SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY

AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Redefining Skills: South African Education in the 1980s

by

Linda Chisholm

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The South African education and training apparatus is clearly in a process of transition. Both the schooling and training of the black working class, in schools and on the factory floor, is receiving renewed attention. In 1980, four years after the Soweto uprising and in the midst of schools boycotts throughout the country, the state appointed the Human Sciences Research Council Commission of Inquiry into education, commonly known as the de Lange report. Through de Lange new forms of educational control and provision were explored and a full-blown attempt was made to renegotiate the racial component of state ideology in education. (1) The report itself has evoked intense conflict between sectors of the dominant classes as to how a future education system for South Africa should look. (2) At the same time, the period between 1977 and 1982 has seen a great expansion of technical and vocational education. Here the extent of capital's intervention represents a departure unprecedented in South African educational history. A dominant theme in the discourse surrounding these reformist initiatives has been that of 'skill shortages'.

These developments closely follow a deepening economic, political and ideological crisis, Since the mid -1970s the South African economy has been sliding into recession; it has faced mounting balance of payments difficulties, growing inflation, the limits of a white consumer market and high structural unemployment of blacks. In 1977, for example, inflation ran at 14% and has increased steadily during the ensuing years, showing no sign of abating by 1983. The real growth rate, which averaged 5 - 7% annually during the 1960s, was zero in 1977. Falling output in manufacturing and declining private sector

investment has been marked, while black unemployment has risen from 11,8% in 1970 to 21,1% in '98' to about 24% in 1982. (3) This has been accompanied by a steep rise in retrenchments of employed workers during 1982 and 1983. Black worker struggles reached new levels of organised militance, with strikes and work stoppages becoming the order of the day from at least 1973. The number of strikes, according to official figures, rose from 76 in 1970, involving 4 146 workers, to 274 in 1975 involving 23 396 workers and climbed to 394 in 1982 involving 141 571 workers. (4) Meanwhile the state faced mounting challenges from the urban black population. In education this was most vividly demonstrated in the 1976 uprising and the school boycotts of 1980 which spread to every major and even some smaller towns in South Africa. The collapse of colonial Mozambique and Angola and settler Rhodesia, and the increasing incursions and attacks by the African National Congress also compounded the perceived threat to its stability.

The transformation of the National Party from a populist movement into a party of the bourgeoisie (5) has meant that the reformist trajectory emabrked upon in 1977 with the appointment of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions of Inquiry into labour relations and influx control respectively, has seen the revival of a strategy rejected in the 1940s, namely the fostering of a settled, stabilised labour force as opposed to a migrant one. This involves the attempt to privilege and thereby win over a small number of blacks to the 'free enterprise' system through selective reforms while at the same time driving a deeper wedge between urban and rural workers, tightening controls over labour and continuing the vicious repression of those who resist.

Educational reform is crucial to the strategy of limited incorporation of small numbers of blacks. Education is a particularly sensitive and fertile area of state intervention since the desire for education and the frustration at the denial of both an adequate education and the fruits thereof has been a long-standing cause of bitterness. Reforms which appear to be real concessions could defuse significant areas of opposition, at least in the short term. The process, however, is not without its ambiguities or contradictions. While these apparent reforms are not mere 'cosmetic' changes, they are also implemented in a manner that leaves the roots of inequality in South Africa untouched.

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Commission of Inquiry:

Appointed by the state in 1980 at the height of nation-wide school boycotts, the Commission's chairperson, de Lange, reported in June 1981. The report proposed reforms designed to streamline and rationalise the existing education system. It also articulated a new meritocratic, 'non-racial', technicist educational ideology. With a brief to provide recommendations for an education system which would meet the manpower needs of South Africa and provide education of 'equal quality' for all population groups, the Commission recommended a system of formal (academic) education running parallel and 'interfacing' with a non-formal (vocational) education structure. The formal structure is to be composed of three tiers: pre-basic, basic and post-basic education. The non-formal and formal education structures are recommended to fall within a single education department as opposed to the racially divided departments of the present system.

Many of the recommendations concerning the structure of education as divided into formal and non-formal education appear to be based on the recommendations of the Technical and Vocational Education Subcommittee which advised as follows:

> The present general academic (sic) type of high school (for blacks: LC) should therefore in time develop into separate Secondary Academic High Schools or Secondary Vocational Schools, the latter being comprehensive and technical schools (6)
>
> and
>
> The majority of pupils require vocational training at school to enable them to enter the world of work. The minority of pupils require the development of academic skills with a view to continuing their academic training at tertiary level.... 50 - 80% of children in standards 5 - 8 receiving vocational education in future is in line with the manpower needs of South Africa (7)

Thus it is proposed that the majority be destined for vocational, job-specific education, while provision is made for a minority to receive academic, general education.

