

CSIS

AFRICA NOTES

A publication of the African Studies Program of The Georgetown

University Center for Strategic and International Studies

No. 41 • April 15, 1985

Black Education in South Africa: Key or Chimera?

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Deep currents of social change are welling up beneath the hard surface of white rule in South Africa. Among the most significant of these currents are those developing in black education, which has become a major focus of public debate, protest, and expenditure.

Some skeptics believe that expanded educational opportunity is likely only to reinforce an exploitative order and thereby render ultimate large-scale violence more rather than less probable. In *Apartheid and Education* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), Peter Kallaway of the University of Cape Town discounts liberal initiatives for educational reform as a stratagem to build an enlarged black middle class and integrate it into a basically unchanged and iniquitous political-economic system. Education is essentially a dependent variable, he argues, and schooling is a "mechanism of class domination." Constricted by a complicit "technicism" that responds to the demands of the prevailing system, educators focus on producing more vocationally trained manpower without challenging the underlying structures of racial separatism.

Even if one accepts that reform-minded whites in or out of government may seek to serve and preserve their own interests as they perceive them, the education-as-a-control-mechanism argument leaves at least one important question unposed and unanswered. What might be the *unintended consequences* of massively expanded and substantively improved black education?

Sobering Demography

The South African government's newfound interest in black education is rooted in sobering demography. According to the Institute for Futures Research at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa's population may leap from 28.6 million in 1980 to 45 million in 2000, just 15 years from now, with whites down from 16 percent to 10 percent of the total. Standing alone, the relatively static white minority of less than 5

million cannot hope to provide the cadres of high-level professional, technical, and managerial manpower necessary for the development and sustenance of a sophisticated modern economy.

This view is shared by the National Manpower Commission established by the government in 1979 to advise on manpower problems and policy. The chair of the Commission, H.J.J. Reynders, was prompt to conclude that "the contradiction of an excess of semi-skilled workers accompanied by a shortage of artisans and high-level manpower" meant that labor matters would "come increasingly under the spotlight." In an influential report published in 1981, the Commission warned that there would have to be a dramatic increase in the number of highly educated African engineers, managers, and entrepreneurs as well as skilled workers, artisans, and technicians. Should South Africa attempt instead to rely on the white minority for top-level manpower, such a choice would not "offer all its people an acceptable standard of living," and a "relative deterioration" of the economy could be "expected."

Leadership within the private sector of the South African economy has concurred with the Commission that educational opportunities for blacks must be greatly expanded. Business-oriented publications cite research estimates that between 1977 and 1987 close to 270,000 job hunters will have entered the job market yearly (730 a day) and for the most part will have joined an existing pool of 2.5 million un- and under-employed, even as the shortage of skilled manpower has soared. With a need for some 23,000 artisans and 9,500 technicians annually, as matched against a current output of less than 10,000 and 2,000 respectively, "the technological uplift of black workers via education, training and improved industrial relations" comes to be seen as "the real key to South Africa's future productivity" (*Flying Springbok*, July 1983).

Assessing South Africa's demography from a more disinterested, systemic vantage point, the director of the Institute for Futures Research, Dr. P.H. Spies, stresses that economic advance and social well-being anywhere depend primarily upon the development of human resources. Consequently, a telescoped educational effort that relies heavily upon new technologies represents the only way for South Africa to break out of political and economic rigidities and move into a more flexible mode of social change. Spies argues that it is an enabling process of genuine education, education in which people learn to think independently and systemically, not a quest for constitutional formulas, that may be expected to open the door to human creativity and accommodation.

Much as Nigeria relied on a single source of national wealth (oil) and neglected vital food production, South Africa for many years relied heavily upon gold and neglected development of its human resources. It was only as the price of gold sank from \$800 down to \$300 an ounce that the country's political leadership began to give serious consideration to the economic consequences of racial policies that left up to 50 percent of the total population (nearly 70 percent of Africans) functionally illiterate. Its imprudence having at least matched that of the Third World leaders it is so quick to criticize, Pretoria only belatedly came to accept the necessity for vastly expanded educational opportunity.

Given the time lost and the bitterness generated as a result of past policy and continuing political exclusion, even a rapid expansion of black education cannot avoid hostile distrust on the part of many black parents and students and at least a transitional increase in social cleavage within the black community. According to the Institute for Futures Research, remorseless (though "influx controlled") urban migration may raise the population of South African cities and their black appendages from 13.7 million to about 30 million between 1980 and the year 2000. Although the share of disposable income earned by Africans, Coloureds, and Asians combined may grow from 37 percent to 57 percent of the national total during this same period, over 5 million persons are likely to be left on the margins to live essentially unschooled and un- and underemployed in stark urban and rural poverty.

Apartheid's Educational Dimension

Upon coming to power in 1948, the National Party's Afrikaner leadership began fashioning an educational system based upon strict racial and ethnic compartmentalization. It proceeded to impose upon voteless Africans an atavistic, largely pretechnological "Bantu education" system that focused on ethnic culture and vernacular languages and de-emphasized English, mathematics, and science. The most generous interpretation that could be placed on this forced march into parochialism would be that the Afrikaner's own struggle against British domination had conditioned him to believe that Africans too should work out their

destiny within the communal framework of ethno-linguistic nationalism. By simultaneously forcing the study of Afrikaans upon African schools, however, the government bared its underlying determination to secure a new era of Afrikaner dominance.

The quality of black education plummeted. At the university level, the government reduced the University College of Fort Hare, the alma mater of most of the country's African intelligentsia, to the status of just one (the Xhosa one) of several ethnic "bush" universities decreed for Africans. At the same time, it barred the door to top-quality higher education at the would-be racially "open" Universities of Witwatersrand and Cape Town. The latter protested but bowed to the government's will and purged themselves of their small (5 to 6 percent) but growing number of African, Coloured, and Asian students.

