

THE SCHOOLING OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS  
AND THE 1980 CAPE TOWN STUDENTS' BOYCOTT:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

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## ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory, and predominantly empirical, study. Its first part - informed theoretically by an historical materialist perspective - presents an interpretative probe of aspects of the development of the pre-tertiary schooling of Black South Africans in relation to the region's penetration by colonialism and the rise of industrial capitalism. Data for this part were drawn from primary documentary, as well as secondary, sources.

What schooling involves in practice - including, but not co-extensive with, the plans of policy-makers - is conceived as the outcome of interaction between involved parties within a shifting structural setting which conditions, where it does not determine, the constitution and actions of such parties as well as the processes in which they participate. This conception is reflected in the study's focus on Black people's resistance to schooling in specific forms. Particular attention is paid also to the educational ideology of the different parties concerned with schooling in relation to their respective social locations and concomitant material interests. On its own, the first part of the thesis is primarily an exercise in empirical and conceptual reconnaissance of under-explored terrain, intended to provide information and analytic experience for further research and theorising.

The second, and major, part of the thesis presents a detailed dissection of a nodal episode in the contemporary history of Black schooling in South Africa, namely the class boycott of 1980. The data for this part were derived from in-depth interviews combined with the use of primary documentary materials.

The course taken by the boycott beyond the boundaries of Cape Town is not documented in any degree of detail, nor is, within those boundaries, what transpired in relation to African schools. Much deeper is the description of what occurred during 1980 in and around the Coloured schools of Cape Town. The study penetrates far into the diversity of trends, processes, episodes, interpersonal encounters, organisations, objectives, demands and interests which collectively

constituted the boycott as a complex social whole. The account offered, represents the product of a deliberate attempt to be as non-interpretative as possible. As documentation, it constitutes an empirical contribution to a side of South African educational history which has barely begun to be written and, indeed, to South African political history.

Juxtaposed, the two parts are mutually problematising. Juxtaposed, they draw attention to levels of social and educational process and practice which tend to be overlooked by analyses developed in broad historical, or structural, contexts. They draw attention, further, to some of the factors which, while not necessarily apparent in events such as are detailed by the second part, are needed to render those events intelligible. The two parts in juxtaposition demand that people's interventions in educational process from below be taken as seriously as are the structural and other historical constraints within which those interventions are made.

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Research, such as is reflected in this study, is undertaken because, in the view of a researcher, it is intrinsically worth doing. It is completed, however, mostly because the researcher has time and stamina.

My stamina may well have been found wanting had I not had a reason for completing the thesis over and above my belief in the value of its contents. My wife, Pearl, my son, Timothy, and Abigail were such a reason. This is for them and for all the other little big people of Tim's and Aby's generation.

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May it all have been worthwhile: may the production of this academic treatise be more than an end in itself.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the text of this thesis.

AAC	All African Convention
AEM	African Education Movement
ANC	African National Congress
Anti-CAD	Anti-Coloured Affairs Department Movement
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
AZASO	Azanian Students' Organisation
BAD	Bantu Affairs Department
CATA	Cape African Teachers' Association
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
CPA	Cape Provincial Administration
CPC	Coloured Persons' Council
CRC	Coloured Persons' Representative Council
CTPA	Cape Teachers' Professional Association
DCR	Department of Coloured Relations
DEIC	Dutch East India Company
DET	Department of Education and Training
MIRGE	Mowbray Inter-Race Group
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGS	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk
PAC	Parents' Action Committee
PESCO	Port Elizabeth Students' Council
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
PTA	parent-teacher association
PTSA	parent-teacher-student association
PWD	Public Works Department
SACOS	South African Council on Sport
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAP	South African Police
SRC	students' representative council
TAC	Teachers' Action Committee
TATA	Transvaal African Teachers' Association
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town

UTASA United Teachers' Associations of South Africa  
UWC University of the Western Cape  
WEPCOS Western Province Council on Sport  
WPGWU Western Province General Workers' Union

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

The year 1976 saw Black South African students spark off a nationwide uprising. Conceivably, conditions at the time were such that it could equally well have been Black workers who took the lead in engaging the regime. Possibly, the initiative could have come from the ranks of those most oppressed and exploited amongst South Africans, the Black women. The historical facts remain that the uprising was led by students from the segregated schools of township and countryside. While the issues at stake were broadened, educational demands continued to be emphasised. The schools remained the organisational base even when the frontline was on the streets. The students remained a central - albeit not the most powerful - force. Never before had the demand for a unitary system of free and compulsory schooling been so forcibly put forward on so broad a base. Once more in 1980, tens of thousands of Black students rose from their desks to demand democratic, non-racial, free, compulsory schooling for all the youth of a liberated, single South Africa. For months they boycotted their classes before returning with the commitment to continue their struggle in the classroom. Meanwhile, employers have been bemoaning an increasingly acute shortage of skills in the labour market. Their cry has been for more Black schooling and technical training. What sense is to be made of all this? There is such certainty about schooling's significance. Yet, what effects do the processes which constitute it have on whom? Who benefits from which ones and under what conditions? What really needs changing? This study does not answer these questions but it arose with them out of the same situation.

Sociology of education has problematized what is to be taken as education. What constitutes 'education' is not a matter of mere definition. There is nothing necessary about any content which the concept of education might be given. It shares a territory with concepts such as socialisation, learning, training and schooling. The relation in which these concepts stand to one another may be variously theorised but the boundaries around whatever content each is given, remain permeable. For the purposes of this thesis, education will be taken as that part of the process whereby people are fashioned for membership of a particular society which involves the

transmission of cultural information, the inculcation of attitudes, ideas and values, and training in technical and social skills. Education takes forms which vary through history and from one society to another. The predominant form taken by education in the 20th century has been that of schooling.

The general theoretical concerns underlying this thesis revolve around how to conceptualise the structures, relations and processes within schools and the schooling system, what their connection is to the social - including economic, political and ideological - context of which they are a part, and what determines them. The general empirical concerns of the thesis are with the pre-tertiary schooling of Black South Africans. The form taken by the thesis is that of an exploratory - and predominantly *empirical* - study. The first part of the thesis traces the development of Black schooling in sweeping historical contours. The second, and major, part presents a detailed dissection of a nodal episode in its contemporary history, the 1980 boycott of classes by Cape Town's Black students.

The view in the first part is from the vantage of an eagle which soars over time apprehending the movement of historical change, how features of the social landscape stand as big and small in relation to one another and where they are respectively situated, while its selective eyes pick out periodically a particular prey. The view in the second part is through the near by eyes of a fly which settles indiscriminately on all in its restricted world. Valuable as the lofty vision of the eagle can be, it is so only if it can account for life on the ground as viewed by the lowly fly. While structures and historical changes in terrain may be visible to the eagle, from on high the world can appear deceptively still and even void of people. The fly is at home amidst the buzz of people in interaction and through its sticky feet can sense the very texture of social life. The point in presenting two such varying views together is not simply for their cumulative content, but that, juxtaposed, the proud eagle might be brought down a peg or two by the puny fly.

The first part of the thesis is an interpretative probe of aspects of the development of the schooling of Black South Africans in relation to the process of colonial conquest and the rise of racist industrial capitalism. It does *not* present itself as a comprehensive survey of historical changes

in educational practices. Particular attention is rather paid to the educational ideology of the different parties concerned with schooling in relation to their respective social locations and concomitant material interests. Inevitably, treatment of so expansive an historical canvas is extremely selective. E.P. Thompson calls a 'model' that which determines what is selected and what is discarded, and warns of the ease with which it can be misused.

'A model is a metaphor of historical process. It indicates not only the significant parts of this process but the way in which they are interrelated and the way in which they change. In one sense, history remains irreducible; it remains *all* that happened. In another sense, history does not become history until there is a model: at the moment at which the most elementary notion of causation, process, or cultural patterning, intrudes, then some model is assumed. It may well be better that this should be made explicit. But the moment at which a model is made explicit it begins to petrify into axioms. Nothing is more easy than to take a model *to* the proliferating growth of actuality, and to select from it only such evidence as is in conformity with the principles of selection.'

'A further danger is that a model, even when flexibly employed, disposes one to look only at *certain* phenomena, to examine history for *conformities* whereas it may be that the discarded evidence conceals new significances.' (Thompson, 1965 : 349 - 350)

The dual approach of the present study is an inquiring response to dangers such as Thompson identifies.

The second part of the thesis recounts the course of the 1980 students' boycott and describes in relative detail the actions of people who were in one or other way involved with the class boycott as it was conducted in, specifically, Cape Town's schools under the Department of Coloured Relations (DCR). The attempt is made to be analytic only in the sense that an anatomical dissection is analytic. The latter presupposes an ability to cut through the layers of a body without disfiguring what still is to be studied and understood. It does not depend on knowledge of every part exposed in the process. The dissector can lay bare organs even without names for them and without any interpretation of how they are related to one another. Dissection of a social situation presupposes a sociological sensitivity to people, politics, social process and what there might possibly be to uncover. However, as with the anatomical dissection, it does not depend on either a preconceived, or an *ex post facto*, analysis of what is discovered. The

description in the second part of the thesis represents the product of a *deliberate attempt to be as non-interpretative as possible*. As well as being offered as an empirical contribution to South African educational history, juxtaposed with the historical interpretation in the first part, it draws attention to levels of actual social process which tend to be overlooked when developing an analysis in a broad historical, or structural, context. As such, it might stand as a silent challenge to analysis of the sort represented in the first part of the thesis. Furthermore, it exemplifies the challenges awaiting a sociology of South African education.

There is one aspect of the relation in which the two parts of the thesis stand to one another on a substantive level which calls for clarification. Although there is nothing in this presentation of the study's conception which would lead to an expectation that the focus of the first part should be on Coloured schooling, so set has the South African mind become in the categories of colour, which subdivide the society's subordinate population, that, together with possible preconceptions concerning a conventional case study - which the second part of the thesis is not - a reader may have such an expectation nonetheless. The first part of the thesis is not intended as an introduction to the background of the 1980 boycott in any immediate sense. It does not attempt to track the specific antecedents of the actions of Cape Town's Coloured students in that year. To this extent, the two parts are relatively discrete. However, relevant as the distinctive histories of African, Coloured and Indian schooling may be in accounting for some of the ways in which Black schooling as a whole is differentiated, in terms of the concerns of the present study it is those aspects of African, Coloured and Indian schooling, which they share and which differentiate them collectively from White education within the overall system of segregated schooling, that are of most significance. At the same time, taking Black education thus as a whole, it has been dominated - if only through the sheer weight of numbers and the strategic political importance of all matters affecting the position of African people - by the schooling of Africans. Furthermore, Black people's resistance to schooling *per se* and to particular forms of schooling, which constitutes a major theme of this thesis, has been predominantly manifested in African schools and not in Coloured or Indian schools. While centre-stage in the second part of the thesis is held by students classified Coloured, the foregoing explains the relative emphasis on African schooling to be found in the first part.

The theoretical framework, which is employed in the first part of the thesis, differs markedly from the perspectives which have informed most previous writings on Black education. Up until very recently, the concern had, in any case, never been with why the schooling of Black South Africans had developed in the way that it had. Its development has been presented, for the most part, as the unproblematic outcome of the policies of Church and Government authorities. Such histories have had no place for parties other than the policy-makers themselves or for factors other than the 'purely educational'. They have not situated the schooling system in its social surroundings. Relatively exceptional were those pieces which condemned Bantu Education as an anti-educational attack on Africans, politically inspired by Whites' racist desire for domination. Explanation by reference to an ideology alone, however, remains itself ideological so long as it fails to pose, but begs nonetheless, the question of why a particular ideology held sway when it did and why it was translated into the policies and practices which it was and not others. Over and above the inadequacies of such explanations which were not explanations, they portrayed Black schooling as a weapon which those in control of the government could wield to wreak whatever damage they willed on the minds and life-chances of African children.

The analysis in the first part of this thesis is theoretically informed by an historical materialist perspective. The thesis does not, however, pretend to present an analysis which is 'adequate'. It is primarily an exercise in empirical and conceptual reconnaissance of under-explored terrain intended to provide information and analytic experience for further research. The tenor of the thesis is, therefore, tentative throughout. The study does not set out in a spirit of arrival.

To avoid misplaced expectations, it is important to dissociate the thesis from certain aspects of what for many seems to have come to be connoted by the label 'Marxism'. Thus, as a generic term, Marxism is often associated with the notion that there needs to be - or that there is necessarily - a link between historical materialism as a theoretical framework for understanding aspects of social reality and particular political practices. It tends to be associated also with *belief* in the *truth* of historical materialist theories. There is a chauvenism in this more characteristic of religion than of science. If it is dialectical, it is

surely only in some Hegelian guise. Such reverence before ideas runs counter to the ever-sceptical spirit of sociology and cannot but become stultifying to scientific advance. Finally, if historical materialism is understood as a metatheoretical framework in terms of which particular concepts and theories can be developed, particular research can be conducted and particular analyses made, using historical materialism to inform investigation does not involve absolute commitment to any *particular* concepts or theories. The term Marxism, however, can often be taken to connote precisely such absolute commitment to the whole bag of concepts classically strung to the Marxist tag.

What might be read as a lack of theoretical sophistication in the first part of the thesis is - hopefully - a reflection not so much of what it might seem to be as a refusal to apply uncritically conceptual orthodoxies like formulae which are assumed to make sense of the real world even if the processes involved are obscure. Most notable for its omission from this thesis is the concept of contradiction. Contradiction has a central place in dialectical logic. Does the concept of contradiction have any place in the real world, however? Does it have any more purchase there than the categories of formal logic? If, as is so often the case, 'contradiction' is used to refer to a conflict or to countervailing forces, then let such be thus more specifically characterised. If there is a philosophical rationale for application of the concept of contradiction to the real world, what is explained by attributing the source of, for instance, 'resistance', to a particular contradiction? Unless the mechanisms whereby the contradiction results in resistance can be identified and, assuming that even contradictions are not invested with magical powers of determination, nothing is explained. It is suspected that the contradictions conceptualised in certain structuralist theories are, in fact, merely those theories' internal contradictions transposed onto the real world.

Historical materialism is a vital antidote to interpretations of history as the outcome of ideas executed by 'great individuals'. Its use has, however, had serious side-effects. One of them is that instead of just removing the 'great individuals' from centre stage, reducing the monologue of ideas, and letting the play proceed, the stage is cleared of actors altogether and swept clean of ideas and initiatives. The play is reduced to the props. Society is reduced to a set of structures.

Creativity is excised from the plot. The 'great individuals' are found to have had understudies in the form of the 'great structures' which now step into an equivalent historical role. It seems to me that such a scenario cannot but mystify society. The fact is that society is constituted by people. People are not puppets who can only react. Human history is testimony to a species' enduring capacity to challenge the constraints on it. People's actions can have efficacy. Furthermore, even ideas are more literally than figuratively immaterial. Such a position need be neither idealist nor voluntarist. But closure is foreign to a scientific approach - there must be openness at least to the possibility of people's actions and ideas being efficacious, along with a preparedness to perceive them as such if they are.

What schooling is about in practice - including, but not co-extensive with, the plans of policy-makers - is conceived in the first part of the thesis as the outcome of interaction between involved parties within a shifting structural setting which conditions, where it does not directly determine, the constitution and actions of such parties as well as the processes in which they participate. An important manifestation of this approach is the attention devoted to Black people's resistance to schooling *per se* and to particular forms of schooling. However, such recognition as is given in this thesis to the role of resistance must be distinguished from the propagandists' romanticised representations of resistance, along with anything allegedly authored by 'the people', as 'progressive'.

The second part of the thesis is informed, not by the theoretical framework employed in the first part, but by what was characterised above as a sociological sensitivity. The latter is inspired by sociology's fundamental interest which is to understand why people, their attitudes and actions are as they are, how they are differentiated, and why they are differentiated not only at the level of individuals but also in social categories and classes and according to often pervasive social patterns. The concern is to understand the social structures and constructions which condition all social processes. Sociological sensitivity starts from systematic scepticism of all that seems on the surface, or is said, to be the case. Related to the latter is a rigorous irreverence towards anything anybody assumes, whether it be on authority or as orthodoxy. Sociological sensitivity leads the researcher to look at much that most see past as well

as to see through what most do not look beyond. Furthermore, sociological sensitivity makes possible a level of objectivity which would be otherwise unattainable in a study such as this. Objectivity is not achieved in any way equivalent to that in which sterility in an operating theatre is achieved. To assume that social researchers can 'wash up' as surgeons do before an operation is to assume that political positions, ideology, values, and subjectivity are like germs and bacterial whereas, if they are analogous to anything in the operating theatre, it is the blood of the patient. It would be presumably a less messy and perhaps more precise procedure if patients were drained of all their blood for the duration of operations. However, surgeons' concern is with patients and not corpses. They, therefore, have no option but to get their hands into the pulsating bloody mess that is a living body. Similarly, social researchers have no choice but to get their hands into the mess of political positions, ideology, values and subjectivity which course through every level of social reality. There is no neat, automated system for controlling and containing them all - the social researcher has to cope with them in ways no textbook can teach. Objective representation of social process has to be pieced painstakingly together via procedures which draw together the researcher's general acumen, knowledge of relevant background information, capacity to identify appropriate sources and 'feel' for what information to elicit from whom, ability to appreciate another person's position and perspective, the perceptivity to penetrate prejudice and propaganda, openness to the possibility of levels of meaning other than the obvious, fascination as much with the mundane as with the spectacularly significant, and, most importantly, honest dedication to revealing and understanding things social as they are - all this and more constitute what is conceptualised above as sociological sensitivity.

Concerning the scope of the thesis, it was considerations of length which led to it being restricted to the pre-tertiary levels of formal education. Another restriction on its scope, to which attention needs to be drawn, is that, although sexism is seen to be a significant component of the schooling system in South Africa, it is not developed as a substantial sub-theme. In the first part of the thesis, this was because the limited number of relevant primary documentary sources, which I had

found, had almost all been cited in a single, and one of the only, secondary sources to take up this question in the South African context, namely Cock (1980 : 265 - 306). And, in the second part of the thesis, although the interviews covered it, sexism seemed to have been substantively of only slight significance in the boycott itself. The latter is not to suggest that sexism was found to be of only slight significance in the content of the classes boycotted, but it did not arise as an explicit issue.

The scope of the study on the 1980 students' boycott needs to be delimited along two dimensions: depth and extent. The course taken by the boycott beyond the boundaries of Cape Town is documented at a relatively superficial level, as is, within those boundaries, what transpired during the boycott in the schools falling under the Department of Education and Training (DET). Much more important is the in-depth description of what occurred during 1980 in and around the schools of Cape Town which fell under the Department of Coloured Relations (DCR). Even within the latter domain, the degree of detail varies as the account moves, for instance, from discussing generally what students were doing during a particular phase of the boycott to the documentation of a specific demonstration or to close consideration of the content of student consciousness, or, again, from overviewing the proceedings at numerous community meetings to putting down the plot of a play staged by a school principal at one particular such meeting to help the parents of his students understand the point their children were trying to make. While broad trends are traced on the one hand, the minutiae of specific episodes are mustered on the other. The study penetrates deep into a selection from the diversity of episodes and processes, interpersonal encounters and interests, which together compounded the boycott as a complex social whole. Never can all that occurs be recounted but it helps to be reminded that beyond what we bother to record is much that might be quite as 'significant' and certainly is as real. Thus, for instance, the account moves in behind the granite facade of Government buildings to find out how the Prime Minister interacted with the leader of a delegation of Black teachers and witnesses the lengths to which a cabinet minister and senior state officials went to pressurise a school principal to withdraw as fallacious her public assertion of a documented

fact that Coloured schools were charged more than White schools for the same supplies from the same stores. The story of the strife between a principal and his circuit inspector is related. A record is included of the battle of a few Black booksellers for recognition of their 'right' to share in the profits produced by the school textbook 'bonanza'. It is through this kaleidoscopic series of sketches that the study builds up its multi-faceted portrait of the Cape Town students' class boycott.

We turn now to a consideration of the practical methods used in conducting the research on which this study is based. The data was collected by use of secondary sources of primary documentary sources, and interviews.

The data, which are interpreted in the first part of the thesis, were drawn from primary documentary, as well as secondary, sources. It was the secondary sources which made the study's historically expansive scope, spanning as it does nearly three-and-a-quarter centuries, possible. At the same time, where this study depended on such sources, its empirical base could be only as wide as that of the sources used was narrow. Particularly serious was the widespread omission from the latter sources of information relevant to the role played by Black people themselves in determining what their schooling has been about in practice. The latter has by no means consistently corresponded with the intentions of those who have had the resources and/or political power to fix the formal structures of the schooling system. The primary documentary sources used, included the periodicals and *ad hoc* publications of organisations, newspapers, the reports of Government appointed commissions, and Hansard records of Debates in the South African Parliament's House of Assembly. These sources were consulted in the South African Library in Cape Town and in the library of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) in Johannesburg.

The study on the 1980 students' boycott in the second part of the thesis drew minimally on sources which might be classified as secondary. The primary documentary sources used, may be classified according to five categories: (a) newspapers, both commercial and community; (b) pamphlets;

(c) cyclostyled student magazines, song sheets and other materials used in the 'awareness programmes'; (d) the periodicals and *ad hoc* publications of organisations; and (e) Hansard records of Debates in the South African Parliament's House of Assembly.

Two Cape Town newspapers - The Argus, an evening daily, and The Cape Herald, a weekly - were fine-combed for the period 1 January 1980 to 30 June 1981. In addition, the other two local dailies - The Cape Times and Die Burger, both morning papers - along with the Johannesburg-based national Sunday newspapers, Rapport and The Sunday Times, and the Durban-based, Sunday Tribune, were consulted for such feature articles and editorials as were relevant as well as, in the case of The Cape Times specifically, for the purposes of cross-checking information obtained from The Argus and The Cape Herald. In the absence of any social scientific research conducted contemporaneously with the development of the boycott, the commercial press represented the sole source of certain categories of data which it would have been impossible to gather even if it had been practically and politically possible to include employment of a survey as part of this research. Journalists were alone in attempting at the time to document on a daily basis the development of events and trends. Reliance on the newspapers was particularly heavy in reconstructing accurately the chronological sequence of events in, and related to, the boycott. The interviews proved less than adequate for the latter purpose. It emerged from the interviews, which were conducted in the first half of 1982, that, while the passage of time might temper with any or all dimensions of what people remembered, it tended to be the temporal itself which elapsed time distorted most. Thus, for example, interviewees would either telescope time or elongate particular periods or even do both at different points. There were many instances of interviewees being mistaken in their dating of particular developments in the boycott and being confused as to where different occurrences were temporally located in relation to one another. Another respect in which reliance on the newspapers was heavy, was for data on the boycott beyond the Cape Peninsula. The Cape Peninsula constituted the central focus of the research as delimited geographically, and, for the very different level of detail which was sought on the boycott in its national entirety, the newspapers could serve as a source of sufficient data. For the in-depth study of the boycott in Cape Town, the monthly 'community newspaper', Grassroots, was a source which complemented

the commercial press insofar as it had covered certain limited aspects of the boycott - such as the content of related community meetings - in greater detail than had the latter.

The second category of primary documentary sources used, consisted of a substantial number of pamphlets which are listed amongst the documents in Appendix II.

Some of the pamphlets were collected during the boycott and before this research was undertaken. The rest were collected during the latter part of 1981 and the first half of 1982. How they were collected, was through a network of contacts. This was a network which I already had at the time the research was undertaken but which was extended for the purposes of conducting the research. Without this network it would probably have been impossible to acquire as substantial a set of the pamphlets which were in circulation during the boycott as I did. The political context, in which the research was conducted, constituted a serious constraint on what a researcher - and particularly a White one - would have been in a position to solicit from anybody to whom s/he was not known and by whom s/he was not in some measure accepted as trustworthy. Some of the pamphlets had been banned. Possession of pamphlets, even if it had not been declared an offence to possess them, would have been felt by many to be possibly or potentially incriminating, in spite of their having had nothing to do with pamphlets' production or distribution. Copies of the pamphlets tended to be in the hands of people who had been actively involved in, and supportive of, the boycott. A stranger, who asked such a person whether they had pamphlets in their possession and expressed the desire to borrow them, would have been regarded as behaving in a politically irresponsible - and, indeed, suspect - manner. It is improbable that any pamphlets would have been forthcoming in response to an approach of the latter sort. As it is, there is reason to believe that the pamphlets which I did collect, constitute at least a very large proportion of all those which were distributed in connection with the boycott. One of those interviewed for this research was a student who had been close to the centre of the main circle of student leaders during 1980 and who had taken upon himself the role of 'archivist'. He was under the impression that he had a full set of the relevant pamphlets and he would have had reasonable grounds for thinking that he could be fairly sure of this. However, while there were a few which he had and

which I had not yet found, there were others which I had and which he did not. Furthermore, if there had been pamphlets which I did not have, then, at any rate if they had been at all widely distributed, I would have been likely to come across reference to them in the course of my research.

The third category of primary documentary materials used - cyclostyled student magazines, song sheets and other materials used in the 'awareness programmes' - were gathered in the same way as the pamphlets were. A selection thereof are listed amongst the documents in Appendix II.

The fourth category of primary documentary materials used, consisted of the journals and *ad hoc* publications of various organisations. Some of these were found in the same way again as were the materials in the latter two categories. Some were sent to me through the post anonymously. Some were available in the South African Library. Finally, there were those obtained by approaching the organisations which had published them. Where appropriate, as, for example, in the case of a regular journal, these sources are included in the general list of references. The rest are listed as documents in Appendix II.

The final category of primary documentary sources consulted, consisted of the Hansard records of the Debates in the South African Parliament's House of Assembly during 1980 and 1981.

The single most important method of data collection employed in researching the 1980 Cape Town students' boycott was interviewing. Selection of interviewees was made according to two sets of criteria. Some were selected principally on the basis of having played a particular part in relation to the boycott as an individual and/or as the encumbant of a position in a specific organisation, body or institutional structure. The others were selected in such a way as to maximise - within constraints imposed by purely practical considerations of the extent of research possible - coverage of a complex situation involving students and their parents, teachers and principals in schools differentiated vertically by lower primary, higher primary, junior secondary and senior secondary classifications and laterally by the three Government departments under which they fell, by the socio-economic levels of the communities from which they predominantly drew their students, and by particular traditions.

Application of the latter set of criteria could not alone have lead to a set of particular individuals to be interviewed, only to abstract categories of differentially characterised potential interviewees. All things having been equal, the best procedure to have adopted, would have been selection of a random sample within each of the latter categories. However, the sort of political constraints imposed by the political context, in which this research was conducted, are precisely about things not being at all equal. It is contended that this study would have been impossible had the interviewees been selected on a formally random basis. The latter alone would have been no basis for many people having been prepared to be interviewed. The shadow of the security police is long and it darkens the doors of many more than just those whose attitudes and actions might conceivably be construed by state authorities as undesirable. A Black person, who is approached out of the blue (an all to poignant pun) by an unknown person probing for politically sensitive information, would probably - particularly if the latter was White - sense reason for responding with reserve and refusal to be interviewed. Furthermore, judging from the interviews, which were conducted as part of this research, people want more than assurance that they have no reason not to be interviewed - they want reason positively why they should be prepared to be interviewed. What made many of the interviews for this study possible was again the network of contacts which I brought with me into the research and extended for the purposes of the research. It was through this network that the interviewees, who were selected in terms of the second set of criteria, were individually identified. The disadvantage of this procedure was that, although my aim was to achieve whatever degree of representivity was possible under the circumstances and although I have no reason to believe that I was particularly unsuccessful in this attempt, I cannot formally claim representivity as I would have been able to do, had I employed a conventional sampling procedure. The advantages of the procedure adopted necessarily outweighed any disadvantages, however, because on it depended the very possibility of acquiring the quality of data which is presented in the second part of the thesis. Many of the interviews were contingent upon a high level of trust and rapport such as could not have been established on the basis of anything I might have said alone but only on the broader basis of direct experience of me as a person or at least knowledge of me through trusted others. None of this would have been possible as a 'random researcher.'

Nearly 80% of the interviewees agreed to be interviewed only on condition that their identities not be revealed. While it is not ideal to accept such a condition insofar as it reduces the possibilities of precise replication, had I not been prepared to guarantee anonymity there would have been no study to replicate, precisely or otherwise.

The interviews were conducted between February and May 1982. Sixty-four persons were interviewed in all. The interviewees are listed in Appendix I. Formal interviewing time totalled approximately 180 hours. Only two interviews lasted less than an hour and a further six less than two hours. Two hours was found to be the effective maximum uninterrupted interviewing time possible in terms of the limits to people's powers of concentration. Most interviews of longer than two hours were therefore broken by an interval in which there would usually be informal general discussion over tea or coffee. Seven of the interviews were conducted over more than one session: four in two, and three in three, separate sessions.

Selection of venues for the interviews was treated as a significant but simple matter. It is significant insofar as the conditions, under which an interview is conducted, can crucially affect the interviewee's confidence and thereby how fully, freely and frankly s/he feels in a position to speak. The matter is a simple one in the sense that the only general criterion of a satisfactory interview situation is that there be control exercised either by the interviewer or, preferably - as the more power the interviewee has opposite the interviewer, the greater his/her confidence is likely to be - by the interviewee, such that all, or at least positively unwanted, interruptions can be excluded. For the rest, choice of venue should be left to the interviewee to make in terms of the often complicated set of relevant subjective and objective factors of which s/he alone can be aware. Fifty-six *per cent* of those interviewed for this study chose their own homes. Twenty-seven *per cent* of the interviews were held in offices either of the interviewee or of an organisation to which the interviewee belonged, including an office in the Houses of Parliament, an office in the President's Council, and the office of a university rector. Ten *per cent* of the interviewees elected to be interviewed in my home and a further four *per cent* in my office at

the University of Cape Town. Only three *per cent* of the interviews were held on the premises of a school.

The content of the interviews was recorded in one of two ways, using either a tape recorder or longhand notes. The former was the preferred means because not only does a tape recorder assure one of a complete and accurate record but, by freeing the interviewer from the concerns otherwise connected to recording an interview, the tape recorder allows her/him to concentrate on the content and conduct of the interview itself. Use of a tape recorder also has its disadvantages, however. Firstly, it can, for instance, affect the balance of interpersonal power between interviewer and interviewee in favour of the former. Why such a tendency would be undesirable has been indicated above. Secondly, some people are inhibited by the notion of being taped. Thirdly, the political context can be such as to render people justifiably wary of being irrevocably committed to what they may say. Fourthly, a tape recorder may malfunction without the interviewer noticing that the interview is not being recorded as, for instance, when the batteries are too low to record but sufficiently strong to keep the tape turning, albeit at reduced speed. Apart from the latter technical consideration, the other 'disadvantages' of a tape recorder are not intrinsic but defined as such in relation to particular interviewees and conditions. Thus, where an interviewee does not feel disadvantaged opposite the interviewer by the presence of such a machine, where s/he is not inhibited by it, and where the political context gives no grounds for an interviewee fearing that there might be repercussions of being committed on tape, then the advantages of a tape recorder should be enjoyed. Even where there are possible grounds for fearing repercussions, such fear can be overcome if there is implicit trust in the researcher to deal responsibly with the tapes. In approaching the interviewees for this study, there were those for whom it would have constituted a damaging *faux pas* even to raise the possibility of recording them on tape. A range of particular - including subjective - considerations went into deciding when it was appropriate to ask an interviewee whether s/he had any objections to, or negative feelings of any kind about, use of a tape recorder. As it turned out, one more than half of the interviews were recorded on tape. Subsequently, I transcribed the recorded interviews, parts of them *verbatim* and parts of them paraphrased.

The interviews, which could not be taped, were recorded first in longhand notes taken during the interview. Selected *verbatim* quotations could usually be recorded without interrupting the interview by taking advantage of interviewee's lack of fluency. Care had to be exercised not to let the note-taking intrude to the point of distracting the interviewee. For instance, rather than stop the interview in order to 'catch up', I would prompt unnecessary elaboration on a point and thereby create the opportunity to finish recording something necessary. Nonetheless, I was rarely satisfied that the record made during the interview was sufficiently full. I, therefore, always had the tape recorder in my car so that, even while driving away from the interview when my memory of it was still entirely fresh, I could supplement on tape anything which my notes had recorded too cryptically. On occasion, I would park the car and, using my notes as a basis but elaborating on them, I would tape a fuller record of the interview which I had just conducted. At a later stage, I would then transcribe such tapes. Where the latter procedure was not necessary to adopt, I would write a neater and less cryptic record of interviews, which had not been taped, as soon after them as possible and never later than the following morning. In these ways did I attempt to make up for the limitations of taking longhand notes as a method of recording interviews.

It remains to recount how the substance of the interviews was structured. The instrument employed, was a set of questions and question-pointers which was constructed in its original form before the first formal interview was conducted. The basis on which this instrument was constructed, was the data which I had already gathered from primary documentary sources together with what I had learned through my own experience of, and - albeit limited - involvement in, the happenings of 1980 as well as what I had learned from the numerous persons with whom I had discussed the boycott and my research before embarking on the interviews. The phase of informal discussion with persons some of whom I was to interview at a later stage and others of whom were not prepared to be formally interviewed, served effectively the functions of a pilot study. It certainly contributed crucially to the construction of the set of questions used to structure the interviewing. This set of questions was not, however, a static one. As additional

data was gathered, certain additional questions were generated. Furthermore, the full set was used in no single interview. Each interview was individually organised around a selected sub-set of the questions in terms of what category an interviewee fell into and/or what his/her particular role in, or relation to, the boycott happened to have been. As a practical means of facilitating this procedure, each question was written on a separate card. The interviews were in-depth and open-ended. No interview remained restricted to the specific questions around which it had been planned. Nor were questions necessarily put in the words of the formulation I had on the cards. In many cases the latter would serve only to identify the substance of an intended question which I would then formulate in terms appropriate to the individual interviewee. Some of the cards specified areas for questioning but not in question-form. Some of the more abstract questions, which the study was attempting to address but which it would have made no sense to put as such to interviewees, were also included for the contribution that they might be able to make in giving direction to such supplementary questions as needed generating during interviews. Although care was taken to avoid leading questions in general, certain questions did incorporate interpretations which I hoped interviewees might be able to help me validate or confound but which had to be put to them as such if there was to be that possibility. In contrast to the sorts of questions which have been discussed so far, the majority of questions were very concrete and specific.

The secondary data used in the first part of the thesis is as reliable as its collective sources are reliable and possibly more reliable than any one of them above insofar as the information drawn from them was cross-checked between those of the sources which contained comparable data. Where there were discrepancies, which could not be resolved by reference to the available primary data, the information, which I accepted as most likely to be reliable, was that on which the most sources agreed.

The reliability of such primary data as was drawn from sources which themselves constituted the data - such as, for example, the viewpoint of an organisation as given expression through its official organ - need not be at issue, only my capacity to copy accurately.

Primary documentary sources, such as Hansard records of Debates in the South African Parliament's House of Assembly, which are widely respected for their reliability, need not be doubted.

The primary data based on reports in newspapers and periodicals are as reliable as they can be, given the available sources. Wherever possible, more than one source was used for any particular piece of information. For the rest, so long as there was nothing to render information improbable, it was accepted, albeit with reservations, for want of any alternative.

The data used in the second part of the thesis is almost exclusively primary. As detailed above, they are based on primary documentary sources and interviews. It has already been noted that the reliability of a source such as Hansard need not be doubted. Many of the primary documentary sources used for the second part of the thesis, themselves constituted the data and could not, as used in this thesis, be regarded as unreliable unless misrepresented. Such sources were the pamphlets, the student magazines, song sheets and other materials used in the 'awareness programmes', and the periodicals and *ad hoc* publications of organisations.

Concerning the reliability of the data based on newspaper reports and interviews, wherever possible, I compared and cross-checked the data which I had derived from (a) multiple reports of the same happenings in a single newspaper, (b) multiple reports of the same happenings in different newspapers, (c) newspapers and interviews, and (d) different interviews. This process involved both what are sometimes termed data triangulation and method triangulation.

Overall, the study's multiple methods and multiple sources give me reasonable confidence in the reliability of the data produced.

#### Terminological note

The terms Black, White, African, Coloured and Indian are used in this thesis to refer to people who in South Africa are commonly characterised as such. It is not assumed that the social categories

respectively so labelled constitute 'races' but they are recognised as historical realities which there is no denying. The labels themselves are, of course, ideologically conceived but what they label, suffer at least some measure of material existence.

The significance of the distinctions and divisions between the social categories in question is predominantly political. Historically, the major division within South African society has been between Whites, who used their economic and military power to entrench themselves in a superordinate position, and the rest relegated to subordinancy. The latter are, therefore, in this thesis designated collectively Black and the terms African, Coloured and Indian are reserved for where these sub-classifications are specifically relevant. Black is nowhere in the thesis synonymous with African. The use of Black as a latter-day synonym for African is rejected for the following reasons. The designation Black has been adopted by broad layers of those classified African, Coloured and Indian to symbolise their unity in opposing the Whites' system which oppresses them all, albeit differentially. The same sentiment had inspired the earlier notion of 'Non-White' but 'Black' was felt to be preferable in that it positively identified them independently of Whites where 'Non-White' or 'Non-European' had defined their identity negatively in terms of a residual-sounding category contingent upon those to whom they have been subordinated. It was not long after the uprising of 1976 had demonstrated the currency which the contemporary concept of Black had nationwide, that the Government - in a move which ironically was interpreted as vaguely conciliatory - appropriated the term Black to replace the much-hated official designation of Bantu for Africans. To the extent that many, who had previously rejected Bantu and had adopted Black as referring to Africans, Coloureds and Indians, have come to accept Black in the Government's sense of referring to Africans alone, the ideological thrust of the bigger concept of Black has been parried. In the context of terminological options which are all ideological, the above makes explicit the political grounds on which I opted for the terminology employed in this thesis.

Lastly with regard to the terms White, African and Indian, it needs noting that there have been historically, and still are to some extent,

other terms which have been, or are, used interchangeably with these three respectively. Such is the case with the term European to refer to Whites. Indians are also called Asians. Africans have been the object of a number of names which at different times have been regarded as more or less derogatory, notably Kaffirs, Natives and Bantu. These other terms do appear in the thesis but only as part of quotations.

A final terminological point arises from the fact that anything written about people inevitably comes up against the English language's sexist conventions governing usage of personal pronouns. It is my contention that the conventional use of the masculine form in the generic sense not only reflects masculine biases but may reinforce them. In this thesis, therefore, wherever I cannot evade gender by use of the plural, I employ paired pronouns - for example, s/he and his/her. The latter I alternate with her/his.

P A R T 1THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE  
SCHOOLING OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICANSA. Early schooling in colonial 'South Africa'

Formal schools made their appearance in Southern Africa as part of the new social relations introduced with colonialism. The first school was opened on 17 April 1658, at the Cape. This was less than a month after the arrival of the original shipment of 170 slaves. The school was set up specifically for the Dutch East India Company's slaves and, as far as is known, it took them in irrespective of their ages. Van Riebeeck was allegedly motivated by a concern to have something done for the slaves' intellectual and moral welfare. (Du Plessis, 1911 : 29 - 30) From the earliest days of schooling, the distinction has to be made between the aims of schooling that are declared and what is intended by those formulating educational policy. Furthermore, the intentions of policy-makers are not necessarily matched by the objective consequences of what is implemented in practice. It is safe to assume that the colonists' real concern was that the slaves serve the purpose for which they had been bought namely to labour for their masters. They would have been able to do so more efficiently if they understood a language in which the masters could communicate their orders. The relationship between slave and master having been a most unequal one, it was not the master who learned the slaves' language, but the slaves who had to learn Dutch. Further, the more total the slaves' subjugation was, the less they would have resisted the system of forced labour in which they were trapped. Having been ripped from their homes in West and East Africa and the East Indies, they had already been removed by thousands of miles from their physical base, but, so long as they still had each other and their beliefs, their independence would not have been fully undermined. Yet, even that minimal ideological base of independence would have been removed if the slaves

were indoctrinated with their masters' religion. The slaves were driven physically and psychologically into their masters' world. It is in the context just described that it may be possible to understand an important part of why the early schooling, which was instituted by the colonists, was intended for the instruction of the younger slaves in the rudiments of the Dutch language and the Christian religion. In a regimented environment where elementary academic matter had to be imbibed by rote and where 'respect' for new 'superiors' and a new authority was beaten in, the slaves were supposed to learn obedience and discipline. The colonists presumably hoped that the young slaves, thus schooled, could the more easily be pressed into positions of servility and would become the more efficient and pliant labourers.

Over and above what it would be reasonable to assume, there is evidence that slaves did not accept their subordinate positions. The resistance to being students displayed by slaves might have reflected, *inter alia*, resistance to being prepared for such subordinate positions. The student-slaves' most effective mode of resistance was flight. It happened once that the whole school stayed out for five days and went into hiding in a cave near Hout Bay. The teacher was instructed to try and buy their attention by rewarding what interest and diligence they might show with a tot of rum and two inches of tobacco each. But the slaves' resistance was not so cheaply bought off and they continued to run away until the school finally had to be closed. Thus, from formal schooling's earliest days in the sub-continent, the authorities' capacity to implement policy has been constrained where those to be schooled have rejected the nature of the schooling provided and have been to some degree successful in registering their rejection.

A second school was established in 1663 to provide primarily for children of the colonists. It opened with twelve of their children, four young slaves and one Khoikhoi child. The first suggestion of segregation in schooling came from within the Church in 1676. The recommendation was not expressed in terms of separating children of different colours but rather in terms of the desirability

of having a separate school for slaves. In such a way could the class division between slaves and colonists be kept adequately deep. In 1685, a school was established exclusively for slave children under the age of 12 years and thenceforth the school, which had been open to all since its founding in 1663, was reserved for colonist, and other non-slave, children. Children were further separated into girls and boys for their lessons. In addition to what they learnt at school, the young female slaves were instructed in 'domestic duties' by 'women of standing in the Slave Lodge'. (Behr and Macmillan, 1966: 311) Furthermore, a few young male slaves were selected to be taught trades.

The life-task for which the settler young were trained, was in a sense the converse of that for which the colonists would have wished the children of those they sought to subordinate, to be moulded. Malherbe writes,

'While on the one hand, it is due to the strong church (Calvinistic) influence that education often deteriorated into mere formalism, it gave the people, on the other hand, a type of education which was perhaps as well suited to their needs at that time as any we could devise today. It did not cultivate erudition, yet it produced pioneers - men who had to break-in the country. From their earliest youth boys were practiced in the use of firearms till they became probably the best marksmen in the world. This type of education helped to preserve them against spiritual as well as physical dangers.' (Malherbe, 1925: 47)

It can be seen how early the character of schooling for supremacy was set. Much later, the rationale for its character was made explicit by the Cape Superintendent-General of Education when in 1889 he described how the Government assumed its first duty to be ...

'to recognise the position of the European colonists as holding the paramount influence, social and political; and to see that the sons and daughters of the colonists ... should have at least such an education as their peers in Europe enjoy, with such local modifications as will fit them to maintain their unquestioned superiority and supremacy in this land.' (quoted in Wilson and Thompson, 1975: 222)

One of the D.E.I.C.'s concerns was to see to it that its men, removed from the bonds of the home institutions, remained united in a common ideology. Religious instruction at school contributed by helping to perpetuate the set of dogmas to which all adhered. This gave rise to excessive formalism, and the teaching of the three R's tended to be almost incidental to religious instruction. Malherbe quotes M.E. Martinius as writing that 'Under such circumstances a man was not likely to make an inspired teacher and the work would be apt to degenerate into a mechanical grind. This the Company overlooked in its desire to spread the doctrines uncorrupted.' (quoted in Malherbe, 1925: 29) Arising from the fear which constantly haunted the colonists that 'false' doctrines might be disseminated, steps were taken at an early date to establish central control over who should be permitted to teach and what should be taught. (Malherbe, 1925: 34 - 35)

It was clearly, from the outset, in the interests of the colonists that a certain minimum of schooling was received by both their own children and the children of those being subordinated to their order. However, in the context of the near bankruptcy and political disintegration of the D.E.I.C., a corrupt and weak Cape administration, political complications in Europe, an economic depression, and epidemics of smallpox, it is not surprising that formal education was never a policy priority for the Company, the operations of which certainly did not depend on it. The colonial authorities did decree in 1682 that all slave children under twelve had to attend school and that older ones had to go for instruction twice a week, but this injunction was for the most part ignored, especially in respect of slave girls, and no attempt was made to enforce it. This was in part because the slave-owners were not prepared to forego the slave children's labour. More importantly, it reflected their fear that any form of education might stimulate slaves to make demands above their station. According to, for example, Louw, 'the European settler ... was disturbed at mounting signs of Native restlessness and thoughts of manumission. Ascribing these latter to Western influence, "the civilizing efforts of the Company soon dwindled ... (and) the conscious effort to Christianize ... died away".' (Louw, 1958: 22)

Schooling made thus extremely slow headway in the 17th and 18th centuries. Apart from those for slaves belonging to the D.E.I.C., a few elementary schools were established in Cape Town and surrounding villages to provide for colonists' children and to a lesser extent their household slaves, as well as ex-slaves who had managed to buy their freedom. The 18th century also saw the beginnings of missionary education directed at the already conquered Khoikhoi people. Thus, for example, in the Moravian Missionary Society's school at Baviaanskloof (later to become Genadendal), 'The Hottentots were persuaded to forego their nomadic way of life, and made to realize the need for discipline and regular habits.' (Behr and Macmillan, 1966: 314) Boys and girls were taught separately and, while the former were trained in certain trades, handicrafts were emphasised for all.

The type of formal education that arose in Southern Africa was not based in indigenous social structures. It was introduced as part of the process whereby colonialism brought the subcontinent into the emergent world capitalist system. 'As a colonizing power, it (the 'British race') has always sought to draw the aboriginal population of its over-the-sea territories into harness. ... the Africans are bending their necks to the life-preserving yoke of labour ....' (Christian Express XX (256) 2.11.1891: 1) P.A.W. Cook, writing in 1949, described education for Blacks in South Africa as having been 'for the most part, a purposeful process aiming at the incorporation of dependent peoples into the structures of Western civilisation.' (Cook, 1949: 348) It is not that schooling was at every point designed deliberately to promote the new colonial order but its content and consequences were crucially conditioned by this order. Conceptualising the process in terms of culture rather than imperialism, Cook explains how 'the missionary came to South Africa to preach the Gospel and to dispel the darkness of the heathen. But he taught elements of the same culture to which the trader, the magistrate, and the farmer belonged.' (Cook, 1949: 348)

## B. Black schooling in the 19th century

The major wars, which ended in the Nguni- and Sotho-speaking people of Southern Africa being dispossessed of their land and forced into the colonial order, were waged over the century between 1779 and 1879. It was in 1799 - twenty years after the opening of the latter period - that the first school specifically for Africans was established near what later became King William's Town. Previously, only a handful of Nguni- and Sotho-speakers had had any formal education in colonial schools. From the turn of the century, missions started setting up more such schools particularly on the fringes of settler penetration. The first school in the Orange Free State was founded in 1823, and the first ones in Natal and what became the Transvaal in 1835 and 1842, respectively. Thus schooling played a part in the process of conquest itself - albeit a relatively minor one - as well as contributing to the social consolidation of conquest and the control of the conquered. Schooling in the 19th century contributed both to undermining the as-yet-unconquered and incorporating the already-undermined into the structures of the settlers. However, for most of the century it continued to develop only very slowly. The extent of the contribution that schooling was able to make, was not such as to render it a priority for the colonial government. Nevertheless, a Department of Education was established, and the first Superintendent-General appointed, as early as 1839 in the Cape Colony. Thenceforth, the mission schools were formally under the jurisdiction of that Department. Some state control was exercised through the grant of funds, which first became available to mission schools in 1841, but, in the main, schooling was left to the churches and missionary societies. Although the latter's financial resources were at times supplemented by contributions from the Black communities, in which their schools were situated, funds were always very limited. The standard of teaching was low, minimal secondary education was offered except by the teacher training institutes, and only a minute fraction of the child population received any schooling at all.

It is suggested that such impact as schooling in this early period had, was not, as in the contemporary era, achieved by direct contact with any significant proportion of the children of the indigenous millions but rather through an 'elite' minority which it helped to create. The latter was not necessarily by design. On the contrary, Dr (later Sir) Langham Dale, Superintendent-General of Education in the Cape, explained in 1869, for example, that the aid given to mission schools, insofar as they supplemented the public school system, was 'with a view of bringing elementary instruction within the reach of the mass of the labouring poor, especially those of the coloured races.' (quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 207) Be that as it may, part of the effect which this early schooling had, was indeed the emergence of a new 'elite' which was from the start potentially at odds with the traditional tribal leadership. With their newly acquired 'knowledge', they represented a threat to the traditional authorities and even a possible challenge to their leadership. As Dale reported in 1891, 'The Kaffirs see in the school the agency that weakens and then effaces all tribal bonds and customs. The levelling tendency of popular instruction is not consistent with their traditions, and the Chiefs specially watch the growth of schools with suspicion.' (Cape of Good Hope, Appendix 1, Volume III to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1892, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1891 (G.9 - '92): 11. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 211) Steeped in the conquerors' ways of seeing, converted to their religion, and generally accepting of the new order, the schooled corps could help disseminate a system of ideas, values, loyalties and authorities which were consistent with the colonists' interests and which contradicted, and helped to undermine, the framework that had given the people an independent ideological base in their struggle to retain their land and livelihood. Even a Government commission report contains discussion of how 'missionaries' teachings have acted like dynamite on tribal solidarity.' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 89, para. 464) A division was created between Christian converts and adherents to traditional religious beliefs. These are some of the ways in which schooling contributed to weakening the indigenous people's resistance to colonisation and helped to establish them, once conquered, in their new place of subordination.

The year 1854 marked an important point in the development of state interest in, and support for, the schooling of Black people since in that year there was appointed to the Governorship at the Cape a man, Sir George Grey, who held education to be a prime weapon in the subjugation of the indigenous population. It was as a part of the Cape regime's 'border pacification' policy that he motivated for state subsidisation of the missionaries' educational efforts. Thus:

'The plan I propose to pursue with a view to the general adjustment of these questions (frontier policy) is, to attempt to gain an influence over all the tribes included between the present north-eastern boundary of this colony and Natal, by employing them upon public works, which will tend to open their country; by establishing institutions for the education of the children, and the relief of their sick; by introducing among them institutions of a civil character suited to their present condition; and by these and other like means to attempt to win them to civilisation and Christianity, and thus to change by degrees our present unconquered and apparently irreclaimable foes into friends who may have common interests with ourselves.' (British Parliamentary Papers, Cape of Good Hope. Further papers relative to the state of the Kaffir Tribes presented to both Houses of Parliament, July 1855, Despatch from the Governor, Sir George Grey, to the Colonial Secretary, dated from Cape Town, 22 November 1854, page 38. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 204)

In 1868, Dale was urging, 'The spread of civilisation by school-instruction and the encouragement of industrial habits among the Natives in the Border districts, are of importance to the political security and social progress of the Colony.' (quoted in Union of South Africa, 1936: 12, para.25) Twenty-three years later he described the Black schools as 'hostages for peace' and argued that 'if for that reason only £12,000 a year is given to schools in the Transkei, Tembuland and Griqualand, the amount is well spent; but that is not the only reason - to lift the Aborigenes gradually, as circumstances permit, to the platform of civilised and industrial life is the great object of the educational vote.' (quoted in Union of South Africa, 1936: 13, para.26) In sum, as expressed in the Eiselen Commission's report, 'education was regarded as one means among many

to be employed in the pacification of the Border.' (Union of South Africa, 1951: 39, para. 203)

The conquered, wrenched from their own material base and traditional social relations, were cast adrift, as were the slaves when freed. It has been argued that the need for more schools became urgent after the promulgation of Ordinance 50 in 1828, which gave equal civil rights to the Khoikhoi people, and after the emancipation of slaves in 1833. (Troup, 1976: 9) Almost half a century later, Dale, in an article entitled, 'Technical Instruction and Industrial Training,' posed, rhetorically, the question, 'Do you prefer to spend public money on police, prisons and other repressive and protective agencies, or on the workshop and the teachers of handicrafts?' (Christian Express XXI (260) 1.3.1892: 45 - 6) Schooling assisted in incorporating into the new order those set loose from the tribal structures of social control in such a way that they could be disciplined and made to serve the interests of the colonists. Grey saw the integration of the African people into the Cape economy in terms of their becoming 'useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue, in short, a source of strength and wealth to the Colony, such as Providence designed them to be.' (quoted in Majeka, 1952: 66) The schools helped to make 'useful servants' of them by teaching them the basics of their new masters' language and providing them with the limited vocabulary that would be relevant to their role in the colonial order and with an elementary level of literacy, as well as by training them in the discipline and skills of manual labour. These servants-to-be were supposed to be equipped also with an appropriately servile mentality and a view of their relegation to a place of inferiority as natural. Dale argued, in the above cited article, 'To teach, train and improve the present anomalous part of the community so that their fusion and absorption into the ordinary channels of industry may be steadily consummated is the practical and necessary object of any true method of native education.' (Christian Express XXI (260) 1.3.1892: 46)

It was not as equal individuals that Black people were brought into the colonial order but as a subordinate category which was

integrated economically while kept outside politically and at a distance socially. Some were schooled into an acceptance of the new 'civilisation' at the same time as having any expectations, which they might have developed, of being able to partake as equals of the fruits of colonial society, suppressed. A few were taken further than the rest to form a small 'educated' class of mainly preachers and teachers who, schooled in the views and ways of the colonists, could serve as intermediaries between the colonial authorities and the people.

C. Early responses: schooling resisted, demanded and adapted

Black resistance to schooling - primarily in the form of outright rejection and eschewal thereof - was considerable for most of the 19th century. For as long as Black people managed to remain beyond the reach of the colonial economy - for as long, that is, as the pre-capitalist mode of production remained relatively intact - they would have perceived little, if any, benefit to be derived from schooling and, at the same time, would have resisted sacrificing their children's labour. In 1848, a missionary wrote, in a letter to the High Commissioner at the Cape, 'it is not so difficult, to get the church filled with people, as it is, to get the children to school, who are always by cattle herding prevented from it.' (quoted in Du Toit, 1963: 41) A quarter of a century later, The Kaffir Express noted, 'The chief objection on the part of heathen parents to sending their boys to school, besides their indifference to education, is that they require them to herd their sheep and cattle.' It mentioned further that girls were 'kept from school for different reasons', but did not elaborate. (Kaffir Express IV (45) 1.6.1874: I) Dale, in a report drawn up in 1869, observed,

'There is considerable repugnance on the part of heathen Kaffirs to send their children to school.

'Besides feeling that school instruction weakens the hold which native customs and superstitions have over the mind, the Kaffirs say that they are very well

content as they are .... They want nothing for themselves, and they wish their children to be as themselves. Each parent expects his own child to herd his few goats or two or three cows all day long.' (Cape of Good Hope, Appendix 1 to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1869, Report of an Inspection of schools in the Middle and Eastern Districts by the Superintendent-General of Education during the months of March, April, May and June, 1869 (G. 31 - 69) pages 3 - 6. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 208)

In 1882, the Natal Native Commission recorded its view as follows: 'We think that there is little desire among ordinary Natives for education, but we do not anticipate that there would be opposition to schools being placed in Locations.' The Commissioners betrayed their implicit misgivings, however, through recommendations contained in the next sentence, thus: 'We should recommend beginning with tribes known to be favourably disposed; we should also further propose that schools should be placed in some of the small tribes, partly because any opposition would be of less moment, partly because the distances for the children attending the school would be more manageable.' (Natal Native Commission, 1881 - 2, page 11 Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 210)

To the extent, however, that there were parents who did want their children in school they sent them to obtain the sort of schooling which - while their own society crumbled beneath their feet - they thought would provide an entrée to the colonial order at a point above its mose debased. The education sought was an academic one and students themselves vigorously opposed its dilution with manual labour. At Lovedale, for example, 'all native boarders' were compelled to engage in two hours of 'some kind of work' every afternoon. In 1872, The Kaffir Express admitted that students there entirely rejected this forced labour, characterising it variously as 'a sore point', 'the bane of their lives' and 'an utter abhorrence'. The newspaper cited the case of 'one young savage' who early one morning had run away and subsequently indicated in a letter written from home that he had done so on account of the latter imposition. (Kaffir Express II (26) 1.11.1872: 1 - 2) Parents and students voted for an academic form of education in the only way open to them: with their feet. Thus, for example,

in 1880 The Christian Express commented as follows:

'... Roman Catholic missions have been a failure in Africa when they attempt to satiate the African craving for education with a few ounces of catechism, and communicate nothing to elevate the individual, ... nothing else was to be expected.' (Christian Express X (115) 1.4.1880: 2)

A further illustration is taken from the 1892 report of the commission appointed to enquire into education in the Cape Colony: 'The hereditaries of the South African aborigenes are not in the direction of a love of bodily toil; consequently schools which allow the four hours to be occupied with more or less of dawdling over spelling books or school slates tend to be numerically the strongest.' (Cape of Good Hope, Third and final report of a commission appointed to enquire into and report upon certain matters connected with the educational system in the Colony, 1892 (G. 3 - '92) page 32. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 216) It was especially because of the latter that the missionaries - in a context of widespread avoidance of 'education' and contact with 'civilisation' in general - were not averse to providing the sort of schooling desired so long as it brought children into their schools and thereby aided in the achievement of what was for most of them their primary objective, to evangelise. It aided the latter in another way too in that it was an appropriate education for preparing children to read the Bible and participate in religious ritual. It was in any case with an academic form of education that they would generally have been familiar in Europe. Furthermore, they themselves did not directly share all the interests, which were paramount for the colonists and which might have otherwise oriented their educational objectives, even though they in general wished to serve them, as is illustrated by the following extract from The Christian Express:

'Missionaries are in no sense political agitators. They desire nothing so much as that the relations of the natives toward the Government, should be those of perfect loyalty, and they invariably counsel the natives to be law-abiding and peaceful ....' (Christian Express X (112) 1.1.1880: 1)

Meanwhile, the state's capacity to determine the extent and nature of education in the colony was severely restricted, as is brought out in the following quotation which at the same time illustrates how contested educational terrain was even in those early days of formal schooling in the subcontinent:

'It may be desirable that education of the right kind should be compulsory for the children of aborigenes, but at the present moment the introduction of such a compulsory provision would be inopportune. If the State cannot enforce attendance at school, it can at least define the education for which it is prepared to pay. There should be a definite regulation that one-half of the school time required of those in attendance shall be devoted to such manual training as can best be followed in the locality. The 'literary' instruction sanctioned in native day schools should be purely elementary.' (Cape of Good Hope, Third and final report of a commission appointed to enquire into and report upon certain matters connected with the educational systems of the Colony, 1892 (G. 3 - '92). Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 217)

Then again the following appeared in a 1906 issue of *The Christian Express*:

'... the Native ... is too enthusiastic about mere book learning and far too casual with respect to the accumulation of wealth. .... The way he frequently strips himself to meet his educational expenses is indeed admirable, but this would be quite unnecessary, were he to pay more attention to developing his means of livelihood. It may be urged that the education he is at present receiving is not one to make money with, and there is a good deal of truth in this, but he has all along shown such a pronounced preference for the European curriculum that it has been deemed impolitic to refuse him. It has rather been hoped that the craze would die a natural death. But it will take long for education ... entirely to eliminate from his character that conspicuous defect *viz.*, his fondness for the royal road, in other words his idea that he is already fitted for various positions at present occupied by white men only. It is true that he is to some extent satisfied with such posts as that of teacher, interpreter, etc., but, except in a few isolated cases, for any occupation involving manual labour he is at present strongly disinclined.' (*Christian Express* XXXVI (427) 1.5.06: 125)

There were few openings in the colonial system for Black persons with any degree of schooling, however, and this was the case *a fortiori*

Some twenty-three years earlier, Dale - in explaining his inclination 'to discourage the special preparation of a few native lads here and there, at a great expense, and to assist only in the training of a sufficient number of native teachers to occupy the various school stations at the kraals' - reported as follows:

'Native lads have been well educated here, and have completed their course in England, who, on returning to this Colony, find no sphere or occupation but that of teachers, at a salary of about £40 p.a. This is distasteful to most of them; a long period of comparatively easy and refined life at school and at colleges has led them to expect something better. To the educated Kaffir there is no opening; he may be qualified to fill the post of a clerk in a public office or in a mercantile house, but either there is no demand for such persons, or prejudice operates against persons of colour being so employed. To give a high education to Kaffir boys, and then to leave them isolated from their own people in thoughts and habits, and to some extent in language, and without any prospect of useful and settled occupation in another sphere of labour is only to increase the existing temptations of the so-called school Kaffir to fall into the vices of the low Europeans with whom they are brought into contact. We require Native teachers without that over-refinement which elevates the individual too much above his fellows.' (Cape of Good Hope, Appendix 1 to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1869, Report of an inspection of schools in the Middle and Eastern Districts by the Superintendent-General of Education during the months of March, April, May and June, 1869 (G. 31 - 69). Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 208)

While the colonial context may have limited the capacity of schooling to affect individuals' material prospects, it would appear to have provided at least a leadership element with certain linguistic, and other cultural accoutrements useful in articulating the grievances and demands of their people which, with the collapse of military-backed resistance and the concomitant consolidation of conquest, had to be done increasingly on terrain defined by the colonists. It was not, as many have chosen to believe, that education - through exposing Black people to new and broader horizons - revealed to them what was wrong with the place to which they were subjected in the colonial order and unveiled a previously un contemplated vista of liberty. No vision was needed to conjure up the

latter since the experience of liberty was still fresh in people's memories. That people were clear on the former score, independent of any revelatory power which education might have been assumed to possess, was evidenced by more than a century of bitter resistance to their colonisation and subjugation. It was only as the economic basis for an independent political stand disintegrated with the dissolution of the pre-capitalist mode of production, only as people became impressed by the final failure of their resistance, only as they found their feet anew on terrain which was no longer theirs, and only as the settler authorities demonstrated their power to dictate the terms on which future negotiation might be conducted, that education began to be sought in place of shunned.

Even as early as 1873, it was stated in an appeal by Lovedale for monetary contributions, 'Among the natives the tide in favour of education is fast rising, and as they have found their way here, it is a pity to shut the doors against them.' (Kaffir Express III (28) 2.1.1873: 2) Nine months later the same publication reported, 'The tide in the direction of education among the native people still keeps steadily rising, and overflows the barrier of fees, which it was thought at one time would seriously check this desire, and limit the numbers of those who might seek entrance here at least.' (Kaffir Express III (36) 6.9.1873 : 1) A further nine months after that it claimed,

'the tide has set in even among the heathen Kaffirs in favour of education. Many of the mission schools are filled with the children of those who never go to church, and the real difficulty in getting hold of the children in a heathen location does not lie in the unwillingness of the parents, except in some cases in regard to their daughters, but in the natural aversion of the children to the restraint of a school, and that heathen parents cannot be got to compel them.' (Kaffir Express IV (45) 1.6.1874: 1)

To conclude, in 1905, the South African Native Affairs Commission reported, 'There is among the people themselves a growing desire for education, which cannot and need not be suppressed.' (South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 - 05. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 223)

#### D. The rise of industrial capitalism

Schooling for Black people in South Africa made no major advances through most of the 1800s. Its importance began to increase from the second half of the 19th century. This can be induced in part from the growth of state interest in 'Native education' as well as from the growing numbers in Black schools. As the Eiselen Commission was to explain, 'Bantu education as carried on by the missionary bodies became increasingly the care of the government concerned because the Bantu were increasingly affecting the economic and political life of the country.' (Union of South Africa, 1951: 34, para.169) Thus, in the Cape for instance, with the institution of 'Representative Government' in 1854, state money was allocated to the Aborigenes (Border) Department for the purpose of subsidising 'missionary institutions ... to train Bantu youth in industrial occupations ... (and) as interpreters, evangelists and schoolmasters ....' (quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 206) In 1863, Dale proposed increased subsidisation such as would encourage the teaching of needlework to girls and carpentry, shoemaking and printing to boys and would also produce blacksmiths, gardeners and domestic servants. (Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 207) In 1865, legislation was enacted to provide for state aid to three types of schools: public, mission and 'Native'. Furthermore, a state inspectorate of education was established. While, in 1865, there were a mere 2 827 African pupils enrolled in schools, by 1885 this enrolment had risen to 15 568 and by 1891 to 25 000. (Cook, 1949: 351) In Natal, a Commission of Inquiry was urging in 1853 already that Black youths should be apprenticed to White farmers and tradesmen through the Resident Magistrates and recommended the establishment of Government industrial schools in each village, as well as compulsory attendance for three years of all children, between seven and twelve years of age, living in a Black location. As it happened, none of these recommendations was carried out. (Union of South Africa, 1936: 19, para.61) However, an ordinance, published in 1856 made provision for grants-in-aid to be given to mission schools and also permitted the Government to establish and maintain public

schools. It laid down that the subjects of instruction were to be religious education, 'industrial training' and instruction in the English language. (Union of South Africa, 1936: 19, para.64) In 1884, Black schooling in Natal was made the responsibility of the Council of Education, which had been established in 1877, and placed under separate and specialist officers. Two years later, the first syllabi for elementary Black schools were issued. Hygiene and traditional crafts were emphasised and a fifth of school time was to be spent in manual work which included carpentry for the boys, dressmaking, cooking and laundering for girls, and gardening for both boys and girls. (Horrell, 1963: 19) In 1894, the Council of Education was abolished and a sub-department of 'Native Education' under the Superintendent of Education was created. Enrolment in Natal's Black schools rose from 145 in 1855 to 10 618 in 1900. (Cook, 1949: 352) State subsidisation of the mission schools for Black people started in the Orange Free State and 'Transvaal' in 1878 and 1903, respectively. Although such subsidisation often amounted to little more than occasional grants, it was accompanied by the requirement that mission schools register with the administration. The authorities instituted inspection of schools, acquired a say in syllabuses and the training of teachers, and increasingly began to make demands on the schools.

These developments coincided with the establishment of capitalist relations of production in agriculture and the mining industry. According to the Eiselen Commission Report ...

'the discovery of minerals, the building of railways and the Anglo-Boer War ... radically transformed the political and economic life of South Africa. The new conditions bred a new emphasis on Native policy and particularly on the view of the state concerning the education of the Bantu. The new mines, railways, farms, cities and industries cried out for labour.' (Union of South Africa, 1951: 39 - 40, para. 210)

And indeed the first half of the 20th century saw a slow but steady increase in Black school enrolments and a, though slower, also steady, rise - except for during the depression years of the 1930s - in state expenditure on Black schooling. It is clear that the

growth of schooling, at any rate that for Black people, was not initially stimulated by any need for skill training which might have arisen from capitalist production. Generally, the level of skill required was low and both on the farms and in the mines, what skills the workers had to have, were of a sort which could most adequately be developed through training on the job. The manual training that even those who went to school received, tended to be manual labour rather than training in any specific skills. The racist form taken by class relations in the South African context excluded black workers from developing trade and other such higher-level skills. In 1936, the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education was arguing as follows:

'On the one hand ... any rational system of education should make provision for vocational training leading on to occupations which will give employment and a source of livelihood to a considerable proportion of the population. On the other hand any such policy ... would in the present structure of South African economic conditions, lead to competition of Native tradesmen with European, which is at present prohibited ..., or to a dead-end of unemployment for the Native.'

'Having regard to the present attitude of the European towards the employment of Natives in industry, where skilled or even semi-skilled labour is used, it seems inevitable that the educationist in South Africa must pursue a "ca' canny" policy in regard to the training of Native boys and to this extent must turn his back upon sound educational principles.' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 114, para's. 575 - 6)

#### E. Schooling and the making of the Black working class

It will not be argued that the gradual growth of Black schooling from the 1860s through to the mid-20th century was determined by the development of a capitalist mode of production in the region. It is, however suggested that schooling had some bearing on the way in which capitalist class relations emerged. Stated most generally, schooling was one, albeit minor, factor amongst many which went into the making of a Black working class. It made, first of all, a limited contribution to the process of proletarianisation itself. It did so in the same way as did Christianisation of the indigenous people. The latter

was described in 1878 by The Christian Express, mouthpiece of the missionaries at Lovedale, in the following remarkably explicit terms:

'This subject of work is a burning one in this country. No complaint is more common ... from colonists ... than that there is a great deal of work to be done and few trying to do it.'

'We want to see the natives become workers. .... And ... we believe that Christianity will be a chief cause of their becoming a working people .... '

'... how this ... comes to be is twofold. Christianity creates needs. Generally speaking, every man will work just as much as he requires to do and not more. There will be a constant relation between the time a man works and his necessities. .... If you want men to work; then, you must get them to need. Create need and you supply stimulus to work; you enlist the worker's own will on the side of labour. Few men anywhere, and certainly no heathen men, ever work for the mere pleasure of working.

'Now, the speediest way of creating needs among these people is to Christianize them. As they become Christianized, they will want more clothing, better houses, furniture, books, education for their children, and a hundred other things which they do not have now and never have had. And all these things they can get by working, and only by working.

'But Christianity also teaches the duty of working, and denounces idleness as a sin.'

'So to Christianize a Kaffir is the shortest way, and the surest, to make him put his hand steadily and willingly to the work that is waiting to be done. This will make it both his interest and his duty to work, will enlist, besides his bodily appetites, his home affections, his mental powers, and his conscience, on the side of industrious habits.' (Christian Express VIII (95) 1.8.1878: 1 - 2)

In 1905, the South African Native Affairs Commission recommended, with a view to driving a greater number of Black people into wage labour, *inter alia*, 'The encouragement of a higher standard among Natives by support given to education with a view to increase their efficiency and wants.' (quoted in Union of South Africa, 1951: 40 para 212) The schooled minority helped to spread ideas and practices which encouraged

a layer of the newly colonised to want goods that were obtainable only by means of purchase. Testimony was given to the same Commission as to education's 'economic effect in raising the standard of material comfort and thus creating wants.' (quoted in Union of South Africa, 1951: 40, para.211) With a steadily declining proportion of the people able to support themselves on the land, let alone produce a surplus which they could put on the market, wage labour became, for more and more, the only means of acquiring the money which it took to satisfy any such 'new needs' as might have been generated and even longstanding needs which had previously been met within a pre-capitalist mode of production. The latter makes it clear that the above analysis does not attribute any structurally determinant role to either Christianity or schooling.

The making of the Black working class involved more than the process whereby people were rendered dependent on wage labour. Some employers of labour began to see schooling as part of a related process whereby workers might be rendered at least minimally amenable to wage labour and tractable. They started to recognise that it might be in their interests to attempt to win from workers some measure of acceptance of the social place towards which conditions propelled them. As one who identified with such interests, Pells argued that it was essential to school the newly proletarianised Blacks 'if they are not to be left profoundly dissatisfied and an ever-present menace to society.' He supported his contention by citing the experience of England where he claimed that it had been the provision of universal elementary education which above all else averted a bloody revolution. According to Pells,

'Once the Native is allowed outside of his Reserve ... we incorporate him into our economic scheme and thus proceed to educate him. But this education by contact with the White man's life and civilisation is unregulated, haphazard .... By formal education and instruction ... we must give him those standards by which we judge good and bad .... The Bantu must be educated ... to have the right sort of 'wants' and to be able to satisfy those 'wants'. Only thus can he become a contented and useful citizen.' (Pells, 1956: 152)

Or, as the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education argued in 1936,

'The Native is becoming Europeanised by more contact .... One cannot stop the process .... All that can be done ... is to direct and control the process.

'The problem is, therefore, to devise a type of education which will tide the black man over the period during which his tribal sanctions are weakening, and before he feels the force of the sanctions of European civilisation.' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 89, para. 465)

The latter aspect was spelled out still more specifically in 1943 by the Administrator of Natal who was reported as having said that 'the old ways with their folkways, mores and disciplines which were so characteristic of the behaviour of the Zulus were passing away and it was therefore incumbent on the Bantu schools to develop in the Zulu young the new controls, disciplines and behaviours of Western civilisation.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 6(66) 30.9.43: 8) And, indeed, from the earliest days of industrial capitalism in South Africa, there was the attempt to drill into Black workers an acceptance of their place of inferiority, oppression and exploitation. The report of the Interdepartmental Committee described the view prevalent amongst capitalists that ...

'we must give the Native an education which will keep him in his place' - 'if the Native is to receive any education he should have as his aim the idea embodied in Dickens' version of the ancient prayer: -

"Oh, let us love our occupations,  
Bless the squire and his relations  
Live upon our daily rations,  
And alway know our proper stations."

(Union of South Africa, 1936: 86 - 87, para. 453)

The attempt was made to imbue workers with values and attitudes perceived by employers as befitting those in wage labour as well as to teach them the discipline that would be demanded of them as wage labourers. According to the syllabus for Orange Free State primary schools, drawn up in 1945, 'Rightly considered, the ultimate aim of all education and the purpose for which our schools exist, is to provide boys and girls with a training such as will enable them to take their proper place in life when they leave school.' (quoted

in Union of South Africa, 1951: 83, par 470). Expressed quite bluntly by the Native Economic Commission, 1930 - 32, 'He ('the Native') must learn to school his body to hard work ....' (Union of South Africa, 1932: 12, para.77) The interest of White employers of labour in Black schooling was from the start, as put in the 1903 report of the Transvaal's first Inspector of Native Education, Revd W.E.C. Clarke, to 'Teach the Native to Work.' The latter report, dealing with the objectives of the new schooling scheme which had just been drawn up, put forward the following view:

'No proposal for a plan of native education would be likely to commend itself to the great majority of the people of this country that did not contemplate the ultimate social place of the native as that of an efficient worker .... The scheme prescribed makes provision, therefore, in the first place, for the combination of manual training with elementary instruction, and, in the second, for the shaping of that elementary instruction so as to equip the native for a more intelligent comprehension of any industrial work that is set before him.' (Transvaal Education Department, Report for school year January - December 1903, pages 62 - 3. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 220)

Such a stance was taken up even in a Catholic weekly, *Um-Afrika*, which, published in Zulu from Marianhill, was obviously directing itself neither at White public opinion nor at the government policy-makers but at Black people, presumably as a contribution to eliciting their concurrence. The following is extracted from an editorial in the said publication:

'The view that the African should be given education based on the assumption that one day he shall cease to be an employee of the whiteman is in conflict with the facts. It would be like giving the African an Education with no foundation - a course more dangerous than helpful. That type of Education would make him lose that which he should have derived from his training.' (quoted, in translation, in *Inkundla ya Bantu* 7 (92) 18.12.44: 3)

Discussing the recommendations of the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 - 05, concerning Black schooling, the Eiselen

Commission report pointed out 'how insistently the economic motive was making itself felt: the educated Bantu would be useful in the economic expansion of the country.' (Union of South Africa, 1951: 40, para.213) In a paper first presented in 1918, Revd Albert Leroy posed the question, 'Does it pay to educate the native?' The cleric summarised his conclusions as follows:

'If education induces the best of them to go back and work for the uplift of their people; if the educated native is more temperate, works longer and more steadily than the raw native; if the average educated native is ranked by his employer as varying from good to very good; and from his wages is evidently worth from two to four times as much as the uneducated man - then it seems to us, to use Parliamentary language, "The answer to the question is in the affirmative".' (Leroy, 1919: 18)

Schooling, in general, contributed to separating socially the Blacks and Whites who economically were increasingly, albeit unequally, integrated with one another. Thus, for example, one objective of the Education Act of 1865 was to discourage missions from opening their schools to all irrespective of colour by permitting state grants to schools which did so, to be used only for paying teachers' salaries and leaving the missions responsible for all other expenses. Separate and unequal schooling helped to rigidify racist lines of division which up until the development of capitalist industrialisation had still been somewhat loose. Differential schooling for Blacks and Whites was aimed at moulding the children into their respective dominant and dominated places. As put in the report of the 1936 Interdepartmental Committee, 'The education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society.' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 87, para.453) The same report explained well, from the standpoint of the White super-ordinate classes, why the objectives of schooling for Whites could not be the same as those of 'Native education':

'The two societies do not operate in two water-tight compartments. Geographically they are not segregated and economically they are interdependent. These circumstances, however, do not give them equality of

opportunity. On the contrary. To frame pious aims, therefore, for Native education, such as "fullness of life for each and all" ... is easy, but it is rather futile if not actually misleading. Such an aim can be striven after by education in the European society which is homogeneous and democratic. .... But South African society as a whole consisting of Europeans and Natives is not a democratic society.' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 88, para. 459)

Referring - although more than a quarter of a century earlier - to a conception of education differentiated in precisely the same racist terms, The APO wrote as follows:

'It means that education is to be of the kind suited to the recipient's station in life. It has not even the merit of that education which is clamoured for by some businessmen for their sons.' *Viz.* 'the mercenary man's view' that 'education should be directed to giving its recipients the power of getting on in the world, and getting on in the world simply means amassing lucre .... But for the blacks' education even that low motive is to be discarded. Their education is to be such as will allow the other fellows, the whites, to get on in the world by trampling on the blacks. There must be no unrest or disappointment felt by the blacks of South Africa. No outlook is to be given to them. .... They must stay where they are.' (APO 17.7.09)

From the standpoint of the Black subordinate classes, a 1938 issue of The Territorial Magazine - Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda editorialised as follows:

'In a country where there are definitely superior interests, that is the interests of those who form the ruling class it becomes increasingly difficult even to the extent of embarrassment as to how such interests are to be protected. This is the course which the education of the African has inevitably followed. In educating the African care is being taken that he is given only such education as will fit him for a position which is forever subservient.' (Territorial Magazine - Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda 1 (4) 15.7.38)

Schooling for Blacks - necessarily segregated if to be inferior - provided a schooling in inferiority which helped to prepare Black students for the places of inferiority which they would occupy in society.

F: The content of Black schooling

There was a relation - albeit probably not a determinant one - between the form taken by Black schooling and the social places for which Black youth were generally destined. In a memorandum to the Council of Education, a decade before the turn of the century, an Inspector of Native Education in Natal addressed the question of what the 'scope' of Black schooling should be:

'I would define it as being to qualify the native youth for the effective discharge of their probable duties in life. These, for the present generation of school children, are those connected with the stable, kitchen, nursery, wagon or farm.'

'Whatever may be said ... in favour of teaching the use of tools ... the fact remains that a certain amount of preparatory educating of the thinking and observing faculties is necessary.'

'The inculcation of the habits of industry is a very important part of school work ... but in a very effective degree it is quite possible without the teaching of any handicraft, and a trade may be taught without making the boy industrious.'

