Editorial:
The Politics of Education and Cultural Production

Throughout the 1960s education was regarded as an undisputed good in most newly independent African states, a symbol of, as well as a means to national advance. Many subscribed to the call for universal primary education. Most initiated the construction of new universities, subsequently held up as objects of collective pride. The expansion of education promised both individual and national advancement. It fostered skills and offered the possibility of unlocking the creative potential of human resources for economic development. The very inequality or inadequacy of schooling prior to independence supported the view that education was the key to eliminating oppression and promoting success in the post-colonial era.

There was some early success in expanding educational provision. In the first half of the 1960s, ‘school enrolment in Africa rose by almost half; the average proportion of the government budget spent on education jumped from one-seventh to over one-sixth, the highest for any continent except North America, and the proportion of national income devoted to education increased from 3 per cent to 4.3 per cent, exceeded only by Europe’ (Rado in Court and Ghai, Education, Society and Development, 1974). Certain countries made particularly dramatic progress. A concerted effort in Tanzania raised primary school enrolment from 50 per cent of the age group to over 80 per cent and extended adult literacy to three-quarters of the population. But there were also disappointments, and in some quarters, disillusionment.

Some African countries are now experiencing a marked deterioration in educational provision, in parallel with the erosion of other social services. In this issue, Musambachime describes the particularly serious case of Zambia, where many schools operate with a three-shift day, classes of up to 90 students, inadequate materials and exhausted teachers. In Zimbabwe, though resources are not so severely stretched, inadequate funding and insufficient capital investment are the most serious challenges identified by Fay Chung, Zimbabwe’s Minister of Education and Culture, in an interview in this issue.

Problems of resourcing education and widening provision against a backcloth of persistent poverty and limited economic growth are one cause for concern. But other issues are also raised by our contributors, questions
of substance as well as form, and a critical assessment of who benefits from educational provision.

Education has always been a contradictory process. On the one hand, it is a means to mould, control and contain; on the other, it can be a stimulus to the liberation of minds and a source of intellectual energy for resisting oppression. It can assist in the creation and reproduction of privileged sectors of the population, while at the same time, by processes of systematic exclusion, condemn many to illiteracy and despair.

When public bodies take charge of education they generally rationalise actions in technicist terms. A Kenya Government Report in 1971 declaimed that ‘education must serve the needs of national development’ (quoted in Court and Ghai, *Education, Society and Development*, 1974). Often this is seen in terms of ‘manpower planning’, providing training in the skills required by a ‘modern’ industrialised society. Much of the literature on education in Africa has focused on the way in which this dream has faded, given limited economic development. Education programmes aimed at enhancing levels of skill create aspirations which, if not moulded in accord with existing employment opportunities, lead to what has been labelled the ‘school leaver problem’, increasingly manifested in personal frustration and the potential waste of those human resources they have so carefully cultivated. Or they may nurture skills and knowledge with little relevance to the prevailing economic context.

While educational expansion is aimed primarily at fostering skills and knowledge there can also be other resonances, more ideological or political in tone. As Unterhalter argues here in relation to South Africa, the expansion of education facilities for the black population has been largely a function of political expediency, a means to deflect frustration and suppress organised dissent through the promise of individual advancement. That political expediency has back-fired in this case is evidenced in two of the contributions to this issue. Education in South Africa has become a terrain of conflict, galvanising many into the broader struggle against apartheid. While protest initially focused on the blatant and systematic racial bias characterising the system, it has increasingly shifted towards the need to transform the content of education. In Soweto in the 1970s this was evidenced by student riots against the imposition of the Afrikaans language as the medium of instruction. More recently, as Mashamba recounts here, the People’s Education movement has demanded that education incorporate democratic principles and that it be a vehicle for liberation rather than a means to extend white domination and black subordination.

Education systems are necessarily embedded in and reflect existing patterns of state power, religious authority, gender relations, or racial/ethnic domination. Thus while education is proclaimed to be open to all, in practice there are sections of the population who are ill-served. Women are often the most obvious here, with a gender dimension to school
enrolments, opportunities for higher education and sometimes to the curriculum.

Two of the pieces in this issue deal with the question of gender and education. Unterhalter argues that while there has been a significant expansion in access to education in recent years in South Africa, women are still under-represented at the highest levels and concentrated into stereotypically female areas such as nursing and teaching. Black women remain the most significantly undereducated group in the country. Pittin examines the situation in northern Nigeria. In this largely Islamic area women were long disadvantaged by exclusion from the colonially instituted system of 'western' education. After independence, girls' educational opportunities were expanded, but a recent decree that all women's secondary-level schools are to become boarding establishments highlights the contradictions in regard to the education of girls. On the one hand, boarding schools concede the Islamic demand for the seclusion of adolescent girls, while at the same time offering the opportunity for more radical Muslim educational ideas to be extended to them. There is also a class dimension to this development, however, since only the already privileged can afford boarding fees, and this may well lead to a contraction in educational opportunities for women.

Because it raises consciousness and develops scarce skills, education holds out particular promise to the state in its need to control society and economy. Indeed it may be seen as a key ideological arena. In Kenya, as in many other independent African countries, education was to 'assist in fostering and promoting national unity' (quoted in Court and Ghai). But at the same time education, by its stimulus to independent thought, also poses a threat to prevailing authority relations. If this can be seen over the last two decades in South Africa, it has also been evident in the independent African states, particularly in respect of conflict between governments and university students, though flare-ups have also occurred at lower levels of the education system. A recent episode has involved the closure of the University of Zambia in response to student involvement in demands for an extension of democracy by way of re-establishing a multi-party system. But over the years numerous African universities have been temporarily closed, sometimes repeatedly, as student unrest has generated disproportionate reaction from insecure governments. While governments boast of their success in extending educational opportunities following national independence, they have also proved suspicious of the products of these efforts, and of any signs of a vibrant and independent cultural life, or critical political debate. These they are prone to interpret as a threat to the state or as political dissent.

As Vail and White note in their account of the fate of the Malawian poet, Jack Mapanje, President Banda has openly declared that he wants 'no graduates in Parliament'. The radical intellectuals who called him out of exile to lead the country to independence have been eliminated from his cabinet, their careers, and even in some cases their lives, brought to an
abrupt end. In place of critical thought Banda has substituted a form of 'traditionalism' which draws especially upon the art of praise-singing; but he has usurped its original critical function and made it subservient to his own private political ends. It is for this reason particularly significant that Mapanje draws on the same oral tradition in his poetry, while attuning it to the contemporary situation and rendering its cutting edge as sharp as the new day. His poetry, though often highly personal, is also public in form and intention and constitutes a particularly poignant mode of political critique. For a time the use of poetry to this end evaded the heavy hand of state control over cultural expression in Malawi.

Cultural forms are not infrequently imbued with political content. In some cases such forms are collective in origin and expression. In others, such as the Makonde sculpture described here by Stephen, they represent the intrinsic combination of individual artistic creation with collective understanding and aspiration. Motifs used by Makonde sculptors have changed over the years, partly in response to the market, but also in accord with changes in political consciousness. Sculpture became a means of portraying the injustice of the colonial relationship between administrator and subject, and of celebrating the unity of the national liberation movement.

The review by Sole describes the manner in which theatre associated with the labour movement in contemporary South Africa performs a similar function, expressing political ideas in a manner which is easily absorbed by its audience and which serves as a form of protest. Cultural activity here becomes a site where resistance is both celebrated and temporarily held in check, pending, perhaps, its more organised expression. Workers' theatre serves as a medium of communication and education, available to all on an equal basis and without the encumbrances of hierarchy and institutional structure. Here too, though, as Sole notes, it may implicitly underwrite patriarchal or ethnic stereotypes.

The promise of education has rarely been realised in post-colonial Africa when set against the hopes embodied in the struggle for independence. Contradictions remain glaringly apparent. A flood of aspirant urbanites is created in societies whose wage-labour sector has not grown fast enough to absorb them; an educated and 'self-seeking' class emerges concerned only to serve its own interests and to perpetuate its advantages; and categories such as the poor, or women, are systematically excluded from an equal share in educational opportunities, or are schooled into acceptance of their own inferiority and the lowest positions of society. The state is not the only interested party in the process of moulding minds. Patriarchal, ethnic and class dominance also figure in who goes to school and what they learn there. But education remains a battleground, part and parcel of internal struggles against domination, as well as being a bid by nations to develop their human resources in the wisest and most efficient manner possible.

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Selective Education: Issues of Gender, Class and Ideology in Northern Nigeria

Renée Pittin

A series of policy initiatives have been put forward in Nigeria over the last two decades aimed at expanding its educational system. But while numbers enrolled have increased, gender and class differentials persist. Females have always been represented in smaller numbers than have males and have tended to be disproportionately drawn from the more privileged elements of society. This has broadly accorded with ideologies justifying a primarily domestic role for women which, in the case of Katsina in northern Nigeria, have emanated both from the secular state and the religious authorities. Pittin examines the latest policy initiative, a directive that females at secondary level would be educated only in boarding schools. While suggesting that it is likely to perpetuate and even exacerbate the women’s relatively disadvantaged position as regards education, she also argues that it offers certain benefits. Moreover, because promulgated as consistent with Islamic morality, precisely at a time when greater legitimacy is being accorded to women’s education by elements of the Muslim community, and Islamic schools are themselves permitting some questioning of previously accepted notions of women’s role, it may offer space for some improvement of women’s situation.

As one of his first official acts as governor of the newly created Katsina State, Colonel Abdullahi Sarki Mukhtar declared that all women’s secondary-level schools in the state were to become fully boarding. Received enthusiastically by those men and women in Katsina for whom women’s post-primary education has any relevance, the decree has been seen as a progressive step forward. It is our contention, however, that it has important gender and class implications which must be made explicit, and which are deleterious to most women. We further argue that the gender and class differences exacerbated by the boarding school decision
follow a pattern discernible from the pre-colonial period and clearly evident in colonial and post-colonial planning and provision of education for women.

Current debates and actions surrounding women's education must be situated in their historical context. The history of women's education is, broadly, one of ideological and material constraints, reflected in differential access to education over centuries within the contested and interlinked domains of Hausa tradition and Muslim ideology, later overlaid by the priorities and interests of the British system of Indirect Rule, with its ideology of female domestication, and more recently, by fundamentalist intervention. Discussion of access to education for women in Katsina must bring out these ideological, structural and material features and interests. Even the perceived value and purpose of education must be reconsidered in terms of ideological understandings and contradictions at the levels of the state, religious authority, the community, and the household. The state must be further demarcated, inasmuch as specific federal, state and local governments reflect not only different policies, but also different constituencies and different sets of interests, which merge, converge and conflict around specific issues and circumstances. Katsina State itself, created in September 1987, has begun to establish a distinct profile, which reflects the Muslim background of much of its population, and distinguishes it from its now excised religiously and ethnically heterogeneous former polity, Kaduna State.

Present discussion and action regarding the need for and the extent of women's formal education reflect a multi-stranded and non-consensual tradition whereby access to education is directly related to questions of control over women's labour and other scarce resources. The introduction of women's formal, or 'western', education in Katsina has reflected the concerns and interests of both the Hausa and British ruling elites, focusing particularly on women's 'domestication' within a context of minimal literacy and numeracy. Formal education of women in Katsina has been characterized in the past by a very narrow infrastructural frame with ideological (and, in some periods, legal) justification available to keep, or take, women out of school.

It will be demonstrated that women's education and training have been and remain matters of low priority for the state. This is reflected in policies which, in the recent past, though ostensibly providing educational access to women, have failed to take into account the countervailing pressures to which women are subjected, thus resulting in the progressive loss of women students at post-primary level, and in present policy which in practice greatly restricts educational opportunity for women. The class basis of educational access, an important factor throughout the history of women’s education in Katsina, is accentuated in the present context, as the number of secondary institutions where women may be educated has collapsed from fifteen day schools and two boarding schools, to two boarding schools only, and competition has intensified enormously for the
few available places. Concurrently, with costs of education continuing to escalate, the economic crisis provides a ready excuse for denying to women real expansion in educational content and infrastructure. Thus, education is ‘selective’ in terms of its availability, accessibility, context and purpose. These considerations will be taken up in discussion below.

Beginning with an historical account of the purpose and availability of women’s education in the Hausa States during and subsequent to the Fulani Jihad in the early nineteenth century, we move to a consideration of the introduction of western education in Katsina. The latter part of the article brings out the contradictions between ostensible government policy and practice, and focuses upon the economic constraints and ideological pressures which are presently and profoundly affecting the academic opportunities for women in Katsina.

Debate concerning women’s education in Northern Nigeria has been framed in both Muslim and western contexts and has had an effect on access to education in both Muslim and western forms. Increasing Islamic fundamentalism has reinforced interest in women’s education and has contributed to the expansion and reorganization of Muslim educational facilities at primary and post-primary levels. This has increased the legitimacy of formal education, while providing alternative content. As alternative Muslim education moves closer in form to state-sponsored education, and as state education itself becomes more Islamicised, the boarding schools, which formerly provided ‘western’ education, are in consequence undergoing modification. New areas of Muslim pedagogy in Katsina have in turn broadened the horizons and increased the expectations of elite women, who support the expansion of both Muslim and western educational facilities. But contradictions are also in evidence in relation to perceived and long-term purposes of women’s education and these require careful consideration.

Women’s Access to Education in the Pre-colonial Period

Over the course of centuries, the very notion of education for girls has been questioned, while practice has founderd on conflicting priorities concerning control over women, and women’s appropriate roles and place in the social order. The purpose and extent of Muslim education has also depended on the level of education available. For the vast majority of Muslims, both male and female, education has entailed little more than the provision of the basic knowledge for performing one’s prayers or reading some verses of the Koran. The approach to women’s (religious) education among Muslims in the area later to become Northern Nigeria involved granting responsibility to fathers and husbands either to train the women themselves, send them to Koranic school, or otherwise arrange for their religious education. For older girls and particularly for women of scholarly and aristocratic families, this approach has been linked to ideals of seclusion, or at least to the separation of men and women in public places.
That sufficient education was not being generally provided to women even in the early nineteenth century is evident from the writings of the Muslim reformer and leader Shehu Usman dan Fodio, who inveighed against this neglect, apparent among learned scholars of the period:

[They leave] their wives, their daughters, and their captives morally abandoned, like beasts, without teaching them what God prescribes ... How can they shut [them] up ... in the darkness of ignorance, while daily they impart knowledge to their students? (from Nur al-albab, in Hodgkin: 194-5).

The Shehu went further, recognising that additional forms of training, such as business education, might be required if a woman was obliged to trade for herself (Ogunbiyi: 53-4).

Education in depth was essentially restricted to women of the political and scholastic aristocracies. Certainly dan Fodio’s own daughters are the exemplification of female Muslim scholars. But as shown by Shehu Usman dan Fodio’s remonstrations, even women of this stratum were often left in ignorance. The very fact of his admonitions and recommendations demonstrates that the reality of education for women was far from the ideal, and that the practices he prescribed were not generally being followed.

Further, by permitting women to attend his lectures, the Shehu was condemned for permitting the mingling of the sexes, with the possible consequence of immorality. His response was that the obligation to root out ignorance takes priority over women’s seclusion (Hiskett, 1963:86-7). These issues and conflicting views from within Islam continue to be raised at present and form part of the ongoing discussion in mosques, schools, homes and political fora, in relation to both Muslim and western education. It is significant that even in recent times, access even to Muslim education by women has been difficult. Thus, a Sokoto woman descended from the Shehu suggested that:

a woman’s best way to an advanced Moslem education [is] to marry a scholar, and be careful [not to] argue with him too cleverly or he would stop teaching her (Trevor:252).

The extent to which less high-born Muslim women in the pre-colonial period had access to any education, much less the opportunity to pursue it, is still shrouded in the mists of history. It is likely that most women were given only the most limited of Muslim education, if at all. Indeed, the issue of access to education or of opportunity for continued education probably rarely arose, given the responsibilities accorded women and girls in the domestic sphere, particularly where slaves and servants were not available (or where the women were themselves slaves or servants!), the early movement of women into marriage and child-bearing and their involvement in farming, processing, and petty commodity production. Thus, historically, gender and class were prime determinants in limiting women’s educational opportunities, with ideology concurrently providing bases both to support such education and to limit it.
Introduction of and Access to Western Education in Katsina

The history of formal western education in Katsina is inseparable from that of northern education more generally, and from the history of colonial rule. Control over the vast area of Northern Nigeria was impossible to maintain without the agreement and support of the emirs and other members of the traditional ruling class. The system of Indirect Rule instituted in the North by Lord Lugard was in part based on the condition of non-interference with Muslim religion in areas where it was dominant, through the exclusion of missionaries and mission schools. It has been pointed out (Coleman, 1958:137), however, that this policy may have been as much a mechanism for ensuring the maintenance of Indirect Rule and British interests by controlling and limiting access to information and alternatives, as it was an acknowledgement of Muslim sensibilities. The experience of education and the tide of rising expectations it had evoked in the south militated against instituting a similar policy in the North where, in contrast, the creation of only a small number of schools was supported. Although the curriculum was designed and largely imported by the British, western education did not include the teaching of Christianity except in specific designated areas of the North. Rather, Muslim teachers were hired specifically to teach Islamic Religious Knowledge, including some Sudanese who were brought to Nigeria to teach an expanded Muslim curriculum.