Standards of instruction in English fell at all levels. The separation of English-language and Afrikaans-language (white) schools lowered the quality of bilingualism in all schools. As English-speakers withdrew from the increasingly Afrikaner-dominated education profession, 70 percent of South Africa's teachers came to be drawn from Afrikaans-language institutions. These teachers, in turn, inflicted their reduced English proficiency (aggravated by a disinclination to use the language) upon African students who were, and still are, obliged to spend their early school years learning in a vernacular language.

Ethnocentric government policies pushed Afrikaans-medium universities ahead of the previously dominant English-language institutions in terms of funding and enrollments, with the latter surging from 8,900 in 1954 to over 51,000 in 1980. Although African school and university enrollments rose, gross underprovision of facilities, libraries, textbooks, and teachers' salaries led to cumulative deficiency and demoralization. Just how formidable and enduring an obstacle to real educational development the legacy of Bantu education remains is evident from government acknowledgment that, as of 1985, some 80 percent of the African teachers upon whom such development would have to depend are themselves educationally underqualified.

The End of Complacency

It was student anger, targeted on obligatory Afrikaans but grounded in pervasive resentment of the whole educational system, that sparked the violent explosion that spread out from the Soweto township near Johannesburg in 1976. David versus Goliath images of rock-hurling youths battling motorized police burst onto the screens of television sets around the world. The magnitude and intensity of the violence, along with the international revulsion it spawned, convinced the government that the costs of maintaining the status quo were untenable. Having already moved some distance from the crude and narrow (*verkramp*) stance of initial Verwoerdian apartheid doctrine toward a more pragmatic form of white hegemony, the government was by this time quietly relaxing the color bar in some professions and edging away from

the disabling anachronism of Bantu education in response to manpower imperatives. The explosion of 1976, however, blasted Prime Minister B.J. Vorster's government out of its lingering complacency and embarrassed even previously indifferent whites into openly accepting a need for comprehensive educational reform—albeit still within a framework of communal segregation.

By this time, quantitative as contrasted to qualitative trends were already on an upswing. According to government statistics (which included the designated ethnic "homelands" for this period), between 1955 and 1975 African primary school enrollment rose from 970,000 to 3,380,000, secondary school enrollment from 35,000 to 318,000, and university enrollment from approximately 500 to 4,500. Comparable numbers were enrolled in University of South Africa [UNISA] correspondence courses. Over a 50-year period (1927-1977), the overall distribution of education had changed substantially, down from 53.6 percent white to 16.4 percent white.

In the late 1970s, the pace of change intensified. Government expenditure on African education (excluding capital expenditure and universities but including homelands) rose from R68 million in 1972-73 to R298 million in 1980-81. This still left the government spending 10 times as much on each white as on each African student, however, and not all of the statistics were encouraging. In 1980 only 31,000 of the more than 600,000 African children who had entered school in 1969 reached the last year (standard 10) of secondary school—a 5 percent completion rate. In 1979, only 1,000 of the over 6,000 students then enrolled at the three universities then ascribed to Africans (Universities of the North, Fort Hare, and Zululand) successfully completed a course of study (generally three years), suggesting a dropout rate of at least 50 percent.

De Lange's Post-Verkrampste Blueprint

In order to help chart its course amidst growing clamor for educational reform, the government, in mid-1980, commissioned a massive study of South African education to be carried out under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). A select 25-member multiracial committee headed by the Rector of the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), Dr. J.P. de Lange, mobilized hundreds of researchers for a survey that extended from informal and pre-school to graduate education. After a year of intense labor, publicity, and suspense, the committee submitted its report in July 1981.

The de Lange committee recommended substantial changes. These included creation of a single, unified department of education; administrative decentralization, with communal or racial criteria for school admissions to be determined by regional authorities (an innovation intended to open the way to some voluntary integration); compulsory primary education and funding parity for all students, teachers, and schools as quickly as possible; university autonomy over

(racial) admissions policies; development of more technical and private sector education; and establishment of a multiracial Council of Education to oversee implementation of the committee's proposals for comprehensive educational development. These proposals were judged by the black daily *Sowetan* (November 25, 1983) to be capable of profoundly restructuring education and "setting the scene for a new era" in South Africa.

The government's preliminary response was to endorse a list of hortatory goals/principles set forth by the committee, including "equal opportunities" and "equal standards" in education for "every inhabitant" of the country, but also to express some ominous "reservations." The National Party's commitment to education of a "Christian and national" character taught in a "mother tongue" in separate schools administered by separate departments for "each population group" was reaffirmed. Public comment was invited, and Professor de Lange was asked to head up an interim "working party" to review this comment (some 10,000 pages in all). "Plodding" is the word that best describes the complex political process that would ultimately determine what the government could accept of the de Lange committee recommendations.

In November 1983, two years after publication of the original committee report, the long-awaited *White Paper on the Provision of Education in the Republic of South Africa* was presented to parliament. In response to the proposal for a single, overarching department of education, the government agreed to lodge "general" responsibility for educational norms and standards, data and support services, salaries and conditions of employment, coordination with homeland administrations, and budget planning in one cabinet-level post. Reportedly under political pressure from the conservative education bureaucracy in Transvaal, however, the government stressed that education would remain a communal or "own" affair, with none of the more than a dozen ministers of education for separate racial groups and homelands to report or be considered "subordinate" to the minister with "general" responsibilities. By rejecting subsumption of continued compartmentalization under a single minister, even if only symbolically, the White Paper shattered African hopes for a "new era" and drew attention away from the government's more positive responses to other de Lange committee recommendations. Later, sensing the cost of this deference to right-wing pressure, the government decided to lodge "general" responsibilities with the (white) Department of National Education and claimed that it had thereby created the central ministry called for by de Lange. But this gesture was insufficient to dissuade Africans from the bitter conclusion that separate Bantu education, though modified, would persist.