'There is a great deal of difference between industry and industries; and the former is ... the more important of the two for this people.' (Christian Express XX (237) 1.4.1890: 51 - 2)

A Select Committee on Native Education, appointed in 1908, recommended that the African pupils' language, 'their home conditions, their social and mental environment, their hereditary, tribal or racial instincts, and their future position and work in the country' had to be considered. (quoted in Horrell, 1963: 14) In 1909, the APO commented as follows on 'the peculiar notions of the aims of education which the members of the Cape School Board of the time evidently had:

'With them it is not the drawing out of the faculties of the child. It simply means filling his mind with those facts which may be of service to him in fulfilling the work he may be called on to perform; and the filling process of the coloured child's mind is to be carried on in a different building from that in which the white youngster's mind is operated on. If one considers the composition of the Board, he would not be surprised at such views being entertained by some

of its unlettered members..... They could not find enjoyment in anything beyond the computation of interest or the value of bricks and mortar, or the addition of columns of figures. All other knowledge is regarded by them as useless lumber. They take the old clerical adages as to the necessity for being "content with that station wherein it has pleased a kind Providence to place us" as literally true. Any education that would give a being a thought beyond his station in life is accursed in their eyes. It would, if they had their way, consist solely in the inculcation of the divine duty of drudgery. The black people are the descendents of Ham, according to their ideas. They were meant to be "the hewers of wood and the drawers of water" through all eternity. Their education should therefore be confined to the narrow circle of learning to appreciate the honour they enjoy at the hands of the white man, who allows them to live on the face of God's earth.' (APO 19.6.09)

In 1945, J.N. le Roux articulated the view in Parliament that the schools ...

'should not give the Natives an academic education, as some people are prone to do. If we do this we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in this country? ... I am in thorough agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the labourer in the country .... ' (Hansard, 1945: col. 4528)

To the extent that 'Native education' helped in practice to prepare Black children for a place as subordinate workers, it was in part both through deliberate indoctrination with the ideas of the White superordinate classes, in part through providing them with an education which, insofar as it was equivalent at all to what their White counterparts were acquiring, was vastly inferior, in part through subjecting students to an experience of institutional inferiority, and in part through training them in the discipline and obedience which would be required of them as workers. Thus, for example, the following was written in 1946:

'To-day, the system of African education ... is such as to prepare the African for an inferior type of citizenship. Take history. The history taught in our schools drills into the mind of the African child the idea that

in all our fights with the Whiteman, the Whiteman was on the right and that our forefathers, who fought for their independence and their freedom, were the villains in the whole story.' (Inkundla ya Bantu IX (119) May 1946: 2)

Revd Clarke, in his first and programmatic report cited above, wrote as follows:

'Apart from ... specific subjects I look for substantial results to be produced in the native by the discipline of school life. Habits of obedience and cleanliness and order are what he most wants, and these must be the foundation not only of the usefulness of his school life, but of the life for which the school is but a training.' (Transvaal Education Department, Report for school year January - December, 1903, pages 62 - 3. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975 : 220)

Rather than a 'bookish' schooling, the 'mechanical arts' were emphasised and students familiarised with manual labour. In 1891, Dale reported as follows:

'What the Department wants is to make all the principal day-schools places of manual industry, as well as of book-instruction. It is not expected that all the boys will become expert tradesmen; but it is something to train them to use the spade and the hoe, the plane and the saw, the mason's trowel and the plumb-line.' (Cape of Good Hope, Appendix 1, Vol III to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1892, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1891 G. 9 - '92), pages 11 - 12. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 212)

However, according to, for example, D.D.T. Jabavu, 'In our schools "manual labour" consists of sweeping yards, repairing roads, cracking stones and so on, and is done by boys only as so much task work enforced by a time-keeper, and under threats of punishment.' (Jabavu, n.d.: 95) Even a Government commission report had to admit that the 'manual work' in Black schools had tended to lapse into 'triviality and mere mechanical drudgery with no educative value'. (Union of South Africa, 1936: 92, para. 475) Characterising it as having had 'no educative value' might have been an implicit reference to what Jabavu had identified as 'the invariable result' of the imposition of manual labour of the kind described, namely 'that the boys grow to hate all manual work as humiliating, "skulk"

from it whenever they can, and ever avoid it at home and in after life' (Jabuvu, n.d.: 95) - the very converse, in other words, of the effect which White educationists and employers of labour hoped it would produce.

The scheme for 'Native education', which was put forward after Union by the Council of Education and introduced with a curriculum based thereon in 1915, laid great emphasis on 'training'. This consisted of religious and moral training with the cultivation of such habits as cleanliness, obedience, punctuality, tidiness, orderliness generally, truthfulness, honesty, respect, courtesy, industry, self-dependence, self-restraint, temperance and chastity; physical training; social training, including ideas of civic duty and acquaintance with the laws specially affecting Black people; and industrial training. Schooling also provided, through the 'three Rs', an elementary training in the basic skills of communication and calculation. Most important was a working familiarity with one of the "official" languages - that is, one of the employers' languages, English or Afrikaans. As Clarke explained, 'The enormous percentage of energy that is at present wasted or lost through the lack of a common medium of communication between white employer and native employee shows the necessity of prescribing for all native schools a knowledge of English as one of the elementary subjects necessary.' (Transvaal Education Department, Report for school year January - December, 1903, page 63. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 220) An increasing number of workers who could read, write and work with figures were being sought on the labour market and the schools were the sole source of supply.

Ideologically and psychologically, schooling helped to mould the young workers-to-be into the dominant social relations. There was an attempt to sever them from their past identity and its base in traditional African culture. The early schools contributed to the students' demoralisation by physically removing them to the world of the White colonists, teaching them to despise their own history and culture, and 'converting' them to the colonists' religion. In the place of what was removed, a new world-view and

new values were inserted. In this context, the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education, for instance, regarded religion as 'of paramount importance'. According to its report, 'by religion is not meant merely the learning of the catechism and Bible history, ... but also those emotional and spiritual experiences which determine a person's ideals and his attitude towards life. Under this category are included also character building, morality and manners ....' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 90, para. 469) In religious instruction Black students were taught obedience, humility, patience, fear, passivity, and contentment in adversity. There was, however, amongst the indigencous population, even at the time, keen awareness of the subversive implications of their people being schooled in the settlers' religion. To illustrate this the following is extracted from a catalogue of 'Kaffir objections to the Christian religion' described in 1871:

' ... the Christian religion deprives his countrymen of their nationality. .... No sooner does a member of his tribe embrace the Gospel than he conforms to habits and modes of dress which were altogether unknown to his forefathers.'

'Moreover, when a Kaffir embraces the Gospel, he disowns the authority of his chief, he ceases to be a retainer at "the great place", he no longer spends his time at court, ready at any moment to go errands ... for his chief, he ceases to be a Kaffir subject. Every Kaffir who embraces Christianity lessens the power and authority and greatness of his chief. Christianity neither fosters nor encourages a spirit of loyalty to the Kaffir chiefs, but rather the reverse. .... Any custom ... which teaches the Kaffir such disloyalty ought never to be accepted by wise men who seek to preserve their country's welfare and the authority of their rulers.

' ... the Gospel has deprived him of his country! .... Spies they (the missionaries) were, who came to discover the fat of the land. They received grants of land from chiefs for mission stations, but soon they hailed their countrymen who came across the sea in such numbers that the mission station merged into a town. .... And the unkindest cut of all is that, though robbed of his country, he should yet be urged to accept that which has proved the *greatest foe to the nation!*' (Kaffir Express I (6) 3.3.1871: 2 - 3)

### G. Tardiness in the growth of Black schooling

In the light of what has been suggested about the relation in which Black schooling, up to the mid-20th century stood to the development of capitalist class relations, what might be questioned, is why the growth of Black schooling was so slow. Minimal interest in Black schooling was displayed by the state, capitalists or employers in general. Before 1945, Black education was but seldom debated in the Union Parliament. Except for the Cape provincial administration's appointment, in 1919, of the commission under Dr W.J. Viljoen, the appointment, in 1935, of the Interdepartmental Committee, and the Natal provincial administration's appointment of the Thomas Commission - all of them to report on 'Native Education' - there was little serious state concern with Black schooling before the mid-1940s. In 1920, D.D.T. Jabavu contrasted the state of Black and White education in the following terms:

'The present condition of Native education ... is one of chaos .... Natives here have a just grievance. They see Government spending lavishly in putting up majestic educational edifices for European primary, secondary and University education staffed by highly paid teachers, while they have to be satisfied with having their children taught in mission rooms with walls dilapidated and furniture rough and scanty, teachers receiving miserable pittances, so miserable that a raw and illiterate Zulu policeman in Durban today gets better pay than the best paid Zulu school teacher. Provincial grants to Native education are very tiny by comparison with those for white schools and infinitesimal as compared with the enormous revenue derived from Native taxation.' (Jabavu, n.d.: 12 - 13)

In the mid-1930s, for example, the Government was spending on education over 40 times as much per head of the White population as per head of the African population. In 1940, less than a quarter of the African children between the ages of 6 and 16 were in school. According to Pells,

'In the case of those who did go to school, the time spent and the work done there was so meagre as to amount to no education at all. For over half of them schooling terminated in the sub-standards. Most of the remaining 40% only reached Standard 2. Only  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of those who

attended school reached Standard 6!

'The position by 1940 was that only one in every 1 000 Native children received a fair elementary education! Native education was therefore failing to make the Native literate.' (Pells, 1956: 140)

Why was the schooling of Black South Africans, on whom the economy rested to so significant an extent, not much more of a priority?

In the period prior to the general penetration of capitalist relations of production, the answer is not difficult to find. Dale, in his report on an inspection of schools, which he conducted during 1869, wrote as follows:

'The absence of mechanical appliances to develop the resources of the country or to carry on local industries serves as a check to general education, because skilled and intelligent labour is of no higher value than that of the raw, untaught savage. A people without manufacturing industries, living chiefly by agricultural and pastoral pursuits, must remain at a comparatively low standard; the impulse to higher things is wanting, as well as the necessity which ever brings intelligence and enterprise to the front.

'These general causes not only lower the value of school instruction, but keep people poor and without the means of lengthening the school-life of their children ....' (Cape of Good Hope, Appendix 1 to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1869, Report of an inspection of schools in the Middle and Eastern Districts by the Superintendent-General of Education during the months of March, April, May and June, 1869 (G.31 - 69) pages 3 - 6. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 208)

In 1906, The Christian Express observed that 'the past figures of Missionary institutions ... show greatly reduced numbers during bad years (*viz* years of drought), while numerous letters are received asking for a period of grace with regard to payment of the fees.' (The Christian Express XXXVI (427) 1.5.1906: 125) Furthermore, schooling of Blacks was actively opposed in certain quarters of the settler community and many colonists specifically eschewed the employment of Black persons who had had any schooling. Thus, for example, in 1871 The Kaffir Express was complaining as follows:

' ... for all except the very rudest kinds of work, such as looking after sheep and oxen, and carrying loads, or leading a team of oxen, the raw Kaffir is immeasurably inferior to the trained native. But the red man is preferred by many, because his ignorance passes for simplicity, and because he has not yet learned the civilized lesson of self-assertion. .... He is preferred by many because his wants are fewer, because a worse hut will serve him, and coarser rations and lower wages; and because he controls his feelings well.'  
(Kaffir Express I (4) 4.1.1871: 1)

It must be borne in mind that a society's educative apparatus does not consist solely of schooling. From an identification of certain 'functions' being served by the school, nothing can be assumed about the relative importance of those 'functions' having been served, nor can it be deduced that it was schooling which was required to serve them. Only at a certain stage in the development of a society's capitalist structures does the type of education which might perhaps most appropriately be provided by the school become critical. Before that, while schooling clearly contributes to the educational process, it is but one amongst a number of vehicles for education. In part, this was what the Native Economic Commission, 1930 - 32, was driving at where its report states that ...

'for the regeneration of a primitive people there are educational needs which precede ordinary school education. European school education is based on a civilised environment: for a great proportion of the Native population this civilised environment has still to be created. It is an educational task, but it is not solely the task of the ordinary school, although the school can in a measure assist in carrying it out.'  
(Union of South Africa, 1932: 91, para. 627)

The point is illustrated by the following quotation from the Natal Native Commission of 1881 - 82:

'With reference to Industrial Education, it has to be remembered that there is and has been for many years much of it obtained by the Natives who go to service either at farms or in towns. The former learn to plough and harrow, and to sow crops at proper distances, and to use various tools; the latter are taught orderliness in domestic arrangements and to cook, and in a degree become acquainted with and take part in many of the developments and accompaniments of an advanced civilisation;

and it is but fair to the Natives to say that many of them are easily broken in to all this. Still, service of this kind hardly includes instruction in what are ordinarily called trades, such as masonry, carpentry, and iron and leather work; ....' (Natal Native Commission, 1881 - 2, page 11. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 211)

The conditions which had led to the introduction of mass schooling in the advanced capitalist societies of England, Europe and the United States of America had not as yet arisen in South Africa. In England and certain European countries, mass schooling developed in substantial part as a response to the social and political problems spawned by the Industrial Revolution. With the breakdown of feudalism was broken down its framework of social control. The context in which the labouring people had 'known their place' was removed and replaced by the relative individual freedom of capitalist democracy. Under these conditions, mass schooling would appear to have played an important role in the reassertion of class control by the newly dominant bourgeoisie and provided a way of reproducing an appropriately socialised labour force. Bowles and Gintis, for example, describe how, in the United States, ...

'The process of capital accumulation drastically changed the structure of society: The role of the family in production was greatly reduced, its role in reproduction was increasingly out of touch with economic reality. A permanent proletariat and an impoverished and, for the most part ethnically distinct, reserve army of the unemployed had been created. Economic inequality had increased. Small manufacturing towns had become urban areas almost overnight. The expansion of capitalist production had at once greatly enhanced the power of the capitalist class and had inexorably generated a condition which challenged their continued domination. With increasing urgency, economic leaders sought a mechanism to insure political stability and the continued profitability of their enterprises.' (Bowles and Gintis, 1977: 159)

Bowles and Gintis' thesis is that the mechanism, which they found, was mass schooling. In South Africa, by contrast, the classes with control had achieved it, in the first instance, by conquest. On

that foundation and what it meant for the balance of forces in the ensuing struggle, class control was initially able to be maintained mainly through direct repression. This involved the denial of all political rights and the use of state power for the regimentation and physical control of the lives of Black people by means of the reserve system, the pass laws, and an all-covering net of repressive legislation. Thus, while schooling might be seen as having been part of the structures of social control, it could in no sense be conceived as having been 'necessary' to them under the totalitarian conditions of South African society and given the radically uneven balance of power. Furthermore, where, in other capitalist societies, schooling was already important to the process of allocating young persons within the social division of labour, fitting them into the occupational hierarchy of capitalist production, and distributing them into the social hierarchy, in South Africa these functions were partially served, albeit crudely, by racist ideology.

Furthermore, there was calculated opposition to the development of Black schooling from within the dominant classes on the grounds that it could be politically dangerous and even economically disadvantageous to capitalist interests. Even before the turn of the century, this position was being articulated. Dale was particularly explicit in his report of 1891. There he treated the question of 'diffusing elementary school instruction everywhere among the masses of heathen' as 'a matter of social economy and of political interest'. His argument is significant and warrants quoting at some length:

'Whilst the present cautious system is pursued, no social inconvenience or practical danger can result, but if some system of obligatory school-attendance were introduced and thousands of Kaffirs were leaving school year by year with sufficient school-instruction to set them loose from tribal customs and modes of savage life, what would you do with them? What agencies could be devised to direct teaming thousands into the various channels of Colonial industries? Labour, especially agricultural, is wanted; but will the educated Native leave his home and take service, especially in the western districts? If not, the crowding together of educated natives, living without a trade or regular habits of daily employment, must tend to mischief and social disturbances.

'The capacity to read and write is not in itself a panacea for the abominations of savageism. .... Knowledge is power even to them, but it may be a power for ill.

'Whether the *festine lente* policy pursued by the Department for the last thirty years in the matter of Native education commends itself favourably to public opinion or not, it has been a safe policy ...; and it should not be lightly set aside for a showy and popular system to suit the extreme views of philanthropists, or the theories of those who proclaim universal education as the duty of Governments.' (Cape of Good Hope, Appendix 1, Volume III to Votes and Proceedings of Parliament for 1892, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1891 (G. 9 - '92), pages 11 - 12. Quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975: 211 - 12)

In 1936, the Interdepartmental Committee agreed with Edgar Brookes in summing up the general attitude of White South Africa to education of Blacks as having, in the past, been 'too humane to prohibit it, ... too human to encourage it.' (Union of South Africa, 1936: 87, para. 453) Writing later still, Pells found it understandable that neither of the main White political parties had shown any great enthusiasm for the promotion of Black education, 'since farmers, mineowners and industrialists view them with alarm a process which, as present world experience shows, tends to stimulate the labourers to unreasonable wage demands and uncomfortable social and political aspirations.' (Pells, 1956: 146)

Opposition came also from the White section of the working class since the training of Blacks in certain skills threatened the near monopoly on semi-skilled and skilled categories of employment which White workers had won for themselves. Such opposition was already being articulated in the late 1880s. In an article concerning state support of 'native education', The Christian Express observed in 1888,

'The chief feature of the controversy at present is this - an entire change of the reason why such aid should be withheld. Formerly the Natives got too much school education, and were not taught to use their hands, Now, industrial education is in disfavour, because Europeans are not taught the same, and because native industrial work comes into competition with the European artisan.' (Christian Express XVIII (210) 2.1.1888: 1)

#### H. Schooling as contested terrain

It has been suggested above that the schooling of Blacks contributed, albeit in very limited measure, to certain aspects of capitalism's development in South Africa. Yet, the development of education in the forms which it takes under particular historical conditions is not determined mechanically by posited systemic 'needs' nor evolved rationally on the basis of what 'logically' might be most functional to capitalist interests: the educational arena is contested terrain. Schooling under capitalism is never just a machine processing the children of the exploited to take their parents' places in the interests of the exploiters. While the political representatives of a class, or of classes in alliance, may be at the state controls, there are limits to what they can manipulate - limits largely set by the level reached in the struggle of the politically, and otherwise, dispossessed and by the fact that the implementation of policy depends on the collaboration of students and teachers, against the interests of whose communities such policy may be. Although workers are exploited by employers, it is the wages, which they earn through employment, that alone gives them access to the means of subsistence which they need for their own and their families' survival. It is this - historically transient - mutual dependence that lashes the exploiting and exploited classes together in an antagonistic bind. Schooling, while preparing workers' children for a life of exploitation, at least enhances the individual's chances of finding employment at a rate of remuneration relatively higher than what the entirely unschooled can earn.

The latter is part of what might explain the popular enthusiasm for even inferior education, which gathered momentum from the final quarter of the 19th century. In 1880, The Christian Express observed,

'The thirst for education, and the sacrifices we find parents making to give their sons a good education, are unexampled except in portions of the Home country, where education is made the road to success in life -

the same use to which the African turns it.' (Christian Express X (115) 1.4.1880: 2)

A year later the same newspaper told of a man who had said that he 'just panted' for education for his children, commenting, 'and we are sure that he does not pant alone.' The article continued,

'Behind all this lies another history which we only very partially know, a history of effort and self-denial, chiefly on the part of parents. .... One young man walks all the way from Natal to get to the school he has set his heart upon, and perhaps we see the whole in his case clearly. But there are twenty other cases where the real amount and extent of effort is probably even greater, on the part of parents and friends, and there is not seen but a half-hidden fragment of it.' (Christian Express XX (248) 2.3.1891: 1)

In 1938, The Territorial Magazine - Ipepa NdaBa Lezifunda asserted in an editorial,

'Education amongst Africans will continue for a long time yet being the standard on which the economic welfare of an individual is judged, and any attempt to deprive him of those opportunities whereby he may attain to such a standard, is murderous. .... This is the time when they ('Africans') should be gathering their forces against the threatening illiberal clouds.' (Territorial Magazine - Ipepa NdaBa Lezifunda 1 (4) 15.7.38)

Another aspect of the context in which to understand this demand for education, which Black people have consistently put forward from the earliest years of the 20th century, was the influence of that part of liberal conventional wisdom which has had it that change would come 'naturally' when people were educated. As articulated by Dr D.G.S. M'Timkulu, for instance, Africans 'seek for integration into the democratic structure and institutions of the country. To them one of the most effective ways of achieving this is by education - an education essentially no different from, or inferior to, that of other sections of the community.' (quoted in Herbstein, 1978: 85 - 6) Or, as spelled out more specifically by Isaac A. Mdoda in 1943,

'The leadership of any race anywhere in the world today should concentrate on EDUCATION, as its primary factor in preparing it for its new defensive position.

'The political position, for the African, is grave. Geographically he has no foothold. He has become the ward of a suspicious, malicious and heartless civilisation. ... he is hemmed in with a limit on his movements. He can go thus far and no farther.

' ... how can he get out of this? It is not by foolishly fighting back, to be clubbed to death economically and politically, but by diplomatically manoeuvring himself out of the situation with credit to himself.

'Every African in his sphere must have himself educated to the highest degree, so as to be able to deal with his prejudiced competitor on the spot. Therefore, it is the duty of the African to develop a high state of intelligence superior to his adversary's, and use that education for the means of extricating himself from the hole in which he is placed.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 6(69) 30.12.43: 1)

Some Black people believed that White workers enjoyed the relatively comfortable conditions, which they did, as a result of their having been educated. Thus, for example, in a paper presented to the Natal Missionary Conference held in July 1920, in Durban, D.D.T. Jabavu stated,

' ... white employees and clerks everywhere are being paid in accordance with the times, either as a consequence of strikes, threatened strikes, or other persuasion. This is all due to the fact that the European, being well educated, knows how to speak out his sufferings, plead his case intelligently in the press, organise to the point of perfection, enlist public opinion in his cause, and finally force the hands of Government.' (Jabavu, 1920: 2)

Furthermore, it could be seen that most Black leaders were now being drawn from amongst those whom schooling had equipped with certain of the skills they needed in order to be able to lead 'effectively' on the new terrain of political struggle delimited by the White rulers. Those leaders, in turn, supported an educational policy

which, as characterised by Shingler, 'accorded with their political vision by calling for universal compulsory education on European lines. Such an education would, they believed, enable African children to enter a common society.' They saw education 'as providing a language of global pre-eminence, as a means of participating in the structure which had been imposed upon them and of obtaining familiarity with a literature and ideas, skills and techniques which were the source of wealth and power.' (Shingler, 1973: 54)

Black people's faith in education's potential to affect their life-chances as individuals and collectively were confronted by the harsh realities of racist capitalism. The following is extracted from a letter to the Editor of The Christian Express, which was published under the sub-title, 'Why have you educated me?'

'Of the many promising ('Native') men, thus trained (*viz* for 'industrial' purposes), who have gone out into the world to make a living, some can be traced who are more or less usefully occupied; but sad to relate, the majority are not now engaged in the trades they learned. Many of the latter are to be found on the Reef and in other places ... associating with the lowest class.

'... this sad failure, in many cases, is to a large extent attributable to the Colour Bar. The Trade Unions in South Africa hold a general principle "employ whites". ..... There is therefore no opening for a Native tradesman.'

'It is useless to send our children to school to learn trades when work, the means of livelihood, is denied them. ... we Natives are reluctantly compelled to raise our voices in protest against this gross injustice.'

'With the present state of unrest among the Native people it would not require much to turn the four Provinces of the Union into boisterous little "Balkan States". Then the real "Black Problem" would emerge. We have no desire to appear to threaten; but wise men look facts in the face. Unrest cannot die down while the causes of unrest continue. The Native is loyal but his loyalty is too severely tested when the only answer to his cry for industrial justice is "Pernicious Agitator".' (Christian Express LI (610) 1.9.1921: 146)

Not all Black people believed blindly in education. Many had their faith undermined by the conditions to which the correspondent quoted above was referring. An alternative attitude to education was suggested by a remarkable editorial in Inkundla ya Bantu which warrants quotation at length.

'Many of us firmly believe that education will solve the European Problem (it is not a Native Problem) in this country. Fort Hare has only to turn out thousands of graduates and lo and behold the European problem will vanish like darkness at the break of day. Where exactly the magic of education lies is a question we are seldom bothered with. Yet it is absolutely necessary for the development of our people to know the possibilities and limits of education as it is practised today. When we consider that only 30% of the Native children of school-going age are at school and that over 50% of those are in the Sub-Standards, there is reason to be alarmed at the slow progress of Native Education. Surely it is time that some form of compulsory education was introduced. Such a step would immediately increase the literacy of the Natives, with beneficial results to the development of Bantu literature, which at present is in sore need of a reading public. But reading alone doth not make a full man. Man has to eat to live. It is eating rather than reading matter that is fundamental to the existence of man. Nowadays education has very largely become vocational. It has become a matter of life and death. It is the means whereby human beings may live in comfort and security. With this knowledge let us ask ourselves the question, "to what extent would intensification of Native education better the economic position of the Natives?" the answer is, "Very little indeed." In the first place owing to the poverty of the Natives very few children would receive the benefit of a vocational education. Those lucky enough to go to college would, on completion, find that there were no jobs for them. .... it is fundamental to the policy of cheap Native labour that the Natives should not be admitted to skilled professions. The whole fabric of South Africa's industry rests upon cheap Native labour and vocational education of the Natives meets with strong disapproval and hostile legislation. To be approved by dominant White South Africa Native education must fit the Native ever to become the servant of the White man. .... the Natives must be educated to become good servants of the European.

' ... Native education alone especially as we find it today is not going to solve the European problem. Let our professors and teachers engaged in Native

education realise that they are doing a commendable thing namely, getting a comfortable existence in a hard and cruel world. But let them have no illusions about being the spearhead of that body of men who see visions of the Native people taking a respectable place in the body-politic of South Africa.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 4(42) September 1941: 2)

It is in these terms that it may be possible to understand - in spite of the popularly expressed desire for 'education' and the marginally better-off positions for which those in school hoped they were headed - significant aspects of the uneven history of Black students' resistance to some of what they were taught and, more particularly, to how, and the conditions under which, they were taught. Parents, teachers and the Black community at large were, at various points, all involved in this resistance, the history of which has been little researched. Of course, the history of Black students' resistance includes forms which have been manifested in White schools as well. There is no implication intended in the record of resistance presented in this thesis to the effect that Black students were in all, or even most, cases motivated by political opposition to whatever they might have considered responsible for their schooling being as it was. Furthermore, aspects of what is included as 'resistance' on the part of Black students may be more appropriately conceptualised in some other way, just as it may be meaningless to conceive of all childish indiscipline as being resistance to the objectives of schooling.

As described above, resistance to schooling goes back to the very first formal school: the young slaves, for whom it was intended, ran away with such frequency that it had to be closed. The earliest form of resistance to schooling was, indeed, simply keeping clear of it altogether. However, in the final quarter of the last century, there were indications of increasing resistance on the part of those in schools. Diet appears to have been an almost perennial issue at the boarding establishments. For example, referring to Lovedale, The Christian Express wrote, in 1876, that 'here as everywhere else, the food question becomes at times a "vexed question".' (Christian Express VI (70) 1.7.1876: 2 - 3)

When students were unable to achieve improvement through negotiation, they would resort to boycotting the food. In 1873, a section of the students at Lovedale protested against 'Kaffirs and Fingoes' being 'not treated with the same justice', the discrimination having allegedly been in favour of the Fingoes. Five meetings between the Lovedale authorities and the students were held on the matter, two of which ended at two o' clock in the morning while the fifth lasted eight hours and only finished at four o' clock on a Sunday morning. The outcome was the expulsion of fifteen students. According to a report in the Kaffir Express,

'Though 47, who are as truly Kaffirs as the loudest of the complainants, have declared that no distinction is made, these 15, with a degree of insolent and infatuated insubordination persisted in maintaining this falsehood and in endeavouring to stir up ill-feeling.'

'Those who were ... dismissed were requested to stay if they wished, till their friends were communicated with. This offer with a good deal of strained bravado, they refused to accept ....' (Kaffir Express IV (40) 6.1.1874: 7)

As a further indication of growing resistance by Black students, even before the turn of the century, Lovedale's Report for 1893 identified as 'a serious evil' then 'pressing', 'a perceptible increase of wilfulness and self-assertion showing itself in impatience of restraint and sometimes even, as all Institutions can testify, in curious fits of rebellion in numbers.' (Christian Express XXIV (281) 1.1.1894: 3)

The overall picture in the first half of the 20th century was of sporadic collective action restricted to single institutions. Most of the concerted resistance arose in rural secondary schools and teachers' training colleges. Boarders, as opposed to day-students, tended to be in the forefront and the ages of those who played an active role ranged from the mid-teens to the early twenties. The occasion for, if not the 'cause' of, student resistance was generally provided by some immediate issue or set of issues. The most common was the food question. According to a letter written to

the Editor of Inkundla ya Bantu by one signing him/herself 'Once a Student',

'The conditions of living in many of our colleges are very poor. .... Some schools have no proper water system. Nearly in all of them, the diet is bad, being unscientifically weighted with carbohydrates. Now and again you find that the food is poorly cooked and inadequate supervision is exercised on its preparation. Sometimes no proper facilities exist for the cleaning of utensils. ... I know of quite a famous college where students carry their spoons in their pockets wherever they go.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 8 (102) 30.6.45: 2 - 3)

A month previously the same publication had noted, in an editorial concerned with 'the frequent occurrences of strikes in colleges for Africans', that 'In the majority of these disturbances, the food question is always associated in one way or the other with the strike.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 8 (101) 31.5.45: 2)

Another source of strife was the oppressive authority which staff wielded over students. Punishment constituted a particularly sore issue. To quote an article which appeared in The Territorial Magazine - Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda in 1938,

'the relations in schools between the teacher and the taught border on acute antagonism. What progress can be expected where teachers instead of being guardians ... and legitimate advisers of their students are turned to be tyrants imposing their will, regardless of its being illogic, on the students, failing whose obedience, punishment follows.'

The article referred to 'the question of Punishment' not only as 'a source of annoyance both to the inflictor and to the person on whom it is inflicted' but also as serving 'to place teacher and student in two diametrically opposed camps.' In addition to the often inappropriate reasons for punishment being administered, the 'kinds of punishment employed ... enlarge the gulf between teacher and student. The first and commonest is abusive language "Silly Asses", "Dogs", and the rest of them. ... students ... resent the application of vulgar language

to them.' Other forms of punishment mentioned in the article included 'flogging, clapping, kicking' and 'the worst' was expulsion. (Territorial Magazine - Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda 1 (9) December 1938: 6 - 7)

Related to the latter set of issues was another constituted by the employment of White staff who seemed less than sympathetic to, if concerned at all about, their Black wards. The following is extracted from an article written in 1940 by 'Another Victim':

'Native institutions fail in their duty to produce the best trained men and women fit to do their bit. This is attributable to two factors. First that the teaching staff dishing out information to them is composed of a white majority who do not understand the conditions and the background of the African and secondly the Matrons and Lady Superintendents who are supposed to mother the women students are always white ladies. .... These Matrons, naturally knowing little about the African and caring very little for them act only as policemen to read students' letters and mete out punishment ....'

The writer's particular grounds for protest on this point are especially noteworthy since they contain an implicit expectation that education could serve Black people in the struggle for liberation. The piece proceeds,

'This needs rectifying, the sooner the better, for the good of the African woman who now fails to stand side by side with the African man in the struggle for liberation because she leaves school hopelessly equipped. African progress is hindered by unenlightened womenfolk. A typical example, Boys at Clarkesbury Institution organised a strike fairly successfully, though we are not sure whether they are now provided with better meals, the Girls remained quiet as though all was well; no wonder, poor things, their initiative is thwarted, their creative power is misdirected ....' (Inkundla ya Bantu 3 (28) July 1940: 2)

That students had no control over their education or, more specifically, their schools, was also raised as an issue by them.

This is indicated by, for instance, the following, albeit antagonistic, extract from an article which appeared in a 1945 issue of The South African Outlook:

'About the end of March we had at one of our Native educational institutions another of those riots that from time to time have so disturbed their life in the past 25 years. It was not marked by much destruction of property ... but the evidence points to an attempt on the part of some to do grievous bodily injury to at least one member of staff.'

'Those responsible for the College in question are satisfied that it was an attempt on the part of the students to usurp authority. It seems unthinkable that any body of pupils should have claimed the right to govern, or thought themselves capable of governing, an educational institution in any of its internal affairs or in regard to appointments to the staff, but it is just these unthinkable things that are happening amongst some African students today.'  
(South African Outlook 75 (889) 1.5.45: 70)

Others of what were issues for students included assaults by White staff on students and on Black staff and forced menial labour on farms, roads and school premises.

Over the years, students at their various institutions organised, protested and demonstrated over the above sorts of issues. Generally, they undertook more concerted collective action only after they had made representations to the school authorities and after discussions had been conducted. Further action took several forms. Students boycotted the food, chapel and classes. On occasions, they withdrew the menial labour exacted from them. When sufficiently provoked, they confronted the authorities with sticks and stones and set fire to property. The most common collective action came to be that combination of the latter forms brought together in what was known as a 'strike'. Following a 'strike' which had involved violence and destruction by student apprentices at Blythswood Institution on 17 February 1929, The South African Outlook commented thus:

'The "Strike" idea among Native students had its origin in reports brought back from the Rand by Native labourers of the methods followed there and of the reckless violence of the riff-raff of Johannesburg in labour disputes, so it has from the first been conceived of not merely as a quitting of work, but of blows to be "struck" and damage to be done. As this up to date method of getting grievances righted it has in the course of the last ten years or thereabouts been applied at every one of the large Native training institutions, and, as was to be expected, the procedure has become increasingly lawless and dangerous. This last incident at Blythwood, which apparently arose out of nothing more serious than a grievance about bounds ... outdoes its predecessors in that it seems to have been from the beginning an organised attack upon the staff, with the intent to do them serious, if not fatal injury.' (South African Outlook 59 (694) 1.3.29: 41 - 2)

To illustrate something more of what strikes by Black students in the first half of the 20th century involved, an early example of one, which occurred at Lovedale Missionary Institution is described below.

#### Lovedale, 1920<sup>1</sup>

Lovedale had been losing money, according to those responsible for the Institution. In April, 1920, the authorities decided, as one measure to reduce running costs, to substitute conventional wheat bread with a bread which was made partially from mielie meal. Two years previously, when a similar change had been attempted, the male students had gone 'on strike,' smashing windows. Although one consequence

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1. This account is based on reports which appeared just after the strike on 25 April 1920 in Grocott's Penny Mail (XCVIX (7919) 28.4.20: 5; XCVIX (7920) 30.4.20: 2) and, more substantially, on a synthesis of evidence given by students and staff of Lovedale in the subsequent trial and appeal of 198 of the students who had participated, as reported in The South African Outlook (L (595) 1.6.20: 85 - 7; L(597) 2.8.20: 119 - 21) and Grocott's Penny Mail (XCVIX (7925) 6.5.20: 3; (7925) 6.5.20: 3; XCIX (7926) 7.5.20: 3; XCIX (7972) 30.6.20: 3).

of their action had been that some of them were expelled, another had been that the Institution had reverted to ordinary bread. In 1920, even before the new bread's introduction, one or more students had written up inside the boy's urinal and elsewhere, 'Why not strike on the 19th?' This was a reference to 19 April when the first experimental loaf was scheduled to be baked. Dissatisfaction over food had in any case been rising. A month earlier, the boys had complained that their diet included insufficient meat and, periodically, they would complain to the monitors about the food in general.

On 22 April, 1920, Dr McVicar addressed all the students in the dining hall and explained that the new bread would be just as good as conventional bread. The students generally did not accept his explanation and interrupted him as he spoke. Three grades of fees were paid by Lovedale boarders and only those at the highest paying tables were prepared to eat the mielie meal bread that day. After the doctor had left, the monitors advised the students not to eat the bread and called a meeting of all the boys. At the meeting, it was decided to send the monitors to the boarding master in order to complain about the bread which had been issued. The next morning, another meeting was held at which the monitors reported what the boarding master had said. Not satisfied with the reply, the boys instructed the monitors to see the Acting Principal, Lennox. After they had done so, a further meeting was held at which the idea of a 'strike' was put forward. 'Our parents are paying for what we get and we shouldn't eat the pigs' food the Englishmen want to feed us on.' The meeting agreed that they should gather after supper at the Technical Building. During the meal that evening Lennox came in to describe how the bread was made but also to promise that they would have ordinary bread the following day.

After supper on Sunday, 23 April, all except two cripples and 'some coloured boys', who had not been invited to the meeting, moved off to fetch their blankets and overcoats from the dormitories and then congregated at the appointed place. Having collected sticks and stones, and carrying a red flag, the students commenced their strike by putting the Institution's power plant out of commission so that all the lights went out. After 'smashing up' the Technical Building,

dining hall and bookstall the students were on their way to certain of the dormitories when confronted by Lennox and McVicar. Some of the boys started running away when they saw them but were called back by two of the leaders who proposed that the vice-principal and doctor be stoned. Lennox was struck on the forehead and injured. One of the Black teachers, who had shouted to the boys to do no more damage, was also pelted with stones before being grabbed and given a few cuts with a stick. The students proceeded to the dormitories, which they smashed, as they did the main educational building. Some of them set fire to the straw in the grain store which was gutted and wrecked. By the time they were through, almost every window in the establishment, including those of the church, had been broken. All this took about an hour after which, having declared their intention of returning in the morning, they retired up nearby Black Hill where they held a meeting. A student, who was one of the Crown witnesses in the subsequent trial, wrote 'minutes' of the latter meeting which he presented as part of his evidence and from which the following is taken:

- '(1) Let us sign a petition and write all our grievances ....
- (2) Choose no spokesman.
- (3) Don't allow the Magistrate to ask you one by one.
- (4) Tonight we should make another strike (Monday evening) at the Girls' School so that we should all go home. Since we are hungry we should go for mieities from the fields and destroy the whole night.' (quoted in Grocott's Penny Mail XCVIX (7925) 6.5.20: 3)

The Institution was guarded during the rest of the night by police, the Lovedale staff and White residents of Alice; they were later reinforced by an inspector and 13 policemen from King William's Town and still more from out-stations. In the morning, the students marched in a body, numbering some 250, to the Magistrates office in Alice where they were arrested. From there, they were transferred for trial to Grahamstown where the local newspaper commented wryly,

'The accommodation at the local goal will... be severely taxed, but the authorities have made arrangements to overcome this difficulty. A deduction to be drawn from

this is that the war is not without its lessons. Barbed wire may yet find a further usefulness'. (Grocott's Penny Mail XCVIX (7919) 28.4.20: 5)

When the students appeared on 5 May in the Grahamstown Gaol for preparatory examination on charges of public violence, arson and malicious injury to property, 'in order to simplify identification every prisoner wore a large numbered card round his neck ....' (Grocott's Penny Mail XCVIX (7924) 5.5.20: 3) Fifty had the charges against them withdrawn, while the remaining 198 students were all found guilty of 'geweld, or public violence'. Fourteen of them were singled out as ringleaders for heavier punishment and were each sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment with hard labour and a fine of £50, or in default of payment, a further 6 months' imprisonment with labour. The rest received a fine of £15 or, in default of payment, 3 months' imprisonment with hard labour. The students' appeal was dismissed by the Grahamstown Supreme Court.

No evidence has been found of students having attempted, during the period under review, to broaden their resistance into the community. Generally, it remained restricted to the bounds of individual establishments. There appears to have been minimal student involvement in political organisations. However, Black students do seem to have been responsive both to the conditions in society at large and particularly to struggles against those conditions. In an editorial arguing that, despite the frequency with which the food question cropped up in student strikes, 'the problem does not start and end with food', Inkundla ya Bantu stated, 'The strikes indicate a new sensitiveness to treatment meted out to African students by those schools which have had trouble; a natural reaction when the entire African community has begun to see their problems in the light of their future as full citizens.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 8 (101) 31.5.45: 2) The Committee of Inquiry which was appointed by the Lovedale Governing Council to investigate the causes of the student 'strike' at the Institution on 7 August 1946 included in its Report the following summary of the grievances which students had aired four days before the strike at a mass meeting called by the Chairperson of the Students' Rep-

representative Council to hear complaints:

- '(a) The sugar ration had been cut since the beginning of the session.
  - (b) The bread ration had been reduced.
  - (c) Shortages in beans and samp.
  - (d) The students were not notified of these cuts.
  - (e) Failure to implement a promise by the Principal that substitutes would be provided.
  - (f) The way in which the food was cooked was not appetising.
  - (g) Dirty conditions of the lavatories.
  - (h) Closing during certain hours of the woodyard from which hot water was supplied to the students.
  - (i) At the Bookstall, Croxley pads were no longer sold to the students.
  - (j) That the Principals of the High and Training Schools "did not respect the senior students, and that the former did not listen to complaints".
  - (k) That the free supply of paper to typewriting students from the High School had been discontinued.
  - (l) That members of the Students' Representative Council should have more privileges than the prefects.
  - (m) That the Students' representatives should be consulted in cases of expulsion for misconduct.'
- (as reproduced in South African Outlook 77 (909) 1.1.1947: 6)

The Committee's findings, however, were that 'the real causes of the disturbance' were not these grievances but rather were traceable to factors enumerated in its Report as follows:

- '(i) General state of unrest throughout the world;
  - (ii) Race Consciousness, evident not only in South Africa, but in other parts of the world - in India, Java, the Middle East, and African Colonies and elsewhere;
  - (iii) The tendency on the part of the students to assert their freedom of action, and the urge to do things for themselves;
  - (iv) The Colour Bar and the Economic Disabilities of the African people;
  - (v) Resentment of authority and weakening of discipline during the war period and the breakdown of tribal and parental control;
  - (vi) Political influences, both within and outside the Institution, political propaganda, the distribution of inflammatory literature, and undesirable contacts during the vacations.'
- (as reproduced in South African Outlook 77 (909) 1.1.1947: 13)

Elaborating on the latter point earlier in its Report, the Committee of Inquiry stated,

'it should be emphasised that there is a growing middle class comprising the advanced elements of the African people, which is becoming of great political significance, and which has its most active expression in demands for the abolition of laws specifically affecting Africans and for increased representation on public bodies and in the Legislature. Their views are represented by the Native Representative Council, by organisations of considerable influence and by a number of newspapers and political pamphlets and bulletins.

'This interest in politics has extended to the schools, and it was stated that even at the High School stage students take a keen interest in the political situation.

'Some witnesses suggested that the facts of life were sufficient to influence the minds of the students, while others drew attention to the danger that has arisen from a flood of inflammatory literature, that has found its way among them.' (as reproduced in South African Outlook 77 (909) 1.1.1947: 12)

Significantly, the Report also brought out ...

'the fact that the disturbance synchronised with the unrest that ended in a strike of African mine workers on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines on 12 August, 1946. The movement organised by the African Mine Workers Union actually began on 19 May, 1946, and the decision to strike was taken on 4th August. Meanwhile the organisers of the strike were actively engaged in making propaganda, and there is little doubt that the strike bulletins that reached Lovedale during this period and the atmosphere brought back by students, some of whom came from the Reef, after the June-July vacation, contributed to the general disaffection.' (as reproduced in South African Outlook 77 (909) 1.1.1947: 12)

Another source of resistance within the school system was a section of the teaching corps. It is probably impossible ever to determine the extent of attempts by teachers to undermine that system through what, and how, they taught under cover of closed classroom doors. Overt resistance on the part of Black teachers in the first half of the century was limited in all respects. When they did raise their voices publicly it was most commonly to demand higher salaries and better working conditions for themselves. On 6 May, 1944, for example, teachers along the Reef staged demonstration in support of their demand for improved salaries. Teachers and community members process through the streets of Johannesburg singing

'Morena Boloka' and bearing banners on which their demands - which also included free universal education and more schools - were inscribed. After the demonstration, a large rally was addressed by numerous leaders of groups and organisations including the President-General of the ANC, Dr A.B. Xuma, who pledged Congress' support for the teachers and pleaded for unity in their ranks as the only way of struggling through to victory. (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (78) 17.5.44: 5) As a result of concerted agitation around the issue of teachers' pay, a commission was appointed in the Transvaal to investigate the matter. (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (80) 17.6.44: 3) Also in May, 1944, 'Indian' teachers at Sastri College in Durban decided to strike for higher salaries and better working conditions (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (79) 31.5.44: 3) In June of the same year, a 'mammoth meeting' of the United Cape African Teachers Association, held over four days at Willowvale in the Transkei, threatened militant action if the Government did not respond to its salary demands. (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (82) 17.7.44: 3) To the extent that teacher resistance was taken further in organised form, this was done mainly by three organisations: the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA), the Transvaal African Teachers' Association (TATA) and the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA), which were all affiliated to the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) - the former two *via* the All African Convention (AAC) and the latter *via* the Anti-Coloured Affairs Department Movement (Anti-CAD) - which, from its inception in 1943, had placed education high amongst its priorities.

Resistance came also from outside the school system, in particular from parents' and political organisations. A parents' association was formed in Natal as early as 1939. Another was formed in the Transkei during the 1940s. Parents opposed Native Education in its structure and in its content, in its component parts and *in toto*. Amongst the resolutions adopted unanimously at the first conference of the Bantu Parents Association in Natal, held on 30 June, 1939, in Durban, were the following:

'That this Conference condemns the new method of instruction to Native children, that is the medium of instruction to be Zulu from Std I to Std IV.'

'The Conference holds that the Official Languages of the Union must for the purposes of Native Education be recognised as the medium of instruction in our Native Schools, and that lessons must be in either or both of the Official Languages.

'Zulu to be used in the early stages only as a part subject.'

'While this Conference is in favour of the Union Government taking over Native Education from the Provincial Administration, it strongly opposes the transfer of Native Education to the Native Affairs Department. ....

'We urge very earnestly on the Minister of Native Affairs (Education) not to establish a precedent that is totally opposed by all parents of Native children.'

'This Conference would like to see all schools controlled by the Government direct, and that Government Aided Schools be transferred accordingly.'  
(Territorial Magazine - Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda 2 (18) September 1939: 3)

In January 1944, the same body held a meeting in Ladysmith 'with a view to enabling all parents in Natal to present a firm front against Native Education.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 6 (71) 31.1.44: 3)

The following is extracted from an article which appeared in a 1943 issue of Inkundla ya Bantu:

'This "Native Education" seems to-day to mean a special type of inferior education which is meant to lull the Native into the old sleep that has weighed him down for decades already; and to keep the Native lingering in the vestibule of knowledge, wallowing in the quagmire of the slash and ooze of ignorance. Cui bono? The big dog, of course, reaps the benefit thereof.'

'We must do away with this "dummy sort" of education. It is as cruel or rather as generous as offering a stone to an unsuspecting ignorant child who craves for bread.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 6 (68) 30.11.43: 5)

Two months later, the same publication asserted, 'The African does not want Native Education and he is determined to wage a ruthless struggle to give to his child that education which will make him the

equal of any other South African, White or Yellow.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 6 (71) 31.1.44: 3) Further, it interpreted the Natal provincial authorities' appointment of a commission of inquiry into Native Education as 'a Government reaction to the fact that Bantu parents in this province have publicly challenged the principle on which Native Education is based - the principle of African development along separate and inferior lines. African parents demand education for full citizenship and not for servitude.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (80) 17.6.44: 3)

The 1939 conference of the Natal Bantu Parents Association expressed its opposition 'to the system of teaching children only over-sea history in the Primary Schools'. (Inkundla ya Bantu 2 (18) September 1939: 3) In 1946, Inkundla ya Bantu took history as an example of what had to be opposed in Native Education on the level of the curriculum, stating, 'Our history, in our schools, seeks to perpetuate this doctrine of White superiority and it is time we raised our voices in protest against it.' (Inkundla ya Bantu IX (119) May 1946: 2) Professor Z.K. Matthews, in a review, which he wrote in 1946, of Native Education over the previous 25 years, stated,

'opposition has come in the main from the African people themselves. They have pointed out that there was a danger of their children being given a form of education which might be more of a handicap to them than anything else. They have demanded for their children an education which takes due account of the fact that they are living in the modern world, in an environment which includes both Western and African elements linked together indissolubly. Their view has been that they will not tolerate any course which purports to prepare their children for a purely African environment when they know that such a thing no longer exists in South Africa. Without advocating a slavish following of the curricula requirements of European schools, they have insisted upon the necessity for constructing our curricula in such a way that all children can, in accordance with their varying talents, be led into the common heritage of man in all fields of human knowledge and skill.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 76 (905) 2.9.46: 140)

Parents and others demanded consistently that the quality of education be improved, that it be offered free, and that it be made

compulsory. In 1909, the APO, through the columns of its official organ, urged ...

'further attention being paid to, and fuller provision being made for, the education of the coloured children of the (Cape) colony. ... justice demands it. The coloured ratepayers bear their share of the burden of government, and are justly entitled to fuller facilities for education; and we are convinced that the only solution of the education problem will be found in making primary education free, secular, and compulsory for coloureds as for whites.' (APO 3.7.09)

Another of the resolutions adopted by the conference of the Bantu Parents Association mentioned above was as follows, 'The Parents Association requests that schooling of Native children should be free and should be on the same basis as other schools of Non-Europeans made compulsory.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 2 (18) September 1939: 3) In 1944, Inkundla ya Bantu referred to 'the rising tide of African agitation for better Education.' It observed, 'On the education front Africans are gradually marshalling their forces for united action. .... The struggle for better education and higher salaries is a national affair and part of the national struggle.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (80) 17.6.44: 4)

The most fundamental question to be raised by those strictly outside the school system was that of its control. The 1939 conference of the Bantu Parents Association recorded its conviction that 'the time has come when the Authorities in charge of Native Education should consult the parents of the Bantu children in any change in school syllabus and other changes that vitally concern the Education of the Native children.' (Territorial Magazine - Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda 2 (18) September 1939: 3) In 1944, Inkundla ya Bantu asserted 'the eternal right of the African parent to say what form of education shall be given to his child.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 6 (71) 31.1.44: 3) Either out of naiveté or for polemical purposes, the same publication interpreted the inclusion of Africans in the commissions appointed by the provincial authorities of the Transvaal and Natal to report on Black teachers' salaries and Native

Education, respectively, as indicating,

'an acceptance (by the Government) of the principle that the Black man must have a voice in the making of the laws which affect him, and, therefore, a first assurance that after all the foolish experiments with Native Education, it (Native Education) will cease to be a political instrument used by the Whiteman to curb the free development and training of the African's intellect and therefore an instrument to make the Bantu satisfied with an inferior position in the State.' (Inkundla ya Bantu 7 (80) 17.6.44: 3)

A few attempts were made to circumvent state control of schooling by setting up independent schools supposedly beyond the reach of state policy. The Second Annual Congress of the Cape Trade Unions held during 1920 in Cape Town resolved 'not to leave the children of the workers in the Cape any longer at the mercy of Capitalist Public Schools, but to get busy in establishing a Labour College in Cape Town, at the earliest possible moment.' It was proposed to teach initially the following subjects:

- '(1) History (from the workers' and materialist points of view)
  - (2) History and Development of Trade Unionism
  - (3) Sociology
  - (4) Economics.'
- (Bolshevik 1 (8) May 1920: 7)

Attempts which did come to limited fruition were those of Black parents in the Transvaal where by 1948 there were 'shanty' secondary schools, as they were known, in Orlando, Western Native Township, Brakpan, Atteridgeville and Alexandra (Lodge, 1980: 43) Finally, there were occasions when parents attempted to intervene in the school system directly. One such instance was the boycott of Brakpan's Amalgamated Mission School in 1944. To protest the Department of Education's dismissal of a politically active teacher, mothers of some of the school's 900 students picketed the school entrance and persuaded the students to return home. (Lodge, 1980: 44)

The various forms of resistance which had been arising in and around the schools by the time the National Party came into power contained the seeds of what were for the dominant classes ominous potential developments from below.

## I. The introduction and development of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education

The National Party brought to government a new emphasis on Black schooling. There was the almost immediate appointment, in January 1949, of the Commission on Native Education headed by Dr W.W.M. Eiselen. The Commission reported in 1951 and, pursuant to its recommendations, the Bantu Education Act was passed in 1953. A Commission on Coloured Education was set up in the Cape in 1953 although it was only in 1963 that the Coloured Persons Education Act was passed. The latter provided for the control of education for children classified Coloured to be transferred from the provinces to a Division of Education within the Department of Coloured Affairs. This transfer of control was effected in the Cape and Transvaal on 1 January, 1964, and in Natal and the Orange Free State on 1 April, 1964. The last legislative bricks were laid in the wall of segregated schooling by the Indian Education Act of 1965 which similarly, provided for the transfer of the control of education for people classified Indian from the provinces to the Department of Indian Affairs. Its provisions were applied throughout Natal and to the Transvaal College of Education for Asiatics as from 1 April, 1966, and, a year later, it came into operation in the Transvaal generally. The Act came into operation in the Cape on 1 April, 1970.

Opponents of the system of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education have tended to portray it as having been an entirely new approach to Black schooling, which, as the brainchild of Nationalist ideologues, who ignored what was functionally required for continued economic growth, deviated from the enlightened direction of the mainly mission Native Education which it superceded. Such an interpretation, however, is misleading. First of all, it involves a distorted notion of what the schooling of Blacks consisted in prior to the introduction of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education; secondly, it overlooks all of what the National Party carried over into Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education from the educational system which it had inherited from previous regimes, the fact being that there were both continuities and discontinuities; and, thirdly, its assumptions about what was

functionally required for 'economic growth' are unsubstantiated.

There had never previously been a coherently formulated educational policy integrated into overall state strategy. The Eiselen Commission proposed one. Various changes followed the implementation of the Bantu Education Act. Black schools were taken out of church and other non-state hands and control was centralised in Pretoria. Syllabus revision became centrally dictated. The primary school syllabi, which were finally enforced in 1956, stressed obedience, communal loyalty, ethnic and national diversity, acceptance of allocated social roles, piety, and identification with rural culture. Teachers were to be as rigidly regimented as practically possible. Schools were as far as possible reorganised on a fragmented sectionalist or 'tribal' basis. They were 'Bantu-ized' in personnel and, to a certain extent, in medium of instruction. Schooling was to contribute to the revival of 'Bantu Culture' and brought into line with 'Bantu Social Institutions.' At post-primary level the schools were as much as possible located away from the urban areas. Community participation was introduced *via* partially elected committees and boards under the aegis of 'Bantu Authorities'. Greater numbers were to be brought in for at least an elementary schooling. At the same time, cost per student was reduced by means of, *inter alia*, shorter double sessions daily, employing more underqualified teachers, paying minimal salaries to Black teachers, discriminating even further against women teachers, pegging the amount of the state's financial contribution, extracting more from the African communities themselves, taking away school feeding services, and the abolition of caretakers' posts making the students responsible for school cleaning. Finally, it became illegal to operate a school not registered with the Department of Bantu Affairs. The question is what the developments were that led to this new state interest in, and modified approach to, Black schooling and what type of response to those developments Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education represented.

One important development coinciding with the period in which the new regime was fashioning its educational policy was the rise of

manufacturing industry. This led to increased demand for workers with some level of literacy and numeracy as well as semi-skilled and skilled workers. In contrast, the growing numbers of Black job-seekers with clerical-type skills could not be absorbed within the particular racist structure of employment which prevailed. Yet, the training of any substantial layer of Black workers in the skills which were increasingly being sought, could not be undertaken at that time by the National Party government without threatening the White workers' privileged position as 'labour aristocracy.' It is suggested that part of what Bantu Education was initially to do, was to reduce the number of Black people with medium-level academic qualifications to that minimum required mainly as teachers and functionaries in the Bantustan bureaucracies. At the same time, it was to increase the number of workers with skills limited to a level which would not threaten the White working class but be sufficiently high for them to move into the growing number of semi-skilled jobs being opened up through the process of deskilling and job fragmentation. Bantu Education was also to begin expanding the number of workers with basic literacy and numeracy.

While not wishing to diminish the significance of what has been put forward so far, it will now be argued that Bantu Education, along with Coloured and Indian Education, were first and foremost part of a broader state reaction to factors other than the 'purely economic' demands of the labour market.

Accelerated capital accumulation - as a result of the expansion of the manufacturing industry and the opening up of the new gold fields in the Orange Free State and uranium mines in the West Rand and Klerksdorp areas - meant a growing need for labour. Taxes imposed to smoke the people off the remnants of their land combined with an accelerated rate of economic collapse in the reserves to produce an ever faster flow of Black workers to the urban areas. The potential political consequences of the development of a massive oppressed and ultra-exploited Black proletariat concentrated around the cities were recognised by the National Party ... and feared. Already in the

years following the end of World War II the political consciousness of Black South Africans was rising rapidly. The spirit of African nationalism was asserting itself with unprecedented force and the call was out for the unity of all oppressed people. Encouraged by the impact that anti-imperialist struggles were having in the colonised countries of Africa and Asia and the success of the people's war in China, a new feeling of solidarity and power was gathering momentum and being expressed in open struggle. The workers in the cities were making increasing use of strike action which included most notably the bloodily suppressed African Miners' Strike of August 1946. In solidarity with the mine workers' stand, the African workers of Johannesburg attempted to organise a general strike. At the same time, resistance to the authorities' rule in the reserves was widespread and determined. The Government could not but have recognised these developments for what they were: a most grave threat to their very economic foundations. The Cape Times asserted in an editorial on 17 October 1946, 'The race problem today is worse than it has ever been throughout our history .... Relations between European and Non-European were never nearer breaking-point.' (Cape Times 17.10.46)

The National Party saw that the Black nationalist movement, in the process of consolidating itself, was either going to become controlled by the liberal agents of imperialist, 'anti-apartheid' capitalism or would accept the leadership of the Black fraction of the working class. For the National Party, representing basically the alliance between the White fraction of the working class and domestic agricultural, manufacturing and finance capital, neither could be countenanced. Its leaders realised that merely to continue the repression of revolts and the suppression of political organisation could not in the long run suffice to save the racist structures of exploitation and domination. It was in response to these conditions that a new strategy started to take shape.

The underlying strategic conception was based on the belief of the National Party that no political rights could be granted to Africans within a common South African framework without inevitably provoking the demand for full political rights within that common framework and without setting in motion a process over which they

would eventually lose control and which would then result in open civil war or complete capitulation. The Government recognised that the granting of any political rights to Africans as national citizens could only foster the further development of African nationalism. The process of withdrawing from Africans what minimal political rights they had, was completed by the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959. In debating the latter piece of legislation before enactment, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development argued that if the principle of African representation was accepted, ...

' ... then the Bantu would have to accept this Parliament as his Parliament, and he would then become involved in a struggle in which he would demand representation in this House on at least the same basis as the White man. That is the trouble which awaits South Africa .... ... if there are people who say that the Bantu will always be satisfied to be represented in Parliament by a few people, I say to them that they are living in a fool's paradise. No nation in the world would agree to it, and still much less the proud Bantu.' (Hansard, 1959: para. 6009)

This is what the more liberal section within the superordinate classes seemed to have failed to appreciate. During the House of Assembly debate over the Transkei Constitution Bill in 1963 the Leader of the Opposition argued as follows:

*de Villiers Graaff*: 'They (the Nationalists) believe that there are only two policies in South Africa. The one policy they say is complete separation, and the other policy, they say, is complete integration, complete equality, one man one vote.'

*A Nationalist interjector* : 'Tell us, how are you going to stop that?'

*de Villiers Graaff*: 'If the ... Prime Minister thinks that he can keep the entire mass of the Bantu population living permanently in the Republic which controls our destinies, how can he deny that we (the United Party) can do something much smaller ... and restrict the representation that we intend to give them in Parliament? Our policy at least has a safety-valve. It gives a degree of representation ... eight representatives of the Bantu people in Parliament will be far less dangerous than eight sovereign Black states.' (Hansard, 1963, paras. 2265, 2272)

The Nationalists, however, knew from their own history what potential lay in the fusion of working class consciousness and nationalist ideology - it had helped propel their own party into power. They knew that, for their own future, the working class had to be fragmented and the basis of a national (black) consciousness broken. Thus, central to their strategic objectives was the defusion of African nationalism through a systematic attempt to retribalise African consciousness in such a way that the resultant fragmentation into tribal splinters would obstruct its further development. It was primarily for these purposes and in order to entrench the status of the bulk of the oppressed as literal non-citizens by placing them politically in a sphere completely removed from that of South African citizenship, that the Bantustans were devised. The political dead-end of the Bantu Authorities were intended to divert African nationalist demands away from the White Parliament as the formal seat of political power in South Africa.

The same strategic conception lay beneath Verwoerd's introduction of Bantu Education and provides the key to understanding the critical new dimension in the schooling of Black South Africans. The Black oppressed had to be put outside the sphere in which the wealth of the land was owned and controlled. In Verwoerd's notorious words:

'There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... for that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze.' (Verwoerd, 1954: 24)

Bantu Education was to prepare young Africans psycho-ideologically for where the Bantustans placed them physically and politically. To that end, Bantu Education, according to Verwoerd, 'should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society. .... The basis of the provision and organisation of education in a Bantu Community should, where possible, be the tribal organisation.' (Verwoerd, 1954: 23) The Bantu Education

Act was passed by Parliament two years after the Bantu Authorities Act. Where the latter was intended, *inter alia*, to create a separate 'Bantu Community', the former was aimed to fit African people into it. The Bantu Authorities were designed for indirect, but rigid, rule through Government-recognised (or Government-created) chiefs and headmen; it was under the control of these very Bantu Authorities that the Bantu Education Act placed the control of so-called 'community schools'. The emphasis of the Bantu Authorities Act on tribal divisions was reflected by the Bantu Education Act particularly in its provisions concerning language medium and the exclusive tribal composition of schools. At every point, Bantu Education was designed to back up the Bantustans. Where there was a limit to the capacity of Bantustans and 'group areas' to remove all Black people all of the time physically from the context in which the wealth of the land was owned and controlled, Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was designed to help remove them psycho-ideologically and 'resettle' them in their separate 'places' of subordination.

State response to the resurgence of Black resistance and the rapid rise of an urban working class was not restricted to the broad political strategy described thus far. New mechanisms of control were introduced and old ones overhauled. Through the Native and Coloured Affairs Departments, the labour bureaux, the pass laws, the location system, group areas, and a web of restrictive legislation, the lives of Black people were regimented in effectively every aspect. Where this regimentation was in the main physical, the system of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was aimed at the mind. The regime recognised what was argued in an ANC document at the time, *viz* that the people's ...

'surest guarantee for ultimate victory in their struggle, and the greatest threat and danger to white exploitation and domination is the political consciousness of the masses of the oppressed people, their contact with current world events and trends in international relationships, their acquaintance with and knowledge of the history of the liberatory movement in other parts of the world, and their unity of purpose with all democrats in this country and abroad - a unity which transcends racial or

ethnic differences and strikes at the very foundations of the social, economic, and political structure.' (Memorandum on Bantu Education with Special Reference to the Decision of the 42nd Annual Conference of the ANC. Undated. Quoted in Feit, 1967: 150 - 151)

The system of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was designed to control the direction of thought, to delimit the boundaries of knowledge, to restrict lines of communication, and to curtail contact across language barriers. It aimed to dwarf the minds of Black children by conditioning them to servitude. Like the segregated and inferior schooling before it, the system of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was intended to prepare Black children for the subordinated positions that awaited them in such a way that they were appropriately equipped with limited skills as well as ready to resign themselves to their exploitation. White supremacy would be secured if the Black product of schooling was, as expressed in the same ANC memorandum, 'a person who accepts in full the Nationalist policy of Apartheid, of White domination of the master-servant relationships as between White and Black; a person ... whose highest aspiration will be to assert the superiority of his own tribe over other tribes ... a creature whose mind will have been thoroughly regimented into willing acceptance of the *status quo*.' (quoted in Feit, 1967, 151)

The more direct linking of Black schooling with the Native and Coloured Affairs Departments was designed to achieve a stricter and more rigid, a more efficient and effective, a more completely totalitarian control of student and teacher both in and out of school, than had been possible with the less direct link through the provincial and church administrations. According to the Minister of Education, in 1957, 'Control by the government was needed as it was necessary to prevent undesirable ideological developments such as had disturbed the non-white institutions not directly under the charge of the government and as the Bantu authorities had not developed to take over this control.' (Hansard, 1957: 27 - 9 May) Control seemed clearly to have been the operative objective. As the production of skills was relatively unimportant, 'standards' could safely be sacrificed; this accounts for how it was possible to increase the numbers in school so greatly

with minimal increase in expenditure. The goal was to bring greater numbers of Black youth into the ambit of direct control. Thus, although the system of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education certainly perpetuated and extended the educational starvation, religious indoctrination, and inferiority of previous Black schooling, it was never intended as a simple denial of educational opportunities but represented a more calculated attempt to subvert the political and economic aspirations of Black South Africans. And, as has been seen, it was an attempt tightly articulated with a broader political strategy developed by the political representatives of the superordinate classes to defend their threatened order.

#### J. Opposition to Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education

Student resistance during the nearly seven years which elapsed between the National Party's victory at the White polls on 26 May, 1948, and the formal introduction of Bantu Education on 1 April, 1955, continued in much the same form as it had been manifesting itself before. For instance, in February, 1950, forty students of St Matthews College in the Cape were convicted in the Keiskammahoek Magistrate's Court on charges of public violence. Later in the same year, student 'strikes' - in the form of boycotts, not violent attacks - at two institutions in the Transkei, St John's College, Umata, and the Shawbury Methodist Institute, occurred within six weeks of each other. The latter institution was closed for two days, during June, following the 'strike'. The female students, objecting to the food served, had boycotted the dining-hall. They had gone to a nearby hill and, refusing to return, they had been joined by their male counterparts. The police had been called and they stood by before, finally, 400 students were sent home. In September that year, 200 students were dismissed from Adams College, Natal, for breach of discipline. They had refused to eat their lunch, stayed away from their afternoon classes and refused to attend chapel. They were accused of having been planning to destroy school property and injure 'loyal' students. In July, 1952, 74 students from the Mfundisweni hostels of the Faku Institution, near Flagstaff, were found guilty of violence arising from a 'disturbance' in which the boarding mistress of the girls' dormitory was attacked. The following month, 84 students were arrested for 'rioting' at the Bensonvale

Training School near Aliwal North in the Herschel district. All the institution's thatched buildings were burnt down, food supplies were destroyed, and windows were broken. When the police arrived, they were heavily stoned while firing shots into the air. The students were protesting against the dismissal of one of their teachers as well as alleging that there was no co-operation between White and Black teachers at the institution. Towards the end of the same year, there was intra-student conflict at Orlando High School after three of its teachers, having been sacked, set up a school of their own. Students 'stoned, stabbed and battered' other students of the school and even shots were said to have been fired. On 14 May, 1953, 184 students at Bethal Training Institute, near Coligny in the Transvaal were arrested after they had stoned, and used gallons of petrol to set fire to, classrooms and the principal's house. Their grievances included bad food, weak milk, overcrowding, insanitary conditions, and the fact that one student had been dismissed after allegedly returning from a football match drunk. Six days later, 42 students at Indaleni Training College, near Richmond in Natal, were arrested after they had burnt down two offices and a classroom. (Drum, July 1953)

In October 1953, students at the Healdtown Native Missionary College near Fort Beaufort in the Eastern Cape mobilised around a number of issues about which they were dissatisfied. They demanded the improvement of certain conditions which they claimed were interfering with their studies. They complained that, since the appointment of a new boarding master, the seniors had been deprived of the privilege of electing their prefects. The dignity of the seniors had been further impaired by placing juniors in positions which seniors had previously held. The senior students also objected to the standard of the food, to being compelled to take turns working from 3 a.m. in the bakery, to having to wash dishes, to being used in the repairing of roads, to being debarred from visiting the girls' hostel and to being prevented from visiting relatives. The students submitted a written list of suggested improvements to the boarding master but he refused to consider them. Approximately a hundred senior students

then embarked on what they called a strike, refusing their meals or even to be seated in the dining hall. After two days of their passive resistance campaign, the College authorities ordered them to leave. Initially, the students refused to comply but, when a police detachment, gathered from Cradock, Bedford, Adelaide, Fort Beaufort and Alice, arrived to expel them forcibly, they left without further resistance and boarded trains for their homes in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, parts of the Transkei and other centres. (Rand Daily Mail 30.10.53)

No evidence of overt student opposition to the Eiselen Commission's proposals or the Bantu Education Bill was found. They would not seem to have been at issue even in a 'disturbance' during May, 1955, at Xedwaleni Training School which resulted in the expulsion of thirty student leaders.

It was teachers who mounted the first concerted resistance and they did so principally through three organisations: the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA) and the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) - both affiliated to the All African Convention (AAC) - and the Transvaal African Teachers' Association (TATA). Not long after the Eiselen commission had been appointed, TATA's journal, *The Good Shepherd*, attacked its *raison d'etre* in the following terms: 'It wants to find out how it can give the African the training necessary to make him an efficient worker, without giving him any real education, for the simple reason that it would be dangerous if the oppressed sector of the population were sufficiently advanced to fight for their freedom.' (quoted in Lodge, 1980: 47) According to Lodge, 'A group of Orlando teachers, who were elected in 1951 to leading positions on the TATA Executive, began to campaign quite effectively along the Reef, organising meetings of teachers and parents to explain and condemn the findings of the Eiselen Commission. .... From 1952 TATA began organising anti-Bantu Education teachers' conferences in Johannesburg and the East Rand ....' (Lodge, 1980: 47) In June, 1952, CATA's annual conference condemned the Eiselen Commission's Report and called on its members to 'organise the people and explain to them the recommendations of the report'. (quoted in Lodge, 1980: 46) In his address to

the same conference, CATA's president stated, 'At this moment every attempt is being made to cut us off from contact with the stream of ideas from the outside world. You must have noted how, according to the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission, ever-increasing use is to be made of Bantu languages in our schools ... (sic) we are systematically being excluded from the world culture and ideas to which we gain access only through English.' (quoted in Stradling, 1976: 6) The TLSA, in attacking the proposed Bantu Education at its annual conference which was also held in June 1952, declared that 'the tribalisation of the African people in and through the proposed (bantuisd) educational system, which forms the central feature of the Report, is intended to fit in with the Bantustan planned for the African people in the Bantu Authorities Act, and it was therefore the purpose of the Commission to fit the education of the Africans into the outmoded "Bantu Society".' (quoted in Stradling, 1976: 6) The year 1952 saw CATA and the TLSA form the Cape Teachers' Federal Council in order 'to consolidate the campaigns against tribalised schools and to prosecute the struggle for equal education in a democratic South Africa.' (Stradling, 1976: 6) During 1953, CATA and the local Vigilance Association together called a public meeting in Langa, Cape Town, to protest against the proposed legislation. (Lodge, 1980: 46) CATA's 1953 annual conference called upon 'teachers and parents to do everything in their power to oppose the Herrenvolk schemes for their enslavement'. (quoted in Lodge, 1980: 46) With the passing of the Act, the Cape Teachers' Federal Council issued a manifesto against Bantu Education. Later in the same year, CATA called upon all teachers 'to demonstrate their readiness to fight for true education' by attending what was planned as a mass conference to protest against the Bantu Education Act in Queenstown on 14 December. Eiselen, Secretary for Native Affairs, warned teachers not to attend the conference. The conference convenor, N. Honono, responded in a public statement as follows:

'This attempt by the highest official of the Native Affairs Department to muzzle African teachers is a foretaste of things to come. The blanket of silence, which the apostles and perpetrators of apartheid would throw over the issue of the control and content of African education is a sure

indication of the evil designs behind the Bantu Education Act.

'Even after African education has been transferred to the Native Affairs Department we shall not countenance anything which cuts across the universally accepted aims and guiding principles of education.' (Rand Daily Mail 11.12.53)

In defiance of Eiselen's warning, some 200 teachers attended the Queenstown conference. Teachers were also active in the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations. CATA and the TLSA would seem to have been more successful in this than TATA. Progress in the Transvaal was slow, according to Lodge (1980) - by late 1954, Parent-Teacher Associations had been formed only in Johannesburg's South West Townships, Lady Selbourn and the East Rand.

Teachers might have been the first in the Black community to give organisational expression to their opposition to Bantu Education, but, from the outset, Black people in general were implacably opposed to it. From even before its implementation, people perceived Bantu Education as part and parcel of the imposition of passes, Bantustans and the whole repressive apparatus. Resistance to the introduction of Bantu Education was widespread. Even in the remote rural areas, it was intense - as especially, for example, in the Sekhukhuniland and Zeerust regions. In the period around Bantu Education's initial implementation parents played a particularly prominent part in the popular opposition mounted against it. Many refused to send their children to Bantu Education schools. In places, people burned them down. Such actions demonstrated dramatically the depth of resentment against Bantu Education in view of, as pointed out by one leader, how much Black people had generally been willing to sacrifice in order to have their children educated. (Tabata, 1960 : 14) It can be imagined how those flames devouring the schools might have symbolised for people their consuming desire to rid themselves of the dreaded new system. It was parents, not students, whom the African National Congress (ANC) attempted to mobilise in support of its campaign to resist Bantu Education. The story of the latter campaign has been adequately documented elsewhere - notably in Feit (1967), Karis, Carter and Gerhart (1977) and Lodge (1980) as well as receiving some treatment in, *inter alia*, Tillema (1974) and

Hirson (1979) - and will, therefore, not be repeated here. However, the debate within the ANC over what tactics to adopt in opposing Bantu Education and the conclusions which the leadership drew from the fate of its campaign, demand at least some consideration.

The ANC conceived the choice before it as lying effectively between two forms of opposition: on the one hand, a symbolic protest expressed through a temporary (say, one week) demonstration boycott of Bantu Education schools (which, in terms of the Government's programme of implementation, meant initially the primary schools), and, on the other, total non-cooperation with Bantu Education through a permanent boycott involving withdrawal from the schools until such time as this system had been replaced by one acceptable to the people. The initial step was taken by the ANC Annual Conference of December 1954 which adopted the following resolution:

'Conference insists that the correct policy to be observed towards Bantu Education is one of fighting an uncompromising consistent battle against the implementation of the Bantu Education Act and therefore resolves upon total rejection of Verwoerd's evil Act as the moral and spiritual enslavement of our children. To defeat this Act it calls upon African parents to make preparations to withdraw their children from primary schools indefinitely as from April 1, 1955, until further directive from the National Executive Committee.'  
(quoted in Feit, 1967: 144)

The 'subjective' dimensions of the context in which the choice had to be made, were critical. For example, at least in the first half of the 20th century, it was the ruled, not the rulers, for whom 'education' had greater priority. As expressed in the minutes of an ANC Women's Section meeting, 'It is the supreme desire of the vast majority of urban (African) parents to give their children the opportunities of an education .... Educational achievement is synonymous with success, and success spells money.' (quoted in Feit, 1967: 144) Money, in turn, meant to those 'urban parents' the only access to means of subsistence and on higher wages hung perhaps less inhuman conditions for their children. Feit quotes a young man from Moroka Township: 'Today we live in the age of money. That is why we go to school in order to acquire a higher education in order to get

higher wages ....' (Feit, 1967:144) At the beginning of every year parents battled to have their children admitted to the hopelessly too few places in school. An article in Bantu World captured the typical scene:

'Weeping mothers and tired children trudged in the heat from one school to another, only to be turned away by dejected headmasters whose schools were packed to bursting .... Several mothers stayed away from work so that they could hunt for schools for their children. Not all of them were successful .... Headmasters were between two fires. The educational authorities lay down a strict limit to the number of pupils who may attend a school and a headmaster who exceeds this amount may get into serious trouble .... Some headmasters could not stand the sight of weeping mothers and took on more pupils than they should have.'  
(Bantu World 23.1.54)

An ANC document already cited, entitled 'Memorandum on Bantu Education with Special Reference to the Decision of 42nd Annual Conference of the ANC', outlined the arguments for and against both a temporary and a permanent school boycott. The grounds for favouring a short demonstration boycott as the tactically preferable alternative were that the conditions did not exist for a permanent boycott to command the immediate popular support it would require for success. Parents who had been lucky enough to find places in schools for their children knew how easy it would be for them to lose those places to others not in school. It was argued, *inter alia*, that parents were more likely to be willing to withdraw their children for a limited period than to support indefinite withdrawal. If being out of school for an extended time meant that the children would be idle and open to mischief, parents might return them to the classroom. Furthermore, a permanent boycott would directly jeopardise the livelihood of teachers who might in consequence actively oppose the campaign. More positive arguments in favour of a limited period boycott revolved around how it would pave the way for a permanent withdrawal. It would show what people were already in a position to support as well as how much organisation was still needed for full mobilisation to be achieved. Finally, it was argued that participation in a short boycott would help parents for longer-term withdrawal of their children and also

that children returning to school after the initial boycott could persuade those who had not supported it to join them in the later indefinite withdrawal.

The arguments against a short boycott included one that, in view of the ANC's unqualified condemnation of Bantu Education, it might appear contradictory 'to absent the children from school for a week and then return them to imbibe the "poison".' (quoted in Feit, 1967: 159) Another held that, due to inadequate preparation, not enough students would withdraw even for a limited period to constitute an effective protest. 'But', it was suggested, 'the same number of children may represent a resounding victory in a campaign for permanent withdrawal.' (quoted in Feit, 1967: 160)

The main argument in favour of a permanent boycott rested on the understanding that Bantu Education was first and foremost part of the rulers' strategy to smash the rise of African nationalist consciousness. 'Looked at from this point of view, the fight against Bantu Education ... is the sharpest point of conflict' between the people and the regime. (quoted in Feit, 1967: 158) As presented in the Memorandum:

'The withdrawal of children from schools is not merely an attempt to save the children from the destructive effects of Bantu Education, but it is a denial and frustration of Verwoerd's fascist control over the lives of African children. In the course of this struggle the political situation in this country should be discussed and handled at the child level. Political consciousness would not merely be a bone of contention but would be placed in conditions in which it would develop the very qualities that the Nationalists want to destroy.' (quoted in Feit, 1967: 158 - 9)

As to whether these children would not seriously suffer by being withdrawn from formal, albeit bad, schooling, the Congress Youth League leadership called for the rejection of 'this non-political nonsense that talks of the "poor children" as if they were separate from their parents. The African children have no separate destiny from the African nation. If Verwoerd is oppressing the African people with pass laws, low wages, etc he cannot be an *oppressor* of the parents and a *benefactor* to the children.' (Executive Report

to the 12th Conference, of the ANCYL, May 29, 1955. Quoted in Feit, 1967: 163)

Another document, entitled 'Suggested Programme', pointed out that 'Every Government requires thousands from the oppressed to run the oppressor system - civil servants, police, clerks, semi-skilled labourers, etc. Furthermore, "education" of some sort enables the ruling classes to maintain an ideological contact with the governed.' (quoted in Feit, 1967: 161 - 2) It seems that it was at no point suggested that total withdrawal from state schooling was impossible. On the contrary, the Suggested Programme contended that if the majority of 'Africans' could be organised to participate in such a withdrawal the situation could become so impossible for the regime as to force it 'to beat a retreat.' (quoted in Feit, 1969: 163) Could the people have been so organised and was indefinite withdrawal an historical possibility in that phase of the struggle?