The financial provisions reinforce these aims. Whilst basic education (up to approximately age 12) is to be free, post-basic education is not. That is, at the point at which scholars are channeled either into academic or vocational schooling the financing of education becomes dependent on the social class of the parents. The cost of formal (academic) secondary schooling is shifted onto parents while that of vocational education is to be borne primarily by capital. Capital will also bear some responsibility for the provision of vocational education. The obvious implication of this is that working class students will be channelled into vocational/technical education.

Vocational education, moreover, can be undergone either in schools or on-the-job where it would be cheaper for capital to train workers. Thus vocational education remains relatively free, while academic education does not.

The implications of these provisions are as follows. Instead of being denied academic schooling, as in the past, as was largely the case in the Bantu Education system, academic schooling could now become a possibility for blacks as long as they can afford it. This is allowed for in the dubious principle of 'parental free choice' specified in the report which could allow parents to send students to expensive multi-racial private schools. The vocationalisation of schooling, however, would apply equally to black and white working class students. On the one hand, then, white working class scholars would no longer be protected by free secondary academic schooling, although they would still attend schools in 'white' areas. (This has clearly been recognised by the right wing of the National Party). On the other hand, an escape route is provided some black working class and petty bourgeois students. The majority remain where they were while an ideology of upward mobility and equality of opportunity, made possible by easing restrictions on the training of blacks, disguises the continuities between Bantu Education and present initiatives. Crucially, it also potentially removes at least some of the grounds for antagonism in the older system of Bantu Education.

Thus class location and internal mechanisms within schooling itself, such as elaborate streaming processes ('canalisation' in the jargon of the report), seem destined to propel the majority of black students into vocational and technical schooling and to provide the opportunity

of academic schooling for a few. In this way the de Lange report, in tandem with the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions of Inquiry, represents a part of the strategy adopted by the state in conjunction with monopoly capital to 'reform' racial capitalism through co-option of a small black middle class and increasing controls over the working class. Despite the uproar that ensued when it appeared that the government had rejected a report which the 'liberal' press claimed was a 'revolutionary breakthrough' in educational provision in South Africa, many aspects of the Commission's recommendations are being implemented. In particular, its recommendations concerning technical and vocational education have not been ignored. These will be examined later.

The HSRC Commission reported its findings in the context of a chorus of voices lamenting the shortage of skills in South Africa. The Commission itself saw one of its main purposes as addressing this question. The extent of the skills shortage was so great, it was claimed, that it could not be met by the white population which was already 'fully absorbed' in employment, nor by white immigration, which was not of a scale to keep pace with the demand. For economic growth to be maintained, it was intoned, education would have to be revamped to enable the necessary education and training of some categories of blacks. A mass of statistics about the precise number of shortages in each sector and the shortfall in black education qualifications was produced, flooding popular consciousness with its urgency. In the space thus created, plans for the restructuring of education were floated via de Lange, the provision of technical education was accelerated and industrial training programmes were

expanded. All these, it was claimed, would provide a 'higher' level of skill designed to meet the manpower requirements of South Africa.

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Major interpretations of the crisis faced by the South African state and capital have also placed this skills shortage near the centre of their argument. Among the most important of these are Saul and Gelb, 1981, Davies, 1979 and Sharp and Hartwig, 1983 (8). An attempt will be made to isolate the major tenets of a thesis that has emerged as conventional wisdom within the last few years.

Sharp and Hartwig, paraphrasing others, have argued that skilled labour shortages arose in South Africa during the 1960s largely as a result of 'the trend towards a rising organic composition of capital through mechanisation, reorganisation and rationalisation of the labour process to thereby enhance capital's national and international competitiveness'. (9) Changes in the labour process involved the 'progressive deskilling and increasing subordination of manual labour, on the one hand, (and) ... the creation of a minority of specialised supervisory and mental wage-earning places on the other'. Skilled wage-earning places have historically been occupied by whites and unskilled manual places by blacks; 'such a division of labour broadly accorded with the value and technical requirements of capitalist production', argues Davies, ' and with the political interests of the bourgeoisie or of particular bourgeois fractions'.(10) These shortages were exacerbated, it is argued, both by a shortage of whites and a racist education system which prohibited the production of adequately skilled blacks.

The 'potentially adverse effects' of shortages were, however, countered during the 1960s in the conditions of boom that prevailed. Shortages of technicians, supervisors and artisans in production were met by floating the colour bar; shortages of clerical, administrative and sales personnel in circulation were mitigated by the 'availability of large amounts of foreign investment capital'. (11) At the same time, to reproduce skilled labour power, the state began to place a major stress on vocational and technical education for whites as well as on white immigration. (12)

In the 1970s, 'conditions ... changed abruptly'. Declining profitability, due in part to reduced levels of foreign capital inflow and intensified worker struggles led to conditions which made it imperative for capital to seek modification of the racial division of labour. Shortages became acute. The previous means of coping were no longer possible. While the crisis of profitability forced capital to introduce new technology repeatedly to raise productivity, thus constantly exacerbating shortages of skilled labour power, the political and ideological dimensions of the crisis necessitated reforming at least some aspects of the reproduction of labour power.