Early policy supporting only limited western schooling was intended: (a) to train Muslim scholars as clerks and primary teachers; (b) to educate the sons of chiefs; (c) to provide basic education more broadly, in local languages; and (d) to provide Christian education to the children of the southern clerical staff. At the same time it was assumed that Koranic schools would continue to provide education as intended by the traditional rulers. Indeed, as the system of Muslim education already provided the necessary structure for the training of judges, scribes and functionaries for the traditional aristocracy and for lower levels of the British administration, western education could be even more strictly circumscribed.

A parallel purpose of western education, besides mastery of the basic academic curriculum, was the inculcation and reinforcement of respect for authority, and thereby the support of the system of Indirect Rule to which many of the graduates of the higher level schools, as children of the traditional aristocracy, were heir. However, the limited introduction of western education in Northern Nigeria resulted in a grave north-south educational imbalance (Adamu, 1973:51), with important implications in political and infrastructural terms, particularly in the run-up to and following independence. Yet even more striking has been the gender differential, and it is on this that we shall now focus.
Introduction of Women's Formal Education

Western education in the North has always been characterized by both differential access in relation to sex and class and limited access for women at all levels (see Pittin, 1979: 437-447). This reflected a convergence of British colonial interests and ideology and those of the Northern aristocracy in the pre-independence period, particularly in relation to the perceived or intended family-oriented nature of women's work, especially among the elite.

Documentary evidence points out that British-designed education was intended to focus only on domestic subjects and literacy, and that girls were to be permitted to leave school 'at the customary age of marriage, with regard to the role of women in society' (Trevor: 257). As 'marriage age' at this time varied from ten (in Sokoto) to, more generally, twelve, thirteen or fourteen, this placed an early terminus to the education of most girls. In Katsina, girls attended school in the early years from the age of four, with the students 'leaving for marriage at about fourteen or younger' (Note from O.C. Robinson, Assistant Mistress, Girls' Centre, Katsina, to the District Officer Katsina, 21 Dec. 1931; Katprof 1/400 Vol.1, No. 251).

It should be noted that the Nigerian state, whether pre-colonial, colonial or post-colonial, has never been neutral in relation to women's education, although contradictory positions have been taken. Thus, for example, the state has tended to support continued control over women via marriage, particularly through its failure to enforce subsequent sanctions forbidding the unauthorised removal of girls from school or to set a minimum age for marriage. First mooted almost forty years ago in the Northern Regional House of Chiefs and the House of Assembly (J.N.D. Anderson, 1954: 205), the issue of minimum marriage age has been brought up subsequently, but has never been resolved.

Formal education for girls in Katsina was introduced considerably later than for boys (1929, compared to 1912), and with considerable caution exercised by the colonial authorities. This is evident even in relation to the sitting of the school. Originally planned to be located in the Katsina Middle School, training ground for the first group of Northern educated elite, the Girls' Education Centre was instead located within the compound of the Emir's palace, following objections from the Emir and his council, as related by the Katsina District Officer, that:

> it is contrary to their customs and their law for their girls to be seen in the street

(D.O. i/c Katsina Division to Provisional Superintendent of Education, Zaria, No. 129/1929/2, Agency No. 400).

Although stated here as a general proscription, in fact at the time seclusion was less prevalent than at present. Being primarily practised by the ruling aristocracy and among the families of senior religious functionaries, seclusion had a significant class-linked dimension. The association of the aristocracy with the establishment of girls' education reinforced this aspect
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of Hausa Muslim culture, affecting the formal control over girls, indicated here in the location of the school, and later in the limitations imposed on activities of school girls and school leavers.

Education for Domesticity: The Domestic Sphere as Educational Site

As elsewhere in the North, education of girls in Katsina was intended to be in

domestic subjects applicable to the country with also an elementary knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic (E.J.R.Hussey, Director of Education, Kaduna, 1929, Katprof 1, Agency No.400).

The emphasis was on domestic roles accorded with the need perceived by the British to train a class of elite Hausa girls as modern housewives and helpmates to the growing group of male Nigerian administrators as well as the socialization of their children along similar lines. The Hausa ruling class was entirely supportive of this emphasis which coincided with the progressive diminution of women's political and ritual authority over the course of the nineteenth century, from an earlier position (for women of the aristocracy) of considerable political, ritual and economic power. This education-linked ideology of domesticity acted therefore to reinforce the concept of women's dependency within the context of increasing physical control over women through the agency of seclusion.

From its inception, access to western education was controlled by the ruling elite(s). Girls chosen to participate in primary school in the early days were largely supplied by the palace and the aristocracy, although some of the early school girls were the daughters of former slaves, retainers and other clients of the aristocracy, associated thereby through feudal dependency relations. But for female education probably more than for male education, the ruling class sent also their own children.

In 1931, a year after the Girls' Centre, Katsina, was opened, the composition of the student body of 61 girls included:

about half ... from the Emir's compound and the rest from the households of the Magajin Gari, the Wuziri [sic] and the Galadima (all senior aristocracy) (Note from O.C.Robinson, cited above; parenthetical phrase mine).

The value of the continued involvement of the Emir with the Girls' Centre was only recognised when it was lost. A move from the Emir's palace in 1938-39, and the dismissal of a group of students without reference to the Emir (or the Resident), had serious negative consequences. Reflecting on this later, the Resident of Katsina Province wrote that:

Since then, the school has ceased to be of any value. Prior to 1938 the school was carried on in the Emir's compound ... and the Emir bore much of the cost. A reason urged by the Mistress for the move [outside was to] attract the children of the 'people'. In fact it has done nothing of the sort. Today the 'people' refuse to let their children go to it ... Female education in Katsina has experienced a setback which
Female education in the early period in Katsina provided few women with the option to move beyond the ‘career’ of family and marriage. At that time, marriage and seclusion remained for the aristocracy a life-pattern incompatible with others. This was reinforced by the ‘education for domesticity’ ideology inculcated in Nigerian schools and evident in class-linked education and ideology in the United Kingdom. On this score the perceptions of Hausa men and the colonial rulers converged. Education provided a career option to some daughters of retainers but for most of the early students, rather than a route to other formal work, education merely served as a detour en route to marriage.

The Contemporary Context: Considerations of Class

The restriction of women’s formal education to small numbers drawn from limited sections of Hausa society was justified in terms of its perceived irrelevance to the lives, and particularly the future work, of the majority of women. But perhaps equally important was concern over its effects in removing girls’ labour. The Hausa system of house trade has depended upon the assistance of girls, generally daughters or other relations, for the actual transfer of goods between buyer and seller. This applied in both rural and urban areas, as did also the importance of girls’ involvement in domestic labour, including the care of younger siblings. Rural production requires additional heavy input from both boys and girls, but whereas boys have been spared for education when it appeared that this could improve their future chances through access to waged labour or higher education, education for girls was seen more as a temporary diversion before entering into marriage, child-bearing, and home- and farm-based subsistence production. In Katsina City, where class differences are quite marked, this has been a distinguishing feature of girls’ education. Education came to be treated as a rite of passage for elite girls, and as a duty, or as a stepping stone, to hypergamous marriage or better labour prospects for children of the palace workers. But among the ‘commoners’ (Hausa: talakawa) in the city, women’s education was not seen as relevant for decades.

Detailed research in two wards in Katsina City in the early 1970s and in 1988 demonstrates the continued importance of class in relation to education. One of these wards, Marina, with a population in the early 1970s of 1,230, is composed largely of artisans, particularly from the textile trades (dyeing gives the ward its name), but also includes traders, construction workers and other categories of skilled and unskilled workers. The women of the ward, mainly city-born and bred, follow a variety of occupations centring primarily around textile-working and petty trade. Between 1971 and 1973, only nine boys and eleven girls from the ward attended primary school and no girl had had post-primary education. In Marina, as in other working class wards, there had been very little incidence of formal
schooling: girls were needed both for domestic labour and as traders by their secluded mothers, while boys were seen to be better or more appropriately trained through agricultural and artisanal labour, for both of which access was available through neighbours and kin.

The second ward, Yarinci, with a population in 1971 of 875, includes many of the traditional aristocracy and their clients; half of the adult men are in waged employment (from labourers to senior civil servants), while the remainder include Koranic scholars and traders. Some women married to elite men had no occupation, while others followed a range of trades and crafts, including embroidery, preparation of cooked snacks, and domestic service (among the working-class women). In this ward in the early 1970s, only fourteen girls and eight boys did not attend primary school. The class bias and linkages, evident at primary level, are strengthened in post-primary education and job placement. In Yarinci, some of the girls and many of the boys from the elite families continued to secondary school and teacher training college, upon graduation from which available networks ensured entry into white-collar wage labour. The boys from client families use traditional patronage to seek entry into wage labour or to proceed further in education. The girls of client families, having completed primary education, tend to marry.

Policy of Expansion of the Education System

In the last decade and a half, major changes have taken place in relation to the value placed on formal education. An attempt to introduce Universal Primary Education (UPE) nationally in Nigeria in the mid-1970s was unsuccessful: insufficient teachers, classrooms, schools, materials, organisation and funds, and resistance especially in the rural areas, and particularly with respect to girls, combined to create insurmountable barriers to its fulfilment. But even then, and certainly since, school attendance increased dramatically. Yet it is important to note that this increase has not affected males and females equally, and the vast historical imbalance between male and female education in Katsina persists.

Indeed, city-wide statistics demonstrate that a gender bias has been structurally incorporated into primary education. In the 1970s, the Katsina Local Education Authority sought to maintain a two-thirds to one-third ratio of boys to girls in primary schools. This was achieved, with 1972 figures, for example, showing 3,656 boys and 1,512 girls enrolled. But this gender imbalance has now changed for the worse: March 1988 primary school figures for Katsina Local Government schools show girls to constitute only slightly more than one-quarter (26.5%) of the total enrolment. As education has expanded and become more valued, and as pressures on available resources increase, the government has ensured that progressively more boys than girls are educated, a situation which guarantees an even greater marginalisation of women students at higher levels.
Day Schools: A Viable Alternative for Women?

In the aftermath of limited success with introducing Universal Primary Education, other policy initiatives have been forthcoming in an attempt to expand the educational base. One of these has involved the introduction of co-educational day secondary schools throughout the state, and particularly in the rural areas. In Kaduna State (of which Katsina was then a part), the creation of co-educational post-primary day schools began in 1979 through the efforts of the administration of Governor Balarabe Musa. Intended to counteract the effects of the boarding system by ending the fruitless 'search for admissions' of too many persons seeking too few school places for their children, the programme vastly expanded the number of students in post-primary education. To maximise the availability of education to the masses, it was stipulated that no tuition costs should be charged. This was one of several efforts made by the PRP (People's Redemption Party) executive, voted into office in that year, to improve the general situation of the peasantry and the workers, and to respond to the needs of the rural-based majority of the population.

In terms of ostensible initial intent, the government programme can hardly be faulted. But the state has never enforced the day school programme for women, nor responded to the gender-linked issues which would affect women's participation in day schools, whereas the community, more restrictive in this instance than the state, has incorporated the day-school initiative into its pre-existing agenda for women of early marriage and seclusion.

The co-ed secondary day school programme has been disastrous for women. Although more than one-third of the initial intake was female, there has been progressive attrition of their numbers in day secondary schools, with only a handful of women actually graduating. For example for mid-1988, Junior Secondary School II (formerly called Form 2) statistics for the Katsina Administrative Area showed a total enrolment of 2,195 students, of whom 833 (37.9%) were women. Of these, half attended co-educational day schools. In Senior Secondary I and II (formerly Forms 4 and 5) women comprised just one-quarter (24.9%) of the total students, and co-educational day school students only 15.9% of the total female student population (Statistics Unit, Research, Planning and Development Division of the Katsina State Ministry of Education). Some of the women had been transferred to boarding schools; the majority had been withdrawn from school altogether. Girls from the elite, with access through kin and patronage networks to the educational administration, managed to gain entrance to boarding schools from Form 1; day school had become for non-elite women a temporary locus en route to marriage.

Control over women's labour, their person and sexuality, combine to assert strong ideological and material pressure to withdraw women from school, or to deny them the opportunity for admission. But besides this, day school also poses a real economic deterrent in terms of travel, accommodation, board and all the auxiliary costs exclusive of tuition fees which gravely
reduce the likelihood of women being educated. Indeed, it has been stated by some parents that the costs of day school, for a student who must find accommodation away from home, are higher than the costs of boarding. Families forgo real income by permitting their children to go to school, while the benefits of that education are declining. This is an area where the state could have intervened to support women's education more effectively; that it did not respond to the pressures on female students over the course of several years is itself an indicator of policy. The PRP government, creator of the day-school initiative, remained in office long enough to implement its policies but not to improve them. Concurrent with the PRP policy at the state level, however, the federal government, controlled by the NPN (National Party of Nigeria), espoused a policy of 'quality rather than quantity' education, and supported a less precipitous expansion of schools until the necessary infrastructure and personnel could be made available. Thus, conflict over policy existed between federal and state governments during the civilian regime, and indeed even within the Kaduna State government, with a PRP executive and NPN legislature. The co-educational day schools could have offered some positive features for women, such as allowing access to a less sex-stereotyped curriculum than is available in single-sex schools, but any such benefit has been overtaken by events. And indeed day schools have suffered generally in terms of insufficient facilities for their students. Limited economic resources and low prioritising of the schools have resulted in their becoming virtually a residual educational category, providing inadequate training in insufficiently staffed and equipped schools. While not fulfilling the role for which they were intended, the introduction of day schools has in certain ways removed the pressure from the state to improve educational opportunities for women.

The Rise of Islamiyya Schools
One further element of the changing educational scene which warrants attention is the rise of Islamiyya schools. It has already been noted that for women in particular, the provision of any education was problematic even in the pre-colonial period and was treated in particular contexts as irrelevant or improper. These objections have been restated periodically over the centuries and the present use of the western syllabus, created by and within a society with a different culture, has furnished an additional excuse for parents to keep children from enrolling in the state school system. More acceptable to some are the Islamiyya schools which have experienced considerable expansion in the last ten years. Representing an accommodation between traditional and modern forms of education, these schools provide a Muslim alternative or complement to the teaching content in state schools with use of similar format and style. The Islamiyya schools now provide Islamic and Arabic coursework formerly not widely available, as well as a non-secular curriculum for a holistic Muslim
education which uses modern educational methods. Thus, classes are organised into grades, with specific teachers for particular grades; and textbooks, exercise books and blackboards are used, as well as all the associated paraphernalia of the modern schoolroom.

The expansion of alternative Muslim education is associated in Katsina specifically with the 'yan izala (adherents of Izala), a fundamentalist sect created by Sheikh Abubakar Gummi in the late 1960s, apparently in response to political posturing among Northern Muslim scholars and leaders of thought within the Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI — Society for the Victory of Islam) following the death of the Sardauna of Sokoto in 1966 (see Paden, 1986:565). Whereas Islamiyya schools per se predate the establishment of izala, the present flourishing of Muslim alternative education corresponds with the growth of the sect. At present, the Islamiyya schools parallel, but have not replaced, the state-based system.

**Boarding: A Solution, or Part of the Problem?**

It was in the context of these developments in the educational field and after the military captured political control from the PRP government, that the boarding school decree was issued. For several years prior to the announcement of this edict, women's residential schools were being progressively deboarded in order both to re-utilise funds, and to provide space for additional students. In January 1988, however, the trend was reversed, with the entire new intake of women students being put into the existing boarding schools.

In Katsina State, this entailed the merging of intake from eighty-three day schools, into the eight extant boarding institutions. In Katsina City, additional students, comprising the daughters, wives and other kin of the returning Katsina indigenes redeployed from Kaduna State, have been automatically admitted as transfer students. The effects of the decree, coupled with the doubled intake from Kaduna, have been chaotic with, for example, more than 2,000 women boarding in 1988 at the Katsina Women's Teachers College, which in 1987 catered for fewer than 400 boarders. Women were sleeping two to a bed, and classes, by mid-1988, were up to 85 students each. Some new classrooms and hostels were being built to alleviate these pressures, but after the fact rather than before.

The immediate result, in spite of the chaos, has been a vast expansion in the number of girls in boarding facilities and the possibility that many will continue their education; but many will not. Tuition costs create one barrier, but the associated costs of boarding are, for poor parents, even more problematic, already resulting, according to one Katsina State education official, in a significant number of children being unable to take up their places. Present plans are to reduce the requirements (no mattress, fewer uniforms) in order to reduce costs for parents and guardians (Interview with Hajiya Lami Abba, July 1988). As these goods will no longer be provided by the State, children of poorer families will have fewer amenities than girls from wealthier homes — if indeed the poorer parents
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If the new boarding structure is not modified, it is likely that fewer women will be educated up to and beyond secondary level. Whereas in 1988, about half the eligible students were accepted for secondary training, from 1989 the number will be much smaller as places will not be available nor, given the economic situation, will new schools be built (Interview with Hajiya Hassu Nko, June 1988). The economic crisis also permits the indefinite postponement of the proposed creation of new technical schools for women. Formerly co-educational day schools will become all male, thereby greatly increasing the number of post-primary educated boys in relation to girls, and probably increasing pressure to institute additional tertiary and vocational training for boys. Employment opportunities for boys will also be relatively improved, although as the economic crisis has greatly reduced job availability for secondary school graduates, access and contacts have become more significant predictors of educational advancement and employment than education per se. Given, however, that education is still necessary (even if not sufficient), for entry into and advancement in what little white-collar work and even blue-collar employment is available, and given that early marriage, seclusion, and limited adult education virtually close off women’s opportunities for later study, their situation is bound to deteriorate.

It must, however, be acknowledged that boarding schools present numerous advantages over day schools, not least of which are an atmosphere, facilities and space conducive to study, away from the competing claims of domestic labour, assistance in trading, and childminding in the family context. They remove women from ongoing patriarchal control and from a variety of restrictions and pressures exerted within the context of the household. In these respects, boarding can be a liberating experience for women.