Particularly disappointing to Dr. de Lange was the government's failure to free education from the stifling hold of entrenched bureaucracy and to decentralize its administration within new, socially more responsive,

enterprising, and inclusive regional units—a cause that he continues to argue. He hailed, however, new government initiatives to create preschool and adult education opportunities for blacks, establish universal norms for classroom facilities and for teacher qualifications and salaries, and organize upgrading programs for black teachers. Speaking in August 1983 at a USSALEP (United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program) conference on U.S. initiatives in support of black education in South Africa, de Lange declared himself a long-term optimist and pointed with satisfaction to a rise of 17.1 percent in the 1982-83 education budget (R3.1 billion, ahead of expenditure on defense for the first time).

Further confirming a propensity to equivocate when confronted with a need to act against its own doctrinal leanings, the government initially declined to grant universities full authority over admissions policy and announced adoption of a racial quota system instead. Then it backed away under pressure from university leaders and agreed not to implement the quota so long as university admissions did not produce sudden or massive shifts in institutional (meaning racial) character. This left self-declared “open” universities free to internalize a process by which they had reopened and built modest but significant African enrollments in the 1970s on the basis of case by case government permission. How far they might be allowed to go and for how long remained in question.

Overall, partially positive inconsistency characterized the government response to de Lange and the education crisis. Pretoria welcomed the advice to expand technical education and agreed in principle to the merit of subsidizing some private education. It had already placed a high priority on the establishment of technikons (racially segregated tertiary polytechnic institutions providing job-oriented instruction in applied sciences, technology, and related skills). And it had permitted a number of private schools, such as St. Barnabas College (Anglican) of Johannesburg, to develop and offer exemplary multiracial education to a limited number of select students; some of St. Barnabas' 300 racially mixed students even lived in as boarders. On the other hand, the government side-stepped the advice that it waive the Group Areas Act in order to permit thousands of students in overcrowded black schools and technical colleges to be accommodated in underutilized white facilities.

Instead of agreeing to form a single, unifying advisory council to oversee implementation of educational development, the government decided to form two: a 20-member South African Council of Education (SACE) representing all population groups to advise on overall policy for school-level education, and a 12-member multiracial Universities and Technikons Advisory Council (UTAC) for higher education. Whether these bodies could develop into effective monitors and catalysts of enlightened policy would depend on the quality and independence of their membership and, once again, on the government's preparedness to heed reasoned counsel.

Unfortunately, the precedents were not overly promising. Despite a now well-seasoned ascendancy over earlier domination by English-speakers and a now inescapable awareness of educational needs, the Botha government remained enmeshed in the contradictions of “separate but equal” dogma and had yet to demonstrate the vision or political self-confidence necessary for bold and unequivocal action.

New Realities in 1985

In 1984 a new constitution adopted in the name of reform granted a parliamentary role and limited political rights to Asian and Coloured minorities but left the African majority of nearly 75 percent in a voteless limbo. Racial polarization intensified and the guarded optimism earlier generated in the field of education by the de Lange committee gave way to pervasive doubt and pessimism.

Within a context of declining economic fortunes, the magnitude of educational need came increasingly to be seen as defying the government's means as well as its will. Illustrative of the scope of this defiance, a 1984 report from the South African Medical Association indicating that 66 percent of African children suffer from protein deficiency buttressed assertions by, among others, the opposition Progressive Federal Party's health spokesman, Dr. Marius Barnard, that high dropout rates among African pupils are related to extensive malnutrition. He cited research showing children with a history of protein deficiency to have a failure rate twice that of a control peer group. Work at the Bureau for Economic Research at Stellenbosch suggested, moreover, that many African children have been permanently handicapped by malnutrition before entering school: physical and mental stunting, hearing and sight defects, and sheer hunger conduce to apathy, low concentration, lack of maturation, low achievement, absenteeism, and ultimately a high dropout rate.

Cognitive difficulties associated with plunging children from traditional, rural societies (69 percent of African schoolgoers live in homelands) into an educational system rooted in a change-oriented, industrial society also pose formidable difficulties. The problems these children experience in understanding the new system, education analyst Elizabeth Dostal recently argued at Stellenbosch's Institute for Futures Research, hampers “logical thinking” and the ability to cope cognitively with daily situations. This phenomenon “is further characterized by imitative behavior and rote (parrot fashion) learning without understanding.” Though susceptible of exaggeration, the cultural leap required does clearly place a crucial and intimidating pedagogical burden on underprepared black teachers.

That a truly massive effort will be needed if even marginally acceptable standards are to be realized in black education has been further underscored by recent trends. The number of African secondary school graduates doubled between 1975 and 1978 (5,529 to 11,167), then jumped by a factor of nearly eight by 1984 (83,000), and, according to government projections, may reach 190,000 (outnumbering whites 3 to

1) by the year 2000. Partly because there are simply not enough qualified teachers or adequate instructional materials and facilities to serve these swelling enrollments, the quality of black secondary education has measurably deteriorated. Assessing this deterioration, Kenneth B. Hartshorne of the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Witwatersrand cites low morale as another major contributing factor. African teachers suffer from a demoralizing inability to command respect in the classroom, a plight exacerbated by the student rebellion of 1976. Even worse, they suffer from a debilitating loss of self-respect as a result of working within a system of which they disapprove.

Evidence for a decline in standards is discernible in the sharp fall in the proportion (as distinct from the number) of African students who pass the national matriculation examination at the end of secondary school. Between 1978 and 1982, while the number of successful "matric" examinees rose from 7,468 to 30,541, the proportion of those taking the examination who passed fell from 76 percent to 51 percent. (According to Hartshorne, the foregoing statistics exclude homelands from the time they became independent: Transkei in 1976, Bophuthatswana in 1977, Venda in 1979, and Ciskei in 1981. To the figure of 30,541 passes in 1982, therefore, another 20,000 might be added. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations' *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1983*, only Transkei is excluded from these figures from 1981 on. The discrepancy illustrates the near impossibility of securing clear and comparable data given current homeland policies.) Even more devastating, the proportion of those (3,236 in 1978 and 6,336 in 1982) who passed with "exemptions" and thereby qualified for university entrance fell from 33 percent to 11 percent. Of those who passed the matric, more did so by squeaking through with low marks. And reflective of the enduring costs of Bantu education, only 521 of the over 20,000 who graduated from secondary schools in 1981 passed the matric in advanced physical sciences and 1,795 in advanced mathematics.

