<sup>27</sup>

Since mid-1984, South Africa suffered considerable capital flight, as a result of corporate disinvestment and because of the repayment of foreign loans. Net capital movement out of Africa was R9,2 billion in 1985, R6,1 billion in 1986, R3,1 billion in 1987 and R5,5 billion in 1988. This trend was continuing, with R1,7 billion in capital outflow in the first two quarters of 1989. One effect of this capital outflow was a dramatic decline in the international exchange rate of the rand. This meant that imports were becoming increasingly expensive. This also helped to fuel South Africa's inflation rate, which at 12-15% per year, was much higher than its major trading partners.<sup>28</sup> The fact that imports were becoming costly had negative implications for education. This implied that teaching aids that were sourced from overseas became expensive without a proportional increase of the Black education budget allocation.

<sup>26</sup> M. Phillips, South Africa: The Road Ahead. *World Policy Journal* 7(2), p. 390.

<sup>27</sup> G. Leach, *South Africa: No Easy Path to Peace*, p. 298. P.I. Levy, Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do? Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> R. Knight, Sanctions, Disinvestment and US Corporations in South Africa. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://richardknight.homestead.com/files/uscorporations.htm>. K. Owendale and T. Cole, *Apartheid and International Finance: A Program for Change*, p. 108.

It is impossible to argue conclusively that trade sanctions failed in South Africa. Given the small economic effects of trade sanctions, an argument for their effectiveness ends up hinging on their psychological impact on the governing party. Most South African leaders claimed the impact was minimal. While it is clear that sanctions had a psychological impact, this was nowhere near enough to swing the balance against apartheid. As long as the government perceived itself as facing complete disaster should they succumb to a communist aligned Black government, a small decrease in the payoff to persisting apartheid did little, or nothing, to alter the government's course of action. Once it became clear that a negotiated solution might be palatable, calls for more sanctions became an unnecessary burden to the substantial incentives to talk.<sup>29</sup> As such assessing whether the sanctions were an effective tool to end apartheid will remain complex to determine. It can only be argued that it is implausible and far-fetched that trade sanctions alone played a momentous and constructive role. As such it could be concluded that the South African case is not a model for further trade sanctions elsewhere.

In 1993 it became clear that the ANC was going to call for the lifting of sanctions against apartheid. This was motivated by the agreement on a multi-racial interim government to conduct South Africa's first ever democratic elections. This was deemed to be an important milestone on the road to democracy. The international corporations were urged to help redress the economic and social legacy of apartheid.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> P.I. Levy, *Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?* Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005.  
[www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 12. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 133. *Sanctions Against South Africa*, 1986. Retrieved on 11 June 2008.  
[www.exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/pubs/AmLnc/br56.htm](http://www.exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/pubs/AmLnc/br56.htm), p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> J. Barber, *Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-1999*, p. 2. U.S. Anti-Apartheid Leaders Applaud End of South Africa Sanctions, Call for Socially Responsible Investment, Black Empowerment. Retrieved on 20 January 2005.  
<http://richardknight.homestead.com/files/sanctionsliftingstatement.htm>, p. 1.



Whilst it cannot be conclusively argued that sanctions were an effectual instrument to end apartheid, it has to be accepted that they were an inconvenience to the NP government, as they exerted psychological pressure on the whole of South Africa. The fact that they were lifted when it became evident that a negotiated settlement was about to be reached indicates that their impact cannot be completely discounted.

### 6.3 In search of teacher unity

The establishment of teachers' organisations which represent the views of the teachers' corps in an education system is a common phenomenon in any country. In South Africa teacher organisations traditionally discussed matters such as the following with the Department of Education over the years: educational policy, problems encountered in the teaching situation, administration of education, personnel matters, conditions of service for teachers, fringe benefits, pensions, political interference in education and crisis in education. Several meetings were held with the Department on an ongoing basis, to discuss these issues.<sup>31</sup>

The history of teacher unions in South Africa has, in the main, mirrored the broader political, economic and cultural dynamics of South Africa's transition. Teacher unions have been critical actors in shaping educational and social change. In the process, there was a significant rearrangement of the existing power relations between teacher unions and government. This played itself out in unions' struggle over membership recruitment, organisational development and ideological reappraisal.<sup>32</sup> Strictly speaking teacher unions are supposed to focus on 'bread and butter issues' for teachers. Their involvement

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<sup>31</sup> M.G. Masitsa, *The Establishment of a Learning Culture as a Prerequisite for Academic Achievement*. Unpublished Doctor of Education Thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, pp. 87-88.

<sup>32</sup> L. Govender, *Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change*. In L. Chisholm, *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. p. 285. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008.

in political issues derails their focus on their calling. It pushes the interests of the child as a learner to the periphery.

According to Masitsa the unbanning of all political organisations, the release of political prisoners and the abolition of apartheid laws in 1990 by the government of South Africa, activated considerable political activity in the whole country. The liberalising course of the action of the government inspired new dynamics at the beginning of 1990. The new freedom that followed immediately caused trade unionism to take root in education in militant form.<sup>33</sup> There were extreme divisions in the teaching profession in terms of political ideology, language and geographical position. Teachers were divided into two blocks, namely, the 'recognised' – also referred to as the 'traditionals' or 'established,' and the 'unrecognised' – referred to as the 'progressive' or 'emergent' organisations.<sup>34</sup>

The recognised traditional bodies were established and recognised as representative of teachers by the various corresponding apartheid education departments. The unrecognised progressive bodies were mostly militant and linked educational demands with broader political demands.<sup>35</sup> The recognition and non-recognition of some teacher unions by the government created some negative and positive labelling depending on the

<sup>33</sup> M.G. Masitsa, *The Establishment of a Learning Culture as a Prerequisite for Academic Achievement*. Unpublished Doctor of Education Thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, p. 88.

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 8 on p. 467.

<sup>35</sup> M.S. Mothata, *Teachers and Teacher Organisations*. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, *South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era*, p. 94. L. Govender, *Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change*. In L. Chisholm, *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, p. 271. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 30. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p.171. R. Morrell, *Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/KwaZulu. Transformation*, Volume 7, 1988, p. 47. P. Kihn, *Comrades and Professionals: Teacher Ideology and Practice in the Western Cape, 1985 to 1990*. In P. Kallaway, *The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994*, pp. 326-327.

political prism against which an individual was looking at the situation. The recognised unions, whilst they enjoyed the audience of the government, were seen as traditional and conservative. They were perceived as unions that were against the cause for which the majority of the Black were fighting. The unrecognised bodies, on the other hand, were seen as progressive, militant and understanding the plight of the Black people. The militancy of teacher unions undermined the culture of teaching and learning in the schools. Teachers, the people who are supposed to be symbols of authority, failed dismally in this area because of union militancy.

Like the racially divided education system, the different teacher organisations were organised into four national groupings, corresponding to the four officially defined population groups. African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA) represented Black teachers, the Teachers' Federal Council (TFC) represented White teachers, United Teachers Association of South Africa (UTASA) represented Coloured teachers, while Teachers' Association of South Africa (TASA) represented Indian Teachers.<sup>36</sup> This profile reflects the extreme divisions in the teaching profession. While other factors such as political ideology played a role in these divisions, language further divided the White teacher organisations in the former provinces, namely the Transvaal, the Cape and Natal, each of which had separate structures for English and Afrikaans speakers. It was only in the former Orange Free State<sup>37</sup> where White teachers were in the same bilingual teachers' union. All these organisations, except the Afrikaans-speaking and bilingual White teacher associations, came to oppose apartheid and segregated education as a matter of policy in

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 8 on p. 467.

<sup>37</sup> The Free State province was known as the Orange Free State until 9 June 1995. The 'Orange' referred to the House of Orange in Holland. See Orange Free State. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

the 1980s.<sup>38</sup> It is not surprising that teacher formations were divided along racial lines in South Africa. It would be almost impossible to attain unity among educators belonging to racially and ethnically separated Departments of Education because of their different employers and conditions of employment.

In the past, ATASA, UTASA and TASA often operated within the state education system. They were perceived as 'puppets of the state and obstructions en route to liberation.' Their organisational work did not fundamentally challenge the apartheid state although their members were not necessarily supporters of apartheid. Rather, their activities helped to work the machinery of apartheid education. They sat on official committees concerned with policy, conditions of service and curriculum planning.<sup>39</sup> For an example, the three organisations were involved in the HSRC's investigation into the provision of education, also called the De Lange Commission. The former president of Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA), an affiliate of UTASA, Franklin Sonn, and Transvaal United African Teachers' Association's (TUATA) Leepile Taunyane actually sat as De Lange Commissioners, and were considered part of the state by progressive educational organisations such as COSAS, AZASO and the emerging National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA). The view was held that 'it was not

<sup>38</sup> M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 95-96. Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, From an Externally Regulated Profession to Self-Regulation and Ownership of the Profession by its Own Members. Paper Presented at the Second International Conference of South African Education Law and Policy Association (SAELPA). Stellenbosch, 18-20 September 1997. Private Collection of Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008.

<sup>39</sup> G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 31. M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 96. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 123.

enough to be against apartheid,' and teachers 'must practically show themselves to be part of the liberation struggle in South Africa.'<sup>40</sup> It can also be argued that it was not everything that the government did that was wrong as the progressive recommendations of the government sponsored De Lange Commission, in which Leepile Taunyane participated and unfortunately earned him a negative imprint, were to prove.<sup>41</sup> Cooperating with the government, even without supporting its discriminatory policies, was enough for any individual to earn a label of a 'puppet.' This negative branding of people is unfortunate as well meaning people who meant to get the best for the community in the prevailing situation were easy victims of such labelling. What made matters worse was that the labelling was extreme and inconsistent as the situations that could lead to such identification were arbitrary.

The constitution of NEUSA stated unequivocally that the progressive teachers of South Africa recognise that "we are part of our communities, committed as we are to the liberation of our people from the oppression and exploitation they suffer under apartheid, recognise the need for a strong, national, non-racial teachers' union in our land." NEUSA believed that it had to unite all teachers nation-wide to fight for the rights and interests of teachers in schools and rid the classrooms of apartheid education. It believed that it was to take its rightful place in the implementation of people's education in schools and communities and to involve the union in the progressive struggles of the people.<sup>42</sup> NEUSA believed that it could not allow a situation where their members remain passive observers when the communities they were serving as teachers were subjected to inferior education. Whilst the stance of NEUSA may have had some merit, it has to be noted that this contributed to NEUSA deviating from its mandate of leading professionals and this undermined the role teachers had to play in their communities. It was such positions that

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<sup>40</sup> M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 96. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 123.

<sup>41</sup> M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 96.

<sup>42</sup> Constitution of the National Education Union of South Africa, May 1986. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers. Colin Purkey Collection. A1984/C16.16.

helped to create a situation of lawlessness in the schools. The learners suffered as teaching and learning time was lost with teachers dedicating their energies to political matters. The defiant culture that developed among teachers and learners created anarchy in the schools. Many learners lost life opportunities in the process.

During the mid-eighties a growing division between existing teachers' organisations and a proliferation of new teachers' organisations resulted in a segmented organised teaching profession, consisting of at least thirty-two different teachers' organisations. Ironically, this period was also characterised by a pursuit of teacher unity. The more disagreement occurred, the more the struggle for the establishment of a single, non-racial national teachers' organisation intensified. Two main groups, the so-called "progressive" or "emergent" teachers' organisations and the "established" or "traditional" teachers' organisations took the lead in the debate.<sup>43</sup> The progressive teachers' organisations included the Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU), the Democratic Teachers' Union (DETU), Education for an Aware South Africa (EDASA), the Eastern Cape Teachers' Union (ECTU), the Port Alfred Progressive Teachers' Union (PAPTU), the East London Progressive Teachers' Union (ELPTU), the Cape African Teachers' Union (CATU), the Progressive Teachers' League (PTL), the Mamelodi Teachers' Union (MATU), NEUSA (banned in 1988) and the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA). The established teacher's organisations included the ATASA (an umbrella body for black teachers), the United Teachers' Association of South Africa (UTASA: an umbrella body for Coloured teachers), TASA (an umbrella body for Indian teachers) and TFC (an umbrella body for White teachers). Membership of these organisations was based on race, language, colour

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<sup>43</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 144. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 171.

and geographical position. Some of these organisations were politically cautious.<sup>44</sup> It is not surprising that membership of these organisations was based on race, language, colour and geographical location. These permutations were a replica of the political arrangements in South Africa. Some of these unions were politically conscious to the political situation in the country, whilst others showed apathy. It has to be stated that the so-called “progressive” unions helped to erode the culture of teaching and learning in the schools, whilst teachers belonging to established and conservative teacher unions struggled to maintain order in the schools. Needless to say, this caused divisions amongst teachers belonging to different organisations at schools.

The progressive teachers’ organisations represented teachers who were impatient with the response of the established teachers’ organisations to the conditions in the schools and communities and particularly with their lack of practical engagement in the liberation struggle. These were teachers who were preoccupied with the struggle for socio-political transformation and freedom from apartheid. They felt that it was no longer sufficient for teachers and their organisations merely to voice their opposition to apartheid; they had to become actively involved in the liberation struggle.<sup>45</sup> NEUSA, for an example as a teachers’ union, emerged openly and defiantly in 1990 because it was committed to the liberation of all people from the oppression and exploitations they suffered under apartheid.<sup>46</sup> The preoccupation of some unions with the struggle for social and political transformation could be expected in the South African political context. In other

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<sup>44</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 144. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 271. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008.

<sup>45</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 144. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 123. G. Kruss, People’s Education: An Examination of the Concept: People’s Education Research Project, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 30.

<sup>46</sup> N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 123. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 271.

countries, where communities are not plagued with problems of discrimination, unions are mainly concerned with the conditions of service of their members.

Between 1985 and 1990, all structures which organised Black teachers moved substantially away from support for the apartheid state and towards the position of the broad liberation movement. The traditional Black teacher federations and all of the progressive teacher unions eventually participated in unity talks explicitly convened by organs of this movement. The December 1985 conference which launched the NECC, referred to in Chapter 5 of this thesis, aimed to find a strategic response to the education crisis, and more generally to help regain the initiative against the state following the imposition of a State of Emergency in July of that year. At this conference teacher unity was placed on the political agenda of the democratic movement for the first time. But the resolution on teachers that was adopted by the conference contained the totally unrealistic notion that such unity could be attained within a month. The conference was guided by a principle of maximum unity of all anti-apartheid forces, and by a recognition that all teachers' organisations needed to be drawn into the programmes of the NECC, ATASA in particular, could not be left out because it had within its ranks the majority of Black teachers in the country. Even if ATASA had been conservative in its actions in the past, it was a mass-based organisation and could not be left out in the cold. Likewise, the militant progressive teacher unions had to be a vital part of the NECC.<sup>47</sup> The need for all teacher organisations to be involved in the NECC, whether they were emergent and progressive or established and conservative, was taking into account the political challenges facing Black people. The involvement of all organisations would help to forestall unnecessary labelling and suspicions. It was, however, doubtful whether the marriage of organisations with such divergent ideological differences could last.

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<sup>47</sup> I. Moll, The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 191-192. G. Kruss, *People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 30.



As could be expected, delegates to the NECC conference, animated by commitment of these political principles, did not debate or understand the situation on the ground, particularly in the teacher organisations. There were deep conflicts between the mainstream and the progressive teacher organisations which surfaced repeatedly at the NECC conference, despite their common allegiance to a broad anti-apartheid alliance. Many delegates from the progressive teacher organisations argued that the ATASA leadership was made up of the very principals and inspectors who carried out state repression of progressive learners and teachers. ATASA officials, they claimed, were first and foremost collaborators with apartheid education. The ATASA delegation, not to be outdone, rejected these accusations.<sup>48</sup> It would take some effort before the established and emergent teacher unions could understand and appreciate each other. This may be attributed to the fact that the profile of their members and the objectives of their unions were different. It was almost impossible to hold together an alliance of unions motivated by conflicting positions regarding the objectives of a union; with the established unions seeing themselves as “professionals” who were duty bound to protect the learners’ rights to learn, and emergent ones as “workers” with an obligation to protect their rights before they could look at the interests of the learners. It was in fact a sad day for education to have to contend with such conflict. Strictly speaking such dissonance has no place in education.

In 1986, the different teacher organisations debated the issue of teacher unity and tried to get to grips with its implications. At the National Consultative Conference on education called by the NECC in Durban in April 1986, a walkout was threatened by the progressive teacher organisations in protest against the presence of ATASA and UTASA members. By the second half of 1987, teacher organisations had once again started to respond to the call for unity. Unfortunately, the old division between the recognised and the non-recognised teacher bodies remained, although they were no longer expressed

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<sup>48</sup> I. Moll, *The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990*. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 192. G. Kruss, *People’s Education: An Examination of the Concept: People’s Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, p. 30. T. Sono, *African Teachers’ Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 171.

quite as antagonistically. The result was that two parallel sets of unity talks emerged towards the end of 1987. First, the Progressive Teacher's Union (PTU) initiated talks between itself, NEUSA, WECTU, DETU, EDASA and the Progressive Teachers' League (PTL) in October 1987. By the end of the year, this initiative had been joined by MATU, ELPTU and ECTU. Agreement had been reached in principle that all of the progressive teacher organisations would unite into one national teacher's trade union.<sup>49</sup> The failure of the emergent unions to readily accept the established unions to the point where they threatened a walkout at the Second NECC Consultative conference reflects the stigma and labelling that went with being recognised by government. This suspicion was unnecessarily overstretched for political point scoring. The fact that the established unions were recognised did not imply that they were collaborators.

The second teacher unity initiative was that of ATASA, which convened a meeting involving all the affiliates of UTASA, TASA, the TFC and itself in November 1987. The express purpose of this meeting was to respond to the ongoing calls for teacher unity.<sup>50</sup> By early 1988 ATASA, UTASA, TASA together with Transvaal Teachers' Association (TTA), South African Teachers' Association (SATA) and Natal Teachers' Society (NTS) had established an agreement in principle that they would work towards unity among themselves. That parallel unity talks were in progress was in conflict with Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), UDF and NECC resolutions on teacher unity. It was the express wish of these organisations that all teacher unions must be united into one body in South Africa.<sup>51</sup> It was, however, the continued labelling of established unions by the emergent ones, with the latter initiating unity talks for progressive unions, that created a need for the former unions to look at starting unity talks exclusively for the

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<sup>49</sup> City Press, 22 November 1987. L. Govender, *Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change*. In L. Chisholm, *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. p. 270.

<sup>50</sup> Weekly Mail, 27 November 1987.

<sup>51</sup> I. Moll, *The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990*. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 195. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 170.

established unions. These baseless accusations would make it almost impossible for the established unions to wish to merge with the emergent unions.

The ongoing disunity among teachers was compounded by the second State of Emergency imposed in June 1986, which resulted in serious disruptions of the mass democratic movement. The majority of the NECC leadership was in detention by the end of the year, and the NECC and the UDF were seriously disrupted on the ground. Most of the coherence in the education struggle which had been built up by the two NECC consultative conferences was destroyed by increased repression. The State of Emergency also brought an attack on teacher organisations. H.H. Dlamlenze, the general secretary of ATASA, was detained for a long period, and more than 100 members of the progressive teacher organisations, especially NEUSA, WECTU and ELPTU were in detention at various points during the height of the emergency in 1986 and early 1987.<sup>52</sup>

The outcome of this repression was that the question of teacher unity ceased to be central to the agenda of teacher organisations, and by early 1987 there was very little discussion or activity on the issue evident among any of the teacher organisations. The State of Emergency and the attendant repression exacerbated rather than resolved the crisis in schools, and teachers increasingly bore the brunt of an education system in collapse. ATASA and UTASA also continued to show signs that their membership was more politicised by retaining and developing links to programmes of the NECC and other progressive initiatives in education. In 1986 the ATASA Executive Committee decided to withdraw from participation in the structures of the Department of Education and Training and moved towards the adoption of the Freedom Charter.<sup>53</sup> Despite the fact that the Unions failed to seize the opportunity to unite before the restrictions of the State of

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<sup>52</sup> Eastern Cape Regional Report to the NEUSA National Conference, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> I. Moll, The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, p. 194. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 267. M. Cross, Resistance and Transformation: Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa, pp. 62-64.

Emergency were introduced, some established unions, on their own volition; were forging more direct links with the programmes of the NECC. This was to the point of being prepared to sever ties with the Department of Education and Training. It was becoming fashionable for most organisations to want to be identified with progressive organisations. With the evident signs that the NP government was willing to speak to the ANC and other banned organisations, and with democracy imminent, there was a scramble for people to be identified with progressive organisations.

Despite the conflicts, struggles and lack of contact between different teacher organisations, the role of the NECC and the UDF was notable during this whole period. Both continued throughout to emphasise the importance of seeking a basis for teacher unity. COSATU strongly recommended, at its national education conference in 1987, that all teachers' organisations of the oppressed should be united according to the principle of 'one industry, one union.' ATASA and UTASA, for example, argued that they were 'professional' associations first and foremost and did not require any particular political allegiance on the part of their members. COSATU's call therefore had a broad appeal amongst all the organisations. It could reach organisations in a way that neither the UDF nor the NECC had been able to do.<sup>54</sup> Despite COSATU's broad appeal, the fact that the proposed merged union would be aligned to the ANC would make it difficult for established unions, which saw themselves as professional bodies, to be part of the envisaged united teacher organisation.

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<sup>54</sup> I. Moll, *The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990*. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 194-195. L. Govender, *Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change*. In L. Chisholm, *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, p. 270. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 170. P. Kihn, *Comrades and Professionals: Teacher Ideology and Practice in the Western Cape, 1985 to 1990*. In P. Kallaway, *The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994*, p. 325.

The basis for the involvement of teachers in the struggle for social transformation and freedom from apartheid was laid during the Harare Seminar, which was held in Zimbabwe from 2 to 8 April 1988 under the auspices of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), COSATU, the ANC, the All African Teachers' Association (AATA) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU).<sup>55</sup> The All Africa Teachers' Association (AATA) and the WCOTP, in conjunction with the ANC, intervened to speed up the process of teacher unity. All were concerned that teacher unity in South Africa was not being fully realised. The latter three organisations invited a range of South African teacher bodies to the Harare seminar to discuss teacher unity. ATASA, UTASA, TASA and most of the progressive teacher organisations from South Africa were represented at the meeting. So too were COSATU, SACTU and various Black teacher unions. It is important to note that the Afrikaans speaking teacher professional bodies were not invited. The 'Harare Proposals' were a watershed in the movement towards the unification of teachers in South Africa. The meeting was decisive in bringing together around the negotiating table all the various organisations which represented Black teachers in South Africa. While it did not eliminate differences between different organisations, it established a clear-cut negotiating agenda on the basis of which teacher unity process took dramatic steps forward. All representatives of the teachers' organisations present agreed on the need for the national unity of teachers and committed themselves to discuss this in their various organisations and to propagate the feasibility of one national teachers' organisation. The second half of 1988 saw teacher organisations debating and seeking common ground in

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<sup>55</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 144. Address by Prof. Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education, at the 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union, Matthew Goniwe House, 5 October 1999. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.info.gov.za/speeches/1999/9910071007a1004.htm](http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/1999/9910071007a1004.htm), p. 2. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 174.

opposition to apartheid education.<sup>56</sup> The Harare seminar marked a significant qualitative shift in the development of the teacher unity process in South Africa. Prior to the meeting, teacher organisations had tended to approach the question of unity by emphasising conflicts and differences among themselves as evidenced by continuous suspicions, accusations and counter-accusations. It is doubtful whether these negative tendencies towards unity would be completely eradicated beyond the Harare discussions. The fact that Afrikaans speaking teacher professional bodies were not invited was disappointing and pointed to the inherent discriminatory tendencies in the South African political landscape.