But there are also fundamental difficulties with increased boarding. The essential rationale for the boarding school edict related to the assumption that females are unable to control their sexuality and so must be placed in a protected environment. This rationale demeans women and is repugnant. But to ignore or resist the boarding initiative, especially in view of an increasingly conservative climate, would merely leave in place the severe limitations to women’s education which already exist. Rather, as there are inherent benefits to the boarding system and as the day school system has proved to limit rather than enhance women’s educational opportunities, it might be more useful to embrace the initiative and press within its terms for major expansion of the school system for women, bringing in the new technical schools heretofore only vaguely discussed,
constructing new boarding facilities, and vastly expanding the number of places for women at the secondary school level. Ideally there should be concurrent revision of the discriminatory male/female admissions ratio at primary school level, which denies education to women from the outset. Shared class interests and class networks would invariably continue to siphon off secondary school places to daughters of the elite, but expansion of school places could provide more space for children of parents less wealthy or well-placed, while a system of scholarships for tuition and associated costs could assist in ensuring that such girls attend without additional financial burdens on their parents, or material discrimination in the school itself.

All this would require active support within the Katsina State government. But in the current context of rising costs, it is unlikely to be achieved, let along embarked upon, without strong pressure being exerted by local women’s organisations and by women in government.

Education, Religious Identification and Opportunities for Women

It has been noted that Katsina State is in the process of establishing a particular profile, differentiating it from the culturally and religiously more heterogeneous Kaduna State to the south, and carefully distancing itself also from the ‘secularity’ of the Federal government. On the other hand, it must be kept in mind that the ideological posture of the Federal Government in relation to religion is far from straightforward. The Federal Government often pursues contradictory policies in relation to religion, which has itself become the most divisive and manipulated differentiating mechanism in Nigeria today. Overt actions such as the entry of Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) several years ago are not the work of a disinterested and secular state. And the pressures exerted by various groups in relation to religion, and the responses and initiatives undertaken at various levels of the state, are inextricably bound together, although often intentionally disguised or disclaimed.

The move to all boarding of female students by the Katsina State government, however, presents a clear ideological statement of Islamic and Hausa identity with selectivity in the symbolism employed. The spatial control over women or ‘protection’ of women inherent in boarding, has been further reified in stringent new dress codes in Katsina secondary schools.

It was the Federal Government, via the Ministry of Education, which promulgated a directive, in mid-1987, for the introduction of a new female students’ uniform, used first in federal secondary schools. In this case the new uniform, styled after Pakistani dress, was ostensibly (according to the directive) not to be categorised as ‘for Muslims’. In Kaduna State, the new uniform triggered off religious riots at the prestigious Queen Amina College as some of the Muslim students rushed to wear the new outfit
even before it was formally adopted by the Kaduna State government, while the Christian girls objected to the introduction of a religious-linked uniform (West Africa, 27 July 1987), and feared both that they might be forced to wear it themselves and, ironically, that they might not. The students clashed over the uniform issue twice, the second time with weapons. In both cases, the school was forced to close and the police were called in to stop the fighting using tear gas on the latter occasion. At present in Kaduna State, the two uniforms, religion-specific, are being worn within the women’s secondary schools (Newswatch, 3 April 1989). In Katsina, the state government’s identification with Islam renders unlikely the use of two uniforms in the state schools, and indeed it is the Pakistani-style dress which female students must wear. All women, including non-Muslims, are required to wear high collared, long-sleeved tunics, trousers, shawl and head scarf or (optional) cowl.

Increased veiling, and clothing covering more of the body, is evident also in the city. Described as being a matter of fashion or tradition and/or religion, the new dress code demonstrates well the way in which Islam is inextricably linked at present with other aspects of Hausa culture. But the return to boarding schools and dress codes presents serious contradictions to some ongoing activities and life-styles in Katsina City.

The educated women of the traditional elite in Katsina, for whom the years of study, class background, and state creation have facilitated entry into the upper echelons of the civil service structure, find that increased mobility and authority are now in their grasp. The recently returned Katsina women have brought with them the norms of non-seclusion of the less constrained and far more heterogeneous former state capital, Kaduna. The number of educated elite women with shared values and norms has increased with state creation. And the presence of a small but high-profile number of women in senior and authoritative government positions introduces a new image of economically independent women in Katsina.

Many of these senior women in the administration have a vision of broader participation of women in all spheres of Nigerian development which they are unlikely to relinquish for the doubtful security of a more limited segregated system. But this view is not shared, for example, by more conservative members of the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) in Katsina, who are supportive of sex-segregated education and differentiated careers for Katsina women, a perspective which is also being espoused elsewhere. An issue of a journal established by a section of the Muslim oligarchy (‘Education, Apathy and the North’, Hotline, 11-24 July 1988), appeals to Hausa culture and tradition as the basis for a fully sex-segregated educational and labour system in the North, and puts forward Saudi Arabia and Iran as appropriate models for emulation by Muslim men and women in Northern Nigeria.

As some women of the elite are regaining authority in the wider society lost to them for almost two centuries, fundamentalism presents an alternative structure which may remarginalise women into a category of
segregated workers, wives and mothers. It is ironic that probably the most effective strategy to increase funding for women's education would be to stress the need for sex-segregated facilities — clinics, schools, offices — and thus the training of additional women, albeit in a limited number of areas. Nor is this sex-segregated model necessarily distant. As early as 1987 the Minister of Education announced plans for 'special women [sic] institutions' — new colleges of education and federal technical colleges — only for women. Described by the Federal Government as 'providing more admission chances to female candidates', the plan has been attacked by one relatively progressive Nigerian newspaper as contrary to the co-educational basis of Nigerian education and as a possible part of the 'already noticeable process of Islamicization being adopted surreptitiously' in Nigeria (The Guardian, 23 July 1987). There are clear pitfalls in a sex-segregated strategy for women epitomised in hidden agendas behind the 'separate but equal' ideology. But at the same time the strategy offers space for some progressive development, especially given the simultaneous trend toward more open and extensive education for women within Islamic schools.

The izala sect, echoing Shehu Usman dan Fodio (and looking to increasing numbers of adherents), has emphasised women's right to education and has opened schools for Islamic studies specifically for married women. Discussions presently taking place among women in association with this development permit access for the first time to varying interpretations of the Koran and demonstrate a real questioning of hitherto accepted values and practices associated with control over women in daily life, with profound effects on household and conjugal relations. Women are being taught, among other things, that the Koran and Islam do not obligate them to obey their husbands unthinkingly and unquestioningly, and that they are not obliged to do domestic labour as a marital duty, particularly if their husband can afford to pay domestic servants. Inevitably such discussions have inherent limitations, inasmuch as they are carried out in an arena with pre-set parameters, with an agenda established within the ideology, rather than being a critique of the ideology itself, placing it in a specific historical and social context. However, this is an important area of debate, which practising Muslim women are attempting to use as a lever to reform the religion from within.

In his discussion of the concept of hegemony, Gramsci insisted on the possibility of critical response to hegemonic ideology by the broader population. Thus, an imposed ideology may be renegotiated in terms of the needs and interests of its receivers. This opens possibilities of change even within contexts of considerable physical and ideological constraint. Indeed the very process of gaining knowledge, and the use to which that knowledge is put, cannot be wholly controlled, nor the outcome guaranteed. The reproduction of knowledge inherently provides the space for its alternative utilisation and for the questioning of knowledge itself, the paradigms within which it is presented, and the social system within which it is made available.
But there is another trend present, which permits little leeway for women. This is a move towards the comprehensive redomestication of women, a trend which has been receiving increasing support from religious and government authorities in neighbouring Kano State and which might well be equally applied in Katsina. It is consistent with the strengthened fundamentalism in the North and with the limited and decreasing economic opportunities open to women in the formal sector. Informal sector work, particularly in terms of house trade, remains the prime economic activity of women. But government has intervened to hinder that trade, while supporting women’s continued seclusion. In Kano State, a government edict seeks to remove girls from assisting in house trade, on the grounds of their vulnerability, and the need to preserve women’s honour. This edict has been promulgated on the basis of Muslim morality and the alleged need to protect women as daughters, mothers and wives (Sunday Triumph, 7 August 1988), thereby begging the questions both of women as workers, and of the ostensible secularity of the Nigerian state. Religious ideology is used in this case as justification to counteract increasing violence through harsher control over women and children, while the state directly benefits through the identification of women with family and home, and their availability as carers, nurses, and welfare workers, carrying out at no financial cost to the state the work formerly the responsibility of the now vastly underfunded hospitals, clinics, and other social service institutions.

Elite women might be less affected at the outset than the majority of Hausa women by this new wave of repression, but increasing emphasis on women’s family roles and protection of women will ultimately affect all women, constitutional guarantees against sex discrimination notwithstanding. On the other hand, the very existence of contradictions between rhetoric and rhetoric, and rhetoric and practice, within and between levels of government, and within and between religious groups themselves, provides space for manoeuvre for women. A possible way forward may involve the utilisation of the ostensible Federal ideology, as incorporated in constitutional guarantees of equality and commitment to the goals of the Decade for Women, as well as the implemented sections of that ideology, as materialised, for example, in the new Women’s Units in each State Ministry of Education, to counter or anticipate negative trends or positions. Such a strategy may provide one means of gathering support, establishing space, and creating new possibilities which would otherwise be neither available nor forthcoming.

Yet it may well be that the increasing concatenation of state and religious arenas, the continuing reaffirmation of religio-cultural identity in terms of the broader Nigerian polity, with the increasing emphasis on fundamentalist morality, associated with the decreasing availability of formal sector waged labour, creates conditions within which women are particularly controlled and constrained, with class continuing to be a basic operating distinction and possible division between women. It would appear, therefore, that women in the new Katsina State must fight against
increasingly heightened odds to maintain access to education and to economic viability, and to maintain what little autonomy and authority they have achieved in the present political context.

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**Endnotes**

The term Hausa is used in this article to describe the settled Hausa-speaking population and culture of Katsina, and of other former Hausa States, from around the time of the Fulani Jihad of the early 1800’s to the present. Fulani is used primarily to distinguish the culture and followers of Shehu Usman dan Fodio during the period of the Jihad, and to contrast them with their Hausa adversaries, recognising however the strong interlinkages and shared culture even at that period. The traditional Katsina elite are of Fulani ancestry, but speak and share the broad Hausa culture.

To avoid confusion regarding the use of the term ‘state’ as an abstract, and as the name of specific sub-polities in Nigeria (Katsina State, Kano State ...), the latter is generally fully named in each instance. The term Federal Government is used where this higher level of administration is meant.

**Bibliographic Note**


Interviews were also carried out with Hajiya Lami Abba, Principal Education Officer, Women’s Education Unit, Katsina Ministry of Education, in July 1988 and with Hajiya Hassu Nko, Chief Education Officer, Women’s Education Unit, Katsina Ministry of Education, in June 1988.
The poetry of Jack Mapanje is of undoubted literary merit. But it also warrants consideration for the manner in which it intertwines with and comments upon the political situation in Malawi. As with praise singers in the past, there is little space between cultural expression and political involvement in this case. If sometimes personal, Mapanje’s poetry is more frequently public commentary, formed with consciousness of the oral tradition, of the poet speaking directly to an audience. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mapanje should be seen as a threat to the status quo, though tragic that his art has led to his confinement as a political prisoner. Vail and
Of Chameleons and Paramount Chiefs: The Case of the Malawian Poet Jack Mapanje

White describe the case of Mapanje, exploring the development of his poetry and of its place within the political context of contemporary Malawi.

On 25 September 1987, Jack Mapanje, Malawi's most accomplished poet, was arrested in Zomba by police units acting for Malawi's special branch. He was taken in handcuffs to the University of Malawi, where he is Head of the English Department. His office was searched and various manuscripts were confiscated, including drafts of recent poems and the text of an address delivered at a conference at Stockholm in 1986 under the title 'Censoring the African Poem: Personal Reflections', which included a blow-by-blow account of his dealings with the Malawi Censorship Board. Mapanje was then taken to his house where a further search was made and where his three children were forbidden to telephone their mother, Mercy Mapanje, a midwife absent in Malawi's capital, Lilongwe, completing a course in community nursing. Finally, he was removed to Mikuyu Maximum Security Detention Centre near Zomba, where he is still being held in the company of a mixed group of detainees at least one of whom has been imprisoned without trial for more than twenty years. No charges have been brought against him.

Mapanje is best known for his volume Of Chameleons and Gods (1981), a selection of poems written between 1970 and 1980. But he is also Chair of the Linguistics Association of SADCC Universities (LASU), has worked intermittently for the British Broadcasting Company, and has twice served as a judge for the Commonwealth Prize for poetry. He has published other books, including an important anthology of African oral poetry (1983), and he is editor of Kalulu, a Malawian journal devoted to oral literature. One effect of his detention is that the Malawian authorities have discovered for the first time the scale of his international reputation. Mapanje has been made a Prisoner of Conscience by Amnesty International and an honorary member of P.E.N. American Center. Selections from Of Chameleons and Gods were read by British playwright Harold Pinter outside the Malawi High Commission in London, and the reading was broadcast on the BBC Africa Service and heard in Zomba by Mapanje's children. His most recent work has been published in Stand, The Literary Review, Poetry Wales, and Index on Censorship. In June 1988, he was the winner of the Poetry International Award in Rotterdam, and the award was accepted on his behalf by the Nobel Prizewinner, Wole Soyinke.

For most of the people who have protested to Malawi's President, H. Kamuzu Banda, and his agents over Mapanje's arrest, the issues are straightforward. A much admired poet, living under a dictatorship, has been detained without trial and without any apparent intention of bringing charges against him. The banning of poetry touches some hidden well-spring in most of us, and Mapanje's case is now taken up by thousands of readers who had heard little of him until the Malawian authorities were foolish enough to attempt to silence him. Yet to those who know both Mapanje and Malawi, the case against the Malawian
government is both more complex and — if such seems possible — more outrageous. No poet in southern Africa in recent years has more deliberately confronted the issues of Poetry and Power. His work and his arrest demonstrate two things. On the one hand, they illustrate the imaginative possibilities of adapting the aesthetics of oral poetry to the English language and the printed word. On the other, they indicate the ambiguities of that aesthetic in the jungle of post-independence African politics.

The Malawi Writers’ Group
Mapanje first came to prominence in the early 1970s as a founder member of the Malawi Writers’ Group. This group, which met weekly, had in common with similar groups throughout the world that it provided its members with a small but usually sympathetic audience for their own poems and stories. Two features of the Malawi Writers’ Group, however, gave its meetings an unusual importance.

The first was that they succeeded in avoiding the control of the official government censor. The Malawi Censorship Board was established in 1968 by an Act of Parliament which made it an offence to publish anything or handle any publication:

likely to give offence to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the public, bring anyone into contempt, harm relations between sections of the public or be contrary to the interests of public safety or public order (quoted in Gibbs, 1988:19).

As if these clauses were not sufficiently comprehensive, the Act also made provision for any member of the public to complain, anonymously if they wished, about material which had ‘caused offence’. For reasons which remain unexplained, however, and which were certainly not anticipated, weekly meetings of the Writers’ Group were treated in practice as part of the University of Malawi’s teaching programme. Although the Group was by no means confined to the university, attracting contributions from journalists, teachers and businessmen, the poems and short stories circulated for discussion were regarded as teaching materials and became, inadvertently but invaluably, a medium of uncensored publication.

The second distinctive feature followed from the first in that, in the circumstances then prevailing at the university, the Writers’ Group became the only forum in which Malawian affairs were habitually discussed. The university had a football club together with various religious societies and an embryonic student branch of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). But there were no political or sociological debating societies of the kind that flourished at other African universities. Even the student newspaper, a four-page broadsheet run off fortnightly on an arthritic duplicator, had to be supervised by a member of staff whose principal function was to clear its contents with the government censor. The result was that, as the Writers’ Group began to establish itself, it attracted to its meetings young
intellectuals whose interests would normally have been diverted into other channels but who found in poems and short stories a permitted outlet for their concerns. Within weeks of the Group's formation in April 1970, up to four hundred copies of the materials to be discussed at each meeting were being circulated within and outside the university.

It was soon obvious that poetry was the favoured medium of expression and communication. Poems, these young writers discovered, could be brief and safely obscure, apparently without any sacrifice of literary merit. In part, such assumptions reflected the atmosphere of the English Department's Practical Criticism classes, but they quickly acquired a more urgent purpose. Over the weeks, a code of imagery began to evolve. Poetic references to 'dawn' or 'cockcrow' were immediately taken as metaphors for the Malawi Congress Party, the official flag of which contains a symbol of sunrise and whose Life President, Kamuzu Banda, proclaims 'Kwacha! 'Dawn!' at the beginning of all official speeches. 

Another recurring metaphor dealt with Chingwe's Hole. The reference is to a natural fault on the top of Zomba Plateau, a cleft in the rock face descending some 150 feet. In colonial mythology — though not in historical fact — Chingwe was described as a Yao chief who had executed his enemies by hurling them down the crevasse. The myth, however, survived Nyasaland's entire colonial period to be adopted by poets in the Writers' Group as a metaphor for detention without trial in President Banda's Malawi. Every Malawian poet worth his salt has a poem about Chingwe's Hole, including Mapanje, whose own detention has naturally provoked further poems on the theme.