In this context, so the argument runs, 'removing some of the more obvious at least of the various forms of discrimination and oppression affecting the black petty bourgeoisie (including job reservation and overtly racist barriers to "upward mobility") has become a major political imperative for the bourgeoisie ... (as well as) a major element in restoring the previous levels of capital inflow. (13) 'The only solution', argue Sharp and Hartwig,

to solving the problem of shortages of skilled labour power, '... lay in upgrading the qualifications of significant sections of the black population'. ('4)

While not denying that skill shortages of specific kinds might exist at particular levels at different points in time or that there is a distinct strategy on the part of the state and sectors of capital to build a black middle class committed to 'free enterprise', this article will seek to cast some light on a dimension of reformist strategies in education unaccounted for in the literature mentioned above. It will emphasise certain of the ideological dimensions of 'skill shortages' as employed in the South African context. ('5) These have largely been ignored in recent debate. The nature of the skills said to be 'required' is considered in greater detail and the social nature of the skills demanded is highlighted. ('6) The skills needed by certain sectors of monopoly capital, it will be argued here, are concerned as much with the 'moral and ideological preparation of new strata', with labour discipline and with the inculcation of the values of 'free enterprise', as with increasing technical requirements. As the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has written for England, and equally apt for South Africa, ' "good" worker attitudes are more important to employers than particular skill competencies, even though the latter may be in short supply'. ('7)

In South Africa 'good' worker attitudes have become imperative in the context of two factors of major importance. The first is that the reorganisation of capitalist production at a higher organic composition of capital has led not only to job-fragmentation,

the emergence of new technical and supervisory positions and increasing structural unemployment; it has also involved the 'reorganisation of the production process so as to ensure a real and extended control over the direct producer'. (18)

South Africa's particular pattern of dependent industrialisation, involving the importation of capital-intesive foreign technology, has both increased South Africa's dependence on the outside world, and necessitated raising the productivity of labour. Changes in the labour process are of some significance here. The use of capital-intensive technology has led, as mentioned above, to processes of job-fragmentation, deskilling and the re-skilling of others in, for example, machine maintenance. Accelerating technological change and corresponding deskilling and retrenchments, means that machine operatives and technicians are required to be both technically skilled and 'flexible' : flexible enough to adapt to different machines - or to accept their lot if retrenched. Along with the emphasis on a stable, flexible workforce is the importance attached to the mobility of workers.

Eddie Webster has also argued for the metal industry that a skills shortage has been used to undercut white craft unions by introducing black labour into semi-skilled and technical positions at lower wage rates than that paid to whites. The threat of a skills shortage, he argues, 'concealed an attempt to increase the productivity of labour', (19) ' .... a process of cheapening labour'. (20)

The need to raise productivity and extend control over labour has occurred in the context of the creation of

> conditions under which the 'indiscipline' of the working class ... began to manifest itself in organised form, for the inroduction of new technology meant changes in the imposition of the rule of capital at the point of production, on the one hand, and the creation of redundancies on a considerable scale on the other (21)

Increasing worker organisation and militance, as Davies points out, makes it increasingly difficult to extract surplus value through measures such as lengthening the working day; in this context, and given rising wages, other ways of extracting surplus value have to be devised: the nature of the worker's application to the job becomes of paramount importance. S/he has to be motivated, efficient and stable. Here the assertion of ideological control by capital over workers becomes critical. It is this tension between the need to maintain profitability and the need for different ideological controls over a changing kind of labour force that seems to be of crucial importance.

The second factor of major importance concerns the fact that schools in South Africa have failed to create ideologically acceptable school-leavers. Schools and universities, after a decade of near-silence, became key sites of resistance from 1969 with the emergence of the South African Students' Orgnisation (SASO) and the black consciousness movemement. While Bantu Education might thus have produced manual and semi-skilled workers in sufficient numbers for capital, it was also generating people with 'dispositions out of keeping with requirements' for a quiescent labour force.

From 1976 to 1981, with but brief intervals inbetween, these students mounted a sustained attack on Bantu Education, on apartheid and, more explicitly, in 1980 at least, on capitalism. On each occasion, albeit in different ways, they forged or attempted to forge links with workers. In 1976 the Soweto Students' Representative Council asked workers to support stay-aways, boycotts of consumer goods over the Christmas season and similar social actions. In 1980 students in Cape Town allied themselves with workers' struggles under the slogan, 'The workers are strong; our parents the workers are strong; it is only by supporting them that our struggle will be won'.(22)

The significance of this is not to be underestimated. The 1970s, as mentioned above, had seen an escalation of independent workers' organisation and militance, of strikes and stoppages, unprecedented in their number and scale. To their number, it was clear, would be added politically aware and highly militant school-leavers.