The Neglected Rural Majority. Rural South Africa confronts government with especially acute, if relatively unpublicized, educational need. Speaking with sweeping acerbity, Oscar Dhlomo, the minister of education for the territorially fragmented KwaZulu homeland of nearly 4 million people, recently described schooling in all the homelands as "glorified literacy campaigns parading as full-fledged educational systems."

In the cases of those homelands declared independent, hundreds of thousands of young people simply evaporate from the revealing columns of South African government educational statistics. Isolated from cultural contact with an external world that refuses to recognize them, the resource-poor "TBVC countries" (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei) thus risk seeing their children become the forgotten youth of South Africa. For the time being,

the South African government does continue to subsidize the general budgets (R553 million in 1982) and thus the modest educational systems of these areas, but in the guise of international assistance through the Department of Foreign Affairs rather than as an accepted domestic responsibility.

Similarly marginal and subject to neglect, nearly 500,000 rural Africans attend over 5,000 farm schools within "white South Africa." The government pays teachers' salaries and prescribes the syllabus but white farmers construct the schools, control admissions, and fix the level of education offered—a system unlikely to accelerate African advance.

Literacy Is Not Enough. To this array of daunting realities must be added the fact that for the foreseeable future the pressing educational need in economic terms will be for African manpower qualified in precisely the fields and at exactly the levels most difficult of attainment: manpower possessed of the highest technological and managerial skills.

Given low standards and high dropout rates in science and mathematics and the related fact that only about three percent of the enrollment in technikons, technical colleges, and universities combined is African, some analysts suggest that South Africa could have a shortage of up to 500,000 persons in these highest skill categories by the year 2000. Such analysis specifically projects a need to bring some 4,300 African, Asian, and Coloured "executives" into the labor market each year, almost 10 times the 1970-1980 average of 490 a year. There will be a comparable need for African university-trained civil engineers—a total of less than 20 have been produced to date.

On the other hand, projections show that as many as a million Africans with general educational experience through standard 8 to 10 (junior high/high school) may find themselves jobless, frustrated by educational preparation judged inadequate or inappropriate for the job market. In a report summarizing research that predicts just such an end-of-the-century predicament, Graham Watts of the Johannesburg *Sunday Express* (October 21, 1984) concluded despairingly: "The keys that unlock the door to the future were lost long ago."

New Financial Constraints. In February 1983, then-Minister of Finance Owen Horwood publicly estimated that realization of racial parity in schooling by 1990 (assuming no inflation) would require an annual education outlay of R5.2 billion, some 40 percent of the government budget. Independently, Dr. A. Roukens de Lange of the Institute for Futures Research has concluded that, in order to equalize per student expenditure among all racial groups (based on a 20 to 1 student-teacher ratio), the government would have to spend some 38 percent of its budget on education. Put in comparative terms, South Africa would thus have to expend some 11 to 13 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on education, about twice the amount spent by most Western countries. The finance minister seemed nonetheless to imply that parity was possible if "users" (meaning the private sector as

distinct from taxpayers) bore a significant share of the costs. And moves by the Transvaal provincial government to introduce fees in white schools suggest that at least a modest redistributive process may be accepted as a necessary corollary of the effort to expand black education.

Most political analysts, however, incline to the view that, given the state of South Africa's economy, the costs of achieving equal educational opportunity in the near term would be politically prohibitive. The government has set no target date for such an achievement. The goal of equality, researcher A. Roukens de Lange concludes, is fated to remain "a dream for the distant future." White South African parents may be willing to pay modest school fees but they show no sign of being prepared to pay taxes at a level that would substantially lower their standard of living or raise student-teacher ratios in white schools (18.2 to 1 versus 42.7 to 1 in African schools). They continue to decline to share underutilized school facilities, let alone to accept classroom integration, as means for achieving educational parity.

In the face of a serious economic recession, the government has continued to increase incrementally expenditure on African education (rising from R560 million in 1983 to R709 million in 1984, homelands excluded), while it has reduced expenditure in most other areas. But the South African economy is sorely constricted by the depressed price of gold, the devastating multiyear drought, inadequate savings reserves, regional military ventures (an estimated \$1.5 billion in direct military and related economic subsidies for Namibia alone), and an apartheid-bloated bureaucracy variously estimated at 390,000 to 600,000 and said to increase at a rate of 4.5 percent a year (80,000 added so far under P.W. Botha's stewardship). There is considerable doubt that such an economy can bear the costs of an educational reform that must include, for example, training, upgrading, and support for tens of thousands of black teachers.

In the absence of a new white political consensus that would alter priorities and permit a massive mobilization and reorientation of national resources, therefore, rapid qualitative change in black education has come to be seen as an illusory goal by Africans who earlier had allowed their expectations to be raised by proposals and discussions surrounding the labor of the de Lange committee.

Back to the Streets

It was within this context of fallen hopes accompanied by rising unemployment, living costs, and racial antipathy that South African students in 1984 once again mobilized in schools and universities around the country. By late 1984, the press was regularly reporting that over 200,000 students (at a given time) were boycotting classes, roaming the streets in rock-throwing bands, sparking violent demonstrations, and organizing for sustained action through the rival countrywide networks of the (multiracial) Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and the Black

Consciousness-oriented Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM).

Nothing the government said or did sufficed to normalize matters. In October 1984, when 7,000 troops entered the East Rand township of Sebokeng to "restore order" and distributed leaflets urging students to return to their classes, the boycott only intensified. At the beginning of the new academic year in January 1985, however, the government seemed to manage at least a punitive, if temporary, "last word." As African students streamed back to classes nationally, the Department of [African] Education and Training announced that stringent economic conditions would not permit it to repair the hundreds of schools burned, gasoline-bombed, or just window-smashed during the unrest of 1984.