In the early 1970s, therefore, it appeared that the distinctive features of Mapanje's poetry, as of his contemporaries such as Lupenga Mphande, Geoff Mwanja, and Felix Mnthali, had been determined by the circumstances in which he had begun to discover himself as a writer, namely as a member of the Writers' Group. Social and political concerns were central to his work because the Group, his sole audience, functioned in part as the one forum available for such discussion, while a style characterized by subtlety and indirect allusion was necessary to outwit the government's censor. In 1972, however, Mapanje left Malawi for the first time to continue his studies at the University of London, and two years later, while still writing poetry, he completed an M.Phil. thesis entitled The Use of Traditional Literary Forms in Modern Malawian Writing in English. This thesis describes the evolution of Malawian writing in general and the genesis of his own work in particular from an entirely different and much richer perspective.

His point of departure is a discussion of the predicament of writers in many parts of Africa — Anglophone and Francophone — who have found themselves increasingly, and even violently, at odds with their societies:
While some writers have had to make a painful reassessment of their 'hoped for roles' in independent Africa by an unhappy accommodation of their moral and aesthetic principles within their new political situation, others have inflicted upon themselves some sort of exile, while still others have been forced into exile by the embarrassed politicians who look at the writer's critical approach to life as an impediment to their remaining in power for as long as they would like.

It is no wonder then that African writers should feel alienated in their societies today ... To keep their sanity ... they have to write what politicians regard as subversive literature or obscure works either directed towards a literary coterie or meant as therapy for their psychological crises (1974:8-9).

These words anticipated by seven years the Introduction to Of Chameleons and Gods where Mapanje speaks of writing verse 'as a way of preserving some sanity' and of the recurring temptation ('where personal voices are too easily muffled') to be like the chameleon and 'bask in one's brilliant camouflage'. The passage from his 1974 thesis continues by identifying the dangers in this:

All this points to the possibility of the development of the doctrines of art for art's sake. If politicians do not tolerate writers this development is predictable in certain African countries for, as the Russian Georgi Plekhanov's experience shows, art per se develops when the artists feel a 'hopeless contradiction between their aims and the aims of the society to which they belong' (ibid:9).

The results may be 'therapeutic', but Mapanje has larger ambitions than to direct encoded signals to small embattled communities of the like-minded.

The way forward, Mapanje argues, is for the writer to learn from the 'traditional' artists of his society, and the remainder of the thesis is devoted to examining the forms of oral literature available within Malawi. Two central arguments are developed about oral culture which throw a great deal of light on his own poetic practice and which clarify just how fundamental is the nature of his challenge to President Banda's own appropriation of Malawi's history and culture.

The Legacy of the Oral Tradition

He appeals first for a return to 'traditional literature and modes of thought as the source of metaphor and inspiration' (ibid:2). In suggesting this, Mapanje is not, as it may appear, advocating a nostalgic or neo-traditional literature of drums and masks and fly-whisks and rain-shrines. He means that he wishes the new generation of young Malawian artists to have available, even when writing in English, something of the range of devices and density of metaphor the oral poet shares with his audience. At the centre of his argument is a long section on the art of riddling, a subject that has long fascinated him. Riddling, he argues, is at the heart of all new metaphors. The 'rebellious nature of the riddle' lies in the fact that it surprises the audience into realizing that things are not 'patterned as they appear':
riddles push the audience into seeing relationships between the verbal world and the world behind it. Herein lies the role of the riddle challenger, if seriously taken, as a poet. Riddling is an intellectual process of creating symbols and metaphors. Need we ask the use of riddles to young writers today? (ibid:136)

Mapanje firmly rejects the notion, still current in some discussions of writing from east and central Africa, that oral modes are simple and unsophisticated or that wit and polish and complexity in a writer are signs of western influence. To Mapanje, the language of the oral poet is sophisticated and mischievous, dense with history refined to metaphor, yet capable of dynamic effects of communication precisely because those metaphors are understood and have achieved currency. To recreate in Malawian English a language of such local resonance, recapturing the toughness and complexity of oral poetry and especially its capacity for intellectual rebellion, has become his literary programme. From this perspective, the coded metaphors of the poems contributed to meetings of the Writers’ Group in the early 1970s were not primarily the product of circumstances in which the Group came together. They were the offspring of a marriage of the English language with a Malawian oral aesthetic.

But the appeal to oral models carries a second implication. Mapanje’s thesis of 1974 also lays claim to the authority of the oral poet in interrogating power. He describes how this licence operated in Malawi with a range of examples extending from the praise poet assessing the character and conduct of chiefs to the ordinary woman at her mortar pounding millet and singing satirically about her husband’s laziness or neglect or declining virility. Under President Banda’s regime, however, oral poetry has increasingly been appropriated for purposes of elementary propaganda. It is used by agricultural extension workers coaxing village farmers into buying fertilizers and by social workers addressing issues of rural hygiene and even by the Christian churches, which have stolen many of the best tunes. What Mapanje terms the most ‘dangerous’ of these tendencies is that politicians have ‘changed the old traditional war song ... to watered down propaganda to praise the new leaders with very little poetic insight’ (ibid:29-30):

What the new praise-song lacks is an element of constructive criticism of wither the leadership or the society. The criticism was necessary in the original song because it was one way of helping the chief or the traditional leader to improve. It was also a way of knowing what the people think about the leadership ... What we would like to see is a critical praise poem to bring about sanity where it is rare to find. (ibid:32-3)

This is an argument that has been deployed by South African poets from A.C. Jordan onwards. But Mapanje is the first poet in an independent country in central or southern Africa to appeal to this aesthetic as his ‘licence’ in questioning power.

By proposing a return to the modes and conventions of oral literature, Mapanje finds an escape from the dangers implicit in the work of the
Writers' Group, the dangers of writing for a small coterie from a stance of art-for-art's-sake. His poetic programme is to illuminate murky corners of the country's political culture. The agenda is set by political developments in Malawi, the 'most tragic' amongst which, for Mapanje, was the cabinet crisis of 1964, when 'the intellectuals who had made independence possible were discredited' (ibid:25).

The Cabinet Crisis

The 'cabinet crisis' erupted within days of Malawi's independence in July 1964. It began on 26 July with a speech by President Banda on his return from the Cairo summit of the Organization of African Unity in which he attacked unnamed members of his cabinet for questioning his policies. In foreign affairs, Banda was moving towards a trade agreement with Portugal, the colonial power in neighbouring Mozambique, and towards friendly relations with the Republic of South Africa. At home, Banda sought to impose charges for outpatients at government hospitals and to set strict limits to the pace of Africanization, especially in the civil service. Banda justified these measures on economic grounds, but their political basis was revealed by his refusal to accept a soft loan of £10 million from the People's Republic of China in return for an end to Malawi's two-China's policy.

At the cabinet meeting of 27 August, Banda was attacked on all these issues and apparently offered his resignation. Over the next twelve days, however, he prorogued Parliament, identified a loyalist faction in the cabinet, and dismissed 'rebel' ministers Chiume, Chirwa, Bwanasi and Rose Chibambo, an action which forced Chisisa and Chokani to resign in sympathy. In a recalled Parliament on 8 September, he demanded and received a vote of confidence. The ministers in disagreement with Banda, now including Henry Chipembere, who had earlier been absent in Canada, never recovered the initiative and returned to their constituencies or left Malawi for neighbouring countries. The following February, Chipembere attempted an insurrection from his base in Fort Johnson (Mangoche) but was easily defeated at Liwonde, and in March Chisisa launched a small invasion from Tanzania and was killed. It was clear by that stage that the dissident ministers commanded little popular support.

It was these very intellectuals who, as young radicals, had invited Banda to return from exile in 1959 to lead the struggle against the imposition of the Central African Federation on what was then Nyasaland. With their destruction and the consequent collapse of the Malawi Congress Party, Banda proceeded to consolidate his dictatorship. He rebuilt the Party to his own specifications, whilst governing the country in the fashion of the late colonial period through chiefs and headmen. Today he occupies the pinnacles of two rival systems of authority, capable as Life President of both the party and the state to play off at any level one set of officials against the other as circumstances demand. These political structures have now come under intense pressure as a result of three circumstances: the
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‘politics of succession’, whereby from 1980 onwards, potential heirs to the aging Banda have manoeuvred for position; the politics of destabilization from South African-backed RENAMO forces operating freely from Malawi against the government of neighbouring Mozambique; and the economic intervention of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which have demolished much of the financial oligarchy which was the source of Banda’s powers of patronage. But the structures have not been modified — not even in response to Banda’s extreme decrepitude — and their origins in the cabinet crisis of 1964 have largely been forgotten.

In today’s Malawi, the events of September 1964 remain a totally embargoed topic. President Banda’s annual rehearsal of his destruction of the Central African Federation at Independence Day celebrations makes no acknowledgement of Chipembere, Chirwa, Chisiza and Chiume, whose efforts in organizing the party he inherited are thereby denied, and their names cannot be mentioned. All Malawians over the age of 35 are aware of the deceit of Banda’s presentation of history, but no one addresses the issue.

The exception to this rule of silence has been Jack Mapanje, who has never ceased to argue, in poetry and in prose, that the political rivalries central to the cabinet crisis and replicated in the current politics of the succession have been the key to Malawi’s intellectual and cultural sterility.

The Intellectual in Malawian Society

For members of the Writers’ Group at the University of Malawi in the early 1970s, the literary agenda set by these political developments was extremely complex. As young intellectuals, many of whom had ‘thrown stones’ as school-children in the pre-independence disturbances of 1959, it was natural for them to sympathise with the educated ministers defeated in 1964. Where they themselves were to fit into Banda’s Malawi was far from clear, the politics of patronage leaving little space for graduates produced by the University from 1969 onwards.

Banda’s preferred ‘elite’ were the party officials and members of Parliament whom he personally selected — the MPs being subsequently declared as having ‘won unopposed’ — before he presented them with the farms and businesses for the management of which they were held accountable to him. It was a system with no room for anyone who had achieved distinction through his or her own efforts, and even being a successful boxer or singer or footballer carried risks. On the eve of the elections of 1971 there were rumours that Dr. Peter Mwanza, Principal of the University’s Chancellor College, was willing to be a candidate. Banda’s response was to declare that he wanted no ‘graduates in parliament’. The marginalization of the educated seemed complete.

There were more personal reasons for insecurity. Most Malawian students came from rural backgrounds and maintained strong family connections. They were deeply conscious of the gap between their current lives and
those of the generations before them, and much of what they wrote was concerned with exploring the nature of their individual missions. An influential text was Wordsworth's pastoral poem *Michael*. This tale of an English north country shepherd who sent his son to earn money in town to redeem a mortgage and who lost everything was read as a contemporary Malawian story, both because of Wordsworth's eloquent celebration of the integrity of the life of Michael's non-literate ancestors and because of the father's great grief that his son had gone adrift in the city. Many poems and stories contributed to the Writers’ Group explored such themes. James Ng’ombe’s short story ‘The Leopard’ described the sacrifices made by the narrator’s elder brother to enable him to gain an education at secondary school and university, sacrifices brought home to him only when his brother is killed by a leopard while defending the parents’ tiny herd of goats.

There is nothing very surprising in the fact that a group of young writers was concerned with questions of identity. But their difficulties were unusually acute. Malawi’s older generation of writers was not at hand to offer any guidance. David Rubadiri, Malawi’s best known poet and ambassador to the United Nations, had become yet another casualty of the cabinet crisis, and his work was banned. Legson Kayira, the novelist, had chosen exile in Britain, his crime being that he had duplicated Banda’s personal myth in walking many hundreds of miles to obtain an education. Aubrey Kachingwe, Malawi’s other published novelist, had opted for the safety of silence. There were, of course, potential African models from further afield. But the political education of young Malawian writers had been swift and brutal (none of them had forgotten the public display in Blantyre of Yatuta Chisiza’s insulted corpse) and the cultural nationalism of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Ngugi wa Thiongo’s *The River Between* and Okot P’Bitek’s *Song of Lawino*, much admired though these writers were, seemed already to belong to simpler times.

*Song of Lawino*, a series of satiric songs addressed by an Acoli woman to her alienated, deracinated, westernised, shame-ridden husband, was especially problematic. At the universities of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the poem was being hailed as a revolutionary text, the authentic voice of the peasantry directed against the new petty bourgeoisie. Further south, such appeals to traditional values read more ambiguously. There were students in Malawi’s ‘Banda-stan’ who wrote satires in imitation of *Song of Lawino*, attacking the use of lipstick or of hair-straightening and skin-lightening creams, only to suffer the indignity of having their work praised by the government censor! In political practice, Banda had first used the ‘traditional’ chiefs to outmanoeuvre the graduate ministers, and he had then used the ‘traditional’ arguments to outmanoeuvre the chiefs. In Banda’s world, Lawino appeared an innocent. So much of what Lawino argues in her songs seemed, in fact, to have been appropriated by President Banda that Malawian students dropped into the habit of calling the members of the Malawi Congress Party’s Women’s League ‘Banda’s Lawinos’.
Banda’s Theatre

The greatest difficulty for these young writers in creating alternatives to Banda’s world, however, was the sheer imaginative appeal of Banda’s own symbolic constructions. By the 1970s, and largely as a substitute for political debate, Malawi’s political year had evolved into a cycle of presidential rituals — the regional crop inspections, the opening of the tobacco auctions, the President’s official birthday, the opening of parliament, the opening of the party convention and so on. For all the intellectual poverty of Malawian nationalism, there was no denying the effectiveness of Banda’s theatre. Most resonant of all, and standing by way of illustration of these public performances, were the ceremonials enacted at the international airport whenever President Banda left Malawi or returned home from visits abroad.

From first light, many thousands of people would converge on the airport, which was then located at Chileka, outside of Blantyre. Prominent among them were members of the Women’s League, dressed in the style originally designed on the model of a housemaid’s uniform by a lady at the Blantyre Mission, but which President Banda had proclaimed to be a ‘traditional’ in his war against the miniskirt. Many of the women had travelled hundreds of miles by open lorry to be present, the colours of their dresses representing Malawi’s three provinces, but they all displayed Banda’s portrait prominently and they occupied the ground surrounding the presidential podium. Towards mid-morning, if he were leaving Malawi, the President himself arrived, standing in an open limousine and accompanied by the official ‘hostess’, Cecilia Kadzamira, by the Minister of the Southern Province and by other high officials. He was dressed, as always, in a long grey overcoat, a three-piece Saville Row suit, and a Homburg hat with dark glasses, his right hand brandishing an ivory-handled fly-whisk. As he took his seat on the podium, the overcoat was handed to an official and the proceedings began.

First, Banda was entertained by groups of women from different regions and districts, taking their turns to sing and dance his praises. These performances would last for upwards of two hours while Banda gesticulated his appreciation and engage in animated conversation with a bored-looking Ms Kadzamira. Next came Banda’s speech, the central theme of which was usually the need for Malawians to observe the ‘four cornerstones’ (Unity, Order, Obedience and Discipline) during his absence. Such speeches were invariably in English, enunciated a clause at a time on a rising cadence with pauses while the official interpreter (in those days John Msonthi, later, after Msonthi’s disgrace, Ms. Kadzamira’s uncle, John Tembo) translated into Chewa. Integral to the delivery were moments when Banda would correct the interpreter’s Chewa, inviting the audience to ridicule Msonthi’s supposedly imperfect knowledge of the language. The presidential party then retreated to the airport’s VIP lounge where, while the crowd still waited outside, the third act of the ceremonials was played out. This was a broadcast press conference, Banda’s audience
shifting to the worlds’ newspapers, his theme international affairs. Finally, Banda would inspect a small guard of honour of the Malawi Rifles under the command of Brigadier Lewis, their British commander, before advancing down a red carpet to the VC10 jet which by now, with perfect timing, was roaring impatiently on the tarmac. As Banda advanced, shaking hands with a long line of dignitaries — his ministers, party officials, church officials, ambassadors and high commissioners and cultural representatives, the Papal legate, the university’s Vice Chancellor — the impression was created that he was keeping the plane waiting. The crowd’s last glimpse of their President, before the catharsis of the jet’s take-off was of a white glove waving from the first class gangway.

Essentially, what was being recreated at these airport meetings was the welcome engineered at Chileka by the Congress Party’s young intellectuals (though without their role being acknowledged) on the occasion of Banda’s return to Malawi after forty years of exile in July 1958. But the rituals had other resonances. Banda’s dress, his ease in English, his displays of erudition and his command of limousines and jet-airliners, all proclaimed his mastery of the white world of education, technology, and international affairs. His manipulation of politicians and party-officials, diplomats, journalists and the military, illustrated different aspects of his competence and powers.

‘Praise-Songs’
Most significant of all, however, was the time and space allotted to the neo-traditional Women’s League whom Banda courted with his chieftain’s fly-whisk, his apparent expertise in Chewa and his acceptance of their praises. All these elements were brought together in the subtle and elaborate praise-name ‘His Excellency, the Life President, Ngwazi Doctor H. Kamuzu Banda’. But the attention paid to the Women’s League was no mere formality. Their praise-songs became central to the official speeches with Banda taking up their themes (‘as the women sang just now’), reiterating and reinforcing their messages and accepting their agenda. The impression was fostered that, in the last resort, everything that Banda was doing in the large world of power and diplomacy was being done on their behalf.

But it was in precisely this nuance of state occasions that the young poets of the Malawi Writers’ Group found room for manoeuvre. Transcribed, translated and set out baldly on the page, the praise songs of the Women’s League can appear to be of very little merit and it has to be accepted that some of them are feebly expressed and abjectly sycophantic. We noted earlier the complaint in Mapanje’s 1974 thesis that older conventions of critical praises have been changed ‘to watered down propaganda ... with very little poetic insight’:

All these things
Belong to Kamuzu Banda.
All the chickens
Are Kamuzu Banda’s.