In the last four months of 1988, the unity talks envisaged by the 'Harare Proposals' became firmly established inside the country. COSATU convened the first two rounds of talks in August and December 1988. All teacher organisations, with the exception of those affiliated to the TFC, were invited to and attended these meetings as delegates. All present agreed that they would in future participate in only one set of teacher unity talks convened by COSATU. The end of 1989 saw the teacher unity process formally consolidated in the establishment of the National Teachers' Unity Forum (NTUF). This structure consisted of representatives from all of the organisations which committed themselves to realise the aim of one national teachers' organisation. The teacher unity process accelerated considerably during 1990.<sup>57</sup> In pursuit of its goals to attain a single, unitary teacher union the NTUF formulated fifteen guidelines on 7 April 1988.<sup>58</sup> Different teachers' organisations debated these guidelines extensively but there were two

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<sup>56</sup> I. Moll, *The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990*. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 196-199. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggarenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008.

<sup>57</sup> I. Moll, *The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990*. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, p. 199. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 170.

<sup>58</sup> See Appendix 9 on p. 469.

discussion points in particular which appeared to be at the crux of the debate on teacher unity, namely the form of a unitary teachers' organisation, and by implication also the nature and function thereof, and the structure of such organisation.<sup>59</sup> The Harare proposals and COSATU's decisive intervention and leadership of the unity processes gave serious impetus to progress towards the unity talks. This was to an extent that guidelines for the unity talks were formulated. It was, however, still doubtful whether such a unity would last.

Deliberations on the guidelines for achieving teacher unity covered aspects such as appropriate forms of protest by teachers and consequently revolved around the choice between a trade union and a professional type of organisation. The progressive organisations took an "anti-capitalistic" and "anti-imperialistic" stance and aligned themselves with the workers' struggle. Disrupting classes and mobilising learners would be acceptable if considered as the only way to force the government to act on teachers' demands. These organisations pointed to the conditions which affected teachers, such as long working hours, job security and victimisation, as necessitating a teachers' union which would put mechanisms, such as arbitration, mass demonstrations and strikes, at the disposal of teachers. This stance was in accordance with the sixth guideline accepted at the Harare Seminar, namely that the unitary organisation must protect and promote the teachers as workers and professionals. The established teachers' organisations on the other hand preferred a professional teachers' organisation which would promote professional ethics and the concerns of the teaching profession. According to the established teachers' organisations, the teacher's primary responsibility was to facilitate the development of the child, a duty which the teacher as a professional should under no circumstances neglect.<sup>60</sup> Even in an atmosphere where guidelines were drawn and agreed

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<sup>59</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 145.

<sup>60</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 145. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008.

upon with COSATU leading the processes, the robust approach of evolving teacher organisations to unity would still bring irreconcilable differences. The inclination of emergent unions to militancy as opposed to professionalism was inimical to the prospects for any form of unity. The education system would not thrive if the militant proposals of the progressive organisations could be upheld. It is suicidal for people entrusted with moulding the lives of children to put their interests as workers before those of children. The insistence of the established teacher unions, on the other hand, on professionalism is cautious and acceptable.

Coetzee asserts that the other issue that brought serious debates was the issue of the structure, the choice between a unitary and a federal structure. A unitary structure presupposes that all teachers belong to a single organisation and not to different associations affiliated under an umbrella body. According to its proponents, the advantage of such a structure was that it would provide teachers with more bargaining power, challenge the educational structures of apartheid and be reconcilable with the popular demand for majority rule within a unitary state. A federal structure, on the other hand, implied that teachers are not required to terminate their membership of existing teacher associations. Coetzee says opponents argued that such a structure was politically undesirable because it did not unite teachers in the liberation struggle and was seen to be related to ethnicity and apartheid. Coetzee argues that established teachers' organisations were not prepared to submerge their identities and assets in a unitary structure, and to void their existing recognition agreements with Education Departments. Some conceded that unity should be the eventual goal; they favoured a federation that focused on initial regional co-operation. They believed serious problems would be created if people of widely opposing organisations with different methods and ways of functioning were forced into one group.<sup>61</sup> The fact that national political agendas had to be taken into account in teacher unity talks compounded the negotiations. Emergent and progressive unions saw the need to structure the merged union in such a way that it would be a force

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<sup>61</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, pp. 145-146.



to reckon with politically, whilst the established unions did not see any such pressing need. The position of established unions of pursuing the route of leaving political issues to hard core political parties was more sensible and far-sighted. Submerging teacher unions into national political agendas is reckless, as it could go a long way to compromise the core business of education, namely teaching and learning.

The structural stalemate threatened further negotiations in the direction of unity. The NTUF referred the matter to an Interim Working Committee (IWC). The IWC, representing both the progressive and established organisations, was requested, inter alia, to prepare a timetable for the formation of a national unitary teachers' organisation. The IWC met on 26 May 1990 in Cape Town and recommended that a national teachers' organisation be established at a national congress to be held later that year and the organisations that were ready and able to disband should do so at the launch of the national body. Those not prepared to break up should be permitted dual membership for a period to be determined by the NTUF. At an NTUF meeting, held on 23 and 24 June 1990 in East London, it was decided that such organisations must disband within twelve months and that at a congress to be held on 6 and 7 October 1990 in Cape Town, the establishment of a single national organisation, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), be launched. The establishment of this national organisation would represent the culmination of more than two years of debate.<sup>62</sup> The NTUF, with the help of COSATU, worked relentlessly to attain teacher unity. It is doubtful whether the envisaged unity, if it were to be a success, would last. This reservation arises from the different views that the unions had on the objectives and structure of the planned union.

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<sup>62</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, p. 146. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. p. 270. T. Nxesi, General Secretary – South African Democratic Teachers' Union. Address to the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association (USA), 4 July 2000. Retrieved 12 June 2008. [www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html](http://www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html), p. 2. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 170. M.G. Masitsa, *The Establishment of a Learning Culture as a Prerequisite for Academic Achievement*. Unpublished Doctor of Education Thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, p. 89.

The NTUF sharpened its unity programme and objectives. It organised a successful nationwide 'sit in' of teachers across all education departments on 24 July 1990 to protest against the education crisis and to consolidate the move towards one national teachers' organisation. It put forward for discussion a draft constitution and a draft Bill of Rights for teachers. ATASA, UTASA, TASA and NEUSA all publicly indicated that they would disband once the new national organisation was launched. The unity that emerged in the NTUF had overcome the destructive divisions of the pre-Harare period. Developments in teacher unity were rapid. The speed of these developments was as a result of exceptionally heightened militancy among South African teachers. Teacher unity talks in 1990 took place against the backdrop of 'chalks down' teachers' strikes and other mass action. On 6 October 1990 SADTU was formally launched at a rally in Johannesburg, wherein the keynote address was delivered by Nelson Mandela, the then recently released Deputy President of the ANC. This was a symbol of the new body's alignment with the liberation movement in South Africa. Speakers also included Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of COSATU, the labour federation which had acted as a midwife to the teacher unity process. A long and painful process had necessitated the strong guidance and wealth of experience which COSATU, through its Education Desk, brought to bear on the birth of a united teacher union. The nature of this alliance would be an important issue in the future for SADTU and for COSATU affiliates.<sup>63</sup>

At its launch, it claimed to represent 150 000 teachers across all education departments in South Africa. It elected an executive committee which contained members from all the various organisations which had participated in the teacher unity talks from 1987. It was thus the most non-racial and representative teachers' organisation in the history of the

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<sup>63</sup> South African Democratic Teachers' Union, Commemorative Journal, Launch Congress/Rally, Shareworld-Johannesburg, 6-7 October 1998. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16.

country.<sup>64</sup> The successful launch of SADTU may be attributed to the fact that teachers perceived their challenges to be the same. Teachers were also wooed by the popularity of the ANC, a COSATU alliance partner. It was fashionable for Black people to be associated with the ANC after its unbanning. In terms of ideological differences the merger was as good as 'mixing iron with clay,' and hoping that the two will hold together. It is doubtful whether this marriage of convenience would hold.

Messages of support were received from a number of local and international bodies. These included others in the mass democratic movement of South Africa, international teacher organisations and labour federations. It was noted that October 6, the date of the launch, is recognised as International Teachers Day. The launch congress was a closed meeting, and was followed on Sunday, 7 October by a celebratory public rally at the Orlando Stadium in Soweto. International guests addressed the large crowd. Mary Futrell, President of WCOTP, affirmed the support of her organisation to SADTU, and reiterated her call for a more determined assault on the still intact apartheid education.<sup>65</sup> The birth of SADTU, with the support of the ANC and COSATU confirmed its alignment to these organisations. This would be unfavourable to the continued participation of the conservative teachers from established unions. It is not wise for a teacher union to be aligned in any way with a political party, as it cannot be all members of that union who would support that particular political party.

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<sup>64</sup> I. Moll, The South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Politics of Teacher Unity in South Africa, 1985-1990. In E. Unterhalter (ed.), *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, pp. 200-201. M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, *South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era*, p. 99. South African Democratic Teachers' Union, Commemorative Journal, Launch Congress/Rally, Shareworld-Johannesburg, 6-7 October 1998. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16. Keynote Address by the Deputy President of the ANC, Nelson Mandela at the Launch of SADTU, 6 October 1990. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16. Address by Prof. Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education, at the 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union, Matthew Goniwe House, 5 October 1999. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.info.gov.za/speeches/1999/9910071007a1004.htm](http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/1999/9910071007a1004.htm), p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> South African Democratic Teachers' Union, Commemorative Journal, Launch Congress/Rally, Shareworld-Johannesburg, 6-7 October 1998. Wits William Cullen Library Archives. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16.

One of the aims of SADTU was to eradicate apartheid education and replace it with a non-racial and democratic education system. There was a great increase in activism and organisation among teachers, the result of which were marches and sit-ins which were viewed by some commentators as 'the energies of a long struggle against apartheid.' The 1990 SADTU launch congress passed many important resolutions,<sup>66</sup> challenging the apartheid system and its machinery. These resolutions touched on the curriculum, the education crisis, a democratic service contract for teachers, to name but a few.<sup>67</sup> The resolutions taken at the launch of SADTU were wide ranging, touching on matters both educational and political. This put SADTU firmly in the league of progressive mass democratic movements. The resolutions did not in any way reflect the conservative position of established unions, which were part of the merged SADTU. The submersion of their stance and approach would make this fragile merger impermanent. This would resurrect their differences that were suppressed before and during the unity talks.

Early in 1991, the Department of Education and Training was formally requested to recognise SADTU as a teachers' association in terms of *The Education and Training Act of 1979*. The Department was reluctant to do so because the union did not want to discard the right for teachers to strike. To express its discontentment with the resolution of the Department SADTU conducted strikes, marches, chalk-downs and demonstrations to demand recognition. Members of SADTU often prevented inspectors, subject advisors and other Departmental officials from going to school to check on teacher's work, evaluate them and perform other duties. Masitsa asserts that discipline among teachers deteriorated with the inception of this teachers' union. The extremes of the defiance campaign against the Department were enforced by intimidation well into 1993. The morale of teachers was badly weakened in the process. After long deliberations with the Department and a few compromises on the part of SADTU the union was recognised by

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<sup>66</sup> See Appendix 10 on p. 471.

<sup>67</sup> N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 123.

the Department late in 1992.<sup>68</sup> The disinclination of the DET to recognise SADTU was sensible and logical. The government was reluctant to entrust education to a union that did not put the interests of children first.

According to Masitsa the attitude and behaviour of SADTU members, contributed to the perception of the learners that a number of teachers were poor or even bad role models as they were openly undisciplined and even corrupt. Such behaviour contributed to disrespect for teachers. The learners felt that some teachers did not encourage and inspire them as they were not committed to doing their work. In the same manner, the parents expressed discontent about the poor teacher morale and irresponsibility in many schools. Masitsa maintains that teachers had brought themselves down to the level of the learners and had taken advantage of the poor conditions in schools. They were irresponsible and undisciplined and knew that the blame for problems in schools would be put on the learners.<sup>69</sup> It is deplorable that the teaching profession could be compromised to the point where even learners and parents did not have confidence in teachers, the people that are key to the functionality of the schooling system.

The formation of SADTU as a unitary national structure was a victory for the progressively orientated and served to acquaint many teachers with the broader interests and strategies of the national liberation struggle. However, notwithstanding the momentous significance of the foundation of SADTU and the euphoria attached to the event, there were already signs that the tensions that had been submerged regarding the form and function of the new union had not been laid to rest. When SADTU was formed in October 1990, it came under attack from traditional teachers' organisations, who argued that, as a union, SADTU could not advance the professional interests of teachers. The traditional organisations, unlike SADTU, maintained that professionalism and

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<sup>68</sup> M.G. Masitsa, *The Establishment of a Learning Culture as a Prerequisite for Academic Achievement*. Unpublished Doctor of Education Thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, pp. 89-90.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

unionism were irreconcilable. SADTU regarded professionalism as an important principle in education, but rejected the notion that unionism, understood, as pursuing material interests by means of striking, was unprofessional. According to the first president of SADTU, Sheperd Mdladlana, there were two inescapable realities about teachers. One is that they are educators and the other is that they are workers. According to SADTU there were two definitions of professionalism, namely the traditional and the democratic. The traditional view of teachers' professionalism was that teachers must uphold the dignity of the profession. SADTU believed in unionising for democratic professionalism. Democratic professionalism recognises the teachers' responsibility to provide an education of the highest standard to all learners, but also recognises the teachers' democratic right to bargain for improved benefits.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, Chapter 2 of the Constitution guaranteed every citizen of this country, including teachers, basic human rights, for example, the right to strike, the right to administrative justice, and the right to form and join a trade union.<sup>71</sup> The fact that both the progressive and conservative unions were unwilling to compromise on these critical points of difference would undermine the unity realised with the formation of SADTU. The stance of SADTU of democratic professionalism could not be supported by conservative teachers who subscribed to unqualified professionalism as opposed to unionism. Democratic professionalism as preached by SADTU would create serious problems for education in South Africa.

Following SADTU's formation, and lamenting the loss of easy access to government which they enjoyed during the NP era, TUATA, NTS and the White English-speaking TTA met to discuss the mutual concerns related to the unionist orientation of SADTU

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<sup>70</sup> New Nation, 3-9 April 1992. M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 99-100. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 271.

<sup>71</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act Number 108, 1996. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 271.

and to explore ways of mutual co-operation among themselves. In subsequent meetings, these bodies were joined by the Natal Teachers' Union (NATU), the Orange Free State Teachers' Association (OFSATA) and the remaining majority of the TFC affiliates, all of whom had been excluded from the NTUF or had made a decision to dissociate from SADTU. Threatened by SADTU, both the TFC and TUATA with other similar minded organisations formed the National Association of Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) on 11 November 1994. The first President of NAPTOSA was Leepile Taunyane.<sup>72</sup> The birth of SADTU therefore, did not end the debate and division which characterised the unity movement from the start. Not all the teachers' organisations that had been part of the NTUF initiative became part of SADTU. UTASA, despite having committed themselves to an eventual unitary structure, withdrew their representatives from the NTUF. The NTS and the TTA associated themselves with the activities of the NTUF, but decided not to become part of SADTU because they were not prepared to disband. They did, however, take part in the establishment of NAPTOSA. The latter was organised as an umbrella body with a federal structure, the twelve incorporated teachers' associations could retain their identities. NAPTOSA's constitution committed the organisation to:

- Protecting the inalienable right of every child to quality education within an equitable and non-discriminatory system of education
- Maintaining a high level of teacher professionalism
- Enhancing all aspects of the working life of all teachers and

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<sup>72</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 92. L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 270. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. P. Kihn, Comrades and Professionals: Teacher Ideology and Practice in the Western Cape, 1985 to 1990. In P. Kallaway, The History of Education under Apartheid: 1948-1994, p. 328.

- Treasuring the principles of non-racism, independence, autonomy and political non-alignment<sup>73</sup>

The emphasis was placed on professionalism, political non-alignment and teachers' responsibility towards the child, issues that were viewed differently by SADTU. It was clear that the differences of the two organisations were deeply rooted and it would require more time and intensive debate before unity could be attained. It was healthy for NAPTOSA to stand firm for what its members believed in, despite the fact that it did not seem like the popular route.

Three key factors led to the demise of the merger initiatives: inability to reach consensus on the question of political alignment, with the strong undercurrent being over the 'political' role of teachers, both within and outside the classroom; disagreement on whether a unified body should be based on unionism or professionalism, encapsulated by SADTU's insistence on the teacher's right to strike as opposed to NAPTOSA's emphasis on the entitlement of learners to uninterrupted learning; and, whether a united organisation should be a federal or a unitary structure. Teacher organisation, therefore, had fragmented along political, ideological and organisational lines.<sup>74</sup> The launch of NAPTOSA added more fuel to the already burning fire between the established and progressive organisations. However, it was evident that the White rulers of the time sided with the moderate NAPTOSA because former President de Klerk<sup>75</sup> met the representatives of NAPTOSA even before it was launched prior to April 1994.<sup>76</sup> It is doubtful whether the merger of the so called conservative unions would last. This may be attributed to the fact that whilst they agreed on maintaining a high level of

<sup>73</sup> The Citizen, 26 August 1991. Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, From an Externally Regulated Profession to Self-Regulation and Ownership of the Profession by its Own Members. Paper Presented at the Second International Conference of South African Education Law and Policy Association (SAELPA). Stellenbosch, 18-20 September 1997.

<sup>74</sup> L. Govender, Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change. In L. Chisholm, Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. p. 272.

<sup>75</sup> Frederick (F.W.) Willem de Klerk 1936-, South African President and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate with Nelson Mandela. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people.deKlerk.fw.html](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people.deKlerk.fw.html)

<sup>76</sup> Die Burger, 12 November 1994. M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 101.



professionalism, they belonged to different language and racial groups. Moreover their respective unions had different ethos, traditions and approaches to educational issues.

In the middle of 1996, differences among members of the federally structured NAPTOSA began to emerge. Several organisations representing Afrikaans-speaking teachers within NAPTOSA severed ties with the organisation to form a national union of Afrikaans-speaking teachers called the South African Teachers' Union (SATU) or Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU).<sup>77</sup> Founder members of SATU included the Transvaal Onderwysersvereniging (TO), Vrystaatste Onderwysersvereniging (OVSOV) and Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU) in both the Cape and Natal.<sup>78</sup>

There were several factors that led to the secession of the Afrikaans-speaking members from NAPTOSA. The Afrikaans speaking members of NAPTOSA felt that they were resented by the Black teachers, as the latter were generally not comfortable with the use of Afrikaans in their meetings. This was despite the fact that it had been agreed at the conception of NAPTOSA that both English and Afrikaans would be used in the meetings. Further, the Afrikaans-speaking members had been used to strict adherence of the teachers to the prescripts of the teacher's disciplinary code as a professional body. They were uncomfortable with defending cases of individuals who had contravened the code,

<sup>77</sup> The name Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU) is preferred above the English translation, the South African Teachers' Union (SATU). The latter can be easily confused with the South African Textile Union (SATU) or South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU). See Private Collection of the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie, Bloemfontein. Letter Heads of the SAOU, 30 May 2008 and Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008.

<sup>78</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. *The Citizen*, 1 August 1996. *Die Volksblad*, 31 July 1996. M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, *South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era*, p. 92. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Prof. N. van Loggerenberg, former Dean of the Faculty of Education (UFS), Director of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association and Co-chair of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Bloemfontein, 2 June 2008. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Andrew Taylor, former Chairman of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU), Member of the National Committee of the Executive of SAOU and Principal of Brebner High School in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein, 8 July 2008. T. Sono, *African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle*, p. 171.

as was the case in NAPTOSA. The President, Mr Leepile Taunyane, was not happy when the Afrikaans-speaking members declared their intention to sever ties with NAPTOSA. Several meetings were held to salvage the merged union, all in vain. English speaking unions remained in NAPTOSA. It was only the English speaking members from the Free State who joined SATU. This may be attributed to the fact that their affiliated body had always had both Afrikaans and English speaking members. It is important to note that SATU continued to have very cordial relations with NAPTOSA after the disaffiliation.<sup>79</sup> It is surprising that the SATU members could not remain in NAPTOSA as the aims of the two organisations were compatible. It was mainly the language differences and the varying ethos that led to the secession. This was an important test case for the new South Africa of the likelihood of successful mergers between organisations that have different ethos, language and culture. There were important lessons to learn from the NAPTOSA break-up for the South Africans that wished to make a success of any future mergers under similar circumstances.

Founded on 30 August 1996 in Pretoria, SATU was made up of organisations representing about 25 000 Afrikaans teachers. The union aims were as follows:

- To promote education that is based on biblical values and a non-discriminatory system;
- To empower educators with regard to professional responsibilities;
- To establish a service whereby members' interests and rights are improved and protected;
- To ensure that the interest of learners are not adversely affected by the actions of workers;

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<sup>79</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. L. Govender, *Teacher Unions, Policy Struggles and Educational Change*. In L. Chisholm, *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. p. 270.

- To link to the wider labour movement in the interest of members.<sup>80</sup>

It was SATU's plan to form ties with organised Afrikaans parents' organisations, cultural organisations, churches, commerce and industrial organisations. The first President of SATU was Mr Herklaas Smit of Bloemfontein.<sup>81</sup> The aims of SATU were diametrically different from those of NAPTOSA. The breakaway may therefore be attributed to language, racial and cultural differences. This is confirmed by the fact that SATU was formed exclusively by Afrikaans speaking teachers.

The search for unity among teachers was a dismal failure. This may be attributed to different long held views on ideological perspectives. The fact that some unions believed in militancy and radicalism as opposed to professionalism would make long lasting mergers almost impossible. The racial, language and cultural differences played a critical role in the merger fiasco. South Africa emerging from years of segregation where different races did not know each other well and were often suspicious of one another, still had a long way to go in ameliorating cultural and racial stereotypes.

#### **6.4 The introduction of democratic political reforms in South Africa**

The dismantling of apartheid involved an acknowledgment that an education system based on racial differentiation cannot be sustained. Systems and policy change took the form of negotiations between interest groups. These negotiations took the form of 'political manipulation.' The interest groups brought pressure to bear on the political authorities. Educational systems do not change just because there is a change of government. The notion of an immediate replacement of the existing education system with a new ideal one is false. The interplay of competing ideologies and the process of negotiation will produce compromises between ideals and reality. The implementation of

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<sup>80</sup> Private Collection of the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie, Bloemfontein. Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie, Grondwet, revised 10 September 2005 and 18 June 2006. Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. *Die Burger*, 31 July 1996. *Die Volksblad* 31, July 1996.

<sup>81</sup> Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Interview with Mr Herklaas Smit, the first President of Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie. Bloemfontein, 30 May 2008. *Die Burger*, 31 July 1996. *Die Volksblad* 31, July 1996.

new policies is typically a lengthy and an uneven process. There are no educational coups d'état. Most change is incremental and creeping. The shape and pace of educational change depends on the nature of the existing system and its pattern of relations with the broader social contexts of which it is a part.<sup>82</sup> It has to be noted that apartheid education and its aftermath of resistance destroyed the culture of learning within large sections of the South African communities, leading in the worst affected areas to a virtual breakdown of schooling and conditions of anarchy in relations between learners, teachers, principals and the educational authorities.<sup>83</sup> Reforms in education had to take into account years of neglect under a system that was under funded and plagued by internecine and intermittent strikes and protests. The system had to be salvaged from the level of almost total collapse, where Principals and teachers had lost their initial authority and respect.