In January, 1955, the ANC National Secretariat issued detailed directives for the holding of a series of meetings and the appointment of local action committees which were to submit regular progress reports. The Transvaal Youth League's Anti-Bantu Education Committee, at a meeting held on 9 January, 1955, called for a thousand volunteer teachers for alternative education programmes. Many meetings and conferences were held during the first months of that year in different parts of the country. But when the National Executive Committee (NEC) met in March 'to consider reports on the progress of the campaign in the various centres, no such reports were available and there was no evidence that the country would be ready for the withdrawal on 1st April.' (Report of NEC, ANC Annual Conference, December 17 - 18, 1955) The NEC, therefore, decided to defer withdrawal and for the moment proceed only with a boycott of Bantu Education school committees and boards. At the same time, 'ultimate withdrawal' was reaffirmed as the *objective*, and a committee - which became the African Education Movement (AEM) - was set up under the chairpersonship of Father Trevor Huddleston to plan alternative education. The NEC's reversal was rejected in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape where withdrawals began on 12 April. On that day, the first of the new school

term, certain schools were picketed, classes entered and dismissed, and large numbers of mostly women and school students marched through the streets of Benoni, Brakpan and Germiston carrying ANC posters against Bantu Education.

The regime retaliated with an ultimatum issued on 15 April by Verwoerd. Unless boycotting students had returned to school within ten days of his statement - namely, by 25 April - they would be permanently excluded from school. Even a single day's absence, if shown to be part of a boycott, would lead to immediate expulsion while the places thus opened up would be given to others previously unable to gain admission. In view of the store set by parents on getting their children into school and the perennial difficulty doing so, Verwoerd's move was, as Feit points out, 'even more potent as a means of breaking the ranks of the boycotters than closing the schools, for the boycotters would simply have given up the places of their children to others.' (Feit, 1967: 174) Six thousand nine hundred and forty-eight students who had not returned to school on 25 April, were duly expelled and 116 teachers were served with a month's notice. (Drum, June 1955)

Sporadic and uncoordinated actions continued in different parts of the country at different times, some involving prolonged withdrawals, but effectively the boycott was over before it had been able to gather momentum. Most of the 6948 students who withdrew from school were initially, along with some 4000 children who had not found places in school for 1955, drawn into the alternative 'schools' - styled Cultural Clubs to circumvent the prohibition on unregistered schools - which were set up under the aegis of the AEM. No 'education' was permitted and even blackboards and chalk on club premises were used as evidence of illegal teaching. Activities had to be restricted to such as singing, story-telling, plays, quizzes and games. The clubs operated under conditions of extreme adversity: hopeless shortages of funds, equipment, premises and qualified leaders as well as unrelenting police harassment in the form of raids often involving assaults on children and leaders and the arrest and banning of committee members and club leaders. In October, 1956, there were reported to be still seven clubs with 1517 children and 22 leaders. (Karis *et al*, 1977: 34)

Increasingly the AEM had to concentrate on collecting money for bail, fines and lawyers' fees until it and the clubs finally collapsed completely during the 'state of emergency' declared by the regime in the wake of Sharpeville.

The attempt to organise a permanent boycott of state schools and a form of alternative education was abandoned. The struggle against racist and inferior schooling continued. Lessons emerging from the campaign were quickly grasped by the ANC leadership. Amongst the points made in the NEC's report to the 1955 Annual Conference were the following:

'... education is essentially a slow process whose mass effects may take generations to become noticeable. An evil system of education therefore cannot be effectively attacked by means of sensational, dramatic campaigns of short duration, except where such campaigns flow systematically from, and are part of a steady, deep-rooted and enduring campaign, planned and conducted on the clear understanding that it involves a long and bitter struggle.'

'It is impossible to over-emphasise the fact that where there is no organisational machinery, any struggle must ultimately perish.'

'... there seems to have been failure ... to realise that Bantu Education is intended and calculated to undermine the entire liberatory struggle and is therefore an open target and should be the object of persistent attack in any meeting or assembly of freedom-loving people. To this extent the campaign against Bantu Education should not be handled in isolation from other campaigns as if it were something which has its own beginning and its own end.

'We must learn that it is one thing to wish to see a complete national withdrawal of all children from Bantu Education schools. It is another thing to achieve this; organisational preparedness does not happen overnight. It is the result of steady, even slow, patient, persistent work....

'There is no doubt about the long-term aim which is to prevent the functioning of Bantu Education by a boycott. But talk of permanent boycott in the isolated areas where the people are carrying out this slogan will eventually end in disillusionment and dropping of morale if the campaign remains isolated and localised. We must beware of creating the false impression that by isolated

local boycotts the Bantu Education Act can be defeated. The struggle is a long one and the people must see this campaign as all others, as a stage on the road to victory. .... The total boycott will not be "proclaimed" by a certain date chosen on the calendar, but it will develop from local actions that spread, that join up and grow nationally. At the same time we must not deceive ourselves or the people into believing that in the immediate future we can, with our own resources, substitute a national education system. We have no state budget behind us.'

'The fight against Bantu Education must go on. We must build steadily, ... achieving the boycott of the school boards and committees, adapting the form of protest to the state of preparedness in the area and the local conditions there.' (Report of NEC, ANC Annual Conference, 1955)

Resistance to Bantu Education did go on and the long-term aim remained to prevent its functioning. However, there was a shift away from any idea that this could be achieved by means of a permanent boycott. Insofar as any general strategy emerged, it was to stay in the schools but refuse to collaborate with the system's methods and objectives. Teachers, by refusing to indoctrinate their students with the ideology of the rulers, aimed to undermine the possibility of schools operating according to the Government's design. Parents, by boycotting the Bantu School Boards and Committees, refused to collaborate voluntarily in helping to run a school system that was oppressive. Students in school and university sustained a simmering rebellion, which surfaced variously at different times and in different places. Some instances follow.

The principal of the primary school in Dinokana, Zeerust, came out during 1957 in support of passes for women. According to a report in Drum, 'The people went mad. They thought that he was in cahoots with the police and the Commissioner.' They burned down his house and organised a boycott of the school. On the first day of the boycott, only 146 students - out of the 1200 enrolled at the school - attended. The principal informed the Commissioner who relayed the matter to Pretoria. The authorities' reaction was swift and harsh. The following day orders came back from Pretoria that the school be closed down on the current roll immediately, the teachers be transferred, and the

names of the boycotting children be taken down and circularised so that they could be prevented from receiving education for the rest of their lives. (Drum, July 1957)

Phyllis Ntantala, in an article published in *Africa South* (4 (2) January - March 1960: 42 - 7), notes that people in the Cape were generally too hostile to Bantu Education to elect School Boards, while many, who were appointed to them by the Government, refused to serve. She records people's rejection of ministers of religion, who 'broke the people's boycott of the BAD School Boards by agreeing to serve on them', and of church leaders who, without consulting the communities, which had built and maintained the schools and placed them in the hands of the churches for management, agreed to lease them to the Government for use as Community Schools under Bantu Education. For instance, members of the Peddie community, in Eastern Cape, locked up the schools, which they had built with their own money and labour, and told the minister-in-charge to build his own schools if he wished to hire them out to the Government. In Port Elizabeth, members of a certain congregation called upon their minister, who had accepted the chairpersonship of the local Bantu School Board, to resign, reminding him that he depended on them for his livelihood. In Mt. Ayliff, East Griqualand, people burned down the schools they had built rather than lease them to the Government, and then told the minister, who had agreed to the lease, to hire out his own schools. (Ntantala, 1960: 45)

Ntantala also describes the deterioration suffered by the schools after their transference to the BAD. In the boarding schools, maintenance personnel, with the exception of the cooks, were dismissed, and their work given to the students, who had compulsory manual work to do before and after classes every day. According to Ntantala, 'corporal punishment provides the only discipline and a whole "gestapo" system has been introduced, by which - profiting from the poverty of the African people and their desire for education - the authorities are offering scholarships to some students on condition that they spy on their fellows. .... in any one institution there are usually three, four or more of such paid spies.' 'Inevitably,' she continues, 'these boarding schools seethe with student discontent and staff

repression.' Ntantala cites several examples thereof. In 1957, a student was shot during a 'disturbance' at the Ndamase Secondary School in Buntingville. The principal admitted in court during the subsequent student trial that he had fired shots to 'frighten' the students. Soon thereafter he shot himself. In the same year, some 30 senior female students at Shawbury in the Transkei were sent home and about 200 male students at St John's College, Umtata, were expelled on the eve of their examinations. In 1958, Adam's College, in Natal, sent more than 200 students home. Such was the situation at Lovedale that early in 1959 over 300 students chose to go home (Ntantala, 1960: 44)

The connection between the expression of student dissatisfaction in the schools and the demonstration of opposition to the political order outside the schools would appear to have begun, by 1960, to draw closer. Noting that there had been 'disturbances' at various African schools prior to 1953, Horrell states that 'such disturbances have increased in number and in severity.' (Horrell, 1964 : 86) She argues, however, that this cannot be accounted for by the introduction of Bantu Education alone - 'although the dissatisfaction it created among many teachers and parents, and in the controlling mission organisations, naturally permeated to the student bodies.' It appears to Horrell that 'in recent years normal disciplinary problems have been aggravated by the mounting spirit of unrest among Africans in South Africa, for which 'unrest' numerous factors besides the policy of "separate development" in education were responsible. In this regard, she points out that African students in the higher standards were in general older than students in White schools and were 'Likely to be more aware of events outside the school room.' Horrell proceeds to illustrate the coincidence which she identifies between the pattern of student 'disturbances' and 'periods of marked unrest in the country generally.' (Horrell, 1964: 87) After the initial wave of resistance around the introduction of the Bantu Education Act which is discussed above, the pattern displays heightened student resistance in the form of 'boycotts or riots' during the period in 1960 when there were mass demonstrations against the pass laws leading to the police killings at Sharpeville and Langa, declaration of a State of Emergency, and the banning of the ANC and PAC. Then, again in 1961, there was a wave of 'disturbances' at

African secondary institutions during the period of widespread demonstrations against South African becoming a republic, which was also a period of particularly militant mass opposition to the authorities in the Transkei and certain other areas. There were further instances of student 'disturbances' in 1962 which saw the emergence of Poqo and Umkhonto we Sizwe as well as the first cases of sabotage and the Paarl uprising. Another wave in 1963 coincided with increased activity by Poqo and more sabotage (Horrell, 1964: 87 - 9)

The Secretary of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) Southern Transvaal Region, Patrick McKenzie, in a Report on 'Disturbances in African Schools', which he prepared in 1964, regarded it as 'significant' that ...

'the disturbances in the early part of 1963 followed each other in quick succession giving the impression of some connection between them. The troubles at Wilberforce in March 1963 were followed within a few days by those at Lovedale and then Healdtown. Those at the Faku Institution and the Bethal College followed within a few weeks.

'I am informed that there was a definite plan behind these disturbances. During discussions that I have had with pupils, some have admitted that the storm centre of the disturbances has been political. Most of the disturbances have been sparked off by a genuine complaint and then fanned by a small group within the school, and on occasions there has been additional help (or one might say interference) from outside.'

Earlier in his Report, McKenzie states categorically,

'In recent years there has been increased political activity within the schools. This has been confirmed by all sources as well as by the conviction of pupils by the Courts.' (Document 8)

Evidence is for the most part lacking as to whether students were conscious of any connection that there might have been between their own actions and political activity in the broader society.

Amongst the institutions which experienced overt student resistance in the period 1960 to 1963 were Amanzimtoti Zulu Training School, Bensonvale Training School (near Aliwal North), Bethal College (near Butterworth), Botha Sigcau High School (Flagstaff), Emmarentia High School (near Warmbaths), the Mfundisweni hostels of the Faku Institution (near Flagstaff), Freemantle Institution (Queenstown), Healdtown Training College (Fort Beaufort), Kilnerton Institution (near Pretoria), Lovedale High School and Theological College (Alice), Maria Trost Catholic Boarding School (Lydenberg), Mariazell High School (near Matatiele), Moroka Training Institution (Thaba 'Nchu), Ndaleni High School and Training College (near Richmond), Pax Institution (Pietersburg), a Presbyterian Church hostel attached to a high school at Bulwer, Sekitla High School (Hammanskraal), St Francis College (Mariannhill), St John's College (Umtata), Swartbooistad School (Hammanskraal), Tigerkloof School (in the Cape), Wilberforce Institution and Zimutu Mission School.

The only directly political issue, over which students protested, was South Africa's withdrawal from the British Commonwealth and becoming a Republic in 1961. The most common issues concerned food and forms of punishment. There was opposition to corporal punishment but what students objected to most strongly was expulsion, which was used frequently, often for petty transgressions. Also related to the maintenance of discipline was the issue of the police being brought onto the campuses of certain institutions, or, as in one case, a principal's threat to call them in to deal with 'schoolboy agitators'. In another instance, students were incensed by police arriving to search their personal belongings, ostensibly for dangerous weapons; when they resisted, the police removed their trunks and conducted the search at the police station. Students protested over numerous other issues. Hostel facilities were primitive. Many teachers were incompetent. Administration of the schools was poor. Students opposed the enforced introduction of Afrikaans. They resisted the manual work which they were compelled to do and complained that there was too little time to study. They objected to the strict segregation which there was between White and Black members of staff and despised the Black teachers for being prepared to serve under such conditions. Furthermore, students' complaints were never

seriously considered and they had no vehicle for the expression of opinion since many student organisations had been suppressed and contact with ex-students discouraged. Finally, there were single-instance issues such as relatives and friends being refused admission to an institution's annual drama night.

Student resistance took various forms, the most frequent, however, having been boycotting classes and setting fire to classrooms or the principal's office. There were boycotts of chapel, of the dining hall, and of manual work. There were walk-outs and stay-aways. Students stoned school buildings and on occasion the home of a staff member to whom they objected particularly strongly. In one case, they attacked physically the matron of a girls' hostel.

The reaction of the authorities to student resistance was in all cases repressive. Many hundreds of students were expelled, never to be re-admitted. Of those suspended, some were allowed to apply for re-admission - of those who did, many were refused. Certain schools were temporarily closed down and the students all sent home. Many students were arrested and taken to court on charges of arson, malicious damage to property, public violence, or addressing, holding, or being present at, an illegal gathering. (Document 8; Horrell, 1964: 86 - 9; SAIRR 1959 - 60, 1961, 1962, 1963; Cape Times 1.6.60, 9.6.60, 18.8.60, 31.8.60; Bantu World 13.6.61; Contact 1.6.61, 29.6.61, 27.7.61, 24.8.61, 21.9.61, 26.7.62)

The period 1960 - 63 was followed by more than a decade of relative quiescence - if only qualified compliance - in the African schools although intermittent instances of student resistance, similar in form to that detailed above, did continue. Resistance to Coloured and Indian Education was given organised expression mainly by the TLSA and a network of Parent-Teacher Associations which had been built up primarily for that purpose. The consensus, however, was that *'teachers should stick at their posts and continue to teach* and refuse to indoctrinate, as ... required of them. They would not leave voluntarily. They would not sack themselves. They would leave the sacking to the rulers.

They themselves would defend true education regardless.' (Stradling, 1976: 7) Indeed, some had been sacked already. As early as 1956, officials of the TLSA had been dismissed from teaching for their opposition to segregated schooling. In 1961, 16 officials, executive members and leading speakers in the organisation had been banned under the Riotous Assemblies or Suppression of Communism Acts and, in February 1962, they had been forced to resign as teachers. Many more were to be dismissed in the years that followed. Prior to 1976, very few reports are to be found of overt student resistance in Coloured and Indian schools. Most of what few protests were reported were over the detention or dismissal of teachers. (Argus 24.7.63, 4.4.68, 30.5.68, 3.6.68, 4.6.68) For the rest, such resistance as there might have been, occurred under cover of closed classroom doors.

P A R T 11THE 1980 CAPE TOWN STUDENTS' BOYCOTT<sup>1</sup>A. AN ACCOUNT1 The first term : before the boycott1.1 *Rumbings*

In August, 1979, the vice-chairperson of the Transvaal Regional Education Committee, Ralph Peffer, told a meeting of inspectors of schools under the Department of Coloured Relations (DCR), that Coloured Education was about to collapse. According to him, the number of unqualified teachers had risen sharply because of the shortage of qualified teachers - among teachers being used were some who had failed Standard 8. Matriculation and Junior Certificate failures had increased - there had been no improvements in the numbers of matriculants in the previous ten years. Poor salaries and working conditions had led to a teacher brain-drain. Student dissatisfaction with an inferior educational system was on the increase. Promotions and job security for principals and teachers were rooted largely in the latter tacitly accepting the dictates of the DCR without question. Students who protested against irregularities were being victimised and teachers who rebelled or were in sympathy with protesting students faced being transferred to 'bundu' towns or dismissed. Approximately a month later, a memorandum, drawn up by Peffer and containing a warning that Coloured Education was 'in a mess and headed for collapse', went through official channels to the Regional Board of the Department of National Education in Johannesburg. In the memorandum, the Transvaal Regional Education Committee recommended that an investigation by a commission be set up from the Departments of National Education and Coloured Relations and from the various regional school boards and committees. The warning was dismissed and the proposal rejected. (Argus 24.4.80)

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1 In Part II, where a particular sentence or paragraph is not followed immediately with a reference, it can be assumed that in every such case the next set of references to be cited are the synthesised sources of all that has appeared in the text back to the last stated reference.

Protest action by Black students in 1980 did not start at a classified Coloured school. The year began badly for many of the African children who were supposed to start school in 1980. The Department of Education and Training (DET) had introduced a new regulation which required school beginners to produce their birth certificates before principals might admit them. Because of the difficulties which parents experienced in obtaining their children's birth certificates, many children started their schooling late - or not at all. Many parents found that, before they could apply for the birth certificates, they had to furnish proof that they belonged to a 'homeland'. This involved their writing to a 'homeland government'. Replies took many weeks to come through. Furthermore, there was blatantly, 'a catch here' as put by one parent. 'Once our children start being identified with homelands they won't be able to get jobs in the Western Cape when they have finished their studies.' (Argus 22.1.80) After term was well under way, teachers were claiming that there were fewer students in Sub A than there had been in previous years in spite of an expected rise in first enrolments.

The then president of the Co-ordinating Civic Council, S.M. Tindleni, was reported as saying that his Council had actually anticipated this situation arising and had tried to arrange a meeting with the regional director of Education and Training, D.H. Owens, in October of the previous year. Owens had refused to see them - on the grounds that they were not a body officially recognised by the Government authorities - and had referred them to the Community Council. The Co-ordinating Civic Council in its turn refused to have any interaction with the Community Council on the grounds that the Community Council was popularly rejected as a Government instituted body of stooges which had no support nor mandate from African people. The situation described above was then allowed to arise without further intervention. (Argus 22.1.80)

Even before the Soweto schools had opened in mid-January 1980, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was threatening a school boycott in the form of a complete stayaway.

The specific object of the Soweto students' opposition was the employment of 'national servicemen' in DET schools. The Department was insisting that it would proceed to employ these soldier-teachers in order to alleviate the teacher shortage. The students' attitude was that they could not accept 'national servicemen' as teachers because of their defence of apartheid. A student was quoted as having asked, 'How can we accept them when they go to the borders and all they defend is a system of rule which discriminates against us?' A spokesperson for COSAS stated his organisation's position bluntly: 'If we find any white teachers at school on Tuesday (the commencement of term) we will immediately go back home.' (Herald, 19.1.80)

## 1.2 *The physical conditions in schools under the Department of Coloured Relations*

Before the end of January, public attention was being drawn to the physical conditions in which many of the schools under the DCR were to be found. One of the schools highlighted at the time as having been in a particularly bad state of repair was the very school where students classified Coloured were the following month to take their first boycott action of 1980, Mount View Senior Secondary School. Two others were Parkwood Senior Secondary and Acacia Primary, both schools in Parkwood Estate. Conditions at Parkwood Senior Secondary were so bad that the Regional Chief Inspector had felt obliged to take the extreme step of declaring the school unfit for educational purposes and was having the children bussed to school in Mitchell's Plain. The administration blocks of Mount View Senior Secondary and Acacia Primary had been wrecked by fires over the previous two years. No repairs had been made and the principals at both schools were using partly-destroyed offices surrounded by debris. Neither school had electricity. Many of the desks were broken beyond repair. Only the odd window was not broken. Glass lay strewn over the playgrounds. In many classrooms students would be forced to huddle into the middle when it rained in order to avoid getting wet; in others work would have to stop completely when rain poured through the damaged roofs and paneless windows. The ceilings had been torn out of a number of the

classrooms so that in winter - even when not being soaked by rain - they would be excessively cold while in summer they would be excessively hot. The very frames of many of the windows and doors had been entirely removed. Mount View Senior Secondary had no library.

Towards the end of January, 1980, the Mount View School Committee complained publicly about these conditions. The Committee's chairperson said in a statement that the conditions were so bad as to be unhygienic and that as a whole Mount View resembled a bomb site rather than a school. They had been promised in October the previous year that the school would be repaired but still nothing had been done.

The Hanover Park Principals' Association had been making representations to the DCR concerning conditions at the schools in that area since its inception in 1972. In particular, the Association had repeatedly requested the replacement of the supposedly temporary 'De Nova-type' structures with conventional brick and mortar, modern school buildings as well as the all-round improvement of Hanover Park's senior secondary schools. The sort of improvements on which they as principals had over the years laid emphasis were administration blocks to serve as the initial phase in the replacement of the De Nova structures, verandahs, better and more fully equipped practical-subject teaching rooms in the senior secondary schools, decent toilets and cloakrooms, and better drinking-water facilities. Occasionally, the Association's letters would be acknowledged by the Administration but only once was there a substantive reply. The latter was received in 1974 after they had written requesting to know where the R21 000 000, which the Coloured Persons' Representative Council (CRC) had voted for 'coloured education', was going or had already gone. Receipt of this letter was first acknowledged by the Regional Office. There was then an acknowledgement of receipt from Head Office followed by a third letter confirming that their inquiry was receiving further attention. Finally the Association received a detailed reply stating that the sum was used primarily to pay salaries.

In February, 1980, the Hanover Park Principals' Association initiated the formation of an 'umbrella committee' to bring together the various school committees in the area. This committee was to constitute a base for making further representations to the DCR, still most specifically with the 'request' that 'immediate top priority' be given to Hanover Park 'with regard to the erection of our new school buildings and the demolishing of all De Nova buildings'. The 'umbrella committee' was abandoned in its infancy after the DCR had refused to recognise it and had insisted on individual school committees operating separately.

An unofficial view held by some within the DCR's Cape Town education hierarchy is that the quality of school building such as those in Hanover Park is not so much the result of any lack of preparedness on the part of the authorities to expend sufficient to put up adequate buildings but is rather the result of a lack of effective communication between the education authorities and the City Council in the period prior to a new township being established. The DCR depends for its forward-planning on the City Council's plans for development. Once the latter are known and the educational needs of a new area have been projected, plans to meet those needs have to be made. Specific building plans have to be drawn up and the requisite financial resources obtained from the Treasury. For the execution of whatever is planned the DCR depends finally on the Public Works Department (PWD). If the proper procedure is to be followed, the DCR needs some five year's notice to establish an adequately accommodated new school. What has tended to happen in practice, however, has been that the DCR's education division has heard about the siting of a new school only just before people have moved into the new area, or, in certain cases, even after they have started to do so. The allegation made, is that the education authorities being confronted in this way with people moving into an area without facilities for the children's schooling is the consequence of the City Council's failure to furnish the DCR with timely information.

The foregoing is allegedly what happened in the case of Hanover Park when it opened in 1970 as a scheme for people being forced out of

their homes in District Six. The first provision made for the education of Hanover Park children was a primary school housed in a hired Madrasah hall in Lansdowne. Because schools then had to be built in such a hurry, prefabricated structures produced by persons in sheltered employment at De Nova were put up instead of conventional brick and mortar buildings. These temporary constructions were erected on short wooden stilts which left a small gap between the floor and the ground. An inspector interviewed described them as health hazards because of the water which tended to stand under the classrooms for long periods during winter. Prior to the 1970s there had been a tradition of always accommodating new secondary schools in permanent buildings from the beginning. In the early 1970s, when secondary schooling was being established in Hanover Park, the Government's priorities, combined with the economic recession of the time to result in the available finances being insufficient to uphold this tradition. Thus, a new type of structure, known as the 'light montage' building, came to be erected. It was an improvement on the 'De Nova' structure in that it stood on brick and mortar foundations instead of stilts. However, thin panels still served as walls and generally it too was highly unsatisfactory - and, of course, temporary. A contracting company, McCarthy's, claimed to have had these sorts of structures last for five years. By 1980 they were still having to be used in Hanover Park after as much as ten years.

Why they had not been able to be replaced during all that time was allegedly because the communication between the DCR's education authorities and the City Council never improved and what had happened in Hanover Park continued to repeat itself so that they were continuously battling against a backlog and were obliged to push the replacement of inadequate buildings into a place of secondary priority behind the provision of schools in further new areas where there were none at all. What happened with regard to Hanover Park before 1970 has allegedly happened even since 1980 in, for example, certain sections of Mitchell's Plain. Apparently the education authorities stumbled on Tafelsig after people had already started moving into the area. With no provision for schools there

having been made, children from Tafelsig, Eastridge and Beacon Valley had to be bussed to schools in other areas. This occurred in spite of the attempt to develop Mitchell's Plain as a model township. The latter was itself a further reason why no attempt was made to improve conditions in Hanover Park because even when slightly more resources did become available they were all channelled out to Mitchell's Plain. Hence, in a memorandum submitted to the education authorities in May of 1980, the Hanover Park Principals' Association wrote as follows: 'After ten years and many promises we are still the only area, possibly in the whole Republic of South Africa, with predominantly De Nova type buildings to serve as agencies of socialization. We find ourselves in a position where *we feel* that Hanover Park is considered as the "Cinderella" of the Wynberg region.'

Why the temporary structures in which Hanover Park's schools had been housed all this time were in such bad condition was not only because they were being treated as permanent and used beyond their designed durability. Buildings at especially the secondary schools had been devastated during the 1976 uprising. Mount View Senior Secondary was the first school out on boycott in 1976 and the last school back in classes. Later during the same day on which Mount View Senior Secondary had begun boycotting in 1976, the whole of Hanover Park had erupted in violent protest. Much of the damage incurred then was never repaired. Furthermore, the schools had over the years been victim to unremitting vandalism while the authorities had made no attempt to provide for the proper supervision of school buildings. The result was that most of what little these schools had, was soon either destroyed or stolen. The equipment and material for woodwork and domestic science would always be the quickest to go. As already referred to, certain schools had also suffered arson attacks over the years. Why Mount View Senior Secondary, for example, was short of stationary in 1980 was because the school's stock had been destroyed in a fire that had wrecked part of the school in 1978. Stationary to replace what had been lost was ordered in 1979 but by February 1980 had still not been delivered.

There was no denying in 1980 that even on the level of the most

elementary physical essentials the schools of Hanover Park as well as of a township like Parkwood Estate had become insufferable. (Interviewees 6, 7, 9, 20, 24, 41; Herald 2.2.80; Argus 12.2.80, 27.3.80; Sunday Tribune 13.4.80; Hanover Park Principals' Association, memorandum entitled 'School Buildings in our Area' dated 19.5.80)

### 1.3 *Dissatisfaction and organisation in schools under the Department of Education and Training*

On Saturday, 26 January, 1980, parents and students who attended a meeting in Soweto called jointly by COSAS and AZASO unanimously adopted the following motion: 'That black children, while rejecting the present system of bantu education, refuse to wear uniforms and pay school fees. White children don't pay school fees and their education is free. Blacks are demanding free compulsory education.' Students from various schools on the Witwatersrand told the meeting that there was no standard school fee and that they were paying different amounts for the same tuition. (Cape Times 28.1.80) For one thing, they claimed that at White-supervised schools they were forced to pay R50 for books and school funds while those at schools with African principals were paying only R8. (Sunday Post 27.1.80) According to students, they were still required to buy textbooks and other materials despite the DET's claim to have spent approximately R5,5 million on textbooks to be supplied to Black schools free. Furthermore, apparently most principals were demanding that students buy their uniforms from particular shops and dealers. (Financial Mail 75 (7, 15.2.80) 591) One of the speakers at the Saturday meeting in Soweto was the suspended president of AZAPO, Curtis Nkondo, who said that if the education system for Black people remained unchanged 'it would be difficult for many parents to send their children to schools and this will create a flood of thugs and many unemployed blacks.' This meeting also resolved that White principals should be eliminated from Soweto schools and that students should stay away from any schools where there were Whites until they left. COSAS and AZASO called on secondary school students throughout the country to hold similar meetings the following Saturday because, as it was put, 'Soweto's problems should not be isolated from the rest of the country.' Until they had held such

meetings to decide what action to take on the cost of education for Black people, students were called upon not to pay school fees or buy uniforms. (Cape Times 28.1.80)

This call was not taken up elsewhere in the country but in Soweto a meeting was organised, again jointly, by COSAS and AZASO on Saturday, 2 February. It was held at the Regina Mundi Church and there was reportedly a militant spirit among the more than 2000 parents and students who attended. The meeting called on Soweto students to boycott the schools until 'national servicemen' had been removed from them and 'until the white authorities come to their senses'. Further demands expressed were for free education, the establishment of students' representative councils (SRCs) and the readmission of students barred from school for being 'too old'. (Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 1)

Presumably in an attempt to defuse the situation, the Secretary for Education and Training, Joubert Rousseau, immediately issued a statement that, although 'national servicemen' had been used as teachers in Soweto the year before, there were none in 1980. Further, on the Monday for which the boycott had been called, the Regional Director of the DET in Johannesburg, Jaap Strydom, addressed a meeting of school principals and members of school governing councils. He announced to them that there would be an investigation into the school fees paid by parents to recommend how these could be reduced and standardised and to devise means of cutting the cost of school uniforms. Strydom made a special point of denying that the investigation was to be made as a result of the threat of a school boycott. (Financial Mail 75 (7) 15.2.80: 591)

Meanwhile, students ignored the call to boycott almost completely. Monday, 4 February, saw only four of Soweto's 51 secondary schools respond and primary schools seemed unaffected. (Financial Mail 75 (7) 15.2.80: 591) A major criticism of the boycott call which was expressed particularly by parents, was that COSAS and AZASO had failed to offer any viable alternative to the present system of education. (Argus 4.2.80)

That same week, however, on Wednesday, 6 February, in Guguletu, Cape Town, the students of Fezeka Senior Secondary confronted their principal, L. Lubelwana, on a number of issues about which they were dissatisfied, including that they lacked representation on matters directly affecting themselves; that school fees were compulsory; that their parents' contributions to the school fund had been increased from R5,50 to R8; that the wearing of uniform was compulsory when uniforms were 'expensive and unnecessary'; that they were suffering a shortage of textbooks; that some students were forced to attend a homework period of two hours every afternoon from 3 to 5 pm; and that a teacher had insulted some of the students and their parents. (Interviewee 26; Argus 20.2.80; Cape Times 20.2.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 15)

#### 1.4 *The first brief boycotts of classes in Cape Town*

The next protest action in a Cape Town School to be given publicity was that taken by students of Mount View Senior Secondary in the working class township of Hanover Park. On Tuesday, 12 February, more than 100 of them boycotted classes. While their four-person delegation met with the principal, Anyster, to spell out the reasons for their dissatisfaction, the rest stood outside, talking in groups or playing a ball game. At this initial stage, the students' protest was directed primarily against the lack of stationary, the generally poor conditions at the school, and the shortage of textbooks. After the students had heard Anyster's explanation of how the situation causing their dissatisfaction had arisen and having later been given the assurance by the Regional Chief Inspector, Dr Frank Quint, that corrective steps would be taken immediately, they decided to return to classes, saying they would wait to see when their books and stationary would arrive. Quint then seems to have made every effort to defuse the discontent boiling up at Mount View Senior Secondary. The next morning, Wednesday, 13 February, textbooks were delivered to the school. Later that day, Quint announced in a press statement that the Administration of Coloured Relations was considering hiring a commercial security firm to protect schools in the area against vandalism and that as soon as this had been arranged an immediate start would be made with repairing the damaged classrooms and offices. That Quint

was keen for the public to have some 'acceptable' account for the position at the school was indicated not only by his identification of vandalism as entirely responsible for the condition the school was in but also by his explanation of the shortage of books and stationary as the result of a lack of storage space at the school. He also obviously wanted to smother instantly the very thought of boycotting because he told the press that although 'some of the pupils (had) stood around the playground ..... at no time was there a boycott of classes'. (Argus 12.2.80, 13.2.80)

The following day, Thursday, 14 February, some 800 Fezeka Senior Secondary students began a boycott of classes in protest against the principal's dismissal of their demands. The points which the students had taken up with him had been considered by parents, teachers and the school committee but dismissed as unfounded. Having received conflicting reports from their parents, teachers and principal respectively, and having picked up indications that their case was being misrepresented, they demanded to be allowed to attend meetings of the PTA and school committee. (Argus 20.2.80, Social Review 9 (May 1980) 15; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 1)

Despite the opposition of some of the teachers and the reservations of the rest, the students won this demand and a meeting of staff, students and parents was set for Wednesday, 20 February. The DET was not formally represented but the police kept the meeting under surveillance and a man in a 'neat light grey suit' noted down the registration numbers of all the cars parked outside.

On the issue of the compulsory and increased fees, the students' case was lent weight by reports which there had been that the Regional Director, Owens, had said in a speech in Port Elizabeth that as far as the Department was concerned there was no need for any child to pay school fees and only R4 needed to be contributed to school funds. Furthermore, on the question of students being required by the school to wear expensive uniforms, a spokesperson for the DET had the month before been quoted in a 'Black' Transvaal newspaper as saying that 'while the Department does not object

to the prescribing of school uniforms these uniforms may not be made compulsory and children without them must not be discriminated against.' The students asserted themselves strongly at the meeting. Most of the teachers, being both conservative as well as scared, expected the school committee chairperson to protect the principal and themselves from the barrage of questions and criticisms fired by the students but he was in no position to do so. A teacher interviewed had felt that the students were not justified in putting the questions and making the demands that they did. For one thing, whatever money was at issue came from the students' parents and if anybody had the right to put any questions and make any demands it was the parents and not the students. Despite this having been the predominant attitude of the teachers present, their support for the principal on the rise in fees was not strong because he had made the tactical mistake of not discussing his reasons for raising the fees with the staff. The outcome of the meeting was that the Fezeka school committee and parents present declared the students' 'grievances' to be 'rather genuine'. The committee decided that the principal had exceeded his authority in increasing fees which would revert retrospectively to R4. This meant that the principal had to draw out of the school's account a substantial sum in order to give parents their 'change'. Students were given until the end of April to acquire uniforms. Attendance of the afternoon 'prep' period was made voluntary. (Interviewee 26; Post 25.1.80; Argus 20.2.80; 21.2.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 1)

The next day the Fezeka students returned to class. A spokesperson for the DET told the press that they were 'not entirely happy with the outcome' of the previous night's meeting. There was concern in the Department over the fact that a boycott had led to changes having been forced by students which created a 'doubtful' precedent for the future. The spokesperson was further quoted as saying that it was an 'extraordinary arrangement' that pupils should be represented on school committees. He said that there were signs that those in authority had allowed themselves to be 'pushed into a corner'. Nevertheless he admitted that it was 'a good thing' that a potentially serious situation had been defused by dialogue among those involved. Overall, although the Department clearly felt that too much had been conceded, there was no official intervention at this stage. (Cape Times 22.2.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 15)

### 1.5 *The issues in Hanover Park*

Meanwhile, in Hanover Park, students, community activists and even a few teachers were organising both in the senior secondary schools, Mount View and Crystal, and in the township's broader community. Christian and Muslim students' organisations were active alongside members of AZAPO as well as persons supportive of the African National Congress (ANC). (Interviewees 20, 24, 34, 51)

A month after the first one-day boycott of classes by approximately 100 students at Mount View Senior Secondary School, on Thursday evening, 13 March, a protest meeting was held in Hanover Park to discuss 'gutter education, school conditions, and the intimidation of students'. Pamphlets distributed by students to call the meeting stated that students supported their parents who were dissatisfied with being 'requested' to pay voluntary school fees for textbooks, copy books and uniforms: 'our parents earn little'. The meeting was attended by some 300 students, parents and teachers from Mount View and Crystal Senior Secondary Schools. It was the first community meeting to be called, organised and run by students in Hanover Park and was an extraordinary breakthrough in the sense that public meetings had for a long time been difficult for anybody to organise in that township. The turn-out was the more remarkable in view of the venue having been in the territory of a much feared gang, the Mongrels, where most would usually not have ventured out at night.

Students told the meeting that the situation at their schools then was similar to that of schools in Soweto prior to 16 June, 1976. They spelled out specifically what was for them at issue, *inter alia*: that teachers were coming to school drunk; that teachers often left school early on Wednesdays to attend race meetings while others would be absent earlier in the day to lay bets at the off-course tote; that school fees were compulsory and students were being sent home when their parents did not pay them - in conflict with the regulations according to which voluntary fees had to be paid only by those who could afford them; that nothing visibly of benefit to students was being done with the money collected on 'lists' and as school fees;

that parents were still having to pay for books although they were supposed to be free; that although students were issued with normal hardcover exercise books, teachers were requiring them to use the ledger-type books and were refusing to mark work done in the smaller ones; that teachers were instructing students to buy the books or get out of their classes; that parents were having to pay examination fees for all standards when fees were supposed to be payable only for the Standard 8 and matriculation examinations; that parents were being forced to pay for athletic meetings even when their children were not attending them; that the school committees included members who did not have children at the schools; that one of the principals had called in the security police to interrogate students after someone had written 'Swapo' on a blackboard; that students were being forced to leave the school if they did not wear uniforms in spite of the fact that uniforms were not supposed to be compulsory; that the schools were in such very poor physical condition; and that teachers were under-qualified and unreliable. Furthermore, students told of how they had been warned not to attend the meeting because they would be involving themselves with politics and communism. Teachers had threatened that, if students did attend, the security police would be called in and they would be expelled. Out of the meeting came the formation of a student-parent committee which announced that it would call for a total boycott of classes if 'student intimidation' continued. A spokesperson for the committee said they planned to send a letter of complaint to Quint and that a follow-up meeting would be held in a week's time to report on progress. The Mount View principal, when approached by journalists after the meeting, told them that he was not prepared to answer the complaints which had been voiced. The only allegation to which he did respond, was that of drunkenness amongst the teachers; his response was, 'I know some of the teachers drink, but they never drink in front of me.' (Interviewee 20; Cape Times 15.3.80, 17.7.80; Herald 22.3.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 1; Grassroots, April 1980: 16)

#### 1.6 *Early stirrings in the Eastern Cape*

The next part of the country where student resistance surfaced that year was the Eastern Cape. *Circa* mid-March students at

Uitenhage Senior Secondary had formed an action committee to work, *inter alia*, for the establishment of an SRC and the dismissal of the school's new principal, Stanley Japhta. According to a member of the action committee, students found Japhta 'unapproachable' with their troubles and they objected to the 'high-handed' way in which he acted towards them. They were particularly discontented with the way he went about maintaining discipline. For example, he had hired as a caretaker a member of the 'Peacemakers' - a vigilante gang operating against the warring Mafia and Mongrel gangs - and put him on toilet duties armed with handcuffs. In one incident the man had unsuccessfully attempted to handcuff a boy whom he had found smoking there. Another issue was that the PT teacher insisted on girls supplying their dates of menstruation so that she could draw up a 'timetable' to prevent students falsely claiming this as an excuse for being exempted from PT or put off sick and sent home. A little less than a month after the students formed their action committee, a school board inquiry found that 'nothing was wrong at the school and there is no substance in the pupils' claims'. The conflict came to a head on Monday, 17 March, when over 500 students walked out of their classes and, armed with placards, assembled on the sports field. At that stage, the Revd Alan Hendrickse, leader of the Labour Party, was brought in to persuade the students to return to class and, after a peaceful demonstration, they agreed. The next day the Uitenhage Senior Secondary students were given an assurance by the authorities that their grievances would be investigated. At the same time one of their leaders was visited at home by two policemen, one a captain, and warned against the use of violence or intimidation. Then, on Thursday, 20 March, the students - who were dissatisfied with the way in which their representations had been handled - again walked out, demanding the principal's dismissal and a departmental inquiry into the issues they had identified. This time three security policemen were brought in, not to question the students, but to photograph those boycotting class. A senior security policeman told the press later that the matter was not regarded as political and that 'at the moment' there was no investigation. The following day a student spokesperson told the press that they had decided to 'cool it' for a while and go back to class although not satisfied with the circuit

inspector's investigation. They had, however, now won permission for an SRC. The principal was keen to present himself as reasonable and conciliatory and to down-play the situation which had arisen at his school at the same time as letting the students know that enough was enough. He told the press on the Saturday that the whole thing had been 'blown out of proportion and was all the result of a misunderstanding.' He claimed, 'All matters have been ironed out, and ... I do not envisage any future problems, and we have agreed not to take any action against any teachers or pupils. But, if there is any future trouble, then we will seriously consider taking steps.' (Argus 18.3.80; Weekend Argus 22.3.80; Sunday Times 23.3.80; Herald 29.3.80)

By the end of the week, Uitenhague Senior Secondary students were not alone in the Eastern Cape. On Friday 21 March, the matriculation students at Newell Senior Secondary in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, numbering some 300, walked out of classes and met in the school grounds to discuss their rejection of the double-stream matriculation system and, specifically being compelled to take certain subjects in the standard, rather than the higher, grade. Police visited the school and warned the students that they could be prosecuted under the Riotous Assemblies Act if they continued their walkouts; students at Uitenhague Senior Secondary received the same warning. Later, the Newell students met with their principal who then agreed that they would all sit for the higher grade examinations at the end of the year. (Weekend Argus 22.3.80; Herald 25.3.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 15)

### 1.7 *Mobilisation in Hanover Park*

Going back to Monday, 17 March, but this time in Cape Town, that night some 5000 pamphlets were distributed calling for solidarity among Black schoolchildren, parents and workers. The pamphlet called on parents to protect their children against 'exploitation' and stated, 'Our parents work as slaves to please us and to provide shelter. We are forced to work as cheap labour because our parents cannot afford to maintain us. We do not blame them. We sympathise with them.' A

spokesperson for the Hanover Park student-parent committee explained that the pamphlets were an attempt to get Black students from all over the Peninsula to attend their next meeting at St Dominic's Church Hall, Hanover Park, on the Thursday evening - which details of date and venue were carried by the local daily press.

This second Hanover Park meeting, on 20 March, was attended by approximately 600 people. During the meeting a police van cruised up and down and again 'a little man in a grey suit' noted the registration numbers of cars parked outside the hall. He later ventured into the hall and, after asking some reportedly 'peculiar' questions, left. The issues discussed were in general those that had been identified at the previous meeting described above. A student told the meeting, 'We want to learn, but we're not being taught. In fact, we can't be taught under the conditions at our schools and with the teachers and principals we have'. A mother complained that her child had been beaten up 'physically, with the fists' and this was confirmed by another student who had witnessed the student being assaulted by one of the teachers. Overall it was very apparent how impatient students and parents were becoming with the stagnation in schooling and with the authorities' procrastination on such matter as providing books and repairing damaged schools. Although the issues themselves were not a source of contention amongst those present, the meeting was somewhat disrupted by disputes over meeting procedure and, when certain persons volunteered to serve on a committee being constituted, some students challenged their authority. However, these disruptions were used by one of those assuming a leadership role to warn the meeting that a few people had obviously come with the intention of wrecking solidarity. The outcome of the meeting was a demand for the resignations of the principals and 'inept' teachers at Mount View and Crystal Senior Secondary Schools as well as a deputation formed to 'confront' the authorities in question, being the DCR, on the issues which the students had identified. A point on which the meeting was very strong was that the committee be given clear-cut instructions not to work through the Executive of the CRC. There were further motions which called for a two-day 'constructive' boycott of classes and sought the support of students in other parts

of the country, but these were left pending until the deputation had presented further proposals at a report-back meeting the following week. (Argus 21.3.80; Herald 29.3.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 16; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 15; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 1)

The beginning of the next week saw students at Newell, Uitenhage, Mount View and Crystal Senior Secondary Schools back in class but pressing for the matters they had raised to be given attention. At all four schools they were demanding that the principals be sacked. (Argus 24.3.80)

During the course of the week, parents, teachers, politicians and academics publicly accused the authorities of 'inexplicable negligence' and called on the Government to act immediately to defuse a 'potentially explosive situation'. Franklin Sonn, president of the Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA) said in a public statement that his organisation had made 'consistent and angry' representations to the Administration of Coloured Relations to improve conditions at the Department's schools. 'But all we were given were promises and the authorities will have only themselves to blame if things turn out badly.' (Argus 27.3.80)

#### 1.8 *Close of the first term: the Department of Coloured Relations reacts*

The day on which the schools closed for the short Easter vacation, Friday, 28 March, the authorities made a move which in the period immediately thereafter was to become a big issue. Five minutes before the final bell was rung at Crystal Senior Secondary, three unsealed letters were delivered to the principal, C.I.R. Fortuin - they contained the dismissals of three of his staff. The dismissed teachers were Elizabeth Everett, Barbara Houghton and Brenda Lieberwitz. Being classified White, they were formally only temporarily seconded to Crystal on a 24-hour-notice basis. Although the Department supplied no reasons in writing for the dismissals, allegedly these three teachers had 'encouraged' the students to draw up a memorandum of their grievances and two of the, Everett and Lieberwitz, had attended the Thursday-night public meeting. Houghton, who did not attend the meeting,

had actually tendered her resignation two days before receiving her notice of dismissal. Everett outlined to the press how she saw her dismissal: 'I was sympathetic to the grievances of the pupils which I feel are quite justified. Conditions at Crystal ... are bad and the manner in which corporal punishment is meted out to pupils is horrific and in contravention of school regulations. .... I attended the meeting because I felt it to be my duty as a teacher to find out what was going on, but I am convinced that this was a factor in my dismissal. .... My dismissal is totally unfair and I see it as victimisation.' The three dismissed teachers later described how they had fallen into bad grace with Fortuin because of their stand over corporal punishment. Everett, for example, had told her form class that they had rights regarding corporal punishment and if they were punished in contravention of the regulations laid down they could come and tell her about it and she would take the matter up with the principal. She had further read the regulations to the class. From then, she said, she had a constant flood of complaints about corporal punishment from the students. Everett herself had witnessed corporal punishment being irregularly administered on a number of occasions. She described how, for instance, she had once been 'looking for some maps and opened the bookroom door. Inside a girl was standing with her hand held out. She was being caned by a male teacher. Just next door were sitting the vice-principal and another senior teacher drinking tea. I can't believe they didn't know what was going on.' (Cape Times 29.3.80; Sunday Times 30.3.80; Argus 31.3.80, 12.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 16)

Students in Hanover Park held a meeting to decide on 'a line of action' on the Sunday. They demanded the unconditional reinstatement of the three teachers and they threatened to call a boycott to protest against the dismissals - 'the dismissals are forcing us into direct confrontation with the authorities.' (Argus 31.3.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 2)

The Crystal school committee also met and in a statement - the signatories to which included Fortuin - it repudiated the 'malicious insinuations' made by 'pupils and parents' at the recent

public meeting. The committee in turn alleged that teachers wasted valuable teaching time by 'subverting the minds of pupils with politics and ideologies to bring about chaos and instability in South Africa'. (Argus 31.3.80)

Meanwhile, the Departmental authorities had decided to acquiesce in the demand for the dismissal of the Mount View principal and on Monday, 31 March, it became known that Anyster had been transferred to a school in Mitchell's Plain. (Argus 31.3.80) This was followed the next day by a further mildly conciliatory move in the form of a statement by the Commissioner for Coloured Relations, A.P. de V. Kempen, that repairs to badly damaged schools would be carried out 'on a priority basis within the next few weeks'. As an extra measure the Administration had got permission to appoint nightwatchmen at a number of schools and he appealed to all communities to come forward and ensure that damage to their schools was prevented. (Argus 1.4.80)

## 2 Towards the boycott

### 2.1 *Students organise*

The short school holiday disrupted momentarily the mobilisation in and around the Hanover Park Senior Secondary Schools, which has been documented above, and produced a temporary lull. But there were activists at work who had perceived the possibilities provided by the conditions, which had arisen, for organising local Black students into a united demonstration of their dissatisfaction with the schooling to which they were subjected. Some such activists were amongst those who attended a meeting held on Saturday, 5 April. According to press reports, student representatives from 19 schools met to pledge themselves 'to fight the education system at all levels'. They reportedly affirmed the proposal that a boycott be called if certain demands were not met by the end of the following week, that is, Friday, 11 April, and issued a statement specifying demands similar to those already made by the Hanover Park students including immediate delivery of sufficient textbooks to the schools and immediate repairs to damaged schools, as well as the additional demand for their teachers

to be better paid. It seems that the story which appeared in the press was based on a report phoned in to journalists under a pseudonym which was partially fabricated, at least to the extent that allegedly it had only been students from approximately five schools who met that Saturday. Planned in conjunction with this report, a series of placards echoing the demands made at the weekend meeting were tied to the fence outside the Wynberg Regional Offices of the DCR and headquarters of the Wynberg Inspectorate. Journalists had been tipped off and photographs of the placards along with a report of the alleged meeting of 19 schools appeared in the Monday morning newspaper. (Interviewees 20, 23, 34; Cape Times 7.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 16; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 2)

By the middle of this next week it became public that the other local principal whose dismissal was being demanded, Fortuin of Crystal Senior Secondary School, had been replaced by his deputy and himself transferred to work on an educational research project for the Administration. At the same time, a student spokesperson was reported in the press as saying that, although Fortuin's 'transfer' had met one of their demands, their demand for the re-instatement of the three dismissed teachers still stood. The three teachers themselves had in the meantime lodged letters of complaint concerning their dismissals with the Director of Coloured Education, A.J. Arendse. (Argus 9.4.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 16)

## *2.2 Non-representative representations to the Government*

It was at this relatively early stage that the first high-level representations to the Government on the situation developing in certain schools under the DCR were made. The initiative was taken, with no mandate from the students or anybody else as far as was known, by Lofty Adams who, on Wednesday, 9 April, announced to the press that he had had an urgent interview with the Minister of Coloured Relations, Marais Steyn, about conditions at Coloured schools. He further conveyed in his statement the Minister's assurance to him personally that the three White teachers had not been unfairly treated but had been dismissed to make their posts available to suitably

qualified Coloured teachers. According to Adams, the Minister 'was fully aware what was happening and said steps had been taken to bring relief.' When asked later by a journalist to account for his visit to Steyn, he did so in the following terms: 'I went to him because I think it is the duty of every parent to try to defuse a very explosive situation.' (Argus 9.4.80; Sunday Tribune 13.4.80)

Meanwhile, Everett and Lieberwitz had gone to the Wynberg Regional Offices of the DCR to apply for alternative teaching positions - they were unwittingly offered their old jobs at Crystal Senior Secondary! The offers were subsequently withdrawn and when the school re-opened for the second term they had not been replaced by anybody classified either White or Coloured. (Argus 12.4.80; Sunday Tribune 13.4.80)

### *2.3 Resignation of the Education Council*

Later in the same week, there was another development at the 'top' of the hierarchy. At the time, the formally highest body in Coloured Education - although only an advisory body - was the Education Council. On its executive committee were Professor Richard van der Ross, Sonn and the Council's chairperson, Quint. At the Council's invitation, on 11 April, the Deputy Minister of Coloured Relations, S.P. ('Pen') Kotze, and the Secretary for Coloured Relations, J.H.T. Mills, came to explain the Government's plans for the CRC's successor, the all-nominated Coloured Persons' Council (CPC).

Directly after having had these plans explained to it, the Council went into committee to discuss a motion calling on all its twelve members to resign. The motion was carried unanimously after three dissenting members had withdrawn from the meeting. Rather than requesting the State President to disband the Council, they decided to resign with immediate effect. As one of its former members explained afterwards, 'We wanted this to be a gesture of rejection of the exposition of Government policy we had just had from Mr Kotze and Mr Mills.' Had they continued on the Education Council their nominations thereto would have had to have been

confirmed by the new CPC executive - had the Government gone ahead and appointed one - where originally they had been nominated by the Labour Party -controlled Executive of the erstwhile CRC.

Steyn responded with a public admonishment to the effect that serving officers of the Coloured Education Department were not free to resign from the Council unless they also resigned from their official positions and 'at most' could ask that their appointments be terminated. One of those who had resigned in town hit back at Steyn: 'That is big brother trying to wield the big stick by hinting that our job might be in jeopardy. Before the Minister wields this stick, he should inform himself about the mood in the coloured community and the current state of coloured education. Then, if he is wise, he will recognise that he has less power in the present situation than he apparently thinks he has.' (Interviewee 42; Argus 14.4.80, 15.4.80)

#### 2.4 *Ultimatum from the students*

Returning to the student- community level, towards the end of the week there was widespread distribution of pamphlets calling for student 'solidarity' and expressing resistance to 'gutter education'. In the pamphlet, students said they knew the importance of an education and the sacrifices made by their parents to give them one. They explained that they were mobilising in response to their 'inferior education' which had been keeping them in their oppressed position and were demanding that the system be radically changed. 'Students have stated what they think of ethnic education. It is an education for domination, inferior in every respect.' (Interviewee 34; Argus 11.4.80)

A meeting of student leaders was planned for Saturday, 12 April, to be held in a Salt River home. After the students became aware of the tight surveillance under which the Security Police had kept the meeting place since the morning, they managed at the last minute to get the Spa Hall in Athlone as an alternative venue. More than a hundred student representatives from twenty Peninsula secondary schools and other educational institutions attended the meeting.

There was consensus amongst those present that what action had been promised by the authorities would not materially change the position even if carried out. In a statement emerging from the meeting, the students said, 'The steps taken by Mr Steyn to supply proper textbooks and to keep the school buildings in good repair are the run-of-the-mill things any good administration should do. What we are dissatisfied with is the general low standard and poor conditions surrounding coloured education.' The meeting decided to give the Government two-and-a-half weeks to meet their demands or at least to respond to them in a concrete way. If by the end of the month their ultimatum had been ignored they would call for a boycott. A list of students' demands was drawn up at the meeting and included the scrapping of 'racial education'; the immediate establishment of SRCs at all secondary and tertiary level educational institutions; an immediate review of the Government's fiscal policy on Black schools; the provision of sufficient textbooks - the correct ones and free - as well as of adequate educational equipment; action against principals and teachers who contravene regulations; re-instatement of the three teachers dismissed from Crystal Senior Secondary; and re-instatement of any students who had been expelled for political reasons. Another meeting was planned for the following Saturday to consider 'further action.' (Argus 12.4.80, 14.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980)16)

### 2:5 *Support for the students*

The authorities' attempts presumably at defusing the situation by promising to repair buildings and deliver textbooks and by removing two principals met with a response from parents and community leaders which was similar to the students' response. For instance, the vice-chairperson of the Rylands Parents' Association - an organisation founded by parents who considered those serving on the school committees in the area to be 'all Government yes-men' - was quoted the same day as the above students' meeting as saying that the steps taken by the authorities so far did not cure the real ills in Coloured Education. He proceeded to enumerate many more sources of dissatisfaction including that wearing uniforms in some schools was compulsory even though parents could not afford it; that

school fees were being enforced where most parents could not afford them; that corporal punishment was applied beyond the limits of the regulations; that students were forced by some teachers to buy hard-cover ledger-type exercise books irrespective of domestic circumstances; that students were interrogated by the Security Police on school premises; that students were victimised if they stood up for their rights and some had been unfairly expelled; that students were sometimes evicted from classes because they could not cope with the work; that students were forced to do subjects which they would not need for their future careers; and that in many instances equipment needed for a course was not available (Argus 12.4.80)

### 3 The boycott begins: its first day

It was on Monday, 14 April, that the boycott began. The Saturday meeting's decision not to call students out on a mass boycott unless the authorities had failed to respond adequately to their demands by the end of the month was overridden by the students of at least 6 schools who started boycotting that day. Only one of these schools fell under the DET and that was Fezeka Senior Secondary in Guguletu. The others, all within the DCR's Wynberg region, were Bridgetown, Parkwood, Steenberg and Wynberg Senior Secondary Schools and Sentinel Junior Secondary. On that first day there were already at least 5000 students boycotting. The form which the boycott took right from this beginning was that of a class boycott as opposed to a complete stayaway from school. Only at Parkwood Senior Secondary did students stay away altogether. In the latter case it was of obvious significance that, as referred to above, the Parkwood campus had been temporarily closed as unfit for educational purposes and the students were being bussed daily to school in Mitchell's Plain. To the extent that Parkwood students met that morning to discuss and decide on a boycott it was at the point from which their busses departed. It appears that no students would have been allowed on to the bus even if they had wanted to board it. After a two-day stayaway they returned to school to join the boycott of classes on the Wednesday. (Argus 14.4.80; Cape Times 15.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 16)

At Fezeka Senior Secondary, while only one class carried on with its lessons more than 800 students attended a meeting outside in the school grounds at which it was decided to boycott classes until such time as their demands had been met. Their demands were as they had made them almost two months earlier with one immediate demand modified and one additional demand. Fezeka students had already several weeks previously elected an SRC - consisting of two representatives from each class - but it had still not been recognised by the school authorities. Their demand was thus for its recognition. The additional demand was that the intimidation of students be stopped and specifically that the threats of expulsion which had been made against some of them be withdrawn forthwith. The principal, in what was presumably an attempt to retain some initiative, dismissed the students at lunchtime and told them to return the next day. (Argus 14.4.80; Cape Times 15.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 16)

At the start of school at Wynberg Senior Secondary, students gathered in the quadrangle and refused to go into class. The prefects handed in their badges because, according to a student spokesperson, among other things, they had been chosen by the principal and staff and not elected by the student body. Their only definite demand at this stage was for the immediate formation of an SRC. But, according to the spokesperson, their action was not only in support of this demand but also 'in solidarity with pupils whose schools have not been repaired.' When representatives of the students met with the principal to ask him to allow an SRC he told them they would get their answer in two weeks' time. The students rejected this response and decided to continue a boycott of classes until their demand had been met. At about 11h00, the principal tried to close the school and ordered them to go home. The students refused to disperse and their spokespersons made it clear that they intended to remain at school all day everyday until their demand had been met. (Argus 14.4.80; Cape Times 15.4.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 16)

At Bridgetown Senior Secondary School, all the students except for one class started boycotting after they had held a meeting during the second interval to discuss what to do. Their demands were a

selection of those which the Hanover Park students had earlier put forward along with further demands specific to their particular school, including the dismissal of one of their teachers, the appointment of a biology teacher, and the immediate provision of a laboratory and a library. (Cape Times 15.4.80) At Steenberg Senior Secondary, students refused to go to classes and staged a 'sit-in' with placards bearing slogans such as 'Away with inferior education'. (Argus 14.4.80) At Sentinel Junior Secondary that very first morning, the full complement of secondary students at the school - those in Standards 6, 7 and 8 - formed up in the grounds outside. No students tried to 'bunk' off and their assembly was entirely orderly. Their decision was to start boycotting immediately and of this they informed the principal. (Interviewee 22)

In addition to the schools already mentioned, there were at least two others, as well as Hewat Teachers Training College, where students held meetings to discuss the situation which had arisen. At Spes Bona Senior Secondary, students held a mass meeting at which they decided to begin a boycott of classes the next day and to continue with it until conditions at Peninsula schools had been improved. At Westridge Senior Secondary, in Mitchell's Plain, students met during an interval which the principal extended to give them adequate time. After the meeting several students met with the principal to convey their demand for an SRC. (Argus 14.4.80) At Hewat Teachers Training College, students held a mass meeting at the start of lectures to discuss conditions at the schools and other educational institutions such as their own as well as to consider the conditionally proposed call for a boycott. It was decided to hold a meeting every morning for the following three days to discuss what were for them the issues and their demands. (Cape Times 15.4.80)

That Monday also saw pamphlets, outlining what was at issue for students, distributed at Peninsula schools. In the evening of the same day, about a thousand people gathered at the Westridge Civic Centre in Mitchell's Plain to pledge their support for the students. A resident who attended, was quoted in a community newspaper as saying how he admired the young 16- and 17-year-old students who had

addressed the meeting so confidently and explained the problems at their schools to the parents - it's a whole new generation'. (Cape Times 15.4.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 1)

Thus, by the end of the first day many of what were to become features of the boycott for much of its duration were already in evidence. Students had responded to an, albeit at that stage embryonic, co-ordinated student leadership. The response had been uneven and, to the extent that it had taken the form of initiating an immediate boycott instead of waiting till the end of the month as *per* the terms of the Saturday meeting's ultimatum, it conflicted with the actual call made by the leadership. Students under both the Departments of Coloured Relations and of Education and Training were involved. The form taken by the boycott was that of a boycott of classes with a minority of students staying away from school altogether. Individual student bodies were deciding for themselves at mass meetings on what action to take. Students were openly challenging the school authorities. The formation and recognition of SRCs was emerging as a central demand. Over and above demands for specific improvements and reforms, the rejection of inferior education as a whole had already been expressed. Principals' responses had ranged from outright opposition to being relatively co-operative. Prefects had resigned. Widespread discussion of conditions at the schools had begun as well as debate as to what action to take. There had been public expression of parental support for the students' stand at a well attended community meeting; and pamphlets outlining the issues and calling for action had been distributed.

In spite of the entirely peaceful and orderly actions of the students, Quint publicly objected to the way students were 'demanding' what they wanted. He told the press: 'It is not necessary for them to go into all these hysterics. If they want student councils, they only have to ask their principals.' At the same time, he chose to deny that there had been a 'boycott' at any school, saying that students had merely approached their principals with the demand for SRCs; and this only at three schools, namely Parkwood, Westridge and Wynberg Senior Secondary Schools. It was from Parkwood Senior

Secondary that there had been a complete stayaway and no contact with the principal had been made at all (Cape Times 15.4.80)

#### 4 Plight of the prefects

It is appropriate to deal with the fate of prefects at this early stage since their demise was immediate. Prefects constituted barely an issue later in the boycott and were a factor in its course still less.

At the time the boycott began, it was the exceptional DCR secondary school in the Peninsula which did not have a prefect system. The very few schools, which had had an SRC before the boycott began, had also had prefects. One of the latter schools had a system of rotating prefects whereby every Standard 10 student had an opportunity to be a prefect for some part of his/her final year - the full set of prefects would be changed periodically. In the case of this school and others at which there were both prefects and an SRC, they generally co-existed without friction. This would seem to have been because the function of the two systems, respectively, were different, combined with the fact of overlapping membership. Prefects were charged by school authorities with limited disciplinary duties while members of an SRC were elected by their fellow students mainly to take initiative in the organisation of extra-mural cultural activities as well as to represent them to the principal on matters with which they were dissatisfied. Most commonly, prefects would be selected by the principal in consultation with the teachers or, at any rate, the more senior amongst them. In rare instances, students would have some circumscribed say in the selection of prefects along with staff.

There was a fairly widespread tendency for prefects to be selected from the academically higher achieving students and were often perfectly well respected by their fellows. The latter was not consistently the case. Thus, for example, at Mount View Senior Secondary School those appointed prefects were 'kids who were more feared than respected'. Being a prefect was a strong-arm operation which had nothing to do with being a 'good student'. Mount View prefects would administer summary punishment and abuse their power in such practices as permitting students in contravention of the rules to go to the shop opposite during interval in return for a cooldrink, packet of chips or some like reward.

The prefect system was generally not liked, but it was seldom overtly opposed. Prefects were widely regarded as the staff's lackeys although students' attitudes toward them varied with individual prefects and from school to school, ranging from hatred to some degree of respect. Where they were found to have been least rejected was at the school where matric students served as prefects on a rotational basis. The latter system minimised the possibility of prefects developing illusions about what was a role restricted to very specific tasks. In contrast, another school was found to have had a history of resistance to the strategy of indirect rule which the prefect system constituted. The school authorities' use of students to control their fellow students had been a source of constant contention. The struggle around this issue had led, *inter alia*, to prefects handing in their badges and the ostracism of those who would not.

With the boycott came a widespread demand for the abolition of prefects. At some schools the student body lost no time in instructing the prefects to take off their badges. Some prefects immediately handed them in of their own accord. None attempted to assert themselves as prefects and those, who went on to play leadership roles during the boycott, did so independently of their past positions as prefects. Many of them would seem to have dropped demoralised into the background. The prefect system as a whole collapsed and, with the rest of what constituted 'normal school', went into limbo for the duration of the boycott. (Interviewees 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 20, 21, 25, 32, 34, 38, 40, 41, 57, 58)

## 5 The boycott joined: the first week

### 5.1 *The boycott spreads*

The boycott spread rapidly in the Cape Peninsula during its first week. More students from more schools joined everyday. By the end of the week an estimated 25 000 students from thirty Peninsula DCR schools as well as Fezeka Senior Secondary were boycotting class. The schools which became involved in this opening phase were Alexander

Sinton, Arcadia, Athlone, Belgravia, Belhar, Bellville South, Bishop Lavis, Bonteheuwel, Bridgetown, Cathkin, Crystal, Elsies River, Elswood, Heideveld, John Ramsay, Kensington, Manenberg, Mount View, Oaklands, Rylands, Schotsche Kloof, Silverstream, Spes Bon, Vista and Wittebome Senior Secondary Schools as well as those already mentioned, namely Bridgetown, Parkwood, Steenberg and Wynberg Senior Secondaries and Sentinel Junior Secondary School.

## 5.2 *The process of coming in*

Not every school came into the boycott along a single route. However, from the details of how students at individual schools began boycotting can be abstracted a process whereby information concerning initiatives taken and their consequences were communicated to some or all students at a particular school who on the basis thereof in turn took initiatives which resulted in classes there being boycotted. The precise course taken by this process at any one school would be accounted for only by a detailed description of the concrete combination of a myriad circumstantial factors.

Concerning the media whereby information was communicated, particularly just before the beginning of the boycott and in its first few days, the most important medium was 'bush telegraph'. At its most haphazard this involved information flowing out along regular channels of communication between students at different schools who were associated with one another in some other context such as sport, religious practice, family or neighbourhood. More deliberately and with more effect, activists would contact individuals whom they happened to know, or to know of, and whom they considered capable of taking initiative at their respective schools. It was a process that developed its own dynamic. For example, at Spes Bona, which already had an SRC, the students, after themselves deciding to come out on boycott, sent representatives to make contact with other schools in the vicinity. Along with 'bush telegraph', pamphleteering was an important medium of communication. From the first week of the boycott vast quantities of pamphlets were distributed. At Rylands Senior Secondary, for instance, the boycott began on 18

April after a batch of pamphlets had been flung by a student from another school over the fence into the school grounds. They were grabbed and read immediately and a few minutes later the student, who was already assuming the leadership at the school, stood forward to call for a boycott. How the boycott started at Alexander Sinton Senior Secondary, on the other hand, was with a letter received from students at Crystal Senior Secondary explaining their 'hassles' and requesting the Sinton students to stand with them. Finally, in this connection, the public media - and in particular the local English-language press - also served as an important vehicle for the dissemination of information. Concerning substance, the initial information which reached schools generally included some account of the grievances of students at Mount View and Crystal Senior Secondary Schools along with the idea of a boycott in support of the Hanover Park students and in protest against the system to which they were all subject. After 14 April the information included the fact that students at certain schools had already begun a boycott.

The response of individual students to the information reaching them inevitably varied and so did the collective response of students at different schools. These collective responses ranged from initial opposition through critical consideration, relative inertia, carefully considered support, to uncritical enthusiasm. At some schools the decision to boycott was taken in an *ad hoc* manner by a certain section of the student body and became *de facto* the decision of the student body as a whole when those who had made the initial move were joined by the rest of the students. At some schools the initiative of even one student playing a leadership role seemed to be sufficient to bring the student body out instantly. At others a majority vote was taken after often long and heated debate. When the different schools came into the boycott varied over a period of approximately a week-and-a-half in the case of those in the Cape Town area. How the school authorities learned of the boycott's commencement at their school was either by finding the students not in class or by student representatives informing them that they were joining the boycott or first the former and then the latter. The extent of division/

consensus over participation in the boycott and over how to conduct the boycott varied. If student bodies managed by any stage to organise themselves sufficiently to respond collectively in a coherent way to the situation, how long they took to do so varied. At some schools the students organised themselves in a disciplined and purposeful way right from the outset; at others they went through an initial phase of distressed milling around unsure of how to behave or what to do.

At this early stage there was also considerable unevenness of participation in the boycott, not only in the Cape Town region as a whole which has already been illustrated, but also at individual schools. Not every student joined the boycott at every school where there were classes being boycotted. At some schools there was a substantial minority attempting to continue in class while at certain others it was only a minority who were boycotting class at that stage - it was often particular standards or classes which were, or were not, boycotting. Furthermore, while hundreds, when not thousands, of students were daily joining the boycott there were also those who returned to class before the first week was out. Fezeka students did so after certain issues had been provisionally resolved at a meeting of the school committee on the Monday night. At Wynberg Senior Secondary, in spite of a student spokesperson having said on the Wednesday that they would not return to class until there had been a change in the 'racist educational structure', the next day they did return to their classes. Wittebome students also resumed classes shortly after having joined the boycott. Amongst the schools at which students had not become actively involved in the boycott by the end of the first week were Crestway, Grassy Park, Groenvlei, Harold Cressy, Heathfield, Lavender Hill, Livingstone, Ocean View, Salt River, South Peninsula, Steenberg, Trafalgar and Zeekoeivlei Senior Secondaries as well as certain schools in Mitchell's Plain. At some of these schools, although students had not started boycotting, time was set aside during the week for discussion of the situation as it developed.

### 5.3 *At school, out of class*

The decision of students who had begun boycotting in the first week was at most schools - whether taken by design or by default - to the effect that they should not return to classes that week but let further action be determined by a meeting of students' representatives called for the Saturday. In the meantime, the boycotting students continued coming to school. What they did there varied from school to school. At some of the schools which had not previously had an SRC there was an early attempt to establish some form of representative structure or at least an organised leadership in the form of what was called, for example, a working body. Much time was spent in mass meetings as well as more informally discussing developments. Students staged placard demonstrations along the school fence and/or marched around the grounds. At a few schools there were the embryonic beginnings of an 'awareness programme'. Inevitably, especially in this opening phase of the boycott, there was also a considerable amount of milling about doing nothing. (Interviewees 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14, 21, 22, 27, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40, 41, 48, 49, 50, 54, 58)

### 5.4 *Boycotting beyond the Peninsula*

The boycott's opening phase was not confined entirely to the Peninsula. In the Western Cape students at Gordons Senior Secondary in Somerset West joined the boycott during the first week and, while expressing solidarity with the boycotting students of Cape Town, they presented the principal with a set of their demands. (Argus 18.4.80) Then on the Friday, 18 April, the Cape student boycotters were joined by at least 2000 in Johannesburg. Early that morning more than a thousand students of Christiaan Bothma Senior Secondary in Bosmont marched from their school to nearby Coronationville Senior Secondary. There students of the two schools held a meeting and decided to come out in support of the Cape boycott. Their demands, which were set out in a pamphlet read at the meeting, included: abolition of racial education; integration of all schools; equal distribution of money for education; higher standards of education; parity of all teachers'

salaries; abolition of the ministerial consent required by students of one classification who wish to attend a university reserved for another classification group; abolition of the DCR and better textbooks. The meeting pledged support for the boycotting Cape students and further called on principals to take up their demands with the authorities. The students, then some 2000 strong, marched to Coronationville Primary School. There the gates had been locked to prevent them from entering the grounds and after a few minutes they moved on. The marchers carried placards on which were slogans such as 'We don't want inferior education', 'Treat our teachers fairly' and 'Down with the CAD'. They were on their way to Westbury Senior Secondary when they were intercepted by the security police and the 'flying squad'. The march was stopped and a Bosmont student detained. Later he was released when the students, after being reminded by a student who addressed them with a police megaphone that 'We want no violence and no one to get hurt', promised to disperse. (Argus 19.4.80. Grassroots, April 1980 : 16)

#### 5.5 *Inception of the Committee of 61*

Cape Town students had called a meeting of representatives of the schools and other educational institutions for Saturday, 19 April. It had been planned to be held at Hewat Teachers Training College but on arrival the students learned that the Hewat authorities had withdrawn their permission to hold the meeting on the college campus. The venue was shifted to a mission hostel hall in Crawford outside which there was the by now expected police patrol during the meeting. Due to the size of the alternative venue, about a third of the students, who had come for the meeting, had to be turned away. Their solution was to choose four delegates to represent each institution - some 244 students representing 61 institutions attended. Virtually every Black secondary school in the Peninsula as well as ones in Paarl, Worcester and Stellenbosch were represented. There were delegates from as far afield as George and Oudtshoorn. Tertiary students were also represented from UWC, Hewat Teachers Training College, Bellville Training College, South Cape Training College, the Peninsula Technikon as well as the Black student body at UCT.

The students barred the press from their three-hour meeting but during a break a spokesperson read out a statement. In it the students condemned the education they were receiving as 'ideological

control on the part of the State'. 'They are training people for a cheap labour market. This protest is against all racist educational systems, and is not confined to colour or creed.' According to the press statement, the meeting called for immediate action on various issues, *inter alia* : the lack of autonomous SRC's at most schools; the necessity to apply for Government permits when students wish to attend certain educational institutions; the Security Police having free access to school premises; the disparity in money spent on the education of the various 'race' groups; the failure to repair damaged schools; the acute shortage of qualified teachers; the shortage of textbooks; the compulsory wearing of uniform; the abuse of corporal punishment; and the unfair dismissal of certain teachers.

The meeting decided to organise a full boycott for a further week after which they would decide again whether or not to continue. The call issued by the meeting was for students to attend school but to boycott class. According to the statement released, the coming week would be used to 'educate fellow students about the reasons for the unrest'. Regular classes would be replaced by alternative education and an awareness programme was being devised for students 'to come to grips with the issues involved in the boycott'.

The students further announced that they were electing an umbrella body of representatives from the 61 institutions represented at the meeting. They would not release the names of the members of what came to be known as the Committee of 61 - and a little later as the Committee of 81 - because, it was explained, they needed to operate confidentially. At the same time, according to their statement, 'Students unanimously reject all statements made on their behalf by racist bodies such as the Labour Party, lecturers at racist institutions and reactionary teachers' organisations like the CTPA.' All delegates present agreed on behalf of their institutions to join the boycott on the Monday. (Argus 19.4.80; Sunday Times 20.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 17)

## 6. A week of marches and meetings

### 6.1 *The boycott still spreading*

The second week of the boycott brought students in from many parts of the country including all the major urban centres. This was in fact the first week in which the emergent student leadership had called on students to boycott classes - whether or not it was at this stage actually to their call that students were responding.

On the Monday of that week there were already some 80% of Black secondary schools in the Peninsula participating although African students were attending classes as normal. Virtually all Coloured secondary and tertiary students around Cape Town were boycotting by the end of the second week. Furthermore, they were joined on the Friday by primary students from at least three schools, namely Bellville South, Bonteheuwel and Surrey Estate Primaries. Students all over the Western Cape started coming out on boycott. Some of the schools involved were Gordons Senior Secondary in Somerset West, Luckhoff in Stellenbosch, Vredenburg and Saldannah Senior Secondaries, Emil Weder Senior Secondary in Genadendal, and Fred Gaum in Ceres. Further afield in the Cape, students of Bastiaanse Senior Secondary in Beaufort West came into the boycott. In the Eastern Cape, 16 out of a total of 17 Coloured and Indian senior secondary schools were boycotting by the end of the week. In Kimberley, at least two schools were participating. The boycott spread immediately throughout Johannesburg and the Reef including at tertiary level the Rand and Bethal Colleges of Education. By the middle of the week about 2000 of Lenasia's approximately 5000 Indian students had come out. All Pretoria Coloured secondary schools joined the boycott as did, for example, Toekomrus Senior Secondary near Randfontein. The boycott also spread to schools in parts of Natal and the OFS, including Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Bloemfontein. Press estimates of the number of students boycotting class on Monday, 21 April, put it at around 100 000. If, as claimed by Steyn, this

was an inflated figure for the *beginning* of the second week, it seems that it could not have exaggerated the extent of the boycott by the *end* of the week. (Argus 21.4.80, 22.4.80, 23.4.80, 24.4.80, 25.4.80, 26.4.80; Cape Times 26.4.80; Star 9.5.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 16-17)

## 6.2 *Student marches*

A prominent feature of this second week of the boycott was that students - notably in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban - staged, or attempted to stage, off-campus protest marches which resulted in a degree of direct confrontation with the police. The first such march started from Eldorado Park Senior Secondary in Johannesburg. On the Monday morning, pickets allowed no students nor teachers into the school. After holding a half-hour placard demonstration outside the school, Eldorado Park students, numbering about a thousand, marched to Kliptown Senior Secondary where they collected another thousand students before marching further. Leaders of the march emphasised to the press that their demonstration was non-violent and stopped photographs being taken. Another march was undertaken that morning by students of Westbury and Coronationville Senior Secondaries who joined forces and marched to Bosmont Senior Secondary. Strong contingents of police kept the demonstrating students under surveillance but, although they confiscated posters, the police did not intervene to stop these marches - as they were to do later in the week. (Argus 21.4.80)

## 6.3 *The Athlone march*

The biggest mass march of the week occurred the next day, Tuesday, 22 April, in Athlone and was a major event in the boycott as it developed in the Cape Peninsula. The march took place against the explicit decision of Saturday's meeting of the Committee of 61. It was not possible to establish precisely how the counter-decision was taken. The student, who would seem to have been the leading proponent of the plan, was prominent in the leadership at Spes Bona Senior Secondary. That this student at the time apparently enjoyed the backing of a self-constituted core group, which was in due course to achieve a relatively dominant position in the Committee of 81, as it was to become, is the only indication that possibly the march had

a degree of support within the Committee's emergent leadership. There were a few others in the Committee of 61 who were also aware of the proposed march. At an informal meeting in one of their homes the night before the march took place and at which the student leader in question was present, there was heated debate on the issue and an attempt made to dissuade him from taking his school out into the streets. Be all this as it may, the decision to go ahead with a march was certainly not made by the Committee of 61 and was in no way a collective one. Student critics of the march were later to argue that it had taken place not in consequence of any mass frustration supposedly experienced by the student body but as a result of sheer opportunism on the part of those who had engineered it in combination with the uncritical enthusiasm of the rank-and-file who joined it.