All the goats
Are Kamuzu Banda’s.

Etc. indefinitely.
(quoted in Van Zanten, 1970-1)

But the older conventions were not entirely moribund and could come to life in two ways. First, many of the songs set out very specific reasons why Banda should be praised. He had ‘taken the country peacefully’, had brought roads, clothing, food, schools and hospitals:

When Banda came, what did you see?
When Banda came
You saw Congo cloth and Zambia cloth.

(ibid)

It was songs such as these that Banda would take up in his speech of response, effectively letting the women define his programme. For all his self congratulatory air, there was a sense in which the conditions of praise had been laid down by the women and not himself, so that the praises functioned as a kind of contract between the ruled and their ruler. The women had made it abundantly clear what they expected — peace, improving standards of living — from such homages to power.

Secondly, there were occasions when the songs contained muted criticism. The usual tactic was to claim that President Banda ‘had found out’ what was going on. President Banda sometimes ‘didn’t know’ that money was being embezzled or that land was being appropriated or property confiscated or that famine was prevailing locally, but the songs made everything clear to him. Some of these songs were composed in their home areas by local branches of the Women’s League, occasionally in collaboration with their husbands, making them an important channel of communication with President Banda. One of the best instances of this was a song performed in 1975, when the Secretary-General of the Congress Party, Albert Muwalo, and the head of the Special Branch, Focus Gwede, were arrested for plotting to assassinate President Banda. Banda, who was then on tour in his home region, had forbidden all references to the affair, but a group of women performed a song cataloguing through several verses Muwalo’s abuses of power, each verse having as its chorus line ‘Kamuzu didn’t know!’. Banda was stung into an angry speech of self exculpation.

It was this space for poetry on state occasions, this occasional loophole for ‘poetic licence’, that provided Mapanje and such contemporaries as Lupenga Mphande and Geoff Mwanja with a possible poetic model. Assumptions still prevailed in Malawi about the capacity of poetry to make the powerful appear ridiculous. A neo-traditional authority could
be undermined by a traditional aesthetic. This became the model of Mapanje's *Of Cameleons and Gods*.

**Mapanje's Poetry**

The profoundly oral nature of Mapanje's style needs little demonstration. The poems are dominated by the speaking voice, usually in the first person and the present tense. They shift line by line both in tone and syntax, from bald statement to quiet reflection to satiric jibe to open interrogation. They are intensely dramatic with strong beginnings and forceful endings and incorporate a good deal of direct speech. These effects are, of course, an achievement of artifice. Mapanje is not in practice an oral poet with his audience present before him. He writes his poems in several drafts, working through as many as a dozen versions before hitting on the form and the images appropriate for what he wishes to say. But the direction of these revisions is always towards greater immediacy of impact and variety of tone, the illusion of orality. Equally demonstrable is the extent to which Mapanje has adopted the oral poet's stance of public spokesman. Poem after poem uses the first person plural 'we' in a manner not available to post-Romantic European poets. Of the forty-seven poems in *Of Chameleons and Gods*, no fewer than eighteen end with questions and further eleven with exclamations. It is the stance of the praise poet, telling the chief what no one else will say and licensed by the medium of which he is master.

To his audience in Malawi the poems are packed with references to the people, places and events of the country's recent history. A reading of the landscapes of Malawi is also a reading of ethnic tensions and political rivalries. Mapanje's poems represent not history as code but history as drama, evaluation and judgment. They address the agenda which has been set by President Banda since the events of the cabinet crisis of 1964 and they seize back President Banda's own appropriation of the past by offering an alternative account of history, custom and tradition. In the process, they become the best guide available within Malawi to events over the past generation. In a country where intellectual and moral enquiry have been savagely repressed, Mapanje's satire challenges like a conscience.

**'The New Platform Dances'**

These are large claims. We shall try to substantiate them by discussing in detail two poems from *Of Chameleons and Gods* and, subsequently, one of his more recent poems. The first is a relatively early composition, written in 1970, when Mapanje was still an undergraduate and first published in the proceedings of the Writers' Group, *The New Platform Dances*, (1981:12-3).
Haven't I danced the big dance
Compelled the rains so dust could
Soar high above like the animals
stampede? Haven't I in animal
Skins wriggled with amulets
Rattled with anklets
Scattered nervous women
With snakes around my neck
With spears in these hands
Then enticed them back
With fly-whisk’s magic?
Haven't I moved with all
Concentric in the arena
To the mystic drums
Dancing the half-nude
Lomwe dance
Haven't I?

Haven't my wives at mortars sang
Me songs of praise, of glory,
How I quaked the earth
How my skin trembled
How my neck peaked
Above all dancers
How my voice throbbed
Like the father-drum
I danced to
Haven't they?

Now, when I see my daughters writhe
Under cheating abstract
Voices of slack drums, ululate
To babble-idea-men-masks
Without amulets or anklets,
Why don't I stand up
To show them how we danced
Chopa, how it was born?
Why do I sit still
Why does my speech choke
Like I have not danced
Before? Haven't I
Danced the bigger dance?
Haven't I?

The speaker in this poem, a dramatic monologue, is a Lomwe headman. The Lomwe people migrated to Malawi from Mozambique at the turn of this century and following the long years of their settlement under labour-tenant schemes — the notorious thangata system — they today
remain among the poorest of Malawi's people. Their central role in John Chilembwe's revolt of 1915 made them deeply suspect to the colonial authorities and ironically, despite Chilembwe's status as a national hero in independent Malawi, the Lomwe have continued to be regarded as potential trouble-makers. Rumours of ethnic conspiracy in Malawi invariably refer to the Lomwe in disparaging terms. The Lomwe headman in this poem, therefore, has affinities with the prostitute, the mad person, the prisoner, the Jehovah's Witness, the old woman selling thobwa beer who appear in others of Mapanje's poems. He is adopting the voice of someone deep inside Malawian society but outside the system.

 Appropriately, the poem's central metaphor is of the Chopa dance. This is a Lomwe dance of great power and complex symbolism, the function of which is to honour the ancestors and 'compel' them to send the rain (White, 1987:106-8). To an immense battery of drumming, the men dance in procession around their chief or headman, wielding spears and axes, sometimes even with venomous snakes draped around their necks, while the women dance in an outer circle waving green branches. For its oppositions of male to female, violence to gentleness, hunting to planting, dust to the rains, Chopa draws its symbolism from the Lomwe creation myth, which tells how the first man and first woman came out of a cave in their Mozambique homeland and brought conflict to a harmonious world through their discovery of fire.

Thus the poem sets up two contrasts. The first is between the old dance, in which the headman's duty was to dance until his power and energy 'compelled the rains', and the new dances of politicians on public platforms whom the poem calls, in a sharply compressed neologism, 'babble-idea-men-masks'. The second contrast is between the praise songs sung by the headman's 'wives', which were praises for real achievement, and the dances and ululations accompanied by 'slack drums' — drums without resonance — offered to the new leaders. The reference is, of course, to the Women's League. Implicit in these contrasts is the larger one between a coherent world alive with meaning, whose hierarchies have religious sanction, and the new world of dummy figures with 'cheating abstract voices'. This is not a contrast between past and present. The headman is alive and challenging Banda's neo-traditionalism on his own ground. The metaphor does not demand that Mapanje himself believe in Chopa or the trappings of rain-making (he is not himself Lomwe). It is Banda who has assumed the trappings of chieftaincy and, by the very standards he has invoked, his dance is an empty one.

Of course, the poem makes no such statement. It was understood by the Malawi government censor, who cleared it for publication in 1971 and allowed it to be read on the radio, as a defence of 'traditional' as opposed to modern styles of dancing with, perhaps, a satire on the early 1970s fashion in Malawi for platform shoes. Every sentence throughout the poem is actually a question, interrogating its readers and drawing them, through their own replies, into complicity with intellectual rebellion. There is a
further ambiguity. The headman’s final question is ‘Why do I sit still/Why does my speech choke?’ The closing lines can be read in different ways — as a bewildered old man’s inability to come to terms with the new world or as a rhetorical call to arms. There is no real doubt as to the correct reading — Mapanje chose the latter in his broadcast of 1971. But one almost feels sorry for the government censor in having had to cope with such sophisticated dissent.

‘On His Royal Blindness’
The second poem we discuss from Of Chameleons and Gods was written in 1980 and is notable for making the first public acknowledgment in Malawi that President Banda is aging and that he will eventually have to make way for younger men. The name Kwangala is glossed by Mapanje as a ‘Yao word for dancing frenetically’, and the reference is again to Banda’s dealings with the Women’s League, in particular, to the ‘chief’s’ practice of dancing briefly with the women on Independence Day anniversaries. Once again, too, the subject of the poem is addressed and interrogated directly, though Mapanje has added a careful end-note (‘the chief is in the mind of the poet’) which takes the reader back to the armchair and spirits away the illusion of oral confrontation fostered by the actual text.

On His Royal Blindness
Paramount Chief Kwanoala

I admire the quixotic display of your paramountcy
How you brandish our ancestral shields and spears
Among your warriors dazzled by your loftiness
But I fear the way you spend your golden breath
Those impromptu, long-winded tirades of your might
In the heat, do they suit your brittle constitution?

I know that I too must sing to such royal happiness
And I am not arguing. Wasn’t I too tucked away in my
Loin-cloth infested by jiggers and fleas before
Your bright eminence showed up? How could I quibble
Over your having changed all that? How dare I when
We have scribbled our praises all over our graves?

Why should I quarrel when I too have known mask
Dancers making troubled journeys to the gold mines
On bare feet and bringing back fake European gadgets
The broken pipes, torn coats, crumpled bowler hats,
Dangling mirrors and rusty tincans to make their
Mask dancing strange? Didn’t my brothers die there?
No, your grace, I am no alarmist nor banterer
I am only a child surprised how you broadly disparage
Me shocked by the tedium of your continuous palaver.
I adore your majesty. But paramountcy is like a raindrop
On a vast sea. Why should we wait for the children to
Tell us about our toothless gums or our showing flies?

The precise tones of this poem’s ironies are extraordinarily difficult to pin down. It was written after the intense political repression of the mid-1970s had receded, culminating in the arrests of Muwalo and Gwede, but before the crisis over the succession to President Banda was to explode in the killings of senior Cabinet Ministers in 1983. Although the poem clearly insists that Kwangala’s time is over, it seems at one level a fairly sympathetic view of his place in history both as actor and victim. Stanza two acknowledges the economic change that the chief has brought about, while at the same time mimicking in a manner always derided in Malawi the self-denigration of sycophants. Stanza three accepts that other Malawians (like President Banda) have travelled to South Africa to bring back regalia for their dancing, though the self-caricatures which result are saddening. The argument in stanzas one and four is not that Kwangala has been especially nasty but that he is very old and that it is time to give way to younger men. More than any other of Mapanje’s poems, ‘On His Royal Blindness’ seems to fit the depiction of praise-poetry involving ‘poetic licence’ deriving from a broad acceptance of the current hierarchy.

Yet this reading of the poem is completely undermined by the epithets within it. From the beginning the chief’s display is ‘quixotic’, his speeches ‘long-winded’, his constitution ‘brittle’. By the third stanza, the ‘European gadgets’ central to the dance (President Banda’s suit, his Homburg hat, his dark-glasses) have become ‘fake ... torn ... crumpled ... dangling ... rusty’. In successive rereadings, the ironies spread back from the adjectives to the nouns (‘golden breath’, ‘Royal happiness’, ‘bright eminence’) until the whole text seems a triumph of delicate mockery, offering praises and in the same breath reclaiming them. Yet this description, too, needs qualification. The comments in stanzas two and three — ‘I am not arguing’, ‘why should I quibble?’, ‘why should I quarrel?’ — are entirely serious and contain no detectable ambiguity. They cannot be otherwise, given the number of deaths involved, deaths from which the poet cannot detach himself through mockery. Malawians may have ‘scribbled our praises all over our graves’, but it was not Kwangala who made ‘my brothers die there’.

It is this semi-acceptance of a common destiny with Kwangala in the making of Malawi’s present that justifies the poem’s conclusion. The charity the poet extends to the chief is not extended by the chief to the poet, who is ‘only a child surprised how you broadly disparage/ Me’. There is no room for him in President Banda’s Malawi. Yet in a court of sycophants who else will point out the painful truth about ‘toothless gums’ and his ‘showing flies’?
In the last analysis, 'Of His Royal Blindness' is a poem about the role of the poet in Malawi, demanding to be offered the space and licence sanctioned by Banda's own neo-traditionalism. There are a number of poems in Of Chameleons and Gods which explore related ideas. 'Kabula Curio Shop' describes the marginalization of the artist. 'Glory Be To Chingwe's Hole' shows how the artist's creations are appropriated for the chief's own purposes. 'We Wondered about the Mellow Peaches' reflects, among other things, on the erosion of larger visions by the sheer pettiness of dictatorships. All these themes come together in the paper 'Censoring the African Poem', which Mapanje read at a conference in Stockholm in 1986, one of the manuscripts seized by the Special Branch at the time of Mapanje's arrest, though blessedly too late to prevent publication.

Censorship of Mapanje's Work

In Malawi, Of Chameleons and Gods fell into a limbo by being neither officially proscribed nor officially cleared for sale. Bookshops which displayed it were ordered to return their copies to London, while there were rumours that the Special Branch had bought the last fifty copies in the University Bookstore and thrown them down pit latrines. James Ng'ombe, former author of 'The Leopard' and now chairman of Dzuka (Wake Up!) Publishing Company, proposed to bring out a 'Malawian' version of Of Chameleons and Gods, omitting those poems which 'poke at wounds that are still raw in Malawian history'. As Mapanje comments, 'the mind still boggles about what the Malawian version of already Malawian verse would be'. Dr Dzimani Kadzamira, brother of Cecilia and Principal of Chancellor College, used the situation to check on the loyalty of former members of the Writers' Group, inviting them on the Censorship Board's behalf to report in writing whether they considered that Mapanje's book should be banned. Ironically, copies of these reports came into Mapanje's hands in London. The verdict of the majority was 'no problem', but he had been warned which of his friends were untrustworthy.

In 1984 Heinemann reprinted the book. Plainly, it was selling both at home and abroad and the censorship board was divided as to which market infuriated it more. In June 1985 the Ministry of Education and Culture issued a circular banning 'without delay' its use in schools and colleges. But still the book itself was not banned. Malawians could be prosecuted for possessing a copy of Animal Farm or, by this stage, Song of Lawino. But it was not an offence to have imported a personal copy of Of Chameleons and Gods.

Typically, Mapanje found much to amuse him in the censorship board's discomfiture. He insists that 'the objective of most Censorship Boards is first and foremost to protect the censors from dismissal', and recalls with relish the occasion when President Banda recommended to his Cabinet a book he had been presented with on his return to Meharry College, where he first trained to be a doctor, only to find it was on the list of banned...
books. Even Dzimani Kadzamira's elaborate manoeuvre had its positive side: it was the first time the censors had solicited the opinion of Malawi's intellectuals and the idea might, perhaps, catch on! As for the imaginative effects of censorship, the challenge to outwit the authorities could be stimulating. He quotes the Polish novelist Tadeusz Konwicki to the effect that censorship 'forces the writer to employ metaphors which raise the piece of writing to a higher level' (1981:105) and wrings humour from the suggestion that the Malawi Censorship Board has actually improved his poems. As these comments make clear, his reflections are both balanced and subtle. But his evident good humour only lends greater weight to his main charge, driven home by examples, that 'censorship ultimately protects African leadership against truth'.

There is no doubt that Of Chameleons and Gods did circulate widely among Malawi's teachers, professionals and civil servants. By the early 1980s, the uncertainties generated by the politics of the succession to Banda were beginning to create a coalition of resistance, Malawians of all ages and regions and classes coming together once again under the auspices of the Malawi Congress Party to oppose the pretensions of the Kadzamira family. Mapanje's poems were informally enlisted in this cause, at least to the extent that people found stimulus in the eloquence of his questioning. There is evidence, too, that some of his poems circulated orally. His metaphors featured in semi-public discussions and it was possible to sit in bars and hear people talking about 'Chingwe' or 'the leopards of Dedza' or about the merits of 'drinking at the source', Mapanje's sardonic image for travelling to the United Kingdom. Nor was there any doubt about his growing reputation both outside and within Malawi. One of the reasons given for not formally banning Of Chameleons and Gods was the risk of preventing him from returning to Malawi. Another was the risk of making him a hero. When he did return, after completing his Ph.D. in April 1983, he was asked to deliver a public lecture at Chancellor College in Zomba. His thesis had been on 'Aspect and Tense in ChiYao, ChiChewa and English', and he chose for his lecture the most rarefied and abstruse of linguistic topics. Yet it drew an audience so large that the venue had to be shifted to Kamuzu Hall, the new theatre built for presidential convocations. By April 1983, however, it was also plain that the literary project to which he was committed and through which he had discovered his identity as a poet had no future. The poem he wrote describing his return begins as follows:

Another Fools' day touches down, another homecoming.
Shush. Bunting! some anniversary: they'll be preoccupied.
Only a wife, children and a friend, probably waiting.
(quoted in Index on Censorship, 1987:23)

This is no longer the public voice of the oral poet speaking for the community. The motif 'Shush' recurs throughout the poem, anxious not to disturb the 'they' who are preoccupied with other matters than his arrival, and the consolations of return are entirely private and familial. Of
Chameleons and Gods had conjured the illusion of the oral poet speaking for his society making comments which were licensed by his oral aesthetic.