Reforms in education had to be preceded by meaningful reforms in the political arena. Apartheid did not collapse overnight, but in stages. The constitutional reforms of the early 1980s led to four phases of political change that, ultimately, irrevocably transformed the South African political system, and therefore the education system. The four phases have been arrived at in terms of the epoch-making events of the time. First, the 1983 constitution's new political representation for Coloureds and Indians made the glaring lack of participation by the country's Black majority even more obvious. As discussed in Chapter 5 early discussions of the new constitution triggered widespread violent protests by anti-apartheid activists. The escalating violence prompted the government to impose a series of states of emergency and forced both the government and many citizens to realise that promising future political reforms regarding Black political participation would no longer suffice; sweeping political reforms would be necessary and the need for such reform was becoming increasingly urgent.<sup>84</sup> The inadequacy of the constitutional reforms of the early 1980s elicited protest that sent a message that the changes were not a panacea to the political dispensation that was

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<sup>82</sup> R. McGregor, *McGregor's Education Alternatives*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>83</sup> *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. Education Department, ANC, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>.

punctuated by inequalities. It was therefore necessary to look at the other avenues that would bring about the needed changes and accommodate all racial groups.

The second phase of change was a series of secret meetings between NP officials and imprisoned ANC leaders. These began in July 1984, after Minister of Justice Hendrik “Kobie” Coetzee, and others representing President P.W. Botha, paid several unpublicised visits to ANC leader Nelson Mandela, who was then serving the twenty-first year of a life prison sentence.<sup>85</sup> The State had realized that force would not make the central non-negotiable issues of socio-economic justice, including education and full political rights for all South Africans go away. On 29 November 1987, the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok,<sup>86</sup> admitted:

We will have to find a political solution acceptable to the majority – otherwise we will lose.<sup>87</sup>

The government formalized these visits in May 1988 by establishing a committee to handle government contacts with Mandela and with other imprisoned or exiled ANC leaders. On July 5, 1989, in response to Mandela’s request for high-level discussions of a possible negotiated settlement to the ANC’s armed struggle, Botha and Mandela held their first face-to-face talks.<sup>88</sup> It is worth noting that the propensity of the crisis in the Black South African education system had reached alarming proportions. The situation in South Africa was aptly captured by Nelson Mandela in his correspondence to P.W. Botha before their meeting on 5 July 1989:

The deepening political crisis in our country has been a matter of grave concern to me for quite some time and I now consider it necessary in the national interest for

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<sup>85</sup> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>. P.I. Levy, Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do? Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> Adriaan Vlok. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved on 26 May 2008. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

<sup>87</sup> *The Cape Times*, 30 November 1987.

<sup>88</sup> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>.

the ANC and the government to meet urgently to negotiate an effective political settlement.<sup>89</sup>

This gave a clear message of true commitment of the Nationalist government to seriously engage with the ANC and its leadership. The fact that the meetings were initially unpublicised shows the sensitivity of this stage of negotiations and the prudence of the government in approaching them. All parties agreed that the use of force would not provide a long lasting solution to the social, economic and political problems facing South Africa. This is true of the problems that confronted education.

Botha resigned from office, owing to ill health, in August 1989, and in December, Mandela suggested a 'road map' for future negotiations to the new President, F.W. de Klerk. Mandela's proposal outlined a power-sharing plan for the NP and its political rivals and embraced the spirit of compromise that would be needed to weather the political turbulence that lay ahead.<sup>90</sup> The fact that the negotiations did not stall with the resignation of Botha shows that the NP had taken a collective stance to negotiate with the ANC leaders, and that it was not the position of Botha alone. Collective decision making is critical to continuity and the sustainability of the issues at hand.

Internationally brokered talks about Namibia's independence gave momentum to the idea of a political solution in South Africa. Both pre-empting and encouraging this move, the ANC came up with the Harare Declaration in August 1989, conditionally supporting talks with the NP government. It, however, set five conditions: lifting the State of Emergency with its restrictions on political activity, legalising all political organisations, releasing all

<sup>89</sup> The Mandela Document: A Document Presented by Nelson Mandela to P.W. Botha before their Meeting on 5 July 1989. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/64-90/docs890705.html>.

<sup>90</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1984-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 187. South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>. Nelson Mandela's Address to Rally in Cape Town on his Release from Prison, 11 February 1990. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/release.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/release.html) R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 12. J. Barber, *Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-1999*, p. 41. M. Morris, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*, p. 239.

political prisoners and putting a stop to political executions. If this happened, "all armed violence could be suspended while the two sides agreed on constitutional principles and then on a mechanism for drafting a new, nonracial constitution."<sup>91</sup> It was important that hostilities and the use of force should formally cease for amicable negotiations to go unhindered. It would be self-defeating for the political organisations to still be banned and political prisoners to be languishing in jail whilst talks for a democratic South Africa were going on. In the same manner it would be counter-productive for political organisations to continue disrupting education, bombing key government installations, and in some instances killing innocent civilians, whilst the negotiations were going on. A relationship of mutual trust is a prerequisite for meaningful talks to take place.

On the political level the State of Emergency lapsed on 8 June 1990. The lifting of the State of Emergency implied that although 2 February 1990 was considered as the beginning of freedom as De Klerk announced the unbanning of political organisations, in reality it began on 9 June 1990. All discriminatory laws were to be removed from the Statutes and the reservation of *Separate Amenities Act, Act No. 49 of 1953* repealed. The State President indicated clearly that all discrimination would have to be repealed in order to pave way for democratic era. In education these developments implied that unutilised and underutilised White schools could now be occupied by South Africans regardless of race.<sup>92</sup> The government showed boldness and relentless courage in implementing these measures. This was a clear sign that it would not renege on the reform process that it had started.

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<sup>91</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, pp. 186-187. V. Maphai, *The Future of Education in South Africa*. Head of Department Political Science, University of the Western Cape, on the Occasion of the National Education Symposium on 19 April 1991 in Bloemfontein.

<sup>92</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, pp. 130-131. Address by the State President Mr FW De Klerk, DMS, at the Opening of the Second Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. Cape Town, 2 February 1990. Retrieved on 26 June 2008. [www.fwdklerk.org.za](http://www.fwdklerk.org.za), p. 8. Statement by President F.W. de Klerk on the Timetable for Further Constitutional Reform. Issued by the Office of the State President. Pretoria, 26 November 1992. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/timetable.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/timetable.html) , p. 3.

The unwavering stance of De Klerk to introduce reform in South Africa can be seen, amongst others, in the speech he made on 1 February 1991 in which he declared:

Our country is irrevocably on the road to a new dispensation. The goal with the removal of discrimination is to give all South Africans full rights in every sphere of life... The ending of apartheid and the repeal of these last remaining discriminatory laws will bring us to the end of the era.<sup>93</sup>

The resolute stance of the National Party government to end apartheid was going to bring equality to education. The abrogation of the remaining discriminatory laws gave South Africans a foretaste of the reforms that were going to be introduced in education. These developments reassured the education stakeholders that the government would not renege on their promises for a democratic political dispensation in South Africa.

The talks with the ANC led to the third, and most transforming phase in South African politics at that time, beginning with de Klerk's historic speech of February 2, 1990, in which he legalised more than thirty anti-apartheid organisations, including the ANC, SACP and PAC; ordered the release of eight long-term political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela and ANC Deputy President Walter Sisulu; removed many emergency regulations concerning the media and political detainees; and announced his intention to negotiate a new democratic constitution with his political opponents. In October of that year, the parliament took a symbolic step toward reform by repealing *The Separate Amenities Act of 1953*, an important pillar of apartheid.<sup>94</sup> The watershed speech of de Klerk showed that the NP was resolute in its preparedness to bring wholesale political reforms in South Africa. He made bold decisions. He took the world by surprise in

<sup>93</sup> Address by State President F.W. De Klerk, at the Opening of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1 February 1991. Vol. 1, Cols. 1-26.

<sup>94</sup> M. Ottaway, *The ANC: From Symbol to Political Party*. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 28. M. Ottaway, *The March 1992 Referendum*. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 119. South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>. Sanctions Against South Africa, 1986. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/pubs/AmLnc/br56.htm](http://www.exchanges.state.gov/EDUCATION/ENGTEACHING/pubs/AmLnc/br56.htm), p. 1. Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa. 29 May 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa), p. 2.



February 1990 when he announced the unbanning of the ANC and other political parties, and the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela. These defining moments guaranteed the South African citizens that South Africa would soon experience a complete overhaul of their education system. This went a long way to appease the education stakeholders who had been clamouring for changes in education.

The release of Nelson Mandela and other political detainees and the unbanning of political organisations went a long way to pacify the flaring tempers among members of the Black community. In his home-coming rally in February 1990, Mandela appealed to learners to go back to school and learn.<sup>95</sup> The call was followed by the NECC's launch of an Intensive Learning Campaign as a direct response to disintegration in schools and a high failure rate among the 1989 matriculants. The outcome of these calls was that a significant number of learners registered for the 1990 school year which resulted in the resources available to the state being drained.<sup>96</sup> Education had become so dysfunctional that there was a need for calls to be made for the situation to normalise. The damage done to the education system cannot be corrected overnight. It takes much time and energy to eradicate the bad habits of absenteeism, bunking classes, late coming and ill-discipline. Fighting political battles with education is suicidal. Learners who missed a year or two of proper schooling would suffer great pain to recover the lost time.

The unexpected announcement at the opening of parliament on 2 February 1990, caught many off guard. As Alistar Sparks noted:

In those 35 minutes De Klerk unleashed forces that within four years would sweep away the old South Africa and establish an altogether new and different

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<sup>95</sup> T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 155. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 122. M. Ottaway, The ANC: From Symbol to Political Party. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 28.

<sup>96</sup> N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 122. M. Ottaway, The ANC: From Symbol to Political Party. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 28.

country in its place. Another country with another constitution and another flag and another national anthem. And above all another ethos.<sup>97</sup>

It is the view of some commentators that it was not De Klerk's intention at the time. In their view it was the last apartheid President's hope to control the change process and forestall a democratic dispensation which would lead inevitably to Black majority rule, or what he termed a "winner take all" outcome.<sup>98</sup> This pessimistic view of these commentators cannot be substantiated. President De Klerk would not have made such bold statements without fully understanding their implications. These political innovations must have been discussed at length in government circles before pronouncements could be made. It can therefore be safely argued that what followed these Presidential announcements must have been expected. De Klerk's speech marked a turning point in South African politics and this brought hope for education in South Africa.

According to Radebe De Klerk's speech as a watershed for reform in South Africa while the Conservative Party considered it a revolutionary onslaught on the Afrikaner specifically and the White people in general. Amid these different interpretations of the President's speech, it heralded a new era in South Africa and a huge break with the past as well as prospects for a negotiated transition to a non-racial, democratic and united South Africa.<sup>99</sup> A classless and egalitarian political dispensation would ensure that all people would receive equal education in South Africa. The reforms that De Klerk introduced could not enjoy the support of all the people of South Africa, who naturally have differing views on the governance model for the multi-racial South African community. Any attempt to satisfy any one exclusive grouping would still leave other groups dissatisfied. The views of these groups on the structure of the future education

<sup>97</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 187. Nelson Mandela's Address to Rally in Cape Town on his Release from Prison, 11 February 1990. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/release.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/release.html)

<sup>98</sup> B. Pottinger, *The Botha Era: An End or a Beginning?* In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 13. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 187.

<sup>99</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 122.

system were conflicting. The route that De Klerk's government followed was prudent in the light of the history of the polarised racial relations that South Africa had.

Despite the constraints posed by the apartheid system that had brought so many challenges to the South African population, it was evident that the people of South Africa enjoyed wealth and a quality of life that was far advanced of standards achieved in many other countries. If this was compared with the political chaos, economic decline, unrest and violence elsewhere in the world, the country was doing much better than most in 1990. In fact in development and growth the country stood tall when compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1988 and 1989, South Africa registered the highest real economic growth rates in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>100</sup> This was the context within which South Africa was to get into the serious business of transformation through different negotiation structures. The Black education system would benefit from these developments. It is, however, unfortunate that the wealth of the country was not evenly spread. This would be one of the most serious challenges of the 'new' South Africa.

The fourth phase in the political transformation occurred as the NP government and the ANC leadership began to recognize their mutual dependence and the need for cooperation and compromise in embarking on constitutional negotiations. In this phase, the previously adversarial relationship was transformed through their discussions and their agreement on three accords, namely the Groote Schuur Minute of May 1990, the Pretoria Minute of August 1990, and the D.F. Malan Accord of February 1991. In these accords, ANC leaders pledged to suspend the armed struggle, the government agreed to release all political prisoners, and both sides agreed to pursue political reform through negotiation. On September 14, 1991, representatives of twenty-seven political parties, interest groups, and the national and homeland governments signed the National Peace Accord, agreeing to form a multi-racial council, later called the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), to serve as temporary executive authority until democratic elections

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<sup>100</sup> Speech by Lucas Mangope. CODESA, Vol. I, 20 December 1991. Private Collection of Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Minister of Education of QwaQwa Homeland. S. Jones and A. Muller, The South African Economy, 1910-90, p. 296.

could be held.<sup>101</sup> Huge strides were made by the government with the different accords of 1990 and 1991. This crystallized the optimism that education stakeholders had that a new dispensation would soon be introduced in education in South Africa. The agreement of the ANC to suspend the armed struggle and the government to release political prisoners, and the subsequent formation of the multi-racial Transitional Executive Council were a clear indication that South Africa was on a path to a true democratic dispensation. It is commendable that South Africa was able to go through this important period without major upheavals. This would make the transformation of education easy to achieve.

Nearly three months after the signing of the historic peace accord, preliminary negotiations to agree on procedural rules began at the World Trade Centre outside Johannesburg, with the Convention of Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The first plenary session of CODESA began on 21 December 1991. Chief Justice Michael Corbett opened CODESA with Petrus Shabot and Ismail Mohammed as presiding judges. About 228 delegates from nineteen political parties attended and pledged their commitment to negotiations by signing the Declaration of Intent.<sup>102</sup> Absent from the Convention was the PAC which had withdrawn from the negotiations a few days earlier. The PAC believed that the negotiations must be held outside South Africa under the stewardship of a neutral party, such as the United Nations Organisation or the Organisation of African Unity. Other more extremist organisations such as the Conservative Party and Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) also did not attend. Later in the negotiations, Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) also withdrew in protest at the exclusion of

<sup>101</sup> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>. Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa), Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. pp. 2 and 5. The Soul of a Nation: Constitution-Making in South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/online%20books/soul-of-nation-constitution/chapter4.htm](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/online%20books/soul-of-nation-constitution/chapter4.htm), pp. 1-14. R. Meyer, The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 6. J. Barber, *Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-1999*, p. 45. A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 77.

<sup>102</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*, p. 10. Celebrating Freedom and Democracy: The CODESA Negotiations. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/codesa.htm](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/codesa.htm) F. van Zyl Slabbert, Why South Africa's Transition is Unique. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 111. E. Louw and K. Tomaselli, *South African Politics: Mapping the Constituency*. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/politeconomy/postapartheid/sapolitics.htm>

the representative of the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini and the KwaZulu homeland.<sup>103</sup> The few dissenting voices that appeared on the South African political landscape were not surprising. The divergence of the views of the people who have to participate in the negotiations would make agreeing on all issues impossible. It was therefore important for all the parties to be willing to be flexible and accommodative. This would be the recipe for future negotiations on education reform also. Education stakeholders would have to be accommodating and adaptable to the differing views of the other negotiators.

In September 1992, Mandela and de Klerk reached a Record of Understanding, formally committing both sides to accept a democratically elected, five-year interim government of National Unity led by a political coalition.<sup>104</sup> They also agreed that the centre of government would remain in Pretoria and that the new State President would be chosen from the party winning the largest plurality of votes in nationwide nonracial elections. Any party that won at least 5 per cent of the seats in parliament would be entitled to a place in the cabinet. The transitional, bicameral parliament was to be charged with drafting and adopting a new constitution. The ANC accepted the idea of sharing power with the NP during the transition. Assuming the ANC would win the elections, it would,

<sup>103</sup> Celebrating Freedom and Democracy: The CODESA Negotiations. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/codesa.htm](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/codesa.htm) F. van Zyl Slabbert, Why South Africa's Transition is Unique. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 111. E. Louw and K. Tomaselli, South African Politics: Mapping the Constituency. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/politeconomy/postapartheid/sapolitics.htm> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>. The New South Africa: Mandela's Release. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. <http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/newsSA.htm>. A. Odendaal, The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 187. Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa. 29 May 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa), p. 2. Address to CODESA by Comrade Nelson R. Mandela, President of the ANC, 20 December 1991. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/1991/sp911220.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/1991/sp911220.html), p. 1. Meeting Between the State President of the Republic of South Africa and the President of the ANC Held at the World Trade Centre on 26 September 1992. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html), pp. 2-3. R. Meyer, The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), pp. 6 and 14. Statement by President F.W. de Klerk on the Timetable for Further Constitutional Reform. Issued by the Office of the State President. Pretoria, 26 November 1992. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/timetable.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/timetable.html), p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*, p 16. F. van Zyl Slabbert, Why South Africa's Transition is Unique. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 111. E. Louw and K. Tomaselli, South African Politics: Mapping the Constituency. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/politeconomy/postapartheid/sapolitics.htm>

as the majority party, exercise its prerogative on most matters, and the NP would serve as a junior partner in running the country. Supporters on both sides viewed the government of National Unity as the country's best hope for achieving long-term political and economic stability, for attracting much-needed foreign investment, and for limiting violence by both White and Black extremists.<sup>105</sup> One of the main criticisms of the proposed coalition government was that with the two major political rivals entering into a governing alliance, their small-party opponents would have little political maneuverability and would be forced into extra parliamentary protest.<sup>106</sup> It was the view of the State President, F.W. de Klerk, that all parties involved in the CODESA negotiations should emerge victorious. He wanted "win-win" results for all parties at the negotiations, despite very delicate issues on which different parties held conflicting views.

<sup>105</sup> J. Barber, Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-1999, p. 7. F. van Zyl Slabbert, Why South Africa's Transition is Unique. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 111. E. Louw and K. Tomaselli, South African Politics: Mapping the Constituency. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/politeconomy/postapartheid/sapolitics.htm>

<sup>106</sup> F. van Zyl Slabbert, Why South Africa's Transition is Unique. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition, p. 111. E. Louw and K. Tomaselli, South African Politics: Mapping the Constituency. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/politeconomy/postapartheid/sapolitics.htm> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>. The New South Africa: Mandela's Release. Retrieved on 16 January 2005. <http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/newsSA.htm>. A. Odendaal, The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994. In Y.N. Seleti, Africa since 1990, p. 187. Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa. 29 May 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa), p. 2. Meeting Between the State President of the Republic of South Africa and the President of the ANC Held at the World Trade Centre on 26 September 1992. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html), p. 2. Statement by Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC at the Opening of the ANC/NP Government Summit, 26 September 1992. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html), pp. 4-7. Press Statement by Nelson R. Mandela, President, ANC, Summit Meeting, World Trade Centre, Johannesburg, 26 September 1992. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/record.html), pp. 5-7. R.T.H. Dolamo, Using Political Power to Serve Rather than to Dominate. CTC Bulletin. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm](http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm) Statement by President F.W. de Klerk on the Timetable for Further Constitutional Reform. Issued by the Office of the State President. Pretoria, 26 November 1992. Retrieved on 12 June 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/timetable.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/timetable.html), p. 2.

There were conflicting views such as the protection of the right of minority groups.<sup>107</sup> These agreements on the transitional government represented important compromises by both the government and the ANC, and they helped to set new precedents for future negotiations. The agreement to power sharing served to allay fears and instill trust in an otherwise delicate process on either side of the political spectrum. This brought stability to a process that could be compromised by extremists in the opposing camps. The fact that the negotiators agreed on a government of national unity implied that conflicting views would be accommodated in mapping out the new educational dispensation for South Africa. This would be beneficial to education, as these differing views would ensure that a good and well debated education dispensation emerged out of the processes. Getting a convergent group of people to decide on the future education system would imply that not all the views of South Africans would be represented in mapping the way forward in education. This would pose a serious threat to whatever outcome was arrived at, as the differing views of the other sections of the society would have been left out on something as delicate as education.

CODESA established five working groups, each made up of thirty-eight delegates and thirty-eight advisers, to take the lead in creating a climate for free political activity; in determining basic constitutional principles; in establishing transitional procedures for the nominally independent homelands of Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda; in setting and overseeing time-tables for the transition; and in dealing with new problems that would arise during the transition itself. International organisations and other countries were torn between recognizing South Africa's impressive accomplishments and encouraging further progress.<sup>108</sup> Most international sanctions were lifted soon after *The*

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<sup>107</sup> Speech by W.A. de Klerk. CODESA, Vol. I, 20 December 1991. Private Collection of Mr D.T. Mokoena, Former Minister of Education of QwaQwa Homeland. South Africa: Human Rights Developments. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.hrw.org/reports/1993/WR93/Afw-09.htm](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/WR93/Afw-09.htm), p. 2. R.T.H. Dolamo, Using Political Power to Serve Rather than to Dominate. CTC Bulletin. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm](http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc04-12/ctc04-12h.htm) J. Barber, *Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-1999*, p. 45.

<sup>108</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*, pp. 18-19. Towards Democracy. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/36.htm>. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 26. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 56. G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott and K.A. Elliot, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy*, p. 221-222. A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 137.

*Population Registration Act of 1950, The Group Areas Act of 1950 and Land Acts of 1913 and 1936* were repealed. In July 1991, the United States Congress lifted remaining sanctions under its Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, although laws restricting commercial ties with South Africa remained on the books in many states and cities in the United States. Other countries gradually lifted a range of boycotts, and many African governments, under pressure from their own business communities, reestablished diplomatic ties with South Africa. The United Nations General Assembly would wait until late 1993 to lift the remaining UN sanctions.<sup>109</sup> The abrogation of legislation that was the cornerstone of apartheid was proof of the resoluteness of the government in uprooting the last vestiges of apartheid. This convinced the international community that South Africa was on a path to total transformation free of discrimination. The transitional arrangements for the independent homelands implied that the failure of children of these territories to have access to educational institutions in South Africa would soon be abrogated.

The political situation depicted above affected the South African education scenario. It was a widely held view that education in South Africa was in a crisis and, as such, needed to be revamped. Education in South Africa was typified by severe quantitative and qualitative inequalities in provision. These coincided with ethnically divided structures of control, centred on 'own affairs' departments of education answerable to the White, Indian and Coloured chambers of parliament, with Black education under the Department of Education and Training and homeland departments of education. Racial inequalities remained one of the greatest obstacles in South Africa's education system.

<sup>109</sup> Towards Democracy. Retrieved on 20 January 2005. <http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/36.htm>. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 26. P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: the End of Apartheid*, p. 56. P.I. Levy, Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do? Centre Discussion Paper No. 796. Economic Growth Centre. Yale University. February 1999. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. [www.econ.yale.edu/growth\\_pdf](http://www.econ.yale.edu/growth_pdf), p. 6. G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott and K.A. Elliot, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy*, p. 221-222. Policies of Apartheid of the Government of South Africa, United Nations General Assembly, 10 December 1985. Retrieved on 26 January 2005. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/40/a40r064.htm>, pp. 1-2. Celebrating Freedom and Democracy: The CODESA Negotiations. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/codesa.htm](http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/codesa.htm), p. 2. A Black Homeland Finds Itself an Orphan in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html](http://www.query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html), p. 3. South Africa: Human Rights Developments. Retrieved on 11 June 2008. [www.hrw.org/reports/1993/WR93/Afw-09.htm](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/WR93/Afw-09.htm), pp. 10-11.