The march started from Spes Bona Senior Secondary where the school authorities were taken completely by surprise. While principal and staff assumed that the students were gathering in the hall as usual for their daily meeting and awareness programme, the leadership had marshalled the students into a neat formation and marched them out of the grounds. On realising what was happening, the vice-principal, Randall van den Heever, followed the marching students in his car. Having caught up with them, he spoke to the student, already discussed, who was leading the march. The student leader tried to reassure van den Heever by telling him that he had himself telephoned the police the day before and informed them of the march. According to what he was supposed to have told the police, he had made it clear that it was to be an entirely peaceful demonstration, that they did not wish to disrupt traffic or cause unrest of any sort, but that they wanted the police to stay out of it. Allegedly the police had given the go-ahead for the march to take place on condition that they did not disrupt traffic and, furthermore, that they carried no placards. The truth of this could not be satisfactorily established but there was apparently indeed not a single placard on the march and initially the police made no move to stop it as they so easily could have done before the Spes Bona students had reached even one other school.

van den Heever, realising that he was himself in no position to dissuade the students from marching, told the leader of the march that he was going ahead to warn the principals of the various schools for which the march might be headed. The first school was Alexander Sinton to whose principal it came as the worst possible news. The Sinton students got to hear about the march shortly thereafter when one of their number came rushing into the school with the story that hundreds of students were on their way down Thornton Road. The principal had the gates bolted and instructed all students to go either into the hall or into their classrooms where they were free to do as they chose as long as they stayed there. The instruction was ignored and the students gathered on an upstairs balcony and outside the buildings. A few minutes later the Spes Bona students arrived and took up position on some open ground across the road from the Sinton gates. From there they started chanting, 'Sinton kom uit! Sinton kom uit! Sinton kom uit!' The pressure on the Sinton students was intense as the marchers circled their school, sang freedom songs and chanted at them. The atmosphere was emotionally highly charged and made the more exciting by the arrival of international television crews. In the meantime, the students of nearby Belgravia Senior Secondary had been enlisted and they joined the Spes Bona students on the field opposite. At the fence, leaders of the march spoke to Sinton's leaders but the overwhelming feeling was for going out and, before they could be properly ordered and in spite of teachers pleading with them to consider the implications of the march properly, the students were streaming down from the balcony and from wherever they were towards the fence. Some climbed over the fence. Others went out the back of the school through City Park and up Thornton Road to join the marchers. Eventually the gates were opened and the rest of the students moved over the road.

The marchers, by then consisting of students from Spes Bona, Belgravia and Alexander Sinton Senior Secondaries set out for Athlone Senior Secondary School in Gleemore. Police had in the meantime set up a blockade ahead of them in Thornton Road but the students evaded it by diverting the march down a side street. One student was grabbed by police but managed to free himself and rejoin the march.

van den Heever's forewarning of the principals of Athlone and Bridgetown Senior Secondaries came as a shock - 'O my God!' was the only response managed by one of them. Athlone Senior Secondary did not join the march when it passed and the marchers - realising they were not going to - moved on almost immediately. After collecting the Bridgetown students, the march stretched for about a kilometre down Klipfontein Road, blocking off traffic almost entirely. They arrived at Rylands Senior Secondary an estimated 5000 strong. The sight of the marchers produced extreme excitement amongst the Rylands students, some of whom straight away started climbing over the fence. But police guarded the locked gates and were initially determined not to let any students out onto the street. On the command of their leadership to sit down and keep quiet, the students sat down and kept quiet. The principal then sent the student leader forward to negotiate and at the fence the march leaders asked him whether Rylands was coming with them or not. They told him that the march was headed for Cathkin Senior Secondary from where they planned to go to Langa Senior Secondary and from there to Cape Town's city *centre*. The Rylands leader, though himself privately opposed to participation in the march, conveyed to his approximately 700 students that they were being called upon to march in solidarity. The general feeling was to join the march. Having arranged the students neatly, with the shorter ones in front and those taller behind, their leader announced that they were coming out. Van den Heever, amongst others, had in the meantime spoken to the officer in charge of the police's operation there and persuaded him that it was senseless trying to keep the students apart. The gates were flung open and the police stood back as Rylands marched out. The students then proceeded to Heideveld where at Cathkin Senior Secondary they were instructed by the police to disperse.

The leaders of the march agreed to disperse but, as they had to move back towards Athlone in order to return home, they decided to go back together as far as Clover Crescent and disperse there. About a hundred riot squad police followed them back up Hinds Road

and into Klipfontein Road where at the Gatesville Shopping Centre there were more police waiting. There were by this stage an estimated 8000 students marching. With no further warning the police launched a movement to break up the march. Their initial tactic was to drive at speed straight into the students' midst forcing them thereby to break ranks and immediately to start scattering. The police then laid into them with batons and for the first time deployed a new device known as the 'sneeze machine' which sprayed an irritant powder known as 'tearsmoke'. A parent who watched the marchers being dispersed saw riot police fire teargas canisters into a shop in the Gatesville Shopping Centre while students ran away from the emissions of the 'sneeze machine'. R. Shaboordin, manager of the Avalon Music Centre which faced on to Klipfontein Road, told of how he was standing outside his shop when 10 to 12 police vans drove past. 'Two schoolgirls were standing inside the shop and there were a couple of students on the pavement outside. As the vehicles drove along Klipfontein Road one of the chaps fired a canister.' The canister missed an assistant by 'four or five inches' before going off and shattering a record stand. According to Shaboordin, the police had no apparent reason to fire the canister. Interviewed two years later, he seemed keen to emphasise that he considered the incident to have been accidental and that there was no harassment of people such as himself by the police.

Although dispersing as fast as they could run, groups of students were chased. Even Rylands Senior Secondary, to which some students had returned for cover, was teargassed. After the march had been completely broken up many students were given lifts back to their respective schools by motorists, teachers and parents. In one case, some fourteen students were walking home across a section of open land on the outskirts of Vanguard Estate when, according to residents in the vicinity, a riot policeman - one of several in a Land Rover - fired a teargas canister at them. Several of the students ran into a house in Calcium Road. The policeman fired two more canisters into the back and front yards of the house. Another policeman then went around the house and forced the back door open, breaking the lock in the process. Shouting 'Kom uit, kinders!' he fired a further canister

into the house. The students ran out through the front door but none were arrested. The policeman in the Land Rover left and took up station on the open ground while one of them fired a last teargas canister into the yard behind the house. Many students were fiercely embittered by this treatment at the hands of the police. Van den Heever described how the student who had taken the lead in the whole matter was 'absolutely livid with rage', able only to splutter, 'Wat gat met dié mense aan?! - we were just coming back to disperse!!!'

The same afternoon, certain members of the Committee of 61, who had in any case been opposed to any such march taking place, drafted a statement which that evening they issued to the press in the name of the Committee. The statement reminded students that their 'Representatives had decided no pupils at any school were to leave school grounds for any reason. This was unanimously decided by the student body and any school participating in marches are violating this decision.' It appealed to students to abide by this decision and not to act emotionally. 'We appeal to students to adhere to the awareness programme and refrain from actions which may divide the pupils. The march in Athlone we find deplorable.'

The attitude articulated in the latter statement turned out to be, indeed, that of the majority in the Committee of 61 when they had the opportunity to discuss what had happened. The possibility of disciplinary action against those members who had initiated the march was mooted. However, it would seem that the faction, of which those responsible were a part, had sufficient clout within the Committee to quash such a move.

In the ensuing debate, those who favoured mass public demonstrations used as a bargaining point the fact that the Athlone march had shown rank and file student support for such tactics to be there for the tapping. The huge majority of students, whom the circumstances of the march had presented with the possibility of participating, had responded with enormous enthusiasm - they had been longing for the opportunity to 'do something.' Even representatives on the Committee of 61, who

had supported the decision that there should be no demonstrations off school campuses, marched with their schools that day. Further, it is reasonable to assume that many other students in the Peninsula would also have marched had they been called upon to do so. Many students had been pushing for a more confrontationist approach. Especially at schools where the students had little other to do than hang around waiting for something to happen, frustration was setting in even at this early stage in the boycott and some seemed to want confrontation merely to break the monotony. This is notwithstanding that many might not have participated in deference to the Committee of 61 which was fast establishing its authority. The majority on the Committee of 61 had the memory of 1976 imprinted on their minds and could not countenance a repetition of young students becoming fodder for the guns of the police.

In an interview with the central figure behind the Athlone march, he explained that the faction, of which he was at the time a part, recognised that what had happened, had happened, but their view was that ...

'the past couldn't be allowed to impede our actions. Because we felt it was necessary to get out into the open and make clear our position more emphatically that we're not just a "pseudo," middle class movement which could so easily have been the idea among a lot of people. We felt that a march such as the one which took place, for example, was an ideal way of emphatically clearing up the position in the eyes of the broader community - that is, that this is our militant position and we are not prepared to compromise. We also saw this as equivalent to workers striking ... when they get out into the open and emphatically state their position.'

Retrospective assessment of the march was mixed. The feelings of the marchers themselves immediately afterwards were generally those of elation and anger. On the positive side, there was the view that it had been an effective demonstration to the community at large of student solidarity. Having brought a great number of students together in a common action the march was a symbol of their unity and commitment.

The march was also part of the mobilising process in that it brought many students - who up until that point had not expressed themselves - out in open support of the boycott. Others considered the march a mistake. At least it should have been decided upon by all the Peninsula's Black schools and planned collectively. Their action was courting confrontation and those who led the students out of the school grounds knew those following them would get hurt. It did damage to the Committee of 61 in that it was divisive. The march damaged the local students' movement as a whole in that it lost it support in the community. (Interviewees 19, 34, 41, 45, 48, 56, 58; Argus 22.4.80, 23.4.80; Grassroots, April 1980 : 16)

#### 6.4 *More marches and many meetings*

Later in the week and elsewhere in the country, specifically in Johannesburg and Durban, students staged more marches which were broken up by the police. Still more marches were planned but were called off for fear of police action. For instance, on the same day as the Athlone march took place students of Toekomrus Senior Secondary had planned to march through Randfontein but called it off. The day after, there were indications first thing in the morning that some students in the Peninsula were readying themselves for further protest marches, specifically from Spes Bona Senior Secondary to Cape Town and from Grassy Park Senior Secondary to Zeekoeivlei Senior Secondary. However, what would seem to have been a significant intervention was made by UWC students. Their representatives, acting on a mandate from the general student body of the university, visited several schools and urged students to remain in their school grounds and not to stage protest marches. The plans were abandoned and students from schools such as Belgravia, Alexander Sinton, Bridgetown and Athlone Senior Secondaries assembled at Spes Bona but only in order to 'promote awareness' - they prevented journalists from entering the grounds. Again on Friday, plans for a mass march to the city centre fell through. All that occurred was in Hanover Park students of Crystal Senior Secondary marched to nearby Mount View where they held a joint meeting. At many schools, students held placard marches around their schools' grounds. (Argus 22.4.80, 23.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980)16)

Apart from the marches, many mass meetings were held in various parts of the country that week. For example, on the same day as the biggest march of the week took place in Athlone, Cape Town, some 10 000 students gathered for a rally in Bosmont, Johannesburg. (Argus 22.4.80) On numerous occasions during the week police intervened to disperse students and/or prevent them carrying through with what they had planned. For instance, some 500 students who were trying to hold a meeting on the Eldorado Park Senior Secondary sports grounds were dispersed by police who, after firing into the air, which made the students scatter, followed up with a baton charge. A little later, police intercepted about 300 students from Kliptown Senior Secondary and broke up their march. Marches in Durban, for example, were effectively prevented by regular, and security, police physically manning the gates of Coloured schools in Wentworth and of Indian schools in Merebank, Isipingo and Chatsworth. At all times students were kept under as close surveillance as the police could muster. (Argus 22.4.80, 23.4.80, 25.4.80, 26.4.80)

## 7 Reaction of the authorities

The reaction of the authorities to the students' actions in support of their demands underwent an apparent change during the boycott's second week. The first response of a representative of the authorities in Coloured Education at local level has already been described. It was that of Quint who, on the first day of boycotting denied that there was any boycott and further denied that students needed to 'demand' SRCs since all they had to do was ask their principals and they would have them. (Cape Times 15.4.80) A response from Cabinet level came at the end of the boycott's first week. The Minister of Coloured Relations told Parliament that the brooding unrest in Coloured schools was not a problem of education at all but the result rather of children being influenced by propaganda and agitators. At the same time there was some implicit acceptance that certain of the students' grievances were legitimate. At some schools in the Wynberg region under Quint, an immediate start was made to meeting some of the students' demands. For instance, by the second day

of the boycott the students of Wynberg Senior Secondary had already won their demand for an SRC in spite of an unsympathetic playing-for-time on the part of the principal the previous day. By the fourth day of the boycott Bridgetown Senior Secondary students had had several of their demands met. Thus, a large number of textbooks had been supplied and delivered; detention classes were to replace corporal punishment; the wearing of uniforms had been made no longer compulsory; and an SRC was to be allowed. (Argus 17.4.80; Cape Times 18.4.80) The Government's attitude in general seemed to be relatively lenient initially. The press reported concern in Government circles that the situation should not be allowed to develop into the Soweto-type events of 1976. (Argus 22.4.80) Up until Tuesday, 22 April, in the second week of the boycott, police maintained a distinctly low profile. On that Tuesday morning, Steyn issued a fairly conciliatory statement in which he indicated that he or officials of his Department would be prepared to discuss with the students their 'problems and grievances'. At the same time he made the usual point that agitators were causing the trouble and, further, that the pupils were themselves 'causing not only frustration of the good intentions the Government has for the future, but also unhappiness to their parents and those who truly have their interests at heart.' (Argus 23.4.80)

It was later the same day that a shift in the authorities' approach could be identified. The Government's public attitude hardened in a matter of hours, as an outflow of a Cabinet meeting held shortly after Steyn had made the above statement. In another statement, this time to Parliament after the Cabinet meeting, Steyn's tone had changed. After claiming that 'school grievances and pupils were being misused by political agitators ... as a springboard for a general political campaign', he appealed to the parents and teachers in question to see to it that 'discipline is reimposed and the pupils resume their studies'. He then proceeded to issue a threat which was to draw a very negative response : 'If they do not restore order and normalize school attendance in this week, consideration will have to be given to closing schools, and in their interests, the future of the teachers will have to be considered.' (Hansard 22.4.80, column 4494)

The police's violent breaking-up of a peaceful student march in Athlone that same day has already been described, as have other instances of harsh interventions by the police during the second week.

Meanwhile, at the local level of the Coloured Education authorities again, Quint was by now admitting, 'We really don't know how to handle the situation.' He told the press that it was being left up to the principals and teachers 'to try to get the children back to school'. 'Individual schools are trying to establish normal relations but how successful they will be is difficult to say.' (Argus 22.4.80) During the week, security police started detaining, under the General Laws Amendment Act, people it suspected of being connected with the boycott. (Argus 24.4.80; Social Review 9 (May 1980)6) Later in the week, Steyn announced again the Government's willingness to give attention to the student's grievances but this time he added the proviso that 'order' at the schools would have to be restored first. According to the press, the attitude in Government circles was by this stage that an 'order situation' had arisen and that the students had to return to class before there could be any consultation with them. It was further reported that extensive preparations had been made by the police to ensure that order was maintained, and, further, that action was likely to be taken against those regarded as agitators. (Argus 24.4.80)

By the end of the second week of boycotting, the consensus amongst students was that they had not received a satisfactory response to their demands from the authorities. At meetings of student representatives in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban the decision was to continue the boycott for another week. The Cape Town meeting was held in Athlone and attended by representatives of 80 secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the Western Cape. In a statement issued midway through the meeting, the students announced they would continue the boycott 'until there was tangible proof that students' demands would be met.' They felt their demands had not been properly considered and instead had been 'met with absolute arrogance

from local and national authorities'. According to the statement, the representatives deplored the detention of fellow students and others who had associated themselves with their 'grievances'. The students further called upon teachers and lecturers to form a representative body and join the boycott. They also called on parents to demonstrate their solidarity with the students' cause by keeping their children, who attended primary schools, at home on Thursday, 1 May. (Argus 26.4.80; Grassroots, April 1980 : 16; Social Review 9 (May 1980)18; Intergroup 3 (June 1980)3)

## 8 Parents, community and students

### 8.1 *Solidarity*

The students were favoured from the beginning of the boycott by substantial support from parents, and people generally, as well as organisations, in the Western Cape's Black communities. The extent to which this support was given public expression - mainly through community meetings - was indeed greatest during the first two-and-a-half weeks of the boycott. Amongst the communities in which there were meetings to express solidarity with the students were those of Mitchell's Plain, Facticeon, Retreat, Lotus River, Grassy Park, Athlone, Paarl, Stellenbosch, Ocean View, Silvertown, Rylands Estate, Kensington, Parkwood Estate, Tiervlei, Hanover Park, Lansdowne and Wynberg - all of them held between the middle and end of April, the majority having been in the boycott's second week. /These meetings were generally organised either by the local civic association in conjunction with students of the area, as in the case, for example, of a meeting held on Sunday, 20 April, under the auspices of the Lotus River Ratepayers' and Tenants' Association, or by students acting independently. Senior Secondary Students organised the first meeting concerning the boycott in Ocean View, for instance, and on the evening of 23 April some 2000 parents attended a meeting in the Bellville South Civic Centre which had been called and organised by tertiary students in the area. Attendance at these meetings was in general large, ranging from several hundred to over 4000 as in the case, for example, of a meeting held on Thursday, 24 April, in Paarl.

The meetings gave students an opportunity to explain to parents what it was about the systems of education that they were rejecting and what goals they were seeking to achieve through the boycott. Their case was presented by students some of whom were as young as 13 years old. One 14-year-old at a meeting in Factretton, after describing the difficulties students faced at school and outlining their demands, asked the approximately 800 parents present how they could expect their children to learn under such inhuman conditions. A panel of students told the meeting in Lotus River that what they were striving for was to ensure that all students at least had the chance of reaching their full academic potential so that they could compete on an equal footing in an open job market. At all the meetings the students emphasised that they wanted and needed their parents' support. At one in Mitchell's Plain, parents were called upon to stand up not 'behind' their children but 'with' them. Students also tried to allay the fear expressed by some that their children would again take to the streets and be shot down like in 1976. At meeting after meeting they reassured them that their protest was an orderly and entirely non-violent stand. Another concern of parents was their recognition of the likelihood of boredom and the consequent need for organised programmes to overcome this. But again students assured them that the boycott was 'not a holiday' and urged them to try and ensure that their children continued to go to school and involve themselves with the awareness programme. Speaking was not all that students did at the meetings. In Ocean View, for example, they livened the meeting up with guitar playing, folk songs and poetry reading.

Many parents, who were initially somewhat sceptical of the student's actions, were won over by the sincerity and skill which they displayed in running the meetings and in organising the boycott generally. The response of the parents at all these meetings was an expression of confidence in their children and full support of the demand for a non-racial system of education and improvement of the conditions at schools. Resolutions were adopted declaring total solidarity with the students' actions. A further emphasis common to all these meetings was that on the necessity of parents/workers,

students and teachers making a united stand. Calling for unity at the Factreton meeting, a parent said that they 'must erase the lie that communities cannot stand together'. Speaking at the meeting in Bellville South, Dr Allan Boesak appealed for it to be made clear to the Government that the allegations that children and parents were going 'different ways' on the education issue were unfounded. At another meeting parents spoke of the need to press for better education so that the children could be freed from the 'vicious circle' in which they themselves were caught. Poor education, they said, fed the cheap-labour market resulting in low-paid workers who could not afford to give their children a better education. The children were then also forced into the cheap-labour market. A number of the workers who spoke at this meeting related their frustrations in their job situations and linked them to the students' problems. At these meetings, the education issue itself was located squarely within the system experienced by the people as discriminatory and oppressive in its entirety. One meeting, for example, adopted a resolution rejecting 'the political system which resulted in this intolerable situation'. At another meeting, a speaker put it this way: 'We will only be able to obtain an equal education in a democratic society'. Alongside their stand on education, meetings called, *inter alia*, for the rejection of management committees and all 'dummy institutions' as well as for a boycott of the 1980 Lions' tour. At a meeting in the Retreat Civic Centre, many of the members of the local civic association present expressed the view that organisations such as their own should not only be concerned with problems like street lights and roads in the area, but that it should also be involved in issues like the school crisis. As a further indication of the kind of positions taken up at these meetings, the parents and teachers present at one in Lotus River, for instance, adopted various resolutions in which they, *inter alia*, rejected the 'fragmentation of education under the present system into African, Indian, coloured and white education', expressed their full support for the students' protest against 'inferior, tribalised and ethnic' schools, called on parents and teachers throughout the Peninsula to hold similar discussions and demonstrations of support, called on the authorities to act on the issues raised by the students as a matter of urgency, and demanded a free, democratic and non-racial

system of education for all. At a few of the meetings student-parent or student-parent-teacher committees were formed to carry the solidarity expressed further and to translate it into action where possible. (Sunday Times 20.4.80; Argus 21.4.80, 24.4.80, 25.4.80; Herald 26.4.80, 3.5.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 1,15 - 16; Social Review 9 (May 1980) 16 - 18; Intergroup 3 (June 1980)3; Interviewees 14, 24, 27, 34)

While meetings such as those described were probably the most significant vehicles for the public expression of parental and community support for the students' stand, another, albeit minor, one was the letter columns of local newspapers. There follow extracts from two examples of Letters to the Editor which were published at the time. H.R. Neethling of Atlantis wrote :

'I feel that every parent should take the same stand as their children. These young people are tired of inferior education, and it is because of the will to learn and to better themselves that they are actually rebelling against the low standard of education which is being given to them.'

'... why separate syllabuses? Surely these children have the right to the same standard of education as their white counterparts. Is this reason why our non-white school leavers cannot get jobs - inferior educational qualifications? In other words is it keep their standard of education down, and they'll never qualify for certain positions, which by right must be kept for our white children"?'  
(Argus 25.4.80)

Then again R Titus of Portlands wrote as follows :

'Education for coloured people is inferior and our children today are being penalised because we parents had been too stupid to rebel against it. I'm proud of my children (especially those at high school) who are now struggling for their survival and freedom of expression ....'

'They are now staging a peaceful boycott which the riot police have turned into a frightful experience for them. So they flee and become involved in something

They did not start. It's disgusting - why can they not be given a better opportunity instead of being treated like vandals and worse?

'I fear for the children but I admire all of them for the courage they all have shown.' (Argus 30.4.80)

Public expressions of support for the students also came from, for instance, the Western Province Non-Racial Football Union which announced that it was cancelling all its match fixtures as from Saturday, 26 April, as an expression of solidarity with the students. (Argus 24.4.80) The Bishop Lavis Coordinating Council on Crime made public their resolve to 'support the students in their struggle and to make ourselves available to them at any time.' (Herald 3.5.80) From the Black business community came a call upon the Minister of Coloured Relations to resign. In a statement to the Press, Dawood Kahn claimed that it was Steyn's incompetence which had caused the students' protest to reach the point it had. Steyn had claimed on television that Indian students from Rylands Senior Secondary had joined the boycott because they were forced by agitators to do so. Kahn said,

'As a member of the Indian community I wish to take the strongest exception to this allegation. Indian students, like coloured and African students, do not need agitators to teach them that they are being taught an inferior education by a system which dehumanises them and strips them of their human dignity.'

Apartheid, he said, was the real agitator. His statement went on,

'I would like to point out that if indeed there are agitators at work it means that there is a very strong and well-organised underground movement in the coloured and Indian communities which no one knows about - not us, the Government nor its security services. The implications of this are obvious. The Minister must therefore say publicly what he knows.'  
(Argus 23.4.80)

To the rank and file students identifying with the boycott, often more important than these public expressions of support was the more immediate or direct support parents and others in the Black community showed them on an *ad hoc*, or entirely spontaneous, basis in their homes and on the streets. For example, motorists driving past a school where a placard demonstration was being held along the fence would flash their lights, hoot and wave in support of the students, as happened outside Hewat Teachers Training College in Belgravia Road. Parents would gather outside schools on occasions such as when the mini-rallies were held and especially if there was a particularly heavy police presence. A newspaper report related, for instance, how the group of parents who gathered in the street outside Zonnebloem Teachers Training College to watch the rally which took place there on 30 April were all in favour of the students' actions. One parent, watching plainclothes security policemen in unmarked cars trying to patrol discreetly, reportedly remarked, 'What do the police want with our children? All they are doing is asking for a better education. I fought in the war for four years to defend this country and look what I and my children got for it - apartheid.' The same person pointed out that while parents spent a lot of money educating their children, when they left school, their job prospects were minimal. (Argus 30.4.80) One occasion when parents immediately rallied around their children was after the Newlands arrests on 29 April, the circumstances of which are described below. That night, while the 763 students, who were charged, waited, many of them late into the night, in a courtyard cell to appear before a Johannesburg magistrates court, parents and others from the community waited with them outside. The support was more than merely moral as evidenced by 73 dozen bread rolls and the large quantity of spread-on cheese and fruit juices which were brought for the arrested students (Argus 30.4.80) As a final example of the forms taken by parental support for the students, parents in Ocean View went as a part of a PTSA delegation to the principal of the township's only senior secondary school to communicate to him their backing for the boycott. (Interviewee 14)

## 8.2 *Reservations and opposition*

The above account of parental and community support for the student boycott requires qualification. Not all parents were as enthusiastic in their endorsement of the students' actions as they are portrayed to have been above. According to one student, 'The majority of the parents - especially the more middle class - were sympathetic with their children but wouldn't really give their support. There were, however, some parents who gave a lot of support.' (Interviewee 38) At the end of the boycott's second week, a local newspaper carried a feature article under the heading, 'Boycott - the parents' dilemma', which described them as being 'divided in their feelings'. 'Whether for or against the actions of their sons and daughters, a confusing blend of pride and fear for their safety seem to be the prime emotions of many parents.' The fear was that '"the police would come" and their children would get injured.' (Cape Times 25.4.80) It was a widespread and consuming fear which must have challenged the very being of many such as the bus driver who was quoted, in the same article, describing his thoughts as follows:

"My kids watched my frustration and humiliation all these years. They saw how much grief the discrimination against us caused, just because our skin is brown. I was bitter and angry. Now I look at my girls, 16 and 17, and their younger brothers and I think of white policemen with guns and I am afraid. Maybe apartheid is better than being dead." (Cape Times 25.4.80)

Many parents were openly opposed to the boycott and in particular to the participation of their own children in it. For example, a dockworker was quoted at the time as having said,

"I don't care if my son (aged 16) never comes home again. He's breaking his mother's heart. We work very hard to give this boy and his sisters an education and now they are throwing everything away. That boy will come home with a police bullet in him." (Cape Times 25.4.80)

A mother of four complained that "The kids never learn. Look what happened last time (in 1976). People get killed and nothing changes." (Cape Times 25.4.80)

Certain of the student interviewees had personally encountered only discouragement and opposition from parents. Thus, according to one, for example, 'Parents were the first to say: don't get involved, you'll get detained, *etcetera*. There wasn't much encouragement from their side - they didn't stand with us.' According to the same interviewee, 'Many parents were against their children being involved with the SRC because it was just a political body. Many pupils actually resigned from the SRC saying it was because of their parents.' (Interviewee 3) Another student told of how the chairperson of the SRC at his school had one day physically been 'fetched by his father - never to return again.' (Interviewee 38) 'Students were under a lot of pressure from parents.' (Interviewee 54) A community activist, who organised amongst parents and students during the boycott, observed that 'a lot of those who were not into the boycott were being pressurised out of it by their parents.' (Interviewee 34) A principal who was interviewed said that while parents had not put any pressure on him to try to induce the students back to class, they did 'put pressure on their own children'. (Interviewee 5) In partial contrast, according to a teacher, at the school where she had been teaching during 1980, 'parents were putting a lot of pressure on the principal and the teachers to keep on with lessons' and to get the students into the classrooms. Furthermore, she said that 'For some of the students there was a terrific amount of pressure not to participate in the boycott. And so we had to keep the classrooms open and we had to appear in our classes while the alternative programme was going on on the field. You'd have in those classes, say, five or six kids who didn't know what to do with themselves.' (Interviewee 41) One of the student interviewees questioned the sincerity of some parents' public professions of support in the following terms: 'Some people spoke a lot at the community meetings but in their heart they didn't want their own children to get involved - they wanted other people to go and fight but not their own children. So, in other words, many parents behaved differently at public meetings and at home.' He concluded that 'All round most

parents were against the boycott.' (interviewee 3)

Reproduced above are extracts from two examples of letters written by parents to the Editor of a local newspaper supporting the students' stand. There was also the occasional letter dismissing the students' stand. Thus, for example, a person from Mountview Estate, signing him/herself as 'Disgusted', wrote thus:

'The way these children are handling the situation proves that a higher education is necessary. I have never come across such stupidity. They cannot see that the teachers are using them to line their own pockets. The only ones suffering are the children themselves because they are losing valuable time with their education.

'There are many children who are against this nonsense yet they have to suffer because the teachers do not even bother to come to the classes to teach those who want to go on learning, yet they have the audacity to demand more wages.

'Have principals and teachers no control over the children to allow these things to happen? What is the world coming to?' (Argus 30.4.80)

In spite of the pressure and criticism under which so many students came from their parents, they tended to be relatively tolerant of it or at any rate to be able to distance themselves from it. A fifteen-year-old student, shrugging off his mother's pessimism, was quoted as having accounted for it in the following terms: "The old people are scared to make demands. Apartheid breaks you in the end. The parents just accept everything. But the young people have had enough." (Cape Times 25.4.80)

## 9 Teachers, principals and students

### 9.1 *Support*

Support of strategic importance to the students came also from a substantial section of the teacher corps including many principals. At all of the community meetings already referred to,

there were teachers to express their solidarity with, and full support for, the students' struggle. During the boycott's second week, the CTPA came out in unqualified support of the students' demands. The following is extracted from a statement released to the press:

'As an organised teachers' association consisting of 13 000 teachers in the Cape, the CTPA declares that it fully supports the grievances of pupils and students. To observe our pupils who are stripped of their political rights undertaking a peace march within the precincts of the school ground in the interest of their teachers, parents and their own future careers, moves us deeply.

'We acknowledge and accept that this is a student initiative and respect the pupils for this. We therefore do not want to capitalize on their actions and aspirations, but feel deeply convicted to identify with their aims.'

Public support for the students' cause was also expressed, for example, by the Athlone District Principals' Association which alone represented 70 heads of schools. The Transvaal Association of Teachers issued a statement strongly condemning 'the intimidatory arrogance implicit in the threat by ... Mr Steyn to close schools'. The statement asked, presumably rhetorically, 'So-called coloured schools are threatened with closure, and teachers with what? Mr Steyn does not give a sign that he appreciates the aspirations of millions of fellow South Africans.' In a few instances, staff at a particular institution made their support for the students public. A notable example was the Black staff at UWC whose 137 members issued a statement backing the students' cause. In it they expressed their rejection of 'the dehumanising and oppressive system of education which is rooted in the political and economic system of the South African society.' They also said that they regarded the statement by Steyn that agitators were responsible for the protest as 'a deliberate and naive attempt to distort the reality of the situation and the day-to-day experiences of the oppressed people.' The latter point was also emphasised in a letter from five UWC lecturers published in a local Afrikaans language daily. They described the boycott as a 'comprehensive protest against discrimination as such' and denied that it could be attributed to

'agitators'. (Argus 25.4.80, 23.4.80, 26.4.80; Die Burger 25.4.80; Sunday Tribune 27.4.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980): 3; Cape Times 23.4.80; Educatio, Second Quarter 1980: 6)

The support from teachers which meant most to the students was that relatively non-public support manifested daily in individual schools. The extent of such support ranged from schools where all but perhaps one of the teachers including the principal were supportive of the boycott, to schools where 'the bulk' or 'most' of the teachers supported the students, to schools where 'more than half' or 'many' of the teachers were supportive, to others where there were 'some' or 'a minority' of teachers who showed support. Students at all schools had the support of at least a few teachers whom they characterised as 'progressive'. (Interviewees 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 21, 22, 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, 41, 48, 49, 58; Joubert, 1981: 42, 44; Everett, 1980: 120)

Some teachers' 'support' was little more than tacit, as reflected in the following comment which was made by one of the students interviewed: 'Most of the teachers were in sympathy with the boycott even though they didn't show it.' (Interviewee 7)

The extent of teacher support was not as obvious as it might have been, had many teachers - feeling under constant threat from the authorities - not kept their sympathies relatively concealed. This gave rise to the sort of situation described by a student interviewee as follows: 'We had the teachers' and the principal's support. But the teachers didn't know we had the principal's support because he told us he wanted to keep a low profile. The Black teachers didn't want the White teachers to know that we had their support.' (Interviewee 4)

Furthermore, much of the support which was of importance to the students was manifested by way of 'quiet', or 'covert' interventions such as in an incident - at a school where only a very small minority of the staff were supportive of the students - which was described by an interviewee as follows:

'On one occasion the teacher who controlled the public address system, which the students always used for their assemblies, decided not to let them have it all of a sudden. There was

deadlock until one of the sympathetic teachers drew one of the student leaders aside and put the question: Who paid for the public address system? - Mr X (the teacher involved) or your school fees and funds raised by your parents? That was the end of it - the students simply marched into the office where the PA system was kept and took it. They didn't have trouble again.' (Interviewee 40)

Support from the staff varied in form from simply - but nonetheless significantly - not opposing the students' actions through to active co-operation with students and promotion of the boycott. Nearer the former end of the spectrum was the important type of support constituted by teachers merely making no attempt to continue normal teaching. In the opinion of a principal interviewed, 'One of the major contributory factors to the success of the boycott was that the teachers just stopped teaching - they didn't attempt to teach. And the children were aware of this. There were absolutely no such things as skeleton classes at my school.' (Interviewee 5) The staff at the same school insisted collectively that no teacher conduct normal classes. Thus, for instance,

'At one stage a teacher announced in a staff meeting that one of the Standard 9 or 10 classes wanted lessons and she was going to teach them. We objected to this because we warned that if such a thing should take place it could cause a tremendous furor.... Either the whole school goes back or nobody goes back. Under no circumstances were we going to split the students on an issue like this.

'When the children heard what this teacher had said, they demanded that she should apologise to them. An assembly was called at which she had to appear and apologise.

'She resigned at the end of that year.' (Interviewee 5)

Moving in the direction of more active aid, staff members provided, where possible, a measure of formal 'cover' to students by, for example, everyday making everybody present on the roll. (Interviewee 41) Then, student interviewees referred to teachers who had provided 'encouragement', 'advice', 'guidance' and 'direction'. Many teachers contributed substantially to the awareness programmes, actually

running them entirely at some schools, particularly junior secondaries which had no Standard 9s or 10s. Not only did they make presentations and lead discussions but they, for example, helped arrange for visiting speakers and for films, in the case of the latter often providing the necessary transport. Supportive staff also facilitated access to school equipment such as duplicating machines, film projectors and public address systems. (Interviewees 3, 5, 19, 32, 41, 58) In the words of one of the more supportive principals, 'What we tried to do was give pupils the kind of education they wanted. Pupils were encouraged to use our printing machines and public address systems.' (Joubert, 1981: 47) And, indeed, 'at certain schools the duplicating equipment was used for the production of pamphlets.' (Interviewee 48)

It should be noted that among the teachers who showed the students support there were some who nonetheless found themselves pressed painfully by the conflict they perceived between their 'pastoral' and 'political' responsibilities. One interviewee identified this as having been 'the teachers' central dilemma':

'Their sympathies all lay with the students but as teachers their pastoral responsibilities lay in seeing that the students were not going to go out and get shot as in '76. The teachers were all terrified there was going to be a repeat. One's pastoral responsibility as a teacher was really at variance with the feelings that at least, thank God, somebody's taking a stand and how remarkably responsibly they are behaving.' (Interviewee 41)

## 9.2 *Opposition, apathy and opportunism*

As already indicated, the extent of staff support was uneven. Thus, there were also many teachers and principals who opposed the boycott. However, even those vehemently opposed to it in general dared not be too open in their opposition. As one student interviewee put it, 'Very few were openly against the boycott and the White teachers just kept to themselves.' (Interviewee 7) Yet there were teachers who would say, for instance, '"Ag, you're stupid to boycott - what are you going to get out of it?"' (Interviewee 3) Many of these opponents of the boycott experienced it as an assault on their

authority and felt threatened in the extreme. (Interviewees 32, 40, 41; Joubert, 1981: 43) They were also under direct threat from the authorities. Everett focuses on the insecurity of the position of teachers under the DCR in explaining why they had been 'so wary about expressing solidarity with their pupils.' (Everett, 1980: 120) There were some who opposed the boycott without qualms, not because they disagreed with the students' demands but because of how they sincerely understood their pastoral and political responsibilities under the circumstances. Their pastoral responsibilities were to educate and protect the children under them while politically a more effective strategy had to be devised for achieving the students' just demands. One principal, who had been regarded by his staff and students alike as entirely unsympathetic and even reactionary, protested in an interview that his 'whole intention' had been 'to protect the kids'. For that reason he had at all times urged caution but he had also not wanted to see 'the youngsters embark on anything that was going to lead to disillusion.' (Interviewee 6) Joubert identifies a category of teachers who ...

'supported the pupils in their demands but felt that they might jeopardise the one tool, education, that could be used to further articulate and achieve their demands in the local situation. Such teachers realized that without educational qualifications, no matter how inferior or faulty, the future seemed very uncertain indeed. They reasoned the pupils should for the immediate future acquire what has been called "gutter education" as a key to acquire solid middle class benefits.' (Joubert, 1981: 44)

There were also those apathetic teachers who withdrew - 'physically (to the staffroom) and psychologically into themselves.' (Joubert, 1981: 43 - 44) They, along with all who opposed the boycott, wanted nothing more than to have the students back in their desks and to let school return to normal.

It was not only within and between schools that staff support was uneven but also over time in the sense that it was not static in the course of the boycott. There was an initial wave of enthusiasm on which many an opportunist rode high. Teachers, who for

years had been, in the words of one interviewee, 'beating the shit out of the kids', were suddenly on their side. 'They were up there grabbing the mike and leading the school in song or whatever.'

(Interviewee 32) Randall van den Heever commented as follows in an article analysing 'Teacher Involvement in the current School Crisis' which appeared in the CTPA's journal, *Educatio*:

'It is saddening that in times when problems are suddenly highlighted by active protest in a particular sphere, that people who had been neglecting their duties as responsible professionals for many years, suddenly jump on the bandwagon trying to outradicalize one another in an effort to reap glory and popularity. It is this type of cheap opportunism that a people engaged in a bitter struggle for freedom cannot tolerate. There is no sincerity in the expression of sudden concern for the state into which education has fallen, if that concern follows a lengthened period of apathy, dis-interest and appalling indifference to matters which crippled our schools.' (van den Heever, 1980: 4)

However, as the boycott dragged on nearer the craggy shore of the Department and monthly financial realities, the wave broke, tumbling many of these opportunists out. Left thus high and dry, they withdrew as far as they could from the student tide or waded in once more to do battle with the back-wash. On the other hand, while 'support' from such quarters quickly evaporated, more solid support, which had been spurned at the outset, was increasingly sought as students scraped the barrel of their own resources. Some teachers used this effective dependence of students at many schools as the foundation for a reassertion of control in a newly tailored guise. (Interviewees 32, 61)

### 9.3 *Principals' problems*

Principals were in a particularly problematic position. One of them, who was interviewed, seemed to capture the opposing pressures on principals precisely:

'The student body became so vociferous that as a principal you had no alternative but to yield to the students' demands. As a result of their demonstration

of solidarity, they were able to put certain demands to the Department - how much more to us, mere mortals!

'We, as principals, were in the most invidious position. We had to tread a very fine line. It was hell because, on the one side, you had your students making certain demands and boycotting classes. You were somebody supposed to be responsible for law and order and you had to contain them - but contain them in such a way that it didn't give the impression that you were against them: trying to get them back into their classes without chasing them back into their classrooms; trying to maintain your authority, on the one side, while, on the other, losing your grip. It was difficult. At the same time, on the other side, the Department was pressurising you: What's happening? Can't you control your students? What the hell are you doing there? So it was a fine balancing act.'  
(Interviewee 22)

For some principals this was all too much. Joubert - himself the principal of a Peninsular DCR school involved in the boycott - writes as follows:

'For many headmasters the situation caused severe trauma - physical as well as emotional. Many principals simply abdicated and schools were run by SRCs. A physician acquaintance of mine noted that many of his patients were high school heads.' (Joubert, 1981: 46)

A teacher interviewed, painted the same picture:

'Many principals just buckled under. When the familiar went they had no resources to deal with a totally unknown situation. Many not only put themselves more or less out of circulation but many had nervous breakdowns, ulcers, *etcetera* - not to mention alcohol. What's more, they didn't know how to get on with their staff, especially those who were supporting the students.' (Interviewee 41)

On the other hand, there were strong principals who conducted a serious debate with their students over the adequacy or otherwise of the boycott as a strategy in the educational arena. Thus, for example, a principal, who, in spite of his initial reservations, was one of the most supportive of his students in practice, held a series of meetings with students after the SRC had come to inform him that they were going to join the boycott, at which he made the following argument:

'A school boycott is self-defeating. Although it causes tremendous embarrassment to the authorities ... , it is self-defeating to the students if allowed to run in total isolation from the community, that is, unless there is tremendous community back-up and specifically from working class sections of the community. If they got this type of support, then my view was that the school boycott would in any case recede into the background because school pupils can't bring about change. What they can do is initiate things. (I think this is what they had hoped to do at that stage. I was in a certain degree opposed to the boycott initially because at that time I was not aware that there was going to be the community back-up which came later.) ..... When people come out on strike, I explained to them, they hit out at their bosses. But when youngsters come out in a school boycott they hit out at themselves in the sense that they are jeopardising their own personal development. .... Their reply to me was that it is now time that people in South Africa are prepared to sacrifice those things which they consider valuable. It was something that I could not reply to really.' (Interviewee 5)

The only principals who retained a degree of authority during the boycott were, on the one hand, those who showed the students sincere support and commanded their respect and, on the other hand, those who were able to project an image of support by expediently conceding what they would not counter while all the time set on undermining the students' position and strengthening their own. (Interviewees 5, 6, 7, 14, 21, 22, 32, 33, 38, 40, 41, 46) As put by one of the principals quoted above, 'If he (the principal) were to retain any kind of authority, the principal had to be seen not as an extension of the state but as supportive of pupils' demands ....' (Joubert, 1981: 47)

## 10 The third week: nothing normal

### 10.1 *Mini-rallies*

Amongst Black secondary students falling under the DCR in Cape Town the boycott of classes was virtually total when it entered its third week. To the extent that there were students 'not boycotting', the impact of the boycott was so pervasive as to make effectively impossible the holding of 'normal classes' which might

have been not boycotted. On the Wednesday of the third week, 'mini-rallies' were held at a number of school campuses in the Peninsula. These rallies enabled three or more schools to come together in collective protest at the same time as not acting in a way likely to be interpreted by the police as provocative. One such mini-rally was held at Hewat on which thousands of students from surrounding secondary schools converged from early in the morning. Having attended a mass meeting, they stood along the college fence bordering on Belgravia Road in a silent placard demonstration. The demonstrators were kept orderly by marshalls with loudhailers. Another rallying point was Zonnebloem Teachers Training College where thousands of students from there, Harold Cressy and Trafalgar Senior Secondaries congregated. Students started quietly arriving in small groups from early in the morning. All refused to make any comments to the press and they sat quietly on the sports field. Mini-rallies were also held in Hanover Park, Rylands Estate, Lansdowne, Wynberg, Grassy Park, Steenberg and there might have been others beside. At the rallies, speeches were made, students sang freedom songs, lined the fences holding placards and in all cases confined their demonstrations to school grounds. (Argus 30.4.80)

### 10.2 *Primary students' solidarity stayaway*

Thursday, 1 May, saw parents and primary schoolchildren respond *en masse* to the Committee of 81's call for a one-day solidarity stay-away. Many thousands of primary students stayed at home that day. A survey conducted by the Argus newspaper found that at some primary schools the stayaway was 100% and at most attendances were not more than 10%. Only the Constantia Primary School reported full attendance. (Argus 1.5.80)

### 10.3 *The boycott stabilises*

Elsewhere in the country the boycott was also beginning to stabilise somewhat where not still spreading. A few went back to class, notably all but about 300 of the 1400 students at Bloemfontein's only Coloured senior secondary school, Dr Blok, who returned after being

informed that the authorities had as a top priority the building of another Coloured secondary school there. In the Eastern Cape, after some students had there also begun to return to class, most schools in the region decided, in line with the Committee of 81's stance, to continue the boycott until their demands had been met. The great majority of students classified Coloured and Indian were by now boycotting classes in Port Elizabeth, Uitenhague, Bethelsdorp, Grahamstown and East London. In Natal large numbers of Indian students joined the boycott. But the boycott was at this stage also beginning to be joined by substantial numbers of African students. Thus, in Grahamstown's Fingo Village some 900 African students at Nayaluza Senior Secondary started a stayaway. Outside Durban, at least five of Kwamashu's African schools joined the boycott. In Pretoria's Mamelodi township, students from six African schools launched their boycott of classes with a solidarity march. Also in the vicinity of Pretoria, there were attempts to disrupt classes at several Atteridgeville-Saulsville schools; at certain primary schools, principals had to send the young students home for safety. In Cape Town, Fezeka Senior Secondary re-entered the boycott. A further development was that, particularly in the Eastern Cape and around Johannesburg, the class boycott became effectively a school stayaway for many students. Principals in the Eastern Cape reported absenteeism of between 40 and 60%. By the last day of April, Coronationville Senior Secondary had only about 250 of its approximately 1500 students present. The following day, Westbury Senior Secondary students all stayed at home. Relying, for want of any viable alternative, on what was reported in the press, a guesstimated 140 000 students were boycotting by the end of the third week. (Argus 28.4.80, 29.4.80, 30.4.80, 1.5.80, 3.5.80; Cape Times 30.4.80; Herald 3.5.80, Star 9.5.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 3)

#### 10.4 *The authorities: containment and communication*

##### 10.4.1 Police violence

Consistent with the assessment, to which the authorities had come in the second week, that an 'order situation' had arisen, they went into the third week with no strategy for resolving the 'schools

crisis' but determined to contain it in such a way as not to allow law and order to be threatened. It is unclear, however, precisely what orders the police were under because, although they for the most part maintained a relatively low profile - for instance, in Cape Town where they limited themselves to surveillance - there were forceful interventions made by the police elsewhere in the country, for example, in Kokstad, in Newlands, Johannesburg, and in Kwamashu, Durban. (Argus 29.4.80, 30.4.80, 1.5.80, 2.5.80)

To describe just one of these instances, it arose out of a mass meeting in Newlands which had been planned as a peaceful demonstration. About a thousand students from Christiaan Botha Coronationville, St Barnabas and Westbury Senior Secondaries rallied at the latter school on Tuesday, 29 April. The area surrounding the school was cordoned off by police in camouflage uniforms with semi-automatic rifles, side-arms and gas masks attached to their uniforms. Although the police had prohibited the press from entering the area, teachers told afterwards of how the police had jumped over the locked school gates, discharged tear gas, and baton charged and chased the students while yelling at them to disband and start queuing up for arrest. In the chaos, which followed the breaking up of the rally, some students fled into nearby houses and, according to residents in the vicinity, were followed by police who beat them up with batons. One Westbury resident described to journalists what had happened at her home: 'I locked my door. I heard banging and the police threatened to break my door down. When I opened the door they hit me and my daughter and swore at me.' At least fifteen van-loads of students were arrested and taken to Newlands police station. One father who did not know whether his 12-year-old son had been arrested, was turned away from the police station when he went to enquire. While there, however, he saw young persons being beaten by policemen and bleeding. He also saw some 60 parents and children baton-charged.

The 763 students started appearing before a court specially convened at 17h30 the same day. According to the charge sheet, the students had allegedly contravened the Riotous Assemblies Act by

attending gatherings prohibited by the Minister of Justice. Five of them were also charged with public violence as a result of allegedly causing damage to police vehicles. In the first hour, 60 of the cases were handled after which the students were brought before the magistrate 32 at a time instead of only 16. Their ages ranged from 12 to 19 years old. In school uniforms, the children entered the dock - with their parents behind them - to hear the magistrate release those under 17, who were in the great majority, in the custody of their parents or guardians. Those over 17, amongst whom there were two teachers, were released on their own recognisances. All of them were warned to reappear on 13 May. Each session took only about two minutes but it was the early hours of the next morning before all the cases had been processed. (Argus 29.4.80, 30.4.80; Cape Times 30.4.80)

#### 10.4.2 Delegation to the Minister of Police

Contrasting with such actions on the part of the police, there came also during the third week a mild attempt initiated at Cabinet level to confront somewhat more positively the question of how the boycott might be resolved. The two initiatives taken were the direct result of suggestions put to the Minister of Police by a delegation which had come to see him on 29 April 1980. The delegation was put together by a group of individuals who were concerned with the possible repercussions of an escalation in student-state confrontation. The delegation had two definite objectives in going to see Le Grange. The first was to achieve the release of Neville Fry and Richard Stevens along with two teachers from Paarl. The other objective arose out of a general principle that the more information a party has about the terms on which its adversaries are operating, the less likely unintended and/or futile confrontation will be. Thus, these persons thought that it would be useful to establish at the highest level under precisely what conditions the police would invade school premises as well as what actions against the students were being contemplated or had already been planned.

One of those involved in this endeavour was a UCT sociologist, Professor Paul Hare. He suggested that somebody from the DCR's educational authorities be delegated to set up a meeting with the police.

Apparently, however, there was nobody in Coloured Education who would undertake such a task and Hare volunteered his services. If humour should survive in the rubble of the future, the anecdote which follows is here preserved for posterity's amusement. Le Grange returned Hare's telephone call personally but was put through to an administrative assistant in the Department of Sociology. Before going in search of Hare, the assistant, hearing it was a minister speaking and being of a naturally friendly disposition and himself a church man, asked to what denomination the minister belonged. Le Grange's response was a curt, 'The Minister of Police' - he obviously considered it inappropriate to reveal his denomination.

The fact that it was a matter of only some two hours before Le Grange had agreed to receive this delegation, along with the fact that he had himself telephoned to set up the appointment, was interpreted by Hare as an indication of how keen the Minister was to acquire first-hand information on, and insight into, the students' boycott. This interpretation was lent weight when it became apparent during the course of the meeting with Le Grange that he was operating, to some extent at least, on inadequate and even incorrect information. For example, half way through, they discovered that he was under the impression that there were parents and teachers on the Committee of 81.

The four-person delegation to Le Grange was led by Sonn. Its other members were Ted Doman (Editor of The Herald, Hare, and Lionel Kearns (a member of the CTPA executive). The meeting was also attended by the Commissioner of Police, General M.C.W. Geldenhuys. Towards their first limited objective, Sonn appealed to the Minister for the release of those detained in connection with the students' boycott and specifically the four persons mentioned above. Sonn pointed out that in the case, for example, of Fry, the whole community was certain that there could not possibly be grounds on which to justify the detention of this teacher. Le Grange told them in response to this appeal that he had not as yet been able to study all the relevant reports in detail. He undertook to do so at the earliest opportunity and to act on the basis of what he discovered. He said immediately,

however, that he knew Stevens could not be released. Fry and the other two teachers were released before the end of the week. Towards the delegation's other limited objective, they established that Le Grange's instructions to the police were that any gathering, including on school premises and even if in a building, was to be regarded as a 'riotous assembly', in terms of the Act by that name, if it was in sight of a public thoroughfare or in any way in public view. This information was important in that the interpretation Le Grange was now giving to what constituted a riotous assembly was a more stringent one than that which the police had been applying so far. It was, therefore, something of which students were going to have to take cognisance if they wished to continue avoiding confrontation with the police.

Concerning the Minister's general approach to the delegation, he seems to have been open, honest, prepared to listen and amenable to suggestions. One member of the delegation developed the impression that Le Grange was deliberately demonstrating his determination not to be another Kruger (his predecessor). He explained more than he needed to, he was rational, and there was apparently nothing 'hard-line' in his attitude. He stressed repeatedly that he did not want to hurt anybody. He admitted there were difficulties in controlling the police given the nature of the training they had received. Being at the top where he had power to direct but could not have control on the ground made him nervous. What he said he could not understand was why such decent children as the great majority of the students were, should be challenging the state in the way they were. His concern appeared genuine when he asked Sonn how he should handle the situation in view of the fact that it would soon become a problem of maintaining law and order.

Sonn, in response, launched into a frank attack on how the Minister of Coloured Relations ran his Department. He pointed out that Steyn did not know, nor had even met, the leaders in Coloured Education such as himself and that all he did was to issue instructions. Sonn pointed out that the first thing any person in the Minister's position should have done under the circumstances was to bring his 'commanders' - in this case the principals and rectors - together and

to talk with them. He should bring them in with him, close the doors, and say : Right, we are in this boat together - what do we do? Then listen to them and take them seriously. Le Grange accepted the point. He thought that there should have been communication between the Minister of Coloured Relations and the heads of Coloured educational institutions - he had assumed that there had been. However, as he said he had told the Cabinet, he had no intention of running any other Minister's Department for him in the way, he implied, his predecessor, Kruger, had wanted to do. Le Grange elaborated by saying that if another man's Department went awry but the difficulties there did not threaten law and order then that Minister was not to come knocking at his door for he would be told to go off and run his Department properly. His own role as Minister of Police was that of a last resort if things got out of hand. In the meanwhile, he had to assume that his colleagues in the Cabinet were dealing with the substantive issues. He had no particular strategy for dealing with the students and rather saw himself in the wings ready to make an entrance only in the eventuality of violence erupting. The police's mandate was merely to keep people off the streets and protect things the way they were. Nevertheless, he was now faced with the fact that Steyn had not been doing his job effectively. He acted without further delay and got the Minister of Coloured Relations to summon all principals of Coloured secondary schools and rectors of Coloured training colleges in the area, including the Peninsula Technikon, for a meeting with representatives of the Government.

#### 10.4.3 Principals and rectors summoned

The very next morning, DCR principals and rectors in the area received an instruction issued by Steyn to present themselves that afternoon at the H F Verwoerd Building. This was the first of the two initiatives referred to above. Meeting the 72 principals and rectors who attended, were the Minister of Coloured Relations, Steyn, the Minister of Police, Le Grange, the Deputy Minister of Coloured Relations, S F Kotze, the Secretary for Coloured Relations, Mills, as well as other officials of the DCR. The meeting was grabbed, however, by those from the DCR, as an opportunity to persuade the principals to use their

influence to end the boycott. The few principals who spoke up insisted in their turn that it was up to the Government to set up contact with the students and that they as principals could not act as the agents of the Government in trying to end the boycott. They made the further point that part of the problem was precisely lack of communication between the Government and the mass of the Coloured people. Sonn, hoping to be able to raise some of the fundamental issues involved in the boycott, had hardly started speaking when Mills told him that they did not have time for speeches. Reacting to being put down in this manner, Sonn refused to proceed. By sitting down, Sonn was in effect guaranteeing that nobody else would then speak, and it did, indeed, kill the meeting. Le Grange made the plea that people should be allowed to speak since that was supposed to be why they were there. He had, after all, forced the meeting in response to the request of Sonn's delegation. But, as Sonn put it, 'we didn't ask him to be preached at'. What was interesting about the meeting was that it was Le Grange who played the role of the 'big', understanding one while Steyn and Mills acted like the police ministers. (Interviewee 47; Argus 30.4.80)

#### 10.4.4 The committee of 81 summoned

Going back a day to the meeting with Le Grange again, he - turning to Hare - said he had expected that the delegation would be bringing him an actual solution which could defuse and tie up the whole situation. Hare responded by pointing out that much had to be achieved before a solution could even be seen. The first step would be to get the adversaries, being principally the Government and the students, to start talking to each other. But no government could be expected to negotiate when they have a gun pointed at their heads, the Minister said holding an imaginary gun to his head. And, in any case, he went on, 'No government will negotiate with students.' In spite of this initial reaction - although in the spirit of that reaction rather than what had been intended by Hare - Le Grange acted on this point too. (Interviewees 19, 47; Argus 2.5.80)

The next day he had police raid a meeting of the Committee of 81. At least fifteen policemen, some in plainclothes and others in camouflage uniforms, accompanied by dogs, entered the St Francis Hall in Crawford, during the meeting. Police blocked the exits and surrounded the hall while the student representatives present were lined up, cursorily questioned and photographed. Their names, ages and addresses were taken in preparation for the attempt to be made the day after to set up a meeting between the Committee of 81 and the Minister of Police. (Interviewee 4; Argus 1.5.80) As it turned out, security police were able to round up only about 20 members of the Committee. They were telephoned on Thursday, 1 May, and personally informed by the police that they would be picked up at their homes at 18h30 'to meet the Minister of Police'. Those who allowed themselves to be found for this meeting with the police were generally more junior members of the Committee. They were driven to Spes Bona Senior Secondary where they were put in the school hall and addressed by a member of the security police, Capt. G Strydom. He explained that he had been instructed by the Minister of Police to try and arrange a meeting between himself and the Committee of 81 for 10h30 the next day in the H F Verwoerd Building. The students were then given an opportunity to work out their response which was that they could themselves not decide on whether or not to meet with the Minister and would have to take it back to the full Committee where a decision would be taken only after all the representatives had discussed the matter with their respective schools. The students were then driven home again. The next day a spokesperson at the office of the Commissioner of Police announced that the proposed meeting between Le Grange and the Committee of 81 had been postponed. The feeling amongst students was overwhelmingly against their representatives meeting the Minister of Police. The student leadership was definite that it should not enter into negotiations with the Government, while at school level there was also the suspicion that those who went would be detained. No meeting between the Committee of 81 and the Minister of Police or any other representative of the Government took place then or at any stage in the boycott. (Interviewee 4; Argus 30.4.80, 2.5.80)

#### 10.4.5 A threat

Equally in conflict with the spirit of what even Le Grange had intended should be attempted following his meeting with Sonn's delegation, Steyn, at the weekend, addressed a directive to the rectors of the training colleges and technikons under his jurisdiction, instructing them to warn their students that if these institutions had not returned to 'normal' by 7 May - the middle of the boycott's fourth week - action would be taken against them.

Why this threat of expulsion applied only to students at training colleges and technikons is unclear. Steyn's previous threat, which had been to consider closing the schools if they had not returned to normal by the end of the previous week, had proved to be a provocative move. Possibly the authorities were testing for public reaction to this tactic by employing it at a relatively limited number of institutions and ones which no student was attending compulsorily.

As it turned out, the students affected chose simply to ignore the threat of action against them. Realising that this was what the students were going to do, the rectors of the Peninsula Technikon and the various training colleges were called in for an urgent meeting with Van Kempen, Mills and Arendse. After Mills had re-emphasised that action would definitely be taken if they could not get their students back to studying, it was decided not to do so at that stage in spite of the ultimatum they had issued. The only limited significance that such a meeting had, was that it was unprecedented. (Interviewee 47; Argus 7.5.80)

### 11 The fourth week : 'conciliatory' moves

#### 11.1 *Level of participation*

The level of participation in the boycott was in general the same during the fourth week. By mid-week in Natal, however, it was reported that classes at Coloured schools were back to normal and that Kwamashu's African schools had 85% attendance. The University of Durban-Westville

also called off their boycott and returned to lectures. On the other hand, with a mass walkout of students and staff at Dower Teachers Training College in Port Elizabeth and many young students at Ntsika Junior School in Grahamstown joining, the boycott was still growing. In the Johannesburg townships of Coronationville, Newclare and Bosmont, no students arrived for class on the Monday morning but they were there and gathered in the grounds. At Westbury Senior Secondary, one of the schools to have had a complete stayaway the previous week, reportedly some 70% of its students came to school but drifted off again after about an hour. On the evening of 6 May, students met in the major Indian townships on the Witwatersrand and drew up a fresh set of demands. The position which emerged from these meetings was that they would not return to school until Steyn had been removed from office and until all students' and parents' action committee members detained had been released and any charges against them withdrawn. These students warned that any 'unreasonable and tough' countermeasures the Government might take against their new demands would force them to 'enlist the aid of overseas governments and anti-apartheid bodies'. (Argus 5.5.80, 7.5.80, 8.5.80)

## 11.2 *The Government presents a conciliatory face*

### 11.2.1 Delegation to the Prime Minister

For the first time in the boycott's development, the Government moved at the highest level to present a conciliatory face. Like the, albeit abortive, initiatives of the Minister of Police the week before, this move was precipitated by a delegation but this time to the Prime Minister. The delegation had been mandated to seek an interview with P W Botha by a meeting which the CTPA had called and at which there had also been representatives of the United Teachers Associations of South Africa (UTASA). Why a certain body of teachers decided on representations to the head of Government is explained below. Sonn was appointed to lead the delegation and, in the evening of the same Saturday that the decision was made, he telephoned a contact who was in a position to relay their request for an appointment with the Prime Minister. Within half-an-hour he had Botha's reply - he would see them at 08h30 on Monday morning.

How the meeting with the Prime Minister on 5 May proceeded is of interest. The proceedings were described by Sonn in an interview. As the words in which he gave his account help to convey particularly the more subjective aspects of the meeting, they will be used where possible. Speaking for the delegation, Sonn made it clear that they had not come to recriminate Botha, because what they would have told him if they had, he could in any case take as said. 'You know how you would feel if you were me. So don't let me give you an inventory of grievances because if you are worth your salt as Prime Minister then you'll know what they are already. You do know our grievances.' To which Botha nodded, 'I understand, yes - you are right.' Sonn told Botha that he was not perceived as the villain his predecessor had been. Vorster had been regarded as another Hitler.

'In 1976 every toilet you opened had disparaging graffiti about Vorster. You'll still see on walls in the townships, for example, "Vorster die renoster" and "Vorster is 'n vark". I must be truthful with you this morning, Mr Prime Minister, but I have never seen anything like that written about you. That is a position to work from - now how do you use that positive position in your and our best interests? If you don't, your position is going to decline and soon people will start writing the same things about you in the toilets.'

Having struck an apparently appropriate opening chord, Sonn lay into apartheid and outlined something of what it is like to live under such a system. As soon as he saw that he was losing Botha again, he hauled him back with a reminiscence.

'You know, Sir, my wife comes from George and my father-in-law often told me personal stories about you. He knew you very well - you may not have known him. What is amazing is how the ordinary Coloured folk respect you. They believe that you will deal very well with them and reverse some of the very bad things that have been done to them. They do so because they know you so well; they know you personally. You are a Cape man. Mr Prime Minister, there's something I want to tell you, if you'll permit me. I know the official representative of the United States Government in our country, not even indirectly, but personally. If there's a knock at the

door on a Sunday afternoon and it's them, I'm not surprised - they don't even phone any more. So American Government policy which affects us I know at first hand. Now in your system a Minister of Coloured Relations is supposed not only to be an ordinary Minister but to be the Government's representative to a group of people who are "citizens" living in the shadows of society. Furthermore, you have to be informed by him - he is your ambassador. Yet, you know what, Mr Prime Minister? I don't know him and I don't know them.'

Sonn said, pointing at Kotze and Mills, the Deputy Minister and Secretary of Coloured Relations, respectively. At which moment one of those pointed out could no longer contain himself and snapped, 'Moenie net hier sit en verwys nie!' Still addressing himself to Botha, Sonn asked of him rhetorically, 'Meneer die Eerste Minister, hoor u hoe skree hulle vir my? Hulle skree omdat ek die waarheid praat.' Botha's response was almost classically appropriate - he looked down with a suppressed smile and started cleaning his nails.

Sonn went over the student's main grievances and emphasised that they, as teachers, identified fully with their short- and long-term demands. He pointed out that the CTPA had consistently over a long period of time brought all these issues to the attention of the Government in an orderly and constructive manner but had nothing to show for it. It was precisely for that reason that trouble had now arisen in the form that it had because students and people in the wider community were saying that talking did not help - the only way to make the Government sit up and take note is to demonstrate and cause unrest in the streets. A senior member of the delegation, J G van den Heever, principal of Grassy Park Senior Secondary School, spoke strongly to the Prime Minister on the consequences of sending negotiators out with empty hands. If he sent them home empty-handed they would never come back ... they *could* never come back. Even in their eyes - persons who were still prepared to try and negotiate with the Government - dialogue would have failed for all time.

There followed a process of amicable bargaining in which Botha would suggest something he could do and then ask: 'How is that?' The delegation would respond with, for instance, 'Fine'; He would then

say, 'And I'll do this - how's that?' and somebody would say, 'Well what about something a bit different?' To which he might respond, 'No, let's go one better - I'll do this.' The officials present would seem never to have witnessed negotiation of this kind before and reportedly sat with gaping mouths.

The Prime Minister was at the time contemplating certain reforms. He clearly already had thoughts on the question of education but the 'crisis' which had arisen, gave him a context in which he could obtain extra mileage out of making his ideas known. Botha was able to make two commitments which could not reasonably have been rejected by the delegation. First, he asked whether a commission of inquiry would help resolve the situation. The delegation's response was: no, people won't accept commissions of inquiry, we're sick and tired of commissions. To that, Botha responded by suggesting that instead of a conventional Government inquiry, he could commission a design-study which would produce an architectural drawing of a new structure for education. At that point he took the opportunity of explaining that he had been Prime Minister for a relatively short time. One area which had always concerned him was that of education. He felt sure things were not as they should be because he was hearing too many complaints: from industry, from commerce, from White teachers, and, of course, from virtually everybody who had anything to do with Coloured, Indian or 'Black' Education. But, Botha went on, he was a layman and did not presume to know how things educational should be. He said he did not want to embarrass members of the delegation by asking them to say off the cuff how things ought to be. What he needed was to commission experts to tell him what changes were needed. As far as is known, that was when and where the idea which materialised as the de Lange Commission was first floated. The delegation accepted the Prime Minister's proposal in good faith. Secondly, Botha said he would commit the Government to the principle of equality and this too the delegation had to accept. Thirdly, he committed himself to seeing to it personally that the students' short-term grievances were redressed forthwith.

Botha asked, then, whether they were satisfied. Sonn, on behalf of the delegation, replied that obviously what he had proposed was not what they were after or anywhere near it but that, understanding his position too, he had probably gone as far as he could have gone at that stage. However, it was one thing committing himself to them in private, would he go on TV that night and say the same publicly? Botha said that they could take out his undertakings and themselves make them known to the community. The delegation refused to do this on the grounds that what constituted representative bodies and who were 'real leaders' in the community were too disputed. They had no intention of setting themselves up as leaders who were coming back to tell the people what the Government had said nor obviously did they represent the Government. Botha accepted this immediately because he turned, then, to his secretary, with the instruction: 'Bel gou vir die SAUK, asseblief - sê hulle moet hiernatoe kom." His secretary returned with the news that the SABC would be coming immediately. 'Will you go with me on TV, Mr Sonn?' asked Botha. 'No,' was the reply. 'You go on TV alone, because you must speak, not us. Afterwards we shall respond. If what you say is good we'll applaud it, if what you say is bad we'll criticise it. (Interviewees 47, 56)

### 11.2.2 The Government's commitments and concessions

The same night the Prime Minister was on television committing the Government to the principle of equality in education and announcing that he would shortly be commissioning an independent and scientific investigation of education as a whole in South Africa. The latter seemed unprecedented but in committing the Government to the former, Botha killed a holy cow.

Consistent with the image projected by Botha, the same day, the Secretary for Coloured Relations, Mills, stated publicly that steps to meet some of the students' demands had already been taken. Mills said several of the demands, such as those relating to school uniforms, school funds and SRCs. could be dealt with by school committees. To deal with the shortage of books, a special R1,6 million had been

obtained from the Treasury. He admitted that the backlog in the repair of school buildings was a real problem as was the shortage of classrooms but said that these were partly the result of a tremendous increase in the number of pupils. Negotiations had, however, been held with the Department of Public Works for a faster building programme. Concerning the general standard of education, he pointed out that this was a problem which would take time to solve. He suggested a three-pronged approach involving better training for prospective teachers, in-service training of underqualified teachers, and the attraction of better qualified people into the profession. (Argus 6.5.80) Regarding the book concession, principals were instructed to submit requests for 'whatever books they need' by Wednesday, 14 May, the middle of the boycott's fifth week. (Argus 12.5.80)

### 11.3 *Students reconsider : provisional suspension*

Students of the Rand College of Education decided unanimously to return to classes and, reportedly, student spokespersons from most of Johannesburg's Coloured secondary schools confirmed that they would do the same.

In the Cape Peninsula at a meeting attended by more than 800 African students, it was decided that they would enter the boycott as a body from the following week and their representatives would submit a list of their demands to the principals of the four local African senior secondary schools. They also decided to run an awareness programme.

Meanwhile during the week, at many DCR schools in the Peninsula, referenda on whether the boycott should continue or not had been held. The results generally reflected great division in the students' ranks. To cite but one example, in a referendum held on Thursday, 8 May, at Belgravia Senior Secondary School, 460 students (or 51,1% of those who voted) were in favour of continuing the boycott and 420 (or 46,7%) voted against it, while 20 spoilt papers accounted for the other 2,2%. (Interviewee 41)

When the Committee of 81 came together on Saturday, 10 May, it decided to suspend the boycott for a provisional period of three weeks as from the following Wednesday and to submit an ultimatum to the Government. The ultimatum, still to be drawn up, was that if the Government had not met their demands completely within three weeks they would review their suspension of the boycott and call on the community for active assistance. (Argus 10.5.80, 12.5.80; Herald 17.5.80; Document 33) The following resolution was passed by the meeting :

'We, the students, suspend the boycott as from Wednesday 14 May, and will resume "normal" schooling in another form as from Monday, 19 May. Our demands must be met within three weeks of normal attendance after which we will reconsider our attendance of classes:

- A. All academic work performed during the period of boycott should be nullified. (Lessons given to student scabs or student traitors must be done over again.)
- B. We submit a list of demands to every student, parent and worker. (We will set a deadline for all our JUST demands to be met. We are not being unreasonable in giving 3 weeks for the demands to be met - it should have been met years ago - it is our demands for fundamental human rights. If our demands are not met, workers, parents and students will have to decide what to do.)
- C. We set an ultimatum of 3 weeks which, if not met by the authorities, will result in us reviewing our decision to go back to classes. (The ultimatum is not only set to the authorities: it is set to us, the voiceless majority of South Africa. We must be prepared to take certain decisions if the ultimatum is not met by the Government.)
- D. The concept of education for Liberation must be taken up in the classrooms. We should refuse to accept passively the blatant tribalism in our syllabi. Thus the struggle for Equality and Freedom must continue in a new form. (We don't need no thought control - We must force our teachers to teach us about our struggle. They must refuse to merely prepare us for the labour market by stuffing us with facts. We must learn to become critical to challenge them rather than accept.)

- E. We pledge ourselves to work harder in conscientising the community and transforming the issues of education into an issue of the fight for fundamental human rights. Thus, when a new revolutionary strategy is decided upon, we stand united as one community. (We must explain to our parents that we aren't "finished with the boycott". We are merely suspending it for 3 weeks.)
- F. We will continue to hold mass meetings and to review the situation. We will request time every day for our conscientising programme. If we do not get time, we will have to walk out of lessons at a certain time to have our programme in operation.
- G. The end of the boycott is not a retreat, it is a consolidation of our forces. We have not been forced by the fascist rulers to go back. We decide what we do from a position of strength and unity.

Thus, it is strategically correct and desirable that we call off the boycott. That is the feeling of the majority of boycotting students. ....'

We, in our 3 weeks consolidation, must see how we can make the boycott more effective and powerful.'  
(Document 33, page 1)

The same meeting of the Committee of 81 also decided - regardless of the outcome of their conditional suspension of the class boycott - to boycott the June examinations in order 'to impress the seriousness of our demands on the Government and the community' and also as an expression of solidarity with student detainees who might not have been released in time, and would in any case not be prepared, for the examinations.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the students warned that their ultimatum should not be met with promises, nor should it be ignored, nor met with police violence and detention. 'If our ultimatum is met with any of these responses, then we will certainly call upon the workers to help us.' (Argus 10.5.80, 12.5.80; Herald 17.5.80; Document 33, p.2)

## 12 The teachers: organised responses

### 12.1 *Meetings, 'downing of tools' and inception of an organisation*

This is an appropriate point at which to describe further the role of teachers in the boycott because by the end of its fourth week their attempt to mount organised collective resistance themselves had effectively collapsed.

At the start of the third week, approximately 1200 teachers came together at a meeting in Athlone to discuss the boycott and their relation to it. The teachers pledged their solidarity with the students and expressed their total rejection of the Government's policies. They also adopted a very strong position opposed to the CTPA. The meeting elected an *ad hoc* committee to carry organisation further. (Interviewee 61; Grassroots, April 1980: 15)

The same day as the Athlone meeting was held in the Cape - Monday, 28 April - in the Transvaal some 300 teachers, most of them members of the Transvaal Association of Teachers, 'downed tools' at a number of Johannesburg primary schools in solidarity with the boycotting students and expressing full support for their demands. (Argus 29.4.80)

The next day another meeting attended by again about 1200 teachers was held at Hewat Teachers Training College. One teacher captured the overriding feeling of those present when he said, 'We have been without a voice and it is about time we show our solidarity with the students.' The meeting gave its full support to the class boycott. It was also recommended that teachers 'down tools' in solidarity but this was to be considered the day after by the *ad hoc* committee representing more than a hundred schools which had been formed by the meeting. Several teachers said that they had already refused to continue with regular classes and thereby 'perpetuate gutter education'. One primary school teacher said that she had stopped giving lessons on the Monday and had been devoting the time to 'enlightening' her young students about the situation. Another

teacher stressed that teachers should assist and advise students when it was needed and provide more 'backbone' to their protest. The meeting unanimously supported a declaration presented by the lecturers and students from Hewat which said they completely identified themselves with those who were striving towards a single 'non-discriminatory and non-racial educational system'. The declaration continued :

'We sincerely believe that the division of any educational system along ethnic lines is totally unjust and indefensible. We also believe that such a system is contrary to and a violation of the most basic tenets of education.

'We disagree vehemently with any contention that only sees alleged agitators behind the present unrest.

'We dedicate ourselves to the achievement of a single, non-discriminatory, non-racial society within which no racially stratified educational system can function.'

The meeting also adopted a motion denouncing the CTPA as a 'reactionary body'. (Argus 30.4.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 16)

The next night at a meeting of teachers, in Paarl, 471 out of 587 teachers representing 33 schools in that vicinity voted not to continue with lessons and provide alternatives to classroom work. (Argus 2.5.80)

A formal collective decision to 'down tools' was finally taken at a meeting on Thursday, 1 May. The four-hour meeting was attended by approximately 1000 teachers representing *circa* 150 schools throughout the Western Cape including outlying areas. It was to have been held at Hewat but the Administration of Coloured Relations prohibited it and at the last moment the venue was switched to the Athlone Civic Centre.

On a general level, the teachers spelt out what they stood for in a unanimously adopted motion placing on record their complete identification with all who strove towards a single non-discriminatory educational system 'in the land of our birth'. The motion continued,

'We sincerely believe that the division of any educational system along ethnic lines is totally unjust and indefensible. ... we also believe that such a system is contrary to and a violation of the most basic tenets of education.

'We dedicate ourselves to the achievement of a single, non-discriminatory, non-racial society within which no racially stratified educational system can function. As teachers concerned with the whole education of the child, we will continue to work and strive for these views which we hold sacred and will not cease such efforts until we have achieved a non-racial educational system within a non-racial society.'

On a more specific level, teachers at the meeting gave voice to the demands for parity in teachers' salaries and for equal *per capita* educational expenditure. Concerning how to give organisational expression to their commitment, the meeting rejected the CTPA, along with all other 'ethnic or racist' bodies, and called on teachers who were members of the CTPA to terminate their membership thereof forthwith. It was decided to form an action committee of their own. The meeting's decision with the most contentious implications and the most serious possible consequences was contained in another unanimously adopted motion which instructed teachers at all educational institutions to 'down tools' until such time as the students and teachers decided to end the class boycott. The motion explained, 'Down tools shall imply the following: That teachers remain in classrooms or at schools and involve themselves with non-administrative and non-curriculum activities. By non-curriculum activities we shall include all officially organised sports and other extra-mural activities.' Their committee, to be known as the Teachers Action Committee (TAC), would work out a programme for schools for the following week - it was said that the programme might include fasting and prayer. TAC would also work with the Committee of 81. (Argus 2.5.80; Interviewee 61)

The next day, more teachers in the Transvaal decided to 'down tools'. A meeting of Lenasia teachers resolved to do so in sympathy with their own students and in solidarity with the teachers who had downed tools in the Cape.