‘Out of Bounds’

In poetic terms, this metaphor served Mapanje extremely well. In the difficult circumstances in which he had tried to find his poetic voice, it gave him a public style and helped to shape poems of great dramatic power. Politically, however, he was Out of Bounds — as the title of his projected second volume of poem expresses it. In theory, he had identified a space for satirical poetry within Malawi’s political culture. In practice, he had set up an unacceptable challenge to the regime.

There are four reasons for this. The first and most banal, given the intellectual poverty of Malawian nationalism, is that there was no room for poems which recorded with such moral precision the main events of Malawian history since 1959. No other Malawian writing within the country has dared to discuss the anti-Federation struggle and its links with the cabinet crisis, the attempted coup of 1975, and the struggle for the presidential succession. Like Wole Soyinka in comparable circumstances, Mapanje has become the conscience of his nation. But there are further reasons why Of Chameleons and Gods gave offence, arising out of the ambiguities of the enterprise itself. In the earliest account we have of ‘poetic licence’, Andrew Smith’s description of Mzilikazi in 1835 had emphasized the role of oral poetry in allowing people to present their comments and requests to the king who was by this means kept in touch with popular sentiment. But no matter how sharp the criticism, no challenge was intended to the ruler’s legitimacy. The very act of performance implied an acceptance of clientage in Mzilikazi’s embryonic state. Mapanje, however, together with his Malawian readers, had moved beyond the simpler forms of the politics of patronage. By virtue of the education which had made them so fluent in English they had a claim to status in their own right. That in itself caused offence in Banda’s Malawi where the lines of communication remain as paternalistic as under colonialism — the landowner dealing with his peasants, the master with his servants, the President with his people. Exacerbating this problem was the fact that Mapanje’s poems had been printed. The terms of the relationship between ruler and ruled changed when the ruled was able to ensure the permanency of his complaint through writing. Finally, and compounding every other offence, was the fact that poems had been published in London and in English. When the confrontation of the praise poet and paramount chief was played out before an international audience in the capital of the former colonial power, it could indeed seem that the poet was merely ‘poking at raw wounds’.

Mapanje has shown himself aware of these contradictions. Even in his 1974 thesis where the notion of ‘poetic licence’ was elaborated, he refers also to the benefits of publication abroad. ‘Writers’, he remarks, ‘are a threat to African leadership because having been published abroad they
are usually given international recognition and hence international protection' (1974:10).

From his return in April 1983, Mapanje regarded himself as licensed only in the sense that he had a London reputation and that his creation, 'The Linguistics Association of SADCC Universities' was generating some foreign exchange for Malawi. His paper on censorship, first delivered in November 1986, makes no mention of the oral poet's licence. The stance has been abandoned. By then, however, political murders had occurred in May 1983 which confirmed in appalling fashion the need for 'another voice'.

The Constitution of Malawi provides that on the President's death the Secretary General of the Congress Party will become Acting-President with the responsibility to summon within three months a Party Convention at which a new President will be elected. Given the widespread hatred in Malawi of the Kadzamira family, both inside and outside the Congress Party, together with the fact that the Malawi Army backs the Constitution, these provisions appear to lay down insuperable obstacles to John Tembo's or Cecilia Kadzamira's securing the succession. Tembo by 1982, contrary to Party policy, had already forged with South Africa's backing an alliance with RENAMO forces which were operating freely within Malawi against neighbouring Mozambique.

In May 1983, President Banda planned a bizarre manoeuvre which would have furthered the Kadzamira family's ambitions. He proposed to spend a year's 'sabbatical' in Britain, leaving Cecilia Kadzamira in charge of the government during his absence. Recognizing this scheme as an attempt to circumvent the Constitution, both the Malawi Cabinet and the Congress Party resisted. Precisely what happened next has been the subject of many different rumours, but the outcome was clear. Dick Matenje, the Secretary-General of the Congress Party, Aaron Gadama, the Minister for the Central region, and two Members of Parliament, were assassinated. Banda never took his sabbatical and the post of Secretary-General of the Party remains unfilled to this day. Seven months after these events, Mapanje wrote to England for the first time about the murders:

And then the murders happened! And there were supposed to be more people to go with them. The village is so shocked that these days only a handful of women go dancing. Right now everyone is waiting and waiting, watching the road where the event is going to happen from. The rains are about to fail. We had in November two weeks of water rationing, the first in the history of this country. It has never happened in anybody's lifetime. The poets are revising their myths about Napolo! The interpretation that everybody is giving is obviously that the Gods are 'laughing at us for our callous deaths which were not necessary at all!'

Do you remember watching Idi Amin off Tottenham Court Road in 1973? Well, those shootings were so remote. They looked like jokes. I did not realise that ten years later the story'd get home. And it was so painful that I could not work or think for months! (private letter, 12 December 1983).
Dick Matenje and Aaron Gadama were not only men who embodied the constitutional means of defeating the Kadzamira family, they had in the two years prior to their murder been signalling the need for greater openness in Malawian politics. Gadama in particular had made courageous speeches insisting that the whole point of a mass party was to involve the masses in discussion, and though the discussions over which he presided were somewhat formulistic, emphasizing the reasons why Malawians should be grateful to Banda, there were promises implicit in his campaign. His and Matenje’s murders killed off the hopes they had inspired of a peaceful transition to a more democratic state.

The themes of most of the poems Mapanje has written since 1983 are present in embryo in his letter about the murders. Fear is one dominant motif. In part, this is the personal, physical fear of ‘being accidentalised’, but equally it is the fear of the social violence that, in the absence of any provision for the presidential succession, now seems unavoidable in Malawi. A closely related motif is what Mapanje sees as the final and absolute suppression of all debate inside Malawi. Not only is the poet himself Out of Bounds; even the Women’s League no longer bothers to turn out to sing Banda’s praises, their patron-president being out of touch with events, impervious to all influence from below.

Significantly, the dominant metaphor of these recent poems is of drought. Malawi has experienced two droughts and a famine since 1983 but, as in Mapanje’s letter about the murders, the famine of these poems is more than literal and is fertile with meanings. The following example is representative of a wealth of poems which exist mainly in manuscript. It describes Kadongo village, in Mangochi District, on the eastern shore of Lake Malawi close by the border with Mozambique. This is Mapanje’s home village, where he spent his childhood and where he still has close relatives. Though with typical restraint he does not flaunt this fact before the reader, it remains the key to the poem’s tightness and sad anger (Index on Censorship, 1987:23).

**Kadongo Village: Even Milimbo Lagoon is Dry**

In the cracking heat of October, a village market.  
A queue of skeletal hands reaching out for the last  
Cowlac tin of loose grain, falters, against hope.

In the drought, a frail dog sniffing his lover’s arse  
Goes berserk, barking at the wave of grey eddying  
Between the mountain boulders and the shrivelling lake.

Scurvy children kicking the grit, scud beachwards,  
Their wobbly feet digging in for possible cassava  
Where even such tubers are now hushed in shoot.
Rocky geckos, blue tongues hanging out, scuttle on
The hot sand but bil-tong, belly up, before the beach.
Fish eagles suspended, swoop down for grasshoppers.

Even Milimbo lagoon is dead; no oar dips in anymore.
Those fishermen who dreamt up better weather
Once, no longer cast their nets here, and their

Delightful bawdy songs to bait the droughts are
Cloaked in the choking fumes of dawn, banned.
But Our fat-necked custodians despatch another tale.

The images are of sterility, fear and repression. The drought is a real one, the villagers starving and dependent on food hand-outs. The 'cracking heat' is too much, even for the land's natural survivors the dogs which go berserk, the cassava tubers which are 'hushed in shoot', and the lizards which are turned to biltong by the sand's heat. Only the fish eagles, swooping from far above, feed well. These images of a cursed, silenced and preyed upon village are almost surreal in their intensity. But the poem's real meaning emerges in the final two stanzas. The drought could have been 'baited' by the fishermen's 'delightful bawdy songs'. As with The New Platform Dances, there is no need to take the rain-making metaphor literally. The drought is an image of the nation's sterility, and what matters is that the fishermen's songs are now 'cloaked in the choking fumes of dawn'. It seems a slightly awkward metaphor until we remember the coded images deployed at meetings of the Writers' Group in 1970, 'dawn' referring to kwacha, the opening exortation at each public meeting attended by President Banda.

An early draft of the this poem was entitled 'On Approaching Forty', suggesting a poetical stocktaking. The project begun at those meetings of the Writers' Group has finally been 'banned'. There is now no means in Malawi of 'compelling the rains', of challenging the version of history prologated from above by 'our fat necked custodians'.

Mapanje remains in custody.

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Endnote

Bibliographic Note


**Editor’s Note**
For more information about Jack Mapanje and other ‘Prisoner’s of Conscience’, contact Amnesty International, 22 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ.
A Conceptual Critique of the People’s Education Discourse

George Mashamba

The struggle on the educational terrain in South Africa has been intimately connected with the broader struggle there for democratic rights and the elimination of apartheid. From an early call for equality in education, the movement of People’s Education now calls for a complete transformation of the form and content of education, as well as a change in the way in which it is managed. Education has formerly served as an instrument of oppression, but it carries the potential for liberation and its importance cannot be underestimated. Changing demands relating to education have mirrored changes in the substance of the larger struggle. The manner of conceptualising these demands, and indeed the understanding of what constitutes People’s Education are not static, but the reflection and the consequence of changing social circumstances. It is the burden of Mashamba’s analysis, excerpts of which are reprinted below, to chart these changes and interpret their significance.

There has been insufficient conceptual exploration of the intuitions and insights which have been engendered and developed in the struggle against apartheid education and the apartheid system as a whole. This is partly responsible for the alleged existence of ambiguities and uncertainties, lack of purpose and direction, and other perceived weaknesses in the theoretical and conceptual armoury of the People’s Education discourse. It undermines the People’s Education cause at a time when the State has effectively banned the National Education Coordination Council (NECC), key students’ organizations, and some central progressive teacher organizations like the National Education Union of South Africa, the Western Cape Teachers Union and the Democratic Teachers Union, as well as restricting and detaining People’s Education activists. Coupled with these disruptive and destabilizing tactics, there have also been ‘preemptive’ forays into People’s Education discourse to ‘co-opt’, and
generally dilute the whole concept and programme of the People’s Education movement.

Thus it is both academically and strategically necessary to map out the conceptual terrain of the People’s Education discourse. Concepts do not have fixed and final meaning, common to or shared by everybody, but develop and change in meaning as people deploy them in different situations to express different and differing interests, ideals, feelings, attitudes and experiences. It is, therefore, important to establish the meanings people attach to the concepts they deploy in various discourses; such a sensitivity to the use of concepts in People’s Education would help to identify the various interests embodied therein and thereby minimize the scope for conceptual misunderstanding and distortion. Sensitivity to the use of concepts would also make activists and exponents of People’s Education realize that the historical baggage of the concepts deployed in People’s Education needs to be unpacked, brought to conscious awareness and finally off-loaded. It is only when people have become consciously aware of the social and historical dimensions of the concepts they use in their discourses in People’s Education that they can intelligently and meaningfully challenge the traditional discourse that exerts its influence — not only on the school curricula and syllabi, but in all spheres of ideological discourse. This critique is, accordingly, intended as a contribution to the creation and heightening of conceptual self-consciousness amongst those engaged in the education struggle. Too often people know how to talk sense with concepts but not how to talk sense about them, that is to spell out the meanings with which these concepts are used by charting their logical inter-relationships with other concepts as deployed in specific socio-historical contexts. It is hoped that this analysis will empower those involved in the People’s Education movement and the struggle against apartheid education.

While People’s Education is a creative instance of some of the dominant theoretical and ideological trends in opposition politics in South Africa today, we must remember that it is still in a process of formation, its features just becoming defined, and therefore not a formulated body of final doctrines. Its exponents come from a variety of social backgrounds, with differing needs, interests and ideals, all of which goes a long way towards shaping their conceptions of the notion of People’s Education. Clearly, People’s Education is a contested terrain and its fate will depend on the outcome of this contestation, on the strengthening or weakening of one trend or another. In a critique of conceptual developments in People’s Education, we must keep this in mind. We must get to the rational kernel of the rhetoric, sloganeering and propaganda, if we are to appreciate the developments that have taken place conceptually in the sphere of People’s Education.

In 'The Road to People’s Education', the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) declares:
Much progress has been made and we have all learnt a lot about the meaning of People’s Education but there are still many outstanding questions and there are still some people who have not been part of the discussions and reflection. These are the people who complain that they are confused about the meaning of People’s Education and who ask for definitions. But everyone must be involved in discussions and in making plans for the future. People’s Education must come from the people. We must all become involved in the development of People’s Education and in the implementation of programmes which will ensure People’s Education for People’s Power (NECC, Press Release, 1986:1).

In the spirit of the quotation above, this critique enters the ongoing discussions and reflections on People’s Education from a particular angle — the conceptual angle. It hopes to offer a critique of some of the central and most controversial concepts in the People’s Education discourse and, thereby, to help clear up some of the confusion and misunderstandings about People’s Education.

The Concept ‘People’

In South Africa, different notions of ‘people’ have emerged. These notions have been developed and have contended for ideological supremacy in the ongoing struggle since Union and before. They have accordingly been quantitatively and qualitatively different in their content and meanings.

Thus ‘the people’ (or ‘the nation’), as conceived and legislatively underwritten by the 1910 Union Constitution, were whites. General Smuts put it succinctly thus: ‘The whole meaning of the Union of South Africa is this: We are going to create a nation — a nation which will be of composite character, including Dutch, English, German and Jew, and whatever white nationality seeks refuge in this land — all can combine. All will be welcome’ (Hancock, 1968: 36) Quantitatively, the empirical referent of this concept of ‘people’ has grown bigger since then, but qualitatively this concept has remained racist, colonialist and bourgeois.

In 1912 another concept of ‘people’ was forged by the founding fathers of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) (later the ANC). Quantitatively, the empirical referents of this notion were the Africans but, right from the beginning this concept of ‘the people’ was potentially inclusive of all South African inhabitants, black and white. For, ‘Though they [the founding fathers of the SANNC] spoke principally to Africans, conceived of as constituting a single potential nation, they sought its unification as a means of gaining entry into the political community defined by the Act of Union’ (Jordan, 1988: 115).

This sentiment was later to be embodied in the Freedom Charter in 1955. Qualitatively, this concept of ‘people’ has changed from being liberal, neo-colonialist and petit-bourgeois, to being democratic, non-racial anti-colonial and hegemonically working class.
The Concept ‘People’ in People’s Education

The concept ‘people’ is the most controversial in People’s Education. It is used to refer variously to ‘Africans’, ‘blacks’, and ‘blacks and whites’. While for strategic and tactical reasons exponents of People’s Education use the term ‘people’ in all three senses in their writings and addresses, the non-racial ‘black and white’ connotation of the term comes to the fore and overshadows the other two most frequently. For example, Mkatshwa, in his keynote address at the first National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education, uses the term ‘people’ throughout his exposition on contradictions to mean ‘the nationally oppressed’, that is ‘the black people’, even though he places the People’s Education theme within a non-racial democratic context (December 1985). Mkatshwa also deals almost exclusively with Bantu Education, which is directly relevant only to Africans. Is this a sign of confusion on Mkatshwa’s part? Although we may accuse Mkatshwa of inconsistency, the fact of the matter is that the section of the South African population most directly affected by the education crisis at the end of 1985 was blacks, especially Africans. The main culprit was the Department of Education and Training (Bantu Education). As Appendix 2, the Resolutions, and the Soweto Memorandum in the NECC’s Report show, blacks, especially Africans, were the primary victims of the repression and still are (NECC, December 1985: 28-32 & 36-37). Against this background, Mkatshwa’s deployment of the concept of ‘people’ here is understandable.

In his keynote address to the Second NECC Conference, Zwelakhe Sisulu (March 1986) uses the concept ‘people’ to refer to ‘all sections of the oppressed community and all who detest apartheid’; to ‘the entire oppressed and democratic community’. He speaks of ‘all sections of our people, black and white’, contrasts ‘the people’ with ‘the racists’ and ‘people’s organizations’ with ‘puppet bodies’, and identifies ‘the people’s camp’ with the democratic forces and ‘the enemy camp’ with ‘the forces of apartheid’. He also speaks of ‘our people’ in the Bantustans and the rural areas. Clearly, there are a number of dynamics at work which inform Sisulu’s deployment of the concept ‘people’ here. ‘People’ means both ‘black and white people’, blacks as those that are oppressed, and whites as those that form part of the democratic community which detests apartheid and sides with the oppressed. ‘Our people’ may also mean the oppressed blacks, especially Africans, for the same reasons given with regard to Mkatshwa’s use of the term above.

This illustrates that the meaning of a concept is not simply decided upon in people’s heads, but is rather created in the context of social activity and struggles, and only expressed in people’s consciousness by means of concepts. Here we see how the empirical, quantitative referent of the concept ‘people’ has grown and developed. It has expanded to refer not only to a particular race or tribe or to human beings in general, but to a socially and historically constituted grouping, which is definable in terms of its social position, practices and ideals. This broadening out of the
empirical reference of the concept ‘people’ implies a qualitative change in
meaning, and a development towards non-racialism and democracy.

An important point about the use of the concept ‘people’ in the People’s
Education discourse is that it recognizes the reality of classes and class
differences within ‘the people’. This is in keeping with the general
conception of ‘people’ in the non-racial democratic movement. Nowhere
else in the literature on People’s Education, not even in the writings of
those critical of its viability, are the classes which comprise ‘the people’
so clearly spelt out, the contradictions between them so carefully worked
out, and the role of the working class in the struggle so unambiguously
explained as in the literature of the exponents of People’s Education
themselves. Yet the greatest weakness of the People’s Education discourse
is supposed to be its ambiguity on the question of the concept ‘people’.