The South African education system was faced with serious challenges in the early 1990s. Education governance was fragmented and dominated by state bureaucracy; government provision and subsidisation of schooling varied greatly by race and region; the quality of basic schooling for the majority of children was deficient with pre-school education opportunities lacking and special education provision largely absent. These constraints must be viewed against the background of South Africans generally having very high educational expectations, with education on the other hand becoming unaffordable.<sup>110</sup> With the pressing political agendas of the early 1990s it was not possible to immediately attend to education reforms. It would be the new political dispensation that was still in the process of being decided, that would clearly map out the reforms in education.

By the beginning of 1990s the Congress alliance had secured the largest constituency in the country. Most analysts predicted that South Africa's political future would be ANC dominated. Though the NP's public image had dramatically improved, the Party had still to shake off the legacy of apartheid. The other players, both within and outside of Parliament, had neither the support nor the power of the NP or ANC.<sup>111</sup> The willingness of the NP to radically transform the apartheid system and segregated education, plus usher in a nonracial democracy, served to transform the NP into a modern democratic party, while at the same time depriving it of the uninterrupted political dominance it had enjoyed for some forty-five years.<sup>112</sup> The boldness of the NP to usher genuine reforms in the South African political landscape instilled confidence in its government and the reforms processes that it was introducing. It was reasonable to expect that this move would make any further disruptions of education impossible. It is unfortunate that this was not to be.

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<sup>110</sup> J.M. Luiz, The Economics of Future Education in South Africa. *Economics*, pp. 9-11. T. Nxesi, General Secretary – South African Democratic Teachers' Union. Address to the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association (USA), 4 July 2000. Retrieved 12 June 2008. [www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html](http://www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html), p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> E. Louw and K. Tomaselli, South African Politics: Mapping the Constituency. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.und.ac.za/und/ccms/politeconomy/postapartheid/sapolitics.htm>.

<sup>112</sup> South Africa: NP. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12174.html>.

This was the end of apartheid. The ANC and the other parties had to reestablish themselves in the country. Meanwhile political violence in KwaZulu Natal soared, spreading to other provinces. These hostilities resulted in considerable instability in the country, and this affected education negatively. Teaching and learning cannot thrive in an atmosphere of enmity and panic. Accusations were made that government agents were trying to destroy Black unity. The National Peace Accord of September 1991 helped to restore trust, and negotiations began in December, but soon broke down again amid fresh violence and accusations. Despite the public breakdown in negotiations, meetings continued in secret between the ANC and government leaders.<sup>113</sup>

### **6.5 Pressures facing education in the run up to democracy**

In 1994 the new democratically elected government of South Africa took office amid great expectations that the education system, like other aspects of South African society, would change rapidly. Most people, and in particular those who had long been oppressed and had struggled against apartheid, expected greater justice and equality, the elimination of racism and an improvement of the quality of education received by the Black majority.<sup>114</sup> The new democracy inherited an education system which was deeply divided and where education institutions had been transformed into battlefields in the struggle against apartheid.<sup>115</sup> An analysis of the 1991 census suggests that under apartheid a quarter of the Black population had no education at all. Four decades of apartheid education have produced hundreds of illiterate and semi-literate Blacks who lack effective control over their lives. On the other hand, it has created, most paradoxically, a serious structural problem for the economy due to a lack of skilled resources. In the former homelands this rose to between 35% to 45%. Unlike apartheid education, the

<sup>113</sup> The New South Africa: Mandela's Release. Retrieved on 16 January 2005.

<http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/newsSA.htm>. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 187. R. Meyer, *The Paradigm Shift: The Essence of Successful Change – A Personal Experience*. Retrieved on 11 June 2008.

[www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/mer01/mer01.pdf), p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> J. Pampallis, *The Establishment and Transformation of a Repressive System: A Historical Perspective on Educational Change in South Africa*. In C. Odora Hoppers, B. Gustavsson, E. Motala and J. Pampallis, *Democracy and Human Rights in Education and Society: Explorations from South Africa and Sweden*, p. 15.

<sup>115</sup> T. Nxesi, General Secretary – South African Democratic Teachers' Union. Address to the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association (USA), 4 July 2000. Retrieved 12 June 2008. [www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html](http://www.nea.org/speeches/sp000704f.html), p. 2.

democratic dispensation that came into existence after the 1994 national election sought to bring about greater access and equity in education and other social provisions. For example, the new democratically elected government would be preoccupied with providing compulsory education to all South Africans, where this was not a priority for the Nationalist government.<sup>116</sup>

The first White Paper on Education and Training stated how government saw its overarching goal:

For the first time in South Africa's history, a government has the mandate to plan the development of the education and training system for the benefit of the country as a whole and all its people. The challenge the government faces is to create a system that will fulfill the vision to 'open the doors of learning and culture to all.' The paramount task to build a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to learners young and old throughout the country.<sup>117</sup>

While 1990 had been marked by some normalisation in the political arena, the crisis in education had deepened. Pressure was mounting for education to be given its due priority. It was clear that unless urgent interventions were made to halt the breakdown in the learning process, which was characterised by a complete breakdown of authority at schools and growing confusion among learners, the results could be catastrophic. The deterioration had occurred despite efforts by the NECC and its sectoral organisation to salvage the situation. The NECC had sought to restore a culture of learning into the school community, while at the same time intensifying pressure on the state. Alarm bells rang at the end of 1989 after the announcement that only 42 per cent of matric learners at DET schools, excluding the Bantustans, had passed. Hot on the heels of the

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<sup>116</sup> M. Nkomo and O. Olufemi, *Educating Street and Homeless Children in South Africa: The Challenge of Policy Implementation*. *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice*, p. 343. M. Nkomo, *Foreign Policy and Scholarship Programmes for Black South Africans: A Preliminary Critical Assessment*. *Perspectives in Education*, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> White Paper on Education and Training. Government Gazette, Volume 357, Number 16312, Notice Number 196 of 1995. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (Department of Education). Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1995, p. 17.

announcement came reports of widespread irregularities in the marking of examination scripts. There was general agreement that there was no chance that learners who were sitting for the matric examinations at the end of 1990 would improve on or even meet the 1989 desperately low pass rate. The situation was so desperate that the gloomy forecast for matric results had served to worsen the morale of learners already battling to motivate themselves under a discredited and inefficient system, plagued by intermittent political disruptions. The DET was pressured into postponing the end of year examinations, and agreed that learners who obtained at least a 20 per cent pass could write supplementary examinations early the following year.<sup>118</sup> It is evident that using education to fight political battles had undermined education, which was in fact not supposed to have been used as a political tool in the first instance. The result was the forced lowering of standards imposed on the DET.

South Africa was witnessing growing numbers of Black matriculants emerging through the system with no prospect of useful employment and exaggerated expectations of what awaited them after matric, while the country simultaneously faced a desperate shortage of managerial, engineering and technological skills. It was evident that the legacy of apartheid would take decades to resolve even under optimal conditions of political and economic stability and enlightened education policy.<sup>119</sup> The effects of year after year of 'Bantu Education' could not be concealed when Black learners' examination results were compared with their White counterparts. In the case of Whites, all but 2 per cent of learners passed. However, a crisis was developing in the White education department as well, though it was the exact reverse of that occurring in Black schools. White schools had too many resources and declining learner enrolment. In 1989 nine White Transvaal schools were forced to close down. At DET schools, there was an official shortage of 60 343 primary school places and 99 506 secondary school places, and a teacher-learner ratio of 1:54, compared to a ratio of 1:20 in White schools. In the Bantustans, the

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<sup>118</sup> J. Heard, *From Crisis to Catastrophe in the Classroom*. Work in Progress, p. 32.

<sup>119</sup> C.M. McMillan, *The Needs of Industry and How They Could be Met*. Transvaal Teachers' Association Executive Seminar on 'The Needs of a Future Education for the RSA.' The Transvaal Education News, p. 6.

situation was more critical.<sup>120</sup> The pressures faced by the DET schools justified the need for the creation of one education system and the sharing of resources by all the learners in the country.

There was a heightened awareness that, in order to alleviate the chaos which a future government would inherit, learners should return to schools, organise themselves and understand the important role that education would play in the shaping of a future economic and political policy. However, a number of socio-economic crises weakened the call to attend classes. For instance, the violence in Natal was estimated to have displaced about 500 000 learners. Moreover the power and water cuts in townships affected by service charge boycotts brought education to a standstill. A number of other developments had added to the general crisis. Heightened political expectation comprised one set. Another was an increased sense of urgency among teachers and learners.<sup>121</sup>

The partial success of the back-to-school campaign at the start of 1990 encouraged the return of large numbers of learners who had been forced to discontinue their education. This placed an added burden on overworked and underpaid teachers, and exacerbated overcrowding. The failure of the DET, its local bureaucrats and the Bantustan education departments to provide additional facilities and a sympathetic ear to learner and teacher grievances frustrated efforts to bring some semblance of stability to the learning

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<sup>120</sup> J. Heard, From Crisis to Catastrophe in the Classroom. *Work in Progress*. p. 32.

<sup>121</sup> J. Heard, From Crisis to Catastrophe in the Classroom. *Work in Progress*. pp. 32-33. J. Love and P.C. Sederberg, Black Education and the Dialectics of Transformation in South Africa, 1982-1988. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 317-318. B. Nzimande, 'Civil Society' and the Role of the NECC, p. 23. J.E. Corrigan, E. Unterhalter and G. Slovo, Subverting Apartheid: Education, Information and Culture under Emergency Rule, p. 38. L. Daba, Parents Teacher Student Associations, p. 32. G. Kruss, People's Education: An Examination of the Concept: *People's Education Research Project*, No. 1. Centre for Adult and Continuing Education. University of the Western Cape, pp. 14 and 16.

process.<sup>122</sup> Proper planning in education is necessary to ensure that the system is not overtaken by situations that the authorities did not adequately plan for. Organising a “back to school” campaign without planning for it in advance created problems of overcrowding that would not be easy to resolve.

The unbanning of political organisations in February 1990 enabled structures to begin rebuilding and developing a more open, mass-based style. But many of the structures lacked resources, and had battled to build strong and accountable leadership. Problems which had arisen centered on a lack of consultation between leadership and members, a lack of discipline among the youth, and a lack of communication between local and national structures. Weak organisation and deteriorating social conditions in the townships resulted in an alarming increase in gangsterism, rape, gambling, intimidation and absenteeism.<sup>123</sup>

The 1990 Black matriculation results were appalling. The pass rate was 36% as compared to 96% of Whites. This was a decrease from 42% of 1989. What compounded the situation was the fact that the White pass rate remained constant. The failure of Black learners to attend school without disruptions led to the high failure rate in Black schools. This was compounded by the fact that Black education was under resourced. This state of affairs prompted Nelson Mandela to take an initiative to lead an education delegation which was made up of twenty six delegates from different political persuasions, teachers, workers’ unions, churches, technikons, universities, the Council of Black Education and

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<sup>122</sup> J. Heard, *From Crisis to Catastrophe in the Classroom*. *Work in Progress*. p. 33. J. Wright, *Popularizing the Precolonial Past: Politics and Problems*. *History Workshop Paper. Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 47. J. Hyslop, *Schools, Unemployment and Youth: Origins and Significance of Students and Youth Movements, 1976-1987*. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Summer 1988/89, p. 67. A. Manie and D. Meerkotter, *The Role of Computers in a People’s Education for Liberation*. In Y. Da Costa, C. Julie and D. Meerkotter (ed.), *Let the Voices be Heard: Process and Practice in Education*, pp. 82-83. A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 4. J. Gerwel, *Constructing a New Education System*. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 12.

<sup>123</sup> J. Heard, *From Crisis to Catastrophe in the Classroom*. *Work in Progress*. p. 33. J. Barber, *Mandela’s World: The International Dimension of South Africa’s Political Revolution 1990-1999*, p. 1. Address by the State President Mr F.W. De Klerk, DMS, at the Opening of the Second Session of the Ninth Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. Cape Town, 2 February 1990. Retrieved on 26 June 2008. [www.fwdklerk.org.za](http://www.fwdklerk.org.za), p. 8.

Research, the Council for Education and Training as well as the homelands education departments. The purpose of this was to engage in direct negotiations with the State over the entire education crisis and the need for urgent transformation. The Mandela Delegation wanted to persuade the government to take full responsibility for resolving crises in Black education. It wanted the government to remove all racist education laws and structures and lay the foundation for a single education system. It also wanted to persuade the government to meaningfully involve Black communities in decision-making and suspend unilateral restructuring of education within the apartheid framework. The government responded positively to the demands of the Mandela Delegation and agreed to be part of the Joint Working Group (JWG) to further discuss the short term and medium term issues raised at the meeting.<sup>124</sup> A closer look at the Mandela Delegation suggests that there was an expectation for the education transformation to happen at the same time as the political changes in the country. This was almost impossible as it is not possible to determine the education structure before there is agreement in the political arena. It was important for the government and its negotiating partners to first look at the political structure before the details of the education system. It, however, has to be acknowledged that education was facing serious pressures at this time.

During the course of 1992/1993 two important reports on education were released. The first was the *Education Renewal Strategy: Management Solutions for Education in South Africa (ERS)*, published by the Department of National Education. The second was the *National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI)*, commissioned by the NECC. The major implications of the ERS document were that:

- Race would in future not feature in the structure and provision of education;

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<sup>124</sup> B. McKenney, *Reconstructing Education for a New South Africa*. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, p. 97. N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, pp. 132-134. J. Gerwel, *Constructing a New Education System*. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 16. D. Pillay, *Negotiating a Way out of the Education Crisis*. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, pp. 31-31.

- Education should promote national unity and freedom of expression, and allowance should be made for the accommodation of diversity in the form of language, religion and culture;
- One central education authority with provincial Departments would be established, with maximum devolution of power to the community and to individual institutions.<sup>125</sup>

It is fascinating to note that the NECC reports did not differ radically from the ERS. There was convergence over the necessity for deracialisation and the establishment of a single Ministry, with extensive decentralisation. The NECC warned, however, that extreme decentralisation would tend to lead to under-provision of basic schooling and inadequate co-ordination of education developments.<sup>126</sup>

The beginning of 1992 experienced more educational problems as there was virtually no schooling in the majority of Black areas. Mandela unequivocally made a 'back-to school' call. The government, it would appear, was at last prepared to face the reality and address the rhetorical issue of underutilised White schools. To reach the full utilisation of schools in South Africa, all schools were declared open on 6 March 1992.<sup>127</sup> The NP emphasised that the organisation of education en route to unification was essential and indeed inevitable. The benefit to be derived from it would be cutting costs on personnel which would allow for an increase in the level of expenditure on other educational needs such as more adequate provisioning of furniture and equipment in schools as well as more

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<sup>125</sup> J.M. Luiz, The Economics of Future Education in South Africa. *Economics*, p. 11. B. McKenney, Reconstructing Education for a New South Africa. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, pp. 99-100. A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 5. F. Mentjies, Bringing Back a Culture of Learning. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>126</sup> J.M. Luiz, The Economics of Future Education in South Africa. *Economics*, p. 11. B. McKenney, Reconstructing Education for a New South Africa. In H. Kitchen and J.C. Kitchen, *South Africa: Twelve Perspectives on the Transition*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>127</sup> A. Essop, Introduction. In A. Essop, J. Gerwel, F. Mentjies and D. Pillay, *Back to Learning: The National Education Conference, 1992*, p. 1. N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 145.



schools.<sup>128</sup> The costs of education would not be effectively cut as long as individual races continued to be served by different bureaucracies. The duplication of services was costly to government. Moreover the savings from the Departments that were under spending their budgets could not be transferred to the ones with serious financial backlogs.

For the first time in its history, democratic elections were held in 1994 and a Black majority government, headed by the ANC, came to power with an electoral mandate to redress inherited inequities and inequalities.<sup>129</sup> Major initiatives in all areas of national life were launched to create a fair and equitable society and redress the past inequalities of the pre-democratic era. Education, which in the past was the arena for the implementation of major apartheid policies as well as powerful resistance to them, formed part of national reconstruction.<sup>130</sup> The transformation of the entire education system in South Africa was one of the first tasks of the Government of National Unity. The fact that South Africans had experienced different educational histories was a significant factor in the transition to a single, national and non-racial system.<sup>131</sup>

The interim constitution, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 200 of 1993* was ratified on December 22, 1993, and implemented on April 27, 1994. It provided for a framework for governing for five years, while a new constitution to be implemented by 1999, was drafted by the CA. The final constitution had to comply with the principles embodied in the interim constitution, including a commitment to a multi-party democracy based on universal adult franchise, individual rights without discrimination, and separation of the powers of government.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 145.

<sup>129</sup> E. Weber, *Shifting to the Right: The Evolution of Equity in the South African Government's Developmental and Education Policies, 1990-1999*. Comparative Education Review, p. 261.

<sup>130</sup> F. Pretorius, *The System of Education and Training*. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 1. Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa. 29 May 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa), p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> N. van Wyk, *Organisation and Governance of Education in South Africa*. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 23.

<sup>132</sup> South Africa: Constitutional Change. Retrieved on 16 March 2005. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12165.html>.

The interim constitution of 1993, provided that the former independent Bantustans of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and Venda, would be reincorporated into South Africa.<sup>133</sup> In place of the former four provinces there would be nine provinces, each with its own representative body, but the provinces were given relatively little power. In the final constitution of 1996, a National Council of Provinces, not directly elected, formed the second house of parliament, with some powers of review. Members of the National Assembly were drawn from party lists under proportional representation system that initially provided no scope for them to move from one party to another, and gave them no constituency to represent. The members of both houses sitting together formed the CA, which met from May 1994 to May 1996 to draft the final constitution.<sup>134</sup> This was the kind of parliament that was to craft the way forward for the new South African education system.

The interim Constitution provided for, inter alia, equal citizenship to all South Africans and included provisions for education. The interim Constitution was a total new approach to politics and the education system in South Africa. The State President's determination to lead South Africa to a truly democratic country was gradually becoming a reality. On 20 October 1993 *The Education Labour Relations Act, Act No. 146 of 1993* was published. The Act provided for the regulation of labour relations in education, including collective bargaining, the establishment of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the registration of certain organisations in the teaching profession, their admission to the said Council, the prevention and settlement of disputes and to provide for matters connected with it.<sup>135</sup> The passing of the ELRA was a huge step forward as the Department of Education would be able to settle matters of concern with the teaching fraternity in the ELRC. This would assist in obviating strikes and mass actions which harm teaching and learning programmes at school. The recognition and registration of

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<sup>133</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*, p. 15. A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 199. A.J. Jeffery, *Conflict at the Crossroads in Bophuthatswana*, p. 98.

<sup>134</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 199.

<sup>135</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 146.

teacher organisations became a reality. Previously the recognised teaching organisations were not necessarily registered.

The ANC agreed to what were called ‘sunset’ clauses, providing for continuity of personnel in the civil service, police and armed forces; the new government would not be able to get rid of such people immediately it came to office. The ANC was joined in the GNU by the NP, which won 20% of the vote, and the Inkatha Freedom Party, which won 10%. De Klerk became the deputy president, with Thabo Mbeki,<sup>136</sup> one of the deputy presidents, and Buthelezi was given a post of Minister of Home Affairs in the new cabinet.<sup>137</sup>

On October 1993 the State President assented in a Government Gazette to the establishment of a Transitional Executive Council with a view to promoting the preparation for and transition to a democratic order in South Africa. The dramatic changes brought about by the State President proved him to be a man of integrity as he did not make empty promises. He was able to transform the political arena from own to general affairs. He repealed all discriminatory laws in South Africa that also affected the education system. He managed to implement in three to four years of his presidency what the previous NP State Presidents failed to implement. The State realised that there was no other option to address the complex problems in education in South Africa, but to amend its constitution which was previously based on separatist ideology. For this reason, on 28 January 1994 the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as introduced in 1993 was published for general information. On 5 April 1994 a departmental circular on the operative effect of the Constitution as of 27 April 1994 was released.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Thabo Mbeki. Retrieved on 10 April 2008. [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mbeki](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/people/mbeki)

<sup>137</sup> A. Odendaal, *The Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 1948-1994*. In Y.N. Seleti, *Africa since 1990*, p. 199.

<sup>138</sup> N.G. Radebe, *Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, pp. 146-147. T.R.H. Davenport, *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*, p. 21. *Negotiations to End Apartheid in South Africa*. Retrieved on 29 May 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa), p. 5.

South Africa was to recognise eleven languages as official. This was viewed by many commentators as a reconciliatory redress of the past imbalances where only English and Afrikaans were the official languages. Language in education implied that learners would receive tuition in the language of their choice where this was reasonably practicable. Every South African was entitled to enjoy all rights, benefits and privileges which included the right to vote. The entitlement to which were all citizens of or over the age of eighteen years. The implication of the political redress had a promising future for education where all learners irrespective of colour would enjoy all benefits of having the same equal education which was previously the preserve of Whites. The Constitution provided for freedom of religion. Every citizen would be allowed to choose a religion of his own unlike before where education was based on Christian-National values ignoring other religions. All South Africans were given a right to basic education and to equal access in education institutions, thereby redressing unequal provisioning of education among learners.<sup>139</sup> All these developments augured well for an education system that had been battered by years of discrimination, bias and under-funding.

#### **6.6 Key principles and values underpinning education in the democratic South Africa**

Before the 1994 elections different groups and constituencies came up with options and ideas that shaped the education agenda and proposals for the democratic government. The agenda consisted of the liberal and radical ideas embodied in People's Education pioneered by the NECC in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Freedom Charter, drawn up in 1955, became the foundation for all specific demands around education.<sup>140</sup> The principle of equality of provision was extended in daily contests by teacher and learner organisations to issues around free and compulsory education, provision of facilities and textbooks, and teachers' working conditions and salaries. There were struggles against

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<sup>139</sup> N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 149.

<sup>140</sup> S.W. Rembe, The Politics of Transformation in South Africa: An Evaluation of Education Policies and their Implementation with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape Province. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Rhodes University, 2005, p. 130.

racially based schools, compulsory school fees and exclusions from schools on the basis of age.<sup>141</sup>

The underlying theme of the 1994 ANC National Conference held in Bloemfontein was the need to press ahead with consolidating and deepening the democratic breakthrough of 1994. For the ANC the democratic revolution was a thorough-going process of transformation, of overcoming the political, social and economic legacy of apartheid colonialism, of racism, sexism and class oppression. The conference acknowledged that an immense nation building and reconstruction effort rest upon the collective initiative of all South Africans.<sup>142</sup>

The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the ANC guided the reconstruction of South Africa. Both documents were underpinned by the five core values of democracy, liberty, equality, justice and peace and contained significant principles for the reconstruction of education. First, a vision for education and training was based on the country's new Charter of Fundamental Rights and Article 29 of the 1996 Constitution. The Constitution stated that every person shall have the right:

- To basic education and to further education;
- To education in the official language or the language of his/her choice where this is reasonably practicable;
- To establish, where practicable, independent educational institutions, provided that there shall be no discrimination on the ground of race, they are registered with the state and maintain standards comparable to public institutions<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> January 8 Statement: 1995 – A Year to Consolidate and Deepen Democracy. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/anniversary/jan8-95.php>

<sup>143</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act Number 108, 1996.