Before the week's end, many teachers had been given ultimatums to resign or to apply for unpaid leave if they heeded the call to 'down tools'. TAC made its reaction known in the following statement:

'The action committee has resolved that if any teacher is dismissed on the grounds of agitation, promotion of the struggle, insubordination, misconduct or any other charge related to our decision, the staff of that school will walk out and every other teacher at every other educational institution being part of, or in sympathy with, this action committee will do likewise. The reason for this resolution is the blatant intimidation of teachers by some principals and inspectors and threats of dismissals.' (Argus 5.5.80)

Although the 'downing of tools' was widely debated, only a small minority of teachers ever even considered downing tools themselves. For many it was not an issue. Some seem to have felt the need to justify their rejection of such action, which they attempted by, for example, interpreting it as a call on teachers to resign their posts so as to make it appear ridiculous. Other teachers experienced real ambivalence. (Interviewees 33, 41, 61) 'The general feeling, however,' according to one teacher interviewed, 'was that they would lose their jobs if they took such action. There was in any case no teaching going on. For most of the boycott the teachers were upstairs in the domestic science room, the women, with their hair in rollers, making curry and the men playing ping-pong, *etcetera*.' (Interviewee 57) At one school, the staff, although particularly supportive of the boycott and in any case not attempting to continue normal curricular work, passed a formal resolution not to down tools. 'But,' as explained by the principal, 'that was for external consumption. Had we downed tools we could immediately have been charged with misconduct. We took a deliberate decision to protect ourselves.' (Interviewee 5) As pointed out by a principal who had been sceptical of his staff's sincerity in taking a resolution to down tools, 'the kids had effectively in any case taken the choice out of their hands.' (Interviewee 6) At one school with both a secondary and primary level, the whole staff, bar one White teacher, downed tools. The primary teachers remained with their classes but occupied them in non-curricular activities. The latter had official repercussions about which the interviewee was reluctant to speak. (Interviewee 22)

It is not known how many teachers did in the end actually 'down tools' but a 'random survey' of 50 Peninsula schools conducted by TAC suggested a figure of 727. A spokesperson for TAC also claimed that in the Athlone area alone more than 100 teachers had gone 'on strike' and another 40 at Roman Catholic schools who had 'struck' with the approval of their Church's hierarchy. (Argus 7.5.80, 9.5.80)

On Thursday, 8 May, exactly a week after teachers in the Western Cape had decided on an indefinite downing of tools, they met again in Athlone and called it off. The previous week's resolution to down tools had apparently proved difficult to implement and teachers alleged widespread victimisation by principals and inspectors especially at primary schools. TAC reported that it had held a meeting with the Committee of 81 and that it had been felt that the teachers should be actively represented on the students' committee. The meeting also discussed a proposal that a permanent teachers' union be formed. Afterwards, TAC issued a statement making the point that by having implemented the 'downing of tools' action for a week, teachers had emphasised their total rejection of racially constituted education. Further, quoting from the statement,

'We have also demonstrated a unity of purpose between students and teachers.

'We have therefore passed the following resolution that the downing of tools be suspended with immediate effect; that the Teachers' Action Committee and the Committee of 81 ... review the situation on a continuing basis; and that a line of action be decided mutually between the teachers and the students as the need arises.'

(Argus 9.5.80; Cape Times 12.5.80)

## 12.2 *Teachers' Action Committee*

The latter statement along with what was experienced as the arrogant behaviour of TAC's representatives towards representatives of the Committee of 81 drew resentful criticism from students. It was felt that TAC had no right unilaterally to set itself up alongside the Committee of 81 as joint-controllers of the course of the students' boycott. (Interviewee 35) Concerning what support TAC enjoyed amongst

teachers, in its infancy it carried, by association, the weight of the substantial number of teachers who had attended the above mentioned mass meetings as well as of those others who were, or were believed to have been, represented by those who attended. But, although TAC was launched through those meetings, the meetings themselves reflected not organisation but merely an initiative made possible by the situation in which teachers found themselves under intense pressure to take a public stand. To the extent that support for TAC was not thus in any case only apparent, much of it proved ephemeral. It has been seen that TAC had no rise, for it was launched from a point from which it could only fall. With its inception, TAC went into decline. It was incapable of projecting any clear image of itself and seemed to take no account of how threatened and conservative the vast majority of teachers were. As one teacher interviewed put it, 'TAC effectively writes off 75 to 90% of teachers'. (Interviewee 13) Most teachers were frightened by TAC's militant aura. Moreover, many, who were otherwise sympathetic to its stance, were alienated by TAC's insistence on total rejection of, and resignation from, the CTPA. Their experience of the latter organisation had been not only of an effective professional union, from which they had benefitted materially, but also of a high-profile body which for as long as it had been under Sonn's leadership had consistently articulated many of the very demands which were then being made by the students on boycott.

TAC also suffered from internal problems. Its leadership was criticised for being weak 'theoretically' and generally indecisive. The degree to which the organisation functioned democratically was questioned and there were accusations of manipulation. Finally, there were a number of White teachers in TAC whose approach many of the other members regarded as problematic. Not only did they tend to push themselves into the forefront and in the process smother some of the development of individuals and organisation which could have been occurring, but also, perhaps because of a different background, they were insensitive to aspects of the approach adopted by the Black members. They were criticised, notably, for ignoring 'the national question' in their zeal to interpret everything in class terms and for disregarding how Black teachers employed by the DCR viewed 'the CAD'

which controlled their lives and how they therefore viewed negotiating with the Department. The White faction in question favoured seeking confrontation and they saw negotiation as providing the opportunity to provoke it, while the Black teachers in TAC opposed negotiating with 'CAD' on principle. Whatever the reasons, TAC was unable to generate more than minimal support. It did attempt to sustain teacher interest in the boycott and even recruit membership by holding lectures and workshops but, although these were found to be worthwhile by the few who attended any of them, such activities could be no substitute for organisation. (Interviewees 13, 29, 33, 40, 41, 46, 57)

### 12.3 *Cape Teachers' Professional Association*

The only substantial teachers' organisation involved in the boycott was the CTPA and even it, with a membership at the time of *circa* 17 000, was regionally uneven in strength. The CTPA was strongest in the rural areas and weakest in the Peninsula's Southern Suburbs where it was hardly a consideration for either teachers or students. (Interviewees 5, 6, 41, 56, 64) What follows, is based primarily on an interview with the organisation's President, Sonn. The CTPA was 'in full agreement with the grievances' of the students and expressed its support for them publicly. It did not approve of the boycott as a strategy, however, 'We never actively supported the boycott,' said Sonn. Yet nor did they as an organisation actively try to break it. On the one hand, the leadership was 'fearful' of having their actions interpreted as attempts to 'defuse the issue' and 'normalise' the situation as quickly as possible. On the other hand, they were 'tremendously under pressure from parents and members who were saying : our kids are going to die - blood's going to flow and you must stop it. ' Sonn admitted frankly : 'We didn't know which way to turn.' And, indeed, the CTPA's role in the boycott was an ambiguous one. Insofar as any coherent approach can be discerned, it would seem to have been directed towards, on the one side, protecting the students for as long as their protest lasted, and on the other, achieving a resolution to the boycott on terms as favourable to the students as possible. In the latter regard, Sonn said, 'We felt our role as teachers was to use the pressure the students placed on us to bargain for improvement for reform- but the kind of reforms the Government couldn't afford

to make'. To those ends, on the one hand, they used their influence (such as it was) among the students and 'spoke to church and community leaders', and, on the other, they engaged the Government in negotiation. (Interviewees 19, 56, 47 - all quotations from the latter interview)

Going back to the end of the boycott's third week, the CTPA had at that stage still taken no public step apart from their initial statement of support for the students' cause. In that period the leadership was holding out against tremendous pressures on the CTPA to call a mass meeting for teachers. The reason for their resistance was their fear that they might not be able to retain their leadership under the emotional conditions prevailing, and, losing it to 'the mass', they would be dictated to by 'the mass'. Specifically, they feared a decision to strike not merely because it could jeopardise the organisation but they believed that it would have been immoral to lead their members out on strike without the resources to support them and their families. Eventually they had to give in to the pressure and called a meeting for Saturday, 3 May. It was held in Belhar, Cape Town, and attended by some 500 teachers who included representatives of UTACA from all four provinces. Addressing the meeting, Sonn pointed out that the Government had known for many years of the appalling conditions in Coloured schools and had been implored over and over to do something about them before the situation exploded. He told of his frequent visits to the corridors of power to deliver the warnings. Several of the delegates spoke of how despondent they felt after these years of getting nowhere in their efforts. The meeting voted for full support of the students' boycott and passed a motion saying, 'Teachers view with pride and admiration the discipline and manner whereby students have conducted themselves during the present crisis.' They called for the scrapping of separate education systems and for all education to be placed under one department. They also demanded the release of all teachers, students and others in detention. None of these resolutions, calls and demands confronted, however, the central question which most had come to the meeting to have answered: What could they *do*? They felt they had to do something. Many persons argued that they should join those who had downed tools. There was a heated debate on the question but the meeting went with the

leadership which took up an unequivocal stand against striking. The most that they could agree on was to 'review the role of the teacher in the boycott situation' according to the Government's response to the crisis. In the end, Sonn put to the meeting the possibility of going to see the Government. On the assumption that he had the Minister of Coloured Relations in mind, the idea received short shrift. When they understood that he meant the Prime Minister they considered it. The outcome was that if nobody less than the Prime Minister was to be seen then they should go. Sonn asked the meeting what they wanted them to ask of Botha. He was told : Just go and see him - tell him we can't take it any more and he must now do something. Reflecting on the meeting in retrospect Sonn explained, 'We took that decision just for wanting to do *something*.' (Interviewee 47; Argus 3.5.80; Herald 10.5.80)

#### 12.4 *Teachers' League of South Africa*

The only other organised tendency amongst teachers at schools under the DCR in the Peninsula was the Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA), a remnant of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). The local pun portrays it as a 'left-over' in reference to what is widely regarded as the latter ('late') organisations' 'ultra-leftist' leanings. The only sign of organisational life which the TLSA exposed to the public was its official organ, The Educational Journal. Teachers associated with this tendency restricted their intervention in the boycott to using what influence they had amongst students to persuade them of the folly of their actions. Their impact was slight - if that is not to over-state it - since even in their traditional bastions at Harold Cressy, Livingstone, South Peninsula and Trafalgar Senior Secondary Schools the authoritative influence which they had once wielded, was almost entirely eroded. (Interviewees 5, 21, 27, 58, 35, 61) A Livingstone student interviewed, spoke of the 'Unity Movement' as having come to be 'hated'. (Interviewee 27) According to a Harold Cressy student 'A great proportion of the school had already rejected the whole TLSA-Unity Movement scene. In 1980, they felt that these elements were again trying to manipulate them and this they didn't like. 'The Unity-type teachers really tried to push their position in persuading the students to go back to classes. Basically

the argument was that the time wasn't ripe for this kind of action.' She went on to recount how these teachers had accused them of being 'adventurist' and of simply 'misunderstanding our role'. (Interviewee 21) Apart from a few - at best sceptical and for the rest sarcastic - passing references to the boycott, The Educational Journal barely mentioned it while it was in progress. Towards the end of the year an editorial pronounced that while 'teachers, pupils and parents have a fundamental rôle to play, ... that rôle can have meaning and effect ... only if the battle in education is recognised and prosecuted as part of the war upon oppression and exploitation in South Africa' - as if that had not been a central point made consistently by almost all involved in the boycott. The same editorial contained a scathing attack on teachers who had been supportive of the boycott. Thus,

'The fairweather type, who only by sudden revolts that must occur in a system in a state of permanent crisis, is propelled into sudden activity, only to sink into political deep-freeze when the conflict cools, is of little use in the struggle. Overcome by euphoria and ecstasy at the prospect of relief from a manifestly hard job, his dramatic urge to "down tools" is matched by the equally histrionic display of instant wisdom as to what is to be done. The short cuts to liberation become the stock-in-trade of these political hucksters who ought to do their political homework regularly, working year in and year out *with* the people's organisations, overhauling ideas and awakening in pupils the enthusiasm for learning and for learning how to change society.' (Educational Journal L11 (3, Oct - Nov 1980)3)

What follows is an attempt to record the gist of the TLSA's view of the boycott based on an interview of a senior teacher who has long been associated with the tendency in question. The TLSA saw the students' boycott as having been an orchestrated attempt by the ANC, or liberals fronting for the ANC, to use what was a real and critical problem for the oppressed community - *viz* education - to let down a backdrop against which other political activity could be staged. According to the TLSA view, what lay behind involving the youth in this struggle was a belief that the ruling class' moral sense would be aroused and the Government - shamed by having the errors of its ways exposed by persons so young - would grant the concessions sought by the students and

even accede to the more fundamental political demands which were being promoted at the time. As supposed vindication of their interpretation they cited the Golden Acre demonstration as a blatant attempt to take the struggle into the soul of the White system and thereby to shame or shock the rulers into change. The latter reflected an approach which was not only 'moralistic' and 'sentimental', as opposed to properly political, but also 'racialistic' insofar as it had 'prescribed the destruction of property' which was identified in terms of being owned by people of a particular colour. Also manipulating the students in 1980 was the Church, according to the TLSA. The Church established an 'in' with the students by *inter alia*, providing them with sanctuaries for their meetings while they were prohibited from meeting. This encouraged them to take the clergy into their confidence. It was thus no coincidence that many of the views expressed by the Committee of 81 were those of 'political crusaders in the religious sense'. The students regarded themselves as having a mission that was 'blessed by the supervening almighties'. This was indicated by the frequent references, which there allegedly were at student meetings, to how the powers above would help students reckon with the police and paramilitary forces deployed against them. (Interviewee 10)

Needless to say, such 'insights' made minimal impression on anybody seated in other than the TLSA's own pews, least of all the students. To the extent that teachers associated with the TLSA tendency played any role in relation to the boycott, however, it was a negative one. (Interviewees 5, 21, 27, 40, 58) According to a student leader interviewed, 'They betrayed the struggle both by not providing the sort of leadership which could have been expected of them and by not providing the resources which they could easily have provided.' (Interviewee 35)

The only organised body of teachers to have, by the end of the fourth week, publicly expressed outright opposition to a continuation of the boycott was the Lenasia branch of the Teachers' Association of South Africa. In a statement issued after a meeting held on 7 May the organisation said,

'We are sympathetic towards the demonstrating students' cause. We condemn separate systems of education. However, we believe the students have made their point

to the Government and the public and should go back to school. The students should ignore all support for the continuation of the boycott. We would like other community leaders to join our call to end the boycott.' (Argus 8.5.80)

### 13 The fifth week : an ultimatum

#### 13.1 *Department of Education and Training students in Cape Town join*

The fifth week of the boycott saw students at the African senior secondary schools of Langa, I.D. Mkize and Sizamile join Fezeka students who had already been boycotting classes for two weeks. They also elected their own body, known as the Regional Committee, to represent African students in the Western Cape independently of the Committee of 81.

#### 13.2 *'Manifesto To The People of Azania'*

Wednesday, 14 May, was the date set by the Committee of 81 for the provisional suspension of the boycott although classes were to be resumed only the following Monday. The Committee of 81 issued a major document dated 14 May 1980 and entitled 'Manifesto To The People of Azania' which, *inter alia*, spelt out the terms of the students' ultimatum to the Government. They were that if the Government had not by 6 June made a 'definitive policy statement' giving a 'firm commitment' to meet the students' demands, they would reconsider their suspension of the boycott and further call upon their parents to support them in their struggle for a 'non-racial, non-exploitative society'. The demands themselves will be dealt with in detail below. (Argus 14.5.80, 20.5.80; Cape Times 15.5.80; Herald 17.5.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 3; Document 33)

Amongst the rest of the Manifesto's contents was a statement in which the Committee of 81 told students, *inter alia*, not to 'feel intimidated when going back' to class.

'Do not allow teachers or principals or the police to victimise any one of us. We must stand united. We are involved in active struggle for our freedom.'

'We must demand an End to the teacher being the most important person in the classroom. We must challenge what our distorted textbooks say. We must go back to classes with a new outlook on life. Our attitudes must change. We must stand together as one student mass.'

Under a sub-heading, 'Unity', the Manifesto declared:

'We are like the five fingers of the hand formed into a solid fist. United, we can smash the exploitative and oppressive system of this country. Divided we cannot achieve anything. Thus, all students must return together, work together for 3 weeks of "normality" and pursue a common line of action after the 3 weeks.'

The remainder of this statement warrants quotation in full

#### 'UNIFIED OPPRESSED

The boycott has deliberately been made a coloured issue by the ruling-class newspapers and SATV. To attempt to solve the problems of CAD education is not enough. The committee of 81 has schools which fall under Bantu Affairs, Coloured Affairs and Indian Affairs. Why has the government promised to solve the inequalities in CAD education only? What is divide-and-rule tactics?

#### 'DEMOCRACY

The Committee of 81 has been representing students primarily from the Western Cape and some platteland dorps. However, the Committee must not decide what to do next. We, as students should decide in our meetings at schools and our representatives must then go to the Committee of 81 meeting and give the reasons for us making a certain decision. We must have more MASS DEMOCRACY.

#### 'THE STATE AND COMPANY

The suspension of the boycott has been decided upon by the students at all schools represented by the Committee of 81. We have not made our decision in response to PW (Piet Wapen Botha) nor because creepy crawly Sonn saw and negotiated with the regime against the wishes of the boycotting students.

'Finally, with the same dedication, organisation and willingness to sacrifice shown during the boycott, must we tackle and implement the new strategy. The dawn of a new social

order, a more just, humane and harmonious society is in sight. Together we must fight for it. The students boycotting classes cannot achieve it. We can only act as the initiators and hope the way WE have shown will be taken up by the workers.' (Document 33, page 2)

### 13.3 *In the rest of the country, for the rest of the term*

Outside of the Western Cape, the boycott drifted on unevenly for the rest of the second term. In the fifth week, it was reported that in the Eastern Cape only a few students at two Coloured senior secondary schools, Bethelsdorp and Uitenhague, were still boycotting classes. On the Witwatersrand, the boycott was in disarray as many Coloured students stayed out of class and many returned. At the same time, the boycott was still gathering momentum amongst African students. In Grahamstown, another African secondary school, Andrew Moyake, joined the boycott. It was joined in the sixth week by four African primary schools in Port Elizabeth. For two days African students in Bloemfontein staged mass street demonstrations during which they stoned busses, police vehicles and those of the Administration Board. African students at the University of the North, Turfloop, joined the protest with a sit-in. By the first week of June - the eighth week of the boycott - it was being reported that students were boycotting class at 26 African and Coloured schools, including 14 secondary schools, in the OFS. In the Eastern Cape class boycotts were continuing at approximately 51 educational institutions, including 37 African schools, in Port Elizabeth and towns in the area, and a number of Coloured schools and two Coloured training colleges in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhague. It was reported at the same time that on the Witwatersrand many Coloured and Indian schools were virtually deserted as the class boycott turned into a stayaway from school. There was, however, widespread boredom apparent and many students were looking for jobs, if they were not already in employment. At the end of the eighth week, students at Eldorado Park, Kliptown, Bosmont and Noordgezicht Senior Secondary Schools decided to return to classes the next Monday. The ninth week saw a Coloured senior secondary school in Kimberley resume the class boycott while it continued at 45 Coloured and African Schools and colleges in the Eastern Cape. An important development in the latter

region was the formation of a body to unite students and bring about non-violent social and political changes, the Committee of 41. This Committee compiled its own set of demands for submission to the education authorities and thenceforth regulated the boycott in the Eastern Cape. (Argus 12.5.80, 24.5.80, 4.6.80, 5.6.80, 6.6.80, 10.6.80, 13.6.80; Cape Times 22.5.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 3 - 4)

#### 14 The sixth week: the boycott goes on

##### 14.1 *Suspension and resumption*

Returning to the Cape Peninsula, on Monday, 19 May, students did their best to resume 'normal' classes with a certain amount of time supposed to be set aside each day for 'relevant education'. At one senior secondary school, no less than half of the normal curriculum was to have been devoted to an awareness programme which students would conduct.

However, also on 19 May, the University of Fort Hare was closed down and its 2800 students ordered off the campus. Two days later, the Committee of 81 decided to resume the boycott in accordance with an earlier decision to do so should any educational institution be victimised. The Committee of 81's demand was simply that Fort Hare be immediately re-opened and all students re-instated unconditionally. Additional issues involved in the boycott's resumption were the sacking of striking meat workers, the violent response of the authorities in Kwamashu to the boycott, the mass arrest of 153 African students in Grahamstown and a recent increase in bus fares in Cape Town. In a press statement, the students said that their resumption of the boycott would finally 'explode the myth' that Coloured, Indian and African students were not united in their rejection of the system of 'inferior, racist education!.

Earlier in the day on which the Committee took this decision, several schools had already resumed the boycott unilaterally. They included Elsies River, Elswood, Valhalla, Florida, Bellville South and Rylands Senior Secondary Schools. At other schools, the issue

was being discussed, while at Salt River Senior Secondary students staged a march during interval to protest against victimisation of students at the school. There was a mass resumption of the boycott in the Peninsula on Thursday, 22 May, and students at UWC held a 'Day of Solidarity' with Fort Hare students.

#### 14.2 *Demonstration through commercial and financial disruption*

It was at the end of this sixth week of the boycott that students staged their demonstration through commercial and financial disruption at the Golden Acre Centre and at several other large shops as well as banks in Cape Town's White suburbs. (Argus 19.5.80, 21.5.80, 22.5.80, 24.5.80; Cape Times 22.5.80; Grassroots, May/June 1980; Intergroup 3 (June 1980)3)

In the course of the boycott no other action under the formal auspices of the Committee of 81 was undertaken amidst as much controversy or evoked more criticism. Those on the Committee, who favoured a more confrontationist approach, had not been satisfied by the mini-rallies since they had been confined to particular campuses - as, of course, they had been intended to be. They were, therefore, pushing for more 'drastic action' and proposing specifically a march on the city centre such as had been undertaken in 1976. With the majority still opposed to a confrontationist approach, the demonstration through commercial and financial disruption emerged as a compromise proposal. That the proposal was even considered, was an indication of how influential the faction putting it forward had become within the leadership of the Committee of 81, given the extent of the opposition it faced outside the Committee itself. This is not to deny that there were many students who did feel that they should have been doing something 'more active' than they had been.

Members of the Committee had been in consultation on the matter with the Western Province General Workers' Union (WPGWU) which represented the striking meat workers in support of whom the demonstration was primarily intended to have been. The Union strongly opposed the plan. Of the students to whom the idea had been put for consideration, many had opposed it. Apparently, for example, some 80% of UWC students

had expressed their opposition to the proposal. Apart from vague rumours during the week, the first many students heard formally about the plan was the day before it was to be executed when they received instructions as to where they were to go, what they were to do, and that they were to use no violence. For many students, these instructions brought to a head the issue of whether, if the majority makes a decision, everybody is bound to abide by it. The overwhelming feeling at one school where the question was debated, was that they were not so bound. The same school was split four ways on the matter: there were those who wanted to participate collectively as a school, those who wanted to participate even if as individuals, those who felt bound by the majority decision of their representative organisation to participate even if as individuals they disagreed with the tactic, and those who were opposed to participation in the demonstration altogether. As it happened only some 25 out of that school's approximately 750 students did, in fact, participate.

The main target for the demonstrations of commercial and financial disruption was Cape Town's central business district. On Saturday morning, 24 May, an estimated 3000 students who had made their way to the city centre in groups gathered in the concourse of the Golden Acre. First, they entered the basement of the OK where they started to disrupt business by, *inter alia* pulling goods from shelves, loading up trolleys, forming long queues at the tills and being unable to pay when the goods had been rung up by the cashiers. From there, the students moved out into Adderley Street but were unable to enter other department stores since they had already locked their doors. More shops shut their doors as the demonstrators marched along Strand Street, up Loop Street, and back towards Adderley Street along Castle Street. The students sang and chanted slogans as they went. By the time they got back to the Golden Acre, the riot police had arrived. Undeterred, the students poured along all levels of the Golden Acre disrupting business where they could. The police moved in on about 100 students who had entered Clicks. The demonstrators fled, jumping over counters to escape. Their next move was to stage a sit-in in the concourse of the Golden Acre. They were instructed by the police to disperse. The students responded with jeers and refused to move. The police then instructed all those not involved in the demonstration to leave the

concourse and warned the students that, if they did not disperse of their own accord, they would be dispersed 'with force'. After most of the onlookers had been cleared away, riot police, wearing gas masks and bearing batons, charged the demonstrators from the Adderley Street entrance. The students dispersed in disarray before the batons and teargas of the police. Many were screaming in panic, pain or both; some fainted; others were overcome by vomiting. In their desperation to get away from the police, some jumped five metres down over a wall. The concourse was littered with broken spectacles. Some of the students were caught by the police, arrested and taken away in police vans which had been used to block Adderley Street. Police cordoned off the area and refused to allow people in. For a period the whole Golden Acre complex, as well as the OK, were closed. So ended the demonstration in the city.

Similar demonstrations were held at the Claremont branch of the OK, Kenilworth Centre, the Blue Route Centre and the Parow branch of the Grand Bazaars as well as in Paarl's Pick 'n Pay. In the supermarkets, the students were supposed to concentrate on the meat and other perishable goods. Another target for the demonstrations that day were banks in order to cause disruption to the financial world. There, students created chaos by, for instance, forming long queues, opening accounts only to deposit some minimal amount like 5 cents, then queuing up afresh to request the interest on the sum just deposited or alternatively to close the account again. Apart from a march in Voortrekker Road, Bellville, which was broken up by a police baton charge, the students demonstrating at the other points dispersed when confronted by the police and there were no other reported cases of the police resorting to violence.

The students' demonstrations of commercial and financial disruption came under critical fire from every quarter including their own ranks. Through this action, not only did students start losing support they had been getting from parents and the community in general but even the meat workers to whose struggle the demonstrations were specifically intended to contribute, lost support as a result of it. According to the assessment of their Union, the disruption demonstrations were bad publicity in the sense that the students were widely regarded as having been irresponsible in undertaking them and the workers were

tarred with the same brush. At that point, the boycott of red meat, which had been in progress, went into decline. In turn, the students' struggle lost a degree of worker support. Almost all the students interviewed had severe reservations about the demonstrations. A common view was that they had not gone as intended especially in the city itself. It had been planned as a more controlled action but not all who participated kept to the plans in a disciplined way. Had they done so, the police would not have had the same excuse to react violently and the demonstration would have been more effective. There was also the feeling that for many the demonstrations had an almost mischievous content. Some went with the idea, for example, that 'if they could steal a bit of sausage for Mom, well, so much the better, they'd steal it.' This sort of attitude was felt to be inappropriate to the seriousness of what was at issue. One student interviewed, who had participated, had not felt 'quite right' behaving in the way the demonstration had required of her. Her view was that it was all well and good for students to get a kick out of getting their own back at the shops and 'the system' but that they had not appreciated the seriousness of their decision to embark on collective action of this sort, particularly as the repercussions could have been still a great deal more drastic than they were. The demonstrators had not been prepared for the confrontation which could have ensued nor did the leadership have contingency plans. Not all student reaction was negative, however. One girl interviewed, who had wanted to participate but been prevented from doing so by a part-time job she had on Saturday mornings, clearly respected the courage of those who had demonstrated, the more so as they had gone into it knowing that they would get into trouble, be confronted by the police, and possibly be beaten up or even arrested. Another student interviewed pointed out that on the positive side the disruption demonstrations had helped to regenerate interest in the boycott. As she explained, 'they caused quite a bit of excitement because they were something new - it was not sitting on the floor listening to a lecture, sitting cramped in a hall looking at a movie; it was actually getting out of the school grounds and *doing* something. (Interviewees 3, 7, 8, 18, 21, 32, 35, 38, 40, 48, 58; Argus 24.5.80; Grassroots, May/June 1980)

## 15 Student support for workers' and community struggles

### 15.1 *Strike by meat workers and the 'red meat' boycott*

The demonstrations of economic disruption were not the students' sole attempt to show their active support for the workers' and community struggles with which their boycott overlapped ... just the least appreciated. The struggle with which the latter demonstrations were specifically connected, surfaced in the community at large on Monday, 19 May - start of the boycott's sixth week - when some 800 Cape Town meat workers belonging to the WPGWU came out in an industry-wide strike in support of their fellows at Table Bay Cold Storage who had been dismissed after refusing to work until management agreed to recognise an unregistered, democratically elected, non-racial workers committee. (WPGWU, 1980a)

The meat workers called on the community for support by way of, firstly, financial assistance to cover 'relief pay' 'so that the meat bosses could not starve them back to work in submission.' (WPGWU, 1980c: 79,83) Secondly, they called for a 'boycott of ALL red meats including polonies, sausage, mince, chops, steaks, bacon, processed meats (tins), take-away foods, etc.' (Document 64) They called, thirdly, for 'discouragement of scab labour in the meat firms'. (WPGWU, 1980a: 82) A pamphlet of unknown origin, dated 23 May, suggested that students do the following:

- '(a) Set up a "boycott fund" for the workers.
- (b) Assist in distribution of pamphlets, stickers and to act as lines of communications.
- (c) To use their regional structures to inform their parents of their campaign.
- (d) Form a students committee to co-ordinate the student phase.' (Document 62)

The Union emphasised publicly that the workers would lead the struggle and that all support had to be sanctioned by the committee which, comprising scattered representatives of various community organisations, the University of Cape Town, the University of the Western Cape, regional student committees, and other unions, and chaired by a WPGWU appointee, was formed in the second week of the strike to organise community support.

Support from Cape Town's Black community was 'spontaneous and extensive, even crossing class lines'. (WPGWU, 1980a: 82) A WPGWU organiser, who was interviewed, acknowledged that such support had made a critical contribution to the meat workers' struggle.

(Interviewee 18) Much of the committee support came directly from students and, much of what did not, the students nonetheless played an important part in generating. According to the same Union organiser, students started coming forward keen to help almost immediately. The Committee of 81 as well as *ad hoc* groups of students approached the Union to find out more specifically what they could do to help.

(Interviewee 18) In an account and assessment of the strike by the Union, it is noted that ...

'students clearly saw in the meat strike an opportunity for showing concretely their genuine sympathy with the workers' struggle and an opportunity for extending the parameters of their struggle beyond the classroom. They took upon themselves responsibility for carrying the meat issue to their communities.' (WPGWU, 1980b: 62)

The organiser, who was interviewed, stated that the students, being on boycott themselves, were in an almost unique position to mobilise community support.' (Interviewee 18) The Union's above cited article points out that ...

'there was considerable general support in the Black community for the activities of the students and they were thus easily able to take the meat strike issue to their parents in the community. Moreover, the vast majority of the parents are, of course, workers themselves, so it is easy to imagine the tremendous mobilising power enjoyed by the alliance of students and actively struggling workers.' (WPGWU, 1980b: 62)

A total of over R100 000 was collected by the community in aid of the meat workers and impressionistically students did if anything more than their 'fair share' of fundraising. (WPGWU, 1980b: 63; Interviewees 32, 54, 58, 61) Student bodies were amongst many community organisations to have endorsed the red meat boycott called formally on 21 May. (WPGWU, 1980a: 82) According to a WPGWU Memorandum of 4 June 1980, 'The call was rapidly taken up in ... the Western Cape, being spread by the student/pupil organisations and by community meetings throughout

the area.' (WPGWU, 1980c: 80) One way in which students helped bring the community into the meat boycott was through simply speaking to their parents (Interviewee 54) although, according to a student interviewed, 'A lot of kids didn't want to cause family hassles by really telling their parents : We are NOT going to eat that meat you're buying.' 'But,' she added, 'eventually it did catch on.' (Interviewee 58) In some areas students went from door to door explaining why the meat workers were on strike and why it was important to support the meat boycott. (Interviewee 18) Students played a big part in the distribution of supportive pamphlets. (Interviewees 54,61) According to one student interviewee, 'The school press was at our disposal which is why we could roll off a lot and, *via* newsletters to parents, *etcetera*, we got the word going.' (Interviewee 58) Some students, specifically in the African townships, attempted over a certain period to enforce the red meat boycott by searching the bags and parcels of people entering the townships and throwing away any red meat found, with maximised embarrassment to the culprit. (Interviewees 32,61) Finally, according to the Union organiser interviewed, the meetings which students arranged, with the primary purpose of reporting to parents on their own boycott, provided a valuable channel into the community. Many such meetings were addressed by meat workers and Union organisers. (Interviewees 18, 61) According to the WPGWU, its 'officials were attending upwards of six different meetings each evening.' (WPGWU, 1908b: 61)

As already indicated in the context of the demonstrations of economic disruption, relations between students and the WPGWU were not unproblematic. The Union leadership had a number of criticisms of the students' approach and practice. First of all, students were found to be 'in general very activist - ready to jump into *anything* just in order to do *something*, but often without due consideration.' (Interviewee 18) Students were criticised further for generally lacking a sense of accountability and failing to appreciate that the organisers had to be directly accountable to the Union's members and specifically to the meat workers. Union officials were not prepared to act without a democratic mandate from the striking workers and, because of the time consumed in obtaining such mandates, some students allegedly criticised them for 'holding things back'. (Interviewee 18)

The WPGWU was particularly concerned that the strike not be supported from outside itself in ways which might interfere with the course of the strike or perhaps even jeopardise the Union. It was anxious about the possible repercussions of actions such as the demonstrations of economic disruption which were organised in support of the meat workers albeit by others operating entirely autonomously. The risk was increased, in the Union's view, by what they considered to be the student leadership's inability to control what they initiated - 'this lack of discipline was potentially a threat to the whole organisation of the strike as well as the supportive boycott'. (Interviewee 18) In rationalising the extent to which the Union had attempted to direct autocratically the ways in which the community supported the strike, they wrote as follows :

'We were unquestionably influenced by a, probably justifiable, nervousness with respect to the fringe element of the students, particularly with regard to the prospect of being lumped with responsibility for acts perpetrated in our name by people who were responsible to neither the union nor the community. In the event, our caution was probably excessive, but it unquestionably influenced the degree of autonomy that we were prepared to extend to the community.' (WPGWU, 1980b: 69)

Still in the context of the same explanation, there was clearly apparent a significant, though understandable, difference in strategy between the Union and the students over what the former characterised as the latter's perception of 'the undying necessity ... for consistently extending their struggle' (WPGWU, 1980b: 62) - something which the student leadership did indeed regard as central to the very point of the schools boycott. For the Union, 'the intense political turmoil and the high level of popular organisation in Cape Town' (WPGWU, 1980b:61) at the time of the meat workers' strike posed a contradictory situation. On the one hand, it not only resulted in the meat workers enjoying immense popular support but it was precisely the struggles of the students and other sections of the Black community that made it possible at all to extend the meat workers' issue into the community.

'On the other hand, the popular turmoil made the meat issue potentially highly explosive with respect to the state. The tendency amongst some sections of the

students to always want to extend an issue beyond its own immediate confines and link it up to all other manifestations of oppression under apartheid also posed a severe problem for us. In calling for community support, the union was treading a very narrow line. We had to increase the pressure being brought against the meat bosses, especially once the state began intervening; hence the BROADENING of the struggle to include the community. But we had also simultaneously to keep the focus of the ISSUE CONFINED to a demand for democratically elected non-racial workers' committees in the meat firms. If this demand was to be attained it had to be disentangled from other, perhaps more long range, issues.' (WPGWU, 1980b: 69)

For the students - incumbents of a very difficult social place and embroiled in a struggle of a very different nature - if anything worthwhile was to be attained, the entanglement of their specifically educational demands with 'more long range issues' had to be especially exposed.

The last of the Union's criticisms of the students to be mentioned here was levelled against what the official interviewed characterised as having been their 'arrogance in telling workers what they should do in place of consulting together and deciding together on a course of action.' The interviewee pointed out that in 1976 workers had felt that their economic muscle had been used by students without their having been properly consulted. It was alleged that in 1980 workers had felt that, although the students had made a real contribution to their struggle this time and although they seemed initially committed not to repeat the same mistakes, they had again begun unilaterally demanding support from workers. In response to counter-criticism from students and others in the community who had supported the meat workers, the Union subsequently acknowledged that it had itself been arrogant in having taken up - in what they considered to be the interests of maintaining meat worker leadership over all aspects of the meat strike - 'an authoritarian position with respect to the rest of the community' by dictating to it, principally through its domination and direction of the support committee, what forms support for the meat workers had to take, (WPGWU, 1980b: 68; Interviewee 18) The Union's admission in this respect read as follows: 'We did not recognise sufficiently clearly that workers' leadership was probably enhanced, rather than retarded, if we, the workers

organisation, cooperated democratically with respect to our allies in the community.' (WPGWU, 1980b: 68) The Union admitted further that it had made 'a serious error' in having at no stage attempted to reciprocate the support which they were receiving from the students and other sections of the community. (WPGWU 1980b: 69)

### 15.2 *The bus boycott*

The other major struggle, in which the students involved themselves in the course of their class boycott, was the boycott of City Tramways' busses which began on 2 June as an attempt to resist the increase in fares that had come into effect in April. (Interviewee 61; Document 57; Grassroots May/June 1980) According to a community worker, Rommel Roberts, who was a high-profile figure in the organisation of the bus boycott, students played a pivotal role in it. The students were represented on the Bus Action Committee, which coordinated the bus boycott, by appointees of the Committee of 81. In Roberts' view, the Bus Action Committee managed to organise the effective area-groups and street committees which it did, largely as a result of students, themselves on boycott, having been thus available to do the necessary 'leg-work'. The latter was meant literally for it involved many students in walking from home to home explaining the bus boycott and setting up such organisational structures as they could. They also helped in the arrangement of lift clubs. (Interviewee 44) Furthermore, 'students would walk with parents to the train stations and they would fetch parents from the train stations. This happened on a wide scale and had the effect of bringing a closer unity between students and parents than had been achieved in the school boycott.' (Roberts, in Hare, 1982: chapter 6, page 10) As well as helping to pamphleteer in support of the bus boycott, students mobilised support for it in their own homes and schools, at bus stops and terminuses. Sometimes they jumped on to buses and tried to persuade any who might have been riding to join the boycott. "Sometimes people were made to get off - it was nasty for them but it worked." (Interviewee 58) Particularly as support for the boycott began to wane in many areas, some students attempted to enforce its continuation by coercive means which principally involved the sporadic stoning of buses. (Interviewees 32, 44, 61) Such actions were bound to generate resentment, and even antagonism,

towards the students. 'Whereas at first people were doing things willingly out of conviction, now they were doing them out of fear.' (Roberts, in Hare, 1982: chapter 6, page 12) According to the WPGWU organiser interviewed, 'there came a point in the bus boycott when workers felt that there was no point in continuing it and the only reason they couldn't start catching the buses again was fear of retribution, organised and carried out by the students.' (Interviewee 18)

Having described what appear to have been the essentials of the part played by students in support of the meat workers' strike and the bus boycott, it remains to summarise the ways in which those two struggles were significant for the students' boycott. The issues with which they confronted the community and the action for which they called, contributed to sustaining students' interest and thereby the class boycott itself. The meat and bus struggles were in a practical sense part of the alternative education to which students exposed themselves. The meat boycott, in particular, provided a certain substance to the notion of the centrality and primacy of the workers' struggle which, while incessantly stressed by the student leadership, was rather remote from students' experience. Students had the opportunity not only to extend their own struggle beyond the schools but to make a concrete contribution to the workers' and the wider struggle. (Interviewees 32, 38, 61)

## 16 The authorities vexed

### 16.1 *Dregs from the cup of 'conciliation'*

Up to the end of the sixth week, the authorities would seem to have still been following a limited *laissez faire*, if not an openly conciliatory, approach. It would seem that the only place where students suffered tough action during the fourth, fifth and sixth weeks was at Fort Hare where police did intervene with force. On Monday, 19 May, the university was closed indefinitely and its 2800

students ordered off the campus. Even towards the end of the sixth week the Minister of Coloured Relations made known his willingness to discuss with representatives of the students. He said he had heard of all kinds of conditions and demands but none had reached the Government. The authorities could not react only to Press statements and pamphlets; there could not be negotiations without negotiators. Steyn also made public that the announcement of the names of those to be members of the new all-nominated CPC was being delayed. Although he dismissed suggestions that 'coloured leaders' were now reluctant to serve because of feelings in their communities, he admitted that the delay was because of the situation in the Coloured schools. (Argus 22.5.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980)3)

The only further high-level moves to appear conciliatory came a fortnight later, during the boycott's eighth week. Speaking to a conference of the Eastern Cape Relations Committees, Steyn admitted that there were solid grounds for pupil dissatisfaction. He and Kempen, chief director of the DCR, said the Government was moving as fast as it could towards the equalisation of education. At the same time, Steyn re-emphasised his belief that agitators were using the schoolchildren in stirring the continuous boycotts. (Argus 3.6.80) Then, on 6 June, the DCR announced a five-year plan to upgrade Coloured Education. The proposals included: a doubling, in 1981, of the existing R28 million budget for building new schools; an additional R2,6 million to improve teachers' qualifications through bursaries and other opportunities; doing away, by January, 1981, with the backlog in the provision of textbooks; new schools would in future be provided with halls and sports facilities; under an agreement with the Department of Public Works all schools would be renovated and painted every five years; and the minimum qualification required for teacher training would henceforth be a matriculation. (Argus 7.6.80)

## 16.2 *Principals summoned once more*

### 16.2.1 'Crisis of authority'

At the end of the boycott's sixth week, although there were still signs of the attempt to be mildly conciliatory, a characteristically

much harsher attitude began to re-emerge. This became apparent when the heads of local secondary and tertiary educational institutions under the DCR were again summoned to the H F Verwoerd Building. This time, they had to be accompanied by a member of their school committees. The Government was represented at the meeting by Steyn, Le Grange, Mills, Kempen and Arendse. The weakest of those who spoke for the authorities was reportedly Arendse who, according to an interviewee who had been present at the meeting, played the part of apologist.

Steyn and Mills made various promises and again it was stressed that steps were already being taken to redress those of the students' grievances which they considered reasonable. The meeting was told that the book shortage should have been wiped out within a month and the teacher backlog in five years. Building and repair programmes were being accelerated. Teacher training facilities were being improved. No new schools would in future be built without halls, playing fields and other necessary facilities. Existing schools would be up-graded to the new standard within five years. Parity in qualified teachers' salaries would be achieved within three years. And overall, the Government was now, as had been stated by the Prime Minister, committed to the principle of 'equal education'.

*But*, the boycott had to be brought to an end and the ball was in the principals' court. Mills instructed them to put a stop to the awareness programmes. If the students refused to take lessons, they were to be expelled. If they resisted expulsion, they would be removed bodily. If there was a mass walk-out the students involved would be barred from ever returning to school. Mills told the principals that they had to maintain discipline. The whole situation had become a crisis of authority. He pointed out that in some cases the students' actions were aimed at the teachers themselves as well as the education authorities.

Le Grange warned the meeting that although his police had so far maintained a low profile, they were losing patience and might be changing their approach. His threat to the principals was clear: either they kept their students in order or the police would come in and do it for them. Certainly, any activities, such as marching, would be dealt with severely.

One of those interviewed, who had had to attend the meeting, gained the impression that they, as principals, were in effect being blamed for the boycott. When allowed an opportunity to speak they repudiated any suggestion that they could be held responsible. They insisted that the students' grievances were valid and that, until at least some of them had been redressed, the students would not go back to class. The principals were angry. One complained of being treated like a Sub A child. Some of those who spoke, took up limited issues like the cost of textbooks while some lashed out at the whole system of apartheid. Others said that they could only hope and pray to God that He would make the children see how wrong they were.

#### 16.2.2 A ministerial challenge taken up in the name of justice and truth

At one point, Steyn challenged anybody present to give one example of a single injustice in the system of Coloured Education. It is well known how difficult responding to such a challenge on the spur of the moment can be, which is why it is a technique often used by, for instance, teachers who, feeling vulnerable, wish to establish their authority over a class by seeming to stymie them. From the silence which followed on Steyn's challenge it could be gathered that the meeting was almost so apparently stymied.

However, one of the principals then stood up and said that she could mention something which, although in itself a minor issue, exemplified the gross injustice that there was in the system. She proceeded to expose a fact of which nobody - but those responsible obviously - had ever become aware. Coloured schools had been paying substantially more than White schools for the same items of stationery, all of which were supplied from the same central store run by the Cape Provincial Administration. The same items appear in different catalogues for Coloured and White schools respectively, with the same catalogue numbers but different prices. Amongst the examples, which this principal quoted from the two catalogues, both issued in April 1980, were the following :

<u>Item</u>	<u>Price for White School</u>	<u>Price for Coloured School</u>
chalk (per box)	,26	,62
correcting fluid	,23	,76
drawing book	,07	,22
drawing pins	,08	,25
exercise book (a)	,02	,04
exercise book (b)	,04	,08
exercise book (c)	,11	,15
ledger	,09	,15
ledger paper (per ream)	4,60	5,00
rubber	,02	,04
ruler	,06	,10
stencils (per box)	2,33	4,57

The principal gave other examples of items with which White schools were supplied entirely free but for which Coloured schools had to pay. Some items, which appeared in the catalogue for White schools, could not be supplied to Coloured schools at any price. For example, White schools could be supplied with a *box* of 10 overhead projector pens for ,75 while a Coloured school would have to purchase them from a commercial retailer at R1,05 *each*. She showed that this kind of injustice did not apply only to stationery. For example, if a Coloured school requisitioned desks, it was supplied with a desk which had no place for books to be kept either under a lid or on an underneath shelf. White schools, on the other hand, were supplied with a desk which did have place for books. Yet both desks went out from the same store.

The consternation amongst persons in top political and administrative positions caused by the raising of this issue warrants description of how the matter was handled. Amidst general acclamation from the floor, the principal in question asked to have it explained to her, if this was not an example of injustice, what justice was. The first response came from a fellow principal: standing up he asked everybody to stop clapping because he was going to request 'this lady' to retract what she had just said. The 'lady', of course, refused to retract anything because what she had said was a matter of fact for which she had documentary evidence.

Arendse rose to assure the principal, who had raised this matter, that he would see to it that her school was supplied with what it needed.

But the principal explained that he must have missed her point because what was at issue was not what specifically her school was getting or not getting, or even at what price: what was at issue was justice.

The indignation of the principals and school committee members was matched only by the agitation of the Government representatives. After whispered deliberations amongst the latter, Kempen was sent out to establish whether what had been alleged was true. When he returned a few minutes later notes could be seen being passed between those in front of the meeting. One of them then announced that this principal was going to be asked to retract what she had said. She, in turn, still insisted that she could not retract. The meeting was told that it would be given an explanation and then the lady would have to retract. But no explanation was forthcoming and the principal retracted nothing.

After the meeting, this principal was asked to stay behind and for half-an-hour she was told repeatedly what a very wrong impression she had created. Her own view was that those at the meeting had not gone away with a wrong impression but with their eyes opened to a truth about the kind of system Coloured Education was.

The next morning, Head Office was busy with a detailed investigation of her record and the Wynberg Regional Office was buzzing with speculation about her future. A significant occurrence in the latter office that morning was a meeting of the full Wynberg inspectorate at which it was decided unanimously that should action of any kind be taken against her for her stand they would all go out on strike forthwith. At 11h00, the Director of Coloured Education, Arendse, phoned her to say how dissatisfied he was with what she had done the previous afternoon and that those in authority did not feel 'nice' about it. She was therefore to present herself before the Minister of Coloured Relations that same afternoon.

Gathered to speak to the outspoken principal were Steyn, Mills, Kempen and Arendse as well as the person in charge of the CPA stores in question. They again told her how perturbed they were that she had created such a false impression. They said that they would now explain the matter to her fully after which they would again ask her to retract her accusation of injustice. The effect of the explanation they then gave her was that the stores belonged to the White Education Department. Because the DCR had no stores of its own, Coloured Education was levied for being allowed to use the White stores. The principal's response was that even if this was the case it could not justify levying the already less advantaged in society. In any case, the magnitude of the amount Coloured schools paid more than White schools constituted a gross exaggeration of a levy. Further, this explanation failed to account for why there was not a standard difference on all items. Still less did it account for why a very few items cost the same for White and Coloured schools, and why there were a few items for which Coloured schools paid marginally less than White schools. She, therefore, again refused to retract what she had said at the meeting. At which point Mills tried another tack. He asked her why, if she knew what she did and had a grievance about it, she had not come directly to them at the top? She pointed out that she was prohibited from doing so by the regulation that everything must go through the Regional Office. That channel she had tried and had received no response. After two-and-a-half hours, she was urged a final time to retract. She explained that there was no way in which she could do so because they had not given her an acceptable explanation for the injustice which she had identified. She belonged to the Dominican congregation whose motto was truth. She would be doing wrong if she was not standing up for truth and the issue at hand was no more nor less than a matter of truth.

As they were coming out after the meeting, Mills asked her if she was Irish and treated her to the story about the Irish sailor who landed in Cape Town. This Irishman asked somebody he met what sort of a government there was here. But, without having given the person time to reply, he said, 'Actually, never mind, it doesn't matter anyway - whatever it is, I'm agin it'. The barb was obvious and she

told Mills that if he chose to regard her as just another one of those difficult Irish that was his problem. Before she left, Kempen invited her to come in and have a cup of tea with him any time she wanted to talk over difficulties she might experience at school. And there the matter ended.

When the same principal did attempt to go with a problem to the 'top' some time later, Arendse could not see her and she was told to go through the Regional Office. Two years later Coloured schools were still paying more than White schools for being supplied with the same items from the same stores. When she experimented with drawing up her requisitions using the prices in the catalogue intended for White schools, she found that her school's stationery would have amounted to less than half the cost for which she actually had to budget. The implication here is that had schools under the DCR been paying the same for their stationery as their counterparts in White education, they could have been supplied with double the quantity without increasing their budgets and shortage of stationery needed never have been an issue at all.

(Interviewees 5, 6, 25, 47; Argus 23.5.80; Herald 31.5.80)

### 16.3 *The velvet glove comes off*

What seems to confirm the conclusion that there had been a shift in the authorities' approach to the boycott by the end of its sixth week was the way in which the students' attempt at economic disruption was put down by the police. The students' use of such a tactic must also have confirmed the authorities in their determination to suppress the students' campaign. Over that weekend, Security Police detained at least 60 persons in the Eastern and Western Cape. By the middle of the seventh week, it was reported that the number of arrests and detentions throughout the country since the start of the boycott totalled approximately 1475 persons although many of them, having been arrested under the Riotous Assemblies Act, had been released after court appearances. (Argus 26.5.80, 28.5.80; Grassroots, May/June 1980)

On Monday 26 May, the Minister of Police issued a clear warning: 'People who, through underground methods, want to have the schools situation develop into a political confrontation with the Government must realise that it is a question of "so far and not further".' He said the Government could not allow the authority of the State to be challenged in a way that created the impression that this could be done with impunity. While the Government had gone out of its way to defuse the conflict, this should not be interpreted as weakness. The Government was still prepared to consult if some positive aim could be achieved, but for the rest, Le Grange said, the time for talking was over. (Argus 26.5.80)

Nevertheless, the authorities were still careful not to be unnecessarily provocative. That same Monday, principals under the DCR received instructions not to use the 'expulsion measure' against students who refused to go back to class. (Argus 27.5.80) Yet, as a threat, expulsion continued to be dangled over students' heads. The very next day, Tuesday 27 May, in a press statement by Mills - which was issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information under instruction from the DCR - the latter Department let it be known that it would 'stand by' principals who expelled 'children who challenge authority and refuse to be disciplined'. (Argus 28.5.80)

Meanwhile, large numbers of students were staying away from most schools in the Cape Town area. By way of illustration, at Ellswood Senior Secondary, only about 120 out of 1023 students came to school on the Tuesday. The same day, Kensington Senior Secondary had an attendance of 60 out of 950 while only 12 of Windermere Senior Secondary School's 842 students arrived. There was also a general stayaway from the African secondary schools where the boycott was total. At the African primary schools, although most children continued to attend, they were not given normal classes in accordance with a decision taken at a meeting of African senior secondary students at the start of the week. As explained by one principal 'We received a directive ... from the high school students that no lessons should be taught in the schools'.

#### 16.4 *The mailed fist exposed*

##### 16.4.1 The Committee of 81 copes

The seventh week also saw the student leadership in the Western Cape beginning to make an attempt at adjusting to the authorities' more directly repressive tactics. That Monday, the Committee of 81 adjourned its meeting after only three-quarters of an hour because of the close surveillance under which it was being kept by the police. This sort of harassment from the police led the Committee to restructure on a regional basis as a way of increasing the security with which it would be possible for the students' representatives and leaders to move and organise. (Argus 26.5.80, 27.5.80, 28.5.80, 29.5.80; Document 32)

##### 16.4.2 Batons, teargas, cells and bullets

During the first part of the week police intervened with force several times in different parts of the country. Using batons and teargas they dispersed UWC students who had been meeting in the campus cafeteria. A demonstration by some 2000 students in QwaQwa was similarly dispersed. (Intergroup 3(June 1980)4) Two hundred and seventy five African students were arrested when they started to march into Uitenhage. (Argus 29.5.80) Then, on Wednesday, 28 May, several people in Elsie's River, Cape Town, were wounded by police shotgun fire and two young persons were shot dead.

##### 16.4.3 'Kindermoord'

Eyewitness accounts of the events, which preceded the shootings, describe how the normally busy Halt Road in Elsie's River was crowded but quiet. At about 12h30, a police van was seen approaching from the direction of Epping. At the intersection with 20th Avenue - the precise place where two hours later two young persons were to die - the van suddenly stopped and policemen, some in regular uniform and others in camouflage gear, jumped out and, without warning, baton-charged people on the pavements. People fled down side-streets, across backyards and into houses. One eyewitness saw a youth being brought to the ground and beaten by at least four policemen with batons in front of Norwood Primary School where children were playing in the grounds. Students and others, who started gathering in the vicinity,

reacted to the police's behaviour with indignation and anger. There were shouts of 'Gooi hulle! Gooi hulle!' A number of people grouped opposite the school started throwing stones at the police van which had been parked in the middle of Halt Road. They were quickly dispersed and the police moved on down Halt Road continuing with the same type of action. Some of the people started stoning passing vehicles - mainly buses and cars with White drivers. A detachment of riot police moved into the area and started to patrol. By about 14h30, a group had again collected on the corner of Halt Road and 20th Avenue. According to a resident opposite, a blue kombi was stoned as it passed. The van stopped momentarily and a man lying flat on the back seat passed a shotgun to one in front who opened fire on the people next to the road. This account corresponds with one by another eyewitness. As the kombi moved on, people were still scattering in terror - all except five young persons who lay sprawled in the road, two of them dead.

A person who went to the aid of the wounded told what happened then. 'I'm trained in first-aid and I went to the assistance of one of the youths killed, Bernard Fortuin. He had at least four wounds and as I tried to plug a hole in his neck with my finger more police arrived on the scene. We were charged with batons and the police refused to allow anybody to go near the injured and the dying'. Bernard's mother told of how she had been beaten with batons as she had tried to go to the assistance of her dying son. One eyewitness described how those in the kombi had been dressed: army-type boots, camouflage trousers and white T-shirts. Journalists later established that the kombi was registered under the SAP.

Half-an-hour after the fatal shooting, a passing Escom vehicle was stoned by someone in a group of people who, shocked and incensed by what had happened, were standing nearby. One of the Escom technicians, who was armed, jumped out and fired towards the group. A schoolgirl, 15 years of age, Jennifer de Vee, was wounded in the thigh and side by his bullets. It is not known whether there were others injured. (Argus 28.5.80, 29.5.80; Cape Times 29.5.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980)4)

That night a pamphlet, entitled 'Kindermoord', was distributed in the Peninsula which gave expression to the feelings of bitter determination which the children's deaths evoked in so many Black Capetonians. An extract from the pamphlet follows:

'The oppressors have once again answered our demands by killing our children. The bloodthirsty riot squad have murdered them in the streets of Elsie's River. We weep for the children who are giving their lives. We weep for the families who are giving their loved ones. But we will not weep for nothing. No oppressed people has ever wept for nothing. We know what is our goal: a free and united Azania. We will reach that goal in spite of the bullets of the oppressors. We are a movement! They can kill defenceless children - any coward can do that. They can't kill a movement of the people!' (Document 39)

#### 16.4.4 More police force

Later on the same day as the above occurrences in Elsie's River, some 200 police reinforcements were airlifted into the Western Cape - from, principally, the Transvaal - to bolster local forces in the face of the escalating conflict. The next day police again opened fire on a group of people who had gathered on a street in Ravensmead and of whom some had allegedly been stoning passing vehicles. (Argus 29.5.80; Cape Times 29.5.80)

The only other such violent confrontation with the police in the Western Cape before the schools closed for the mid-year vacation occurred a week-and-a-half later on the Monday of the boycott's ninth week. According to the accounts of eyewitnesses, some 60 or 70 students of Bellville South Senior Secondary lined Osborne Road in a demonstration just outside the school grounds. They stood singing freedom songs while some stoned passing cars and buses. Two policemen arrived and with drawn pistols chased the students back into the school grounds. Then the riot police arrived. After some of them had jumped over the gates and started chasing the students in the school grounds, the gates were forced open and police baton-charged the then screaming students. Fifty-two persons were arrested and held on charges of public violence. (Argus 9.6.80)

17 Shifts in parental and community support for the boycott

It was stated above that parental and community support for the boycott was at its height in the first two-and-a-half weeks. In the three-and-a-half weeks which followed, this support seemed to stay steady although it was not given the same degree of public expression as initially. There continued to be community meetings in support of the students' boycott but not as many and those that there were did not capture the attention which the first spate of meetings had. The content of the meetings remained generally the same. At a four-hour meeting in Guguletu attended by students, parents and teachers, a parent told the students that they were fighting what their parents had fought against 27 years previously when the Government had introduced Bantu Education. (Argus 7.5.80) Another meeting in Guguletu, organised by the Guguletu Residents' Association, condemned the present system of education for Black people and expressed solidarity with the boycotting Fezeka Senior Secondary students. (Argus 16.5.80) At a meeting in Wynberg, held to express solidarity with the students, the chairperson of the Western Province Council on Sport (Wepcos), Frank van der Horst, said sportspeople stood by the students in the schools boycott because they experienced and suffered the same sort of discrimination and racialism. As he put it, 'The complaints and grievances that caused the pupils and students to boycott can be read into a sporting situation as well. For instance, ... most of the venues for Blacks are more like sand dunes rather than sports fields. The struggle against oppression should be seen in a much broader sense than just a fight for better schooling and sports facilities.' van der Horst stressed furthermore that it was only the unity of the people which could break the system of divide and rule. (Herald 24.5.80) A meeting was convened on 14 May in Ravensmead by the area's cultural organisation and parents' action committee along with students from UWC and Florida and Uitsig Senior Secondary Schools in order to discuss the reasons for the provisional suspension of the boycott which was supposed to be taking effect at that point. 'It's up to us, as parents, to demonstrate our solidarity,' said one father and the meeting decided on certain steps to do just that. There was a unanimous vote in support of a two-day boycott of White Parow businesses on 29 and 30 May as well as a total boycott of rugby matches connected with the

Lions' tour. Explaining the former tactic, one of the convenors said, 'It will not cripple the merchants economically, but it will make the people aware.' Discussing further possible displays of solidarity, a 'dry weekend', during which no Black person should buy or drink a drop of liquor, was proposed. The meeting appointed a working committee of 25 people to organise in support of its two boycott calls. (Sunday Times 18.5.80)

The first public resistance to the students' boycott was reported mid-way through the boycott's fourth week as building up among parents and teachers in Indian areas in the Transvaal. Parents felt that the boycott had achieved its objectives and, on the strength of this, principals were instructing their staff to resume teaching even if only to one child. By as early as the fifth week, in the Western Cape, some parents were beginning to say to their children that they should rather stay at home since there seemed to be no point in continuing to go to school. (Interviewee 41) Certain of the poorer parents were threatening to take their children out of school altogether and some later did. (Interviewee 32)

Something of a turning point in parental and community support would seem to have been reached with the students' demonstration through commercial and financial disruption at the end of the sixth week of boycotting and the re-emergence of a harsher approach on the part of the authorities. A student who had participated in the demonstrations on 24 May said in an interview, 'Through them we isolated ourselves totally.' (Interviewee 21) Although this student was obviously overstating the position, it was the case that the spontaneous support which the student movement had evoked in the Western Cape was becoming increasingly qualified. Some parents, who had lent their support to the students' demands and tactics/actions, started withdrawing their support from at least the latter. There were less declarations of solidarity with the students and more expressions of parental concern about the physical safety of their children at the hands of the police. In the view of a community activist interviewed, 'Parents were in a way more emotional than the kids because initially they were all in favour of the students' stand but with police intimidation, *etcetera*, fear set in and parents started changing their tune.'

(Interviewee 34) Parents' fears were not only for their children's physical safety but also that they would be unable to write their end-of-year examinations if they did not end the boycott. (Interviewee 29) According to another interviewee, parents began to sense that 'the sacrifices they themselves had made to send their children to school were also in jeopardy' and that their children were 'cutting off their noses to spite their faces and they were not prepared to accept this.' (Interviewee 24) Randall van den Heever, who had been acting principal of Spes Bona Senior Secondary School at the time, argued in an interview that the Committee of 81 had ...

'overplayed its hand by carrying the boycott beyond the psychological barrier where it should have been stopped. Students were therefore in disarray and parents were turning against the movement. Parents started phoning in, saying: Listen, what is going on now? When are our kids going to start going back to their desks? What about the end-of-year exams? Parents started getting worried about that - so did community leaders. Then a number of them started pleading with pupils to go back even via the media. Eventually this position came to be respected as a possible position by the students.' (Interviewee 56)

It was from the boycott's seventh week that certain figures started risking student wrath by calling for a reassessment of the boycott or even for an end to it. Amongst such individuals were Dr Edgar Maurice, Randall van den Heever, the Revd Allan Hendrickse and David Curry (Herald 21.6.80; Interviewee 56)

Following the police killing of the two Elsie's River youths, Hassan Howa, President of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS), made an urgent public appeal to all boycotting students to reassess their action in view of those deaths. SACOS' position was that it fully supported the students' actions as far as they highlighted their grievances but, Howa said, 'the time has come to make a proper analysis of the situation and where it is leading. .... As a parent and one who cares, I want to appeal to the pupils and the authorities to avoid at all cost a recurrence of 1976 .... I would like the students to return to school and in a calm manner sit down and reassess the situation. .... The education of our children thus far

was aimed at providing cheap labour and they must examine whether their action at this stage isn't being provoked by people who want to aid and abet this ....' Howa said that provocative speeches by spokespersons for the authorities, schools and universities made him believe there was a deliberate attempt to keep children away from school. 'The children behaved in a mature and dignified manner when they started the boycott to bring their grievances to the attention of the nation. But this was followed by speeches by people who I cannot believe to be so stupid when dealing with young people in great numbers.' (Argus 30.5.80)

The same week, the chairperson of a residents' association in Mitchell's Plain, Chris Stevens, also declared publicly that it was time students went back to their classes and left the adults to continue the struggle against apartheid. He explained his position in the following terms:

'Although we fully support our children, there is the contention that some students have become power drunk. I further believe that the Committee of 81 ... comprises a large percentage of naïve idealists. They have made no plans to combat the natural tendency toward boredom among children who are kept inactive for long periods. The continuous boycott of classes, and action like that of the past weekend, exposes our children to danger.'

Stevens argued that the Committee of 81 should now order students to resume classes. It was his belief that many children, who wanted to resume lessons, were being restrained by a radical element. On the students' relationship to the workers' struggle, Stevens said, 'The Committee of 81 has allowed themselves to be used to provide muscle for the labour dispute. Although we support the workers, we believe their problems should be resolved separately.' (Sunday Times 1.6.80)

At a public meeting held on 12 June in Mitchell's Plain, Maurice, a former principal of Harold Cressy Senior Secondary School, called for an end to the boycott on the grounds that unity was disintegrating and parental support was being lost. 'The situation is very serious', he said, 'because for six months pupils and students have done little school work. About thirty years ago people had faith in education,

but the value placed on it has disappeared, because it has not brought the salvation.' Maurice pointed out that the political position of Blacks had worsened in spite of being better educated and more professional. Concerning the boycott, he said,

'... our children have displayed a remarkable sense of solidarity and unity in this boycott. Never in the history of our community have we shown the same kind of awareness of the situation. .... The boycott has made an impact, but where do we go from here? .... It is naïve to believe the boycott is going to bring about political change. It is also a two-edged sword and you must be careful you don't hurt yourself.'

His conclusion was that the boycott should end on 'the crest of a wave' and, for a 'real victory', it should be ended on Wednesday, 19 June. (Argus 13.6.80)

On 5 June, a meeting attended by some 800 people to discuss the meat, bus and schools boycotts decided that the students should return to school. Secondary students at the meeting agreed that those who had been staying away should return but they would not follow normal classes. (Argus 6.6.80) At another parents meeting held in Heideveld on 8 June, there was an overwhelming vote in favour of students returning to class. (Argus 10.6.80) More and more parents were complaining that nothing constructive was being done at the schools, that the students were 'playing around' and not following awareness programmes. (Cape Times 10.6.80) Two further factors were mentioned by an interviewee, who had been teaching at a school in Mitchell's Plain at the time, as having contributed to the undermining of parental support for the students. The one was an apparently marked increase in student pregnancies and the other was that children with access to their homes during the day would take their friends back there and parents would return in the evening to find 'the whole place in disarray'. (Interviewee 46) By the ninth week of the boycott, it was being publicly acknowledged that parental support had been waning. (Argus 6.6.80, 10.6.80; Cape Times 10.6.80)

Yet, even at this stage, there was around the country considerably more support for the boycott than there was opposition to it from parents

and the Black community as a whole. For example, a body representing parents from 25 areas in Natal, the Parents Support Committee, voted to support boycotting students who decided not to write the mid-year examinations. A public meeting in Johannesburg on 2 June passed this resolution: 'The demonstrations throughout the country are signs of the urgent demand of the people that everyone should have the right to equality in education, to a decent standard of living and to full participation in government.' (Argus 3.6.80)

Furthermore, the changes in parental attitudes which occurred were not all changes from a positive orientation towards the boycott to a negative one. The case of a community in which most parents were initially negatively disposed towards the boycott but altered their attitude to one of support for their children's cause, is particularly interesting in view of how that change in orientation was brought about. The central figure was the principal of the township's only school and the account which follows, is his own. The community in question is relatively isolated by location and entirely working class by composition. Life is hard. 'For the most part it's survival of the fittest and time for nothing else.' This was the context in which parents felt that the boycott was threatening not only their children's education but their very futures. In its early stages, 'the parents were upset and concerned' - 'probably only a small minority of them understood and accepted what their students were doing.'

'In order to try and help the parents understand what was happening - because it was leading to a clash between parents and children with the former thinking that the only thing to do was to beat the hell out of them and get them back into class (only a milder version of the Inkatha parents' approach) - I called a general meeting of the parents. And I said to the student body: the only way your parents can become aware of what is happening, is if you explain it to them. Parents, ex-students and students came to the meeting. The students, however, made a mess of things. They couldn't put their case properly. The parents couldn't understand what the students were trying to explain and were questioning them quite aggressively. Eventually there was a clash between two mothers. One mother accused a student leader - because he couldn't explain what they were doing adequately - of misleading the students. Then, the mother

of the leader being accused, jumped up, *etcetera*. That spoiled the whole thing and showed the students' utter failure to put their case. The students had the ideas but they didn't have the vocabulary to put it across.'

'As a result of that evening being such a disaster', the school's principal searched for some alternative means to present to the parents 'what the students were getting at'. His idea was drama.

'It was the first time I'd tried my hand at play writing. It was a very simple piece - it didn't call for any great intellect. It was a simple story of Mum and Dad and their two kids going to the beach. But before they go to the beach there's this little discussion at home. Dad comes home the evening, tired from working in the factory (I cast myself in the role of the Dad for so many obvious reasons - I was trying to tell the parents what it was all about; it was also identification with the students.) Dad sits down and opens his newspaper. He says to his wife: Damn boycotts - I only read about damn boycotts. What are these bloody children getting up to? The son comes in and there's some altercation on the issue between the two of them. The father tells his son: Look, you must stop your damn nonsense now. Eventually Dad says: Let's take a break on Sunday and go to the beach.

'They go to the beach and it's a beautiful day. The kids are taking a dip when two policemen roll up (two students in khakhi) and unfurl a banner which reads 'Slegs Blankes'. They tell the father to get the hell out of there. But he's a bit stubborn - he says he doesn't understand this. They haul him off. Of course the mother is upset. The young baby is too. Eventually the son turns up and Mum explains to him what's happened and they go off home.

'The final scene is the same evening at their home. The whole atmosphere has now changed. It's gloomy. Dad is not at home. Mum is waiting anxiously. Eventually Dad comes back down-cast and depressed. His son then asks him: Dad, do you see now what this boycott has been all about. So he concedes: Ja, nou verstaan ek; I understand now.

'As I played that role I was every one of those parents sitting there.

'The meeting was well attended and as a result of that evening we really sensed that the parents had become aware of what was going on.'

The parents abandoned their opposition to the boycott and a new sympathetic understanding of their children's cause was born. (Interviewee 22)

## 18 Mourning and confusion

### 18.1 *Funeral*

The eighth week of the boycott opened with the funeral of the 2 young persons, Bernard Fortuin and Willian Lubbe, 15 and 20 years old respectively, who had the previous Wednesday been shot dead by police in Elsie's River, as already described. The Committee of 81 as a body had had nothing to do with organising the funeral. Not only were some of the persons in central leadership roles out of town at the time, but the Committee was in any case too unwieldy to organise effectively something so specific at such short notice. The funeral, as it turned out, was the result of a number of initiatives not least of which came from an *ad hoc* group which happened to have been brought together a week or so previously by Sonn and a few associates from the CTPA. What their intentions were, remains somewhat unclear but it would seem that they were trying to broaden their own base by constituting a coalition of individuals, whose orientation would at least not conflict with that of the CTPA, to discuss and act on the students' boycott. First, they sought to align themselves with certain church leaders. Once that had been achieved, they had wanted to bring in some persons from the business community as well as politicians - not representing any party or organisation but in their individual capacities. A steering committee under Bishop Naidoo had been appointed to plan further meetings and work out guidelines for possible action. Serving as a consultant on the committee was Hare. In an as-yet-unpublished manuscript, Hare describes how the first meeting of this steering committee on the afternoon of Wednesday, 28 May, was interrupted with the news of the deaths in Elsie's River.

This committee immediately called a meeting for the Friday to discuss the killings and the situation as a whole. One of their concerns became to help try and ensure that there would not be police violence at the funeral. The Revds Bam and Mentoer were delegated to see the Minister of Police to request him to have the police stay in the background and let the occasion take care of itself. They saw

Le Grange and reported back that he had given his assurance that the police would keep a low profile. A number of teachers belonging to the CTPA planned to place themselves amongst the students in the procession and at the service. Their intentions in this were three-fold: firstly, they wanted the students to see their presence alongside them as a sign of identification with their struggle; secondly, their presence was intended to put the stamp of a disciplined type of activity on the proceedings; and, thirdly, they were determined to be in a position from which they could make their influence felt in the event of any untoward turn of events.

Hare took responsibility for organising marshalls to keep the funeral procession and service orderly and under control. He was meeting with the group, which he had brought together to help him in this task, when word came from representatives on the Committee of 81 that it would not be appropriate to have White women serving as marshalls at the funeral. Hare, having at first thought, as he explained in the above-mentioned manuscript, that no Black person might be prepared to take the highly visible 'marshal' role, had intended to have volunteers from the Black Sash and Women's Movement for Peace serve as the marshals. His group realised that, as he put it when interviewed, 'on second thoughts this wouldn't have been quite the image we wanted.' Representatives of the group then made contact with certain members of the Committee of 81 and arrangements were made for students from Hewat Teachers Training College to be the marshals. Hare prepared and distributed leaflets explaining the functions of marshals and how they should undertake their task. As a further precaution he arranged to have two ambulances from the Voluntary Service on hand and he recruited doctors to be in attendance also. They notified the priest at the church in Elsie's River, where the funeral service was to be held, and the families of the two to be buried, of their plans. They advised the traffic police that there would be marshals controlling the procession and sought their cooperation. Finally, it was arranged with a minister who was to speak at the graveside that, should the police attack at that point in the service, he would make a bid to keep people from panicking or retaliating. Independent of Hare, an *ad hoc*

group of parents and students had also been working on ways to reduce the risk of police violence. They had approached the relevant authorities for permission to take the funeral procession along the route planned and this had been granted. It was also this group which on a practical level led and organised the marshals. The person from this group who informally acted as chief marshal was detained the day after the funeral.

From approximately noon on Monday 2 June, busloads of students started arriving in Elsie's River for the funeral. By the time the service started at 14h10, some 12 000 mourners were present. Students from almost every Black secondary school in the Peninsula attended. Everybody knew that Hewat students were serving as marshals and they were easily identifiable by their college tops which they all wore. The role they played in controlling the enormous numbers was described in superlative terms by all. It was an emotionally charged situation. A few of the mourners were allegedly armed - even with revolvers or pistols - but there is no conclusive evidence for this. What is known, is that the control exercised by the marshals was tenuous. They were aided by a large contingent of traffic police who were cordial and cooperative throughout. Traffic along Halt Road was brought to a standstill by the two-kilometer long procession. Regular and riot police watched from a distance and for the most part kept out of sight. At one point along the route a group of about twenty African students took up positions next to the road and started singing freedom songs and chanting 'Free Mandela! Free Mandela! One of the marshals immediately took it upon himself to indicate to this group that the funeral procession was not a political demonstration and that they must behave accordingly and stop singing. His manner was apparently unnecessarily abrupt but, before feelings were further inflamed, a member of the Committee of 81, who happened to be near, told the marshal to be calm and not go on about it, while he appealed in a more comradely way to the small group of demonstrators to tone down their singing at least. It might have been this incident which nearly caused the police to move in on the procession. That eventuality seems to have been prevented, however, by a quick move on the part of the 'chief marshal' who, suspecting their intentions, approached

the commanding officer and pointed out that they were right alongside the White suburb of Epping Garden Village and that to provoke a confrontation at that point would possibly put the lives of a lot more than only those in the procession at risk. The ministers involved in the service itself, such as Ds Mettler and Dr Allan Boesak, contributed to a great degree in inspiring everybody to act in a manner befitting a funeral - as indeed they did. In Boesak's address he said:

'I believe the deaths of Bernard and William were totally unnecessary. And if we had had a place to live as human beings, where we could live freely with one another, to serve one another and where the love of God was allowed to reign freely in our hearts, this would not have happened.'

Another speaker said that the suffering of those surviving the two young deceased was shared by people all over South Africa and the world. He said those students who had died in the struggle did so that their brothers and sisters might live for a better tomorrow.

The massive funeral went off without 'incident' or anybody being injured. A point would seem to have been proved. Hare ends his discussion of the funeral as follows:

'Our ambulances took part in the funeral procession, one at mid-point and the other bringing up the rear. Our services were used by only two women, each of whom required an aspirin tablet for a headache.'

(Interviewees 19, 34, 56; Hare, forthcoming, unpaginated; Cape Times 3.6.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 4)

## 18.2 *A Day of Prayer*

During the rest of the boycott's eighth week, attendance rates at Coloured schools in the Peninsula varied roughly between 25% and 70% while those, who did attend, continued to boycott classes. On Friday, 6 June, thousands of students and teachers in the Elsie River - Ravensmead areas held a day of prayer and initiated a crime prevention campaign. Amongst the schools which participated were

Valhalla Park, Elsie's River, Elswood, John Ramsay, Bishop Lavis and Belhar Senior Secondaries. A statement issued by the organisers explained their actions as follows:

'We, the pupils and teachers, felt the need to again emphasise the fact that as believers we were stripped of our dignity by parties branding us as violators of the peace ..... Our efforts have been towards establishing a just and Christian society.'

(Argus 3.6.80, 6.6.80; Cape Times 7.6.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980) 4)

### 18.3 *Return for reassessment*

On the Thursday of this eighth week, a local newspaper reported that the Committee of 81 had held a meeting the previous afternoon at which it had been decided to call off the boycott subject to this decision being ratified by all the institutions represented. Classes were supposedly to be resumed on the next Monday. One of the conditions on which the boycott was reportedly to be suspended was that an awareness programme would continue alongside the normal curriculum. A student spokesperson was quoted as saying that the Committee now believed that the continuation of the boycott was not achieving anything. 'The boycott does not have enough leverage, for instance, to force the release of the detainees.'

The day after this report was published, the Committee of 81 issued a statement strongly denying that it had called for an end to the boycott in the Western Cape. The statement accused the news media of deliberately confusing the students. 'We strongly condemn the statements from certain unknown individuals who claimed to represent the committee.' Because of this 'the credibility of the Committee of 81 is being questioned. We feel that this is what the authorities want, and is a direct result of their determination to undermine the community.' The statement emphasised that students had merely been ordered back to school on Monday to reassess the situation. 'On Monday we will discuss whether or not to suspend the boycott, and it is therefore imperative for all students to assemble at their respective institutions.' According to the statement,

students were also to discuss the bus boycott, the meat strike and boycott of red meat, the attacks on Sasol, the spate of detentions, the commemoration of 16 June ('Heroes Day'), and the possibility that student bursaries might be stopped because of continued stayaways. (Argus 5.6.80; Sunday Times 8.6.80)

A remarkable pamphlet was distributed in the period presently under review. It contained many ideas of strategic importance for the struggle in the educational arena and reflected an approach to the form in which this struggle should be taken forward from the point it had by then reached in the Western Cape that was to muster wide support in the Peninsula's DCR schools by the time they re-opened for the third term. The pamphlet merits extensive quotation.

'... in it's present form (in the W Cape) the boycott of classes has been stretched just about to its limit.'

'The *boycott* is not the *struggle*. It is a weapon of struggle, one amongst many others. Since the continuation of the boycott threatens to split the students and the parents into those for continuation and those against, it must be altered. The *struggle* can continue (by other means) even if the boycott is suspended. The struggle must be continued both *inside* and *outside* the classrooms.

'The most effective way of continuing the struggle inside the classroom is to build on the unity brought about by the boycott. The best way is to tackle the problem of the *content* of education. Because of this unity we are now in a position to refuse to study what we don't want to study. We can in fact determine to a large extent what we want to study. Students and teachers (in regional and central committees ) need to draw up a list of books and sections of syllabuses (especially in the languages, history, geography and in other strongly ideological subjects), which they are unwilling to learn or teach and present a list of alternative books and areas (sections).

*This is the most important concrete task to be completed during the holidays.* Once the authorities accept even one of these books etc. we shall have established the principle of syllabus determination by students and teachers/parents. From here the way is open to a whole series of things that follow from it. In practice this will mean a bitter struggle in the schools by

students/teachers against principals/inspectors. In this way the whole problem of the control of education will be placed in the forefront. *Hence we shall be carrying on the political struggle all the time.* Moreover, we shall be building and reinforcing our unity because the only defence we shall have is unity. Students and teachers will all have to stand together firmly if we are to succeed. They will have to threaten resumption of the boycott if our demands regarding the content of education are not met.

'Outside the schools (in the community) the struggle will be continued. We shall again go to the people to explain our new tactics and the new phase our struggle has entered. We shall again appeal for their support and understanding. We shall insist that our parents administer all school funds themselves. In other words, any expenditure (beyond stationery etc) which a principal wants to make will have to be approved by the parents' committees. Our parents will be called upon to play a direct and active role in the affairs of the school. In particular, they should refuse to collect any moneys, the allocation over which they have no control.