These issues, as much as a real technical shortage of skills, have shaped the manner in which the notion of 'skill' has been constructed. They have influenced the nature of some of the courses available in skills training, and have drawn into sharp focus the 'subjectivity' and hence the subjection of workers and students.

State Initiatives in Technical Education:

It might be argued that the extent of skill shortages can be guaged by the extent to which the state is providing technical training and in the greatly expanded role of capital in the provision of

education and training at all levels of production.

Indeed, technical education is receiving a great deal of attention. The Department of Education and Training (so-called in 1979 through an Act of Parliament replacing the Bantu Education Act of 1954 in nothing but name) has assigned a high priority to the provision of technical education for blacks within the past three years in urban areas. While this is not an entirely new departure, the scale certainly is.

Until 1980 the majority of these schools were in the bantustans. There were 36 for boys and 9 for girls, compared with none in the urban areas. In 1980, South Africa's first urban technical high school, Jabulani Technical High School, was built. At the end of 1982 a massive programme for transforming existing Bantu Education schools into technical and commercial high schools acting as feeders for technical colleges was introduced. While subjects such as history, a highly contentious subject in black schools, is being phased out in some schools, the rise of technical subjects in many others is noticeable. A National Technical Certificante now also runs alongside the standard Junior Certificate and Matriculation Certificate.

Courses at these technical high schools, designed to train black operatives and provide basic machine-orientations for technicians, include electrical work, motor mechanics, welding and metal work, fitting and machining and other trades. Schools existing specifically for girls provide gender-specific vocational training, preparing them 'for their future task as home-makers and also ... as workers,

particularly in the textile and clothing industries'. (23) In '981, 197 women students were enrolled in dressmaking, home management and secretarial courses at such schools. (24)

Where the schools do not yet offer technical courses, departmental training centres have been established to 'provide technical orientation to pupils in standards 5 - 8 as an extension of the normal school programme'. (25) At present there are 14 such centres in urban areas and 16 more are being planned.

The recent growth of technikons for blacks is also a new development. By '981 there were four in South Africa. It is envisaged that technical workers and black middle management, so-called High Level Manpower, be trained here. (26) Courses are offered in electrical, civil, mechanical and electrical engineering, 'focussing more on the "practical" than the "theoretical" aspects of engineering'. In-service training of already qualified personnel in labour relations is also seen as a vital task of technikons. (27)

Adequate teacher training is also encouraged, but perhaps not being realised, through upgrading black teacher qualifications and through offering new technical teaching diplomas. In 1981 alone the DET (Department of Education and Training) took 135 male and female primary school teachers, put them through an intensive one-year training course at Soweto's Molapo Technikon and placed them in eleven secondary schools in 1982.(28) The Urban Foundation, an organisation of businessmen committed to the creation of a black middle class through provision of housing facilities, inter alia, built a R4-million Teachers' Centre in Soweto in 1982.(29)

These changes are not introduced without problems, however. Their capacity to resolve contradcitions stemming from a crisis much deeper than that manifest in education is likely to be limited. In the first place, the training of scientists, technicians and engineers is undertaken in tertiary educational institutions, but access to such education is restricted. Not only are these facilities limited, but they are also racially segregated. While in some cases well-equipped, many such institutions are notoriously poorly staffed. Selection processes inside and outside of schools also ensure that only about 1%, if that, of the population get to tertiary education. The total enrolment for advanced technical training in 1981 among Africans, for example, was 547: 372 in the first year, 78 in the second, 62 in the thirs and 35 in the fourth. (30)

Secondly, unemployment is increasingly including larger numbers of black school-leavers. After another year of frequent cries for the training of skilled labour, the Star newspaper wailed at the end of 1982 that 60,000 black matric pupils 'face poor job prospects'.

Thirdly, while student resistance has not taken on the dimensions or forms of 1976 and 1980 these last three years, many of the more pressing grievances they responded to then remain unaddressed even now: overcrowded schools, authoritarian and hierarchical systems of control, mass failures of Junior and Senior Certificate examinees at the end of every school year, unexplained dismissals of 'political' teachers, inadequate curricula, etc. Continuing student organisation around these areas indicate that, thus far, the state has not made much headway in its aims.

Capital Initiatives in Training:

Far more significant, however, than the DET's involvement is the greater intervention into educational intervention by monopoly capital. Education and training has become, within the last ten years, a major private sector undertaking. So important is the range of these initiatves in education that Anglo American's Chairman's Fund was recently called 'South Africa's Other Government'. (31) More money from this fund is ploughed into education than any other area of its operations which include research, charity, and 'cultural and social development'. According to the newspaper report, the fund's committee 'considers that shortcomings in black education strain South Africa's social fabric more than any other factor'.