Although the Constitution related to many aspects of the governance of South Africa, and was not specifically directed at education, it did provide the basis on which the national and provincial government could act in the field of education. The Constitution stipulated that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education, and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, was to make progressively available and accessible. The Constitution also provided for the right of individuals to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions, providing such institutions do not discriminate on the basis of race, are registered with the state, and maintain standards comparable to public educational institutions. In terms of the Constitution the state was not precluded from subsidising these independent educational institutions.<sup>144</sup>

The RDP expressly stated that education and training was a fundamental priority of its strategic plan for national transformation. *The White Paper of Education and Training, No. 196 of 1995* further expounded the principles and values contained in the 1996 Constitution and the RDP. These principles and those contained in *The White Paper on the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools, No. 130 of 1996*, also called Education White Paper 2, supported the new *South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996*. According to the White Paper on Education and Training an integrated approach to education and training would be one of the vital principles that would lead and direct educational provision in a new educational dispensation. One of the important principles underpinning the structure of the system of education and training was an outcome based education approach which was a major shift from the traditional education that was bound to content.<sup>145</sup>

*The South African Schools Act of 1996* stipulated that the practice of religion may be upheld in public schools according to rules laid down by the governing body, provided that such religious practice is done on an equitable basis and that attending of these

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> White Paper on Education and Training. Government Gazette, Volume 357, Number 16312, Notice Number 196 of 1995. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (Department of Education). Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1995, pp. 15-16.

practices, both by learners and by members of staff, is done voluntarily. The Schools Act included various other aspects, such as stipulations regarding a code of conduct for schools, a prohibition of any form of corporal punishment, as well as a representative council for learners. It also laid down stipulations regarding the governance and management of schools, including the funding of schools.<sup>146</sup>

Prior to 1994 the entire South African education system, including education departments, financing, and teacher and learner bodies, was organised along racial lines. Following the 1994 democratic elections, a non-racial education system based on the principles of equity was instituted, providing for central as well as provincial and local organisation of education. With the exception of higher education institutions education was devolved to the nine provincial authorities. To accommodate this, a national Department of Education and nine provincial departments of education were established. Therefore the urgent appointment of provincial Heads of Education was necessary to facilitate the process of transformation. The Minister of Education in each province was a political Head of Education. Thus, in respect of organisation, the education system of South Africa changed from a racially differentiated system to a geographically differentiated system, thereby eliminating some of the duplication of the past government.<sup>147</sup>

The democratic government of 1994 inherited an unevenly educated population. White learners, though formally well trained in disciplinary terms at some schools, only escaped an ethos of racial intolerance with effort. Black Africans had to overcome the burden of Bantu Education, which deliberately neglected education in science and mathematics, and rested on a racist anthropology designed to generate cheap labour for an economy that remained organised along racial lines. Coloured and Indian learners were also treated as presumptively subordinate minorities. Though apartheid had been dismantled, its effects

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<sup>146</sup> South African Schools Act, Number 84 of 1996. Government Gazette, Volume 377, Number 17678.

<sup>147</sup> N. van Wyk, Organisation and Governance of Education in South Africa. In F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 13. N.G. Radebe, Post-Apartheid Education Resistance in Black Secondary Schools in the Goldfields. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vista University, Welkom, p. 154.

were still evident in a population that was desperately undereducated and, in many respects, miseducated.<sup>148</sup>

The democratic approach to education initiated in 1994 was grounded in the Constitution and its principles of non racism, non sexism and equality of access.<sup>149</sup> The government was, however, facing serious challenges. As it sought to distribute resources fairly, it found growing inequality to be a barrier. It also found the South African population ill-equipped in the disciplines of science, mathematics and technology; and therefore inadequately prepared to meet the challenges of globalisation.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, the question was how the educational institutions of South Africa were to conduct themselves in order to respond to the challenges of growing inequality and globalisation.

One of the characteristics of the South African changeover was the absence of a radical break with the past. It was a negotiated transition, not a revolution in the classical sense. One of the features of a negotiated change is that reforms must proceed with inherited assets and liabilities. The deracialisation of schooling had to be evolutionary, and every positive step toward this end required an act of political will.<sup>151</sup>

The educational innovations of the democratic government, legitimised by the final Constitution,<sup>152</sup> initially depended on bureaucracies that were still segregated and unequal. One of the first assignments of the government was to transform these bureaucracies into rational institutions, subject to fiscal discipline and professional norms of performance. A new system of governance, introduced in 1995, made a single non-racial national department responsible for higher education and for primary and

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<sup>148</sup> K. Asmal and W. James, Education and Democracy in South Africa. In K. Asmal and W. James, Spirit of the Nation: Reflections on South Africa's Educational Ethos, pp. 174-175. P. Kallaway, Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans, p. 136.

<sup>149</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 200 of 1993. K. Asmal, D. Chidester and C. Lubisi, Legacy of Freedom: The ANC's Human Rights Tradition, p. 128.

<sup>150</sup> K. Asmal and W. James, Education and Democracy in South Africa. In K. Asmal and W. James, Spirit of the Nation: Reflections on South Africa's Educational Ethos, p. 175.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act Number 108, 1996.



secondary schooling, in co-governance arrangement with the nine new provinces.<sup>153</sup> The democratic purpose of the new state's educational dispensation was derived from the final Constitution. Section 29 of the Constitution was the foundation of educational policy, which established the fundamental right to education. The constitution reads:

Everyone has the right: (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.<sup>154</sup>

The gap between the constitutional mandate and the social reality was, unsurprisingly, very wide. For the new democratic government to fulfil its educational obligation it was supposed to uproot and reform a system that had over decades skewed education in favour of Whites and to the disadvantage of Blacks.<sup>155</sup>

A new dawn on the education front broke at the beginning of 1995. For the first time millions of young South Africans, Black and White, attended school under a single non-racial dispensation. It has to be noted, however, that a new system on its own was simply a framework. All teachers, learners, parents and communities had to make a practical effort to ensure that schools became places of effective learning and teaching. In 1994 free and compulsory education was introduced in the South African education system. Needless to say, this absolutely essential advance placed strains and new challenges on teachers.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> K. Asmal and W. James, Education and Democracy in South Africa. In K. Asmal and W. James, Spirit of the Nation: Reflections on South Africa's Educational Ethos, p. 175. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 158.

<sup>154</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act Number 108, 1996.

<sup>155</sup> K. Asmal and W. James, Education and Democracy in South Africa. In K. Asmal and W. James, Spirit of the Nation: Reflections on South Africa's Educational Ethos, p. 176.

<sup>156</sup> January 8 Statement: 1995 – A Year to Consolidate and Deepen Democracy. University of Fort Hare, Liberation Archives. Retrieved on 10 January 2005. <http://www.liberation.org.za/docs/anniversary/jan8-95.php>. T. Sono, African Teachers' Struggle for Education Justice in South Africa 1906-1996: TUATA in the Centre of the Battle, p. 158.

In common with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, South African education faces fiscal constraints and demographic pressures. There is a general shortage of resources – financial, human and material. Those that are available are insufficient to meet the full scale of all the educational needs.<sup>157</sup>

### **6.7 Conclusion**

The NP government gradually relaxed its stance on apartheid related policies. One of the indications of such policy posture was the willingness of the government to abrogate its restrictions on business involvement in education. The effectiveness of this intervention in education has not been fully explored in this study, and remains an avenue for exploration in another analysis.

The issue of the justification of punitive sanctions against apartheid remains a contested terrain. South Africans did not agree on this approach since the inception of this strategy to end apartheid. In the same way the international community did not concur on this approach. This is an area that remains debatable to this date. It can, however, be argued that it was the Black people, whom some of the proponents of sanctions were trying to liberate, who bore the most serious brunt of this action. This does not in any way suggest that the government and the other racial groups were not negatively affected by the sanctions. All South Africans suffered as a result of the sanctions, albeit to varying degrees.

South Africans, and international commentators, do not agree on the impact of sanctions in ending apartheid. Some people are unfaltering in insisting that sanctions helped to end apartheid, others contend that it contributed partially to the ending of apartheid, others still maintain it did not at all contribute to the end of apartheid. It can be safely claimed that it was not sanctions alone that led to the collapse of apartheid, but a combination of factors, including sanctions.

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<sup>157</sup> R. McGregor, McGregor's Education Alternatives, pp. 18-19.

Looking at attempts to unite teacher unions in South Africa it can be asserted that the failure of teacher unions to unite came as a result of the disagreements on the focus of such teacher formations. The emergent unions believed in union radicalism and involvement in political matters affecting the country. The established unions, on the other hand, believed in professionalism and non-alignment with political parties. These diametrical points of difference made it difficult for the union mergers to last. On the whole, teacher unity was not only undermined by ideological and structural differences as was the case in the instance of conservative unions who severed ties with SADTU; but language, racial and cultural imperatives also made cohesion impossible as demonstrated by the disaffiliation of SATU from NAPTOSA. It would take long before South Africans of all races would feel comfortable in such associations. This may be attributed to the fact that South Africans were not used to being in the same organisations, the merged unions were a 'cultural shock' for some of them. It cannot be concluded that the factors that led to dissension in the union are exhaustive, a number of variables come into play. This chapter therefore cannot claim to have touched on all the variables.

The government and the organisations that were involved in mapping the future of South Africa did not immediately pay attention to educational reform. It would be impossible to pay attention to education reform without having given proper attention to political reform. Political reform would give structure to the nature of innovations that had to take place in education. Ordinary people, on the other hand, would not wait for these processes to come one after the other for them to derive joy and satisfaction out of the processes, they wanted wholesale and overnight reform on all aspects affecting them; political, social and economic. Education could therefore, according to them, not be relegated to a later date. That is why South Africa continued to experience unrests even as the negotiations for a political settlement were continuing.

The reforms introduced by De Klerk's government did not enjoy popular support in all quarters. This could be expected because of the heterogeneous nature of the South African society. There were radical elements who celebrated the education reform process and even wanted more; there were those who disapproved the reform programme

and frowned at everything that De Klerk was trying to achieve; there were those who were satisfied with a middle course and believed that everything that De Klerk wanted to achieve was correct for this country.

The nature of the education dispensation that South Africa acquired after the 1994 elections is a subject for further research. The nature of the political structure that South Africa gained paved the way for a non-racial education system, where the doors of teaching and learning would be open to all South Africans. The extent to which South Africa was able to attain this ideal is also a subject for another research.

There is a close connection between all the sub-themes discussed in this chapter. They were all crucial to the demise of apartheid or they were signs that apartheid was about to end. The willingness of the government to allow big business to support Black education was a sign of the government's willingness to introduce true reform in education, and its realisation that it could not attain this alone. It needed corporate cash injections to make this possible. Sanctions also had a psychological impact on the government to expedite its reform programme. The attempts to unite teacher unions allowed for the emergence of the radical grouping amongst teachers, which whilst it is true disrupted education, also put pressure on the government to accelerate its reform of education. It is a combination of these factors, and other factors that may have not been touched on, that ushered in a new political landscape in South Africa, which in turn changed the education system in the country.

## CHAPTER 7

### FINAL CRITIQUE

It would be imprudent to indiscriminately support or condemn the National Party government or the Black political organisations and their supporters in their divergent stance on how Black school education had to be run in the period 1950 to 1994. For anyone pursuing developments in human events like a historian, this period and its tumultuous political developments remain something of a quagmire. With the development of time, more information and insights will emerge, and more dialogue and debate will ensue, and ultimately this era will be comprehended and appreciated more vividly. Viewed with the political lens of 2008, a study of the turbulent period of 1950 to 1994 in education and its attendant political and socio-economic issues will, without doubt, end with more questions than answers. Education will for many years to come remain a contested terrain in South Africa.

In South Africa in 2008, fourteen years after the dawn of democracy, it is convenient and popular to berate the National Party for Bantu Education and all that it stood for. It is comfortable to question the rationale behind segregated and under-funded education, and rebuke the authorities for providing inferior education to Black South Africans. This happened at the time when White learners were given better education which unfortunately did not adequately educate them to live in an integrated non-racial society. There are, however, many questions that remain to be answered. Was the introduction of mass based Bantu Education and the scaling down of elitist and sometimes poorly resourced missionary education not a good start for education for Blacks? Was the notion of mother-tongue instruction as postulated by the Christian National Education (CNE), and endorsed by Bantu Education, not educationally sound? Is there no value in inculcating Christian principles in the South African future citizens in schools as propounded by the CNE and Bantu Education? If so, what were education authorities supposed to do with the learners whose parents were not Christians, but Moslems, Hindus, African traditionalists or atheists?

Looking at all the above mentioned education policies of the National Party government is easy to ridicule the ruling party for wantonly implementing them without consulting the Black majority. Black people were expected to passively acquiesce to the plans designed by the National Party through the CNE and the Eiselen Commission. It is uncomplicated to applaud all organisations and individuals that resisted Bantu Education and its policies. Viewed through a prism of an Afrikaner who had voted the National Party to power in 1948, and in the context of the interpretation of the race relations of the time another researcher could arrive at different conclusions. Was there any justification for the National Party government to impose a plethora of racially biased policies and legislation?

It is undemanding for a researcher in 2008 to revile the National Party for its homeland policy. The policy that allowed Blacks in the urban areas only for as long as they were economically active cannot be justified. 'Balkanising' South Africa into distinctive ethnic enclaves in order to create separate economies for Blacks and Whites has to be condemned. The fact that this created 'migrant' labourers, who left children in the care of the infirm and the elderly, has to be censured. This is because this created an overabundance of social ills which affected education negatively. The question arises, however, whether the current political dispensation which created nine provincial Departments is not in line with the much reviled homeland system and its ethnic duplications. Is disparaging the homeland system not unfair when some of the current South African provinces are to a great extent also along ethnic lines? This is with the exception of the cosmopolitan province like Gauteng which can be led by anybody regardless of his race or ethnicity. Can the people of KwaZulu Natal accept a Member of the Executive Council<sup>1</sup> for Education who is not a Zulu or White to be a custodian of education in their province? Can the people of the same Province accept a Mosotho as their Premier? The same applies to all other provinces, with the exception of the multi-ethnic Gauteng. Is the current political dispensation not a sophisticated and sugar coated

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<sup>1</sup> Provincial Minister in a provincial cabinet. The abbreviation of Member of the Executive Council is MEC.

form of the homeland system and the 'balkanisation' of South Africa along ethnic lines? For a Mosotho to succeed as either the Member of the Executive Council for Education or Premier in the Eastern Cape he or she must have stayed in that area for an extended period of time to the point where he or she is detribalised. Even then his or her acceptance by the Eastern Cape community will not be solid, but subject to ethnic undertones and regular scrutiny of total assimilation. Is it then fair to condemn the National Party of the 1950s and 1960s on something that the South Africa of 2008 has not yet fully resolved? Raising these questions must not be misconstrued to justify or give excuses for the homeland system as postulated and implemented by the National Party government.

This study has taken a cursory look at the Coloured and Indian education and drew some parallels with Bantu Education. The three education systems were designed to keep these racial groups in unequal yet subordinate positions, with the Indians much better than the Coloureds and Blacks, and the latter at the bottom rung of the ladder. Although all these systems had been influenced by the CNE, this research report cannot claim to have fully explored Indian and Coloured education. The study cannot claim to have come to a conclusion as to whether this education system was adequate for the Coloureds and Indians or what alternative education system or systems would have been beneficial to them. Drawing parallels with the landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court, in a matter of *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka*, which declared that the state laws that established separate public schools for Black and White learners denied Black children equal educational opportunities, indicates that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore not improbable that the separate educational facilities of the Indians and Coloured were unequal, and therefore inferior to those of Whites in South Africa.

The imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Black schools was a miscalculation for the National Party government. The government could have consulted

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<sup>2</sup> United States Supreme Court, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 17 May 1954. Retrieved on 30 October 2008. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/NkomatiAccord](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/NkomatiAccord), p. 1

extensively on the matter that proved to be so sensitive, and took pains to take the whims and wishes of the people it served into account. It became a matter of the dominant imposing unacceptable policies on the dominated, and expecting them to passively acquiesce. It is therefore not surprising that the Soweto learners' uprising, that changed the tone of Black school education forever in South Africa, was staged. This does not imply that there was no virtue in insisting that Black learners should study content subjects in both English and Afrikaans. The mastery of any additional language is beneficial to a learner. This is because it opens new horizons for him or her as this contributes to the understanding of the history, culture, way of life, values and thinking of the people whose language he or she has learnt. Instead of using the power of persuasion highlighting these spin-offs, the government chose to wantonly impose Afrikaans on Blacks.

It cannot be argued that the government was oblivious to the perceptions Black learners had about Afrikaans. The government intelligence gathering machinery was so efficient that the widely held view that 'Afrikaans was the language of the oppressor' and therefore detested by Blacks could not have been unknown. Had the government waved the olive branch, through extensive consultation and persuasion, it could have dissuaded the Black learners from their recalcitrant and unmanageable stance. The question arises as to why the government was in so much haste in implementing this language policy.

The whole situation was compounded and made repellent by the state of readiness of the teachers to implement this Afrikaans language policy. Most Black teachers could not teach the content subjects in Afrikaans, and would be inconvenienced by such a policy position. This made it difficult for the people who had been entrusted with the implementation of this government policy to support it. The government was supposed to have implemented this policy slowly, ensuring that all the support structures were in place, more especially the proper training of teachers as the people who were supposed to be the vanguard of such a rearrangement. Education authorities would do well to prepare adequately for policy implementation where such a strategy has such far reaching implications. The experience of the current education authorities with the erratic



functioning of outcomes based education (OBE) in South Africa is a case in point. Failure to plan adequately results in a fiasco and humiliation, sometimes this comes at a very huge cost.

The failure of the government to heed the calls not to implement the Afrikaans language policy led to the Soweto learners' uprising. Many people were killed as violence was rampant. Institutions connected in any manner with the government were destroyed. The destruction of inanimate institutions, which did not determine government policy, was irrational. In some instances institutions that were intended to serve the needs of the very Black communities like schools were destroyed. The fact that people would vent their anger by destroying institutions that have not directly inflicted any pain on them, sometimes to their own detriment as these establishments were intended to serve them defeats logic. It can, however, be demonstrated that in many instances where the powerless have no adequate or equal means of retaliation they turn to themselves or to the things that they hold dear. Another view could be that the powerless were alienated from the institutions associated with the government as they regarded them as a representation of the oppressor.

In some instances White and Black people connected to the government were attacked. The absurdity of this is amplified by the fact that the people that were attacked were not policy makers. It can be further argued that even harassing policy makers would not have solved the problem. Instead negotiations would yield better results than any show of aggression. The South African community was becoming so violent that people thought solving problems in education could be done through belligerence. It is fascinating that in the midst of these unjustifiable and reckless attacks, there were Black people who went out of their way to protect these vulnerable victims, in some instances at great personal risk. The claim that race relations during the apartheid years were polarised has to be tested. If it is true that race relations were strained, how was it possible then that Black people would go out of their way to protect the defenceless Whites attacked by heartless mobs. The question is, were race relations in South Africa amicable or polarised during the apartheid years?

The fact that learners and the police used force is worrying, regardless of who the provoker was. Whether it was possible for the police to refrain from using violent means when learners were using aggression, or vice versa, the fact remain that their failure to restrain themselves has left South Africa a violent country. It can however, be argued that the hostilities of June 1976 taught South African learners that brutality as opposed to peacefulness and meekness can resolve problems. The inculcation of such an approach to conflict resolution is not good for any educational environment. A point has already been made that a more prudent approach by the government on the Afrikaans language policy could have gone a long way to resolve this matter and teach everybody that negotiations are a solution to peaceful transformation in education. The question arises whether the White minority government would have voluntarily dismantled apartheid education of its free will had all the processes been peaceful. Is it correct that South Africa is enjoying equal education today because of the effectiveness of aggression? The Black learners were no more satisfied with peaceful petitions and negotiations as they yielded no results. It is not surprising therefore that they resorted to violent means to get the attention of the authorities.

The government encouraged self-governing homelands to opt for independence. The Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei decided to take this 'pseudo independence.' Their independence was bogus because they were still under the control of the South African government when it came to the key strategic issues of defence and budget allocations. Even their education system was indirectly controlled by South Africa as they used the syllabus that was crafted by the curriculum designers of the Department of Education and Training for all schools for Blacks regardless of whether they were in the urban centres or the homelands. The matriculants in these independent homelands wrote the same examinations as the Black learners in the urban areas, and their qualifications were certified by the South African Certification Council as well. As such this contrived planning did not bring any thing substantive to the perceived independence. These artificial arrangements came at a great cost to the citizens of these independent homelands as they had little or no claim to the education rights outside their

designated areas. This was even more stringent with independent homelands than was the case with the self governing ones. It was the government's intention to further restrict Black people's access to education in urban centres. The extent to which the government was successful in this regard is a focus for another study. It was the intention of the government to stem the tide of rising learners' uprisings with the granting of independence to homelands, by shifting responsibility for some Black schools to independent schools. What is indeed certain is that it was the firm intention of the government to further its policy of separate development with the granting of independence to homelands, which is why separate education departments were established for both the self-governing homelands and the independent ones.

The end of the 1970s saw the formation of national learners' organisations, namely Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and Azanian Students Movement (AZASM), aligned to the ANC and AZAPO respectively. The establishment of these bodies introduced additional militancy of learners against government education policies. The fact that these organisations were respectively aligned to the ANC and AZAPO influenced them to be highly militant and political, something that is not good for a child during his schooling years. The fact that these national learner organisations had provincial and regional networks made coordination of student activities against the government more efficient and effective. That is why the 1980s became more unstable and violent in education in South Africa. The fact that the learners were so well coordinated negatively affected education. Education was frequently disrupted and learners lost considerable learning and teaching time.

It cannot be denied that drawing learners into violent conflict and protest did have its strategic value, but it could backfire. As the South African schooling system proved, violence can easily become endemic and surge uncontrollably. It can be argued that this was a strategy of banned extra-parliamentary organisations like the ANC to spread pandemonium throughout the schools in the country. As the study shows, the more the crusade to render the country and schools ungovernable succeeded, the more the ANC's control over the situation faltered. The use of necklacing methods on suspected

government spies illustrates the extent to which violence had gotten out of hand. Mass violence, as indicated in the study, was not well coordinated; as such there was a real threat that it could deteriorate into a politically meaningless pandemonium. Protest action for the sake of unruliness, without any real political strategy directing the mayhem or providing any sort of restraint, was not the goal of the ANC's scheme. It wanted this commotion to lead to the obliteration of the National Party government's power within the country and in its place witness the creation of an alternative power within the country, and therefore a substitute education system. This failed to materialise. Instead learners lost valuable learning time. Mass hostility increased and disregarded the authority of the National Party government, but it did not succeed in overthrowing it. Instead mass violence spread to unruliness and resulted in the loss of valuable teaching time. Unfortunately the ANC could not control the mayhem and could not immediately score the anticipated political points. Even the attacks on civil targets did not scare the government into submission. The ANC however scored long term political points as the government was compelled by the internecine violence to begin negotiating for a more viable political settlement that would ultimately see equity in education. The ANC did not want South Africa to turn into a wasteland. Instead the armed struggle was seen as armed propaganda that would compel the National Party government to relinquish power.