'We shall link up the struggle in the school with the general struggle of the community and of the workers against oppression and exploitation as has been done now with the problems of the meat workers and the bus fares.

'We shall call upon the committee of 81 together with the teachers action committee (TAC) to elect a People's Commission of Inquiry into the education for the Youth of Azania. This commission shall be called upon to produce an *Azanian Charter of Education*. It shall be a popular, democratic commission that will take evidence from the people all over the country and it shall report back within a reasonable period.

'Some students believe that we cannot (on moral grounds) go back to classes as long as some schools remain closed or some schools are still being boycotted anywhere in the country. *This belief is a trap.* It is clear that the boycott (from the very start) developed very unevenly in different parts of the country for different reasons. It should be clear that the suspension of the boycott will also not take place evenly and uniformly.'

'We must be able to go back to classes here without expecting that students in Natal (or Fort Hare, or anywhere else) will also go back at once. We must

hold solidarity meetings on our school grounds every week even while we have the new type of classes and we should be able to apply pressure to the authorities to meet the demands of the boycotting students in other institutions by threatening to resume the boycott unless the problems are solved satisfactorily. .... There is urgency - we must implement these ideas otherwise the boycott will fizzle out instead of being suspended while we are united.'

(Document 26)

On the Monday of the ninth week, attendance at schools in the Peninsula ranged between 60 and 100%. Mainly as a result of the conflicting reports, which had the previous week been carried by local newspapers, there was widespread confusion. Some students arrived with their books expecting to resume normal classes but, in response to the Committee of 81's call, meetings were held to review the various issues specified above. Later in the day, with the go-ahead from 60 schools and colleges, the Committee of 81 decided to continue the boycott. Students at a number of these schools under the DCR in the Peninsula informed their principals even before the end of term that they would be returning to school for the third term a week late so as to coincide with the beginning of the new term for Indian schools. When the DCR schools closed for the mid-year vacation on Thursday, 19 June - in the tenth week of the boycott - attendance rates were down to between 0 and 10%. (Grassroots, May/June 1980; Cape Times 10.6.80; Argus 19.6.80; Intergroup 3 (June 1980)4)

## 19 Inside the schools

### 19.1 *Mass meetings and marches*

What had been happening inside the Peninsula's DCR schools during the first week of the boycott was described above - an account of what happened during the rest of the term follows.

Mass meetings continued to be a regular feature throughout. At many schools, they were held every day for much of the boycott's duration. The meetings tended to be heavily dominated by the

leadership. If there had been a meeting of the Committee of 81, the school's representatives would report back on its proceedings and decisions. There would usually be a report on, and interpretation of, developments generally. The leadership would present issues to the student body for debate and a decision. Many schools had persons come in and address a student assembly on the bus and meat boycotts to enlist support. Often the mass meetings would be opened and/or closed with the singing of freedom songs which would sometimes reach a climax with the shouting of 'amandla! - power!' as they raised their fists in the 'Power' salute.

Another activity, common to most schools during the boycott, was the staging of marches around the school grounds and demonstrations along the fence. The students articulated the points they were trying to make on placards and often gave their meaning emphasis with more freedom songs. On occasion, students would 'march' to a neighbouring school. There were times when many students were involved in pamphleteering in support of the bus and meat boycotts.

## 19.2 *Awareness programmes*

The single most substantial set of organised activities was what went by the generic term of *awareness programmes*. Talks and guided discussions were the primary components of the awareness programmes. They were given and lead, respectively, mostly by the school's own students and teachers but also to some extent by persons, in particular ex-students of the school and other more senior students from, for example, UWC, who were invited to do so. A wide range of topics were covered, including, for instance, the history of the Black people's struggle in South Africa with particular emphasis on the student-initiated uprising of 1976, the political organisations and leaders in that struggle, South Africa's 'real' history, the system of inferior, segregated education, the exploitation of Black workers as cheap labour, the political situation in the country and Black people's oppression, sports policy and non-collaboration, and how the struggle should be taken

further, even with practical details concerning some of the necessary activities and tactics. Students, teachers and other supporters of the boycott put into circulation substantial quantities of photostated reading matter and even specially prepared pamphlets related to topics such as the foregoing which helped to inform the discussions and serve sometimes as the focus of collective study. Every morning, at one school, there would be a ten-minute talk on what had been in the previous evening's newspaper. As explained by a student activist interviewed, 'We tried to get them to read their newspaper effectively, to criticise it, and not to be misled.' As an alternative to talks, the awareness programme at some schools included quizzes where, for example, a panel of students and teachers would identify questions around the same topics, make sure that it had the answers, and then let the rest of the students attempt them.

Films were always a popular part of the awareness programmes and what few films with any at all obvious political significance there were to be found on the 'home movie' circuit were used heavily. 'Nicholas and Alexandra', because it concerned the Russian Revolution, was shown for almost a week just at one school. 'The Story of Miss Jane Pitman', relating the life and times of an American slave and her eventual emancipation, was shown all over the Peninsula. Three other examples of films used in awareness programmes were 'Viva Zapata' about a hero of the Mexican Revolution, 'Fire Power' about an underground guerilla movement battling US imperialism in an unidentified banana-type republic, and 'If' about the conditions at an English private school and the responses of its students.

At some schools programmes of music were presented. Music considered 'relevant' ranged from reggae to the protest songs of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez. An enthusiastic activist at one school told in an interview of how they had introduced the student body to 'a whole new concept of Nikis Theodorakis'. The song which became a sort of theme for the boycott was the Pink Floyd hit, 'Another Brick in the Wall'. Such songs as this, along with freedom and folk songs in general, were not only listened to but

sung - singing enjoyed an important place in the awareness programmes. The boycott even produced its own songs (some of which are included among the 'freedom songs' listed in Appendix III). Indeed, the boycott unleashed much creativity normally not given expression and uncovered creativity in the ordinary way kept private. There was painting; plays and poetry were written; impromptu plays were staged. In the drama that was a part of many awareness programmes, an example of the sort of theme that would be portrayed was the 1976 uprising with re-enactments of the confrontation that there had been between police and students. Apart from the poetry written by the students themselves, the awareness programmes often included the reading of 'relevant' poetry generally. Students of one school, for instance, responded in particular to the work of Pablo Neruda - readings of his poetry would draw the entire student body to the hall. Closer to home, a great source of poetry, which students found inspiring, was Staffrider.

Towards the end of the boycott, some students conceived the idea of alternative subjects. At one school they attempted to mount alternative courses on, for example, 'politics', 'economics', 'women in society', 'Xhosa', 'gardening' and 'cooking'.

How long the awareness programmes lasted each day, how students organised themselves for the awareness programmes and the physical contexts in which they were held, varied not only from school to school but, at a particular school, varied from one component of the awareness programme to another and were affected over time by experience gained. The awareness programme would generally last from around 09h00 to anything between about 12h00 and 14h30. Sometimes there would be other of the activities mentioned during the course of the day. At some schools, all the students usually congregated in one venue for the awareness programme; at others, they remained in their regular classes. More commonly, they divided into groups, sometimes the size of ordinary classes or smaller, sometimes much bigger when all present would be divided into perhaps four or six groups. At some schools, students would move in the course of a day through a number of 'workshops' each dealing with a different topic. When

meeting as a whole school, students would use the hall where there was one; otherwise, they would commandeer whatever was the largest room in the school, generally the woodwork room, or, most commonly, congregate in the grounds outside. For the rest, they used the classrooms and whatever other spaces were available inside or outside which suited their purposes.

At some schools, the awareness programme was organised entirely by students. Doing the bulk of the organising tended to be a relatively small group consisting, in general, of the SRC or working body assisted by a slightly wider circle of active students. Although even sympathetic teachers were at times excluded, more commonly those, whom students regarded as trustworthy and progressive, were approached to speak, lead discussions, make suggestions and assist practically with, for example, the collection and return of hired films. Sustaining interest was no easy task, therefore teachers and other adults were approached for novel ideas and resources to which the students might otherwise not have had access. The student leadership at many schools, however, found themselves wanting in initiative, background knowledge and understanding, contacts and other resources required to maintain a viable programme. There was always an attempt to 'go it alone' without any adult assistance or direction but the students' initial efforts at some schools fizzled out as early as after the first or second day. At others, it was one or two weeks before the programme under student auspices disintegrated. Students would, for instance, be put in front of groups which they were supposed to lead in discussion on topics decided by the SRC. Yet many students lacked what they would have had to have in order to be able to discuss and hold forth for long periods - their intentions and attempts, however gallant, could not compensate for that fact. After perhaps ten minutes, they would run out of ideas and discussion would soon degenerate into general hubbub. In certain instances, that was the end of an awareness programme at the school. In others, the student leadership was strong enough to retain control over the awareness programme at the same time as bringing in teachers to help run it. At one school, where students and staff enjoyed an exceptionally good relationship, the principal, who commanded everybody's respect, was able to put

teachers back in front of their normal classes and have them run the awareness programme from there. In that particular case, the arrangement worked well because it was a consistently sympathetic staff, in tune with the students and their leadership. In the case of another school, with a principal and most teachers of a very different ilk, where the principal also instructed each teacher to take a group of students, it generally did not work. The students' working committee continued for the most part to set the topics for discussion and teachers were allocated to lead the discussions or provide some input on matters which, as acknowledged by more than one teacher in interviews, they often knew little or nothing about themselves. Indeed, teachers generally proved to be distinctly limited in their capacity to mount useful alternatives to the established curriculum.

Student response to the awareness programmes varied from school to school and from student to student; it varied with the contents and quality thereof as well as varying over time. The students who were prepared to take the awareness programmes seriously varied between a relatively small minority at some schools and the great majority at others. Initially, the programmes were well attended and the students were generally responsive. However, at many schools, as the novelty wore off and the same points were being made repeatedly, usually by the same few individuals, it began to become boring and interest started dwindling. The leadership at certain schools showed particular resourcefulness in countering the creeping boredom. At one school, for example, in case students were bored by the scheduled programme, those responsible for organising it would try always to have an alternative in reserve and fall back on that rather than lose the students' interest. Students tended to attend certain components of the awareness programme more readily than others although it was not necessarily the same components which attracted students most at all schools. In this regard, the experience of one school was that lectures on, for instance, the history of political movements in South Africa delivered by a progressive teacher in one of the classrooms would be very poorly attended while a SACOS

official speaking about sports policy on the tarmac outside would have large numbers of students ready to stand for hours listening attentively. How this was interpreted by a teacher at the school, in an interview, was that most students needed to have the masses around them to feel that something was happening; but if it was merely something of interest where they had to sit down and listen attentively, they could not concentrate. Yet, at certain other schools, the students were for most of the boycott in classrooms, in some cases in their normal class groups, earnestly participating in awareness programmes which were almost as structured as normal classes. They remained interested and responded enthusiastically to the opportunity of - in a context seemingly not substantially dissimilar to normal classes - being able to contribute to a process of collective learning and of being able to criticise openly teachers who in the normal way were figures of unchallengeable authority.

Concerning how long the awareness programmes were maintained, there was again great variation. The programmes were started in the first few days of the boycott. Some lasted as little as a week or a week-and-a-half; most lasted from two to five weeks. The awareness programmes at a few schools were sustained right up until the mid-year vacation.

Many awareness programmes - the 'thinner', less organised ones - even when formally still running, had students doing nothing much of the time. This was even more the case in the period they took to peter out. At some schools, for instance, the SRC would often meet first thing in the morning for up to two hours or more trying to work out a programme for the day and/or discussing latest developments while the students would be wandering about not knowing what, if anything, was to happen that day. For long stretches of the boycott, little or nothing went on at many of the schools. The students would mostly stand around chatting; some would play a ball game; others would drift off home or with groups of friends; the rest would leave school around midday.

Under such conditions, combined with the evaporation of the early ebullience and excitement, it is small wonder that boredom

and the boycott became for many students one - to them, the 'borecott'.

### 19.3 *Stayaway*

For those to whom the boycott was the 'borecott', the 'borecott' in turn tended to become a stayaway. At no stage was a stayaway consciously adopted as a tactical alternative to the boycott of classes. Nevertheless, at the great majority of DCR schools in the Peninsula, there was during the boycott a substantial stayaway in spite of the efforts of the leadership at most schools to keep the students coming.

How many students stayed away, when they started staying away and whether they stayed away sporadically or consistently over some period or periods again varied from school to school. Most schools had relatively normal levels of attendance in the first two to three weeks of the boycott and a very few schools managed to maintain these levels throughout the boycott. Those that did, tended to be either schools which were relatively isolated geographically, such as Ocean View Senior Secondary and Sentinel Junior Secondary Schools, or schools at which student-staff relations were such that the students did not feel that they were in opposition to most members of staff and where staff still exercised considerable control - for example, Crestway and Immaculata Senior Secondaries - or schools with a strong student leadership which, alone or in conjunction with sympathetic teachers, sustained a consistent alternative programme like Grassy Park and South Peninsula Senior Secondaries. In contrast, there were schools such as Bridgetown and Cathkin Senior Secondaries where some students started staying away virtually from the beginning. Generally, the stayaway from a particular school increased from the point at which its awareness programme collapsed and that, as already noted, was in certain cases as early as the second or third week of the boycott. At many schools, for example, Spes Bona Senior Secondary, the stayaway never rose above approximately 10%. There were many other schools, however, which had the majority

of their students staying away for much of the boycott. In the latter phase, rates of attendance dropped to as low as 15% at some schools, for example Heideveld Senior Secondary. Even schools like Harold Cressy and Alexander Sinton Senior Secondaries had, respectively, up to 45% and 55% of their students staying away towards the end of the boycott.

The impression should not be gained that attendance declined at a steady rate or remained consistently at the lowest level reached. The extent of the stayaway tended to fluctuate and even when staying constant it was not always all the same individual students who were keeping it there. What, for instance, happened at certain schools was that some students would come perhaps on a Monday to see if anything in particular was likely to happen that week and check again on about Thursday. In this way, they also kept in touch with friends whom they perhaps did not see in the normal way outside school. A group of students who stayed away completely were those who took jobs during the boycott. Many of the students who stayed away tended to be amongst those who did not take the boycott very seriously, and, while not necessarily opposing it, treated that period as an extended holiday.

#### 19.4 *Running out of steam*

Taking what happened in the Peninsula's DCR schools overall, students were, in general, highly responsive to the calls made upon them; they acted out of a deep-seated rejection of the system of which they felt themselves to be the victims; they displayed their dedication if only in their readiness to stand or sit listening endlessly to an often repetitious and generally inexperienced leadership. However, it seems that the students generated a momentum which could not be maintained. Despite the very substantial support there was for the boycott throughout, there was also a not insignificant section of students who later effectively withdrew support in any active form. There was, of course, a minority of students, relatively small, who actually opposed the boycott as a tactic and even a few who felt little identification with the students' struggle

and its goals. Much of the original determination and direction gave way to disillusion and doubt. Much of the early sense of excitement, fun and adventure was consumed by boredom and depression. There was a great deal of keen interest in the alternative programmes for as long as they lasted, while many students' interest withered away with the programmes themselves. The initial orderliness and discipline broke down in many quarters. The tremendous solidarity and cohesion of the early phases of the boycott developed, with time, the cracks of division. (Interviewees 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 21, 22, 25, 32, 33, 38, 41, 46, 48, 49, 50, 54, 56, 57, 58)

## 20 Repression

### 20.1 *Bannings, expulsions, harassment and threats*

Returning to the last two weeks of the half-year, the authorities still lacked any coherent strategy for dealing with the students' boycott. They seemed to have come to a multi-pronged *ad hoc* approach weighted on the side of suppression of student organisation. The latter was attempted by, *inter alia*, banning all political meetings of more than ten people in twenty-four magisterial districts around the country from midnight on Friday, 13 June, for a month. On 30 June, during the school holidays, the Government extended this ban to a further nineteen magisterial districts - making a total of forty-three - and for a further two months. The Committee of 81 was harassed - it again had to suspend a meeting because of police presence and the tension this induced in the student representatives. An attempt was made to track down and intimidate or isolate individual 'ring-leaders' and 'trouble makers'.

The authorities also tried to carry out the threat of expulsion which had been made to students at the DCR's training colleges, including the Peninsula Technikon. Monday, 9 June, was set as a second deadline for return to classes. On the Wednesday, it was announced that all those who had continued to boycott had been expelled and that those who had been granted Government study bursaries would not receive them. It was stated further that

students might apply for readmission but would have to supply reasons for their failure to attend classes. An estimated 4000 students at 15 institutions were affected by this announcement. However, none of the students to whom the announcement applied were at that stage personally informed of their expulsions. They assumed that it was only a matter of time before they heard individually. Yet, the next day, it turned out that most of the rectors and principals of colleges were refusing to forward the names of the boycotting students or to serve the expulsion notices. Some students, at for example Roggebaai Training College, were formally expelled. Confusion amongst the supposedly expelled students was completed by the various lines taken by different principals and rectors. One principal was quoted as saying, 'Officially the students have been expelled, unofficially they're still here.' The rector of Hewat Teachers Training College, E. Pratt, claimed that students had not been expelled but merely suspended until the following term. On the Thursday afternoon, students from Battswood, Zonnebloem, Wesley, Athlone, Hewat and Bellville training colleges and the Peninsula Technikon held a meeting. They released a statement in which they announced that the students of those eight institutions had staged a walk-off in protest against the latest steps taken against them. They stated further that they would stay away until the end of the term, that they would return for the third term, and that under no circumstances would they reapply or appeal to be reinstated. The confusion continued. On the day before the institutions all closed for the vacation, Hewat and Battswood students finally had their expulsions confirmed and were told to reapply for admission if they wished to return. Meanwhile, the authorities at UWC postponed any decision as to what to do by closing the University a week early. (Argus 11.6.80, 12.6.80; Grassroots, May/June 1980; Varsity 9 (5.8.80)7)

## 20.2 *Tracking the culprits: constraints on the exercise of official power*

As already referred to above, part of the authorities' attempt to inhibit students organising - under conditions which made

prohibiting their organising unenforceable - involved trying to identify individual students and teachers active in perpetuating the boycott. It was alleged that the DCR collaborated with the Security police in this task and that certain inspectors put considerable pressure on principals in their circuits to provide them with the names of 'suspects' and 'culprits'. Only one case of police pressurising a principal for students' names reached the newspapers and even in that instance the actual story of what happened - which was illuminating in a number of ways - was not told. An outline of this story follows.

It started on a morning early in June when a bus was stoned in Hout Bay's Black township. Later that morning, approximately a dozen police vans arrived outside the gates of Hout Bay's only Black school, Sentinel Junior Secondary. A member of the school committee, who was one of many parents who rushed to the school when they saw the police on their way, overheard the commandant in charge say, as he stormed through the school gates, 'Vandag skiet ons hulle vrek!' When the commandant arrived in the principal's office he wasted no time on social niceties. He wanted to know 'what the hell' was going on. Sentinel kids had thrown stones at a bus and damaged it. He had come to investigate the matter and pick up those implicated. H B Jacobs, the principal, was concerned as to how the police knew that those involved were Sentinel students. It was explained that that was what had been alleged by a witness who had claimed to have seen the culprits in Sentinel uniform climb over the school fence after they had stoned the bus and join other students in the grounds. The commandant then demanded to see the head student whom he named. Jacobs went across to where the students were meeting in the hall and informed them of the situation that had arisen. Three or four times Jacobs went back to the students and each time he was given the response he had been confident of getting in the first place: that as far as they were concerned there was no student by that name amongst them there. In the meantime, the students had moved outside deeming that it would be safer than being confined in a hall in the event of their being tear-gassed or baton-charged. None tried to scale the fence and run off home;

they all sat quietly in the quadrangle. The principal explained to the commandant that there would be no chance of their finding the particular student they sought even if he were on the premises. The commandant responded that in that case he wanted the names and addresses of all Sentinel Junior Secondary's Standard 8 students and that, before the end of the day, they would pick up every single one of them. His explanation of this intention was that when they had them all locked up they would get the truth out of them. The principal protested that the police's demand for the names and addresses of students presented him with a profound problem of professional ethics. He told the commandant that he would in any case have to consult the DCR. It did not take Jacobs long on the telephone to learn that the Department would not support any refusal on his part to hand over the information being sought by the police. He then told the commandant that it would take some time to organise the list required. The commandant demanded that he have it not later than 13h00.

The principal had been placed in a serious predicament. He immediately closed the school for the day. At 13h00, the commandant phoned to find out where the names and addresses were. After telling him the list was not yet ready and putting the phone down, Jacobs instructed that the school be locked and drove off out of Hout Bay home. The police arrived first thing the next morning to pick up the list. Jacobs told them he was not handing over the names and addresses of any of his students. A little later, the commandant phoned to instruct him to furnish the list or be subpoenaed to do so. Jacobs still refused.

The police must then have gone to the DCR because, next, the circuit inspector arrived, and, without giving any indication that he appreciated the principal's dilemma, himself demanded the list. A participant in these proceedings remarked in an interview, 'You'd think if he had any spark of humanity in him he'd at least have explained that he was just doing his job and was sorry.' Jacobs at that stage decided to bring in the school committee. The committee

met later the same day and its decision was that the school not hand over the list of names and addresses to the Department. Inevitably, the Department would pass the information on to the police and the committee did not approve of the Department doing the police's 'dirty work' for them. There followed a sharp altercation between, on the one side, the principal and a member of the school committee and, on the other, the inspector. The outcome thereof was the latter telling the former that they would have to accompany him to Head Office.

Jacobs and this member of the school committee took the names and addresses with them but had 'no intention of handing them over'. They requested an interview with the Director of Coloured Education but, characteristically, Arendse did not have time to see them. It became apparent that nobody 'at the top' wished to take any responsibility for the matter which was why an ordinary circuit inspector had been sent to fetch the list from the school and also why everybody was too busy to see them at Head Office. They felt that they had been treated contemptuously and demanded to see their regional Chief Inspector, Quint.

Quint recognised immediately that the situation contained 'dynamite' both in terms of a possible conflict between the police and another Government department as well as in terms of the much more explosive possibility of open conflict between the mass of the Black people of Hout Bay and the authorities generally. Quint set up an interview for them with Kempen. Jacobs, representatives of the school committee and Quint went to see him. Kempen was adamant that the names and addresses had to be handed over to the police. His argument was simply that a crime had been committed and that it was important for the children who were the culprits to be brought to book. All the police needed was for the person who had witnessed the incident to identify the culprits. One of those present described the meeting, in an interview, as having been a 'shattering' experience. For him the confrontation between themselves and Kempen epitomised the broader South African situation. The more they tried to get Kempen to see that, if the department and the police did insist on their

handing over the list, Hout Bay would explode, the less Kempen would listen. He refused to grant that the principal and school committee were even in any particular predicament.

The next step, which was to lead at last to a resolution, was again taken by Quint. He contacted directly the Minister of Police who agreed immediately to see Jacobs and his school committee accompanied by Quint. Le Grange was reportedly reasonable. They put their case to him in full and he had no difficulty in perceiving the dilemma. Their central contention was that in arresting the Sentinel children they would be igniting a powder keg. They explained that the atmosphere had been rendered especially combustible by the above quoted statement of the commandant, overheard by a school committee member, that 'Vandag skiet ons hulle vrek.' For this the Minister apologised and assured them that no senior officer should ever have passed such a remark. Le Grange recognised the need for the whole matter to be dropped forthwith. He said he would appoint an alternative investigating officer who 'after due and thorough investigation' would find that the identity of those responsible for the stoning could not be established.

The sequence of events described took place over a period of more than a week and in the meantime many of the 44 students in Standard 8 at Sentinel Junior Secondary School had fled their homes fearing imminent detention. But the Minister was as good as his word and it took the colonel appointed as investigating officer but a day to close the docket. At the same time pressure for the names and addresses from the DCR hierarchy ceased. The students came out of hiding and returned to their parents. (Interviewees 22, 42; Cape Times 16.6.80)

### 20.3 *Pinning down a recalcitrant principal*

Another instance of a principal refusing to provide his circuit inspector with the names of the activists amongst his students and staff culminated in the principal being charged by the DCR with

insubordination - on another matter - and proffering his resignation. Again it is an illuminating story. As Y da Costa, principal of Crestway Senior Secondary School, experienced the pressure put on him, his circuit inspector, J. Arendse, 'wanted to make a policeman out of me'. He did not succumb which led to various attempts being made to trap him into trouble. The circumstances which specifically resulted in the charge of insubordination are described below.

On the morning of Monday, 21 July, at Crestway Senior Secondary School, four students came to the principal to inform him that the Committee of 81 had indicated that Monday and Tuesday should be used to review the boycott. Further, a mandate had to be obtained from the students as to whether the boycott should be ended. da Costa warned them that they would not be allowed to go around to all the classes for this purpose. He suggested instead that the working committee should take the decision - in favour of ending the boycott - and that they let their decision be the decision of the school. In the hope that his suggestion would be accepted, he gave the students permission to organise a meeting of the working committee during the first interval and to hold the meeting quietly in the machine room of the woodwork block after the interval. That afternoon between 13h00 and 14h00 the circuit inspector, J. Arendse, visited Crestway to remind da Costa again that meetings of pupils were not to be allowed at school and that pupils were not to be given permission to obtain a mandate from their fellow pupils. He had given a similar instruction the previous Wednesday at a meeting of the principals of the three senior secondary schools in the vicinity, Crestway, Lavender Hill and Steenberg. The instruction at this meeting had been that all meetings at schools were illegal unless the principal or his representative was present. Meetings concerning school business were legal. It was only at the end of the school day, not long after the inspector had left, that da Costa came to know that the meeting of the working committee in the machine room had in fact lasted right up until then. He had earlier assumed that the meeting would last only the middle session between 11h00 and 12h40.

The next morning, the woodwork teacher reported to da Costa that a meeting was in progress in the woodwork room. Feeling sure that nothing would come of it, he told the teacher not to concern himself. A few minutes before the first interval, two students came to the principal's office and asked him to come to the meeting since the students had a request to put to him. da Costa went back with them to the meeting and there he was asked whether members of the working committee might go round to all classes and hold a referendum on the question of whether or not to end the boycott. They were given a categorical no. But da Costa then rethought the issue and told the students that so long as they went about it with a minimum of fuss and tried to convince the classes that the boycott should be ended, they might go ahead. The result of the referendum went heavily against continuing the boycott.

The trouble started coming to a head the next morning, Wednesday 23 July, when Arendse, the inspector, arrived at the school in order to accuse da Costa, firstly, of telling the school at an assembly on the morning school opened for the third term that it was up to the students to decide whether they wanted to resume normal classes or not but that they should remember that there were still bus and red meat boycotts in progress; secondly, of allowing meetings at the school contrary to the instructions he and the Department had given him; and, thirdly, of refusing to cooperate with him and the Department during the entire period of the boycott. To da Costa it was clear that these charges had been cooked up in a blatant attempt to get him out of his school because he would not 'cooperate' - meaning in general that he refused to collaborate with the designs of the authorities and more specifically and recently that he had refused to give the inspector names. He had at no point said anything like what he was accused of telling his students concerning their resuming classes while the bus and red meat boycotts were still in progress. Indeed, he had been doing all in his power to persuade the student leadership to bring the boycott to an end as soon as possible.

After Arendse had been in touch with the Regional Office, Quint phoned through an instruction that da Costa was to report to the Director of Coloured Education immediately. Arendse drove him through to Head Office where he outlined to his namesake, the Director, the accusations against da Costa. Arendse, the Director, was not prepared to listen to da Costa's denials and explanations and simply warned him that they were watching him. He instructed the inspector to put the accusations on paper and gave him permission to investigate the matter further.

The two men then returned to the school where Arendse instructed the principal to get the members of the student working committee into the office immediately. da Costa announced over the intercom that the working committee was to come to his office. They came and Arendse asked them whether their principal had given them permission to hold a meeting. They replied no, he had not given them permission - they had gone ahead and held it out of their own free will. The students' antagonism towards the inspector was disguised only by a veil of contemptuous formal respect. Later, Arendse visited the woodwork room - scene of the 'crime' - and wanted to know from the woodwork teacher when and precisely where the meeting in question had been held, through which door the pupils had come, how long they had been there and whether the principal had come to the meeting. He also took da Costa with him to speak to two other teachers whom he asked whether pupils had come around to the classes in connection with the boycott. The teachers, who clearly experienced the position in which this put them as intensely awkward, eventually admitted that students had come around to the classes but denied knowing what, if any, role the principal had played in this. A while after this detective work on the part of the inspector, da Costa received a letter in which the charges were formulated. He replied denying the charges and confirming that the school was functioning normally.

What brought matters to a final head for da Costa was 25 mislaid Xhosa textbooks over which there was another apparent attempt to trap him as well as a tacit questioning of his integrity. da Costa sent off a letter of resignation. Although Regional Office seemed content to accept his resignation and did so forthwith, the teachers

on his staff were unhappy about it and decided to seek parental support, firstly, in getting him to withdraw his resignation and, secondly, in getting the Department to accept a withdrawal of his resignation. At the same time, the staff passed a resolution that they were not going to 'down tools'. It was at this point that some of the story related so far became public. This was followed, on the one hand, by formal denials from the Department that da Costa had ever been brought into Head Office or charged with insubordination and, on the other, with mounting pressure from the community. The DCR offices were reportedly inundated with enquiries about the circumstances which had led da Costa to take this step.

Meanwhile, da Costa had started looking for another job and one of the persons to whom he went was Sonn. On hearing what had happened, Sonn asked him whether he would be prepared to tell the whole story to the Director. da Costa pointed out that he had tried to tell it when he saw the Director before but that he would be prepared to do so again. Sonn immediately set up an appointment with Arendse for the next morning. da Costa took with him a number of affidavits which teachers at the school had already drawn up. Arendse said that he had told him that he could come and put his case to him. da Costa reminded him that he had not been prepared to listen at their first meeting. He then described at length what had occurred at Crestway Senior Secondary since he had opened the school in 1975. There had been other points of conflict with Arendse, the inspector, which he also outlined. For example, he had always been able to go to mosque on a Friday. But, after he had been at Crestway for a while, Arendse told him that as it involved being off school premises during school hours he should make formal application to be allowed to attend mosque on Fridays. da Costa made such an application and it was rejected - the application had had to go through Arendse. The Friday after this permission had been refused Arendse arrived at the school a few minutes after da Costa would have had to leave for mosque - he had come to check whether da Costa was abiding by his ruling. For two weeks da Costa did so after which, as he told the Director, he had decided to defy it and attend mosque in accordance with the dictates of

his conscience. On this, the Director immediately gave him his assurance that arrangements would be made so that he could attend mosque and asked how long he wanted off on Fridays. After being told only 20 minutes, he wanted to know whether da Costa was sure that that was long enough.

da Costa also related what had happened on the occasion he had received news of the death of the mother of a close family friend and had left school fifteen minutes before the final siren to go and lend support. Just after leaving, Arendse arrived and found him not on the premises. Normally, if a principal leaves his/her school for any purpose, he/she must get the inspector's permission. But, on this occasion, had da Costa managed to contact Arendse and obtain permission, the siren would by that time have gone in any case. The next day, Arendse returned to the school and made da Costa write out in triplicate why he had not been on the premises of his school ten minutes before the final siren on the day before.

Having heard da Costa out, the Director asked him what his wishes were. His reply was that obviously he would like to carry on at Crestway but he was not prepared to work under that inspector. Arendse told him he had no right to lay down under what conditions he would be prepared to withdraw his resignation. After considerable wrangling over this point, Arendse said that although he would not be able to accept da Costa's withdrawal of resignation if it contained any conditions, he would give him his personal assurance that matters at the school would be settled if he unconditionally withdrew his resignation. He then again asked da Costa what his wishes were. da Costa explained that teaching and specifically Crestway Senior Secondary School were his life and that, therefore, with Arendse's assurances he would like to continue as principal there. The Director then asked him to write out his withdrawal of resignation and thanked him for doing so. Finally, he told da Costa that he would have to go to the meeting organised by the teachers and school committee for that evening and inform the parents who attended that he had withdrawn his resignation and matters had been resolved.

When da Costa got back to the school the staff on hearing his news decided to cancel the planned meeting and this was announced over the intercom. However, after da Costa had left again - since he was supposed to have been off sick at the time - some of the teachers, who still felt dissatisfaction at the way matters had been handled, decided that the meeting should take place anyway and this was duly announced. That night, it was raining and the venue for the meeting had had to be in Retreat since nothing had been available nearer the school which drew its students mainly from Steenberg. Despite the fact that people had, therefore, to walk far and in the rain to attend the meeting, the hall was packed to capacity - such was the anger of parents concerning what had been happening to the principal of their children's school. The meeting was chaired by the chairperson of the school committee and its main outcome was a demand for the resignation of the inspector, Arendse. This demand was put in letter form and the next day taken by hand to the Department's Head Office in Cape Town.

The whole affair ended, finally, with da Costa receiving a letter from Head Office in which it was stated that the charges which had been laid against him were being referred back to the Chief Inspector in his region. This was tantamount to telling him that the charges had been dropped. (Interviewees 5, 42; Herald 2.8.80)

## 21 Black businessmen, the book bonanza, and bureaucracy

The implementation of one of the concessions made by the Government in response to the students' short-term demands had meanwhile given rise to a little-noticed conflict which seemed to be of any consequence only to the few persons directly involved who felt aggrieved at having been ignored by the authorities. Although this conflict was of minimal significance for the course of the boycott itself, it did expose aspects of the system's workings.

The Government had promised to make good all book shortages in schools under the DCR forthwith, as documented above. Although

never publicly clarified, the promise was intended to apply only to secondary schools. Principals were given authority to order whatever textbooks were needed in their schools. However, according to the instructions they received from the Administration of Coloured Relations, the normal procedure for obtaining the books was not to be followed. A Departmental regulation gave principals the sole right to select the booksellers from whom they purchased. The principals would place orders with the booksellers of their choice who, for a discount of between 30 and 33%, would then liaise with the publishers, supply the books at a 7½% discount and deliver them to the individual schools. In this case, principals had to channel their orders directly to the publishers and bypass their regular suppliers.

Four of the regular booksellers bypassed in this way - Lion's Head of Grassy Park, Premfare of Athlone, Rynew of Bellville South and Westridge of Mitchell's Plain - were the Peninsula's only Black persons in their trade and relied solely on school book sales for their business. They strongly objected to having been left out of the bonanza in a way which meant that only White business would benefit. Frank May, Managing Director of Lion's Head Booksellers, said at the time,

'It is ... a disgrace that only the white minority should gain by monies directed to a part of the majority of people. After all, our children suffered, they sacrificed lessons and examinations, were beaten and bullied; they engineered whatever improvement there is to be according to promises made by Government Officials, or were these just bluff?'

Cape Town's major White booksellers, Juta and Maskew Miller, were in any case to receive massive orders as publishers which they were as well as book retailers. Furthermore, while Black booksellers were not given book orders from White schools, in the country as a whole, White booksellers took more than 96% of all orders from Black schools. Why the local Black booksellers felt so particularly aggrieved was that the schools under the DCR which ordered from them were never allocated sufficient funds to meet anything like their needs and they

had year after year been partially carrying these schools by extending what, for relatively small businesses, constituted very considerable amounts of credit. They did so at their own risk because the practice was prohibited and the Department could legally have disclaimed any liability. One of the booksellers claimed at the time that, by playing the role they had done, they had 'prevented riots which would have taken place long ago and perhaps more often.' Before the 'bonanza' was announced in 1980, the four of them had already that year supplied book shortages at secondary schools to the value of more than R100 000 on credit. At the time their customers were being directed away from them to the publishers, they had recovered nothing of this sum.

The Black booksellers made various attempts to have the DCR withdraw its instruction to the principals and permit part of the massive order to be channelled through them. First of all, they called on principals to refuse to accept books ordered in such a way on the grounds that it violated the Department's own regulation issued to all schools that principals had the sole right to select their own booksellers. Further, they called on the publishers selected by the Department also to refuse to execute such orders. What the booksellers wanted, was stated unambiguously by a spokesperson for the four: 'Our regular customers should be instructed by the Department, perhaps by the Minister, to place all their orders with us. This will prevent a lot of trouble and misunderstanding.' Unsurprisingly these calls met with no response. The booksellers then approached the Associated Booksellers of South Africa, an organisation supposed to represent their interests and to which they all belonged at an annual fee of R100. Its secretary, Piet van Rooyen, refused to act on the grounds that he still thought it was only a survey being conducted. They then requested an interview with the Director of Education. Arendse refused to see them but said all he had to say over the telephone which was: 'We have positively decided to give the orders directly to the publishers and nothing will make us reverse this decision.' When a spokesperson for the booksellers again contacted Van Rooyen to inform him that Arendse had confirmed what they had suspected, he still refused to do anything. An attempt was then made to see the Secretary for Coloured Relations, Mills.

But, when one of them telephoned for an appointment, Mills' secretary told him that they had to discuss the matter rather with a Mr Burnett. When Burnett was asked about the truth of the book orders being all channelled to particular publishers selected by the Department, his reply was: 'If that is the case you know more than I. All I know is that I am conducting a survey - that's all'. At which point, the four booksellers drew up the following statement:

'We the black booksellers have tried our best to save whatever situation may now arise. We offered the officials of the Department of Coloured Relations all the co-operation at our disposal to explain to Mr Arendse and others the true set-up of the whole situation but they all preferred to ignore us. Obviously to them the black booksellers' feelings and advice were (and still are) of minor importance. So we now have no alternative but to leave the entire matter to the Public of the Republic of our beloved South Africa to judge the consequence.'

Their final move was to send a delegation to see the PFP Parliamentary spokesperson on 'coloured affairs', Colin Eglin. Eglin submitted a set of written questions on the matter to the Minister of Coloured Relations. In reply, the Minister gave the following reasons for the decision to place the book orders direct with publishers.

'A large number of the books required are not in stock and must be reprinted. A publisher cannot reprint a book before he has established the need and this he can only do once he has received all the orders.

'The survey to establish the shortage of books was conducted by the Head Office of the Department of Coloured Relations. If the normal procedures were to be followed, all the survey forms would have to be referred to the 13 Regional Offices of the Department for the placing of the prescribed official orders with the booksellers concerned. The booksellers would then have to order the books from the publishers in order to execute the orders.

'As early delivery of the books is a matter of urgency and the usual procedures time consuming, the Department decided as an exception to place the orders direct with the publishers to ensure that the majority of the books would be available at the schools by the beginning of the third school quarter.'

If the approach used in this seemingly reasonable explanation were applied to the regular requisition of books, what really might be questionable, would be the usual procedure followed. Yet, in reply to another of Eglin's questions, the Minister confirmed that the normal procedure would continue to be followed. The Minister provided the names of the publishers with whom his Department were placing the orders as well as the value of the order with each publisher:

Nasou	R513 552
Juta	198 645
Tafelberg	183 374
Maskew Miller	165 803
Perskor	51 268
Human & Rossouw	20 805

Over and above these orders, a number of books had to be ordered from sundry overseas publishers as well as various smaller local publishers. These orders, to the combined value of R372 217, the above-mentioned larger publishers had agreed to place. Eglin had also asked whether the publishers were to receive publishers' or booksellers' prices on these special orders; the Minister's reply was the former. The publishers would also be responsible for delivering the books to the individual schools.

The booksellers, in turn, claimed that the publishers did not have the machinery to deliver *ad hoc* mass orders. Although it was granted that some of the ordered books started arriving within a fortnight, they maintained that what took the publishers six weeks they were equipped to have accomplished in three. Furthermore, one of the four booksellers alleged in an interview that the DCR had not been given more than the usual 7½% discount. This allegation could not be definitely substantiated but, if accurate, would have meant that the publishers did indeed charge booksellers' prices thereby helping themselves to a profit margin even more handsome than usual. The aggrieved bookseller interviewed claimed that the bonanza would have been worth approximately R90 000 to him in turnover. The four Black booksellers believed that together they had suffered a turnover-loss in the region of R400 000 as a result of the bonanza's gerrymandering of their terrain. (Interviewee 28; Herald 31.5.80; Sunday Times 8.6.80)

## 22 The boycott dies

### 22.1 *Mid-year break*

During the vacation, students, especially those in Standards 8 and 10, from several schools returned to classes to take special lessons to make up lost time. Students in the Johannesburg area organised what they called a 'study blitz' during the holidays to make up missed work. In Lenasia, about 200 teachers helped with extra coaching for some 2000 students. The teachers were drawn from a voluntary educational body, Time-to-Learn, which had been set up a few years earlier to help teach literacy to adults.

At one point in the holidays, the Committee of 81 issued a statement in response to the detention of two more students who were both from Bridgetown Senior Secondary, both members of the Committee of 81, and both on the Committee's Press Sub-committee. According to the statement, 'The Western Cape representatives are meeting in their regional groups to analyse and discuss the school boycott in detail and weigh the pros and cons of a prolonged boycott. Further detentions are only jeopardising our discussions and will have negative effects on the so-called normalisation.' It said the release of all detained during the boycott was one of the conditions before a return to class could be brought about. Other short-term demands which had to have been met, were that all textbooks required be supplied free, that school buildings be repaired, that all equipment necessary be supplied, and that SRCs be recognised. Longer-term demands specified at this point were that salaries be made equal for all teachers irrespective of race or sex, that there be not further expulsions nor intimidation, that a wider choice of subjects be offered by the next academic year, and that an emergency amount of money be set aside for Black schools. (Argus 2.7.80; Herald 5.7.80, 12.7.80)

### 22.2 *Schools re-open: retrospect and prospect*

The boycott of Cape Town's African schools when they opened on

7 July for the third term was total. In fact, there was a stayaway from all but one of the four senior secondary schools, Fezeka, where students gathered in the middle of the week for an awareness programme. In the Eastern Cape, too, students continued their boycott at African higher primary and secondary schools. In the rest of the country most African schools opened with full attendance. (Argus 8.7.80, 9.7.80)

The Committee of 81, on Thursday 10 July, announced its decision that the boycott should continue until all the students' demands had been met at Coloured, Indian as well as African schools. In a statement they said, 'We shall continue with greater determination in our boycott and mobilise all community and student forces we can behind our legitimate demands. Only with concrete proof that these demands are and shall be met shall we consider the decision to return to classes.' (Argus 10.7.80, 12.7.80) The next Monday, the day before the DCR schools were due to open, the Committee of 81 issued another statement calling on students to return to school to review the boycott. 'The decision to continue or suspend the boycott rests with the student mass .... We call on students to discuss the decision with their working parents and other groups included in the struggle.' The Committee said a return to class would depend on the reaction of the State. 'If the State refuses to meet our short-term demands, continues with the detention of people, does not lift the ban on meetings and withdraws application forms, the decision-making process will be prolonged.' (Argus 14.7.80)

Meanwhile, a pamphlet had appeared from which the following is extracted:

'SCHOOLS RE-OPEN ON THE 15 July. Because of the ban on meetings we, as students, were unable to democratically work out a *unified plan* of action. This resulted in a breakdown in communication, co-ordination and organisation.'

'Given the ban on meetings, *HOW DO WE ORGANISE OURSELVES?*

'THE CENTRE of student activity has always been the school. The *basis* for student organisation and action has been the

school. We should now utilise our school grounds to its fullest. Together with our SRC's and working bodies we shall make our decisions and together move forward. Some suggestions for classroom discussion on Tuesday (15 July - when the DCR schools were scheduled to open) are:-

1. What should our short-term demands be? ....
2. Under what conditions shall we suspend the boycott?
3. How should awareness programmes be organised?
4. How do we support the meat workers in their struggle?
5. How do we effectively boycott City Tramways?
6. Boycott as a weapon of struggle.
7. What is a democratic independent SRC? What should be the power structure in our schools now - (relationship between principal, staff and pupils).
8. The future of the Committee of 81.
9. Campaigns we could organise (eg. release detainee campaign, fund-raising, support for student demands).
10. Discussions on the content of racist education subjects.

'SUGGESTIONS AND decisions taken by individual schools regarding action in the coming week/months should be taken down by the working bodies and SRC's. These will be forwarded to regional meetings where mandates will be formulated. These will be brought to committee meetings where a democratic decision about the way forward can be taken - in accordance with the WILL of the majority.' (Document 30)

When the DCR schools opened, it was only students in the Western Cape who did not resume regular classes. Attendance rates in the Peninsula reportedly ranged between 75 and 100%. The great majority of those required to sign readmission forms, namely, students at the training colleges, signed them. Some students started with normal classes; others met to consider what to do. On Wednesday, 16 July, a spokesperson for the Committee of 81 announced that an overwhelming majority of schools had voted in favour of resuming normal classes and that the boycott was therefore suspended as from the next day. In a short statement, the Committee committed itself to continuing to campaign actively for the attainment of all the students' demands. (Argus 15.7.80; 16.7.80)

The Committee of 81's account of the students' reasons for resuming classes was contained in the last important pamphlet to have been associated with the boycott. It is reproduced in full below:

'We, the Western Cape representatives of the students of Azania, have decided to call for an end to the class boycott. This decision has been motivated by political necessity, taking into full account the present state of the class warfare.

'We are aware that there are many students who feel that the class boycott ought to continue because our short term demands have not been met by the state. We therefore find it absolutely necessary to explain exactly why we have made the decision to return to classes ....

*Firstly*, if we continue to boycott on the basis of our previous demands (short term demands not being met) and on our recently acquired demands (the unconditional release of all detainees connected to the boycott), then we are attempting to barter with the state from a position of weakness. Our forces have been demoralised by the police and the army of the State. It is our duty as leaders that we recognise the present position we are in and then take this a step further by recognising that our task is to reconstitute our forces. What this means in practise, is that we can only do this once students have gone back to classes. Our walls of resistance as a unified student front have got to be reconstructed, rebuilt and rehardened so as to weather any future storm. Our duty is to concentrate our energies in the building up of powerful, effective and autonomous SRC's, PTSA's and cultural societies at our schools. Once we have done this, then *we* could consider bartering with the State.

*Secondly*, the class boycott cannot be seen in isolation to the general trend of events in the country. Here, what we have taken into account in our analysis and thereby in our call for a discontinuation of the class boycott, is the question of where do we, as students, fit into the fight for the total liberation of the oppressed. What we have learnt through our collective experience in the class boycott is that we, as students, cannot begin to challenge and seek confrontation with the State. We have learnt that to seek confrontation with the State is youthfully adventurous and we have begun to realise the very serious nature of the conflict which exists between the rulers and the ruled. We further recognise that the backbone of the economy, upon which the capitalist rests, is the workers. Thus we have realised that our students, being an economically non-productive sector of the oppressed, can only serve as a support to the workers, who *alone* have the power to change society fundamentally, in their to-the-death fight against the capitalists. In other words, even though we have triggered off the 1980 boycott mechanism, we have got to see the limitations of the class boycott. Thus, we have to see ourselves not as spearheading a boycott anymore, but as a sector of the oppressed acting at all times in support of the workers in *their* organised and calculated battle against the capitalists.

How can we support the workers?

This we achieve by keeping our forces intact and not in disarray. This we achieve by organising ourselves at our schools and in our community organisations. We have to know our battlefield and once the exact positions of all the trenches and lookout posts, only then could we advance the slogan:

WORKERS OF AZANIA UNITE ..... and understand its full implications.

*Thirdly*, on the question of detainees: no calls or demands made by us for the unconditional release of our comrades in detention will in any way affect State policy unless these calls or demands are made from a position of strength. We know that our comrades are experiencing severe physical and psychological hardships at the hands of the enemy and we salute our comrades. Let us say to their jailers that the detentions serve as added fuel to the flames of liberty.

'THE CLASS STRUGGLE AHEAD IS A LONG ONE CONTAINING MANY CURVES AND MANY BENDS, AND OUR DUTY IS TO REMAIN ON THIS ROAD; THE FUTURE IS OURS ... IT BELONGS TO US.' (Document 25)

### 22.3 *The boycott prolonged*

The boycott did not, however, end on 17 July. At the schools under the DET, there was no serious question even of it ending. A student quoted in the press at the time gave as the primary reason that 'The Government has not even started to meet our short-term demands.' Furthermore, African students started claiming that they had 'no true contact' any longer with the Committee of 81. An I.D. Mkize Senior Secondary student was quoted as saying, 'We only hear about the decisions of the Committee through the newspapers.'

### 22.4 *'Intra-Black' relations in student ranks*

Throughout the boycott and particularly after its suspension in the schools under the DCR, one of its most delicate dimensions was the relationship between the students classified 'Coloured' and 'Indian' and those classified 'Black', i.e. 'African'. Although at inter-school leadership level there was considerable contact between them - most importantly via the Committee of 81 - contact more generally was minimal even between students living in immediately

adjoining areas such as Heideveld and Guguletu. Few Coloured students knew of the Fezeka boycott at the time the boycott in the DCR schools began. Coloured students would seem, in spite of the protestations to the contrary, to have perceived the boycott as a predominantly Coloured struggle. The perception would appear to have been shared by African students.

Local African students did not initially favour a boycott although their representatives on the Committee of 81 at no stage attempted to oppose the boycott in the DCR schools. It was, of course, not long before the local DET schools joined the boycott. But when the Committee of 81 came to suspending it, the decision was taken allegedly without consulting the African students' representatives. It was then, as referred to above, that African students started openly admitting to the suspicions which they had had about their Coloured counterparts: in 1976, they had not only been slow to respond to the African students' initiatives but had deserted them and the cause by unilaterally returning to school - now they had done it again. In the words of a Guguletu student, who had been on the Committee of 81 when interviewed by a local newspaper concerning the end of the boycott in the DCR schools,

'They returned to school without any of their long-term demands being met. They did the same in 1976 and we wonder if we should still trust them. They have betrayed us. We will hold out for as long as we can or until our demands are met because we know that the department cannot let the situation carry on indefinitely. We are determined.' (Herald 30.8.80)

Another Guguletu student, quoted in the same report, said,

'to us it seems as if the so-called coloured students were not sincere when they advocated a schools' boycott because they ran back to school as soon as some of their problems were solved, forgetting that nothing had been done for us. The communication we had when the Committee of 81 was still functioning was very real, but now there is hardly any communication at all. Sometimes we don't know how to view the position because they appear to have all the advantages in the Western Cape. Whenever they cry, the cry is quickly answered. Are our voices so low that nobody hears us?' (Herald 30.8.80)

A spokesperson for the African students, stated, in late July,

'We want to discuss whether or not to continue the boycott, but the ban on meetings makes this difficult. If the ban was lifted, the main body of students would vote in favour of continuation. Their feeling is that, if their demands are not met, the boycott will have been for nothing. On the other hand, a smaller, yet significant force, of students believes that the boycott should end.'

At that stage, in Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga, only lower primary students from Sub A to Standard 2 were in class. Even they were not receiving the lessons prescribed by the DET syllabus. General knowledge, left to the teachers' discretion, was being taught instead. Meanwhile, many of the Standard 3, 4 and 5 students were attending drama, music and art programmes organised in church halls by more senior students. The majority of secondary students, however, stayed at home. (Herald 26.7.80) Meanwhile, in the Eastern Cape, there was a total boycott of DET schools in the form of a stayaway. Resistance was also developing at secondary schools in the Ciskei. At the University of Fort Hare, a large proportion of the students, who returned to campus, left again after they had been issued with an ultimatum either to return to lectures or quit the university. Outside of the Cape, it seems to have been only in Soweto that there were any serious student protests and even there relatively few students were involved. Boycotting students at Morris Isaacson Senior Secondary stoned an inspector's car. (Argus 16.7.80, 17.7.80, 30.7.80; Herald 26.7.80; Cape Times 5.8.80)

## 22.5 *Dissension*

The bulk of students in schools under the DCR tried to resume their studies. A debate nevertheless, continued to rage between those still calling for a protracted boycott, which they believed could disrupt the educational process, and the majority who favoured the

boycott's suspension on the grounds that it was necessary in order to consolidate whatever gains had been made. (Interviewee 35; Herald 19.7.80, 26.7.80; Argus 23.7.80, 24.7.80) Students from the former category brought out a pamphlet in which they specified the following 'reasons for not returning to normal school':

- '1) We are going to be pushed through and will have to work day and night forgetting the struggle and our fellow students who have been pushed out.
- 2) Our alternative is to get the true history of AZANIANS and those who have sacrificed their lives ....
- 3) If we return we desert LANGA, GUGULETU and SOWETO and remain the step sons of AZANIA or are we the true sons of AZANIA.
- 4) Let us stand firm and not sway like a supple reed in the blowing wind.'

'If we turn back now .... We will remain oppressed.'  
(Document 21)

Even before the boycott was finally called off, some students had started to use the slogan: 'Niks maak 'ie, net boikot! (Don't do anything, just boycott!) According to a student leader interviewed, although no serious leadership elements had endorsed this slogan, 'it took a hold quite widely'. He had understood its use to indicate not only a rejection of the academic lessons to which students had to return but even a reaction against the awareness programmes. (Interviewee 35) Furthermore, from as early as the first half of June, certain students had had the idea of forming 'squads' to enforce the continuation of the boycott by, if necessary, physically removing boycott-breakers from the classrooms - little came of it, however. (Interviewee 35)

Uncertainty reigned in student ranks. Attendance rates in the Peninsula were relatively normal during the third term's second week, ranging between 70 and 100%. Meanwhile, a student was arrested in connection with the distribution of pamphlets after a meeting held at the Berg River Senior Secondary School in Wellington. There were stayaways at Alexander Sinton and Manenberg Senior Secondaries. Members of Wynberg Senior Secondary's SRC were thrown off school premises by the principal after he had discovered them holding a

meeting in the toilets. More than half the school then walked out in protest. The last 35 Rylands Senior Secondary students still holding out were sent home by the principal. They later gathered at the school gates accompanied by their parents who were required to give an undertaking that their children would abide by the school's regulations before the students could be reinstated. (Herald 19.7.80, 26.7.80; Argus 23.7.80, 24.7.80)

#### 22.6 *Closures and quirts - more threats and detentions*

The authorities had meanwhile taken up a completely uncompromising stance. The week before the DCR schools opened, the Minister of Police issued a statement that the sporadic outbursts of unrest at schools could no longer be tolerated. He warned that, thenceforth, the police would strictly apply Proclamation 1405 published in Government Gazette 7115 of 30 June, 1980, which prohibited students from gathering on school premises.

The day before the DCR schools were scheduled to open, all parents of secondary school students received a letter from Arendse, the Director of Coloured Education. In it he had written as follows: 'I am convinced that the authorities are deeply concerned about solving the problems in education. Consequently, I take the liberty of approaching you with the request to give the authorities the opportunity of proving their sincerity.' The next day, the Administration of Coloured Relations sent out a circular letter stating that it had been anticipated that the situation would have returned to normal by the beginning of the third term. The letter warned that, if the situation remained 'abnormal' on any day thereafter, the affected schools would be closed. Furthermore, if schools were closed, students would be readmitted only at the personal request of their parents.

These were no idle threats. By the end of the third week of the new quarter at least five schools had been closed. Klein Nederburg Junior Secondary was closed after a group of students, gathered in the school grounds, had been dispersed by police

wielding 'quirts'. Also outside the Peninsula, Noorder Paarl Senior Secondary was closed. Wynberg Senior Secondary was closed after the walkout already described. Arcadia and Modderdam Senior Secondary Schools were next to be closed. Finally, Elsie's River Senior Secondary was closed after several students were expelled for requesting to hold a welcome-back party for one of their number, Terence Nicholls, who had been released from Victor Vorster Prison where he had been in detention for over two months. (Argus 10.7.80, 15.7.80, 16.7.80, 24.7.80, 25.7.80, 30.7.80, 31.7.80, 6.8.80; Herald 16.8.80)

The authorities responsible for the African schools were in this period directing their threats at the teachers and parents. Towards the end of July, the DET issued a statement pointing out that facilities for 'black scholars' in the Western Cape and certain other areas had not been used for months. It warned that it would have no other choice but to make alternative arrangements if not used. 'We have got to utilise the teachers. They cannot sit around doing nothing and get paid for it.' This was followed a few days later by a warning from Owens that, if the boycott continued, his Department 'might have to consider re-allocating school building projects to areas which are unaffected by the boycott.' He also threatened that teachers might have to be used in other areas. In Soweto, at least two schools were closed down - Morris Isaacson Senior Secondary until the following year and Mapatha Tswana Senior Secondary indefinitely. Demonstrating students in the Ciskei were on various occasions badly beaten up by Col. Sebe's police. General harassment and detention of students continued in many parts of the country. (Argus 29.7.80, 30.7.80, 1.8.80, 6.8.80)

### *22.7 Resumption of classes reconsidered*

During the new term's second week, students at many schools were reconsidering their decision to return to classes. The main factors leading to this reconsideration were the African students' continuation of the boycott as well as what they experienced as the slowness of the Government's response to their short-term demands. A meeting of what was left of the Committee of 81 was held to discuss what had been

happening and in particular an allegation by the African schools that they had been left out of decisions. The outcome was a statement announcing that the Committee of 81 was not to be dissolved but, because of 'difficulties experienced', was to be restructured, and calling for a further week's boycott from Monday, 28 July. The reason given for this call was that all their short-term demands had not been met. The great majority of students decided, however, not to respond to this call and most DCR schools continued their readjustment to classes. It was not without conflict. For example, at John Ramsay Senior Secondary students decided not to write a particular setwork examination. A few of them then changed their minds and went back to class to write it. Two of those standing outside boycotting the examination took such extreme exception to this that they interrupted those writing and tried to tear up their scripts. (Herald 26.7.80, 9.8.80; Argus 28.7.80)

### 22.8 *Africans alone*

The following week, starting Monday, 4 August, only students at the African secondary and higher primary schools in the Western Cape and parts of the Eastern Cape were still formally boycotting. In Soweto, some students had taken up the rents issue. In one incident, students from four Diepkloof schools protesting against the increases in township rents stoned passing lorries and vans. The students, numbering about 4500, had gathered at a local school with the intention of marching peacefully to the rent offices where they would stand silently with their placards reading 'Away with Rent Increases' and 'Rent: We Won't Pay'. (Argus 7.8.80) A degree of boycotting and conflict with the authorities continued at a few DCR schools in the Peninsula. Arcadia Senior Secondary was still closed and Elsie's River Senior Secondary was closed as late as 8 August (Argus 14.8.80; Herald 16.8.80)

### 22.9 *Sparks in a dying fire*

There was no sharper conflict at this stage than that which occurred at Arcadia Senior Secondary. After having been closed for two weeks students were allowed back on Monday, 11 August, on condition

that the readmission forms were signed. Many students, however, refused to have anything to do with the readmission forms and the principal turned them away. 'What could I do? I was as much under instruction as anybody else', he explained. A few of the students proceeded to slash the tyres on the cars of parents who had come to sign the forms as well as some of the teachers while the rest staged a march around the school grounds carrying placards which accused their principal of being, *inter alia*, a 'puppet' and a 'CAD agent'. The march ended up outside the principal's office. One student threw something at the principal but was instantly reprimanded by other students. Those leading the demonstration were not going to permit any violence against the principal and they blocked the students from moving any nearer the office. Talking about it in retrospect, the principal said, 'I never felt in any danger whatsoever. I was rather amused by all this really. I didn't feel there was any malice behind it. It was a political thing.'

Two days later, when most students at Arcadia were back in class, the circuit inspector came to check on progress since it was one of the last DCR schools to 'normalise'. While he and the principal were in the office a group of students mounted a demonstration outside. They also deflated the tyres on the inspector's car. The principal went out to cut them off before they reached the office and warned them that with the inspector on the premises there really would be trouble. After he had left the office, the inspector telephoned the police who arrived while the principal was still talking to the students. The students, under the impression that this was the principal's doing, were dispersed by the police. Four of the students were arrested and charged with trespassing but later released on payment R5 admission of guilt fines. (Interviewee 6; Argus 14.8.80)

#### 22.10 *Scapegoat*

The Minister of Police seemed pleased to have the last word. After the boycott in DCR schools had definitely ended and the Committee of 81 had to all intents and purposes collapsed - of which developments one should be able to presume Le Grange was aware - he singled the

Committee of 81 out for special public attack on at least two occasions. On 12 August, he told a public meeting in Pretoria that the Committee's activities had gone beyond airing grievances about Coloured Education to the point where the power of the state was being openly challenged. 'It is clear,' he stated, 'that their real aim is the overthrowing of the present order.' (Argus 13.8.80) On 21 August, the Minister again turned public attention to the Committee of 81. 'I am not prepared to take any notice of them now, as they are unrepresentative.' He claimed moreover that those by then controlling the body were not even students.

'They are just a small group of troublemakers. I would go so far as to say that they are part-and-parcel of a particular programme operating in South Africa. .... None of them has had the guts to come forward and identify himself. I ask why this is. They are not solving problems but causing them.' (Cape Times 22.8.80)

Ironically the Committee of 81 barely existed to do either by that stage.

#### 22.11 *Students' views on the end*

Students' views varied on why the boycott had ended when it had. Those who were interviewed gave the reasons which follow. Students had been becoming 'lackadaisical'. They had been treating the boycott as a 'holiday' - staying at home and 'doing their own thing'. (Interviewee 4) Morale had been dropping as the boycott dragged on longer. (Interviewee 54) Students were saturated and could be politicised no further at that stage (Interviewee 38) - even the awareness programmes had become 'useless' (Interviewee 27) Some had decided to start studying because they wanted to write their examinations at the end of the year. (Interviewee 4) Such students believed that 'you can't go ahead in life and you can't fight this Government if you haven't got education' and had been feeling that their school work was being allowed to 'lag'. (Interviewee 54) 'They wanted to pass' - any education was better than none: 'It is not what you are learning that counts - it's actually, like, just having your certificate. With that you can go further - perhaps become a teacher or whatever - and contribute to the struggle.' (Interviewee 7) 'Towards the end things were really falling apart and the Committee had serious organisational problems - a lot of the leadership were detained and those, who were not, were getting very cautious

about their own positions'. The Committee of 81 was also very divided (Interviewee 48) It was felt that if the boycott did continue, the police would do their utmost to end it and that it was better to bring it to an end themselves than 'suffer much greater disaster' later. (Interviewee 54) Students were becoming scared by police intimidation, on the one hand, and by what might happen to their results at the end of the year, on the other. (Interviewee 54) They had also come to realise that they could not continue boycotting indefinitely and that the major demands could not be met in the short-term. (Interviewee 38) In resuming classes, they had, in fact, had no choice. (Interviewee 7) Finally, students had come to the conclusion that it was tactically wrong to press on and that they were 'kidding' themselves: 'You can't keep a boycott going indefinitely in the face of parent pressure, pressure from the cops, and your own saturation.' (Interviewee 27)

#### 22.12 *Isolated protests*

The rest of the year saw only relatively isolated protests in schools under the DCR. For example, at Livingstone Senior Secondary School one Friday morning, just after the end of the boycott, a group of Muslim students decided to attend mosque that afternoon. Although the Department had some years previously sent out directives that Muslim students were to be allowed to attend Friday prayers, Livingstone had always refused to let them go. They approached the principal, R.S. Evans, for permission but he would not give it. The group of approximately 70 students went to mosque anyway that afternoon and were reprimanded by Evans on their return. The dispute continued until two weeks later 80 boys, who had jumped over the fence to attend mosque in defiance of the principal, were expelled. Whereupon 50 girls walked out in protest and they too were expelled. Evans told the press that, 'The school committee and the staff decided that the school was to continue to run without regard to any person's religious persuasions.' After further protest and public pressure the 130 expelled students were reinstated unconditionally and the school committee decided that Muslim students should be allowed to attend Friday mosque. (Herald 2.8.80, 16.8.80; Argus 15.8.80)

Approximately a month after the end of the boycott, students at two schools burnt, tore up and threw away their Afrikaans school dictionaries - the 'Beknopte Verklarende Woordeboek' compiled by M.S.B. Kritzinger - in protest against it containing words which were derogatory and offensive to Black people. At Macassar Senior Secondary School, near The Strand, students also threatened to throw the dictionaries at an inspector. At Gordons Senior Secondary, in Somerset West, they threw dictionaries at the inspector's car and he was forced to leave. These protests resulted in the publishers undertaking an urgent revision of the dictionary. The nature of the protest and its effectivity was of more significance than the fact that the modifications actually made were widely felt to be less than adequate. (Argus 27.8.80; Herald 6.9.80)

The last two public protests during 1980 in schools under the DCR - one over physical conditions, the other against incessant fund-raising - were carried out by primary students. The students of Squarehill Primary School used their lunch breaks on two consecutive days in September to protest against the inadequate fencing of their school grounds which had led to the indiscriminate use of the premises as a thoroughfare as well as to the harassment of younger students by 'hoodlums' (Herald 20.9.80) In October, some 300 students at Voorspoed Primary School, in Hanover Park, staged a mass walkout after being told by the principal, A. Phillips, to leave because they did not want to participate in a planned 'big walk'. Why they objected to the big walk was partly because the Friday on which it was to have been held was a public holiday but, more importantly, because they felt that they had had too many fundraising efforts already that year. Those who did not bring their 'sponsorship' cards were told to go home and not return. Most of them fetched their Mothers who accompanied them back to insist that the school readmit them. (Herald 11.10.80)

## 23 The boycott lives

### 23.1 *The boycott taken forward*

The boycott was taken forward by students in schools under the DET. In the Eastern Cape there had begun to be moves to return to

school. On 21 August, the Port Elizabeth Students Council (Pesco) - a committee of some 20 students which in Port Elizabeth played a role similar to that of the Regional Committee in Cape Town - announced their decision to call off the boycott. Whether this decision was reversed or whether the call was simply not heeded, the boycott continued.

### 23.2 *Parents divided*

On the last day of August, a Sunday, over 8000 boycotting students and their parents attended a mass meeting chaired by the Revd James Haya, chairperson of the Port Elizabeth Parents' Committee. The decision of the meeting was that, if the students' short-term demands had been fully met, they should return to school on 15 September. The short-term demands which would have had to have been met, were that students detained in connection with the boycott be released, that expelled or suspended students be readmitted to schools or universities unconditionally, that transferred teachers be reinstated in their original schools, and that an elected committee be recognised as the only group to deal with grievances - committees elected by teachers would not be recognised. The long-term demands specified were for a unified, compulsory and free educational system for all and equal salaries for teachers of all races. The day before this meeting, parents from areas where students were boycotting had decided at a joint meeting to form a single parents committee in the Cape. (Argus 22.8.80, 1.9.80) In Cape Town, Standards 3 to 10 classes were empty. Organised student leadership was provided by the Regional Committee. Parental support was given organised expression by the Parents Action Committee. (PAC).

Parents were by no means united behind the boycott, however. At one point, for example, two meetings held at different times on the same day in the same venue and both attended by parents each, respectively, directed the student body in opposite directions. At a morning meeting on Monday, 1 September, parents, teachers and members of the school committees of the four local senior secondary schools under DET unanimously agreed that students should return to school immediately.

The approximately 600 people, who attended, decided that parents should encourage their children individually to resume their classes. That evening, a meeting of parents called by the PAC rejected the earlier meetings conclusion that the boycott should be ended. Members of the students' Regional Committee attended the evening meeting but were not allowed to contribute to the deliberations. The position of this meeting was that, by saying the textbooks demanded would be supplied once students had returned to class, DET was indicating a preparedness to meet only one of the students' demands. Said one parent, 'The fact that the Department is transferring school teachers to other areas is a clear indication that the Department is not interested in sorting out the children's grievances.' The parents' decision was that until DET 'sorted out' all grievances, the students would continue with the boycott. The following day a further meeting was held, aimed at uniting the PAC and school committees. In a statement read out at the meeting, the Regional Committee called for the resignation of all school committees in Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga. 'The resignation of the school committees should be made public to show solidarity with the school boycott, because the Government has failed to listen to grievances presented by the school committees.' The statement added that, after their resignations, members of the school committees would be elected on merit to serve on the PAC. The meeting was, however, unable to come to any implementable decisions as a result of its poor attendance by both parents and members of the school committees - fewer than a hundred parents and only four of the more than 300 members of school committees attended. (Argus 14.8.80, 2.9.80, 3.9.80)

### 23.3 *Ultimatum from the authorities*

Early in September, DET gave students one 'last chance' to return to class. The Minister, Dr F. Hartzenberg, issued a statement in which he emphasised that any further delay in the resumption of teaching would result in syllabuses not being covered. Students, who had returned to school, he said, had done so not with the intention of studying - 'they continued to disrupt their own education and to organise further boycotts'. Hartzenberg announced that, as the time factor had become critical, certain steps were to be taken 'to ensure the continued education of the children of those parents who take education seriously'. Firstly, on 4 and 5 September all

higher primary junior secondary, and senior secondary schools in specified areas would be closed. The areas were Guguletu, Langa and Nyanga in Cape Town, New Brighton, Walmer, Kwazakhele and Zwide in Port Elizabeth, Kwanohuble in Uitenhage, as well as in Grahamstown, Moyake High Primary, Ntsika Junior Secondary and Nathaniel Nyaluza Secondary Schools. Secondly, parents who wished their children to continue with their education were instructed to apply on Saturday, 6 September, for re-registration - in person and accompanied by the student - at the school where their children had been enrolled. Thirdly, after the schools had been re-opened on Monday, 8 September, 'with a view to normalising the school programmes and compensating for loss of time', the school day would be extended, extramural activities would be temporarily suspended, the school holiday would be waived and special study material would be made available to students. Finally, the Minister issued three related threats. Schools would be closed for the rest of the year if there was not 'effective teaching and learning'. Students, who failed to re-enrol or failed to pursue normal classes as from 8 September, would forfeit the right to sit for the end-of-year examinations. Whether or not building and other development programmes in the specified areas would be continued, would also depend on the students' response on 8 September. (Die Burger 28.8.80; Argus 4.9.80)

#### 23.4 *Refusal to re-register*

According to DET, less than 5000, or less than 50%, of the Cape Town students required to re-register if they intended returning to school did so. However, a meeting of more than 400 parents and 500 students held on the Sunday night before the schools were to re-open, reaffirmed that the boycott would continue until all the students' demands had been met. In line with the ultimatum issued by the mass meeting in Port Elizabeth precisely a week previously, they gave DET until 15 September to do so. The meeting also accused the school committees of collaborating with the Government and ordered their members to resign so that they could be replaced by the PAC. (Argus 8.9.80, 9.9.80) The next day was Monday, 8 September, and only 3042 of the 4704 students who had re-registered over the weekend came to school.

### 23.5 *Intimidation and violence*

Some of the militant boycotters could apparently not countenance the latter lack of solidarity and proceeded that same afternoon to beat up in their classrooms a number of the students who had re-registered and returned to class as well as some teachers. This task of intimidation, abetted by rapid rumours thereof, instantly produced the effect presumably desired. The next day, attendance fell off sharply. At one of the schools where students and teachers were beaten up, 236 students attended on the Monday and the next day none. At another school, which had not itself been the victim of physical intimidation but which was rife with rumours, where 254 out of a total of 560 students came on Monday, only 63 were there on Tuesday. Similarly, yet another school which had an attendance of 233 on Monday had only 50 students on Tuesday.

Tuesday saw violence coming from two sides. During the day, police batoned and dispersed a group of about 150 students who had gathered in a Guguletu church hall to discuss the boycott. (Argus 9.9.80, 10.9.80) That night students made 'examples' of one person from each of the four DET senior secondary schools. First, they went to the home of P. Tukulu, principal of Sizamile Senior Secondary School. Finding him not there, they terrorised his family before burning the house to the ground. They then moved to the home of the principal of Fezeka Senior Secondary School, where they overturned his car in front of the gate and burnt it. Next, they broke every window in the house of a teacher at I.D. Mkize Senior Secondary School. And, finally, they stoned out the windows at the home of a Langa Senior Secondary student who had refused to support the boycott. (Interviewee 26; Argus 10.9.80)

Later that week, in Bochum, Lebowa, secondary students set fire to their principal's house after which 56 of them were arrested. The following week, students at Imingcangathelo Junior Secondary School, in the vicinity of Alice, stoned the principal, S. Jara, to death. (Argus 10.9.80, 16.9.80)

The PAC responded to the violence of police and intimidators with a statement in which they said that 'Violence cannot be condoned, whether it be from the community or the police.' (Argus 11.9.80)

### 23.6 *The year abandoned*

Numbers at Cape Town's African higher primary and secondary schools continued to dwindle until, by the end of the week, classes were once more completely empty. Meanwhile, on 9 September, Hartzenberg had announced the indefinite closure of all higher primary and secondary schools - bar one each for those few students still attending classes - in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. By this stage, many of the boycotting African students in the Peninsula had given up any possibility of going back to classes that year. There was, however, little to replace school for these young people. Children of all ages were daily to be seen sitting, playing, walking, talking in the streets. A journalist, writing at the time, described the picture as one of 'directionlessness, uncertainty and frustration.' Many tried to find jobs - very few had any luck. Some applied for admission to schools in the Transkei and a few even tried to get into DCR schools. About 50 students registered at the Nyanga Arts Centre but most of them did not attend regularly. The majority just waited for 1981 when they planned to continue with their schooling. (Argus 11.9.80, 15.9.80)

### 23.7 *Schools closed*

A fortnight after DET had carried through the closure-re-registration-re-opening exercise, the Minister closed 74 Cape schools for the rest of the year. This meant in Guguletu, Langa and Nyanga alone some 11 014 students from 14 schools not completing their year's education. Six hundred students from two schools in Paarl were affected, as were 1 223 from two schools in Worcester. In the Cape as a whole, but excluding Kimberley, 19 senior secondary schools, with a combined enrolment of 15 702 students and 37 higher primaries with 26 370 students, were closed. Only in Kimberley were lower primary schools closed - 10 lower primary schools along with 4 higher primaries and 4 senior secondary schools. Altogether approximately 55 165 students

were affected by this round of closures. One school in Soweto was still closed as were those in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. A further three outside the Cape were closed in Bloemfontein. By early in October, 80 schools, plus several in Lebowa, had been closed and well over 60 000 students had to come to terms with the now inescapable reality that they were to lose a year of schooling. (Argus 9.9.80, 10.9.80, 22.9.80, 23.9.80; Cape Times 20.9.80, 26.9.80; Star 8.10.80)

Over and above the schools out of which the students had been locked for the rest of the year, there were a number of others which were open in little more than a nominal sense. This was the case in Bloemfontein, East London, Kimberley, Grahamstown, Fort Beaufort and Pietersburg as well as throughout the Ciskei. In every single centre in the Ciskei, there were schools being boycotted and, even in the rural areas, children were coming out on boycott. There were numerous clashes between police and students reported and, for example, in the last week of October alone, more than 900 students were arrested there. In summary, after schools opened in July there were DET schools boycotted in at least 26 cities and towns throughout the country. The level of tension in the African townships where this resistance had risen to the surface was extremely high. For instance, the East London representative of the South African Institute of Race Relations said of Mdantsane, 'it's never been so tense, not even in '76'. Natal, however, remained unaffected and only two schools in Soweto were touched. (Star 2.10.80)

### 23.8 *Incorporation of the lower primaries*

The last turn taken by the boycott's development in the Peninsula before the end of the year was when a call was made for the participation of lower primary schools from 6 October. This was an attempt to close down Cape Town's system of DET schooling in its entirety. This approach was adopted at a meeting held in Guguletu on 24 September when students decided that no child should be taught Bantu Education. In the Eastern Cape, PESCO also called upon lower primary students and their parents to support the boycott. As explained by PESCO's chair-

person, Duna Lamani, they wanted the lower primary students to boycott not only as a show of solidarity but also because, if they continued with their schooling, those who wrote their final examinations would the following year fill the places of the boycotting senior students, thus defeating the aim of the boycott. Allegations were made that both in the Western and Eastern Cape many were intimidated into heeding the call. A number of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhague students were, in fact, arrested or detained for alleged intimidation of lower primary students. A spokesperson for boycotting students in Cape Town told a journalist at the time that intimidation was a 'necessary evil' in order to bring about a change in the education system. Whether or not intimidation was initially, or remained, a significant factor, attendance at most lower primary schools in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Uitenhague was for the rest of the year well below 30% and at many nil. There was substantial division of opinion on the lower-primary schools boycott, however. Even a member of the PAC resigned because she could not reconcile herself to this aspect of the boycott. (Herald 25.10.80, 29.11.80; Argus 9.10.80, 13.10.80, 5.11.80)

### 23.9 *The last demonstration*

The last reported demonstration of the year arose from a small pre-school being evicted from a bungalow at Sonwabo Lower Primary School which the principal had allowed a teacher to use for that purpose from the beginning of the year but which the school had then decided to sell. Twenty-two toddlers marched down NY1 in Guguletu with placards protesting against their eviction and appealing to the people for help. One placard read, 'Who would like to adopt us?' (Argus 25.11.80)

### 23.10 *Dissolution of school committees*

The last move made by DET before the end of the year was to dissolve all secondary school committees in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhague and Grahamstown. This was in response to repeated allegations from students, parents and the broader township communities that the school committees lacked a mandate from parents. Hartzenberg

announced on 19 November that he had given instructions that new school committees be constituted and elections be held on 30 November. The PAC gave organisational expression to a widespread rejection of the school committees as being government bodies. The turnout on election day, in Guguletu, Langa and Nyanga, was so poor that the school inspectors postponed the elections until further notice. (Argus 20.11.80; Herald 13.12.80)

*23.11 With determination into the New Year*

Students' commitment to their cause in Guguletu, Langa and Nyanga seemed not to have waned by the time the DET schools were scheduled to re-open on 13 January, 1981, and feelings still ran high. A local newspaper interviewed at the time a number of the students involved to ascertain their attitudes. A Form 4 (Standard 9) girl stated categorically that no move would be made to return to school until the outcome of the trial being held in Hermanus of certain students who had been detained in connection with the boycott was known - which was supposed to be 26 January. 'And', said the same student, 'even if the outcome is satisfactory we won't automatically go back to school. We expect the Government to give us what we have been asking for the whole of last year - adequate facilities and enough books to go around are just some of the demands.' Most of the girls interviewed by the newspaper were guarded about the possibility of an improvement in 1981. 'We think the Government will give us more,' was a fairly common response. The boys tended to be more definitive and pessimistic in their assessment. 'The Government won't improve this year, and we won't go back to school.' None regretted the boycott for they felt it had 'pushed the Government'. Several, however, expressed anger at having had to go to such lengths and consequently having missed a year's schooling. A seemingly representative attitude was articulated by a Fezeka student who summed up the position as follows:

'When we boycotted schools in 1976 the authorities asked us to return to school and promised to meet our grievances once we were back at school. Nothing was done. Now, again, the authorities want us to return to school before solving our grievances. No ways!'