Unable, in part due to its fiscal crisis, and perhaps unwilling to provide the necessary educational facilities, but also with an interest in the ideological control of workers, the state offers tax rebates to employers to undertake training programmes. The importance of this socialisation for the state is indicated by the fact that 'training tax concessions are costing the country between R 100 - 150 million per annum'. (32) Although mining capital is excluded from tax concessions on training, their training programmes run into millions, and include literacy and numeracy programmes generally not undertaken by other companies since these are not tax-deductible. In taking over a domain that traditionally belongs to the state, intervention by capital represents an entirely new phenomenon in South African educational history.

Peter Kallaway (33) has indicated three forms that private sector involvement in education has taken. Firstly, there are those educational projects established and administered by independent trusts. These are initiated or directly assisted by private enterprise, in particular the large multinationals or mining groups or they are funded through the 'home' governments of those multinationals, eg. USA. West Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom. These programmes usually involve upgrading of various kinds; training in semi-skilled work, bursaries for blacks to study overseas, and the funding of commercial schools such as PACE College in Soweto. The purpose, as expressed by Vice-Principal and poet, Oswald Mtshali, 'is the creation of a highly qualified, motivated and employable student'. (34)

The second kind of private sector involvement which Kallaway identifies is represented by joint ventures with the DET. These include the running of technical high schools and teacher training colleges. Private enterprise usually provides the funds; the DET provides the buildings and often the curricula, as at the Soweto Teachers' Training College, opened in 1980.

The third form is that of in-service training. These usually involve border industry schools, private in-service industrial training schemes and public in-service industrial training centres. Here the DET provides financial aid and tax concessions of various kinds, while the industrialists provide the buildings, equipment and and material.

Restrictions on in-service training of black workers have also been eased quite considerably. Starting from about 1971, barriers to apprenticeship of so-called Coloureds and Asians were lifted and training opportunities for all blacks became marginally more available. In 1973 the government started establishing pre-service and in-service industrial training centres in urban African residential areas. By 1977/78 pre-service industrial centres were in operation providing more than 7 000 students with basic manual skills in woodwork, metal-work, welding and other trades. By early 1977/78 in-service training centres had also come into operation and had trained 1622 workers. In addition, 20 registered private ad hoc border industry schools for the training of factory operators were in operation.(35) In 1979 the Wiehahn Commission of Inquiry into Labour recommended that restrictions on apprenticeship training for blacks be lifted. This recommendation was accepted by the government.

Although the number of black apprentices remains miniscule,(36) the present scale of in-service training of black workers can be assessed by the fact that 150 000 workers had been 'trained' through 3 722 'approved' in-house courses run by small and large firms during the first nine months of 1982. Besides schemes run by employers for their own needs, private in-service training centres to which several employers send trainees ran 1 522 courses for more than 77 000 workers in 1982. (37)

This quantitative increase in training facilities for black workers in South Africa is matched by an emphasis on the training of blacks at all levels in industry. A survey undertaken by the University of the Witwatersrand Centre for Continuing and Adult Education in 1982

revealed that the mining industry, the chemical, clothing, furniture timber, paper, iron and steel industries and the Chamber of Commerce were engaged in training blacks at all levels. The survey showed a general pattern of in-service training for management, supervisors, technical and artisanal workers and operatives. Apart from courses designed for each category there are also 'specialist' courses. For example, Anglo American trains black workers for blasting certificates; other specialist courses include adult basic education in literacy and numeracy and industrial relations training.

Given this staggering quantitative increase and expansion of technical and on-the-job training and the greater intervention into education by the state and capital, it would appear that it is only the technical competencies of blacks that are in short supply.

A closer examination will reveal, however, that the 'skills' demanded by employers and the state are defined in terms of social dispositions as much as in terms of technical competence. The Wits survey cited earlier has indicated that industry sees a range of objectives being fulfilled by training. Most frequently cited were the need 'to improve productivity', 'to develop social skills especially in areas of communication', 'to assist in training personnel to perform better and to develop to fill higher positions'.