This kind of turmoil is not good for any education system as learners graduate from one Grade to another without having completed the syllabus, and as such complete their schooling careers without having acquired all the requisite competencies. Using and taking advantage of the vitality and enthusiasm of learners the Black extra-parliamentary organisations had marshalled a potent section of the populace. Unfortunately for them, this had serious harmful consequences and permanently disrupted the social backbone of South Africa. Many young people lost out on their normal schooling. To some extent many of these young people are now lost to the country. These children were called, fairly or unfairly, "the lost generation." This study does not focus on the damage suffered by learners in this manner, and is as such not able to quantify the casualties. It can, however, be argued that this unfortunate situation had a ripple effect on the education system as some of these learners who graduated from Black schools at that time became

teachers. Needless to say, there would be certain sections of the syllabus that they would not be able to teach competently. As such this became a vicious circle and indicates that it is not prudent to fight political challenges through education.

With this mounting pressure and in pursuit of its reform programme, the government appointed the De Lange Commission. It came up with progressive recommendations, some of which the new South African government implemented: equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education for all population groups, and the establishment of a single Department of Education under one Minister to control all educational services. The National Party government, however, failed to implement the De Lange Commission's recommendations. This development raises the question why the government appointed a commission at huge cost to the tax payer only to ignore its recommendations. Was the South African White electorate of the mid 1980s ready for the reforms advocated by the De Lange Commission? It also has to be noted that the National Party government could ill afford to impose the De Lange Commission's recommendations on the unwilling White electorate as this would be political suicide on their part. Responding positively to the educational aspirations of Black people at the expense of losing favour with the White electorate would have been imprudent for the National Party government, as this would have alienated it from its voters. Where the government could have yielded to the educational needs of Blacks it failed because the people who would have been served by this move did not have a vote. The National Party government chose the route of gradually educating and wooing its electorate into accepting equality in education, as evidenced by the White people embracing talks with the ANC, and ultimately welcoming a new political dispensation in South Africa. This new political arrangement allowed for some of the recommendations that were initially mooted by the De Lange Commission in education to be implemented.

The 1980s was not to be the decade for equality in education, despite the fact that there was repeated clamour for such. Evidently the ANC, the National Party government and their individual supporters illustrated through their different strategies that unilateral solutions were respectively desired. This made the 1980s a decade of stalemate. Instead

of South Africa enjoying egalitarianism in education, this had to be postponed because each of the major role players was immovable and steadfast on what they thought would be a panacea to the problems that plagued education in the country. This deadlock could have been avoided had these two main role players been willing to compromise. Their failure to find the middle ground delayed the introduction of wholesale reforms in education further.

The chaos that marred Black school education in South Africa prompted parents to constructively intervene and direct education through the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), and its precursor the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC). The NECC, in partnership with the United Democratic Front (UDF), propagated an alternative education programme for Black schools called the People's Education. People's Education did not succeed because of the government's unwillingness to support it. The Parents Teachers Students Associations (PTSAs) scored limited success for the same reason. The government was suspicious of the radicalism of the members of the UDF and the NECC. It is not easy for any programme that is not supported by the government to succeed in government run schools. This is more so when it threatens the very foundations of the education philosophy that the government believes in. Attempts to introduce People's English, People's History and People's Mathematics would not easily succeed as the content of these subjects did not propagate what the government stood for. The government used its machinery and resources to thwart these plans. The implementation of the People's Education programmes was a fiasco as they managed to cover an insignificant number of schools. This is despite the fact that the ANC wanted the alternative People's Education to succeed in the form of alternative structures of people's power. The extent to which the street committees and the people's courts succeeded in establishing people's government is not the business of this research.

The failure of the moves to unite teacher unions is attributed to their divergent views on the nature and focus of teacher organisations. Attempts by the emergent and militant unions to bring any form of militancy to the unity talks elicited apprehension and suspicion in conservative teachers who believed that teaching is a calling which entrusts

them with delicate responsibilities of moulding the lives of children under their care. The established and conservative unions, correctly so, did not yield to a belligerent approach to teacher unionism. The failure of the emergent unions to whittle down their militancy scared off the conservative unions to any form of merger with the combative teachers. This went a long way to obviate the erosion of the decorum and uprightness of teaching as a profession. The militant union members' approach to unionism, and their relegation of professionalism to the periphery, went a long way to erode order and discipline at the schools. Their open defiance campaigns targeting departmental officials and school principals failed education and all that it stood for. Their insubordination and rebelliousness encouraged the learners to follow suit. The fact that people in authority, like teachers, would take a militant stance against their superiors did not augur well for education as it set a bad example for learners. Bad habits are not easy to eradicate.

The question arises, however, whether the government would have ultimately yielded to the demands of the Blacks to bring equity in education, if such unorthodox and reckless methods had not been used by some of the teachers. Would South Africans be enjoying the amount of freedom that the teaching fraternity, good or bad, is experiencing today? Regardless of the positive spin-offs that these unconventional tactics elicited, there can be no situation that justifies unethical and dishonourable behaviour for teachers. Teachers have to ensure that they remain custodians of good behaviour under all circumstances. The failure of teachers to contain themselves in the challenging times has gone a long way to compromise what teachers have to conserve, namely upholding professional conduct, and this has gone a long way to depreciate the integrity of teachers in the eyes of the community. It has to, however, be appreciated that unionism in general was undergoing radical transformation in South Africa at that time. There were unions that were 'workerist' and there were those that were militant. The difference between the two is that the first had the tendency to confine the teacher to 'bread and butter' issues and to some extent professional matters; and the second tendency was to see the teacher's struggle on the shop floor as part of the broader struggle in the community. This made their approaches to questions that confronted them diametrically different.

The ANC's push to isolate South Africa internationally created psychological pressure on the government and the White community. The campaign to isolate South Africa through sanctions and disinvestment was indiscriminate as it affected all members of the South African community, even Black people who were in the main poor. It is not surprising that Black political organisations were divided on the subject of sanctions and disinvestment. Those that were opposed to this drive foresaw the negative results this would have on the people whose interests they claimed to represent. Once a country loses foreign investment it is unlikely for such investments to return after liberation. The approach of the ANC recognised the long-term effects of sanctions but agreed that they were a significant pillar of the struggle as it prevented White South Africa continuing to live under the illusion of separate development. It would have been ill-considered for the ANC to apply 'scorched earth policy' on a country they were going to govern once majority rule was introduced. The ANC did not want to turn South Africa into a wasteland; that is why it was ready to negotiate with the National Party government when the opportunity arose. They, however, would struggle with issues of unemployment and slack in-flow of foreign capital after liberation. It has to be noted however that the ANC did not want to compromise on one of the four mainstays of the liberation struggle, namely, international isolation through sanctions, armed struggle, internal mass resistance and underground mobilisation. Scholars and commentators do not agree whether disinvestment and sanctions contributed to the demise of apartheid.

It is worth noting that the prospect of a negotiated settlement implied uncertainty for both the White and Black South Africans. The fact that South Africa ultimately settled for a negotiated political settlement created anxiety as none of the participating political parties could guarantee what kind of outcome would emerge. The fact that the political establishments across the broad political spectrum committed to a 'win-win' approach is commendable. The magnanimity of the main political organisations in approaching the negotiations shows the generosity of spirit in trying reach a political settlement for South Africa. Whilst it is true that there were instances where points of serious differences were articulated, the protagonists on both sides of the political spectrum showing high-mindedness and pettiness were relegated to the periphery. It has to be appreciated that



because of the divergence of political views and the heterogeneous nature of the South African society it was not possible to have the approval of all parties. That the dissenting voices did not disrupt the dawn of democracy shows the high levels of political maturity the country was enjoying. In this way education benefited as the long awaited reforms in education could be implemented.

With the new dispensation attained in South Africa, under the very distressing circumstances sketched in this study it may be worthwhile to assess the legacy that the turbulence in education from 1950 to 1994 has bequeathed on the South Africa of 2008 and beyond. What are the gains and losses for contemporary South Africa and its posterity?

Today South Africa has made strides towards equality in education as a result of the Freedom Charter as postulated at Kliptown on 26 June 1955. The Freedom Charter called for education to be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; it is also made a call that higher education and technical training should be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit. It called for "the doors of learning and culture to be opened." In line with the Freedom Charter, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, under the Bill of Rights, states that everyone has the right to education and obliges the state to make education, through reasonable measures, progressively available and accessible.

The Constitution further states that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.<sup>3</sup> This is a direct bequest of the 1976 Soweto learners' uprising. South Africa would not be benefiting from this progressive clause in the Constitution had the Soweto learners passively conceded to the National Party government language policy.

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<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act Number 108, 1996. Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996.

In the new South Africa the state of teacher professionalism has degenerated as a result of teacher militancy at the time learners and civil society was rising against apartheid education. Teaching was de-professionalised as teachers were fighting to define and claim their space in the South African war against apartheid education. Government repressive measures increased forms of defiance among teachers. Some elements in the teaching profession have taken advantage of the situation. They did not prepare for their lessons and respect for authority diminished during the apartheid years. With the dawn of democracy the opportunistic teachers continued with these deviant positions, despite the fact that the democratic dispensation that they had been clamouring for had been introduced. The laxity that came with the fight against apartheid has created opportunistic sluggards in some teachers. These tendencies have rubbed off onto the learners. The culture of ill discipline amongst learners from the days of rebelliousness against apartheid education has not been changed. Principals, as the vanguard of the education system and its policies, were the immediate targets of the cheekiness of teachers and learners during the years of insubordination. Principals continue to be the target of non-cooperation even today, from both the learners and the teachers. This is the legacy that years of defiance have left our education.

The media has and continues to perpetuate the damaging public image of teaching by engaging in teacher 'bashing,' and by indiscriminately blaming teachers whenever one or a few teachers behave in an objectionable manner. Situations of learner waywardness emanating from the culture they became accustomed to during the fight against apartheid education are given headline coverage by both electronic and print media. The damaging public image of teachers and learners is manifested in the failure of the teaching profession to attract sufficient students who wish to follow the profession. This is exacerbated by the fact that those who are already in the profession want to leave. This is the legacy of the rowdy years in education. These challenges in education have to be dealt with by obliging teachers and learners to strictly obey their respective codes of conduct.

The government has moved to salvage the situation through numerous strategies and structures. The establishment of the South African Council of Educators (SACE) is one of the targeted interventions by the government. SACE aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession, and to promote the development of teachers and their professional conduct. The other notable structure that the government has established to deal with the de-professionalisation of teaching is the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). The latter strives towards continuous maintenance and promotion of labour peace, by engaging with teachers in a manner that will preclude unnecessary teacher labour unrests and their unpalatable repercussions. The South African education authorities, whilst accepting that the notion of teacher professionalism is both contested and contestable, are prepared to confront and arrest the anomalies they see in education that are the remnants of the riotous years in education. The creation of SACE and the ELRC is a legacy of the protest years in apartheid education.

The recently released report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the state of education in South Africa acknowledges fundamental reforms that have been put in place as the following:

- A more integrated qualifications framework
- A more relevant curriculum
- Better qualified teachers
- Improved school governance and increased financing

These developments are a legacy that has been bequeathed by the transformation of education in South Africa. A more integrated qualifications framework ensures that there is synergy and articulation in the different phases of the South African education system. Learners are able to progress from one level to the next without hindrance. A relevant curriculum guarantees employers that they would employ graduates with requisite skills to improve the South African economy. Whilst better qualified teachers mean that education is entrusted to men and women with the professional know how to take education to greater heights and allow the products of the South African education

system to compete globally. These are positive developments for education in South Africa.

The OECD report goes on to say that the quality of education is being improved by a range of initiatives such as:

- The *Dinaledi* “centres of excellence” in mathematics, science and technology
- QIDS UP (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme), providing teacher and district development support to 5 000 low performing primary schools
- The Education Management Information System as an efficient way of keeping records of education statistical information
- The Integrated Quality Management System for the performance assessment of educators
- A planned National Education Evaluation Development Unit to oversee the measurement and improvement of teacher performance
- The National Education Infrastructure System to document, track and upgrade school infrastructure
- Better remuneration of and training of Principals and more trained district support and school support personnel
- Dedicated bursaries for initial educator training and the ongoing professional development of educators.<sup>4</sup>

All of the above are the benefits South African education is enjoying from the transformation that started in 1994.

The OECD reports notes that education expenditure has increased from R31,1 billion in 1995 to R59,6 billion in 2002 and to R105,5 billion in 2007. Education spending

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<sup>4</sup> Reviews of National Policies for Education – South Africa. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Retrieved on 30 October 2008. [www.oecd.org/document/58](http://www.oecd.org/document/58) , pp. 24-25.

was just over 5% of the gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>5</sup> All these are the legacies of the transformation in education.

The OECD report, however, has noted that education in South Africa still faces many constraints in education transformation and policy implementation, namely:

- The scale of the existing backlogs
- A limited fiscus, compounded by a slow national economic growth rate during the first six years after 1994
- Competition from other social sectors for scarce government funds
- Inefficiencies in education management and delivery and the lack of capacity at provincial and district levels
- Difficulties in containing expenditure on educational personnel and in redirecting funds towards non personnel expenses.
- The desire to equalise per capita learner expenditure despite large disparities between provinces and schools.<sup>6</sup>

This is the negative inheritance that education authorities have to grapple with. Owing to the nature of the environment in which education operates, it has to be noted that it cannot all be smooth, South African education will continue to experience serious challenges. Solutions will have to be postulated to remedy the situation.

Some education commentators deprecate the abolition of corporal punishment by the education authorities and denigrate it as the cause of bad behaviour in schools. The abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools is a positive legacy of the transformation of the education system; it is also in line with the human rights culture espoused in the Constitution. Despite it now being prohibited to mete out corporal punishment, it has proven an arduous task for some teachers to come to terms with this as they feel they no longer have a way of reprimanding errant learners. The education

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

authorities have been compelled to develop alternatives to corporal punishment. This precludes the possibility of children learning from adults when force can be used to resolve undesirable conduct. The government is trying to eradicate what the South African society has internalised through years of upheavals in education, that the use of violence assists in confronting unwanted behaviour. The new government has also established, through, *The South African Schools Act of 1996*, Representative Councils for Learners (RCLs). The RCLs, a replacement of the old prefect system, are democratically elected; and not imposed by the teachers onto the students as was the case with the prefect system that was so hated in Black schools. The democratisation of learner representation in the governance structures of the schools is a legacy of the tumultuous years in Black education.

In the commotion of apartheid education parents were nominated by the school inspectors and Principals because of their social standing and affluence to serve on the governance structures of schools such as School Committees and School Boards. As a result the majority of parents retreated and the learners occupied the void. With the lawlessness that prevailed in education with learner strikes, the parents reclaimed their space by calling for, and in some instances unofficially establishing, parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs). The new government made this aspiration a reality with the establishment of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) along the lines of PTSAs. The SGBs are democratically elected by the parents' school community. Out of this democratic process popular and illiterate parents are elected to the SGBs with little or no knowledge of the education system and how it functions. South Africa has illiterate SGB members who have to decide on critical points such as the appointment of teachers and principals, learner code of conduct, admission policy and language policy of a school, to mention but a few. This is the legacy of the transformation of education in South Africa. Whilst the elitist nominations of parents to the school committees was undemocratic, in the majority of cases it had people who were literate and who could therefore make meaningful input into education. It is not surprising that the education authorities have found themselves compelled to review the powers given to SGBs. What remains positive with the current SGB format is that it puts the parents in charge of the education of their children, but the

drawback is that issues of access, equity and redress have been compromised by the conservative SGBs. The conservative SGBs pass restrictive school admission policies that exclude children of other races and they do not recommend teachers of other races on their staff establishments. As a result fourteen years into the new education dispensation South Africa still has schools that have not integrated. The reassessment of the SGBS is currently underway.

The South African education system has inherited a human rights culture from the frenzied years of fighting against apartheid education. The government introduced the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in 1994 as one of the Presidential lead projects for the country. This programme has contributed to enhanced learning capacity, school attendance and punctuality among primary school learners. Closely linked to the NSNP, and in the spirit of 'education for all,' the government has introduced the learner transport programme for children travelling long distances to schools. As a result of calls for access to education by all regardless of the poverty levels of the parents the government has introduced the "no fee schools" programme. In this programme schools throughout South Africa are ranked according to their poverty profiles from the poorest Quintile 1 to the most affluent Quintile 5.<sup>7</sup> The schools in Quintiles 1 and 2 do not charge school fees from parents as they get the highest per learner allocations from the Department of Education. Whilst this has been a positive legacy emanating from the fight against segregated and under funded Black education, and it is good for redress and access to education, it is worrying that some schools continue to be poor and without proper education facilities after three years of the implementation of this pro poor education policy. This is against the background of years of inadequate funding that was exacerbated by the failure of most parents to pay the R20 or R40 school fee. It is an anomaly that schools that were struggling to collect these meagre amounts do not graduate from poverty even when they get an annual amount of R775 per learner

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<sup>7</sup> The Quintile ranking of Free State schools in the 2007/2008 financial year is as follows: Schools in Quintile 1 receive R775 per learner per year, followed by R711 for Quintile 2, R581 for Quintile 3 (all three match the national target), R350 for Quintile 4 (national target is R388) and R240 for Quintile 5 (national target is R129). See Mafu Rakometsi Collection. Circular issued by the Superintendent General of the Free State Department of Education to School Principals and Chairpersons of School Governing Bodies, 12 February 2008.

guaranteed from the Department of Education. These are the complications that South Africa has inherited from the transformation of the education system.

Another benefit that the education system has inherited from the mayhem of the fight against apartheid education is the inclusive approach to the education of children with mild barriers to learning. The new government with its human rights bias insists that these learners must be taught at normal schools in order to obviate stigmatisation and for easy integration into society. To this end the government has taken bold steps of retraining teachers to accommodate mildly disabled learners in their classrooms, and has adapted the school infrastructure to suit their needs. It is unfortunate that the government is taking long to implement this policy due to infrastructure backlogs. This policy, however, remains progressive and is applauded.

The other benefit that South Africa has derived from the transformation of education following the tumultuous years of apartheid education is the introduction of OBE. This curriculum method regards learning as an essentially interactive process among teachers and learners, with the learner at the centre of the process and the teacher serving as a facilitator. The focus, unlike with the curriculum of the National Party government during the apartheid years, is on what learners must know and do. The goal is to produce active, life long learners with a thirst for knowledge and the love for learning. The curriculum developers were directed to remove overtly racist and other insensitive language from the OBE syllabus. For the first time curriculum decisions were made in a participatory and representative manner.

The overzealousness of the authorities to implement OBE has led to a number of embarrassing glitches. The time-table for the implementation of the new curriculum up to Grade 12 was supposed to be up to 2005, hence it was initially called Curriculum 2005. This target could not be met. The OBE curriculum has only covered the whole schooling system up to Grade 12 in 2008. The original terminology used in the OBE curriculum was not within the reach of the teachers, this was made worse by inadequate training of teachers by the provincial Departments of Education curriculum sections. The National



Department of Education has moved in to remedy the situation by calling for the review of Curriculum 2005 and subsequently introducing the Revised National Curriculum Statement, which has since been renamed the National Curriculum Statement. Education authorities will do well to note that thorough planning for policy implementation is a non-negotiable prerequisite for a successful implementation of new policy. This is regardless of how popular, progressive or noble this new strategy may be.

South Africa has the potential to be a great country. Not only is it beautiful, exciting and dynamic, but it also is a land which calls for its inhabitants to come together to confront the numerous challenges the country faces, in order to build a better country for its inhabitants, its children and its posterity. Education in South Africa continues to be plagued by numerous drawbacks, but throwing money at them is not the key to resolving the difficulties. Indeed, as results repeatedly prove, the most important element in stimulating positive outcomes is often the attitude of the people in the education sector, young and old. Otherwise the legacy that the challenging years of apartheid education brought will come to naught if care is not taken to sensitise South Africans to their responsibilities. In making the South African schooling system feasible and beneficial to its inhabitants the following need urgent attention: reintroduce discipline into education, put an end to anarchy whenever it rears its ugly head; compel teachers and learners to strictly obey their respective codes of conduct; accelerate the upgrading of teacher qualifications; redirect the curriculum towards that which is economically useful; fortify community and parent involvement in school governance and incentivise the management of education to make it more results oriented. Failure to implement some of the critical educational imperatives will lead South African into a slippery educational gradient, a factor that does not augur well for advancement.

It is unfortunate that the enthusiasm of the new education authorities to redress past imbalances has resulted in policy overload that is not accompanied by adequate resource allocation and monitoring. This makes a mockery of the well meaning and progressive policies of the new government.

Despite the many challenges South Africa faces in education there is still hope that South Africa is not far from the ideal education system that will adequately respond to the challenges facing this country.

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*Morena boloka Sechaba sa heso  
O fedise dintwa le matshwenyeho*

*Lord save our nation  
Rid it of wars and tribulations  
(Freely translated)*

### Appendix 1

Appendix 1 shows the number of Black learners enrolled in Bantu Education schools from 1953 to 1988.

YEAR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TOTAL
1953	852 000	30 700	882 700
1955	970 200	35 000	100 5200
1960	1 453 300	47 600	1 500 900
1965	1 833 000	65 600	1 898 600
1970	2 615 400	122 500	2 737 900
1975	3 378 900	318 500	3 697 400
1980	4 063 900	774 000	4 837 900
1985	4 820 100	1 192 900	6 013 000
1988	5 365 600	1 662 000	7 027 600

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<sup>1</sup> F. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid. p. 66.

## Appendix 2

A record of learners in the Matriculation examination under Bantu Education over a seven (7) year period

YEAR	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF PASSES	PERCENTAGE PASSES
1953	547	259	47.3
1954	523	234	44.7
1955	595	230	38.7
1956	768	354	46.1
1957	745	292	39.2
1958	660	248	37.6
1959	629	118	18.8
1960	716	128	17.9

<sup>1</sup> Supplement: Focus on Education. Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, B. Bunting Collection, MCH 07-116.

### Appendix 3

The drop-out rate in Black schools

(Illustrated by the progress through school of the 1962 learner intake)

Year	Standard or Form	No. of learners enrolled	
1962	Sub A	426 827	Lower Primary
1963	Sub B	324 024	
1964	1	288 911	
1965	2	228 480	
1966	3	188 333	Higher Primary
1967	4	144 252	
1968	5	121 171	
1969	6	119 704	Secondary School
1970	I	49 504	
1971	II	42 509	
1972	III	32 074	
1973	IV	11 344	
1974	V	6 732	

<sup>1</sup> F. Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid. p. 66.

**Appendix 4**

**Inscriptions at the Hector Peterson Memorial site, Soweto.**

**TO HONOUR THE YOUTH WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE STRUGGLE  
FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY**

16 June 1976

*In memory of Hector Peterson and all other heroes and heroines of our struggle who laid  
down their lives for freedom, peace and democracy*

Unveiled by Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (President of the African National Congress)  
on 16 June 1992. Erected by the ANC Youth League.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Visit to the Hector Peterson Memorial, Soweto. 12 June 2003.

### **Inscription at the Hector Peterson Memorial, Soweto.**

This precinct – The Memorial, Museum, Garden and surrounds – is protected by the South African Heritage Resources Agency as a place of national significance. It presents the site, and commemorates the students' uprising against Bantu Education.

On that day, in this vicinity, about 1 500 school children gathered to protest against the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, as the students marched peacefully to present a memorandum at the Orlando Police station armed police confronted them with gunfire.

The symbol for courage, anguish and sacrifice of the school children is epitomized in MBUYISA MAKHUBU, who on this site on 16 June, 1976, carried to safety the wounded Hector Peterson, shot at the corner of Vilakazi and Moema Streets. He was one of the youngest children to die on that fateful day. In the wave of student resistance that followed throughout South Africa at least 600 students died and thousands were wounded. Thousands more were detained, tortured, charged and imprisoned. Up to 12 000 fled the country.