(Argus 8.1.81)

Meetings of parents, students and civic leaders were held just prior to the schools opening. The decision was that the boycott should continue until all the students' demands - short- and long-term demands including the release of all detained students - had been met. The Students' Regional Committee announced that lower primary students could attend classes but would not write examinations at the end of the year. The parents of these Sub A, Sub B, Standard 1 and Standard 2 students would not buy their children's books as these should be provided by the Government. They were also not to pay school fees for 1981. Children, who did go to school, were not to re-register because they had not been responsible for the schools' closure. The Regional Committee at the same time urged the Parents Action Committee to continue negotiations with the Government to try and deal with the students' grievances and secure the release of those still in detention. (Argus 12.1.81, 13.1.81)

### *23.12 More intimidation*

The day the schools opened, Guguletu, Langa and Nyanga were rife with rumours of action being planned against principals who collaborated with the Government in trying to break the boycott. Nine principals of secondary and higher primary schools received letters threatening them with death. The letters claimed they came from an 'underground movement' called Black Eye. They warned the principals to cooperate with the students. Although the exact wording of the letters differed, their contents were similar. The following is extracted from one of them:

'By doing this we are trying to build up your awareness. We know that you are after money and yet the Government has promise you of the increase of your salaries. What does money mean more than thousands of souls. We know that Botha is your god. And now its high time you look after your nation. The better way in order to not lose your life you are to exclude yourself from the Government. The Government has used you as tools of this Bantu Education. Brothers and Sisters of Azania, let us come together because we don't want you to lose your life.'

The letter then gave 'orders' that the principal should not accept new registrations or fees and should retain the existing registers. If not, it threatened, the principal should resign or 'choose between death and money'. (Argus 14.1.81)

It was not only principals who were threatened. Any students, who might have considered going back to school, were clear of what the consequences might be. Parents who had sent their children away to schools in the Ciskei and Transkei because of the boycott were also threatened and warned that their children should be back by 28 January. (Argus 14.1.81) Later in the week, a meeting of about 300 students called on all students who had taken jobs during the boycott to stop work by 21 January. They also called on all African students who had registered at DCR schools in order to continue their education during the boycott to stop attending by 28 January which was the date by when students, who had gone to the Bantustans for the same reason, were warned to return to Cape Town. The same day as the above meeting was held, about 1000 young people surrounded the home of a 19-year-old athlete who had been intending to take up a athletic scholarship in the USA. They threatened to burn his parents' house down and threatened him with death if he did not dissociate himself from every form of White education and identify himself with the boycott. (Argus 16.1.81)

### 23.13 *The end*

A week after the schools had opened, there was still not a single student registered at any of Cape Town's DET secondary schools and very few at the higher primaries. On 21 January, a six-hour meeting chaired by Haya was held in the Port Elizabeth township of New Brighton attended by members of PESCO, Cosas and at least eleven other Black organisations, including the Black Lawyers' Association, the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation, several church social bodies, and the Kwazakele Rugby Union. The meeting decided to call the boycott off but with certain conditions and while reserving to the students their right to decide on a further course of action. The conditions, which the meeting specified, were that all students who had been at school the previous year be readmitted to their former schools unconditionally,

that the final deadline for registration be extended, and that the Government bring about meaningful change in the education system in a reasonable period. (Argus 20.1.81, 22.1.81)

Some two-and-a-half weeks later, in Cape Town, a meeting of over 500 African students followed suit by also deciding to call off the boycott, with certain conditions, and to resume classes on 10 February 1981. The conditions were: that the relevant Government authorities be given a month to demonstrate in a viable and complete way that short-term demands were being met; that students detained purely in connection with the boycott be released within a month and that a student being held under Section 10 of the Internal Security Act, China Talakumeni, be brought back from Grahamstown and released; that no further students be detained on school premises where the detentions are connected with the boycott; that no victimisation of students by security police inside or outside school premises take place; that students who had the previous year contributed to school funds and paid examination fees would be credited with these payments in 1981; that students would not have to sign registration forms which contained clauses that children had to attend school regularly and be subject to school discipline; that students be allowed to form SRCs; and that the shortage of books and equipment be rectified. (Argus 9.2.81; Herald 14.2.81)

The 1980 students' boycott in Cape Town finally came to an end on Wednesday, 11 March, 1981. That was the deadline which the students had set for the Government to meet the conditions they had laid down when they had provisionally resumed classes a month earlier. However, a meeting of about 450 students held at Fezeka Senior Secondary School decided to suspend the boycott indefinitely. A statement from the meeting was released through the Regional Committee. In it, the students explained their position:

'We have come to realise that the intention of the Government is to keep us - black children - uneducated. We have decided to suspend the boycott indefinitely and resume our studies. Though the boycott is now suspended, the struggle against inferior education is continuing. Our form of struggle will from now on take on a different

complexion and tactics. The moment calls for us not to react to the provocation by the authorities in the way they want us to, but calls for us to attempt to normalise a very abnormal situation.'

The new tactic was to be to react to each problem as it was encountered. At the same time students stressed that they were still waiting for the Government to meet their demands, which included the release of detained students, free provision of stationery and textbooks, recognition of their SRCs as well as the PAC, and a review of increased examination fees. (Argus 12.3.81) So ended the 1980 Cape Town students' boycott.

## B. ADDITIONAL ASPECTS

### 1. Students' relationships with teachers and principals

The nature of the relationships between the students at a school, on the one side, and the teachers and principal, on the other, was generally not questioned under the 'normal' conditions prevailing prior to the boycott. As determined by the social structure of the schools under investigation, these relationships were intrinsically unequal. All authority lay on one side. Teachers and principals generally perceived nothing problematic in their imposition of that authority on the students who, for their part, took its legitimacy for granted. Teachers were generally accepted as the conveyors, if not source, of knowledge where 'knowledge' seemed to refer implicitly to whatever was not known from experience. Yet an impression gained from the interviews was that it was not so much respect as fear that the majority of teachers and principals inspired in their students through autocratic exercise of their authority which was often arbitrary, violent and, as described by certain teachers and students interviewed, even vicious. Where there was respect for the role of teacher, there was often none for the teachers who filled their role with so little commitment or competence. On the other hand, there were also many teachers and a few principals whom students held in high esteem and they constituted an influential minority. Teachers, for their part, mostly had minimal respect for students, regarding them as no more than leaky receptacles into which it was the teacher's job to pump information while having little themselves to give apart from trouble.

Most essential to the character of the relationships in question was the *control* of students by staff. This element of control was common to every classroom and school - only how it was maintained, varied. It was the latter, however, which made the difference between 'good' and 'bad' relationships in the perception of students. There were teachers and principals who commanded by the cane and relied heavily on repression, resulting in resentment and reduced communication. Others commanded a respect which won them students' cooperation and therewith control. The latter relied relatively less on punishment

and in particular corporal punishment; some were probably as un-authoritarian as the authoritarian structures would allow. Although students' relationships with such teachers and principals were pleasanter and more productive, they presupposed staff control of students no less.

Yet, it was precisely this fundamental element of the relationships which was most consistently and completely overturned in the boycott. The authority of principals and teachers was removed overnight as students began to boycott. The institutionalised hierarchies were swept aside and in most cases almost immediately replaced by more or less democratically constituted student authorities. As an interviewee said *vis-a-vis* the school at which he had been teaching in 1980, 'Up to the Wednesday (16 April), the principal was in full control of the school - a very oppressive school, in fact - and within a day his authority had gone. .... The kids actually took over.' An interviewee who had been a student leader at the time of the boycott described what had happened at his school: 'The normal hierarchy had no authority whatsoever. We blatantly denied their positions of authority. .... We would just inform them when they came to us ... of what we were doing or planning.' A teacher at a school where almost the entire staff had been openly opposed to the boycott described in an interview how the students ...

'went on as if the teachers didn't exist, including Mr X (the principal). They didn't even pretend to retain any respect for the office of principal ... They took over the school. The principal, if he wanted to say something at any assembly, had to ask to be allowed to do so. And whoever was taking the assembly would still say something like, "When I've finished I'll allow Mr X to say a few words to you." The teachers were astounded; they couldn't take it.'

A principal interviewed, in spite of having been well respected by his students, told of how on most issues he was 'just simply ignored. If they felt like marching around the building, they'd march around the building. If they wanted to go off home, they'd go off home. They didn't have my permission - I wasn't asked. They suspended the normal authority of the school.' The principals of some schools took the

course of least resistance and retreated with little ado to their offices where they stayed for most of the boycott. At other schools the principal continued to try and assert anything that might have been left of his authority. For example, to quote from the interview of a principal, who had been altogether opposed to the boycott, 'When I found the kids were getting out of hand and the discipline which a boycott action should presuppose was not forthcoming, I tried - not very successfully - to stop certain things. This put the kids entirely against me. They were resentful but initially accepted quite a lot. Later they disregarded my authority altogether and the SRC eventually took over completely.'

Students suddenly found that they were able to assert themselves *vis-a-vis* staff. For instance, students required one principal, who was a senior office bearer in the CTPA, to account for his position in that organisation at a meeting of the wholeschool. A teacher who had been present at this meeting described in an interview what had happened:

'The students got up one by one and really pinned him down. Their basic argument was how could he perpetuate the system and pretend to fight it. He was trying to tell them that he believes in peace, negotiation and dialogue - not in violence. One girl asked him then: How can you use dialogue against violence? - surely you're not going to tell me that the Government is not violent? Mr Y (the principal) didn't know what to say; he couldn't defend himself. So the students put it to him: Don't you think you should resign? You can't defend your position in the CTPA. Y was lost - he knew in that situation there was no defence. The meeting ended in some chaos with Y saying he can't eat humble pie any more - he's had his fill of humble pie.'

A student leader described how, for example, 'One day the staff locked the hall. We approached the office and really gave them a rapping. We just went to them, stated our case and said: We want that door open now. They had to open it.' At a state-aided senior secondary school where, at the time, 85% of the staff members were classified White, one of the latter related in an interview how, 'The pupils told us in plain straight language: We don't want you White teachers. .... One day the whole staff was brought up onto the platform by

the pupils and each was asked: Why are you here? And we had to give them a valid answer.'

Students seem to have felt little antagonism towards staff and shown still less. More common were feelings of contempt, usually left implicit or veiled by the trappings of formal respect. In general, the students asserted themselves with a firmness which did not involve any lack of respect for their teachers on an interpersonal level. Referring to the school where she had been a student, one interviewee said, 'We maintained respect for the teachers and principal. Our decisions were taken in a way that would keep them in the clear.' According to a teacher interviewed, 'In general the students remained respectful towards the teachers although they gave a fairly rough ride to the harder authoritarians.' Even a principal, who had been entirely rejected for his opposition to the boycott, described in an interview how 'Students stayed respectful in that they listened without booing, *etcetera*, but they did their own thing and didn't accept my approach.' Quoting from the interview of another teacher, 'Relations between staff and students remained fine throughout unlike some of the schools where there was a real *berak*. . . . Our students were polite, concerned about the teachers' difficult position, aware that we did our best, but said firmly: This is our affair - we're doing it our way.' The students seemed generally to want to avoid unnecessarily antagonising the regular authorities at school level. In many cases, they would go out of their way to be diplomatic and to work, where possible, with, rather than against, the principal. Thus, even when all parties were tacitly aware of the authorities' *de facto* lack of authority, the student leaders would still approach them for permission, for example, to hold a mass meeting. The latter would be 'virtually a formality', as put by one teacher interviewed, for during the boycott no principal could have prevented students doing anything. This is not to say that no principal had any say but, whatever say some might have had, was allowed them by the students and not derived from any institutional authority.

Students' response to criticism and opposition from teachers and principals was, for the most part, to ignore it. Speaking of the school where she taught, one interviewee, for example, described the staff as

having been, in general, 'blatantly hostile towards the students and the boycott. The students reacted to this by ignoring them completely.' A student interviewed told of how his principal had tried to intimidate students by, for instance, reminding them that at the end of the year they would need a testimonial from the school which would have to come through him. 'Some students were afraid but the majority weren't worried and paid him no attention.'

Teachers, for their part, found it extremely threatening to be ignored in this way. Thus, for example, one interviewee described how those of his colleagues at the school where he had been teaching, who had not identified with the students' cause, had seemed to feel 'crippled'.

'They didn't know how to handle the situation. They didn't like to see the kids take initiative. They felt threatened not only in a psychological sense but also some of the really oppressive teachers were actually scared they'd get hurt or have their cars damaged. One teacher didn't come to school for about three weeks. He claimed to have been sick but we reckoned he was just scared - he was really hated by the kids.'

At another school, according to an interviewee, who had taught there, 'Most of the teachers stayed in the staffroom feeling very threatened. At most four teachers dared it outside the staffroom. Not that they were afraid the students would attack them physically but just to be completely waived aside was probably too much for them.'

The students at most schools started off the boycott by wanting to be entirely independent of all teachers including even those whom they knew to be sympathetic. Teachers were excluded from their meetings and those, who were not regarded with contempt, were related to with caution. 'Anything the teachers suggested was counter-productive,' according to a teacher interviewed. 'They remained polite but forceful.' It was not long, however, before students, having found themselves hard-pressed for resources, started approaching teachers whom they considered 'trustworthy' and 'progressive' for assistance particularly in conducting the awareness programme. According to one teacher interviewed, 'Basically the students did everything themselves but sometimes they worried that they wouldn't do things right and

so they approached teachers - the three or four who were accepted as trustworthy - to check out certain things. This took quite a lot on the part of some who were quite arrogant.' There were some schools where almost the entire staff was supportive of the students. At one such school, the teachers even had a representative on the SRC. According to an interviewee, who had been a student there, 'The teachers generally played a helpful, positive role alongside the SRC.' Nevertheless, she continued, 'Although we took the views of our principal and teachers into consideration, the SRC made its own decisions as a representative body of students.' What the latter illustrates is, *inter alia*, that communication and cooperation between some students and some teachers and principals were good during the boycott and, where they were, the relationships, which usually had already existed, became closer and stronger. (Interviewees 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 21, 22, 25, 27, 30, 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, 41, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 58, 63)

## 2 Student organisation and leadership

Before the build-up to the boycott, students at most DCR schools in the Peninsula were unorganised and lacked leadership. Amongst the very few schools to have an SRC already were Crestway, Grassy Park, Harold Cressy, Livingstone and Spes Bona Senior Secondaries. About a year after Crestway had opened, in 1975, the principal and teachers had organised an SRC with the primary aim of involving students in the running of cultural activities at the school. Although the SRC was thus initially more of a cultural society than a student political body, on it every class was represented and what they discussed was not restricted to the 'Cultural'. Grassy Park, Harold Cressy and Livingstone Senior Secondary Schools had had SRCs since 1975 while at Spes Bona the first SRC had been elected at the beginning of 1980. Students at Arcadia Senior Secondary had also recently constituted an SRC but had had to do so surreptitiously as the principal would not give his permission for one's establishment and still less give it recognition.

Within a few days of the beginning of the boycott, most student bodies had an SRC. Where an SRC was not elected immediately, some

form of working committee was constituted. Generally, the latter would also be organised on a representative basis and a self-appointed action committee was exceptional. At one of the schools, which already had an SRC, students formed an *ad hoc* committee which incorporated a wider circle of activists than the SRC's membership and it was this body which provided the effective leadership during the boycott. Whatever the case, it was mostly the more senior and politically aware students - in a few cases, in conjunction with certain teachers - who took the initiative. For some schools the example set at other schools was important. Thus, for instance, students at Ocean View Senior Secondary, a school located in a relatively isolated community, only began organising themselves in earnest after a few of its senior students had been taken by a teacher through to a meeting at Heathfield Senior Secondary where they had seen something of what could be done with dynamic leadership.

Inter-school organisation was non-existent in the period immediately prior to the boycott despite certain attempts having been made in the years since 1976 to organise students at this level. The initiatives, which lead to the formation of the Committee of 81, were not taken by a pre-existing leadership. For an understanding of what brought students together in such a body, it is necessary rather to study the significant voids in the structure of the situation which lead almost inevitably to a widespread realisation of the necessity of forming a coordinating student organisation. Practically, the Committee of 81 came into being first through the hard work of those who took the initiative of putting around word of the initial meetings in response to which students began to mobilise.

Massive as the response was, it was not without attempts in certain quarters having been made to restrain the rank-and-file enthusiasm. Thus, notably at the handful of schools where the TLSA was still the dominant influence amongst the teachers, who in turn exercised a degree of influence over students, the already established student leadership started out opposed to the boycott and sceptical of the Committee of 81. Teachers were feeding students' apprehensions while sowing suspicion about the Committee of 81 with the claim that

it was sponsored by 'liberals' and 'the Church'. Such was the situation at, for example, Harold Cressy and Livingstone Senior Secondaries. Both schools already had well-established SRCs which immediately took up a wary and somewhat supercilious stance. An interviewee who had been on the Livingstone SRC gave the following version of their position:

'We were new to the game and we were therefore susceptible to people who had political experience, like the teachers, and they were easily able to manipulate us. .... Their main argument was that 1980 would just give us another outburst which would not be able to help us constructively and so we should rather build up our student organisations instead of coming out on boycott. I was quite susceptible to this kind of thinking at that stage - it's nothing to be ashamed of because that was the sort of view we were given'.

The entire executive of the Livingstone SRC was opposed to the boycott. They sent delegates to the Committee of 61, as it was initially, but their arguments were little appreciated. In reporting back to the school they used 'wit and sarcasm', according to an interviewee, in trying to ridicule the Committee. Few were taken in by this, however, and pressure began building up to bring the school into line with the majority decision which had been to boycott. Never before had the SRC executive been called to account but now rank and file students were posing penetrating questions - 'we had to answer them', said an interviewee who had been on the executive. It was not long before this pressure from below had changed the leadership's view of both the Committee of 81 and the boycott. Meanwhile, according to the same interviewee, 'we found a new solidarity and we began to understand new modes of working'.

The students set special store by democracy within their movement from the outset. The foundation stones of the structure of student organisation so rapidly erected were the individual students in their respective classes. Most commonly each class would elect one or two representatives who would come together as the school's SRC. Some system of weighted-balancing representation was not unknown. Thus, for example, at one school where an existing constitution for an SRC was revived each of the Standards 9 and 10 classes elected three

representatives while the Standard 8 classes were each represented by 2 members of the SRC and the most numerous Standards 6 and 7 classes each by one representative.

However the SRC was constituted, it would then elect two of its members as the school's delegates to the Committee of 81. In the case of, for example, the geographically somewhat isolated Sentinel Junior Secondary in Hout Bay, the school was represented on the Committee of 81 not directly but by the delegates of one of the Senior Secondary Schools to which many Sentinel students went on to do matric. Returning to Hout Bay, as the latter students did daily, made close communication between the two schools easy. Some of the delegates to the Committee of 81 served consistently for the duration of the boycott. At the same time, there was a considerable turnover in the membership of the Committee as some SRC's rotated their delegates. One version was for a school to have a constant delegate who would, if possible, attend every meeting of the Committee but be accompanied to each by a different member of the SRC - this allowed for maintaining continuity as well as giving a representative range of the school's students direct experience of the Committee of 81 thereby minimising the possibility of distortion of the positions and decisions which delegates were charged with conveying back and forth.

How positions were developed and decisions taken varied from school to school, varied during the course of the boycott and varied with what was at issue. Sometimes decisions would be taken formally by the respective constituents of each class representative and conveyed to an SRC meeting. It was accepted, however, that SRC members had a responsibility to lead which went beyond being only delegates of their classes. Particularly as the boycott wore on and less students were coming to school, policy was often formulated by the SRC, uninformed by a formal debate amongst the rank and file. Important decisions in particular, though, were generally taken at a mass meeting of all present and the school's delegates instructed to convey them to the Committee of 81. At the meetings of the Committee of 81, decisions were taken by majority vote.

All but a tiny minority of the students interviewed had felt

dissatisfied with the level of democracy which had been maintained at their respective schools during the boycott. Nobody interviewed, who had had direct experience of the Committee of 81, denied that its functioning had been less than perfectly democratic. Some of the students interviewed, who had played more of a leadership or activist role, were relatively accepting of what lack of democracy there had been. One such interviewee said she had been able to understand why decisions had not always been democratic:

'Its easy to say things weren't done democratically but it's not always so easy to be democratic in a crisis. It's not easy to get representatives from 81 institutions together twice or thrice a week until what time of night let alone to have them all go back and get mandates before taking any decisions. A mandate is a simple matter but it takes organising. All this was particularly difficult as people were generally drained emotionally and there were in fact very few organising everything.'

By highlighting the effective impossibility of the Committee of 81 functioning democratically with consistency, the latter remarks refer not to undemocratic divergences from an altogether democratic structure but rather to the inevitable results of a structure inherently undemocratic. No matter how formalistically democratic a structure seems, if it does not permit of democratic procedure in practice then it cannot be democratic. The Committee of 81 was simply too cumbersome to coordinate and lead on a democratic basis, the more so if true to its original unwritten constitution whereby members were mere delegates restricted to the specific mandates of the student bodies which sent them. The Committee of 81 doomed itself either to forsake the role required of it altogether or to depart from democratic procedure. Yet, the role required of it was a democratic one and for that the students' organisation would have had to have been otherwise structured. As it was, it was inevitable that many decisions made in the name of the Committee of 81 were not taken by majority vote at meetings of the full Committee.

Almost immediately there started emerging a self-appointed leadership within the Committee of 81 which served as a *de facto* executive between meetings. It was neither an entirely coherent nor

static set but consisted of activists whose initiatives - not always taken collectively - were accepted as long as they remained consistent with the spirit of the Committee's overall approach. In time, they became constituted on a semi-formal basis as a non-elected 'central committee' or 'coordinating group'. Thus effectively entrenched, they moved to prevent self-proclaimed spokespersons issuing statements to the press in the name of the Committee by establishing a small 'press committee'. Newspapers were furnished with the names of its members who alone were allowed to speak on behalf of the Committee. They also established an editorial committee through which all material to be published under the name of the Committee of 81 had to pass. It was made known that nothing issued verbally or in print, which had not been through either of these channels, could be regarded as an authentic pronouncement by the Committee. The latter measures might have been used to protect the democratic voice of the Committee as a whole. In fact, they probably did more to help the close circle of central individuals, from which the overlapping membership of the coordinating, press and editorial committees were drawn, to control the Committee's direction since there were not the mechanisms to render those committees accountable to the full Committee, still less to the student body as a whole. Matters were made worse by the representatives having proved frequently ineffective in keeping open a consistent channel of communication between the Committee of 81 and the student rank and file. Thus, one of them claimed in an interview that 'A lot of things were going on at the Committee of 81 which the school didn't know about.' Meanwhile, according to one of those who had been part of the inner core, 'Increasingly things fell into the ambit of the Central Committee and it was this Central Committee which steered things more and more as a sort of vanguard'.

Persons interviewed, who had been delegates to the Committee of 81, spoke of how it had effectively become a relatively small nucleus of individuals who were making all the decisions. According to one of those who had been involved in this development,

'There was tremendous friction within the Committee of 81. The radical element managed to oust the more moderate students who were very paranoid about '76, remembering the police intimidation, *etcetera*. We felt at the time

that if we were going to allow all that to impede our activities then what was the use of doing what we were doing. We then formed a strong element within the Committee of 81 which could push through decisions.'

Sometimes their decisions would receive formal ratification of the Committee while at other times not even that. An interviewee, who had been very close to the central core, admitted that 'A lot of the time the majority of the Committee were merely instructed with decisions.' It seemed to many that the powerful minority within the Committee of 81 was little concerned with democracy. There were those who, failing to find approval for their approach would, if feasible, follow it regardless. Most of the time, however, they did get their way. Generally, the leaders in question were dedicated and politically articulate organisers; some had political contacts outside the student movement; some were tertiary students. As such, they could command a lot of respect and of this they took full advantage to dominate meetings and create a climate of attitudes which inhibited easy expression of views opposed to their own.

Persons interviewed, who had been 'ordinary' delegates to the Committee of 81, identified the main problem with meetings of the Committee as having been that there had been those who had spoken all the time without giving others a fair chance. Tertiary students, especially, were accused of having ridden rough-shod over the rest of the students. What prevented many from saying what they would have wanted to say was the 'atmosphere of hostility' at meetings, as described by one interviewee. For example, according to the latter, 'if you spoke and weren't too clear on an issue (usually a euphemism for having missed the line to be toed) somebody would just, like, sort of expose you.' His use of the notion of exposure was not chance since there came a time when a person putting forward a position, which conflicted with that sponsored by the leadership, might be made out to be a sell-out and traitor to the students' cause. The problem was otherwise perceived by an interviewee who had been part of the self-styled 'radical caucus' within the Committee; his version went as follows:

'A lot of students came to the Committee of 81 with no particular clear ideological perspective. They were very

paranoic and confused. Their influence had to be countered by those who were clear about our objectives. This ... wasted a lot of our energy. That's why we had such a lot of meetings; at times ... we would sit for hours without being able to come to a decision. Then we'd just have to convene a further meeting for the next day or whenever.'

Members of this core faction within the Committee of 81 showed signs of a ruthlessness in their determination to entrench themselves. Thus, for example, they had one delegate thrown out of a meeting and excluded permanently from the Committee by branding him an informer. The person in question had earlier played a central role in initiating what grew into the Committee of 81 but had turned out too independent for the core group to tolerate, particularly in view of his having been widely respected amongst students. One of those involved in this cynical ejection admitted in an interview that the charge they had used, had been trumped up for the purpose.

Returning to the level of individual schools many students came to feel forced to do what they had not themselves participated in deciding to do. According to the description of a student interviewee, 'Our rep's would come back with instructions from the Committee of 81 that we have to do this or we have to do that.' To this students objected even though they usually had no objection to the substance of such edicts. In the schools themselves democracy became for the most part as marred as it did in the Committee of 81. At many, it was what might be termed a 'strong-armed democracy' which prevailed. Decisions were effectively made by a leadership caucus which then bulldozed them through a meeting of the student body for rubber-stamping. Thus, for instance, according to the description of one student interviewed, 'Sometimes the working body would have decided on an issue - for example, that the boycott should continue - and instead of presenting the arguments on both sides of the matter to the students for their decision, as was expected of them, they'd push only the arguments favouring the side on which they had already come down.' Other student interviewees told substantially identical stories; one said, 'We often felt that the leadership had decided on a line and was pushing it one-sidedly without students having a chance to give matters due consideration, to understand properly and on an informed basis to

decide for themselves what to do.' A corollary of this 'strong-arm democracy' was the frequent lack of any real opportunity for the expression of minority opinion or of anything which conflicted with the leadership's opinion.

There were further factors diminishing the democracy of students' practice. One was that so many students lacked knowledge of, and experience in, democratic procedure. Students would sometimes have only the vaguest notion of what they were voting for when electing representatives and neither they nor those elected would understand what the functions of a member of the SRC were supposed to be. At many schools the majority of particularly the Standards 6s and 7s had never attended a meeting before and knew nothing of such responsibilities as reporting back to those whom they represented while in any case understanding but a fraction of what was discussed. Another factor was that so many students withdrew from decision-making either to opt out altogether or content to go along with the activists amongst them and forgo their right to participate in democratic process. A consequence of many students failing to have their opinions recorded was that majority decisions taken were not always representative but had to serve as decisions of all a school's students nonetheless.

The above shortcomings of students' attempts at democratic organisation did not detract from the sincerity and seriousness with which those attempts were made nor from the degree of democracy which was achieved. Nor did they detract from the message and meaning of the movement and its boycott because the students had demonstrated a mass consensus on rejection of the system and on the boycott as an appropriate weapon to resist it which overarched all else. Furthermore, the student leadership in the forms both of school SRCs and of the Committee of 81 was widely accepted, albeit not by all. While for most students effective authority was represented by their SRC during the boycott, the Committee of 81 was unchallenged as their movement's organisation. The direction taken by the boycott in the DCR schools of the Western Cape was for most of its duration primarily determined by the Committee of 81. It was only through the Committee of 81 that the direction of the boycott could be influenced. In spite of the

relentless caucussing of contacts on the Committee to which the latter reality lead, the major decisions continued to be made by the Committee itself. Notwithstanding whatever might have been less than democratic within the Committee, it was there that student strategy was hammered out. Furthermore, in the face of the consistent efforts of a powerful minority pressing for a more confrontationist approach, the majority almost as consistently managed to stand its ground.

The existence of the Committee of 81 and of SRCs in the schools reflected a certain level of organisation amongst Black students of the Western Cape but did it reflect an organised student rank and file? Not necessarily - that much is self-evident. The people of a country are not organised by virtue of being enfranchised and having a system of centralised decision-making. The student movement of 1980 was less organised than the appearance given it by the above structures which reflected in fact no more than a relatively organised leadership.

The students who emerged during the boycott as leaders at their schools were not all of a type. Overall they came from a cross-section of economic backgrounds although this was not necessarily the case at any one particular school. Thus, using the students' own categories, there were schools at which the leaders were drawn predominantly from 'working class' families while at others they were drawn from more 'middle class' families. The latter was a notion which usually referred either to the relatively more affluent working class layer of, for example, some artisans, or to the petty bourgeois layer of, for example, teachers and shopkeepers. It would seem that the student leaders came more commonly from backgrounds which were relatively less deprived, where deprivation was seldom limited to the purely economic sphere and usually involved cultural and educational deprivation as well. Students with relatively more formally educated parents and from homes where newspapers and books were read and matters of political relevance were discussed, had more chance of developing the relatively greater political understanding and ability to articulate their concerns which generally characterised the student leaders. At one senior secondary school, in the southern suburbs of the Peninsula, it was noticed that the leadership was drawn predominantly not from families

long settled in the particular area but from those who had relatively recently moved there from the City, victims of the Group Areas Act and the destruction of District Six. In terms of scholastic performance, the leadership was again drawn from a cross-section of the student body including if anything a disproportion of poorer performers. One principal noted in an interview how the latter shone in the context of the boycott - although academically weak, they proved themselves strong in other ways with the ability to rally their fellow students and vocalise their demands. In general, the leaders tended to be more senior students. They were usually well known personalities at their schools and regarded as being 'clued up' on 'what was really happening'. They were relatively more aware politically than most and typically more militant and outspoken. Some had political contacts and connections outside of the student movement but even they were not affiliated organisationally, at any rate initially. They were generally articulate, adequate public speakers and able to argue a convincing case.

Most of the students who played leadership roles seemed sincerely dedicated to their cause and showed the courage of their convictions. However, there were also those egoists concerned only to be in the limelight. The latter were, in the words of one student interviewee, 'interested in the boycott just so that they could be, like, THE *ouens* around'. Many of the student leaders commanded real respect; others did not. The latter was illustrated by an interviewee's description of the leadership at the school where he had been a student at the time:

'There were about three well-spoken and considerate students on the SRC but the rest were no example for the rest of the students because they were there more to take advantage of the situation for themselves. Some tried to compel students to do things against their better judgement by squirting them with fire extinguishers, for example. People who behaved like that lost the confidence of the students.'

The observations of an 'inside-outsider' interviewed - a Fort Hare student who became acquainted with some of the Western Cape student leaders while in detention with them - are worth noting. The impression which he had formed, was that they were involved more emotionally than on the basis of having thought things out thoroughly within a framework of real dedication.

'They seemed to be enjoying the action - the shouting and speeches, *etcetera*; they never impressed me as people who displayed the sort of qualities that some did in 1976. In 1976 people would sit down and could discuss the whole situation. It looked to me as though the Committee of 81 members had been chosen more on the grounds of being sharp speakers than politically mature persons who could assess the situation and give real leadership. It seemed that they didn't have any background in this kind of thing and only got involved when the boycott broke out - individuals who were there for the moment.'

Certainly the student leaders had their limitations. Perhaps their most serious weakness was how they allowed themselves to be split through in-fighting between individuals or factions set on 'doing their own thing'. Action would often be cused by argumentation. On the other hand, there was an activistic element who tended to be adventurist and 'hot-headed', particularly when it came to assessing what level of action could realistically be expected of people. Some of them learnt a bitter lesson in this regard while detained. A hunger strike was suggested by one of the detainees but rejected by the majority in favour of a demonstration of complete non-cooperation with the prison authorities. Within two days, they were totally divided concerning its continuation and, according to one who was interviewed, 'at the first sign of a baton-charge with dogs, *etcetera*, people were already saying they were going back into their cells.' As a result of that experience, all agreed on a limited period hunger strike, intended not as a tactic to gain their release but as a form of protest against their detention without trial. The above interviewee described how

'Again the same thing happened: the same students were clamouring "To the death!" sort of bravado stuff. Yet those very students flaked out before the end of the week, which had been agreed on, and they argued for an immediate end to the hunger strike. That was of course a very humiliating position they found themselves in and very sobering. After that they became a lot more realistic in their demands of other people.'

The student leadership was uneven in strength, in political background, even in depth of commitment, and generally in the resources they brought to their struggle. Whatever the quality of the leadership, it played a part of central importance throughout the boycott - on this,

everybody interviewed was agreed albeit from varying viewpoints. Leadership was crucial in mobilising students, determining the direction taken by the boycott, and maintaining its momentum. A mere handful of students with leadership ability could carry a whole school along a particular course while schools lacking leadership would soon find themselves without any structure at all. At most schools, the student leadership suspended entirely, and replaced the normal authorities. Even one of the principals interviewed admitted, 'One of the striking features of the boycott was that whoever undertook the leadership among the students had greater control over the students than we as a staff'. A senior teacher at one school used to be teased during the boycott in the local pub about his 'new principal', namely the principal student leader who did, even according to teachers, become in that period the most important individual at the school. The leadership at schools was generally able - using 'strong-arm' methods mainly of a 'moral' kind but sometimes involving limited physical coercion and/or threats thereof - to enforce their alternative discipline. (Interviewees 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58)

### 3 Consciousness amongst students

#### 3.1 *Unevenness*

What students were conscious of, and how they interpreted what they perceived, varied enormously although obviously less so in certain respects than in others. All students would of necessity have been conscious of the conditions in their own schools, communities and homes. The conditions experienced by different students were objectively differentiated although they were in certain important aspects similar for all Black students. Not all students were necessarily conscious of conditions as being inferior and/or unacceptable; nor did they all necessarily have some interpretation of why conditions were as they were and/or of whether conditions could be other than they were. This was manifested, *inter alia*, not only in the differential readiness amongst students to respond positively to the call to boycott but also in the differential forms taken by participation in the boycott.

It seems reasonable to assume that certainly once the boycott had become widespread it would have been effectively impossible for any Black secondary or tertiary student in the Peninsula to have entirely escaped consciousness of what was at issue. However, there were students who, as variously described by interviewees, 'Came along for the ride', participated 'for the fun of it, not out of any seriousness about the boycott as such', regarded the boycott as a 'joy-ride', or 'saw it as an opportunity for jollification'. (Interviewees 7, 8, 38, 54) According to a newspaper report at the time, 'even the most outspoken and ardent of the young protesters admitted there were those who were just "coming along for the ride" or for that matter simply staying at home for the duration of the boycott. These last mentioned children are "unconscious" according to the student leaders. "They just don't know what is going on and probably never will", said one.' (Argus 26.4.80)

An interviewee, who was teaching during the boycott at a school where a considerable section of the student body stayed at home, thought that such students 'probably didn't see what they themselves were doing in a political light.' (Interviewee 32) However, nor did some of the students who did come to school during the boycott for, as the same interviewee went on to say, 'A lot of the kids continued to come to school solely because it was like a meeting ground for friends whereas at home they'd very likely be by themselves and have to do things like clean the house and do the shopping.' (Interviewee 32) Another student interviewee considered that the majority of students at his school, while not having been actively against the boycott, were not really for it or, if at all, only in a passive sense. He described how initially the boycott had been experienced as a novelty and most students had been at least curious to see what was going on and what would happen. In due course, however, the abnormality of the boycott became a new, sort of, if temporary, normality to which they adjusted in such a way that things could continue to pass them by as they did in normal school-time. As the interviewee put it, 'the moral of the boycott wasn't much evident in many of the students' actions' - he cited low turn-outs to certain demonstrations as an illustration of his point. It was his opinion that, although many students bandied around such notions as 'solidarity' and 'unity', the majority did not really understand what they were all about. Furthermore, he observed that many students had

become despondent with the boycott because they were so used to living with the conditions as bad as they were - and having been fairly unaware of how inferior these conditions were in relation to those at White schools - that some students were in fact a little frightened of the demands and expectations which could be placed on them in altered circumstances. (Interviewee 50) Another student interviewee had also perceived 'quite widespread lack of dedication' - his estimate was that approximately half the students had been 'made aware of what was happening'. (Interviewee 54) Yet another student interviewed went so far as to say that he 'didn't think the bulk of the students really understood the issues at stake'. (Interviewee 38) Referring to the students in Standards 6 and 7, who constituted, as was typical, the majority at his school, a student interviewee said,

'I don't think most of them realised the seriousness of what we were doing because they seemed not to be interested in meetings, for example - they came there and talked the whole meeting through; sometimes they had to be kept quiet. When the SRC chairman would react angrily to their messing around they would just laugh at him.'  
(Interviewee 3)

Another described how the student body had been differentiated at her school: 'You get those who think this kind of thing is important and others who feel, bugger the boycott! What's it all going to achieve anyway?' (Interviewee 21)

Those latter 'others' would appear, however, to have been in the minority overall. At the end of the boycott's second week, Keith Kiewiet of The Argus wrote as follows:

'There is an acute awareness that there is something wrong with "the system". The kids are well aware of society's injustices and are highly articulate in expressing their distaste for them'. (Argus 26.4.80)

A week later, Moegsien Williams, also of The Argus, observed that ...

'The most notable aspects of the school protest so far have been the degree of political sophistication even among primary school children, the disciplined demonstrations

and the way the pupils have been able to keep it peaceful.

'A Standard 4 pupil told his mother this week that his teacher was not getting the "salary she is supposed to get" and that he was tired of "sharing a textbook".'  
(Argus 3.5.80)

One of the students already quoted, claimed that 'students were fully conscious of what they were doing from the beginning'. (Interviewee 3)  
An ex-student of Mount View Senior Secondary referred to the fact that in 1979 they had had a few one-day strikes at their school. According to him, 'The students were quite aware politically - in the sense that they knew there was a struggle to be waged - but not in any very sophisticated sense'. (Interviewee 20)

A third-year Hewat student was quoted at the time as stating, 'The pupils are far more politically aware than a few years ago. The modern student understands the deficiencies and shortcomings of his education and is growing tired of putting up with them.' (Sunday Tribune 27.4.80) The following extract from an article entitled, 'What did the boycott achieve?', written by the Assistant Editor of the Herald, in mid-May, indicates something about the extent of that awareness:

"Why are you boycotting?" We fired this question at three youngsters passing our car at a traffic light.

The reply came without any hesitation: "For equal education".

This was the Thursday primary schoolchildren had come out in support of the boycott.

"What do you know about unequal education?" we asked.

"We know ... we get broken books at school and our teachers work so hard but they get less than the whites."

They rattled off several other reasons, including some complicated statistics on the different amounts spent on white and black education.

Yet, they could not have been older than ten.

... the awareness created by the schools' boycott has reached right down to the very young in our community.'  
(Herald 17.5.80)

### 3.2 *Grievances and demands*

#### 3.2.1 A developing set

Examination of what students identified as having been unacceptable to them and of the demands on which they made their stand will serve as a way further into the heterogeneous content of the consciousness among Black students during the boycott. The main demands have already been detailed at chronologically appropriate points in the overall account. Thus, although they will have to be restated for the purposes of this section, it will not be necessary to describe again the particular ways and contexts in which they were put forward.

It is essential to recognise from the outset that the demands, which were associated with the students' boycott, in no sense constituted a simple or static set: they expanded in the course of the boycott; they did not all emanate from the same source; some demands were variously formulated; not all the demands were pressed by all the boycotters - some were specific to a region, school or faction; there was a degree of disagreement amongst students over what the 'real' demands were and whether the more limited ones were actually only tactical demands of little intrinsic significance; and the demands came to be differentiated in terms of strategic assessments of whether the students could reasonably or realistically expect them to be met in the short-, medium-, or long-term.

#### 3.2.2 Initial grievances and demands

The main grievances, which students had identified, and the demands which they had made in the three-and-a-half months of 1980 before the boycott began and in its first week, have already been described and the details of precisely which grievances and demands were put forward by which students - whether from schools falling under the Department of Education and Training, of Coloured Relations or of Indian Affairs, whether on the Rand or in the Western or Eastern Cape - will generally not be repeated. Taking all of these grievances and demands together in this way they can be categorised in terms of having had reference

to one of four aspects of the educational system: the *conditions* in educational institutions, the *cost* of education, and the *constitution* and *control* of the education system.

### 3.2.2.1 *Conditions*

A number of the grievances/demands concerned the very poor physical state in which many schools were and the fact that much of the damage done during the demonstrations of 1976 had never been repaired. In the same sub-category could be placed the grievances/demands related to the shortages of textbooks, stationary and equipment, which schools were suffering, as well as the complete lack, in many cases, of library and/or of laboratory facilities.

A second sub-category of grievances/demands related to teachers. Students demanded official action on the acute shortage of teachers and the under-qualification of so many of those trying to teach as well as action against teachers and principals who were 'unreliable' or 'inept', who abused corporal punishment, who would come to school drunk or on Wednesday would leave early to attend race meetings if they had not absented themselves earlier in the day to lay their bets at the off-course tote. At some schools, students demanded, for example, the dismissal of a particular teacher or the appointment of a teacher for a certain subject; at one, they objected to the behaviour of a teacher in having insulted some of them and their parents. One grievance was that certain teachers were instructing their students to buy ledger-type books in place of the normal hardcover exercise books with which they were issued and, if they did not, either refusing to mark work done in the smaller books or throwing the students out of their classes.

Thirdly, concerning the curriculum, students from DCR schools in Johannesburg demanded 'higher standards' and 'better books'.

The fourth sub-category of these grievances/demands had reference to overt state presence in schools and to repressive steps against staff and students. Students from DET schools in Soweto refused to be taught by 'national servicemen'. In the Western Cape, students demanded that the Security Police not have free access to school premises and at one

school they protested against their principal having called in the Security Police to interrogate them after someone had written 'Swapo' on a blackboard. Further, students demanded the reinstatement of the three teachers, whom they considered to have been dismissed from Crystal Senior Secondary School unfairly, as well as of any student who had been expelled for political reasons.

The final two demands in the category of 'conditions' came from DET schools in Soweto and the Eastern Cape, respectively: the one was for the readmission of all students, who had been barred from school on the grounds of having been too old, and the other was that of students, rejecting the double-stream matriculation system, not to be compelled to take certain subjects in the standard grade and all to be entered for the higher grade examinations.

#### 3.2.2.2 *Cost*

Grievances/demands concerning the cost of education to the students' parents figured prominently. Students opposed, first of all, compulsory fees. At a DET school, students complained that not only were fees compulsory but they had been raised. Students at certain DCR schools complained that they were sent home when their parents did not pay the fees in conflict with their understanding of the regulations which was that fees were voluntary and were supposed to be paid only by those who could afford them. Furthermore, students complained that nothing visibly of benefit to themselves was being done with the money collected on 'lists' and as fees.

Secondly, with reference to cost, students demanded the abolition of uniform which was, according to some of them, 'expensive and unnecessary'. Students from certain DCR schools complained that they were forced to leave their schools if they did not wear uniforms in spite of the fact that, as far as they understood it, uniforms were not supposed to be compulsory.

Thirdly, students objected to parents still having to pay for exercise- and textbooks in spite of their having been supposed to be supplied free.

They objected, fourthly, to their parents having had to pay examination fees for all standards when fees were supposed to be payable only for the Standard 8 and matriculation examinations.

Fifthly, there were students who protested against their parents having been forced to pay for athletic meetings even when their children were not attending them.

Finally, in Soweto students made the general demand for free education.

#### 3.2.2.3 *Constitution*

Students opposed the racist basis on which the education system as a whole was segregated and the differential treatment of its respective segments. There were demands for the abolition of 'racial education', of 'Bantu Education' and of the Department of Coloured Relations. Students from DCR schools in Johannesburg even demanded the 'integration of all schools'. The demand was made for the abolition of the requirement that students of one classification apply for a Government permit in order to attend certain educational institutions reserved for another classification group. There was also protest against the disparity in the money spent on the education of the various 'population registration groups' and the demand that the Government immediately review its fiscal policy on Black schools with a view to equalisation of the distribution of funds for education. Related to the latter, parity of all teachers' salaries was demanded by students under the DCR in Johannesburg. Finally, in this regard, students in Soweto demanded that compulsory education be extended to all.

#### 3.2.2.4 *Control*

Students started effectively calling into question the control of their education when they demanded official sanction, and recognition, of SRCs so that they could have a say in matters which directly affected them. The only other grievance, which was related at all overtly to the same question, was that certain school committees included members who did not have children at the schools and, therefore, had no right to be in such positions. (Argus 12.2.80, 13.2.80, 20.2.80, 21.3.80, 22.3.80, 12.4.80, 14.4.80, 19.4.80; Cape Times 28.1.80, 20.2.80, 15.3.80, 15.4.80; Herald 19.1.80, 22.3.80; Grassroots, April 1980: 1, 16; Social Review 9(May 1980) 15; Intergroup 3(June 1980) 1; Interviewee 26)

### 3.2.3 The issues and demands develop

The above demands had all been made by the end of the boycott's first week. From as early as the week following, additional demands, many of a different order to those which had already been made, began to appear in pamphlets circulating amongst Black students in the Peninsula, on their placards, in newspaper reports of interviews with students and of what students and others were saying at community meetings, as well as in the statements of student leaders. At the same time, the distinction between short- and long-term demands was introduced. Least documented in the main account were the formulations of the demands contained in the pamphlets referred to above and it is, therefore, to those that special attention will be given below.

The demands for specific changes within the schools were still there, as were those calling for the reconstitution of the education system on a non-racial basis. The latter took the form of demands for 'equal education', for 'equality in teacher-training for all future teachers', and for the same wage-structures for all teachers with equal qualifications without regard to 'race' or sex. (Document 31) The demands for changes in the constitution of the education system became linked explicitly to demands for changes in education's entire context. 'One system of free compulsory education for all people' was demanded for a context of 'one undivided South Africa'. (Document 31) One pamphlet demanded 'freedom from EDUCATIONAL *domestication*' along with freedom from 'ECONOMIC *suffocation* and POLITICAL *intimidation* and *persecution*'. It went on to demand the 'abolition of APARTHEID and RACIALISM', a 'non-racial, anti-racist government elected by the people', the 'release of ALL political prisoners', an 'international commission of inquiry into deaths in detention', and an end to '"Coloured" and "Indian" favourism in the WESTERN CAPE'. (Document 16) Another pamphlet prefaced its enumeration of specific demands with the declaration: 'We reject APARTHEID AND ITS EDUCATION SYSTEM'. (Document 28)

One pamphlet associated the students' demands for 'equal education' with workers' demands for 'equal wages'. (Document 14) The Federation

of Cape Civic Associations issued a pamphlet in which it spelt out what was at issue as follows:

'This struggle for equality in education is *part* of the struggle for equality in all spheres of life in South Africa; it is, in fact, *inseparable* from the struggle for the full franchise, for democratic trade unions, for living wages, for equality in sport, for the right to live where one pleases, for the equal sharing of the land and all its wealth' (Document 31)

Concerning what was being demanded for the content of education, it was that it be oriented toward the above changes being demanded in the constitution, and context of the system. Thus, one pamphlet demanded 'EDUCATION FOR FREEDOM' (Document 12) and another 'EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION'. More concretely, a pamphlet demanded that there be 'No more racist books. No more racist lessons.' (Document 22) Another asserted the right of SRCs to be able to conduct awareness programmes. (Document 20)

#### 3.2.4 'Manifesto To the People of Azania'

A comprehensive list of the formal demands in support of which students in the Western Cape were boycotting, were published by the Committee of 81 in what they entitled their 'Manifesto To The People of Azania', dated 14 October 1980. These demands can be categorised in the same way as were those which had been in circulation at the beginning of the boycott with the addition - significantly - of a category for overtly political demands.

##### 3.2.4.1 *Cost*

Only one category of demands received relatively less emphasis in the Manifesto than previously and that was the one concerning the cost of education to parents. The Manifesto contained two demands in this connection. The one was that 'a firm commitment ... be given that free prescribed textbooks are to be given at colleges and universities, whilst a bursary for stationary and other requirements is to be made available.' (Document 33, page 7, demand 1(b) ) The other was a demand that 'no examination fees ... be paid for Junior or Senior Certificate, nor for any other standard' with immediate effect. (Document 33, page 10, demand 12)

### 3.2.4.2 *Conditions*

The demands which were categorised above as concerning, broadly construed, the conditions in educational institutions remained similar. The first sub-category related to *material* conditions. The Committee of 81 demanded that 'all broken windows ... be fixed immediately, including those at primary schools. Broken doors, showers not functioning and general repairs must be carried out.' Included here was a demand for 'central heating by next winter', describing it as a matter which touched them deeply. (Document 33, page 7, demand 2(a)) The Manifesto also demanded a firm commitment that there would be 'an end to inferior prefab buildings. We see no reason why our schools cannot be built properly.' (Document 33, page 8, demand 2(b)) Still in the first sub-category was the demand for 'better facilities'. Their short-term demand in this regard was formulated as follows:

'To develop our academic potential to its fullest, we need an adequate supply of lab. equipment, woodwork, handwork, domestic-science, metal-work and needlework equipment - for physical development, we require sufficient sport equipment. For intellectual development, we need an abundant supply of library books.' (Document 33, page, 8, demand 4(a)).

There was also a demand for a firm commitment that all schools would be given an adequate school hall. (Document 33, page 8, demand 4(b)) The final demand in the sub-category concerning material conditions was for the immediate supply of new textbooks. It was spelt out further that 'No student should be required to share a textbook' and 'textbooks should be replaced every two years.' (Document 33, page 7, demand 1(a))

The second sub-category of demands related to teachers. The two short-term demands in this connection were that 'teachers ... have training in subjects they teach' (Document 33, page 8, demand 6(a)) and that the Junior Primary Teachers Diploma 'be scrapped as it only requires a Standard 8 Certificate and thus hardly attract people who have had the opportunity to develop fully intellectually or be exposed to modern methods of research and education'. (Document 33, page 10, demand 13) The other demand here was for a firm commitment

to 'better training facilities' for prospective teachers. (Document 33, page 8, demand 6(b)). Among the students' grievances at the beginning of the boycott - in particular those which had issued from Hanover Park - had been several to do with the unacceptable behaviour of many teachers. There had also been the demand that action be taken against those teachers. The Manifesto contained no such demands nor any mention of the behaviour earlier identified as unacceptable.

The only demands which there had been in the third sub-category - concerning curriculum - at the beginning of the boycott, had been made by students at DCR schools in Johannesburg. The Committee of 81, however, put forward two demands in this connection. The one read as follows: 'Our textbooks should be objectively written. All propaganda and distortions should be removed. A commission of inquiry into education initiated by the students will make firm proposals.' On this, the Committee of 81 required 'a definite policy statement'. (Document 33, page 7, demand 1(c)). The other was a short-term demand under the heading 'Forcing of subjects': 'The limited choice we have should be expanded. We also wish to be offered a wide variety of subjects and thus to have greater choice in what we learn.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 9)

The specific demands which a fourth sub-category - concerning open state presence in schools and repressive steps against staff and students - had contained, were replaced by what are here categorised as overtly political demands which were directed at state reaction to the students' boycott.

#### 3.2.4.3 *Constitution*

Concerning the students' rejection of the racist basis on which the education system was segregated and of differential resources being directed to its respective segments, the demands in the Manifesto were essentially the same as they had been at the start of the boycott. The Committee of 81 demanded 'a policy statement on the scrapping of BAD, CAD and IAD' and expressed the 'wish to be merged into one educational authority for all students in South Africa. We reject racism and all its manifestations.' (Document 33, page 10, demand 15)

For the medium-term, there was the demand that 'By the start of the next academic year, no permits should be required for entry into any educational institution' - on this again 'a firm commitment' was required. (Document 33, page 9, demand 10(b)) There was also a short-term demand that nine classified African students, who had been refused admission to UWC, 'be allowed the right to attend'. (Document 33, page 9, demand 10(a))

The Manifesto contained several demands relating to the disparity in the resources directed to the education of the respective 'population registration groups'. There was, first of all, a demand for 'an emergency amount of money' to 'be made available immediately to B.A.D., C.A.D., and I.A.D. schools for them to implement the (short-term) demands mentioned' elsewhere in the Manifesto. (Document 33, page 9, demand 11(a)) Secondly, the Committee of 81 declared the following:

'At the next budget appropriation, there should be equality in the per capita expenditure on all students. Note: not only students under CAD, but all students. And no weak excuses about not being able to afford it. Cut down on Defence expenditure. Stop killing people on the border. Start feeding people inside the border.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 11(b))

On the foregoing, the Committee demanded a firm commitment from the Government. The Manifesto also stated, as something requiring 'a definite policy statement', that 'The per capita problem is a problem of separate educational institutions.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 11(c)) Still related to differential expenditure, the Committee of 81 demanded that 'An equalisation of the salaries of teachers classified under various derogatory racial tags ... be started with immediately.' (Document 33, page 8, demand 6(a)) Finally, in regard to the differential allocation of resources, there was the demand that 'Free textbooks ... be given not only to schools under CAD, as has been happening, but also to our comrades suffering under Bantu Affairs and Indian Affairs'. (Document 33, page 7, demand 1(a))

#### 3.2.4.4 *Control*

The demand for SRCs was now linked explicitly to students' demand for greater control over their own education. The Manifesto demanded that ...

'The educational authorities recognise the right of students to form independent SRCs outside the control of the educational authorities, at every school, college and university. These SRCs should have the right to receive both administrative and financial support from their schools and for the educational system.'  
(Document 33, page 8, demand 5(a))

These demands were further elaborated in the following terms:

'The SRCs should have a definite say in how the school is run. The end of autocratic control by principals has come. Students must have a say in everything that affects them. School committees should have liaison in the SRCs before reaching decisions. These committees of students, parents and teachers should from the start commit themselves to fighting for non-racialism and all their decisions should be governed by this principle.'  
(Document 33, page 8, demand 5(b))

The Manifesto contained one other demand based on an assertion of the students' right to have control over their education and in this case over the facilities at their schools. The demand was that students 'have the power to use the hall at any stage, on reasonable notice.'  
(Document 33, page 8, demand 4(b))

#### 3.2.4.5 *Political*

As mentioned above, the Manifesto contained a further category of demands which had not been made at the beginning of the boycott. These were overtly political demands, related, on one level, to the exigencies of their specific struggle at the time and, on another level, to the nature of the struggle of Black South Africans in general. In the former sub-category was, first of all, a demand for the 'immediate and unconditional release of all detained in connection with the boycott. By 26 May 1980, they should all have been released without any further torture.' In addition, 'No other student or community member should be detained on the issue of the boycott'.  
(Document 33, page 8, demands 3(a) and (b)) Under the heading 'Intimidation', there was the demand that 'No students should mysteriously disappear, especially students who have been chosen as reps for their schools.' The latter was prefaced by 'A threat to the security police: detain any more of us then we will have to seriously consider taking some drastic steps.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 8(a))  
The Committee of 81 also demanded that 'No teacher or student ... be

expelled for any reason pertaining to the boycott. The educational authorities had better tie the hands of those kragdadige principals who threaten to expel students. They should issue a statement soon to say that no student or teacher will be expelled because of the boycott.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 7(a)) Further: 'No teacher or student should ever be expelled for political reasons or political activity.' Following immediately in the same paragraph upon the latter was an additional 'demand', which it is unlikely the Committee of 81 had intended to direct to the Government, namely: 'Restrain teachers and principals who sell out the struggle of the people by belonging to the Labour Party, Freedom Party or any other quisling or sellout body.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 7(b)) The final demand falling into the first sub-category of political demands was headed 'Junior Certificate and Senior Certificate' and read as follows:

'(a) For 1980, we cannot be tested on the whole syllabi as we protested against the junk education you've given us.

(b) Our commission of inquiry into education will make proposals as to whether internal examinations should be written or not.' (Document 33, page 10, demand 14)

In the sub-category of demands relating to the struggle of Black South Africans generally, there was, firstly, a demand that 'all people detained for political reasons ... be released', the grounds given, being that such people 'have a meaningful part to play in determining the exact destiny of this nation'. On this, the Committee of 81 required a definite policy statement. (Document 33, page 8, demand 3(c)) Following this demand, under the heading, 'Intimidation', was the declaration that 'In spite of years of banning and suppression of truth, the regime has failed miserably. The boycott is a monument to all those who have fought for peace and liberty.' (Document 33, page 9, demand 8(b)) Finally, in calling for 'one educational system', the Manifesto states the students' rejection of 'the divide and rule tactics of this regime' and concludes with the demand for 'justice and freedom'. (Document 33, page 10 demand 15)

It is reasonable to assume that there would have been something approximating broad consensus over the demands enumerated in the Manifesto, having come, as it did, from the Committee of 81. However, particularly in the early stages of the boycott there was, as put by a pamphlet which is thought to have appeared possibly as early as the first or second week, 'much confusion on what ... the common demands are.' (Document 10; Interviewee 35) A student interviewee confirmed that there had been 'a lot of controversy over what the demands really were'. (Interviewee 21)

### 3.2.5 Nature of the developments

In documenting the development of the demands above, it could be seen how the initial demands behind which the students came out on boycott were supplemented by, and in certain quarters subordinated to, demands directed at a reconstitution of the society at large. Insofar as the latter were not restricted to the educational sphere, they reflected a modified delimitation of the students' struggle. New linkages were forged in students' minds as they traced the source of what they were protesting against in their schools to the society of which the education system was a part.

The leadership of politically more sophisticated students and adult activists as well as teachers and even principals played a part in the latter process. An illuminating picture emerged from the interview of a principal who had been sympathetic to the students' objectives. He described an occasion very early in the boycott when he had been watching some of the students making placards:

'When I looked at their demands, I felt quite embarrassed because if young people were going to make demands in South Africa they had to make them properly. If they were going to carry placards, the slogans had to be the correct slogans. At that stage the students were incapable of formulating their demands properly. Our view was that they had what we called - out of, I suppose, contempt - "plateglass" demands. They wanted improvements to the schools inside the locations.

'I said to some of them: Look, let us assume that they do repair all our windows and they do build us a fence and they give us a most beautiful garden and all the equipment in the world, are you still in the location? And they said, yes. So what have you changed? I asked them. You have changed *nothing*. The situation is still the same because you are still in the location. You're still under the same social, economic and educational system as before, but you've got all these marvelous things that you're asking for. I explained to the kids that you can't make demands like this - if you want to bring about change in South Africa you have to relate it to the franchise.

'The very next morning they had placards demanding a democratic education and the full franchise.'  
(Interviewee 5)

### 3.2.6 Short-term and long-term demands

A distinction also introduced early in the boycott was that between short- and long-term demands. It was most lucidly set out in a pamphlet entitled 'Die Belangrikheid van 'n Metode in Ons Stryd', which started circulating widely amongst a loosely defined leadership layer of students from about the second week of the boycott. Under the sub-heading 'SHORT TERM DEMANDS - LONG TERM GOALS', the pamphlet noted, 'The first kind of demand made at schools is about broken windows, inadequate library facilities, lack of free supply of notebooks and textbooks, no Student Representative Councils, etc.' Having pointed out that some schools had already had some of these sorts of demands met, the pamphlet proceeded as follows:

'These short term victories, however, are incomplete until they are linked up with long term goals. We must see how these short term demands are linked up with the political and economic system of this country. We must see how the fail-pass rate in schools are linked up with the labour supply for the capitalist system, how low quality school buildings are linked to the unequal allocation of funds to education for children of the oppressed and children of the oppressor, how inadequate library facilities are linked with the need to confine and limit the thoughts of the oppressed, how distorted history textbooks are linked with the need to obscure and propagandise against the proud history of resistance of the indigenous people against economic slavery, how, in fact, the whole educational system against which we are rebelling, stems from the fact that we are denied basic political rights and thus political power.' (Document 10)

Different tactical statuses came to be attributed to different demands in different quarters. Some students saw the boycott, and/or the more broadly based struggle for which they thought the boycott would serve as a catalyst, as having the potential to win them even the most radical of their demands. At the other end of the spectrum were students who saw the boycott as aimed at winning the original educational demands. Some accepted that such demands were worth winning in their own right but conceived of them tactically as short-term demands which derived their real importance from an association with longer-term demands. Others saw all short-term demands as of solely tactical significance. Into the last category fell, for example, an interviewee who had been prominent in the leadership of the Committee of 81. According to him,

'In the early stages a lot of students were under the illusion ... that these minor, short-term demands were the real demands and we're going to aspire to get these grievances redressed. We knew that this was impossible. All they would do, is deliver floods of textbooks, *etcetera*. But we weren't interested in things like that.' (Interviewee 48)

It is suggested that the fact that this student was himself in a school where few, if any, of the short-term demands would need to have been made, is more than coincidental. He was either ignorant of, or choosing to ignore, the fact that for students at most schools such demands were real and meant a good deal. Nevertheless, it probably was the case that, as expressed by one student interviewed, who had been involved in the boycott though not in its leadership, 'Students in general did not believe that the fundamental demands would, or could, be met.' (Interviewee 7) Another interviewee, who was in the leadership of Azapo and had been active during the build-up to the boycott and in its early stages, described 'the intention behind the 1980 boycott' as having been 'not that students hoped to achieve what they were demanding but that the students could act as a catalyst initiating a more broadly based struggle'. (Interviewee 36)

Some students would have had access, even early in the boycott, to the guidelines on the tactical place of short-term demands contained in the already cited pamphlet, 'Die Belangrikheid van 'n

Metode in Ons Stryd'. Referring to demands 'about broken windows, inadequate library-facilities, lack of free supply of notebooks and textbooks, no Student Representative Councils, etc', the pamphlet advises as follows:

'These are important because everybody - the ordinary student from Standard 6 to Standard 10 - can appreciate them easily. These issues, because they appear to affect the lives of students directly, can be used as points around which to mobilise students. A mass meeting can be called, for example, to discuss "the bad state of repair of the school buildings". In this meeting, as many students as possible should be given the opportunity to state what their grievances are.

'After a reasonable amount of discussion in the classroom, on the sportsfield, at home, until finally a stage is reached where a set of demands are drawn up. These demands would then be understood, appreciated and supported by the majority of the students. These are the short term demands and form the *basis* for future action. At this stage, students can be drawn into the struggle on the basis of these demands. If there is no thorough discussion by all students in a school, then students will not understand *why* they should participate in a particular line of action. Student leaders should not expect them to follow and learn from the call for a line of action because the mass of students have not made these demands independently.

'Once the average student has reached the level of conscious militancy - when they see how short term demands and long term goals are linked and act on it - then the ground is ripe for unified and effective action. This is what has happened at those schools which have had their first taste of victory.' (Document 10 (How the pamphlet proceeds from where this quotation ends, has already been quoted.))

A final document of relevance in the present context was one which, as far as could be established, was drawn up by an *ad hoc* group of adult activists concerned about the lack of any definite basis for the students to determine the duration of their boycott, given the seemingly indefinite nature of their objectives. They would have been amongst many who became concerned that the impact of the students' stand would be dissipated in the event of the boycott not being brought to a timely tactical halt. The document under discussion was apparently intended as a contribution to the strategic thinking of

student leaders - it would seem, however, to have been distributed only on a very restricted scale. (Interviewee 61) Entitled simply, 'Our objectives', it distinguishes in point form between four tactical categories of objectives as follows:

*'Immediate* (say, 2 weeks)

1. Reinstatement of all teachers dismissed for reasons other than proven non-political misconduct.
2. Repair of all schools and classrooms.
3. Provision of all textbooks prescribed and essential.
4. Abolition of compulsory uniforms.
5. Public accounting of all school funds raised by students and parents.
6. Denial of free access to Security Police.

*Short-term* (say, this year)

1. The right to autonomous SRC's at all secondary and high schools.
2. Dismissal of all principals and teachers who consistently abuse their authority.
3. Free (subsidised) travel to and from school for all primary and secondary students.
4. Start to compulsory upgrading of all teaching staff.

*Medium-term* (say, end 1981)

1. Equality of expenditure per student irrespective of colour or sex.
2. Equal salaries for all teachers irrespective of colour or sex.
3. Equal conditions of service for all teachers irrespective of marital status.
4. Pregnancy leave for all expectant female teachers.
5. A national students' organisation linked to the movement for national liberation.
6. Abolition of all permits for attending any educational institution.
7. Compulsory PTA's with freedom of expression for parents and teachers.

*Long-term* (?)

1. A single department of education for all school-going people.
2. A free, democratic, non-racial system of compulsory education for all the youth of a free and united Azania' (Document 34)

### 3.3 *Conceptions of an alternative*

What does not emerge from the grievances and goals incorporated in the demands enumerated above is the extent to which students had any conception of what concretely should characterise the content of

the alternative education they sought, beyond having their specific grievances redressed within a context of the sort of education they already had, on the one hand, and beyond, on the other, highly general notions of wanting a unitary, non-racial system of free and compulsory democratic education. What the content of an alternative education would be, was not generally perceived to be an issue, let alone problematic. This naiveté is apparent, for example, in the following statement of a student to a reporter, being quite simply that "We have given our alternative. We want an equal and unitary education in a democratic South Africa." (Herald 17.5.80) One of the pamphlets circulating during the boycott urged students to explain to their parents that what they were wanting to replace the present system of education with was 'a democratic system of free, compulsory, non-racial education in a single, democratic, free and united Azania'. (Document 37) Even more vaguely, another pamphlet declared that 'We value a true and proper education which can equip us to take our place as citizens - as human being - in a modern progressive society.' (Document 27)

According to a community worker who played a high-profile part in the bus boycott, 'The students got het-up on protest but not really on alternatives.' (Interviewee 44) One of the students interviewed ... felt sure that 'There were a few students who might have had something of an alternative in mind to the present system but this was definitely not the case for the vast majority of students.' (Interviewee 38) Another student admitted, 'In general students didn't have much of a picture of what would or should replace gutter education.' (Interviewee 21) According to a teacher interviewed,

'The students were absolutely certain that what they were getting was inferior to White education but they had no real idea of what any alternative model of education might look like. Initially they saw White education as that to which to aspire.' (Interviewee 41)

In similar vein, another teacher said of the students at the school where he had been teaching in 1980 that they had ...

'no vision of an alternative. For many kids it was more or less just a question of wanting nice sports fields, a swimming bath, *etcetera*.... For many or most it was a question of having the same education as White kids.' (Interviewee 32)

By way of further illustration, one student interviewee, on being asked whether she thought students had understood what was meant by 'equal education', replied affirmatively and, meaning to support her reply, she referred to having at the time discussed with friends how much was 'spent on White kids at school' in comparison with what the Government spent on their own education. According to her, they wanted in all ways to be given what Whites already had. (Interviewee 3)

What the latter actually was in terms of content would seem to have been the subject of various assumptions. For instance, according to a teacher interviewed, 'It was widely believed by students that White children were being taught different things.' (Interviewee 41) Another teacher described as 'quite prevalent' the idea that 'Whites are taught the truth and we aren't'. (Interviewee 32) It is essential to emphasise at this point that there were also students with other ideas. There follows what one student said about the sort of education they had been seeking:

'I don't think it was towards White education that we were striving as a model - I hope not.

'The whole educational system has been geared so that a certain culture has been forced upon us - a culture not us. We are being forced to reject certain things which we should be identifying with - which we *do* identify with. The whole thing of Western culture and trying to confuse us as to what our roots really are: to me this is what our present education is based on and obviously we would change that.

'I don't think that for me anyway White education is any kind of model. I know what's being forced down on me and I know what I really want to learn about. I know what that new kind of education would be based on but how practically it would be done I don't know'. (Interviewee 21)

Only one of the other student interviewees attempted to give substance to the notion of an alternative content to education. It is not suggested that his observations necessarily represent anything more than an individual's view but they might be illuminating nonetheless. Having characterised the work currently covered in school as seeming 'so childish', he commented without elaboration that 'it should be more progressive'. Describing 'a lot of subjects' as 'boring', he thought that what is done in school should be 'related to what you're going to do when you go out to work' and students should not be 'forced to choose subjects which are not really in their interests.' Apart from envisaging 'more facilities', the interviewee's only other point was that 'teachers should be more open with the children - not just hide things.' (Interviewee 3)

Finally, it is possible that at least some students did during the boycott move further than anything reflected above and actually reached a point beyond what they could articulate clearly at that stage. Thus, according to the teacher already quoted as having said that the students 'saw White education as that to which to aspire',

'When they became more sophisticated, they started grappling towards the sort of notion of not having a structured set of educational values but education growing from the community, and that knowledge is not in the hands of a sacred few. That's the sort of thing the students were well on the way to saying although they couldn't articulate it.

'In a sense, they didn't really know where they were going. But clearly they were saying, *inter alia*, that the whole area of knowledge was something which needed examining. Awareness programmes, the sort of things they'd been doing during the boycott, the inclusion of the things they had found to be important, all these were necessary in their whole education, they realised.' (Interviewee 41)

Only one pamphlet contained any ideas which suggested some substantive notion of what might constitute an alternative to existing education. Under the heading, 'AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION!!!', but without presupposing the prior accomplishment of political and economic

change, the pamphlet outlines what it states that the 'Brazilian educationist, Paulo Freire' sees as being 'the three functions' of education:

1. To make people aware of the exploitation in their society. People should be made aware that it is wrong and unnecessary that some people should swim in their wealth while others are starving. People see the link between low wages, poor living conditions, the high price of food and the economic and political system of their country.
2. To give a vision of a new society. Tell the people there are other alternatives to this society. We must see a society free of racism and exploitation. We must see how a system that can feed all of us and clothe and house all of us, works. We must learn about a society in which we are humans, not cogs in the capitalist machine.
3. To show us how to transform and change our society. We must realise the power we have, how to use it, when to use it and where to use it. We must be prepared to fight for a just and equal society. We must become actively engaged in that fight for liberation as part of our educational process'.

The pamphlet continues as follows:

'Of course, for that three functions of education, we do not refer only to formal education. Students, as part of the educational programme, must go into the community. Parents must be informed and enlightened.

'This is EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION!!' (Document 12)

Preceding these quotations, the same pamphlet poses certain questions concerning the content and control of the current educational system. From the criticisms incorporated in these questions, can be inferred more ways in which an alternative system might have been envisaged as being different, thus warranting still further quotation:

#### 'METHOD OF EDUCATION

'In our classroom, the teacher speaks and the student listens. The teacher is the fountain of all knowledge and the student the empty container to be filled. The main function of the student is to pass the exams. He has to rewrite what he had been told. We, as students thus became uncritical. Is this the best way of EDUCATING students?

'Do we really understand the schoolwork if it fed to us or do we, like parrots, just memorise it and repeat it during the exams?

'If we do not question the so-called facts the teachers blot our minds with, will we question the exploitative nature of our society? Is there a link between the fact that we are taught not to think and to be critical and the fact that if we reflect about our exploitative society, then we would want to change it?

'Is our educational system geared towards getting results? We strive towards getting good results, certificates or A-passes. To hell with understanding our work or liking it, as long as we can get good results then we are "justifying our presence at schools".

'CONTENT OF EDUCATION

'Who decides what our syllabi should be? What sort of things are we taught? Does what we learn have any relevance to our real lives? Does our education portray the rich layer of society in a favourable light? Are we allowed to have a say in what we are taught (although our parents pay for our supposed education)?

'CONTROL OF EDUCATION

'Who controls education in this society? If we say the state controls education, then in whose interest is the state? From which group in society does all the agents of the state (members of parliament, army and police generals) come: the privileged or oppressed?' (Document 12)

### 3.4 *Analysis in the pamphlets*

The students' identification of their grievances, goals and demands involved inevitably some analysis of the education system, the society as a whole, and how both might be changed. The observations, which follow, are intended to complement what has already been implicit in the above and refer principally to such analysis as appeared in pamphlets which were distributed during the boycott. Although the many pamphlets were far from uniform in analytic content, in the main they differed only in how far they took what was broadly an otherwise not inconsistent, albeit diversely formulated analysis. All of the pamphlets collected, located education in some broader political, or economic and political, context. None, in other words, treated education as either explainable or transformable in isolation.

The most circumscribed and crudest analyses appear in two pamphlets issued under the name, 'Student Action for Non-racial Education' (S.A.N.E.), which was reasonably reliably identified as having been an *ad hoc* group associated with the Black Consciousness Movement or, more specifically, with Azapo. (Interviewee 34) The one pamphlet attributes no particular role to education and merely describes its effect as making 'intellectual cripples' of Black people. It gives as 'the only reason for the chaotic *state* of "education" ... the propagation, implementation and maintenance of RACIALISM'. The same pamphlet explains 'the existence of "Coloured Schools"' and of 'separate universities' together with 'the gross inequality between expenditure on white and Black education' as all being the result of 'POLITICAL DECISIONS ... made by *whites*'. From this, the pamphlet concludes, 'It is evident that our education can only become meaningful and relevant if POLITICAL DECISIONS are made BY US and *not* FOR US'. (Document 15) The other S.A.N.E. pamphlet in question takes matters marginally further in offering the following characterisation of, and implicit explanation for, the system of education:

'This educational system incorporates the method and system of oppression including mental and intellectual enslavement. The education offered to us by *the system* only makes us dependent on more of this suppressive treatment, and renders increasingly incapable of organising our own lives around our own experiences and resources within our own communities.'

Later, it lays 'the blame for the social ills, injustices and the chaotic state of Black schools' on 'the Government with its lackeys, stooges, cowards and apologists' who 'are NOT acting in the interest of the masses but *only* for a minority group - "THE SUPREME WHITE RACE"'. The pamphlet concludes that 'because of malfunction and dereliction of duties, and because of the detrimental nature of it we as students *totally* REJECT the present government with its dehumanating SYSTEM OF OPPRESSION.' (Document 16)

Another pamphlet explains no more than that it is the government's 'policy of apartheid that has given rise to the unrest in the country'. (Document 17)

Somewhat less crude, but still limited, is an analysis, the essence of which is that the 'oppressors', as the Government, use their political power to oppress Black South Africans by denying them political rights and, in pursuance of a strategy of 'divide and rule', separating them into sections which are then treated differentially. The education system is conceived as being one part of such a strategy. (e.g., Document 11) Not only is the system 'inferior', it is not education at all - rather it is 'indoctrination' 'designed to Bantuize, Colouredize and Indianize' Black people. The analysis is possibly deepened slightly with the introduction of the notion that this education is intended 'to program us for perpetual inferiority and slavery'. The latter is 'the poison imparted by the system'. Thus,

'the present system of education is totally bound up with the whole political and social structure in this land. The slave educational serves to protect and buttress a slave society. The system is designed to produce many nations - all with a slave status - and one nation (white) as baas'. (Document 27)

It may reasonably be inferred that it is an analysis such as the above which informs the sort of pamphlet in which there is simply reference to 'the system of inferior, racist and "ethnic" schooling for slavery and exploitation.' (Document 24)

Intermediate between the analytically crudest and the relatively more sophisticated pamphlets are some which contain notions presupposing an analysis taken further than the above but that do not show the course taken by the analysis in arriving at such points. Most importantly, they introduce an explicit, albeit elementary, class analysis. Where this appears most often is apparently as a response to the realisation that students could not by themselves attain their long term goals. 'Can the BOYCOTT alone change the system of exploitation?' asks one pamphlet. 'NO', it answers. According to another,

'We ... recognise that the backbone of the economy, upon which the capitalist rests, is the workers. Thus we have realised that our students, being an economically non-productive sector of the oppressed, can only serve as a

support to the workers, who *alone* have the power to change society fundamentally, in their to-the-death fight against the capitalists.' (Document 25)

The identical position is found in yet another pamphlet, thus:

'... the workers ... form the backbone of the economy. The power to effect positive change lies not in the hands of the students and teachers who are unproductive in the economic structure, but in the work force who hold the key to economic stability and progress.'  
(Document 29)

Formulating still the same point only slightly differently, yet another pamphlet reads as follows:

'We need our parents to help us break our bonds. You fathers and mothers have the power. You are the economic backbone of this country. By having your full support in prayer, word and deed to do away with the stinking APARTHEID system and its evil creation.' (Document 18)

One pamphlet simply assumes the need to 'link up the struggle in the school with the general struggle of the community and of the workers against oppression and exploitation'. (Document 26) Another tells students, 'The only true STRUGGLE is the struggle of the WORKERS.' Addressing 'parents', it states, 'the WORKERS of the whole world are struggling against the CAPITALISTS. .... ... where does the money of the rich capitalists come from? It comes from the work of our people who are SLAVES.' (Document 41)

Thus, the characterisation of what is opposed, has been extended. Underlying, and giving rise to, 'inferior, segregated, so-called education' is not only 'racist apartheid' but 'capitalist inequality'. (Document 35) Apartheid is described as 'maintaining' a particular 'economic system' which is exploiting 'our parents the workers' today and, as 'the workers of tomorrow', will in due course be exploiting those who are now students. (Document 28) Furthermore, education is related directly to capitalist exploitation. 'Inferior education' is identified as 'the source of supply for a cheap labour system'. (Document 18) The Manifesto presents education as merely preparing students 'for the labour market by stuffing' them 'with facts'. It contains the following brief analysis:

'Students see the lack of textbooks and poor library facilities as a sign that they are trained to fit into the working-class in the capitalist system. Their white counterparts are trained to become managers and bosses. The parents see their low wages and poor housing conditions as being tied up with the political and economic system. Thus, the root causes of all the small hassles and the big problems in our lives are searched for. The root causes are not our laziness, not fate or bad luck, not our stupidity, but rather an exploitative economic system and an oppressive political system.'  
(Document 33, page 5)

Also in this category of pamphlets is the idea that the changes sought in the educational system could only be attained - at any rate meaningfully - in the context of fundamental economic and political changes. For instance, one pamphlet states, 'We do not want "open doors" nor "better" education in the context of the present political system, but education for social change accompanied by social changes.'  
(Document 18) According to another, 'There can be no free and democratic system of education for all in an unfree and undemocratic country such as their South Africa, just as there can be no "normal sport" in an abnormal society.'  
(Document 35)

Finally, in quotations such as those that follow, something of the contingent and contested character of the educational terrain seems to begin to come through:

'We are aware as students coming from working class backgrounds, that our parents cannot afford to provide shelter, food and education for us. (1) The policy of the State is to make it financially difficult for us to stay at school. (2) We are then forced to leave school and join the cheap labour force.'  
(Document 28)

Addressing, in Xhosa and English, the 'SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF AFRICA', another pamphlet warns students in these terms: 'if you believe in this school education, you will become as tame as lambs. Remember - before the whites came - every father and mother was a teacher.'  
(Document 41) The Manifesto declares, for example: 'We must force our teachers to teach us about our struggle. They must refuse to merely prepare us for the labour market by stuffing us with facts.'  
(Document 33, page 1)

The third category of pamphlets identified, elaborate and extend still further the analysis of South African society, generally, and, specifically, of its education system. To convey the content and quality of the kind of analyses to which a large number of students would have had access warrants some substantial quotations. The account given of the society as a whole will be documented first.