The importance of characteristics other than technical skills and qualifications were highlighted by the National Manpower Commission (NMC) on High Level Manpower (HLM), 1980. Citing research by the Human Sciences Research Council, the NMC noted that,

> the HLM of the country should not only have enough qualifications and knowledge, but should combine these with certain important personality traits such as a sense of responsibility, enthusiasm, initiative, tenacity and especially boldness(38)

The NMC stresses that this area suffers from a 'quality deficiency' and not a 'qualification deficiency', and that this 'leader group should be strengthened by training developments'. (39)

Recruiting blacks to management positions thus relies on their resocialisation into leadership positions. Continues the report,

> Economic development in an economically underdeveloped community awaits the emergence of NEW MEN (sic) of bold imagination and energy who have graduated out of their traditional society and are imbued with a spirit of enterprise, which they wish to apply in the economic field, preferably to build economic empires. For the rest, these men will have a strong urge to achieve, will work harder and learn faster than other people and are prepared to take risks. (40)

It is this 'leader group's' internalisation of the values, the principles and practice of 'free enterprise', that is the greatest concern here. It is a far cry from the conceptions which underlay Verwoerdian discourse in the 1950s and 1960s when it was argued that 'there is no place for him (the black) above certain forms of labour'.(41) in the European community the level of

The strategic necessity for a class of black middlemen in industrial relations was emphasised at the Technical and Vocational Education Conference by the Timber Manpower Services Representative:

> What we need is the appointment of educated and experienced blacks in management positions. They should be in a position to coomunicate with

> black workers - not only to convey the policy of management to them, but also to convey the attitudes, opinions and feelings of black workers to management (42)

Of these, as of black managers, are required identification with the aims of management - whatever these might be - and a commitment to resolving issues by negotiation rather than strikes or work-stoppages. The comment reveals two important points. The first is the clear evidence that is given of a 'breakdown in communication' between management and workers or, more directly, of increased management-worker conflict and heightened worker consciousness. The second is the manner in which management is attempting to regulate this conflict. By introducing blacks to personnel management and supervisory positions in order to 'monitor' workers, existing black nationalist ideology is exploited and utilised in attempting to neutralise worker discontent. At the same time greater class differentiation amongst blacks is promoted.

That partially politicised blacks ('educated and experienced') are appointed to such positions is also perhaps not accidental. It is these who need to be 'won over' to 'free enterprise' and whose insights into worker grievances are often perceived as more telling than those whose subjugation to, or identification with management is complete.

The research capacities of a range of companies and consortiums have been harnessed to develop courses inculcating capitalist principles and values. The National Institute for Personnel Research of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has developed a

particularly interesting and highly popular programme for supervisors and overseers called the ' 6 M Simulation Training Course'. The 6 Ms are: men, money, machines,materials, management, markets. According to Rautenbach, writing for the de Lange report,

> it uses models and artificial money to simulate in a concrete way the establishment and operation of a business in a free enterprise system. Its purpose is to give black overseers a concrete insight into the working of a component of a private enterprise system they are working in, since this experience and knowledge are not yet part of their culture or school curriculum (43)

Courses such as these are clearly linked to the overall strategy of ideological incorporation. Others, such as those run by the Manpower and Management Foundation of South Africa MMF(SA) can be seen in a similar way. The MMF (SA) runs about 50 courses covering supervisory and industrial relations, instructional training, communication and management skills. The latter include subjects such as 'Functions of the Supervisor' and 'Understanding and Motivating the Black Worker'.

The significance of these courses and subjects, in terms of the argument of the article, is that the 'skills' that are taught are far from neutral. This contrasts quite sharply with the images conjured up by the 'noise' of a skills shortage. The latter, and the way in which skills are dealt with by Davies and Sharp and Hartwig, imply that the skills being taught and learnt are purely technical. In practice, however, as can be seen from the above examples, the 'skills' that are being trained amount to political dispositions. Certain forms of skills training are thus

doing little more than socialising blacks into values which schools are patently failing to instil.

As far as operatives and technical industrial workers are concerned, it appears that curricula are being designed which would produce technically skilled workers who are simultaneously 'stable' and 'flexible'. 'Basic vocational skills' are provided for in the 'basic' phase of education defined by de Lange as the necessary period of schooling for potential workers. These skills would include literacy, numeracy and basic technical/vocational skills which can be built on outside of schools through vocational education. Technical vocational skills can be seen to replace the training in manual work of Bantu Education syllabi. Further machine-orientations are provided either in vocational schools (technical schools or technical centres) or in in-service technical training where, as mentioned above, skills such as welding and metal work, fitting and machining and electrical work, motor mechanics and repair work are taught. The 'career code' imbuing this form of training differs markedly from that for the 'NEW MEN'. Here the classic values of 'diligence, accuracy, punctuality, etc' - the values by which work-discipline is engendered - become applicable. (44)

No wider education is provided. No overall understanding of the work to be done, the industry of which it is a product, the society of which it is a part is developed - whether this be 'capitalist' in orientation or not. The skills that are taught here are narrow and limited to enabling the worker to relearn skills or competencies associated with maintaining machines. Thus a semi-skilled or skilled and 'flexible' worker is trained.