In the aftermath, the liberation movements were strengthened, both at home and in exile. The spirit and determination of the school children resonated around the world, marking a turning point in the struggle for freedom, democracy in South Africa.

At this site of national significance, the nation pay homage to the students of 1976, who sacrificed their lives so that the doors of learning and culture would be opened, and South Africa could be free. Today, their vision is enshrined in our constitution.

(This site, unveiled on 16 June 2002, is protected under the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Visit to the Hector Peterson Memorial, Soweto. 12 June 2003.

### Appendix 5

Appendix 5 shows per capita expenditure for the different population groups, it also shows how this has changed over the years since 1953.

YEAR	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE
1953-4	R17	R40	R40	R128
1969-70	R17	R73	R81	R282
1975-6	R42	R140	R190	R591
1977-8	R54	R185	R276	R657
1980-1	R139	R253	R513	R913
1982-3	R146	R498	R711	R1211

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<sup>1</sup> C. Nwaila, *Black English and Education in South Africa*, p. 11.



## Appendix 6

### Resolutions taken at the First National Consultative Conference on the crisis in Education: Johannesburg 28-29 December 1985.

(This conference was called by the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee)

#### 1. ON BANTU EDUCATION

This conference notes:

- i) the imminent forces incorporation into KwaNdebele Bantustan of thousands of South Africans in the Moutse district against their will
- ii) the fact that Moutse Teachers are being forced to sign contracts with the KwaNdebele education authorities upon pain of dismissal or transfer from their schools

Therefore:

- i) we condemn this forced incorporation and victimization of teachers in Moutse who oppose it
- ii) we resolve to struggle against bantustan education departments and to support teachers in their struggles against these agents of apartheid.

#### 2. ON STATUTORY SCHOOL COMMITTEES

This conference notes:

That statutory parents' committees and schools are the agents of the State and carry out the work of oppressive apartheid education system throughout South Africa. Therefore we resolve that:

- i) parents should not be members of statutory parents' committees at schools
- ii) progressive parents-teacher-student structures be formed at all schools so that:
  - a) parents, teachers and students can come to understand each other's demands and problems
  - b) interaction can take place between different schools to develop the education struggle to higher levels.

### 3. ON THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

We resolve that:

- i) teachers should work actively with students towards the formation of democratically elected SRCs
- ii) teachers should work closely with parents and students in dealing with the current education crisis
- iii) teachers should become involved in community struggles and to set up PTAs in all schools
- iv) education programmes for teachers which bring out the history of progressive teachers' struggles, the role of teachers in the community and the role of teachers' unions, should be conducted
- v) teachers should work to unify all teachers into a single, progressive teachers' body
- vi) meetings of teachers should be called in all areas to give students and parent organisations an opportunity to address them on the education crisis.

### 4. ON THE DETENTION OF OUR PEOPLE

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all students, parents and teachers detained in their struggle for people's education in our land .

### 5. ON STUDENT ORGANISATION

This conference notes:

- i) that the banning of COSAS is an attack by the State on student organisation, unity and mobilization
- ii) that the struggle for a unitary, non-racial democratic education is an integral part of the struggle for a unitary, non-racial and democratic society, free from oppression and exploitation
- iii) that the struggle for democratic SRCs is an essential part of the democratic struggle with the schools.

Therefore we resolve:

- i) to intensify the campaign to unban COSAS

- ii) to implement democratically elected SRCs in all schools and tertiary institutions
- iii) to forge close links between student, worker and community organisations and to co-ordinate action in these areas
- iv) to strive to establish regional and national co-ordination in the student struggle
- v) to strive in the co-ordinated campaigns to publicise the legitimate, democratic demands of students
- vi) to endeavour to take the struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa into every school and hence into every home
- vii) to seek consciously to break down artificially created racial barriers
- viii) to encourage the different student organisations to unite in action.

## 6. ON SCHOOL FEES

This conference notes:

- i) that there is increasing retrenchment of workers, who are in turn the parents of our students
- ii) that the oppressed people of our land bear the brunt of the economic crisis
- iii) that national resources should be geared towards the education of our people instead of towards the SADF occupying our townships

Therefore we resolve that:

Parents should refuse to pay school fees in 1986.

## 7. ON TEXTBOOKS

We demand:

The provision of free textbooks and other educational materials for our students in all schools

## 8. ON THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL PARENTS' CRISIS COMMITTEE

The conference notes:

The good work done by the SPCC, and in particular their calling of this consultative conference.

Therefore we resolve that:

Three members of the SPCC together with one regional representative from each of the following areas: Natal, OFS, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Border Region, Transvaal constitute themselves into an ad hoc committee to form a National Parents' Crisis Committee that will liaise with local and regional organisations in the implementation of the decisions of this conference.

## 9. ON PEOPLE'S EDUCATION I

This conference notes that Apartheid Education

- i) is totally unacceptable to the oppressed people
- ii) divides people into classes and ethnic groups
- iii) is essentially a means of control to produce subservient, docile people
- iv) indoctrinate and domesticates
- v) is intended to entrench apartheid and capitalism

Therefore we resolve actively to strive for people's education as the new form of education for all sections of our people, declaring that people's education is education that:

- i) enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial democratic system
- ii) eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of one person by another
- iii) eliminates capitalist norms of competition, individualism and stunted intellectual development, and replaces it with one that encourages collective input and active participation by all, as well as stimulating critical thinking and analysis
- iv) equips and trains all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial democratic South Africa
- v) allows students, parents, teachers and workers to be mobilized into appropriate organizational structures which enable them to participate actively in the initiation and management of people's education in all its forms
- vi) enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression at their work place

## 10. ON PEOPLE'S EDUCATION

This conference notes that the implementation of programmes to promote people's education in an urgent matter.

Believing that:

- i) all student-teacher-parent and community based organisations must work vigorously and energetically to promote people's education
- ii) all programmes must enhance the organisations of all sections of our people, wherever they may be
- iii) the programmes must encourage critical and creative thinking and working methods
- iv) the programmes must promote the current values of democracy, non racialism, collective work and active participation.

Therefore resolves:

- i) that the recommendations of the commission on people's education be referred to the incoming committee for us as a guideline for the formation of programmes to promote people's education at all levels
- ii) that all local, regional and national structures mobilize the necessary human and material resources in the first instance from within the communities and regions and then from other sources.

## 11. ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN 1986

This national consultative conference, convened by the SPCC at the University of the Witwatersrand on 28 and 29 December 1985, having considered in detail the question of whether students of the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa should return to school and if so, under what conditions,

- i) commends the students and their organisations for the principled and courageous manner in which they have conducted the struggle against inferior, racist and ethnic education
- ii) salutes the heroic sacrifices made by our students throughout the country

- iii) acknowledges that the boycott campaign has resulted in fundamental political, organizational and educational gains in spite of the many problems experienced by the students, and that it has also helped to raise the level of consciousness and organisation of the oppressed and exploited people.

Therefore resolves:

- i) to call on all students throughout the country to return to school on January 28 1986.
- ii) that unless the following demands are met before the end of March 1986, another conference shall be convened to consider what action to take:
  - a) the erection of school buildings where such buildings have been partially or completely damaged
  - b) the postponement of all examinations until March 1986
  - c) the release of all students and teachers in detention
  - d) the reinstatement of all dismissed, forcibly transferred or suspended teachers
  - e) the unbanning of COSAS
  - f) the recognition of democratically elected SRCs
  - g) the withdrawal of the SADF and SAP from our townships and soldiers from our schools
  - h) the lifting of the State of Emergency in all parts of the country
- iii) to call on all relevant student, teacher and parent organisations to continue the struggle for:
  - a) the immediate abolition of corporal punishment in all schools
  - b) controls to prevent the sexual harassment of female students
  - c) the abolition of all forms of racist education
  - d) the implementation of people's education in our schools
- iv) to recommend to all democratic organisations to exhort students to return to school on the above conditions

*The above resolutions were adopted by the delegates at the University of the Witwatersrand on 29 December 1985<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> C.Y. van den Bos, *Peoples Education for People's Power: Political Wisdom and Educational Action*. (Unpublished M. Ed dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand), pp. 99-104. Resolutions taken at the First National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education: Johannesburg 28-29 December 1985. *Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987*, p. 28.

## Appendix 7

### Resolutions taken at the Second National Consultative Conference on the crisis in Education: Durban 29-30 March 1986

#### 1. ON MAY DAY NATIONAL STAYAWAY

This 2<sup>nd</sup> National Education Crisis Conference noting that:

- i) this is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the May Day celebrated internationally as Workers' Day
- ii) COSATU and CUSA have called upon workers to declare May Day as a public holiday,

Hereby resolves to:

Call upon students nationally to support the May Day celebrations in the most appropriate form.

#### 2. ON INKATHA

This Conference noting that:

- i) Inkatha has attacked all the democratic forces struggling against the apartheid regime
- ii) it attacked life, limb and property of the organizers and the delegates of this Conference,

therefore declares that Inkatha is an enemy of the people and wholly in league with the National Government.

And resolves to expose, isolate and to fight against this fascist organisation.

And further condemns PUTCO for aiding and abetting the criminal activities of Inkatha against our people.

#### 3. ON REPRESSIVE ACTIONS AGAINST TEACHERS

This second National Education Crisis Conference noting:

- i) the hardships being experienced by progressive teachers' organisations in mobilizing and organizing teachers



ii) the negative and collaborating role of certain teachers and their obstructive teacher organisations,  
and believing that there is an urgent need for a united, democratic, national teachers' organisation and that no one should handicap the development of unity among teachers,  
therefore resolves:

- i) to condemn all repressive actions taken against teachers (eg. Dismissals)
- ii) to urge all obstructive organisations and teachers to stop their negative and repressive roles and stop collaborating with the authorities against democratic teachers.

#### 4. ON JUNE 16 NATIONAL STAYAWAY

This Conference noting that:

- i) June 16, 1986 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Soweto uprisings
- ii) none of the fundamental demands for which thousands of our comrades died have been met,

and believing that we must engage in united mass action in support of our education and other demands,

we call on all sections of our people to launch a national stayaway on June 16, 17 and 18

And we declare June 16 National Youth Day.

#### 5. ON UNBANNING OF COSAS

This Conference on the NECC noting:

- i) our call for the unbanning of COSAS
  - ii) the intransigence of the government in meeting this demand,
- hereby declares that COSAS is unbanned forthwith.

And resolves to call on all students to plan for national action to give effect to this declaration.

#### 6. ON POLITICAL PRISONERS

This Conference believing that in order to find lasting solutions to the fundamental problems of education, involving genuine leaders of the people is a pre-requisite,

Therefore believes that:

- i) banning orders on all organisations including the ANC be lifted
- ii) all political prisoners and detainees be released and all exiles be allowed to return home
- iii) all treason trials be stopped and charges in all other political trials be withdrawn
- iv) the banning order on meetings be lifted
- v) the Sharpeville 6 who have been sentenced to death should be unconditionally released
- vi) that apartheid should be completely dismantled.

#### 7. ON NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE

This National Education Crisis Committee noting the numerous calls for decisive action, hereby resolves to mandate the NECC to form a National Action Committee which will be made up of representatives from all National Organisations that subscribe to the decisions/recommendations of this conference.

#### 8. ON SANCTIONS

This NECC Conference noting:

- i) the importance of the campaign to isolate South Africa
- ii) that some western governments still continue to collude and connive with the minority Botha government in the continued oppression and exploitation on the majority of South Africans,

and believing that the effective isolation of this regime cannot be achieved by mere condemnation and posturing in world forums alone, and further believing that:

- i) foreign capital is involved in the bolstering of apartheid and its structures
- ii) the position of Blacks cannot be worse off that it is now from any withdrawal of foreign capital
- iii) progressive and democratic mankind can and must play a greater<sup>2</sup> role in the intensification of the campaign for the total isolation of South Africa,

hereby resolves to call on all those countries, corporations and individuals with investments in South Africa immediately to withdraw such investments. For as long as political and economic power is still vested in the hands of a white minority, these investments can never be in the interest of the oppressed and exploited majority.

And furthermore resolve, as a decisive punitive measure, to call upon all those countries that still afford the South African Airways landing rights, to cancel such forthwith.

#### 9. ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PEOPLE'S EDUCATION

This second Conference noting:

- i) that resolutions 9 and 10 on People's Education of the SPCC are still relevant
- ii) the report of the AD Hoc Commission of people's education, resolves to accept recommendations 1, 2, 3 of the Ad Hoc Committee (\*) and urges all progressive teachers, parent and student organisations to take immediate and urgent steps to implement the above recommendations. We further urge that this committee should report within a period of three months.

(\*) A Note on the Ad Hoc Committee in Resolution 9:

Recommendation 1 refers to the formulation of Subject Committees.

Recommendation 2 refers to the campaign for an Education Charter.

Recommendation 3 refers to initial experiments in People's Education be started in a limited way according to the resolution of Dec. 1985.

#### 10. ON ANGOLA

This Conference noting:

- i) the collusion between the Apartheid regime and the Reagan Administration as shown in the United States Government's policy of constructive engagement
- ii) the attempts by the South African Government to destabilise Frontline states, particularly the SADF's role in Angola

- iii) the decision by the Reagan Administration to offer aid to the terrorist-UNITA organisation

therefore resolves:

- i) to make it known to the entire world that we consider the Reagan Administration as accomplices in the crimes of Apartheid
- ii) to call on all freedom-loving people all over the world to further isolate the Apartheid regime internationally
- iii) to call on the American people not to support the murderous policies of the Reagan Administration, particularly their attempts to destabilise the legitimate and popular government of MPLA in Angola.

#### 11. ON COMMUNITY ACTION IN EDUCATION STRUGGLES

This Conference noting:

- i) the impact of education struggles on the community
- ii) the increasing hardships experienced by our people with respect to rents and costs of other necessities
- iii) the source of our problems in the community and educational sector is the same
- iv) that the government has consistently ignored our demands for reduced rents and charges, scrapping of GST and reduction and control of food prices,

hereby declares to urge all communities and democratic organisations to launch appropriate regional and/or national mass action campaigns by considering all forms of rent, consumer and other boycotts.

#### 12. ON WOMEN

Noting

- i) that many women are forced to work to support their families
- ii) that working women experience extreme difficulty in ensuring the safety and happiness of their children
- iii) that working women do not have the right to maternity leave

- iv) that there are extremely few child care facilities available to African children and at least 50% of women do not have other family members who can look after their children
  - v) that only 37% of African pre-school children are in crèches,
- believing
- i) that women have the right to work and rear children
  - ii) that women have the right to have access to facilities that keep their children safe and exposed to opportunities for their full emotional, physical and intellectual development
  - iii) that women have the right to keep their jobs while they are pregnant and to maternity leave before and after the birth of their babies
  - iv) that children have the right to be properly cared for
  - v) that children have the right to have access to education from an early age,

we resolve

- i) to demand that the state should provide crèches, nursery schools and after-school centres for all children
- ii) to demand that legislation be implemented giving women the right to job security and adequate maternity leave.

### 13. ON THE RETURN TO SCHOOLS

This Conference having carefully considered the conditions set by the December Consultative Conference for the return to schools and noting:

- i) that the demands have not adequately been met
- ii) that the situation has been exacerbated by the government's intransigence and unresponsiveness to our demands, and in particular the large number of schools which have been closed by various authorities

but believing that:

- i) education struggles must increasingly involve parents, teachers, students and all democratic organisations

ii) we will have to use new and creative tactics to advance education struggles,

therefore resolves that all students should return to school when the new term starts to:

- i) in such cases where schools have been closed, they must be occupied and we must demand the right to education
- ii) use the presence of students at schools to assist in building and regrouping our student organisations
- iii) implement alternate people's education programmes immediately

*The above resolutions were adopted by the delegates at Rajput Hall, Durban on 30 March 1986.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> C.Y. van den Bos, Peoples Education for People's Power: Political Wisdom and Educational Action. (Unpublished M. Ed dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand), pp. 105-110. Resolutions of the National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education, Durban, March 1986. Peoples' Education: A Collection of Articles from December 1985 to May 1987, pp. 41-43.

## Appendix 8

## Recognised Teacher Organisations and Progressive Teacher Organisations (and their affiliates)

African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA)	United Teachers' Association of South Africa (UTASA)	Teachers' Association of South Africa (TASA)	Teachers' Federal Council (TFC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transvaal United Teachers' Association (TUATA)</li> <li>▪ Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA)</li> <li>▪ Natal African Teachers' Union (NATU)</li> <li>▪ Orange Free State African Teachers' Association (OFSATA)</li> <li>▪ Ciskei Teachers' Union (CISTU)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA)</li> <li>▪ Transvaal Association of Teachers (TAT)</li> <li>▪ Orange Free State Teachers' Association (OFSTA)</li> <li>▪ Society of Natal Teachers (SONAT)</li> </ul>	With branches in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natal</li> <li>- Transvaal</li> <li>- Cape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A. English-speaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transvaal Teachers' Association (TTA)</li> <li>▪ South African Teachers' Association (SATA – Cape Province)</li> <li>▪ Natal Teachers' Society (NTS)</li> <li>▪ South African Association for Technical and Vocational Education (SAATVE)</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>B. Afrikaans-speaking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transvaal Onderwyservereniging (TO)</li> <li>▪ Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwyserunie (SAOU)</li> <li>▪ Natal Onderwyserunie (NOU)</li> <li>▪ Oranje-Vrystaat Onderwysunie (OVSOU)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*Figure 1 - Recognised Teacher Organisations and affiliates<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, *South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era*, p. 92.

Cape Province	Transvaal	National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA)	Teachers' League of South Africa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU)</li> <li>• Democratic Teachers' Union (DETU)</li> <li>• Education for an Aware South Africa (EDASA)</li> <li>• Eastern Cape Teachers' Union (ECTU)</li> <li>• Port Alfred Progressive Teachers' Union (PAPTU)</li> <li>• East London Progressive Teachers' Union (ELPTU)</li> <li>• Cape African Teachers' Union (CATU)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressive Teachers' Union (PTU)</li> <li>• Progressive Teachers' League (PTL)</li> <li>• Mamelodi Teachers' Union (MATU)</li> </ul>	Banned in 1988, NEUSA had branches in all the former four provinces.	Members were in all the four former provinces.

*Figure 2 – Progressive Teacher Organisations and affiliates<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> M.S. Mothata, Teachers and Teacher Organisations. F. Pretorius and E. M. Lemmer, South African Education and Training: Transition in a Democratic Era, p. 95.



## Appendix 9

### Guidelines formulated on 7 April 1988 by the National Teacher Unity Forum (NTUF) for achieving teacher unity.

1. All representatives of the teachers' organisations present agreed on the need for the national unity of teachers and committed themselves to both discuss this objective in their various organisations and to propagate the feasibility of one national teachers' organisation.
2. The representatives of teachers' organisations agreed that organisations should get together to negotiate and decide on the form which the envisaged united organisation should take.
3. The united organisation should commit itself to be part of the national democratic movement.
4. Such an organisation should be committed to a unitary, non-racist, democratic South Africa.
5. The organisation should commit itself to free, non-racist, non-sexist, compulsory democratic education in a single education system.
6. The organisation should protect and promote the rights of teachers as workers and professionals.
7. The organisation should implement as a matter of urgency a programme of political and professional education of teachers to enable them to play an effective role within the community
8. Ideological considerations should not be a precondition for unity.
9. The representatives of organisations agreed to urge all the members of organisations as well as those of the envisaged united organisation to abide by the principles and practice of non-collaboration with all structures of the apartheid system.
10. Negotiations with authorities should only be conducted with the mandate of the constituencies concerned.
11. The organisation should commit itself to the realisation of the ideals of People's Education.
12. In the interim, the representatives of organisations should urge their organisations to consult on ways to co-ordinate the various attempts and work together in formulating and implementing People's Education projects.

13. Organisations should be encouraged to organise joint projects which will facilitate national unity.
14. The representatives of organisations committed themselves to urge their organisations to maintain the spirit of comradeship, mutual respect and common purpose which has characterised the Harare Seminar on teacher unity as an essential element in the process of achieving unity.
15. The representatives of organisations agreed to urge their organisations to establish a negotiating body to pursue the objectives agreed on by the Harare Seminar. They requested that as a matter of urgency, COSATU should convene such machinery, having consulted and agreed with the organisations about the composition and powers of such a body. COSATU was requested further to consult with other sectors of the democratic movement to facilitate the unity process.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. Coetzee, Issues Characterising the Current Debate on Teacher Unity in South Africa. South African Journal of Education, p. 145.

## Appendix 10

### 1990 SADTU Congress Resolutions

#### 1. EDUCATION AND POLITICS

In noting that the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) is committed to a free, equal, democratic and non-racial education system in a unitary state,

SADTU resolves that every teacher must have the right to be informed and politically active and to express his/her personal opinions in public without fear of victimization.

Mover: Cde F Khumalo; Seconder: Cde D. Rattan. Carried Unanimously.

#### 2. THE CURRICULUM

SADTU, believing that education in South Africa

- must serve the needs of the people
- should be accessible to all
- is a means of empowerment and part of the struggle for national liberation and societal transformation

and recognizing the need for

- education to be restructured
- the involvement of parents, students and community organisations
- ongoing research into transformative methodologies and into language policy

commits itself to developing curricula which are based on collective input and active participation by all and which stimulate critical and creative thinking, analysis and working methods.

Mover: Cde D Hindle; Seconder: Cde T Reddy. Carried Unanimously.

#### 3. THE EDUCATION CRISIS

SADTU, believing that all children have the right to be educated, expresses its concern at the current crisis in education. SADTU calls for the democratisation of schools with the implementation of PTSA's and other similar structures as may be necessary, favourable teacher-student ratios, an equitable distribution of per capita funding, early childhood education being available to all and effective utilization of school buildings, including their proper maintenance and security.

Congress, in terms of the said crisis, further directs the transitional NEC to address as a matter of priority and urgency, the dismissal of educators, and more specifically those educators in the Pietermaritzburg area.

Further, that SADTU is of the opinion that the Education crisis cannot be solved by the Privatization of Education, but by an equitable redistribution of resources.

Mover: Cde CR Pillay; Seconder: Cde P Hartogh. Carried Unanimously.

#### **4. DEMOCRATIC SERVICE CONTRACT FOR TEACHERS**

In declaring that all teachers are entitled to conditions of service which are free of any discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity or creed.

SADTU resolves to formulate and negotiate a single and acceptable service contract for all teachers in South Africa as soon as possible and shall ensure that such a contract remain open to negotiation at all times.

Mover: Cde E Kleyn; Seconder: Cde C Padayachee. Carried Unanimously.

#### **5. FORMATION OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROJECTS**

Believing that the nation can only benefit from the promotion of adult education and literacy projects.

SADTU resolves to support and encourage all efforts to promote adult education, special education, literacy projects and educational efforts within the non-formal sector, and that educators involved in such endeavours be given paid time off.

Mover: Cde A Williams; Seconder: Cde P Jafta. Carried Unanimously.

#### **6. DEMAND FOR LIVING WAGE**

In believing that it is a human right to receive a living wage and noting that many of its members are not receiving a basic living wage,

SADTU resolves to demand a living wage for all educators in South Africa.

Mover: Cde A D Khan; Seconder: Cde G Strauss. Carried Unanimously.

#### **7. PARTY-POLITICAL INTERFERENCE**

In noting the destabilising influence on education through party-political interference which has its roots in the "own affairs" and homelands system of administration, and further believing that this ethnic system of government has been rejected by the majority, therefore SADTU resolves to demand the immediate abolition of the "own affairs" system and the replacement thereof by a single democratic ministry of education, administering a common education policy for all South Africans.