The government can still contain, suppress, and punish African protest. But it seems less and less able to channel social forces to its own ends, and no one can predict how many students might be boycotting classes by October 1985. Minister of [African] Cooperation, Development, and Education Gerrit Viljoen could lament publicly that "unless the black population growth rate slows no social service for the black population will ever become comparable to those of other groups." But so long as the government has no legitimacy in African eyes and so long as urbanization and middle-class status have not yet offered sufficient socioeconomic incentives, the prospect is that programs to encourage family planning will be seen and rejected by many Africans as part of an overall effort to perpetuate white rule.

Some Positive Developments

The magnitude of need and the inadequacies of government policy acknowledged, it would be unrealistic to gainsay the significance of the uneven change that is, in fact, beginning to take place in black education. That overall expenditure on African education has risen by a factor of five since 1978 and the ratio of expenditure on white and African pupils has begun to drop (from 10 to 1 down to under 8 to 1) represents a relative gain.

It is even possible to read the statistics concerning matric examination results as encouraging if one views them over the span of the last two decades and hypothesizes that the recent drop in the proportion of those succeeding is largely a transitional problem tied to rapid expansion. In 1960, only 716 Africans took the matric, 128 passed (17.9 percent), and 28 earned university entrance (3.9 percent); in 1983, 72,168 took the matric, 34,876 passed (48 percent), and 7,108 earned university entrance (9.8 percent). In 1990, 29,000 Africans are expected to earn university entrance and in 2000 the figure predicted is 65,000.

Beneath these statistical shifts, moreover, lies a developing factor of enormous potential, the cumulative impact of independent black initiatives. A growing legion of voluntary organizations unsullied by collaboration within the official administrative system and ranging from local parent and student groups to na-

1. Student Enrollment^a in South African Universities

	English-language Universities		Afrikaans-language Universities		Ethnic Universities		All Universities		Percentage of Total	
	1980	1983	1980	1983	1980	1983	1980	1983	1980	1983
White	31,479	35,159	51,256	53,180	151	369	82,886	88,708	80.7	71.4
Coloured	1,247	1,642	129	342	4,005	4,567 ^b	5,381	6,551	5.2	5.2
Asian	1,858	2,675	47	61	4,908	5,588 ^c	6,813	8,324	6.6	6.7
African	734	1,547	54	140	6,954	18,994	7,742	20,681	7.5	16.6

a. Residential and commuter.

b. Of this total, 4,487 were at the University of Western Cape.

c. Of this total, 5,388 were at the University of Durban-Westville.

Note: The University of Port Elizabeth is categorized as Afrikaans-language. The University of Transkei provides no racial breakdown; its enrollment is tabulated as African.

tional organizations such as the Council for Black Education and Research is attempting to influence the trajectory of change in black education. By articulating interests, formulating priorities, and pressing demands from within the black community, these groups hope to realize informally some small measure of the influence on educational policy denied to them by virtue of African exclusion from the national political process.

Open Universities. In higher education, the initiative remains overwhelmingly in white hands, although increasing African demand (but not yet organized African leadership) is becoming an important catalyst at the university level. The tables on this page demonstrate the pace at which white universities are now opening their doors, African universities are developing, and African enrollment is for the first time becoming more than a negligible proportion of the total enrollment of residential universities and University of South Africa (UNISA) correspondence programs.

Participation by white institutions in the opening process varies widely. The Universities of Witwatersrand and Cape Town have undertaken to build solid academic support programs in order to improve the success rate of their growing number of African, Asian, and Coloured students (roughly 15 percent of total enrollment). It may be the faculty of the less renowned Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal, however, that is moving most imaginatively and deliberately toward the ultimate goal of converting a predominantly white institution into an open university with a majority of black students. With administrative support and some private seed money, it is pioneering in the development of special instructor-intensive introductory courses in "Learning, Language, and Logic." Along with extended efforts in remedial mathematics, these pilot offerings stressing reading and writing in English are being monitored by other institutions as potentially worthy of emulation. The inevitably increasing need for special funding promises to be a major concern.

By contrast, the language barrier will probably limit African enrollments at Afrikaans-medium institutions, such as Rand Afrikaans University, that have now

2. UNISA Enrollment (Correspondence)

	Number of Students		Percentage of Total	
	1980	1983	1980	1983
White	37,404	37,902	66.1	63.6
Coloured	2,822	3,150	5.0	5.3
Asian	5,261	5,892	9.4	9.9
African	10,687	12,680	19.0	21.3

3. Combined University Enrollment (Residential and Correspondence)

	Number of Students		Percentage of Total	
	1980	1983	1980	1983
White	120,290	126,610	75.7	68.9
Coloured	8,203	9,701	5.1	5.3
Asian	12,074	14,216	7.6	7.7
African	18,429	33,361	11.6	18.1

Data derived from South African Institute of Race Relations' annual *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, 1980 and 1983 editions.

declared themselves "open." Such enrollments may be further circumscribed by the persistence of racial prejudice. In a recent referendum at Stellenbosch University, for example, a majority of the 12,000-member student body (which now includes approximately 180 Afrikaans-speaking Coloured students) voted down a proposal to permit construction of a dormitory to house Coloured students on campus.

Vista University. Though laudable and promising for the long run, the gradual opening of white universities cannot possibly meet the soaring African demand for higher education. With this in mind, the government in 1981 created a new, more accessible form of higher education for urban blacks. Critics denounce it as a latter-day version of Bantu education, while enthusiasts hail it as an innovative breakthrough. It takes the form of a stripped-down (makeshift facilities, no sports or extracurricular activities), multicampus (five cities), live-at-home, inex-

pensive (R153 plus books for a nine-month term), job-oriented (teacher training and commerce) institution known as Vista University. Under a founding rector, C.F. Crouse, seasoned at South Africa's extraordinary "distance learning" university, UNISA, Vista adopted its own entrance examinations (no matric required) and designed a pedagogical format built around study manuals, discussion groups (instead of lectures), tutoring, and frequent testing. From the outset, Vista strictly regulated student organizations, and its relatively mature (average age mid-20s), highly dispersed, career-concerned students were largely nonparticipants in the school unrest of 1984.