What emerges quite clearly from the above is that the skills that are demanded are not technical alone. What employers seem to be demanding and training, by contrast, can in practice be defined in terms of the long-term needs of capital as a whole, reflecting and repeating a pattern occurring in advanced capitalist social formations elsewhere.(45) What is being trained, or what training is directed at, is the creation, on the one hand, of a workforce committed to 'free enterprise' and, on the other, one that is both technically and professionally skilled and flexible, motivated and habituated to the machine. In short, it appears that what Frith has written for the English context is equally germane in South Africa:

> Employers are looking for a quality of "steadiness" that is not the same thing as skill but may be achieved by a process of "training". There has always been evidence that jobs with training made for more stable workers than jobs without and it now seems that employers are "skilling" jobs, adding "training" programmes as a form of work-discipline (46)

The attempt to wed workers to the 'free enterprise' system in a disciplined fashion occurs through both the form and content of training. It, however, also goes deeper than this. Through the Adopt-A-School Programme launched in mid-1982 through the Star newspaper, various companies and any interested bodies have been encouraged to project themselves as foster parents. By the beginning of September 1982, twenty schools in Soweto had been 'adopted', and a few had been taken up in the rural areas. 'Foster companies' involve themselves by funding, repairing buildings, providing libraries; in short, by becoming an active presence in the school. Editorialised

the Star,

> The programme is not just one of signing cheques. It is involvement and caring. It is also caring and concern. It is not paternalism, but vital partnership(47)

The purpose of the project, it was claimed, is to develop 'aggressive moderation':

> We hope that it will become a campaign for upgrading the entire quality of life, for creating just that opportunity on which our future security and well-being depends (48)

There is a recommendation in the Technical and Vocational Education Subcommittee of the HSRC Commission of Inquiry into education which sounds remarkably similar to this project:

> The most practical solution (to the expense to the state of training skilled workers) appears to be the establishment of a private educational organisation(s) ... The purpose of this body would be to funnel the contributions f om industry to establish 'model' vocational schools in different communities who want these schools. The schools would be planned to meet the urgent needs of industry(49)

Thus capital comes to be perceived as a beneficent agency, not antagonistic to the needs of the people, schools are tied more closely to the interests of particular industries and the process of co-option is begun.

Worker on-the-job training plays much the same role. Even when it is not 'industrial relations' per se that is taught, but, for example, grading systems and how they should be evaluated, workers are 'involved' with a management hierarchical ethos.

While these efforts represent an outcome and partial resolution of the conflicts of the '970s,, they do not, however, represent an overhaul of the education apparatus nor do they signify that the battle for the 'hearts and minds' of the people, whether they be 'target groups' or not, has been won. Educational reform always takes place within a given balance of class forces and constantly shifting class alliances. In South Africa new state-capital projects which propose strategies for the incorporation and stabilisation of specific sectors of the black community represent a major challenge to the class alliance which has historically constituted the National Party since 1948. In particular, both the white working class and sections of the petty bourgeoisie appear to be re-aligning in the face of what is considered to be an attack on their interests.

The effects of a combined strategy by the state and capital to train blacks for 'skilled' positions do represent a major attack on white working class organisation which has managed to secure and define for itself certain areas of competence-knowledge. The white working class, holding a monopoly of skills which has gradually been eroded by fragmentation of skills and the introduction of blacks to new positions at reduced wage rates, responded in different ways. Eddie Webster has argued for the metal industry, three engineering unions opened their membership to Africans. The organisation of black workers has thus been an outcome to some extent of restructuring of the racial division of labour. One the other hand there has been a significant shift of white working class cupport to the

Conservative Party opposing the National Party on the grounds of its 'liberalism'.

Equally important is the new petty bourgeoisie, techers, academics, ministers, civil servants, etc. The latter appears to be particularly threatened by loss of control over the educational apparatus. This was most clearly demonstrated during 1982 at the Akrikaner Volkskongres on education. Organised by Afrikaner academics, it provided a forum for the response of the 'new' petty bourgeoisie to the reforms proposed by de Lange. The rhetoric of the 'kongres' clearly rejected proposed changes and reasserted a Christian National Education discourse over that of the modernizing de Lange report. Nonetheless, significant proposals were passed which indicated acceptance. This appears to have been the result of sophisticated stage-management by the organisers of the conference, for shortly thereafter Afrikaans teachers began to organise an alternative power base. The Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging, powerful Afrikaans teachers' body in the Transvaal province, has vocally distanced itself from the National Party and the de Lange proposals; a new Christian National Parent Teacher Association has been formed. It seems that while these groups are conscious of their powerlesness now in the formulation of national policy, they are aware that mobilising their forces might provide some leverage and basis of strength from which to organise opposition in loca contests of power and control. (50)

On the other hand, English-speaking teacher organisations have accepted de Lange's proposals, while the new non-racial National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), formed in 1980, has not only rejected it on some of the grounds spelt out in the critique of de Lange in this article, but have also begun to organise teachers around both

conditions of work and the need for 'a democratic education in a democratic South Africa'. The position of official black teacher organisations has been unclear. While some officials of these organisations participated in and welcomed the recommendations of the HSRC Inquiry, they contiue to voice opposition to apartheid and the inequality of opportunies between black and white. Student organisations, on the other hand, have seen de Lange as part of the current dispensation, as a mixed package of reform and repression, and as not substantially removing any of the causes of inequality in South African education.