Mover: Cde D Simpson; Seconder: Cde D Hindle. Carried Unanimously.

## 8. POPULARISATION OF SADTU

In noting the stand taken by the members of SADTU with regard to their commitment to form a unitary organization for the teaching profession,

This Congress calls upon its leadership and members to undertake as a matter of urgency an intensive campaign to popularise the Union so that in terms of the objects of the SADTU constitution it will include all teachers in the country with special focus on rural and homeland areas.

Mover: Cde ALA Pillay; Seconder: Cde H Hendricks. Carried Unanimously.

## 9. WORKING RELATIONS

This Congress calls on SADTU to establish close working relations with participants in the education sector and other organisations who share and promote the aims of non-racialism and democracy.

Mover: Cde P Dlamini; Seconder: Cde D Rattan. Carried Unanimously.

## 10. EDUCATION CRISIS CONFERENCE

In noting that a crisis in education has been identified in South Africa as a direct result of the apartheid policy of the state, this congress resolves that SADTU calls as a matter of urgency a crisis conference to address this issue.

Mover: Cde E Mdane; Seconder: Cde A Williams. Carried Unanimously.

## 11. EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In noting that children with special needs are severely underprovided for in the present education structures in South Africa,

SADTU calls on the State to make greater provision at all schools for these children with special needs, commencing at pre-school level at all schools with immediate effect.

Mover: Cde a Naidoo; Seconder: Cde B Olifant. Carried Unanimously.

## 12. SCHOOL CALENDER

In noting the education disjuncture which results from separate school holidays in different departments, and believing that considerable education value is lost as a result of this, Congress demands that SADTU immediately implements a common school calender for all schools.

Mover: Cde M Benjamin; Seconder: Cde C Padayachee. Carried Unanimously.

### 13. SPECIAL THANKS TO WCOTP AND IFFUT

Congress noting the substantial support received from the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP) and IFFTU,

Resolves to express the thanks and appreciation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) to WCOTP and its affiliates and IFFTU for their role in the creation of Teacher Unity in South Africa.

Mover: CDE D Hindle; Seconder Cde Y Gabru. Carried Unanimously.

### 14. SPECIAL THANKS TO COSATU

Congress noting the consistent role played by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) as facilitator/negotiator in the Teacher Unity process in South Africa,

Resolves to thank and commend COSATU for the role it has played in bringing Teacher Unity into being in South Africa.

Mover: Cde P Thiba; Seconder: Cde H Daniels. Carried Unanimously.

### 15. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SADTU

SADTU, noting that women teachers have always been discriminated against on the basis of sex, both professionally and organisationally,

Commits itself (organisationally)

- to encourage the participation of women teachers in the structures of SADTU at all levels (branch, regional and national)
- to establish affirmative action programmes for women as indicated in SADTU's constitution.
- To place on the P.O.A. of each region campaigns against all forms of victimisation and harassment,
- to the organisation of a women's conference and that in consultation with SADTU regions-branches the issue of attendance by male and/or female educators be decided upon,

SADTU further demands:

- an immediate end to discrimination against women teachers;
- immediate full parity in salaries between men and women;

- immediate full maternity benefits for all women teachers;
- immediate full paid accouchement leave for all women teachers;
- and further SADTU rejects Minister Gene Louw's recent announcement of salary parity at all levels and demands immediately the implementation of a basic minimum wage for all teachers.

Mover: Cde NK Govind; Seconder: Cde V Clark. Carried by a large majority.

## 16. PROGRAMME OF ACTION

It is hereby stated that SADTU believes in pursuing a Programme of Action with clearly stated short term and long term goals and therefore resolves the following:

### *Short Term*

- to immediately get recognition from the Minister of National Education as the only teachers' union representing teachers on a non-racial, national basis.

This recognition will include the acceptance of stop order facilities,

- to recruit membership for SADTU and organise it into branches and regions,
- to launch regional structures.
- to elect office bearers
- to employ branch/regional organisers
- 

### *Long Term*

- to organise a campaign for a Teachers' Bill of Rights and a Teachers' Charter
- to build the Union on all fronts and pursue the aims and objectives of the Constitution.

Mover: Cde NK Govind; Seconder Cde A Jessa. Carried Unanimously.

## 17. BANTUSTAN EDUCATION

In recognizing that Bantustan education is designed to entrench racist and inferior education for a great percentage of the people of South Africa, this Congress resolves to strive for the dissolution – eradication of Bantustan education and demands the incorporation of such former Bantustan education into a unitary education system for all South Africans.

Mover: Cde Jessa; Seconder: Cde L Green. Carried Unanimously.

## 18. REPEAL OF THE EDUCATION ACT

Noting that the afore-mentioned issue is merely symptomatic of the bankruptcy of Apartheid Education this Congress calls for the repeal of the racist Education Acts in order to address the root cause of the existing discrepancies in the education system.

Mover: Cde J Cambell; Seconder: Cde L Faragher. Carried Unanimously.

## 19. NEW TEACHERS WITHOUT POSTS

SADTU noting:

1. that many newly qualified teachers will not have posts in 1991,
2. the overcrowded conditions in our classrooms,
3. the number of children not receiving any education,

### *Demands*

That all newly qualified teachers be given posts in 1991.

Mover: Cde L Faragher; Seconder: Cde Y Gabru. Carried Unanimously.

## 20. OTHER MOTION DISCUSSED

### 20.1 Position of Temporary Teachers

In response to the hundreds of temporary teachers, nationally, facing displacement at the end of this year, together with the lack of posts for those already unemployed and those prospective teachers who will find extreme difficulty in confirming employment for 1991, SADTU DEMANDS:

1. The scrapping of temporary status be negotiated.
2. Permanent jobs for all qualified teachers and that the said qualifications be determined by SADTU.
3. Permanent jobs for all unqualified teachers already in posts and those unemployed, with the proviso that such teachers be given the opportunity to complete the necessary qualifications over a stipulated and reasonable period determined by SADTU and that such educators be given financial assistance to improve their qualifications.
4. The right of teachers to remain in their current posts OR to select a post elsewhere.
5. The scrapping of the Education Bulletin System in order to achieve permanency.



6. That the terms of probation, if any, be scrapped.

Motion not adopted but referred to NEC for immediate action.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1990 SADTU Congress Resolutions, South African Democratic Teachers' Union Commemorative Journal, Launch Congress/Rally, Shareworld -Johannesburg. Wits William Cullen Library. Historical Papers, Colin Purkey Collection, A1984/C16.16.

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<u>Daily Dispatch</u>	15.07.1980 02.08.1980 23.08.1980 02.09.1980 19.06.1987 13.02.1988
<u>Die Beeld</u>	17.06.1976
<u>Die Burger</u>	02.03.1959 10.11.1984 12.11.1994 31.07.1996
<u>Die Transvaler</u>	08.01.1959 17.06.1976
<u>Die Vaderland</u>	12.11.1984
<u>Die Volksblad</u>	31.07.1996
<u>Financial Mail</u>	31.10.1980 13.11.1987
<u>Focus on Education</u>	March 1993
<u>Ilanga</u>	21.06.1976
<u>Natal Daily News</u>	13.08.1953 21.12.1962 28.04.1980
<u>New Nation</u>	20.09.1991 3-9.04.1992
<u>Pretoria News</u>	17.06.1976

<u>Rand Daily Mail</u>	29.05.1959
	05.10.1959
	04.03.1961
	06.03.1961
	21.04.1976
	08.06.1976
	17.06.1976
	18.06.1976
	19.06.1976
	21.06.1976
	24.06.1976
	01.03.1980
	28.07.1980
	31.07.1980
	16.09.1980
	02.10.1980
	12.01.1981
	24.11.1983
	19.09.1984
<u>RSA World</u>	31.07.1980
<u>South Coast Sun</u>	16.04.1990
<u>Sowetan</u>	18.09.1984
	19.09.1984
	16.09.1987
	24.09.1987
	14.10.1987
	19.02.1992
	15.01.1993
	27.01.1993
	21.08.2003
<u>Sunday Times</u>	11.01.1959
	27.09.1959
	09.04.1961
	20.06.1976
	11.11.1984
<u>Sunday Tribune</u>	20.06.1976
	02.03.1980
	08.06.1980
	11.11.1984
	26.06.1991

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29.10.1959  
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The Cape Times 20.02.1952  
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26.08.1991

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The Friend 19.01.1961  
07.08.1963  
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24.06.1980  
03.08.1983  
24.08.1983

The Natal Mercury 06.03.1964  
19.01.1965  
18.06.1976  
19.06.1980  
15.07.1993

The Natal Witness            04.03.1980  
    10.03.1980

New Nation                    10.09.1987

The Star                        07.01.1959  
    07.02.1959  
    03.09.1959  
    02.10.1959  
    10.11.1960  
    03.01.1961  
    07.02.1961  
    10.03.1961  
    23.03.1962  
    11.02.1963  
    22.01.1965  
    28.01.1970  
    29.01.1975  
    18.06.1976  
    19.06.1976  
    17.05.1980  
    20.09.1980  
    02.12.1980  
    24.11.1983  
    08.12.1986  
    19.09.1987  
    16.10.1987  
    23.11.1987  
    19.02.1988  
    09.10.1989  
    09.01.1990  
    12.09.1990  
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    27.01.1993  
    17.03.1993  
    24.03.1993  
    01.04.1993

The World                    28.01.1956  
    18.06.1976

To the Point                13.06.1980

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### ABSTRACT

The new education dispensation in South Africa has its roots in the turbulent years in education. The transformation of Black school education in South Africa led to the actions and counter actions that interrelated to mould a political climate that paved the way for the education where everybody has the right to learn. The National Party government introduced Bantu Education in 1953 and this aroused strong condemnation from the Black people who were virtually unanimous in their opposition to it. There was incessant disorder in education as a result of separate education for Blacks. The Bantu Education Act was passed following the Eiselen Commission of Enquiry whose recommendations were in line with the principles of Christian National Education.

Political developments inter alia, the celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union of South Africa, the declaration of the Union of South Africa as a Republic as well as the Sharpeville shooting in 1960, impacted on education.

Bantu Education principles were extended to Coloured and Indian education. Segregated education for the Coloured and Indian learners was also met with vehement opposition.

The National Party government introduced the homeland system to fortify its policy of segregated schools and separate economies. The National Party government encouraged the self governing homelands to opt for independence. Learners from all homelands could not easily access education in the urban areas; this was even worse for the learners whose designated homelands had chosen independence.

The insistence of the government that English and Afrikaans must enjoy equal status as the media of instruction in the Black schools sparked the Soweto learners' riots. The South African society responded differently to the epoch making Soweto learners' upheavals. A militant culture developed among the learners and this led to the formation of national learners' organisations. The learners played a prominent role in education



politics whilst the parents' role was relegated to the periphery. The void left by parents in education resulted into chaos.

There were calls for reforms in education as a result of the intermittent school unrests of the 1980s. The reformist programme of the National Party government led to the appointment of the De Lange Commission of Enquiry and the inauguration of the new Department of Education and Training for Blacks.

The 1983 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which led to the creation of the tri-cameral parliamentary system also resulted in the formation of the United Democratic Front by the people who felt that the Black people had been left in the cold by the new Constitution. This ushered in an era of militancy among learners and sporadic riots that disrupted education. The education crisis deepened with calls for "liberation first, and education later." This led to the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee, and its forerunner the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee. There were fresh calls for "people's education for people's power."

As part of its reform programme, the National Party government allowed big business participation in alleviating the challenges that plagued Black education. The African National Congress (ANC) had been calling for sanctions and disinvestment in an attempt to force the National Party government to relinquish apartheid and segregated education. The Black political parties did not agree on this strategy. It remains debatable whether the sanctions facilitated the demise of apartheid in any significant way.

There were attempts to unite different teachers' union by the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the ANC, but the mergers proved complicated. The militancy of emergent teachers' unions undermined discipline and stability in education. Education in South Africa was facing a lot of challenges at the dawn of the new political dispensation.

## KEY TERMS

- Bantu or Black Education
- Christian National Education
- Homelands
- Coloured and Indian Education
- Soweto learners' uprising
- African National Congress
- National Education Crisis Committee
- "Liberation first, education later"
- People's Education
- Teacher unions

## OPSOMMING

Die nuwe onderwysbestel in Suid-Afrika het sy ontstaan gehad in die onstuimige jare in onderwys. Die transformasie van Swart skoolonderwys in Suid-Afrika het gelei tot aksies en reaksies wat wedersydse invloede op mekaar gehad het. Dit het gelei tot 'n politieke klimaat wat die weg gebaan het vir 'n onderwysstelsel waar almal die reg sou hê om te leer. Die Nasionale Party het Bantoe-onderwys in 1953 tot stand gebring wat sterk veroordeling deur Swart mense tot gevolg gehad. Hulle was feitlik eenparig in hulle weerstand daarteen en die beleid van aparte onderwys vir Swartes het tot voortdurende wanorde in onderwys gelei. Die Eiselen Kommissie van Ondersoek het aanbevelings gemaak wat in ooreenstemming was met die beginsels van Christelike Nasionale Onderwys en die Bantoe Onderwyswet is goedgekeur.

Politieke ontwikkelings, soos die feesvieringe rondom die 50ste herdenking van die Unie van Suid-Afrika, die aankondiging van die Unie van Suid-Afrika as 'n Republiek, asook die skietvoorval te Sharpeville in 1960, het alles 'n invloed op onderwys gehad.

Die beginsels van Bantoe-onderwys is uitgebrei na Kleurling- en Indiër-onderwys. Aparte onderwys vir Kleurling en Indiër leerlinge is ook met driftige teenstand begroet.

Die Nasionale Party regering het die tuislandstelsel tot stand gebring om die beleid van aparte skole en aparte ekonomieë te bevorder. Die Nasionale Party het die selfregerende tuislande aangemoedig om onafhanklik te word. Leerders van alle tuislande kon nie maklik toegang kry tot onderwys in stedelike gebiede nie; dit was nog erger vir leerders wie se aangewese tuislande onafhanklikheid verkies het.

Die aandrang van die regering dat Engels en Afrikaans gelyke status as die medium van onderrig in Swart skole moet hê, het gelei tot oproer deur leerlinge in Soweto. Die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing het op verskillende maniere gereageer op die epogmakende opstande deur leerlinge van Soweto. 'n Militante kultuur het onder die leerders ontwikkel, en dit het gelei tot die totstandkoming van nasionale leerderorganisasies.

Leeders het 'n prominente plek ingeneem in onderwyspolitiek, terwyl hulle ouers se rol na die kantlyn verskuif het.

Gedurende die tagtiger jare is gevra vir hervorming van die onderwysbeleid weens die onrus wat met gereelde tussenposes plaasgevind het. Die hervormingsprogram van die Nasionale Party regering het gelei tot die aanstelling van die De Lange Kommissie. Vervolgens is die Departement van Onderwys en Opleiding vir Swartes daargestel.

Die 1983 Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika het die totstandkoming van die driekamerparlement tot gevolg gehad. Die gevolg daarvan was die stigting van die Verenigde Demokratiese Beweging deur mense wat gevoel het dat Swart mense deur die nuwe Grondwet uitgesluit is. Die gevolg hiervan was militante aksies deur leeders, en sporadiese gevalle van oproer het onderwys onderbreek. Die onderwyskrisis is vererger deur die slagspreuk "bevryding eerste, dan onderwys". Die Nasionale Onderwyskrisiskomitee is in die lewe geroep; hierdie beweging is voorafgegaan deur die Soweto Ouers se Krisiskomitee. Daar is ook gevra vir "volksonderwys vir volksmag".

As deel van die hervormingsprogram het die Nasionale Party groot sakebedrywe toegelaat om deel te neem aan die proses om die uitdagings waaronder Swart onderwys gebuk gegaan het, te verlig. Die *African National Congress* (ANC) het gevra vir sanksies en disinvestering om die Nasionale Party te dwing om apartheid en aparte onderwys te laat vaar. Swart politieke partye het nie saamgestem met hierdie strategie nie. Dit is nog steeds debatteerbaar of sanksies hoegenaamd die einde van apartheid bevorder het.

Daar is deur die *Congress of South African Trade Unions* gepoog om die verskillende onderwysunies onder een sambreel te verenig, maar die samesmelting het te ingewikkeld blyk te wees. Die militantheid van ontwikkelende onderwysersunies het dissipline en stabiliteit in onderwys ondermyn. Met die aanbreek van die nuwe politieke bedeling het onderwys in Suid-Afrika baie uitdagings gehad.

## SLEUTELBEGRIPPE

- Bantoe- of Swart-onderwys
- Christelik Nasionale Onderwys
- Tuislande
- Kleurling- en Indiër-Onderwys
- Soweto leerling opstande
- *African National Congress*
- Nasionale Onderwyskrisiskomitee
- “Bevryding eerste, dan onderwys”
- Volksonderwys
- Onderwysersunies

## KGUTSUFATSO

Mokgwa o motjha wa thuto Afrika Borwa o qadile dilemong tse thata thutong. Ho fetolwa hwa Thuto ya Batho ba batsho Afrika Borwa ho lebisitse diketsahalong tse tletseng ho dumellana le ho se dumellane ho ileng hwa bopa maemo a sepolotiki a ileng a lebisa thuto boemong boo ho bona bohle ba nang le tokelo ya ho ithuta. Mmuso wa Manashenale o ile wa kenya tshebetsong Thuto ya Batho ba batsho ka 1953 mme hona ho ile hwa qholotsa tshehollo setjhabeng sa Batho ba batsho se neng se le ntswe leng hore mokgwa ona wa thuto o tlameha ho hanyetswa le ho sehollwa ka matla a maholo. Ho bile le pherekano ka nako e telele thutong ka lebaka la thuto e fapaneng e neng e reretswe Batho ba batsho. Molao wa Thuto ya Batho ba Batsho o ile wa etswa ho ya ka dikgothaletso tsa Khomeshene ya Dipatlisiso ya Eiselen tse neng di ikamahantse le metheo ya Thuto ya Setjhaba ya boKreste.

Diketsahalo tsa sepolitiki tse kang ho ketekwa hwa selemo sa bomashome a mahlano sa Kopano ya Afrika Borwa, ho phatlalatswa hwa Rephaboliki ya Afrika Borwa, mmoho le ho thunngwa hwa batho Sharpeville ka selemo sa 1960, di ile tsa eba le kgahlamelo e kgolo thutong.

Metheo ya Thuto ya Batho ba batsho e ile ya atolosetswa thutong ya Bammala le Maindia. Thuto e fapaneng bakeng sa Bammala le Maindia e ile ya hanyetswa ka matla a maholo.

Mmuso wa Manashenale o ile wa kenya tshebetsong mokgwa wa puso ya mahae ho matlafatsa leano la ona la dikolo tse arohaneng mmoho le moruo o arohaneng. Mmuso wa Manashenale o ile wa boela wa kgothaletsa mahae a itsamaisang ho kgetha boipuso. Baithuti ba tswang mahaeng ana ba ne ba sa kgone ho fumana thuto ha bobebe dibakeng tsa ditoropo; mme ho ne ho le thata le ho feta ho baithuti bao mahae a habo bona a neng a kgethile boipuso.

Ho tswela pele hwa mmuso ho hatella hore Senyese mane le Afrikanse di fuwe maemo a lekanang a ho ba maleme a ho ruta dikolong tsa Batho ba batsho, ho ile ha tsosa merusu ya baithuti Soweto. Setjhaba sa Afrika Borwa se ile sa arabela diketsahalo tse ileng tsa lebisa ho hlokgeng botsitso hwa baithuti Soweto ka tsela e fapaneng. Moya wa boitseko ka dikgoka o ile wa kena baithuting mme hona ho ile hwa lebisa ho thehweng hwa mekgatlo ya naha ya baithuti. Baithuti ba ile ba eba le seabo sa bohlokwa haholo dipolotiking tse amanang le thuto mme seabo sa batswadi sona sa qhelelwa ka thoko. Sekgeo se siilweng ke batswadi thutong se ile sa baka pherekano.

Ho ile ha eba le boipiletso ba hore ho kenngwe diphephetso thutong ka lebaka la merusu le ho hloka botsitso ho neng ho aparetse dikolo dilemong tsa bo1980. Lenaneo la mmuso wa Manashenale la ho tlisa diphephetso le ile la lebisa ho thonngweng hwa Khomeshene ya Dipatlisiso ya De Lange mmoho le ho hlomamiswa hwa lefapha le letjha la Thuto le Thupello bakeng sa Batho ba batsho.

Molaotheo wa Riphaboliki ya Afrika Borwa wa selemo sa 1983 mmoho le ho kenngwa tshebetso hwa mokgwa wa tsamaiso ya ketsamelao ka matlo a mararo a palamente o ile wa lebisa ho thehweng hwa United Democratic Front ke batho ba neng ba ena le maikutlo a hore Batho ba batsho ba qheletswe ka thoko ke Molaotheo oo o motjha. Ena e ile ya eba nako e ntjha ya boitseko ba dikgoka hara baithuti e neng e tsamaisana le methwaelanyana ya merusu e ileng ya sitisa thuto. Mathata thutong a ile a ata ka lebaka la boipiletso bo neng bo re: "Tokoloho pele, thuto ha morao". Hona ho ile hwa lebisa ho thehweng hwa Kommiti ya Naha ya Mathata a aparetseng Thuto, mmoho le e ileng ya thehwa pejana ho yona, e leng Komiti ya Batswadi ya Mathata ya Soweto. Ho boitse hwa qhoma boipiletso ba "thuto ya batho bakeng sa matla a batho."

Mmuso wa Manashenale o ile wa fa lekala la dikgwebo tse kgolo monyetla wa ho ba le seabo twantshong ya diphephetso le mathata a neng a aparetse thuto ya Batho ba batsho, e le karolo ya lenaneo la ona la diphephetso. ANC e ne e se e nnile ya ipiletsa bakeng sa dikotloqobello le ho hulwa hwa matsete tekong ya ho qobella mmuso wa Manashenale ho nyahlatsa kgethollo le thuto e arohaneng. Mekga ya dipolotiki ya Batho ba batsho e ne e

sa dumellane mabapi le lewa lena. Le jwale ho ntse ho sa dumellanwe mabapi le hore na ebe dikotloqobello di fela di ile tsa eba le tshusumetso e kgolo ho le hokae ho weng hwa puso ya kgethollo.

Mekgatlo wa basebetsi ba Afrika Borwa (COSATU) le ANC di ile tsa leka ho kopanya mekgatlo e fapaneng e emelang matitjhere, empa hwa fumaneha hore ha ho bobebe ho etsa jwalo. Ditlwaelo tsa boitseko ba dikgoka tsa mekgatlo e sa tswa thehwa ya matitjhere di ile tsa iphapanya le ho kgella fatshe tayo le botsitso thutong. Thuto naheng ya Afrika Borwa e ne e tobane le mathata a maholo nakong eo ho kenwang mokgweng o motjha wa sepolotiki.

#### MAREO A SEHLOOHO

- Thuto ya Batho ba batsho
- Thuto ya Setjhaba ya seKreste
- Dinaha tsa Mahae
- Thuto ya Bammala le Maindia
- Merusu ya baithuti Soweto
- African National Congress
- Komiti ya Naha ya Mathata Thutong
- "Tokoloho pele, thuto ha morao"
- Thuto ya Batho
- Mekgatlo e emelang Matitjhere