As with all institutions of higher learning for Africans, Vista must compete at a disadvantage with predominantly white counterparts in recruiting faculty from a depleted pool of qualified academics. The severe scarcity of science instructors, along with the absence of laboratory facilities, has delayed development of a Vista science curriculum. Even so, the chair of the Vista University Council, RAU's J. P. de Lange, affirms that Vista has managed to attract able faculty from among young, mostly white, urban academics prepared to begin their careers in nearby black institutions (but not in the rural isolation of homeland universities).

Inevitably, Vista suffers from the stigma of being a white-run "apartheid institution" located but not based in (in the sense of being responsible to) the local community. The standards of its instruction and the value of its degrees have yet to be proven. But Vista has been undeniably successful in attracting and holding students. It began 1985 with 10,000. Its goal is 40,000 within 15 years.

Medical Education. Near to Pretoria and Ga-Rankuwa [township] Hospital, the government has established another all-black (except for postgraduate studies) institution, the Medical University of Southern Africa, or Medunsa. Well-equipped and competently staffed, Medunsa graduated a total of 125 African physicians in its first three classes (1982-1984) and thereby swelled the ranks of the 300-odd African doctors until then practicing in the country. It expects to graduate 600 medical professionals a year when in full operation—physicians (200), dentists, veterinarians, and medical technicians.

Along with the older African-Asian medical school at the University of Natal, Medunsa confronts dramatic need. According to government statistics, one in every 330 whites in South Africa is a physician, while the corresponding figure for Africans, including all homelands, is one in 90,000 (*Panorama*, October 1984). The country's first-ever African veterinarians are scheduled to graduate in 1987. But the cost, approximately R3,500 a year in fees and expenses, is too high for many Africans. It is reported that 30 to 50 of the 120 candidates selected for admission to Medunsa's initial class were unable to enroll for financial reasons.

The Homeland Universities. Leading African academics such as Rector A.C. Nkabinde and Professor

Absalom Vilakazi of the University of Zululand are trying to infuse African residential universities with a sense of identity, legitimacy, and achievement. But they confront enormous odds.

Internally, their institutions are painfully short of African faculty and staff. They must depend largely on available whites. The qualitative implications of this dependency must be seen in the context of the government's policy of installing universities in every homeland from QwaQwa to KwaZulu—seven so far. Classrooms and administrative offices are dominated by whites (mostly Afrikaners), many of whom resent not having made it into a more prestigious (white) university. Attitudes of paternalistic condescension suffuse the "bush" campuses, alienating students. At Fort Hare, for instance, students complain that faculty are indifferent to their needs, resort to reading aloud from texts in class, build their lives around mid-week shopping excursions to East London. Such negative atmospherics combine with high academic failure rates deriving from inadequate preparation and remediation to reduce students' perceived stakes in their studies. All this fosters a pattern of tension, protest, and dismissal that annually interrupts or terminates the educational careers of thousands of university students.

Externally, the propensity of politically insecure homeland administrations to overreact and intervene against campus critics and "radicals" further compromises efforts to develop these institutions into genuine universities. In 1984, Alan Pifer, president emeritus of the Carnegie Corporation, advised a University of Cape Town convocation: "If a society wishes to gain the full benefits of having an authentic university in its midst, it must respect the institution's independence and integrity." This basic truth was ignored by Chief Kaiser Matanzima of Transkei in 1984, when he destroyed hitherto promising prospects for the development of a serious, community-based institution by firing "subversive" faculty and closing the monumental edifices of the University of Transkei.

Among the homeland universities, only the University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO) has not been afflicted by chronic unrest and prolonged closures. Under the less intrusive, relatively enlightened administration of Bophuthatswana's president, Chief Lucas Mangope, UNIBO has purposefully recruited and sustained spirited faculty with a "land grant college" commitment to community development.

The importance of institutional independence to intellectual quality has been highlighted by positive response to the elevation of the (predominantly Indian) University of Durban-Westville and the University of Western Cape (UWC) to "autonomous" status in 1984. In a report headed "UWC has broken apartheid's shackles," the *Cape Argus* (October 13, 1984) welcomed the rapidly growing (33 percent increase in 1984), 6,000-student, formerly ascriptively Coloured, now voluntarily community service oriented University of Western Cape to the ranks of South Africa's open universities. Under founding Rector Richard van der Ross, UWC has invested heavily in computer-aided

remediation and instruction. It has attracted and upgraded an improving faculty that includes such notables as development economist Wolfgang Thomas (a victim of the University of Transkei purge), and supports a lively resource center for improvement of science and mathematics instruction in Coloured, African, and Asian schools of the Cape region.

The Universities of Western Cape and Durban-Westville have now accepted the daunting burden of raising some 15 percent of their funding from private sources, the price of being removed from direct government supervision. It is a price still beyond the financial reach of the homeland universities. Until material and political circumstances enable them too to realize *de facto*, if not *de jure*, autonomy, they are fated to function under an apartheid cloud.

If one intended consequence of increasing opportunities for residential university studies is the production of a pliant, apolitical black elite, government policy shows little sign of succeeding. Whether despite or because of severe administrative control over all political activity, student attitudes on African campuses are characterized by high levels of racial sensitivity and political awareness. A survey and analysis of student opinion at five homeland universities by political scientist Gerhard Töttemeyer (*The African University in a Divided Society*, Umtata, 1984) reveals a keen sense of self-identification with South African, not homeland, citizenship, and admiration for such African leaders as Nelson Mandela and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe. It also records generally unfavorable views of the Soviet Union and Marxist ideology. At the Universities of Fort Hare and Transkei in the Eastern Cape, on the other hand, the Soviet Union commands considerable respect for its known support of African liberation movements whereas the United States is widely criticized for "selfish accommodation" with South Africa's racial order. The high unemployment rate and the long tradition of black political activism in the Eastern Cape doubtless contribute to these differences.