Richard Levin, for instance, contends:

Clarity on what [or who] constitutes ‘the people’ [or ‘the community’] appears to
be one of the fundamental challenges facing the democratic movement in South
Africa and demands conceptual vigour (undated:5).

However, the UDF, of which the NECC is a sister organization, states its
position thus:

We use the term ‘the people’ to distinguish between two major camps in our society
— the enemy camp and the people’s camp. The people’s camp is made up of the
overwhelming majority of South Africans — the black working class, the rural
masses, the black petit bourgeoisie (traders), and black middle strata (clerks, teachers,
nurses, intellectuals). The people’s camp also includes several thousand whites who
stand shoulder to shoulder in struggle with the majority.

In this popular struggle, the UDF has identified the working class as the leading
class ... The workers are the key to victory for the whole people’s camp (UDF,
1986:16-7).

There is clearly nothing ambiguous about the UDF’s concept of ‘the
people’. Nor is the UDF oblivious of the reality of different classes with
differing interests within ‘the people’, and the significance of this in the
struggle against apartheid. The UDF’s position is also spelt out in its
critiques of both ultra-leftism (workerism) and populism. The UDF
criticizes ultra-leftism for speaking only about the working class and for
failing to appreciate the fact that ‘the leading role of the working class is
not to isolate itself in “pure working class issues” ’ (ibid:21), but to lead
the widest popular alliance of all democratic South Africans on all fronts
against apartheid.

Populism, on the other hand, is criticized by the UDF for its failure to
understand (and sometimes for deliberately hiding) the class and other
differences within the broad category of ‘the people’ and, consequently,
for its tendency to compromise the crucial leading role of the working class
within the people’s camp. ‘Populism’, the UDF points out ‘speaks of the
people as if the unity within the people’s camp was based on completely
the same interests’ (ibid:22).
The concept 'people' in People's Education is therefore neither populist nor workerist, but specifically non-racial and democratic. It recognises the unity and diversity of the social forces which constitute 'the people', and the central leading role of the working class within the perspective of the national democratic struggle. It is a concept of 'people' which is concrete and historical in character, and which therefore rejects any timeless or abstract notion that divorces a people or nation from their material roots. This concept of 'people' is a historical category which captures the reality of a socio-historical community of people which has evolved to a new qualitative formation in the course of the struggle.

The Concept of 'People's Power'

Concepts come into being, change and develop within definite socio-historical contexts; their meanings are shaped accordingly. The concept of 'people's power' in People's Education is no exception. It was born and has grown, changed and developed within a socio-historical context characterized by an unprecedented upsurge and intensification of people's struggles against the apartheid regime. These struggles range from protest against the injustices of the system, to the challenge of its power, authority, legitimacy and structures. They have occurred on a broad front — in the townships, in the 'homelands', on the factory floor and at institutions of learning. Sustained protest in the form of worker strikes, stayaways, consumer boycotts and school boycotts forced the state to react by sending the South African Police and South African Defence Force into the townships, factories and schools in an attempt to regain control of a situation which had become 'ungovernable' in traditional apartheid ways. Thus, the power, authority and legitimacy of the apartheid parliament was challenged by the people's struggles and the apartheid regime had to resort to brutal suppression.

Zwelakhe Sisulu in his keynote address, 'People's Education for People's Power', discusses the notion of 'people's power' and the development of organs of 'people's power'. He speaks of 'people's power' in the sense of people 'being able to govern all aspects of their lives', and distinguishes between 'people's power' and 'ungovernability' in the sense that while 'ungovernability' entails a 'power vacuum', 'people's power' means that people are starting to exercise control over their lives. He also regards 'people's power' as a reality that can and does obtain long before liberation. Indeed, he regards this as a pre-condition for the liberation process itself. Further, Sisulu distinguishes between 'people's power' and coercion. He contends that:

"whilst coercion is the use of arbitrary power, people's power is 'the collective strength of the community' subject to the control of the community, democratic mandates and accountability, and thus the expression of the democratic and disciplined will of the people. (March 1986:17)"

He also links the concept of 'people's power' with people's organizations. He argues that the power of the people lies in organization: 'we can achieve
things we would otherwise never imagine possible — if we are organized, if we use our collective strength' (ibid:18).

Sisulu’s analysis and characterization of people’s power are illustrated in developments within the terrain of the education struggle itself. In the first place, we have observed the power wielded by students through their most important organization, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), and the consequent decline of their power following the banning of this organization in 1985. In the second place, we have also observed how the Soweto community moved into the centre of the education struggle by means of their civic organization and the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC), which later led to the formation of the NECC. This, in turn, ‘opened the way for people’s power to be developed in our struggle for a free, democratic, compulsory and non-racial education’ (ibid).

Further, through the establishment of Student Representative Councils (SRCs), Parents-Teachers-Students-Associations (PTSAs), students and teachers’ organizations, crisis committees, people have been able to exert power in the education struggle in the 1980s in a way they have never been able to in the past. It is also precisely at this type of people’s organization that the government’s various states of emergency have been directed. It is, on the one hand, the continuing failure of the state to regain control over the nerve centre of the educational system — the schools — and, on the other hand, the continuing failure of the organs of people’s power to gain control of the education process in the schools, that is responsible for the continuing education crisis. As Sisulu rightly points out, there are two types of power at present ‘the power of the racist regime’ and ‘the power which comes from the organized masses, people’s power’ (ibid:21). However, if we were to identify ‘people’s power’ with ‘political power’ we would speak only of one power, ‘the power of the racist regime’. ‘People’s power’ would then be understood only as a future possibility in terms of political power.

Kate Phillip makes the very important point that the power of democratic knowledge lies in the fact that it provides technical and scientific skills as well as the political consciousness necessary to ensure that people are not only able to achieve liberation, but are able to defend their freedom. She argues:

> Firstly, there is a massive need for practical and technical skills, for the knowledge needed to actually take control of the running of society at a practical level. And secondly, there is the question of consciousness. Unless people at a mass level understand why there are food shortages, or breakdowns in the social infrastructure, or why not all their demands can be met immediately, then the potential exists that they will lose faith in their leadership, lose faith in themselves, lose faith in their ability to take control of the running of society (1987:3).

It is to this type of power that the concept of ‘people’s power’ refers in the slogan ‘people’s Education for People’s Power’. It is also for this reason that the definition of People’s Education given in the resolutions of the first
National Consultative Conference refers both to practical and technical skills and to political awareness. It is for this reason too that People's Education cannot be equated with 'schooling'. It must rather be envisaged as a process of life-long education embracing all members of society.

The Concept 'Democracy' in People's Education

The concept democracy in People's Education has always signified the mass participation of all people in the organs of people's power on the education front for the purpose of establishing 'People's Education for People's Power'. Its context is logically defined by both the primary determining contradiction between labour and capital and the dominant contradiction between the nationally oppressed black majority and the nationally oppressing white minority. It therefore entails the extension of democracy to the nationally oppressed black majority, which would form the necessary condition for the resolution of the basic contradiction between labour and capital, thereby deepening and approximating the ideal of democracy as 'the government of the people, by the people, for the people'.

The ideals, values and principles of collective action, accountability, mandates, mass participation and people's power, in contrast to individualism and self-centredness, and undemocratic and authoritarian practice, are clearly manifest in the spirit though not in the letter of the 'Resolution of the Soweto Community Meeting' convened by the Soweto Civic Association on the 13 October 1985. Consider the basic democratic principles involved in parents drawing up an SRC constitution embodied in their decision to communicate the resolutions to the larger Soweto community and the 'report-back-meeting' principle embodied in the Soweto meeting's resolutions. The ideas contained in that resolution laid the basis for the theory and practice of the subsequent National Education Crisis Committee which came to spearhead the People's Education movement. In this regard, Sisulu makes the following observations.

The NECC has opened the way for people's power to be developed in our struggle for a free, democratic, compulsory and non-racial education. The crisis committees have brought all sectors of the community together in pursuit of this noble goal. Students, parents and teachers now have democratic organizations available through which we have begun to take some control over education. They provide the vehicles through which divisions between young and old, teachers and parents can be overcome ... The education struggle is a political struggle in South Africa. We are fighting for the right of self-determination in the education sphere as in all other spheres (March 1986:18-19).

The concept of democracy that we find in People's Education is, therefore, not an equivalent of bourgeois democracy, social democracy, or liberal democracy; nor is it that of proletarian democracy. Rather it is that of national democracy. This should be clear from our analysis of people's power. Democracy in People's Education has a lot in common with the notion of people's power in the dispersed sense of the word.
The Concept ‘Change’ in People’s Education
The demands for change in education were initially demands for change in a quantitative sense. This was partly due to the colonial nature of the education system and partly due to the undeveloped level of the liberation struggle as a whole. The colonized majority were either systematically excluded from the formal education system completely, or were systematically discriminated against in terms of finances, infra-structure and curricula. However, with the adoption of the Freedom Charter, which embodies an alternative world outlook, the general thrust of the struggle against apartheid underwent a qualitative change. This was reflected in the sphere of the education struggle. Hence the emergence of the demand for ‘People’s Education’ as early as 1954 during the school boycotts in protest against the introduction of Bantu Education. In the 1980s this qualitative concept of the nature of the struggle in the education terrain has manifested itself quite dramatically through the emergence of ‘People’s Education for People’s Power’. In People’s Education the struggle for change is a struggle for fundamental, qualitative change, whereby both black education for domestication and white education for domination will be superseded by a non-racial and democratic people’s education for both national liberation and social emancipation.

The Concept ‘Contradiction’ in People’s Education
The phenomenon of People’s Education is underpinned by the basic social contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production. It also is mainly influenced and characterized by the dominant political contradiction between the nationally oppressed black majority and the nationally oppressing white minority, comprising the ongoing national democratic struggle in our country today.

It is because of the nature of the contradictions at play in the South African scene that the mainstay of both the education struggle and the People’s Education movement is located within the ranks of the nationally oppressed black majority, especially within the nationally oppressed African majority. It is also due to the nature of these contradictions that the events that ushered in the current phase of intensified conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed national groups and gave birth to the People’s Education movement originated not just within the nationally oppressed black majority, but specifically from within the predominantly African working class Soweto residential area, outside the Witwatersrand industrial complex. These realities are reflected in the descriptions and definition of People’s Education by activists and organic intellectuals within the People’s Education movement. The predominant concern with the educational inequalities and injustices meted out to the nationally oppressed, as well as a persistent concern with the exploitative capitalist nature of South African society, is reflected in these descriptions and definitions. In other words, People’ Education is characterized by the features of both the principal and dominant contradictions.
The nature of these contradictions and their relationships means that the political aspect of People's Education is most dominant, while that which concerns the economic and other aspects remains relatively dormant. On the basis of these contradictions, there is also an inherent critique of capitalism and liberal education in the concept of People's Education as advocated by the NECC and others, over and above the rejection of Bantu Educational and Apartheid Education. Ken Hartshorne partially captures this reality:

*On the one hand it [People's Education] is a challenge to authoritarian, apartheid, Christian national education and its underlying philosophy ... On the other hand it is also a challenge to classical liberal thinking on education, with its emphasis on the individual* (1988:18).

**The Concept 'Equality' in People's Education**

Within the non-racial democratic discourse the concept of 'equality' has, historically, been used to denote 'the identical condition of people in society' in relation to three main spheres of social life in South Africa: the political, economic and the cultural, that is, political equality, in the context of national, racial, class and interstate relations; economic equality, in the context of the production, distribution and consumption of material wealth; and cultural equality, in the context of the production, distribution and consumption of cultural values.

Initially, the African people demanded political equality with the white people in protest against the colonial status conferred upon them and consolidated by the 1910 Act of Union. However, in the 1950s, a new vision embodying an alternative conception of 'conditions of life in society' was born and enshrined in the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter states that: 'The people shall govern'; 'The people shall share in the country's wealth'; and 'The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all'. Thus it addresses itself to the 'political, economic and cultural conditions of life' of the people of South Africa and thereby establishes a new standard of equality. With the Freedom Charter, the concept of 'equality' came to have a qualitatively different meaning which demanded qualitatively different tactics and strategies in the struggle against apartheid. 'Equality' came to mean a struggle to create something new which would be different in both quality and extent, rather than a struggle for the extension of that which existed to a wider constituency.

According to Neville Alexander:

*The most striking feature of all the years of protest and resistance since the introduction of a modern system of schooling for black people after the inauguration of the Union of South Africa was the fact that all the students' actions were motivated by the desire on their part for equality of the conditions of learning and of the content of education with those enjoyed by whites (1988:7).*

But that very struggle underwent a qualitative change and gradually became displaced by the struggle for qualitatively different 'conditions of
learning' and of the content of education, even from those 'enjoyed' by whites. In the 1980s, the 'alternative world view' embodied in the Freedom Charter and the 'alternative education system' implied therein have come to occupy centre-stage in informing the struggles of the day. It is to this that Jonathan Hyslop refers when he says 'the 1955 boycott embraced an attempt to establish an alternative education system, a venture which can be seen as a forerunner of present day calls for "People's Education"' (1987:3).

He further contends that:

The emergence of 'People's Education for People's Power' ... as a major slogan and strategy of popular political movements in South Africa since late 1985 has tended to be perceived as an entirely new development. In an important political sense this is correct — for the first time the mobilization of social forces around education issues was sufficiently strong for a struggle over the nature of the education system to be waged at a level which could really challenge the state's policy. But in a historical sense People's Education is not at all a new concept. During the 1955-56 boycotts, leadership elements of the ANC advanced the slogan of People's Education in exactly the same sort of sense in which it has been used in the recent period — mobilization to transform education as an intrinsic part of a strategy for overall liberation (ibid:11).

From the foregoing it is clear that People's Education is not simply about the 'equalization of the conditions of learning and of the content of education' between the nationally oppressed black majority and nationally oppressing white minority. Rather it is about the struggle over the very nature of the apartheid education system which, for the oppressed, is 'education for subservience', and for the oppressing white minority, 'education for domination'. As many exponents of People's Education have stated, People's Education is 'education for liberation' from both 'subservience' and domination. It is not an education which aims at achieving 'equality of the conditions of learning and of the content of education with those enjoyed by whites' (for domination). People's Education is about 'the assertion of people's power in the sphere of education'. In this context 'equality' assumes a completely different content from that it may have had during the struggles prior to the emergence of a radical alternative world view within the democratic movement in South Africa.

Developments in the struggle as a whole, and in the education struggle in particular, have brought about radical changes in the people's understanding of the parameters within which 'equality' can be attained. These parameters have been identified right across the broad spectrum of the mass democratic movement, embracing the principles of non-racialism, democracy, a united South Africa and the absence of any form of oppression and exploitation. The sense in which the concept of equality has been understood within the mass democratic movement and the People's Education movement has not, therefore, remained the same. The different senses in which it has been understood and deployed have sometimes existed side by side within the same movement, with one sense
occupying a more dominant position at one time, and a less dominant position at another.

In conclusion, it should be reiterated that talk of ‘equality’ does not necessarily mean an acceptance of the status quo or a demand for a modification of this status quo to include those presently excluded. The concept of ‘equality’, like all other concepts, derives its meaning from, and changes its meaning relative to, both the conceptual and the historical contexts within which it is deployed. Therefore, to determine the meaning of equality at any particular time, it is important to establish both the conceptual and historical contexts within which it is deployed.

The Concept ‘Education’ in People’s Education

According to Eric Molobi, National Co-ordinator of the NECC:

When societies systematically plan and implement the raising of human consciousness and psychology in the daily interaction between man and nature and between man and man, then we are talking of an education system. Implied in this is the reasoning that education arms individuals with the skills and capabilities necessary for performing various tasks in society (1987:34).

He explains further that ‘Education is ... a name we attach to a process of the planned and systematic moulding of consciousness’ (1986:9). In a similar vein, Mkatshwa maintains that education is not neutral: ‘Education is either for domestication or for freedom. Although it is customarily conceived as a conditioning process, education can equally be an instrument of deconditioning’ (1985:10).

Albert Nolan asserts that:

today everybody knows that the pursuit of knowledge is not, and can never be, a disinterested end in itself. It serves somebody’s interests: the interests of the state, the interests of the dominant class or race, the interest of profit and the profit-making institutions of our capitalist economy, the interests of academic prestige, political interests or indeed the interest of the people as a whole especially the poor and the oppressed (1986:5).

Now it is contended in People’s Education that education in South Africa, especially apartheid education, has been for ‘domestication’ and not for ‘freedom’; a ‘conditioning process’ in the interest of ‘the dominant race and class, profit and profit-making institutions, political and academic prestige’, and not in the interests of ‘the people as a whole, especially the poor and the oppressed’. Hence the NECC’s conference resolution that apartheid education

• is totally unacceptable to the oppressed
• divides people into classes and ethnic groups
• is essentially a means of control to produce subservient, docile people
• indoctrinates and dominates
• is intended to entrench apartheid and capitalism (December 1985:30)
However, prior to 1985-86, the education struggle was mainly been on the quantitative level, restricted as it were to demands for

- equal access and resourcing of education for all in South Africa
- the elimination of racism from texts, teaching and organization of education.

_Virtually nothing was advanced in regard to either the methodology of teaching or the democratization of the organization of schools, universities and other education institutions_ (Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989:13).

The change in the nature of education struggles came about with the emergence of the politics of ‘people’s power’ and the organs of people’s power in the mid-1980s, as the struggle against apartheid broadened and deepened.