What most critically characterises South African society is the want of the Black oppressed alongside the wealth of the White rulers. Thus,

'Millions of South Africans live lives filled with starvation and want. This happens in a country with vast reserves of gold, diamonds, uranium and other precious minerals, with fertile agricultural lands that yields enough food for all of us and with the most highly developed and industrialised system of production in Africa.' (Document 12)

Responsible for this is not apartheid as such but precisely that which accounts for apartheid. At the root of it all is not 'some special evil in white people' but 'an economic system in which the wealth of our country, the mines, the factories and the big farms, are owned by a tiny minority. This ownership enables them to exploit the labour of the working people for their own profit'. (Document 19) It is an economic system 'designed to perpetuate the privileged position of the White Ruling Class'. (Document 49) But 'WHO MAKES THIS SYSTEM WORK?' asks a pamphlet which goes on to furnish the following answer:

'In part, it is the police force, the army and all the other forces of state repression that see to it that the "law" is obeyed. .... In part, it is the collaborators, the stooges and the dummies of the Bantustans, CRC, Indian Council, Community Councils, Management Committees and all the other paid agents of the rulers who bluff the people to believe that there is "something" for them in this oppressive system. But there is another part to the answer ....

*'It is none other than our parents who make the system work. Not because they want to but because they believe they have to make it work. Our parents are workers. It is the workers of this country who produce its wealth.'* (Document 37)

However, instead of enjoying the benefit of that wealth which they produce, 'black workers are paid wages which are just enough to survive - and to keep on working.' (Document 19) 'They pay high rents for the places in which they live. They have to pay high prices for food for their children. They have to work for long hours at tiring and boring jobs.' (Document 12) 'For the bosses it is different.' (Document 19) They ...

'who do virtually no work, live lives of wealth and splendour. The bosses eat caviar and drink champagne. They drive around in beautiful cars and live in huge mansions. Yet the workers produced all the goods of society. This is thus an exploitative society, where a few parasites live off the sweat of the workers.' (Document 12)

'Simply because they OWN the mines, factories, land, etc., they take from the workers whatever is produced and becomes the holders of vast fortunes which they manage as they please. This makes them the masters; not only of 'their' workers, but of society as a whole. They are the real power behind the government and it is for their benefit above all, and for the protection of their property, that the repressive forces of the South African police state are set to work.

'APARTHEID SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THIS CAPITALIST SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA. To suit the needs of the employees, it moves black workers like cattle from place to place under the strictest control, by means of the pass laws, "Bantu Administration", and the contract labour system. It uses the Bantustans as great dams of unemployed labour, where Africans are made to wait until the bosses call. It denies black people democratic rights. It bans their political organisations and imprisons their leaders. ....

'In these and many other ways (including education which is covered separately below) apartheid holds the black working class in conditions of near-slavery. TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THE EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKERS IS THE BASIC PURPOSE OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM.'

This is why, as asserted earlier in the same pamphlet,

'once the struggle against apartheid breaks out into the open, it rapidly becomes a SOCIAL STRUGGLE against the ruling CLASS. It becomes a struggle of the working people against the employers.'

Thus,

'the struggle in South Africa is not against apartheid "pure and simple", not against white domination ALONE, but ALSO against the whole system of class exploitation which underlies it'. 'In South Africa today the WORKING CLASS ... has become the driving force for change. The power of the workers to stop production STRIKES AT THE ROOTS OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM.' (Document 19)

'If the workers could be put in a position where they could say for a few weeks : WE WILL NOT WORK TO MAINTAIN APARTHEID AND CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION, the present loud-mouthed, kragdadige government would be shaken to its very foundations.' (Document 37)

All of the pamphlets falling into the category, which is now being dealt with, conceive of the strongest possible linkages between the education system and the greater 'System'. There are, first of all, general assertions of the latter's causal responsibility for the former. Thus, for example, according to one of the pamphlets, 'The condition of the ghetto schools and the gutter education are the outcomes of the whole system of racist oppression and capitalist exploitation.' (Document 37) Another states that it all 'stems from the fact that we are denied basic political rights and thus political power.' (Document 10) On a more specific level, the same pamphlet links their 'low quality school buildings' with 'the unequal allocation of funds to education for children of the oppressed and children of the oppressor'. (Document 10)

Further than this, there is the notion that why the greater system has given rise to the education system which it has, is because it somehow depends on such education. Thus, for example, referring to the predominance of 'White Ruling Class interests' in South Africa, one pamphlet states, 'All this would not be possible if it was not for tribalised, segregated and inferior education ....' (Document 49) Another, after explaining the exploitative basis of South African society, asserts that 'Education is one part of this society' and 'is thus designed to reinforce' it. (Document 12)

According to a pamphlet put out by the Federation of Cape Civic Associations, education's 'function is to serve the interests of the

particular social system which has given rise to it.' (Document 31) Serving these interests means fulfilling functions necessary for the system's survival. The first such function is that of 'IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL'. The following analysis appears under that heading in one of the pamphlets:

'Workers will organise themselves and overthrow the oppressive economic and political system of this country if they were aware of the nature of their exploitation. The ruling group in South Africa has too much to lose if this society is destroyed. They will thus try to convince workers that the current system is the best system. They control our minds and thoughts in the classrooms. They decide what we are taught. Our history is written according to their ideas. Biology and Physics are subjects taught in schools but which we cannot apply to our everyday lives. We learn all about the grasshopper and the digestive system of the squint-eyed caterpillar, but we are not told that most diseases of the workers stem from the fact that they are undernourished and overworked. They only dare dream about meat and milk and fruit and fish. Mieliepap and unhealthy briedies ... for the workers but bacon, *eggs*, toast, orange juice and steaks, roasts, fish for the bosses. This we are not taught in our schools although this is our reality. .... Our classrooms have become exclusive. They are removed from the real world. Thus our thoughts are regulated away from our oppressive surroundings. We are taught Biology, not in terms of the Biology of Liberation where we can tackle the concept of "race" to prove that there is no such thing as race. We are taught Geography, but not the Geography of Liberation. We are not taught that 80% of South Africans are dumped on 13% of the land (homelands). We are not taught that in spite of the wide open spaces of South Africa, people are crammed into council houses in Hanover Park, Parkwood or Mananberg (the ghetto cities) or in tin shacks in Crossroads (the squatter city)'. (Document 12)

Another pamphlet also argues that 'They ... use education to control our minds with their ideas' 'of "race" and "multi-nationalism"'. (Document 31) One pamphlet asserts the links between 'inadequate library facilities' and 'the need to confine and limit the thoughts of the oppressed' as well as between 'distorted history textbooks' and 'the need to obscure and propagandise against the proud history of resistance of the indigenous people against economic slavery'. (Document 10)

The second-to-last quotation goes on to conclude with two questions: 'How does education reinforce tribalism and thus instill a "coloured", "indian" or "bantu" mentality upon us? Why does the educational system try to do this?' (Document 12) One of the pamphlets in which some answers are provided, is a pamphlet addressed to 'the Muslim Community'. There we read that ...

'The various oppressed groups are so separated from one another that more than 95% of the "Coloured" and "Indian" students, in their 12 years at school have never met a "Black" student on a student-to-student basis. We are so separated from one another that when the average "coloured" student demands a better equipped laboratory, he seldom realises that his black fellow student does not even have a laboratory; when he demands more and better text books, he never realises that black fellow students living under poverty-stricken conditions must buy their own text books and writing books.'

'The White Ruling Class are experts at deceiving the oppressed people, and making them accept their deplorable conditions. The methods they use to protect their privileged position, varies from detention, torture and bullets; but without doubt the most effective method is the enslavement of the mind, through the education system. By creating separated educational systems for the different groups, "White", "Black", "Coloured" and "Indian", with their different text books, syllabi and curricula, based on a racist dogma, they aim to churn out "bruines", "moore", and "Kaffirs". The White Ruling Class functions on the principle of divide and rule. If they can divide us into our various groups (via separate education) we'll start believing that we are different from one another and consequently we either hate, fear or despise each other as "hotnotte", "slamse", "kaffirs", and "moore".' (Document 49)

Another pamphlet points out that 'The system is further broken up into the Transkeian, Ciskeian and other tribal sub-systems'. (Document 31) Elsewhere it is argued that ...

'we differ from each other only in the size of the crumbs that the White Ruling Class throws to us, while they devour the lion's share of this country's wealth. The idea of us being different on the basis of colour is essentially false and it is maintained by the rulers through the separate education. Separating us from each other, makes it easier for the rulers to control us.' (Document 49)

The second-to-last cited pamphlet concludes that 'the most important function of education is *to tribalise/divide the nation of South Africa*'. (Document 31) Why 'the system of education has to conform to, and reinforce, the idea of a *divided* South African nation', argues the same pamphlet, is in order '*to provide the cheap labour force* - skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled - required by the capitalist system'. (Document 31)

Training Black people 'for the cheap labour market' is the other fundamental function of the education system. Most crudely expressed, Black students are being "educated" and "trained" to become slaves in an apartheid-capitalist society'. (Document 37) The pamphlet containing what is perhaps the most developed analysis of South African society as a whole, says of 'the "education" system' no more than its 'stated aim is to prepare blacks only for the role of menial labourers'. (Document 19) Moving towards a more specific level of analysis, one of the pamphlets links, albeit without elaboration, 'the fail-pass rate in schools' with 'the labour supply for the capitalist system'. (Document 10) Another pamphlet tries to provide this linkage with some substance in the following way:

'The labour market needs a certain amount of dust-men, factory workers, doctors, managers, shop assistants and the like. Our schools are thus primarily a training centre for capitalism. The system is designed so that enough people fail in the lower standards so that they can become low paid workers. People do not fail because they are born stupid but because they are trained to be stupid and thus to fail.' (Document 12)

Related in part to the latter analysis, another pamphlet asserts, 'To the whites, education is a training for leadership and management, to the oppressed groups, it is a preparation for their subservient role in the South African society.' (Document 49)

'So instead of education enriching our minds it teaches us to fit into the capitalist society. We are taught Accountancy merely to calculate the profits of the capitalist. We are taught Physics only to be able to make new machines to save manpower and in so doing to gain more profits for

the ruling class. We are taught medicine to patch up tired and undernourished workers who have suffered the ills of capitalism. Thus the workers are cured to produce more profit for the workers.' (Document 12)

### 3.5 *Strategy and tactics*

Having seen something of what the students sought to achieve and of the analysis which informed their actions, consideration will now be given to the content of students' consciousness concerning *how* to conduct their campaign and what contribution it could make to the achievement of their objectives. As already intimated, students did not have a uniform view of strategically what they were attempting to achieve through the boycott. According to a student interviewed, 'many were suffering under severe illusions about what was going to be achieved'. (Interviewee 57) Sonn described how 'From the kids you got the impression that they felt they had finally got the Government over the barrel. They felt that the revolution was here. They were already appointing ministers and dishing out the boodle.' (Interviewee 47)

This is not to negate the significance of the impact on students made by experiencing what another interviewee identified as ...

'a real feeling that they were involved in the making of history. Almost hopefully students would look to see if the police were at the school gates. And they never were, of course. But this would have given them a sense of achievement, of playing a significant part.'  
(Interviewee 41)

At the same time, many students' lack of realism in assessing what they were actually achieving is undeniable. For instance, according to a teacher interviewed,

'The mistake that they all made at the time was that because the police were not beating up the kids, therefore the police were scared of them. This was what the kids were telling me. Kids and teachers thought they were getting victories.'  
(Interviewee 37)

Another student told of 'students who, at the beginning, really felt that we were going to conquer'. But, this interviewee added, 'That kind of thing was smashed obviously'. (Interviewee 21) Saying that the students had over-estimated the potential of a schools' boycott, a principal interviewed, outlined his understanding of what he called 'the logic of their thinking':

'They had thought ... that if they brought out the pupils then automatically, almost *ipso facto*, the whole community was going to come out in their support. This was then going to snowball and the whole of South Africa was going to come out. .... they had a mechanistic attitude ....

'When this thing didn't come off, there was a tremendous amount of disillusionment. They couldn't - and still can't, for the most part - see that what they had done, was a contribution as others will contribute all over the country until eventually those who stand for a truly non-racial democracy will come out victorious. All these little things come together. But they can't see it like that. They thought that this thing was just going to snowball and they were going to come out successful at the end.' (Interviewee 5)

The other side of what emerged from the interviews was that at least a section of the student leadership, if not a sizeable section of the students generally, were convinced of the constraints on what they could achieve by means of a boycott. Thus, according to one of the students interviewed, 'There was no such illusion that this was the start of the revolution - or, if there was, only amongst very few. Certain teachers did accuse us of trying to find a short-cut to the revolution'. (Interviewee 48) Another student interviewee asserted categorically,

'Students did not expect to achieve what they were demanding but intended their protest to be rather symbolic. The leaders, or core, of the Committee of 81 knew this but the general students did not. At Mount View and Crystal, for example, the boycott served to them as getting new textbooks, *etcetera*. As it progressed, then it became something symbolic but at the initial stages it wasn't and students really wanted their textbooks, *etcetera*.'

Later, in the same interview, but in a different context, he confirmed his assertion in the following terms:

'We knew we would never achieve what we wanted without an entire restructuring. The whole point (of the proposed three-week suspension of the boycott) was to stop and show the community that we've given them time, they're not willing to meet our demands, we therefore continue with our grievances.

'How this pretty sophisticated line of tactical thinking was put across to students was simply by saying that we wanted our textbooks, *etcetera*. And the mass of students genuinely thought in terms of those grievances. The core group, though, definitely thought differently.' (Interviewee 27)

Another student described 'the main object of the boycott' as having been ...

'to conscientise, firstly, the students, then go out to the parents and community. If you want to achieve final victory then everybody must be on the same level of consciousness and that has to be a very high level. So the main object was to get the people aware.' (Interviewee 54)

A further illustration is taken from an interview in which an account was given of the perspective of the student leaders at a particular school :

'The leadership was clear from the beginning that they should come out on boycott only on the condition that it would not be another protracted unplanned boycott, which would run inevitably into the sand, but be a demonstration to fellow students that they could take over the school and by doing so showing them what could or should be done with the schools. The objective had to be to *mobilise the masses* through the boycott, *not mobilise the minister*. (Interviewee 40)

Certainly it was the latter, rather than the former, conception of the boycott that students would have predominantly been exposed to by the pamphlets circulating amongst them. As early as its first or second week, a key pamphlet contained the following conception of the 'boycott as a tactic of struggle':

'The boycott is not an end in itself. It is not a holiday, neither will it transform South African society overnight. It is a planned political act, which is designed to achieve short term victories within a given space of time and also, to raise the general political consciousness of broad layers of students. The boycott can achieve short term victories. These are important because they give students confidence in themselves, teach them through practical experience the basic lessons of organisation and create the climate wherein political consciousness can flourish.'

'There is general consensus that a call to boycott should be a boycott of indoctrination-riddled classes. There is to be no stay away from schools if the boycott is to achieve its aims. The school becomes the centre of activity during a period of boycott.'

'An extended boycott appears to be wrong tactically. It would perhaps be wise to call for a boycott for a specific period of time.' (Document 10)

Finally, students were constantly made aware of Government attempts to bluff and buy certain sectors of the oppressed off and even bring them into the enemy fold. Thus, for example, a pamphlet poses the question :

'WHY DO THE WHOLE S A PRESS, RADIO, TV, WHITE POLITICIANS AND COLLABORATORS all unite and insult us by labelling our struggle "Coloured"? Why play up "Coloured" and "Indian" grievances and not "African"? Because once again they want to break our unity. DIVIDE AND RULE. Not only this! There is something more sinister. The oppressor wants to turn "Coloured" and "Indian" against "African". The oppressor wants to hijack the "Coloured" and "Indian" away from the liberation struggle and to win them over as allies. .... That is the meaning of every white politician falling over his feet to get "Coloured" and "Indian" grievances dealt with "sympathetically". That is the real meaning of the commission of inquiry that P W Botha wants to start into "Coloured" and "Indian" education.' (Document 11)

Another pamphlet warns students in the following terms: 'Do not be fooled by the patching up of riot-torn schools and the dismissal of school heads. These measures are taken to blunt our grievances not to provide a SOLUTION'. (Document 15)

As with student perceptions concerning what they were attempting to achieve through the boycott, two loose sets of strategic and tactical orientations may be identified. One pamphlet argues that 'We Must Have Clarity Before Action' (Document 10) while a S.A.N.E. pamphlet urges that 'We learn to do by DOING - so let us get on with our task'. (Document 15) Especially in the boycott's earlier stages, there was 'an emotional mood of confrontation and militancy amongst students'. (Document 10) A pamphlet, however, gave the following reasons for their not wanting 'a recurrence of 1976':

'The total chaos that reigned due to the lack of organisation;  
The opportunistic unruly element that strove to feather their own nests;  
The Gestapo-like display of police power which resulted in the unnecessary loss of life.'  
(Document 29)

In the week of the Athlone march, a local newspaper reported that a major preoccupation with the students was 'the spectre of '76'. According to the report,

'That is something they say they don't want. But their fear is that things might escalate. They are the first to admit a stage can be reached when large crowds simply cannot be controlled. They are not ready to admit that this stage has been reached and, indeed, pride themselves on the fact that everything has so far been tightly controlled.

"Even when they came after us with batons and with teargas, we did not try to lift up stones. You see, we don't want to throw stones. We don't want violence, in fact we admit we are scared of violence. What sensible person would not be scared of violence?"  
(Argus 26.4.80)

Furthermore, the Committee of 81 appealed to students to 'avoid direct confrontation with the police, in the light of a new strategy which entails complete non-violence and the mobilisation of the broader community'. (Intergroup 3 (June 1980)4). Other pamphlets emphasised the need for organisation and planning on the basis of clear principles (e.g., Documents 10, 31, 46).

Concerning specific strategies and tactics mooted,

'Many hair-brained ideas were seriously put forward.

'For example, some of the students wanted to call a general strike as the final blow to the system. After being questioned about their ability to organise it and their contact with the masses of the working class, it was announced the next morning that on reflection it was recognised that they weren't in a position to call a general strike then and that they'd work on it for the next couple of weeks and call a general strike then.

'Another idea was to tie up the police by all the students going to police stations and laying false charges against each other.

'Some of them believed the campaign of economic disruption would bring the economy to its knees.'  
(Interviewee 57)

An argument that some students used in support of an indefinite boycott was that, if they cut themselves off from being educated, they would be cutting off the supply to the labour market of something on which capitalism itself depended. (Interviewee 40) The implication was that students had the power to hold the whole system to ransom by means of what, on an individual level, would have amounted to educational-economic kamikazi. One of the S.A.N.E. pamphlets quoted above, without actually calling for complete withdrawal from state schools, nonetheless confidently asserts, 'The *schools of oppression* can be closed, for then we close once and forever the SYSTEM of OPPRESSION.'  
(Document 16)

In contrast, there was also much maturity in student thinking on the strategy and tactics of the boycott. Reflecting something of the tone and content of the ideas which were in circulation, the following is to be found in one of the students' pamphlets :

'Our struggle, the Educational struggle, is part of a larger struggle - the struggle against the whole oppressive, exploitative system. We realise that as students, we cannot overthrow the state on our own - we need the support of the majority, the workers.'

We realise that our strong point is our potential economic value. We also realise, however, that we cannot go on boycotting indefinitely (although this would hurt the state tremendously) because of the majority of the oppressed's financial condition. We therefore have to rely on the workers to continue the struggle on the economic front until our potential economic power has been transformed into "kinetic" economic power'. (Document 20)

Another pamphlet describes how students involved in the 1976 uprising 'soon realised that bravery alone was not enough. They had shown their willingness to die if need be for the liberation of the people ... but they lacked the means to strike an effective blow.'

Elsewhere in the same pamphlet it is asserted,

'NOTHING CAN TAKE THE PLACE OF THE MASS POWER OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE THEMSELVES. Only when the toilers, young and old, rise to action in their tens and hundreds of thousands against all the forces and institutions of the state, is the racist regime seriously challenged and its authority shaken.'  
(Document 19)

The same or equivalent themes are to be found in numerous of the pamphlets which were in circulation. (e.g., Documents 16, 18, 19, 20, 25, 29, 37)

A student interviewed for a newspaper was reported as having said, *inter alia*, the following :

"We learnt an important lesson that a boycott or two, and the students on their own, can't bring about meaningful changes. We realised how important workers are to the fight for change and the historical significance of the part played by our elders.'" (Herald 17.5.80)

In an interview with a student leader, who had been prominent in the Committee of 81, he claimed,

'We were clear that this was a student movement to a large extent. It's very limited as such. The latter was a lesson that was learnt in the course of the boycott. We

later tried to establish links with some labour organisations to effect some action from the workers, to broaden out.

'We knew that it's so easy to indulge in intellectual politics. We tried to activate workers by embarking on action because we learnt that the workers relate in terms of action. It's no good giving them a pamphlet which they don't understand, with academic terms, *etcetera*. But when they see students embarking on action, then they relate to this. And this is what actually happened.' (Interviewee 48)

To balance the picture emerging at this point, it needs to be noted that especially students in non-leadership roles were not all as 'clear' and certain as the last quoted student leader claims to have been. Thus, for example, one student recollected in an interview how ...

'there was always this phrase that our struggle isn't a lone one but is a struggle with the workers and in the community. Yet, this was only a phrase adopted by the students. This idea of actually joining up with the workers wasn't really there. There was nevertheless always this feeling of solidarity and also of being of secondary importance next to the workers. We listened to the workers for it was always stressed that they were the most important.' (Interviewee 27)

A slightly different angle was apparent in the account of another student leader who told of how students had come to realise that, where their power really lay, was in their ability to influence their parents. They also realised, however, that, without a great deal more organisation, it was not easy for their parents/the workers to come out on strike. (Interviewee 53)

Nothing was more central to the strategic conception carried in the pamphlets than the absolute necessity of 'unity' and 'united action' (e.g., Documents 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 27, 31, 33, 46) Right at the outset, for instance, the key pamphlet, already cited several times, declared that 'a united decision on when to boycott should be taken by all schools. We are united in our stand against racist and inferior education. United we should decide the date of boycott.' How long

the boycott should last, again 'should be a united decision. Individual schools should not be allowed to trickle back in a disunifying, spontaneous way. WE GO OUT TOGETHER, WE COME BACK TOGETHER!' (Document 10) Some two months later, a pamphlet, in drawing out 'the lessons of June 16th,' stressed the point in the following terms :

'There must be complete UNITY of all oppressed people and NO DIVISIONS between students and parents, between "Africans", "Coloureds", and "Indians", between Xhosa-speakers, Tswana-speakers, Zulu-speakers, etc., between country people, "migrants" and townworkers, and at home between women and men. ALL ARE EQUAL IN THE STRUGGLE JUST AS ALL WILL BE EQUAL IN THE NEW AZANIA! The enemy uses divide and rule; our reply is UNITY OF THE OPPRESSED.' (Document 46)

Finally, it is observed that with the exception of one pamphlet which called for 'those thousands who have crossed our borders to continue the ARMED STRUGGLE' to be remembered on 16 June, and another which referred to 'Umkhonto we Sizwe - the armed wing of the A.N.C.' having the week before 'bombed one of the rulers' key strategic installations, SASOL', no mention was made in pamphlets - nor in interviews - of their struggle being carried further by violent means. Nor, however, was there explicit rejection of such a course. The pamphlets concentrated on strategic options which would have been of more immediate pertinence to those being addressed (e.g., Document 39). One pamphlet was ambiguous when referring, *inter alia*, to the police shooting of the two young persons in Elsie's River: 'It is not the oppressed that uses violence. It is the oppressor! Our violence is but a reaction to their brutality.' (Document 17) No general rejection of violence was articulated although there were periodic protestations of the students' peaceful intent. Thus, for instance, a newspaper report quoted a student as affirming, "Ours is a peaceful protest. We are against violence. We realise that that will only antagonise people and will achieve nothing." (Sunday Tribune 27.4.80)

#### 4 White students' response

Cape Town's White students were in general uninformed about their Black counterparts' struggle and were widely apathetic. Nonetheless, even at secondary level, some White students were concerned. (Interviewees 1,41) 'There were in many White schools little cores of pupils who were anxious and worried, including at, for example, Groote Schuur and Bellville High Schools.' (Interviewee 41) A meeting held at the University of Cape Town for White secondary students was attended by approximately 200 students from 16 local high schools. The meeting expressed its solidarity with the boycotting students and formed a co-ordinating committee to plan an awareness programme for White schools. (Argus 3.5.80)

No Government school, however, allowed any of what concern there was to be expressed. At Groote Schuur High, for example, students were forbidden to use the word 'boikot/boycott' for the duration of the boycott. (Interviewee 1) At another Afrikaans-medium high school, three students, who had wanted to take a stand and make some public statement, were brought up before the school committee and 'forced to back down'. (Interviewee 41) A group of girls at Rustenburg High School decided to write to some Athlone Senior Secondary students with whom one of them had had contact. 'When this got to the ears of the staff they were pulled in and given a lecture on how the school prided itself on teaching its children to be individuals and asked how they could do something such as they planned just because it had been suggested by others. The teacher said she was ashamed of them' (Interviewee 1) One Westerford High student was so upset and concerned about the situation that she visited a school under the DCR on her own initiative in order to see conditions for herself and to establish some contact with the students there. She was harshly rebuked by the principal who also called in her parents and threatened to expel her.' (Interviewee 1) The same principal, on hearing that a group of students wanted to hold a 'sit-out' on the field after school one Friday afternoon in solidarity with the Black students' boycott, called an assembly in which he subjected the school to a lengthy harangue on individuals' right to make their own decisions - a right

which would be violated if even a small group were to hold the proposed sit-out since they would thereby be imposing their ideas on the rest of the school. (Interviewee 41)

The 'degree of alarm' displayed by the Cape Education Department was notable. Principals received telephone calls instructing them not to allow their students to do 'anything'. A teacher at a leading boys high school, after setting a Standard 10 class an essay on 'South Africa in the Year 2000', which had stimulated great interest, was called in by the principal the following morning and reprimanded for putting a contentious political topic before her students. It transpired that one of the students in the class had reported the essay assignment to the Department and its Director had telephoned the principal. This was cited as an instance of 'the kind of thing happening in White schools during the boycott.' (Interviewee 41)

One of the only occasions on which White and Black secondary students were brought together during the boycott was organised in response to a call - made by a public meeting held under the auspices of the Women's Movement for Peace - for people to do what they could to contribute towards students 'across the colour line', learning to know and understand one another better. White students from, *inter alia*, Cape Town, Groote Schuur, Rondebosch and Wynberg High Schools and Black students from, *inter alia*, Athlone and Belgravia Senior Secondary Schools, spent an afternoon together. What surprised the two White teachers, who were primarily responsible for setting up this meeting, was that, although their intention had been mainly to 'conscientise' the White students, 'it was in actual fact the Black students who, by the end of the afternoon, were saying that they had had no idea there was *any* concern among White students let alone that their attempts to express it had been so totally suppressed.' (Interviewee 1)

Where some supportive response surfaced was in certain of the classified White private schools. However, it was only at one such school - Springfield Convent Senior School - that the staff and students publicly expressed their solidarity with the aims of the boycotting Black students. The school's principal, Sister Raymunda, issued a statement in which she said, *inter alia*, the following:

'As a sign of our sincerity and solidarity we have had a day of fast and pray that a just solution will be found to the deadlock. We invite all concerned to join us in fasting and prayer every Friday until this problem is resolved.' (Argus 1.5.80)

Although approximately a quarter of Springfield's students were Black, it was a group of White students who approached the principal with the suggestion that the school should join the boycott. Having discussed the situation as a staff, Sister Raymunda told the students concerned that if they wanted to boycott she would be prepared to consider it but only on condition that she had been given permission by the parents of each student wishing to boycott to excuse them from participation in the normal curriculum. On reflection, the students agreed that little would be achieved by themselves going on boycott. Most of what they proposed as alternative ways of expressing their concern centred on the collection of money. The principal responded to these proposals by pointing out that their fellow students in the Black schools were not looking for money but for solidarity. 'Its only through prayer that we can change the hearts of other people,' she told them. It was then that they came up with the idea of their Friday fasts which they kept up for nearly two terms. They also instituted sessions of silent reflection on the situation and the saying at noon everyday of a special prayer for a policy of equal education. Students from Black schools were invited to come and talk about their grievances and demands and developments in the boycott. They also wrote letters of support to the students at Black schools who were participating in the boycott. (Interviewee 43)

At another private school, Herzlia High School, students were addressed by one of the students in the leadership of the Committee of 81 (although in his individual capacity, not as a member of the Committee). (Interviewee 60) Of the points he made, one was as follows: 'We are not agitators; all we are looking for is an education like yours, to relate to you on the same level of education.' (Argus 29.4.80) A few days later a local newspaper published a letter from the Student Council of Herzlia High School refuting an allegation, which had been made in a previously published letter, that White students did not sympathise with the boycotting students. Mentioning that they had held a number of meetings at their school over the week which had past, the letter declared,

'The overwhelming majority of pupils at Herzlia High are well aware of the boycotting students' grievances and strongly support their peaceful efforts to attain what is rightfully theirs. .... Pupils at our school have expressed overwhelming support for equal, non-racial, compulsory education under one controlling body for all South Africans.' (Argus 5.5.80)

The only White students to go on boycott themselves were some of the students at two universities. The first to join the boycott - albeit briefly - were students from the University of Natal. (Argus 23.4.80) At the University of Cape Town some 3000 to 4000 students boycotted lectures for a week between 29 April and 5 May. (Grassroots April 1980: 15; Argus 5.5.80) Further than that, the latter students instituted an 'awareness programme', held protest meetings at which they pledged solidarity with the demands of the school students, staged a demonstration in the form of a march around their campus, and, on one occasion, some of them pamphleteered White high schools. (Argus 19.4.80; 29.4.80) The pamphlet told White secondary students that their ...

'first response should be to listen to what black scholars are demanding. They do not simply demand equal-education with whites, but a new, non-racial system for all. Once white scholars have listened, they can begin to understand. They must understand how their privileged education is training them for positions of domination.' (Argus 29.4.80)

At the other White university in the Western Cape, the University of Stellenbosch, a conservatively worded petition circulated on the campus was signed by some 900 students. The petition stated :

'That we, a group of students at Stellenbosch University, take note of the present coloured schools boycott and express our deep concern about the inequalities in the educational system.

'We acknowledge that these inequalities are a reflection of the broad socio-political set-up in our country, and consequently urgently appeal to the Government to remove these inequalities at an increased tempo.' (Argus 13.5.80)

As limitations of space put the tertiary level beyond the scope of this study, the response of White university students will not be recorded in any greater detail than appears in this paragraph.

Clearly, then, a few White students were sincerely concerned about the plight of their Black contemporaries. In spite of that concern having been most cautiously expressed - except by a small minority of university students - it was effectively suppressed. White students' response to the boycott was muffled at most and for the rest entirely smothered.

## 5 Liberal organisations and churches

The students' boycott seemed to evoke in liberal organisations a sense of concern, responsibility, and the need to respond in some way while differing in the degree to which they had clarity and consensus on *what* way to respond. This section will cover two political parties - one White and one Coloured - three self-styled 'non-political' and 'multi-racial' organisations, and certain Churches.

### 5.1 *Progressive Federal Party (PFP)*

The PFP's attitude towards the students' boycott was 'sympathetic' according to the party's parliamentary spokesperson on education at the time, Dr Alex Boraine, in an interview. Boraine emphasised, however, that the PFP had 'played no part in organising the boycotts or any of the protests'. (Interviewee 2)

Part of what the PFP would appear to have felt called upon to do, was to contribute to keeping the highest level of Government informed of what was happening and of what was being planned. This was done in direct approaches to the appropriate ministers. (Interviewee 2)

The PFP also sought to keep before the Government its interpretation of why there were protests and what it considered to be the likely consequences of repression unclothed by reform. Thus, for instance, during the boycott's third week PFP spokespersons Helen Suzman and Ray Swart called on the Government to allow peaceful demonstrations by students and urged that the police exercise all possible restraint. They backed their plea by referring to the experience of 1976 which, according to them, had shown this to be the best way of handling

demonstrations of the kind which had again broken out. The PFP's main concern was that confrontation between police and students be prevented because this, if accompanied by violence, could in their view create a long-term crisis similar to the 'Soweto riots'. (Argus 30.4.80) A few days later, Herbert Hirsh, leader of the Opposition and chief PFP spokesperson on education in the Cape Provincial Council, issued a statement on behalf of the PFP's provincial caucus calling for a commission of inquiry 'with a particular view to providing more funds for education and eliminating race discrimination in the whole educational system'. (Argus 5.5.80)

The PFP viewed the boycott as usefully making an important point which needed making but which, once made, left the boycott with no constructive goal. After P W Botha's public undertakings following his meeting with the delegation led by Sonn on 5 May, the PFP came out openly in support of an end to the boycott. On 6 May, Boraine issued a statement in which he expressed the hope that students and teachers would, in the light of the Prime Minister's declaration, decide 'to return to school and to keep a close watch on the Government to ensure that the reassurances given are not empty platitudes'. (Argus 6.5.80) The PFP made the latter watch a part of its own brief both out of a desire to see the promised reforms realised for themselves as well as out of support for those teachers and other members of the Black community - some of whom had approached the PFP with their predicament - who risked losing face by banking on the Botha declaration in their attempts to have the boycott brought to a conclusion. In this regard, the PFP saw its role as being to do what (little) it could to hold the Government to 'its side of the deal'. (Interviewee 2)

## 5.2 *Labour Party of South Africa (LPSA)*

The LPSA was founded in 1965 as a political party for persons registered as 'Coloured'. (Document 7) The account of the Labour Party's approach to the students' boycott which follows, is based on interviews of the party's National Secretary, Fred E Peters, and another senior member of its National Executive, Carter Ebrahim, as well as on a letter written by the Party's National Chairman, D M G Curry, to the Editor of the Cape Times which was published on 20 June 1980

and subsequently reproduced as an LPSA document. (Document 6)

The LPSA saw the students' boycott as a sign that 'the chickens of separate development' were 'coming home to roost'. According to Curry, 'The solution is quite simple. Integration is the answer.' (Document 6) The Party felt 'ambivalent', however. Their immediate response to the boycott was 'identification' with the students and recognition that their 'grievances were justified': (Interviewee 11) 'We, as adults, fully support our children and the students. Our hearts beat as one with them' (Document 6) Nevertheless, 'quite early' in the boycott, the LPSA adopted the attitude that the students had 'made their point' and should, therefore, return to class. (Interviewee 12) Curry wrote that 'we are asking our students to reconsider and reassess the implications of extending the boycott.' (Document 6) Their reasons, as given, were that they feared for 'the careers and even the lives of the children'. (Interviewee 11) Curry identified 'the only difference' between themselves and the children as having been that the students had to 'see and understand our desire to see them fulfil their professional and academic careers. Education is a vehicle to liberation and even the present system while it is there must be used and converted as an exit to freedom'. Earlier in the latter, he had written as follows: 'We do not want them to become cheap products for the labour market and therefore we are asking them to go back to school to write their examinations'. (Document 6)

Apart from having made the latter call and having involved itself in negotiating with the authorities for the release of the students in detention, the LPSA did not intervene in the boycott in any substantial way. It was admitted that this had been because of the LPSA's 'total rejection by the students'. (Interviewee 11)

In evaluating the outcome of the boycott, Ebrahim and Peters acknowledged that it had achieved a greater awareness of the inadequacies of the education system in the community. They also regarded the boycott as having been in large measure responsible for the setting up of the De Lange Commission, the Report of which the LPSA 'welcomed'.

Furthermore, some of the students' more limited demands had been, if only partially, met. (Interviewees 11,12) In the above cited letter, Curry stated, 'The student boycott certainly prevented the birth of ... the CPC, nicknamed the Coloured Puppet Council'. (Document 6) However, these 'positive results' were, in the opinion of the interviewees, far outweighed by what had been negative about the boycott. 'For example, if you take the drop-out rate which the boycott raised, you can see that the students' actions boomeranged on them badly'. (Interviewee 11) As further examples of what had been negative, they cited the very bad results which the students had suffered in the two sets of major examinations which, by the time of the interview, they had written since the boycott, the disillusionment which they claimed had subsequently set in, the withdrawal of parental support, and the children who had been shot. (Interviewees 11, 12)

Of all the liberal organisations operating in Cape Town at the time, the LPSA seems to have experienced the least internal pressure to do 'something' in relation to the boycott and the most external pressure from the community to do nothing. But then the Labour Party can claim considerable experience in guaging when it is not wanted. (*vide* Molteno, 1982a).

### 5.3 *South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR)*

It was in mid-February, 1980 - at the same time as the first student boycotts in Hanover Park and Guguletu - that the SAIRR became aware that there was 'an acute shortage of textbooks in all classes' at schools under the DET in Cape Town. (Document 3, page 1) On 22 February, the Chairperson of the SAIRR's Cape Western Region, Daphne M Wilson, visited the principals of three of the four local DET senior secondary schools and held discussions with them about what was described as the 'tense situation'. In a memorandum reporting to her Regional Executive Committee on these visits, Wilson's conclusions about the 'grave textbook situation in the African schools' were that :

- '(a) Scholars felt *deeply resentful* of the inadequate text book situation.
- (b) Their *studies are handicapped* to a farcical degree through lack of text books.
- (c) This factor alone must have a *major effect on poor performance* in examinations at the High Schools'.  
(Document 1, p.4)

About the same time, the Institute's Regional Secretary administered a questionnaire to 180 secondary students drawn from three DET and 27 DCR schools in order to establish the overall position concerning textbooks in the Peninsula's Black schools. The results indicated 'a dire shortage'. (Document 3, p.2)

The SAIRR's first intervention took the form of a letter written by its local Chairperson to the Director of the DET, Owens, requesting an interview to acquaint him with their concern and to query his public statement carried in the Cape Times of 14 February that it was 'not true to say that there were often shortages in the government supply of textbooks to black school children'. (Document 3) Nothing came of this initiative. (Interviewee 60)

As described by Wilson in an interview, 'The work of the SAIRR is to be a watchdog on what is harmful in race relations and they have always taken it upon themselves to give warnings where they think the effects are so harmful that they are going to lead to violence'. (Interviewee 60) Thus, the very day the boycott proper began, a statement made on behalf of the Institute by Wilson, as its Chairperson, appeared in the Cape Times. She called for reform of the educational system and for tolerance and respect for the pupils' rights to peaceful protest. More specifically, she said that 'as soon as possible there should be a pragmatic and unequivocal commitment to: the basing of teachers' salaries on qualification and not race; educational facilities being available equitably to all, regardless of colour; and one national system of education'. (Cape Times 14.4.80; Documents 3 and 4) A week later, a letter was dispatched to the Minister of Coloured Relations, Steyn, requesting an interview between himself and a small deputation from the Institute's Cape Western Region. The intention, according to Wilson, was 'to have a private talk with Steyn and give him directly the Institute's warning in terms of race relations'. Steyn agreed and,

on 12 May, he and the Secretary and Deputy-Secretary of his Department, Mills and Blignaut, met Dr René de Villiers, then President of the Institute, and Dr Oscar Wollheim, a member of the executive committee of the Cape Western Region, who placed before them a case for the urgency of adopting a time-structured programme of reform towards achieving equal education for all. (Documents 3 & 4; Interviewee 60) In a statement issued the following day, De Villiers stated that the deputation had been 'impressed with the expressed determination of the Minister and his officials to strive for equality of educational standards for whites and peoples of colour.' He further recorded that the deputation had 'expressed its gratitude to both pupils and the authorities for the measure of restraint which both sides had exercised in the recent upheavals and expressed the hope that the return to normality would be swift and lasting'. (Document 2)

Apart from these public calls upon, and direct approaches to, Government, the principal role played by the SAIRR was to monitor developments and on occasion to draw the voting public's attention thereto while always emphasising the need for educational reform. Further than that, according to the then regional chairperson in the above-cited interview, the Institute 'stayed in the side-lines ready to support where it could' - 'our sympathy was entirely with the students'. (Interviewee 60)

#### 5.4 *Women's Movement for Peace*

The Women's Movement for Peace grew out of a mass meeting for women called in the Cape Town City Hall on 29 September, 1976, 'to protest the unjust system' against which the uprising of that year was directed. The organisation describes its objectives as being ...

'to promote communication, contact, understanding and harmony amongst all people in South Africa, (and) to work towards a society of equal opportunity for all the people of South Africa, through non-violent means.'

The essence of its 'philosophy' is that 'the starting point of any action for change can be only through open and constant communication with the people affected by the situation. Only then can an organisation become aware of true needs and priorities'. The Women's Movement acts, according to its own account, by ...

'helping the community become aware of their rights,  
 listening to community needs,  
 negotiating between the community and the authorities,  
 working with other concerned organisations, here and  
 overseas,  
 trying to raise the awareness of the general public  
 through protest meetings, petitions, letters and  
 statements to the press, and house meetings'.

What characterises the organisation's structure is its division into areas, each of which incorporates Black and White residential communities. (Document 5)

It so happened that the Women's Movement for Peace had adopted education as the main focus for its efforts in 1980. The role which the Movement wished to play in relation to the students' boycott was one of attempting 'to bring reconciliation and change'. (Williamson, 1981: 1) A little more specifically, according to a leading figure in the organisation when interviewed, members saw it as their role to keep in touch with developments for the purpose of keeping all people concerned with the situation informed as well as generally to make available any resources to which they might have had access in support of the students. The Movement's most public intervention was a meeting it organised on the 'crisis in education' held on 1 May in order to acquaint in particular White people with what was at issue. Members identified with the students' boycott and they hoped it could be effective in some way.

When the Women's Movement came to assess its own role in relation to the boycott there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction. They did not consider that they had achieved anything tangible. At the same time, however, nobody in the organisation had even in retrospect any real idea of how they might have made any greater contribution. (Interviewee 59)

### 5.5 *Mowbray Inter-Race Group (MIRGE)*

MIRGE is a small organisation which was founded after a large public meeting held in the Mowbray Town Hall at the height of the 1976 uprising. Its aim is principally to make some contribution to raising the level of White people's political awareness by having them hear and meet Black 'contact groups'.

MIRGE's response to the students' boycott was restricted to their contact groups having given particular emphasis to the education question during that time. According to its chairperson in an interview, MIRGE 'fully sympathised with the line that the students were taking but they clearly were masters of the situation. They didn't need anyone else to chip in and they knew what they were doing.' (Interviewee 50)

### 5.6 *Churches*

The Churches which responded to the students' boycott as organised bodies for the most part confined themselves to pronouncements. Publicity was given to statements made by the heads of the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist denominations, the Reformed Church in Africa and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk. While giving more or less explicit recognition to the legitimacy of the students' cause, their main thrust was in all cases an appeal to the Government to respond with restraint and to remedy the students' grievances by reforming education. The only reforms, which they identified directly, were the centralisation of control of the education of Blacks and Whites in a single government department, and the equalisation of expenditure. They also called upon students to remain restrained and peaceful in pursuit of their goals. Notable was the way in which these liberal clerics managed to moderate the students' demands at the same time as themselves calling on the Government to respond with sympathy and reforms such as would convince South Africans that it was sincerely committed to helping them all to realise their full potential.

What the foregoing paragraph abstracted from various public pronouncements will now be specifically illustrated by quotation from

those same statements. Thus, early in the second week of the boycott, Archbishop Bill Burnett, head of the Church of the Province of South Africa, made a statement in which he said the following:

'The Government has a unique opportunity dramatically to demonstrate its determination to achieve a peaceful and acceptable future for all our people, by taking radical steps to narrow and then eliminate the expenditure gap between white and black education. Let them take it and give us all a much needed sign of hope. This nation has now more money at its disposal than we ever dared to think possible. Good sense and justice must encourage us to take full advantage of that to begin to transform the facilities and salaries in black schools. The schools' boycott on the Cape Flats and elsewhere should not be seen as the irritating work of tiresome agitators. When the gap between expenditure on white and black education is so scandalously wide, there is a need for consciences to be stirred. We are witnessing the understandable refusal of black young people to accept the maldistribution of opportunity among white and black through education. They are saying that with the future that stretches out before them, they are not prepared to submit to this and other inequalities of apartheid society. .... At the same time, the students will surely best forward their cause not only by firmly standing on the justice of their requests, but also by continuing to exercise discipline and restraint in the way in which they strive for change. Let neither State nor students provoke one another to violence.' (Argus 22.4.80)

Cardinal Owen McCann, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town, said in a statement read in all Catholic churches on Sunday, 4 May,

'It must be realised that the boycott has arisen from a legitimate feeling of injury and frustration. The students and their parents feel that they have no real say in the affairs of public policy which affect them closely and personally. Let the authorities not react sharply against the boycott, but rather listen with sympathetic ears to legitimate grievances. Let them consult with the students and their parents and all genuinely concerned with the improvement of the whole quality of education and life of every South African.' (Argus 3.5.80)

The Catholic Bishops' Conference had by that time already made public its full support for the student's boycott action. Over the weekend between the third and fourth weeks of the boycott, the principals of 49 local Catholic schools met to make clear their stand in relation to the students' boycott. On their behalf, Bishop Stephen Naidoo, Auxiliary Bishop of Cape Town, invited concerned people to join in a 12-hour

prayer vigil at a church in Wittebome starting at 19h00 on the following Friday. They also issued a statement in which they went significantly further than their ecclesiastical superiors:

'We, the principals of the 49 Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese, unanimously resolved to record our identification and solidarity with, and support for, the stand taken by the pupils, teachers and principals of schools under the Department of Coloured Relations in their struggle for equal education in an integrated society.

'However we repudiate all forms of violence'.  
(Argus 5.5.80)

The Chairperson of the synodical commission of the Reformed Church in Africa - a member of the NGK family of churches - Revd Edward Manikkam, issued a statement in which he expressed his Church's conviction that 'education should be administered by one central government department, and not on a compartmentalised, ethnic basis'. The statement called on the Government to remedy the grievances which were being expressed through boycott and which had already been acknowledged in the Erika Theron and Cillié Commissions' reports.  
(Argus 7.5.80)

The chairperson of the Methodist Church's Cape District, Revd Abel Hendricks, issued a statement in which he said, *inter alia*, the following :

'The Government should ... be aware of the irony of a situation in which youngsters who have been "educated" by the apartheid system and who know no other system, have so firmly rejected this system and all it stands for. The current crisis in "coloured" education is merely symptomatic of a greater disease - frustration by most South Africans with the system of Apartheid itself'.

'I call on the Government to take immediate steps to convince the majority of South Africans that it is serious about enabling all South Africans to reach their full potential in the country of their birth as God would expect his people to do'. (Argus 1.5.80)

Only one Church approached the Government directly by way of a deputation, namely the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk. Lay membership of the NGS consists exclusively of people classified Coloured although some of its ministers are White and they have tended to dominate the Moderamen. On Friday, 25 April - end of the boycott's second week - the Moderator of the NGS, Revd Dawid Botha, announced that he, accompanied by Dr H M Beets, Revd I J Mentoor and Revd Jan Mettler, had met with the Minister of Coloured Relations. The Moderamen issued a statement in which it said that the NGS could not ignore the cry of thousands of pupils which arose from their lack of prospect in the very institutions that should prepare and train them for their lives ahead.

'The only manner in which this struggle for ideals and inspiration for the future can be uttered so that all may hear, is to refuse instruction. That this justified demonstration is not without dangers is clear. It can, if responsible leadership and self-restraint is lacking, escalate to extremes which obscure the original purpose.'

'It could also damage relationships between parents, pupils, teachers and the community, and erode that which was good in the education system together with what was weak, undesirable and sick in the system.

'So far the pupils have acted with exceptional responsibility and have made their point clearly. Their grievances have been clearly stated, and those who should hear have heard.

'The Minister concerned has undertaken to rectify matters within his ability. The Moderamen in representations to the Minister asked him to give urgent attention to the petitions of pupils and not to take the drastic step of closing schools. His reaction was exceptionally positive, and he gave the Moderamen the assurance that he would do everything possible to place the education of our children on an equal plane with the best in the country.

'We take the Minister at his word, and expect a new initiative. All must now do their best to ensure that it is carried out and made a success'.

The statement then appealed to parents - with the argument that the pupils had now been heard and the Minister had given an assurance of immediate attention to their grievances - to exercise 'positive parental

leadership' to get education under way again and to move their children to resume classes. (Argus 25.4.80)

The Moderamen's deputation and subsequent statement provoked considerable dissension in the NGS. Eleven of its ministers, including Revd Allan Boesak, made public a signed statement in which they took the Moderamen to task. *Inter alia*, they said :

'We wish to dissociate ourselves, as members of our church, from the statement issued by the Moderamen last week in connection with the boycott of classes. That statement disclosed an unbelievable lack of sensitivity to matters of importance to our community. Apparently the gentlemen do not know the issue involved in the boycott - not placing "coloured education" on an equal footing with "the best in the country" (white education?), but establishing a single national education system for all South Africans. We take the strongest exception to the Moderamen offering the Government the opportunity to use the Sendingkerk to carry its message. We view it as exceptionally dangerous for the credibility of the church that the Moderator should issue a call based on belief in the promises of a Minister whose Government by its political actions of the past three decades enjoys no confidence in our community.' (Argus 29.4.80)

The most forthright statement from a religious quarter to have been reported in the daily press was one signed by twenty Anglican clergy and a Sheikh after a service of solidarity attended by over 200 people in a Bonteheuwel church. It read as follows :

'We, the undersigned, live in a country torn apart by strife, hatred and a violent system. We are experiencing the wrath of a people subjugating us.

'We have suffered and our children are still suffering, but we recognise that God wills us to have a life that is unshackled. God is in our struggle. He demands equality and justice for his people.

'He calls his Kingdom into being through us, a Kingdom freed from oppression and hatred.

'We hate the evils of this system. We believe God is manifesting Himself in our quest for liberation. We are at the point where we cannot bear these evils any longer.

'We pledge our solidarity with the students and all those who are involved in the quest for a just and equal society.' (Argus 12.5.80)

One church, which in a small way intervened practically in the students' boycott, was The Society of Friends. The Quakers, as they are otherwise known, have been in the forefront of the pacifist movement in the Western world and in South Africa have made the cause of conscientious objection to military service their own. Theirs has been the only organisation prepared to receive funds from overseas on behalf of conscientious objectors and they have made various attempts to initiate forms of service which could constitute alternatives to military service and at the same time be 'relevant to community action'. It was towards these ends that in 1976 they formed the Friends' Ambulance Service, subsequently renamed the Voluntary Service.

In 1980, although the friends had no overall response to the education question itself, they saw a role for themselves in terms of 'crisis intervention', and their Meeting endorsed the involvement of the Voluntary Service's two 'ambulances'. What they did on at least two occasions when students were marching in the streets was to have the ambulances circulating in the vicinity ready to intervene, with bull-horn or in less raised tone, between police and demonstrators in the event of confrontation or, failing the prevention of violence, to provide the services of a doctor or person trained in first aid for anybody who might have been injured. (Interviewee 19)

There were, of course, many individual members of various churches who played some part in the boycott and who might have considered that they were acting in their capacity as Christians. But, what has been described here, was the extent of only the institutional response of churches, which can now be seen to have been very limited, as was the role of liberals in general, with the possible exception of those who were teaching at the time in the boycotted schools.

### C. IMPACT

The immediate impact made by the boycott was marked but mixed. First, there were the students who dropped out as a result of the boycott. The schools most affected in this way were in the lower income areas. Many of the students from poorer families, who had found jobs during the boycott, were under pressure to retain such positions rather than return to school. According to a principal interviewed at the time by a local newspaper, 'It is difficult to get a child to return to school once he has found employment ....' (Herald 6.9.80) Some parents felt that they could not afford to keep their children at school - especially if they were probably going to fail. It was held that some students dropped out when, having had the educational system exposed for them through the boycott, they became disillusioned and bored. In the opinion of TAC chairperson, Vincent Farrell, student teachers dropped out because they had in the process become disillusioned with teaching and with the reaction of their teachers to the boycott. (Herald 6.9.80) Estimates made by interviewees of how many students had left school to seek employment as a consequence of the boycott ranged from a 'few' to between 5 and 20% at different schools. No guesstimates were given of how many had returned to repeat the year in 1981 but it was thought that 'many' had.

Further in consequence of the boycott, certain of the more limited, school-specific grievances of the students under the DCR were redressed. Shortages of textbooks were made good. School buildings were repaired. There was even the Prime Minister's promise of equality with White education. However, as expressed by one of the students interviewed, 'It was not anything that was granted by the authorities which was felt to be important but rather the spirit and what had happened amongst the people.' (Interviewee 7) According to another, 'What the boycott achieved, was symbolic - it made people more aware.' (Interviewee 3) The latter was an opinion expressed by all of the interviewees who addressed themselves to the question of what the boycott had achieved.

'The boycott woke me up - it made me more aware of what's going on around me. .... A lot of students became more political. They also became more aware of the inadequacies of their particular school .... Teachers were thoroughly discussed and sorted out.' (Interviewee 3) The boycotting students' support for the striking meat workers led to greater awareness, amongst students and in the community at large, of the workers' struggle and the role of trade unionism. The WPGWU official interviewed spoke of many requests, which the Union had received from students since the boycott, to send a representative to explain their work to them. (Interviewee 18) The opinion was expressed that the boycott had mobilised many students who would not otherwise have been mobilised. They formed or joined groups on and off the school campuses and many became active in the youth sections of their local civic associations. (Interviewees 7, 8, 15, 33, 34, 35, 61) Furthermore, 'It brought a lot of schools together and showed that people could stand together if they put their minds to it.' (Interviewee 8) The following is extracted from a pamphlet which appeared just prior to the final suspension of the boycott in the DCR schools :

'Apart from promises of material reform and improvement, ... the major gains of this campaign have been political and organisational. The degree of unity attained is almost unprecedented anywhere in the country at any time in its history. A base (basis) has been created upon which lasting buildings of the future can be erected.'  
(Document 26)

Almost as optimistic was the principal interviewed for whom the boycott's primary significance lay in it having 'given us a generation of people - who are now becoming adults - who have participated in some form of *active* political resistance. The next generation isn't going to be beaten down so easily because they will have this generation as their parents. We can already see that those coming into the school, who had brothers and sisters who participated in the boycott, are a different group - this is a different kind of student ; this is not a placid student.' (Interviewee 5)

Certainly the boycott injected students with a new sense of power. They realised that authority was not something unchallengeable. They discovered their ability to assert themselves where before they had kow-towed. 'The kids were stronger. They wouldn't allow a teacher to treat them like animals any more. They would refuse to bend (to be administered 'cuts'), for example, where before nobody would have thought of not doing so.' (Interviewee 32) Students appraised their teachers more critically. According to a student interviewed, 'The boycott gave us an opportunity to look through the teachers to see which of them were genuine. Certainly a lot of the teachers at our school became exposed and students developed a new approach towards them.' Furthermore, she said, 'There was a whole new approach to our work because we were now questioning things.' (Interviewee 58) 'In the class situation people wouldn't accept as readily as they would before. They questioned.' (Interviewee 21) A teacher described in an interview how 'The students took pride in being able to make up their minds for themselves. In class, you could see that they were quite proud of being able to say, No, they don't agree with what that writer is saying. This illustrates the critical awareness that had developed in students through the boycott - not just an awareness of political issues but a critical approach in a scholastic and academic sense as well.' (Interviewee 33)

Some teachers welcomed the latter developments in their students. Some adapted their attitudes accordingly. (Interviewees 5, 22, 29, 30, 32, 33, 38, 41, 46, 57, 61) There were teachers who were prepared to learn from the students and admit to shortcomings in their own pedagogical practice. The following, for instance, was said by a principal:

'After the boycott there was greater respect for the students. If you think of the way in which a student had been treated by a teacher or by the principal as just somebody to be instructed and told: Do this and Don't do that, we were made aware that there's a greater being inside that person which requires, demands more respect and who has to be consulted, not just instructed. In that way, we were made aware of our deficiencies. Much of this was carried forward into relations between staff and students after the boycott.' (Interviewee 22)

The same principal described a session in the awareness programme which he had felt 'honoured to have been allowed' to attend.

'That morning a girl from another school delivered a paper. She was in Standard 9 or 10 but the way she spoke and the way in which the students responded, was an amazing demonstration of teaching. She didn't tell them things, she asked questions and led them on. I took myself in a classroom where I'm telling kids things all the time, I'm dictating to them instead of drawing it out. That's what she did and she had their cooperation. As a teacher, I learnt such a lot that morning - I wish my full staff could have been there.'  
(Interviewee 22)

There were other teachers who were gravely threatened by the students' questioning and redefinition of the relations between them. From their viewpoint, in the words of another principal interviewed, 'Classroom relations between staff and pupils changed after the boycott for the worse. They were not longer as amenable to discipline as they had been. Their attitude was rebellious. .... There was a complete crisis of authority' (Interviewee 6) According to one interviewee, 'Particularly some of the older teachers found it extremely difficult to shed their authoritarian positions and they didn't.' (Interviewee 41) Teachers, in general, found themselves effectively constrained, however. According to the last quoted principal,

'The kids realised that there was a lot to make up so they certainly did let the teachers teach. But the teachers couldn't do very much beyond that. You couldn't discipline as you could before. If there was a problem, you had to handle it very gingerly because the kids became rude.'  
(Interviewee 6)

A student told how, 'if students had problems with a teacher, they would go to the SRC which would take it up with the teacher concerned or perhaps the principal. Some of the teachers tried to intimidate the younger students but they'd go to the SRC and the teachers could get very little right.' (Interviewee 7) According to another student, 'Teachers became more subtle, more aware of what they were saying. There wouldn't be the same sort of ordering about.' (Interviewee 8)

In the words of a teacher, 'teachers are having to watch their step both in what they say and in how they treat students, for example, in disciplining them.' (Interviewee 14) 'The unpopular teachers - the more repressive and conservative ones - were very careful as to how they dealt with the kids after the boycott ended. They wouldn't just hit out any more. They were concerned about the implications.' (Interviewee 32)

The scope of the present study did not stretch to include an investigation of developments in the schools subsequent to 1980. However, on the basis of the observations of interviewees, it is possible to give an indication of how lasting the boycott's impact had proved to be by early 1982. There was then no perception that the schools were being materially better provided for than prior to the boycott. Much of the awareness, which the boycott had generated in students and teachers, appeared to have already worn off many of them although not without leaving behind some deposit. Thus, on the one hand, a teacher complained, 'The students are passive and submissive again - you can hardly believe that they're the same students of one-and-a-half years ago.' (Interviewee 33) 'One of the most depressing things about 1980 was how quickly things returned to "normality". Midway into the third term, it was as if the boycott had never happened.' (Interviewee 32) On the other hand, according to a student interviewed, 'Students are now since the boycott more outspoken with teachers concerning what they are not satisfied with. They are prepared to criticise the work given by teachers and even how the teachers give their lessons.' (Interviewee 3) The latter was confirmed by a teacher in the following terms. 'The students are demanding more, they are not taking things lying down to the same extent, and they are more prepared to question - though still extraordinarily tolerant of their teachers' nonsense.' The same teacher recounted an incident of a sort which she said would not have occurred at her school before the boycott. The occasion was that of the White 'General Election' for which day the school was scheduled to undergo a panel inspection. The inspection had just begun when the entire school, in a protest demonstration on the franchise issue, moved out of the classrooms and went off home. When confronted by their teachers, the students told them that they were going to vote. The panel inspection had to be postponed. (Interviewee 57)

Such cleavages as had been brought about in student-teacher relations were considered to have in the main been reversed within two to four months of the boycott ending. A student bemoaned the fact that, 'After the boycott, all this authority, which people had been rejecting, just came back into play again'. (Interviewee 21) Another student described how, 'At the moment, at school, teachers don't seem to care about the students. They give their lessons in a dragging way. There is no opportunity for students to use their own imagination. The teachers seem bored.' (Interviewee 3) Many students had grown disillusioned. According to one interviewee, 'There has been a lot of disillusionment in the wake of 1980 and this is making it very difficult for the student leadership to build student organisations. For example, an SRC is regarded as a boycott body - some people see that as its only function. Many people have the attitude that they've done their bit for the struggle and there's nothing more they can do.' (Interviewee 21) At the time when the interviews were conducted, many students were expressing the hope that their year was not to be yet again disrupted by a boycott. Although some of those who had been mobilised through the 1980 boycott were still active politically by 1982, many were not. Many of the organisational structures, which students had built during the boycott, had subsequently collapsed. Nothing remained of the Committee of 81. Most SRCs were still functioning but in general rather ineffectually and in the face of severe pressure from principals who had quickly re-established complete control. (Interviewee 32) No instances were found of student-initiated interventions in the curriculum or of students refusing to cover some aspect of a syllabus or demanding the inclusion of an area omitted or an alternative text, except the case of certain students' refusal to use a particular Afrikaans dictionary which they regarded as 'offensive' and 'derogatory' because of various racist inclusions. What the students did with their copies of the dictionary in question - including burning them and throwing them at an inspector - was described in the main account above.

Some of the teachers who had been supportive of the students during the boycott had also been somewhat disillusioned by the subsequent conduct of some students. While at certain schools, students

had applied themselves to their studies with great diligence, at others the level of motivation was lower than what it had been prior to the boycott. A principal recounted what had occurred at his school on the occasion of the royal wedding. When no students arrived at school that morning, he went to the homes of the chairperson of the SRC and the head prefect to find out what was happening. They explained that it was an anti-Afrikaner-demonstration: 'because the Afrikaner is giving us such a rotten deal, we're going to show our loyalty to the Queen.' Said the principal, 'In the face of this kind of muddled thinking I ask myself what awareness was there in 1980 really?' (Interviewee 22)

(Where not otherwise specified, data for this section was drawn from Interviewees 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 40, 41, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 58, 61, 63)

CONCLUSION

The first part of this study - informed by historical materialism, as an approach to analysing particular social processes by uncovering the conditions on which they rest, without being constricted by any cult of doctrinaire Marxism - traced the development of Black schooling in relation to the region's penetration by colonialism and the rise of a racist industrial capitalism. What schooling was about in practice - including, but not co-extensive with, the plans of policy-makers - was presented as the outcome of the interaction between involved parties within a shifting structural setting which has conditioned, where it has not directly determined, the constitution and actions of such parties as well as the processes in which they have participated. Particular attention was paid to the attitudes of the different parties concerned with Black schooling in relation to their respective social locations and concomitant material interests. Particular attention was paid also to the changing manifestations of Black people's resistance to schooling *per se* and to particular forms of schooling.

The second part of the thesis - informed by what was described as a sociological sensitivity - presented an intricate dissection and reconstruction of a nodal episode in Black schooling's contemporary history. It recounted the overall course taken by the 1980 Black students' class boycott nationally and documented in relatively great detail its development in and around the DCR schools of Cape Town. In the latter context, particular attention was paid to the respective parts played by the students themselves, their parents and the Black community at large, the teachers and principals of the schools involved, and the police and government authorities. Student consciousness at the time of the boycott was described in great detail. Organisation and leadership amongst the students received special attention, as did students' relationships with teachers and principals. The response of liberal organisations, certain churches and White secondary students was documented. The second part was concluded with a consideration of the boycott's immediate impact.

The first part of the thesis was presented as primarily an

exercise in empirical and conceptual reconnaissance of under-explored terrain intended to provide information and analytic experience for further research. The second part, despite its detail, was equally exploratory in its drive for a form of objectivity and its deliberate minimisation of interpretation. A study as tentative in tenor as this has been, can rightfully conclude only in the most qualified terms. How it ends is not so much with anything conclusive as with questions and challenges. More than anything else, the study has served to problematise common understandings of schooling in South Africa. It has adopted neither conventional, conservative perspectives nor current, 'radical' alternatives thereto. It has raised - albeit in a muted manner - a range of problems without claiming to resolve them.

The thesis, however, does - as was desired - have implications for a way forward. Substantively, the two parts juxtaposed demand that we take as seriously people's interventions in educational process from below as we take the structural and historical constraints within which those interventions are made. Theoretically, the challenge is to develop a framework which can carry the analysis advanced in the first part of the thesis forward in such a way that it can account for the levels of social and educational processes which the second part of the thesis raises to the surface.

The rich complexity of what actually constitutes the schooling system is so self-evident to those involved in it that they would never consider reducing it, for instance, to some simple machine geared to greater systemic requisites. Nevertheless, under 'normal' conditions, much of this complexity is safely contained behind the closed doors of classrooms. The grand theorists outside can ignore it while the micro-process technicians slip in and, closing the doors behind them, so isolate themselves in particular components of the complex whole that they lose sight of what is outside the classroom, of where the students, teachers, principals and educational policies come from, of why young people are there and of where they might be going. Drive past a school while classes are in session and you will see nothing but a physical structure. Should you be riding with, let us say - depending upon your political preferences - Parsons or Poulantzas, you may draw up on the other side of the street and soon

have satisfied yourselves as to why the school must be where it is and what must be going on inside it. However, the road which we have to get on to, if we want to find out more than what might already be in our heads, is the one which leads through the school gates - the road which takes the students into their classrooms and back out into townships and factories. In 1980, classroom doors were flung open as tens of thousands of Black students came out on boycott, exposing as they did so a complexity in the social relations and processes of schooling which could not be ignored and which defied confinement to the Procrustean bed of any brand of mechanistic structuralism.

The documentation of the 1980 students' boycott, beyond being a challenge to theory, constitutes in its own right an empirical contribution to a side of South African educational history which has hardly begun to be written and, indeed, to South African political history. The account of the development of Black schooling, which is presented in the first part of the thesis, makes an analytic contribution to the re-interpretation of that history as a whole. What the two parts taken together demonstrate, is the need to develop for South Africa a sociology of education which encompasses both a theory of the social structures and processes amidst which people act as well as a theory of how human action comes to be taken. What the thesis demonstrates also is the daunting amount of empirical research - both historical and contemporary - which will have to be undertaken before there can be hope of carrying our theorising of the dynamics of schooling in South Africa significantly forward. This study was inevitably limited by its exploratory nature...but it needed doing nonetheless.

## APPENDICES

Appendix I: List of Interviewees

- 1 Anonymous (teacher)
- 2 Dr Alex L Boraine
- 3 Anonymous (student)
- 4 Anonymous (student)
- 5 Anonymous (school principal)
- 6 Anonymous (school principal)
- 7 Anonymous (student)
- 8 Anonymous (student)
- 9 Anonymous (school principal)
- 10 Anonymous (teacher)
- 11 Carter Ebrahim
- 12 Fred Peters
- 13 Anonymous (teacher)
- 14 Anonymous (teacher)
- 15 Anonymous (community social worker)
- 16 Anonymous (Fort Hare student)
- 17 Anonymous (teacher)
- 18 Anonymous (organiser for Western Province General Workers' Union)
- 19 A Paul Hare
- 20 Anonymous (student)
- 21 Anonymous (student)
- 22 Anonymous (school principal)
- 23 Anonymous (journalist)
- 24 Anonymous (senior inspector of schools)
- 25 Anonymous (school principal)
- 26 Anonymous (teacher)
- 27 Anonymous (student)
- 28 Frank May
- 29 Anonymous (teacher)
- 30 Anonymous (teacher)
- 31 Anonymous (member of the Parents' Action Committee)
- 32 Anonymous (teacher)
- 33 Anonymous (teacher)
- 34 Anonymous (parent and community activist)

- 35 Anonymous (student)
- 36 Anonymous (senior member of AZAPO)
- 37 Anonymous (teacher)
- 38 Anonymous (student)
- 39 Anonymous (associated with Non-European Unity Movement)
- 40 Anonymous (teacher)
- 41 Anonymous (teacher)
- 42 Dr Frank Quint
- 43 Anonymous (school principal)
- 44 Rommel Roberts
- 45 R Shaboordin
- 46 Anonymous (teacher)
- 47 Franklin Sonn
- 48 Anonymous (student)
- 49 Anonymous (student)
- 50 Anonymous (student)
- 51 Anonymous (student)
- 52 Anonymous (teacher)
- 53 Anonymous (student)
- 54 Anonymous (student)
- 55 Dr R van der Ross
- 56 Randall van den Heever
- 57 Anonymous (teacher)
- 58 Anonymous (student)
- 59 Sue Williamson
- 60 Daphne Wilson
- 61 Anonymous (community activist)
- 62 Anonymous (teacher)
- 63 Anonymous (teacher)
- 64 Paul Jordaan

Appendix II: List of Documents

- 1 Memorandum on Chairman's Visit to Principals of Three African High Schools on Friday, 22nd February 1980 - RRCW 12/80 - signed by Mrs D M Wilson, Chairman, South African Institute of Race Relations (Cape Western Region).
- 2 Statement by Mr R M de Villiers, President of the South African Institute of Race Relations - dated 13 May 1980.
- 3 Chairman's Report on Cape Western Region to the Council of the South African Institute of Race Relations, June 25th 1980, for the period February-June 1980.
- 4 Chairman's Report for the Period 9th November 1979 - 15th October 1980, South African Institute of Race Relations (Cape Western Region) - RRCW 52/80.
- 5 The Women's Movement for Peace (leaflet).
- 6 'Lessons of Boycott and Unrest', Labour Viewpoint 1, June 23, 1980 - Labour Party of South Africa.
- 7 Labour Party of South Africa: 'A Brief History of the Party and Nationalist Rule Since 1948'.
- 8 Report on Disturbances in African Schools by the Regional Secretary (Patrick McKenzie), South African Institute of Race Relations (Southern Transvaal Region) - RR 19/64.
- 9 'In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful: Whither Oppression' (Durban: pamphlet; 1980).
- 10 'Die Belangrikheid van 'n Metode in Ons Stryd' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 11 'Protect Our Unity' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 12 'Focus on Education...Focus on Education...Focus on Education...' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 13 'Workers Awake!' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 14 'A Call by Ravensmead and Uitzig' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 15 'Student Action for Non-Racial Education' ('Students in Azania must realise...') (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 16 'Student Action for Non-Racial Education' ('This educational system incorporates the method and system of oppression...') (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 17 'Fight Police Brutality!!!' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 18 'A Plea to Workers, Our Parents' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 19 'The Way Forward' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 20 'A New Strategy...' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 21 'In 1948 the blueprint for apartheid was formulated.' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 22 'The Class Boycott is Suspended But the Struggle Continues...' ('The class boycott has been in progress for 11 weeks.') (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).

- 23 'The Class Boycott is Suspended But the Struggle Continues...'  
( 'Ons boikot klasse vir eif weke.' ) (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 24 'The Boycott Takes on a New Form' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 25 'The Class Boycott Ends - An Effective Retreat...The Struggle  
Continues' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 26 'The Boycott of Classes' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 27 'Students Manifesto - A Dedication' (Cape Town: pamphlet;  
1980).
- 28 'Resistance Against Racist Education' (Cape Town: pamphlet;  
1980).
- 29' 'Brief Summary of Events Leading to Boycott' (Cape Town: pamphlet;  
1980).
- 30 'Unity in Action' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 31 'The Crisis in the Schools: A Call to Students, Teachers,  
Parents' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 32 'Regional Committees' (Cape Town: circular; 1980).
- 33 Manifesto to the People of Azania (Cape Town; 1980).
- 34 'Our Objectives' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 35 'A Time to Build Up' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 36 'S R C Newsletter' (Cape Town; 1980).
- 37 'From the Schools to the People!' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 38 'Youths Killed in Streets' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 39 'Kindermoord' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 40 'Tell your Father, tell your Mother,...' (Cape Town: pamphlet;  
1980).
- 41 'Bonyana Ne Ntombi Zase Afrika'/'Sons and Daughters of Africa'  
(Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 42 'The Silent Boycott' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 43 'The National Boycott: Economic Boycott June 16th & 17th 1980 -  
Memorial for 1976' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 44 'A Day to Remember' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 45 'Focus on Strike - June 16 & 17' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 46 'June 16 Day of Unity' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 47 'The Establishment of an Organisation for Teachers' (Cape Town:  
mimeograph; 1980).
- 48 'The Boycott - A Christian Perspective' (Cape Town: pamphlet;  
1980).
- 49 'The School Boycott: A Note to the Muslim Community' (Cape Town:  
pamphlet; 1980).
- 50 'Preliminary Memorandum for Submission to the South African  
Government by the Natal Students' Education Committee' (Durban;  
1980).

- 51 'We demand that: 1) All teachers who have been banned or dismissed...' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 52 'At a Meeting of Parents, Teachers and Students held in the Catholic Centre, Klip Road, Grassy Park, on Thursday 24 April 1980...' (Cape Town: mimeograph; 1980).
- 53 'This Meeting of Parents, Students, Ratepayers and Sportspersons ...' (Cape Town: mimeograph; 1980).
- 54 'We, the Students and Lecturers of Hewat Training College Wish to Place on Record...' (Cape Town: mimeograph; 1980).
- 55 'The Boycott Goes On...' (Durban: pamphlet; 1980).
- 56 'Bus Boycott Bus Boycott Bus Boycott Bus Boycott' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 57 'Bus Boycott!! Bus Boycott!!!! Bus Boycott!!!' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 58 'Bus Strike' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 59 'Bare Facts on the Bus Boycott' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 60 'Focus on Bus Boycott' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 61 'Western Province General Workers' Union: Support the Meat Workers' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 62 'The Meat Boycott' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 63 Resolution ('This meeting of residents, workers and students held at Athlone on 12 June 1980...') (Cape Town: mimeograph; 1980).
- 64 'Fellow Workers, Parents, Concerned People of the Community.' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 65 'Ravensmead & Uitzig Gemeenskap, Ouers, Studente & Leerlinge Tydens Publieke Vergadering (14 Mei 1980) 'n Mandaat was Uitgereik: Boikot die Leutoer!'' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 66 'Boycott the Lions Tour' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 67 'South African Senior Schools' Sports Association - The British Lions Rugby Tour: Its Significance' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1980).
- 68 '1981 Boycott - A Brief Reassessment' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 69 1981 - Solidarity in Struggle (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 70 1981: Build Our Democratic SRC Now (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 71 'Unity Through Struggle' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 72 'Teachers Action Committee' ('Re: Republic Festival '81') (Cape Town: circular; 1981).
- 73 'Anti-Republic Festival Rally' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 74 'Down with the White Republic!' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 75 'Labour Day May 1 1981' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 76 'Working Paper: Background to Republic Day Celebrations - Opposition to the Republic' (Cape Town; 1981).

- 77 'At a meeting held over the weekend attended by representatives from various civic, trade union, youth, student, women and sport organisations...' (Cape Town: mimeograph; 1981).
- 78 'We the people of South Africa are asked to celebrate the formation of the Republic twenty years ago. What Has the Republic Done for Us?' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 79 'Unity in Action Against Racist Republic' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 80 'Republic Day - Why We Cannot Celebrate' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 81 'June 16 Remembered: Unity, Mobilise, Fight On' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 82 'Remember Our Heroes!!!' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 83 'Sharpeville' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 84 'Oscar Mpetha: A South African Leader on Trial' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 85 'Sharpeville: Before and After' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 86 'Bestuurskomitees en Sport' (Cape Town: pamphlet; 1981).
- 87 'Rylands High Grievances' (hand-written memorandum; 1980).
- 88 Inter-School Manual (Cape Town; 1980).
- 89 Inter-School Magazine (Cape Town; 1980).
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- 91 'An Approach to Azanian History' (Cape Town; 1980).
- 92 'Manifesto of the Natal Students' Education Committee' (Durban; 1980).
- 93 'Press Statement issued by the Natal Students' Education Committee (NATSEC)' (Durban; 1980).
- 94 Hanover Park Principals' Association Memorandum, 'School Buildings in Our Area', dated 19 May 1980.
- 95 'Pupils feel unhappy about not having enough books...' (Cape Town: unpublished original; 1980).
- 96 'School Boycott about to End - Now Book Racket Starts' (Cape Town: unpublished original; 1980).
- 97 'The House of Assembly: Written-Question No. 695' - put by Mr C W Eglin, M P - and reply of Minister of Coloured Relations.
- 98 Letter: C W Eglin, M P, to Mr F May, dated 19 June 1980.
- 99 Letter: Regional Representative, Department of Internal Affairs (Coloured Affairs) to Mr A F May, dated 27 February 1981.
- 100 Letter: Director of Education, Department of Internal Affairs (Coloured Affairs) to 'Parent', dated 20 May 1981.
- 101 'The Crisis of Authority in Schools' (resolution passed by 14th Annual Conference of Cape Teachers' Professional Association).
- 102 ANC leaflet distributed at an 'indaba' addressed by Verwoerd (n d).

- 103 Congress of Democrats (COD): Educating for Ignorance - The South African Congress of Democrats' View of the Bantu Education Act.

Appendix III: List of 'Freedom Songs'

- 1 'Amajoni as Afrika...'
- 2 'Another Brick in the Wall'
- 3 'A people united can never be defeated...'
- 4 'A Student and his Mother'
- 5 'Azania oh Azania...'
- 6 'Baa baa Black boy...'
- 7 'Die Stem' (adapted)
- 8 'Freedom isn't free...'
- 9 'If I Had a Hammer'
- 10 'Joe Hill'
- 11 'Kleurlingsake...'
- 12 'Kumbaya'
- 13 'Nkosi Sikelela'
- 14 'Oh freedom...'
- 15 'One Man's Hand'
- 16 'Ons is jonk, ons is vry...'
- 17 'P Wee het 'n CAD...'
- 18 'Racists Laws'
- 19 'Solidarity Forever'
- 20 'Strike school, strike for education...'
- 21 'Them rights, them rights...'
- 22 'This Land is Your Land'
- 23 'We are young, we are free...'
- 24 'When Israel Was in Egypt's Land'
- 25 'We Shall Not Be Moved'
- 26 'We Shall Overcome'
- 27 'What is the reason I'm suffering so long...'

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