Primary and Secondary Education. Africans who accept office within "apartheid institutions" such as township councils are increasingly subject to social ostracism and even physical assault as "collaborators." At the same time, some of their critics organized in voluntary associations have been winning government recognition and even some policy concessions.

Albeit in an uneasy, uneven, and awkward fashion, Afrikaner leadership has begun to accept the limits of coercive power and thus the necessity to consult and even to negotiate with community-legitimated black leadership. Just as white South Africa is accommodating to collective bargaining by burgeoning black trade unions, so too it seems resigned to dealing with organized parents, teachers, and students. But this interaction can continue and develop only if the political climate does not deteriorate to the point where respected black community leaders feel obliged to cut off contact and conversation with public authorities in order to avoid being labeled and treated as collaborators.

In the midst of massive school boycotts and protests in 1984, Minister of Cooperation, Development, and Education Viljoen acknowledged publicly that black resentment would persist until disparities between white and black education were largely eliminated. Pledging to do his "utmost to eliminate those disparities," Viljoen and his department began to respond to African calls for reform with limited concessions reminiscent of the government's response to the de Lange committee recommendations. He accepted COSAS demands for elected Student Representative Councils (SRCs) in secondary schools—though as a means for improving "communications," not for asserting student responsibilities (as per COSAS proposals). He proposed to create a pyramid of advisory councils that would draw upon voluntary school committees and parent and teacher associations to provide African input into educational planning and policy up to the "highest level." Viljoen and his colleagues also undertook to assure agitated African opinion that they were seriously addressing a wide range of grievances articulated variously by parents, students, and teachers—including excessive corporal punishment and teacher misconduct in the classroom, inflexibility of age limits placed on students, shortages of free and low-cost textbooks, and the paucity of well-trained African circuit inspectors and school administrators as well as teachers.

The value of working with or through black community organizations has also impressed itself on the private sector. A Mobil Oil Corporation seed grant of R450,000 recently sparked the creation of Teacher Opportunities Programmes (TOPS) to improve the quality of teaching in black schools. Unabashedly linked to the "survival of free enterprise in South Africa," TOPS, through more than a dozen regional centers, is now providing off-hours, professional training in substance (English, science, mathematics), teaching methods, and management skills to under-qualified teachers, over 1,300 so far. TOPS advertises for contributions from business, arguing that "private enterprise has a crucial role to play because we know that unless our Black pupils are given a solid foundation, we will be doing remedial tasks in education forever."

From the outset, TOPS has also sought to involve teacher associations actively within its programs. Illustrative of how such participation is being used to strengthen black organizational capacity, the TOPS-associated Center for Continuing Education of the University of Witwatersrand recently handed over implementation of the English language upgrading program for teachers in Soweto to the local African Teachers' Association. Such devolution gives black organizations something tangible to deliver to their members and broadens their administrative experience.

Indicative of African determination to initiate and not just participate, a new black organization called Educational Catalysts in Southern Africa (ECSA) headed by businessman Bogie M. H. Mabogoane

organized a November 1984 seminar in Johannesburg on the role of sometimes misdirected private sector assistance to black secondary education. Led off by the editor of the influential *Financial Mail*, the seminar bore in on how such assistance might be converted into a positive factor "for achievement and self-pride among pupils in particular and the black community in general."

With the objective of concerting the activities of the growing number of black educational organizations that have emerged in recent years, black leaders created an umbrella Education Coordinating Council of South Africa (ECCSA) in 1982. ECCSA endeavors to bring greater cohesion to the activities of such groups as (1) the South African Committee on Higher Education (SACHED; director, John Samuel), a multicentered purveyor of community-based education in basic skills, teacher upgrading, university preparation or "bridging," and "distance learning" (Turret Correspondence College); (2) the Council for Black Education and Research (chair, Es'kia Mphahlele, Professor of Literature, University of Witwatersrand), which focuses on cultural discourse, development of black priorities for educational development, and dissemination of both through a quarterly, *Education Press*, and monograph series, *Capricorn Papers*; (3) the Educational Opportunities Council (Bishop Desmond Tutu, chair of trustees, and Dr. Mokgethi B.G. Motlhabi, director), responsible for the selection and subsequent career placement of black graduate and undergraduate students studying for science, mathematics, economics, and other degrees under the South African Education Program (SAEP) in the United States (see "The American Role," below); and (4) other organizations such as the Zingisa Educational Project (Ciskei) and a black Teachers' Action Committee.

Under the leadership of the director of SACHED's Cape Town Center, Dr. Neville Alexander (an alumnus of Robben Island), ECCSA has set as its top priority for black education a national campaign to further the teaching of English as a (unifying) second language. Eschewing a separate budget or bureaucracy, ECCSA hopes to encourage black cultural unity, drawing inspiration from the cultural cohesion and enterprise that so effectively served the Afrikaner. In the words of one activist, "We must beat them at their own game." It also hopes to foster a concerted approach to issues of rural and preschool education, working closely with churches, teachers, and rural associations to build a broad community support base.

Parallel to these efforts to generate so much momentum behind black assertion in education that the government will be forced to come to terms with it, a major debate is emerging within black leadership over general strategy. In the "congress tradition" of multiracial, mass action, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and other United Democratic Front organizations argue for combining the elaboration of an all-encompassing Education Charter with widespread protest and boycotts such as those

which saw hundreds of thousands of school and university students forsake classes during much of 1984. Though costly to those whose educational careers are interrupted or cut short, this strategy is advocated as part of a larger campaign of open-ended pressure that includes mass meetings, labor stoppages, and boycotts of township elections. Its supporters hope that over time it will undermine government capacity and resolve.