Clearly an analysis and description of the purposes of ruling class strategies in education can give no indication of their outcomes. Indeed, these are mediated by a host of other factors. As far as schools are concerned, some of these have been suggested, although by no means all. Where factories are concerned, the success of management training programmes is often mediated by the strength of independent unions in particular areas. Where these unions are active, union education programmes have been begun; their purposes are often diametrically opposed to those of management. Where they are strong, it also appears that management training programmes are treated with caution, and sometimes suspicion. Similarly, the existence of popular oppositional ideologies within black communities could act as a counter-weight to the attempts of employers to win their allegiance.

Conclusion :

Reform in education is thus a crucial means in the attempt to win the 'hearts and minds' of blacks. Through it, limited upward mobility, facilitated by the restructuring of the racial division of labour, comes to be seen

as a possibility - if not a reality. Through the same process, belief in the apparent benefits of 'free enterprise' is fostered. Failure to make it in such a system, where education and training are made available to worker and personnel manager alike, must be seen to lie in the individual and not the system. The importance of expanding educational provision and promoting an awareness of the extent of new intiatives in education is vital in pulling the carpét from under the feet of opponents whose critique of apartheid rests on its denial of equal opportunities alone, and especially of education as a means of achieving these. The old shibboleth of the incompatibility of capitalism and apartheid is perpetuated.

The skills shortage, irrepsective of whether there is an actual shortage or not plays a powerful part in negotiating the discourse of legitimation. It appears to be used as a rationale for brining about changes which cannot be brought about directly since various class interests are thereby threatened. These changes are nevertheless essential in securing the support of certain blacks and in legitimating continued exploitation of workers, albeit under different conditions. They partly involve the recruitment through education and training into management and middle level supervisory, technical and maintenance jobs of small numbers of blacks and the training of technical industrial workers into work-discipline. Inequality at the workplace and outside remains, as does inequality in both the provision and access to schooling of different classes and races. An egalitarian appearance, however, is created through the metaphorical use of education and 'skill shortages'.

The skills shortage is thus partly a metaphor through which consent to restructuring is won. It is part of a sophisticated attempt to

negotiate a new 'common sense' about education, one which renders obsolete the discourse of Bantu Education and makes possible the ideological incorporation of sectors of the black population. It is used to rally all forces, right and left, to the 'national interest' which is, again, support for 'free enterprise' as against those who attempt to 'destroy' it.

It also becomes clear that the essential component of the 'skill' which certain forms of capital are demanding are social and not technical. The purpose appears to be as much to intensify ideological controls over workers and wed them more firmly to capitalist values as it is to provide for South Africa's manpower requirements.

An explanation which attempts to understand restructuring in South African education through recourse to a simple understanding of skill shortages fails to come to grips with the challenge posed to capital by workers and students during the 1970s. In particular, technicist interpretations underestimate ways in which the political and ideological conditions necessary for continued capital accumulation are reconstituted along with economic and political reforms; in short, how processes of legitimation for altered conditions of exploitation change, and how this renegotiated legitmation takes place and is modified in the context of already-existing class struggles.

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For a rather less economistic discussion of some of the issues dealt with in this article, see the chapter by CHISHOLM, LINDA and CHRISTIE, PAM (1983) in SARS(ed) Crisis and Response: Restructuring in South Africa (Ravan Press, Johannesburg)

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9. Sharp and Hartwig, ibid, p. '9
'0. Davies, Ibid, p. '82
'1. Ibid, p. '85
'2. Sharp and Hartwig, p. 2'
'3. Davies, p. '9'
'4. Sharp and Hartwig, op cit
'5. A considerable body of literature and debate has developed around the question of whether there is a skills shortage in South Africa or not. Charles Meth, for example, has argued that there is no crippling skills shortage, and that the apparent extent of the skills shortage is but a 'smokescreen' for the attempt to co-opt a black petty bourgeoisie. See in particular METH, CHARLES, 'Trade Unions, Skill Shortages and Private Enterprise', South African Labour Bulletin, 5 (3) and METH, CHARLES ('98') 'Shortages of Skilled Labour Power and Capital Reconstruction in South Africa' African Studies Institute Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand. While Meth's argument is suggestive and a useful corrective to skills shortage hysteria literature in South Africa it also begs the question of why training is being undertaken on the scale that it is (see later)
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45. This is not completely accidental. De Lange has spent some time in England studying the Manpower Commission's training programmes, especially that of FE.
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