A competing Black Consciousness-oriented approach known as the "Cape strategy" is attracting support among those such as the Azanian Students' Movement who believe that black interests will be better served by following a strategy built around precise goals, short but concerted boycotts, and less dramatic efforts to build up organization and generate leadership (see "A Guide to Black Politics in South Africa" by Steven McDonald in *CSIS Africa Notes* no. 36, November 5, 1984). This strategy, which draws its inspiration from experience in the Western Cape, would rely, for example, on boycotts of a day or two accompanied by alternative outside classes (e.g., African history) and student involvement in a range of community preschool or adult education projects. The objective: to demonstrate and build power but not to deprive students of a continuity of education.

Hapless black school teachers and principals are destined to be caught in the middle between these contending strategies on the one hand and government blandishments (higher salaries) and demands/sanctions on the other. Their conflict management and survival skills as well as their educational commitment will be sorely tested if their roles and circumstances are increasingly politicized.

The Political Core of the Issue

In the final analysis, the effectiveness with which Africans are able to capitalize on the intended and unintended opportunities inherent in the expansion of black education will necessarily be a matter of political as well as educational significance. The imaginativeness of leadership, appropriateness of strategies, and discipline of organization will factor heavily in determining the degree of success of black efforts to exploit the chinks in white armor, though realism suggests that education alone cannot provide sufficient black leverage to alter the configuration of power.

An observation recently made by columnist Flora Lewis about the Soviet Union is also applicable to the apartheid system: "Nobody can know the possibilities of evolution and reform in the . . . system, its ultimate limits, without testing and challenging it." It may be that the South African system and those heading it will prove resolutely and fatally inflexible and reactive. Or it may be, as Professor J.P. de Lange believes, that the basic trend in South Africa is toward "the devolution of power" and an expansion of private enterprise; that resourceful use of new technology—computers, video, educational television—will render a telescoped development of black education feasible even in a time of economic stringency; and that by

the time of South Africa's next economic upswing an increased number of literate homes and a sharp rise in skill levels will enable South African blacks to attain an unprecedented level of social well-being. In either case, the expansion of black educational opportunity cannot but test and challenge fundamental structures of the South African system.

Professor de Lange has implied as much in commenting to the press: "We are creating a time bomb if we go on providing education and don't create a situation in which that education can be used." A situation in which that education can be fully used must presumably be a peaceable one of high social mobility possible only in a context of white-black political accommodation. The achievement of such accommodation, therefore, becomes an ever more urgent necessity as black education develops. It will require white (as well as black) leadership marked by moral courage and vision.

The American Role

In 1981, a USSALEP-sponsored team of U.S. educators made a series of recommendations on the ways in which U.S. assistance might play an important catalytic role after concluding an in-country exploration of black education in South Africa. These recommendations focused on initiatives that emphasize promotion of social justice, seek maximum impact via multiplier effects, replicability, and validation, demonstrate sensitivity to community needs, and reinforce local projects and structures by channeling assistance through and to appropriate private associations. (For the full report, see John A. Marcum, *Education, Race, and Social Change in South Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.)

A growing number of creative private and public U.S. undertakings conform harmoniously with these principles. They include Rockefeller Foundation seed grants to a variety of community-generated educational projects; a multiyear USSALEP-Boston University workshop for black journalists; and Ford Foundation support for SACHED-University of Indiana collaboration aimed at establishing a year-long university preparation program for black students.

In a unique private/public partnership, U.S. university, foundation, and corporate funding (\$3 million a year) has been joined by bipartisan congressional funding (\$4 million a year) for the South African Education Program (SAEP), which functions on a basis of administrative collaboration between the Educational Opportunities Council in South Africa and the Institute of International Education in New York. Over 200 students were attending universities in the United States under SAEP in January 1985. After a longer than anticipated period of difficult and sensitizing exploration, it now seems possible that agreement may

also be reached upon an appropriate mechanism through which to provide AID-funded scholarships to additional hundreds of black students for university-level study within South Africa.

Other educational needs for which U.S. assistance might be effectively tailored include advanced studies and workshops for university and school administrators designed to enhance the independence and competence of their administrations; help in fashioning and implementing more imaginative programs for the advancement of black managers and executives within the private sector (including communication and negotiation skills); and substantial, multiyear funding for a diverse range of community-founded and -based educational programs, helping them to experiment with agendas, methods, and structures of their own making.

Wisely conceived, U.S. assistance can be congruent with black aspirations—that is, with the ardent desire of blacks for education keyed to the development of all dimensions of the human potential. As a catalyst, it need not imply long-term dependency, let alone the chimera of external salvation. For example, the first enterprising returnees from SAEP university studies in the United States have already formed an active alumni association with a self-help orientation. Carefully targeted and sensitively channeled, therefore, assistance to black education offers Americans a feasible and politically acceptable way in which to respond to the moral challenge of South African apartheid.

John A. Marcum, who served as Academic Vice Chancellor of the University of California at Santa Cruz from 1979 to 1984, headed a team of six senior U.S. university administrators who made an in-country exploration in August-September 1981 of the changing circumstances and prospects of South African higher education. The visit was organized under the auspices of the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program (USSALEP). The mission's findings are presented in Dr. Marcum's book, *Education, Race, and Social Change In South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

Dr. Marcum's best-known work is *The Angolan Revolution*, Volumes I (*The Anatomy of an Explosion, 1950-1962*) and II (*Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962-1976*), MIT Press, 1969 and 1978. His previous contributions to *CSIS Africa Notes* include "The Politics of Survival: UNITA in Angola," issue no. 8, February 18, 1983, and "Angola: A Quarter Century of War," issue no. 37, December 21, 1984. During his current sabbatical year, which he is devoting to intensive examination of the southern African scene, he has made visits to the Soviet Union, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and Angola.

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