Education in People’s Education is education for ‘the people’ as defined above: that is, people who aspire to non-racialism and democracy, and who are predominantly black and working class. Accordingly, this education is non-racial and democratic, and primarily informed by the interests and aspirations of the nationally oppressed blacks and the exploited working class. Thus, according to the NECC resolutions, People’s Education is education that:

> enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial democratic system ... [and] enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression at their workplace (December 1985:30).

The nature of People’s Education is further clarified by the NECC in one of its press releases, where it stated categorically that ‘the people’ are struggling against:

- Bantu education, and the gutter education provided for so-called Coloured and Indian students
- the ‘education for domination’ which whites receive
- apartheid education as a whole, which aims to teach the majority of South Africans to become workers and to accept oppression
- illiteracy
- ignorance
- exploitation in education and society
- corporal punishment (1986:2-4).

Further, it is asserted, ‘implementing People’s Education always involves change in certain fundamental areas of education’ (ibid:4-5) such as content, methods and control.

The NECC’s press release makes it quite clear that People’s Education is not simply opposed to Bantu education, but to apartheid education as a whole. As regards changes envisaged in content to, methods and control in education, it is argued that curriculum materials must represent ‘the
people’s interests’ and not those of ‘the ruling groups’ in our society. Science and mathematics must be placed at the service of the people and not at the service of big business and the state. Material on political education must be developed to raise the level of people’s political consciousness to enable them to participate fully and meaningfully. In so far as the question of method is concerned,

"Education must cease to be an authoritarian system in which teachers and other educators tell students what they should learn, the authorities tell teachers exactly what they must teach ... [and] become a critical process where students and teachers work together to understand their communities and their needs (ibid:5)."

The People’s Education position on control of management is that parent-teacher-student organizations should take control of education in the schools; in trade unions, education should be controlled by the workers themselves; and in community organizations by street committees and civic organizations. Overall, the struggle to implement People’s Education involves people’s organizations taking control of the provision and administration of education in the interest of the people (ibid:5): ‘everyone must become involved in discussions and in making plans for the future. People’s Education must come from the people’ (ibid:1).

People’s Education thus proposes a process of socialization for a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa which, at the same time, lays a basis for a future education system.

**Conclusion**

This critique has tried to make explicit the nature, character and quality of the People’s Education discourse by showing how the key concepts in that discourse emerged and developed within and on the basis of the struggles in education and other related spheres in South African social life. Rather than concentrating on the words or terms ‘people’, ‘peoples’s power’, ‘democracy’, ‘equality’, and how these are deployed grammatically, or the concepts embodied in these words and how they are logically related to each other in the propositions in which they are deployed, we have focused on how, in the heat of struggle, new concepts have emerged and developed, and started contesting with older, more established concepts in the language of the prevailing discourse in the educational terrain.

Whereas the struggle initially caused confusion on the conceptual level, where old and new concepts vied for supremacy, as this struggle progressed and intensified, it led to a breakthrough in the conceptual impasse. A new conceptual paradigm, and thereby a new discourse with the terms ‘people’, ‘people’s power’, ‘equality’ came to embody new concepts. Formally, these terms have remained the same but their conceptual and theoretical content has changed, reflecting the new social practices and new ways of understanding phenomena that have been engendered and developed in the heat of the struggle.
In conclusion, we may observe here that those who have not been immediately involved in the struggles rending our society have, on the whole, failed to appreciate the contingency of the conceptual content of the terms deployed in the People’s Education discourse. The have tended to assume that terms have fixed meanings, and fixed conceptual content. However, this assumption only reveals that these people have remained tied to an earlier conceptual framework.

Suffice it to say that the position of most academics as ‘outsiders’ to the struggle has proved a serious drawback whenever they have tried to ‘move in’ and theorize about what is going on in the struggle for ‘People’s Education for People’s Power’.

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Acknowledgement
This article is excerpted from a much longer report, Research Report No.3, January 1990, of the Education Policy Unit in South Africa. The unit was established ‘to provide an academic context for considering educational alternatives for a democratic non-racial education system in South Africa’. The full report can be obtained from Publications, Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, P.O. Box Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa. We are grateful for being able to publish this shortened version of the report.

Bibliographic Note


Briefings

The Impact of Apartheid on Women’s Education in South Africa
Elaine Unterhalter

While the proportions of their age group in school at primary, secondary and tertiary levels is quite high for black South Africans, relative to the situation in other African states, they face an authoritarian education system which is still riven by inequality. The expansion of education for all groups has formed part of the strategy of the government both to create skills needed for the economy and, through limited individual improvement, to stave off black discontent. That the policy has had inherent contradictions is evident from the widespread disruption in black schools which has characterised recent years. But it is important to note also that even where opportunities have increased, they have been unequally distributed throughout the population. In particular South Africa suffers, as do so many other countries, from gender inequality in education. Black women suffer doubly, by virtue of race and of gender. This article examines the dimensions of that inequality at different levels and in respect of different population groups.

The South African education system, under the control of the apartheid regime, has been characterised by two major features — segregation, which has partly accounted for the gross inequalities of the education system, and centralisation, which has contributed to its rigid authoritarianism. These have had contradictory effects on women’s education. While comparatively large numbers of women have received some education, and some have progressed to tertiary level, the majority remain under-educated and a significant proportion are illiterate. These are virtually without exception all black South Africans, who have been denied political power and who belong to the ranks of those most exploited and impoverished.
This Briefing will explore some of the contradictory aspects of women's education under apartheid in an attempt to show that despite expansion in the provision of education for both blacks and whites in recent years and the high numbers of women enroled, most women are inadequately served by the system both as regards quality of education received and the numbers privileged to attend. While similar observations can be made about education for South African men, illiteracy and under-education are particularly acute for certain groups of women. Education has become an important aspect of the apartheid regime's strategy, but educational reform under conditions of segregation and repression has failed either to provide a substitute for black political aspirations or to eradicate the disabilities of illiteracy and under-education.

Segregation in Apartheid Education
One of the early acts of the National Party government in the 1950s was to establish a rigidly segregated education system. Although schools had been largely segregated prior to this, the system had not previously been enforced by law. In the apartheid era segregation had the effect of markedly differentiating the population in terms of educational opportunity. Those classified as white had access to free and compulsory education, amply resourced from public funds. Those classified as black, and further sub-divided into African, Coloured and Indian populations, were subjected to different laws and regulations according to their 'racial' classification. For many decades education was neither compulsory nor free for black South Africans and this continues to be true in most areas even today. Conditions remain grossly inadequate. Hundreds of thousands of children continue to be turned away from school, and those who are able to study do so in large classes with inadequate facilities. Although there have been changes over the forty years of National Party rule, and although the deficiencies in black education vary regionally, and are different for the different 'races', segregation has in general gone hand in hand with racial inequality. Indeed, segregation has been one of the prime instruments of that inequality.

One aspect of the segregated education system is gross disparities in spending between black and white education. As Table 1 shows, spending on white education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels has continued to exceed that for the numerically larger black population, although by 1987 spending on one element of that population, Africans, nudged slightly in front of that for whites.

The trend to finance white education liberally and to consistently under-resource black education is shown starkly when the expenditure is broken down into spending per pupil. Even after the regime's expansion of spending on black education, per capita expenditure remained strongly biased in favour of white pupils. The figures for 1988 for whites and Africans were respectively R3,983 and R583. Per capita expenditure in this same year was R1,980 for Indian and R1,326 for Coloured children (SAIRR, 1988-89). In earlier years the differentials were even more pronounced.
Table 1
SPENDING ON EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA BY ‘RACE’
(Rand million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>252.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>160.2</td>
<td>104.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>738.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>553.0</td>
<td>247.1</td>
<td>122.7</td>
<td>1360.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1816.0</td>
<td>724.1</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>2973.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>2453.4</td>
<td>868.3</td>
<td>367.1</td>
<td>3057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3400.3</td>
<td>1007.6</td>
<td>404.7</td>
<td>3321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It was only in the late 1970s that the regime, alarmed by the growth of militancy amongst black school and university students evident in the uprising of 1976-77, begin to increase spending on black education. This was partly because it was believed that education would help to train a workforce that could contribute to economic growth. At the time this was considered sufficient to stave off black political demands.

In 1986, after a further wave of mass-based popular protest, this strategic thinking was refined. The regime became convinced that even without economic growth, improvements in educational conditions could deflect political demands. Accordingly, the regime announced a ten-year plan to bring about parity in spending on black and white education which involved increasing the budget for black education by 4.1% per annum. However, in 1989 the plan was abandoned as the impossibility of increasing the education budget by that amount when the economy was only growing at 1% per annum was acknowledged, particularly in view of the regime’s huge budgetary obligations to the military and the security forces. In 1990 special substantial one-off payments have been promised by the regime to improve education. But even these are inadequate in relation to educational needs.

Authoritarian Centralisation in Apartheid Education
Centralisation, the other feature of the apartheid education system, dates from the late 1960s when a legislative programme was introduced that gave the executive arm of government, in the form of cabinet committees appointed by the whites-only parliament, sweeping powers to determine and implement policies on education for all ‘races’. There was no democratic participation in the formulation of education policy for either white or black South Africans. However, because whites had the vote and political influence on the ruling party, their views and needs were taken into account, while for the blacks this was only the case insofar as their need for education coincided with the regime’s need for economic growth and political stability.
One consequence of this was a highly authoritarian education system with a narrow syllabus, rigid conditions of teachers' employment, coercive systems of discipline in schools, and consultation procedures with local communities that lacked all democratic content.

**Effects of Segregation and Authoritarian Centralisation on Women's Education**

The consequence for women of these two features of the apartheid education system — segregation and centralisation — were contradictory. On the one hand the expansion in education for both blacks and whites meant that there were increased educational opportunities for women in general. But because the changes took place under conditions of segregation, opportunities for black women were severely limited and restricted chiefly to those whose families were able to keep them in school. The drop-out rate for black girls was extremely high, and even today, when the regime has invested so heavily in black education, only a very tiny minority of girls complete secondary school and a minute proportion have any tertiary education.

Centralisation and authoritarianism permitted the expansion of black education with a minimum of opposition from the white electorate. However, they also contributed to a very narrow focus in education for both black and white women, with a majority of women in senior secondary and tertiary education concentrating their studies in areas leading to the low-paid jobs in teaching and nursing, stereotypically female preserves.

But authoritarianism affected not just the channelling of students' interests; it also had an impact on their teachers, many of whom were women, via contractual controls. It contributed to a general political passivity in the face of intense repression by the regime which, with notable exceptions, only began to crack in the mid-1980s with the mass mobilisation against apartheid and moves to create a single non-racial teachers' union.

The authoritarianism, which characterised the officially sanctioned community bodies with responsibility for education, meant that they rarely challenged the government departments despite widespread allegations of sexual abuse of female students, vicious corporal punishment meted out by teachers to girls and boys indiscriminately, and the excesses of the security forces who have terrorised students. It was these factors, along with the lack of democracy in schools and the narrowness of the syllabus, that became foci for student-led mass-based protests against the education system in the 1980s. But if thereby revealing the nature of the system as one of oppression of black children, it gave little attention to the dimension of gender inequalities. It is the nature of these inequalities which the rest of this Briefing examines.

**The Provision of Formal Schooling for Women**

Apartheid conditions had the effect of expanding educational opportun-
ties for a majority of white girls and women, but only for a minority of black girls and women. Although, since 1960, enrolments for the latter have increased at all levels of schooling, the vast majority of black women have not completed primary, let alone secondary school.

Major beneficiaries of the policy of expansion were rather women from white working class and lower middle class backgrounds — the very constituency from which the National Party drew much of its support from the 1950s to the late 1970s. Since 1960 the number of white women with matriculation certificates has trebled. While in 1960 less than a quarter of white adult women had completed secondary school, indicating a low level of women’s educational attainment, by 1985 more than half had matriculated (Statistical Yearbook, 1974; South African Statistics, 1986). But even if an advance, it remained the case even in the mid-1980s that only a small proportion of white women who passed the school leaving examination enroled in tertiary education courses.

Education for Black Women

In spite of the expansion of education for black South Africans, provision was always grossly inadequate, with poor facilities, under-qualified teachers and insufficient classrooms. A major share in the cost of this education has been borne by black parents, the lowest paid workers in South Africa. Nonetheless many black women, particularly African women, benefited from the expansion of provision that took place, even though the conditions were appalling.

As Tables 2 and 3 show, African girls’ enrolment at primary and secondary school increased markedly over the decades. Indeed there were more girls at school at the higher levels of primary school and at secondary school than boys in the 1980s. The increase in their numbers, however, should be viewed in the context of the growth of the population since 1960. Although the enrolment of girls in primary and secondary school has increased, both absolutely and proportionately to the growth of the population, in 1980, 25% of girls between 5 and 14 were not in primary school, while only 37.8% between 15 and 19 were in secondary school (RESA, 1988; Simkins, 1981).

Table 2

ENROLMENT OF AFRICAN GIRLS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1955-1986
('000 pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number in Lower Primary Schools</th>
<th>Girls as % of All Lower Primary Pupils</th>
<th>Number in Upper Primary Schools</th>
<th>Girls as % of all Higher Primary Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>365.7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>130.6</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>535.7</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>191.3</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>647.1</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>244.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>917.0</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>383.1</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1151.1</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>532.0</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1386.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>640.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1597.1</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>807.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1617.5</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>846.6</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  
ENROLMENT OF AFRICAN GIRLS AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS,  
1955-1987  
('000 pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number in</th>
<th>Girls as %</th>
<th>Number in</th>
<th>Girls as %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>of All Lower Secondary</td>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>of All Higher Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>161.0</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>359.8</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>513.7</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>145.2</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>540.5</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>169.8</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1988: 9

The number of women with matric has increased fivefold over the last twenty-five years, but the proportion of adult African women who have completed secondary school remains under 5%. This has implications not only for the regime’s attempts to buy off the national liberation struggle, by expanding educational opportunities, but also for the mass democratic movement. The struggle against apartheid has been concerned to demand schooling for all South Africans. Creating the conditions to meet this demand is a huge task currently facing the democratic movement.

Schooling for Coloured and Indian Women
In the late 1970s and early 1980s compulsory education has been introduced for Coloureds and Indians. In addition, given the regime’s strategy of attempting to co-opt these groups via the structures of the segregated tri-cameral parliament, large amounts have been spent on expanding education facilities for both boys and girls. The results have been dramatic increases in the number enrolled.

Yet higher enrolments, like the figures relating to the schooling of African women, must be seen in the light of the general under-education of black women taken as a whole. Even in the relatively more privileged sections of the black community, women with matric are still a tiny minority of Coloured and Indian adult women — 6.2% and 19.2% respectively in 1985 (South African Statistics, 1986). Although proportionately larger numbers of Indian women have completed high school, they still constituted a smaller proportion than that characterising white women before the National Party education expansion took place.

Drop-out Rates and Illiteracy Among Black Women
The effects of the inadequate access to schooling for significant numbers of black women can be seen starkly when the statistics on female illiteracy are examined. It is widely believed that these official statistics, derived from the census, under-enumerate the extent of illiteracy. Nevertheless it is clear, even from these figures, that there is widespread illiteracy,
particularly among African and Coloured women. This is a consequence partly of the inadequacy of school provision, partly of the fact that there is no compulsory education, and partly of the poverty of the majority of the families in these populations.

Table 4  
OFFICIAL FIGURES FOR THE PERCENTAGE OF ADULT FEMALE ILLITERATES BY 'RACE'  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition, even for girls who attend school, there is a high drop-out rate. Only 58.2% of African girls enrolled in junior primary school in 1980 proceeded to higher primary school in 1985. African girls in lower secondary school in 1985 represented only 44.6% of girls in lower primary school ten years previously, while girls in senior secondary school in 1985 constituted only 15.8% of those who had enrolled in the lowest grades fifteen years before (derived from Tables 2 and 3). It is widely accepted that if children do not proceed beyond the first four years of primary school, they revert to illiteracy.

What Girls Study at School
A number of studies of women's education in Europe have focused on the subjects girls study at school and drawn inferences from this about women's subsequent employment. While a critical assessment of this literature is outside the scope of this paper, and very little work in this area has been done in South Africa, the sparse statistical material that is available indicates that segregated schooling has amplified not only the difference in subjects studied between women and men, but also that between women of different 'racial' groups.

Unfortunately no comparable material on the subjects studied at school by African girls, the majority of South African pupils, is available. However, a number of interesting points can still be drawn from the material in Table 5. Firstly, for all 'racial' groups, social sciences and biology are the most popular subjects. Secondly, while home economics is studied at secondary school, it is by no means a subject taken by the majority of girls. Even in the poorest group examined in this table, the Coloured population, only a minority of girls studied this subject. For black girls, commercial subjects, which have a vocational application, are extremely popular, much more than is the case for white girls. Many more white and Indian girls study maths to a higher level, on the other hand, than do Coloured girls.
Table 5
GIRLS' ENROLMENT IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL BY 'RACE' AND SUBJECT STUDIED, 1984 ('000 girls)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maths (higher)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maths (lower)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phys. sci.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biology</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages*</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soc. sci.</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commercial</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>127.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home econ.</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arts</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In addition to the official languages of English and Afrikaans which are compulsory.


Tertiary Education for Women
Under conditions of apartheid, only a small minority of South Africans, most of them white, have had access to tertiary education. Although by the mid-1970s girls of all 'races' accounted for around half of senior secondary school enrolments, only a minority of these proceeded to university. Women remain a minority of university students, as the figures in Table 6 indicate, and although their numbers have increased, both absolutely and proportionately, they have not reached anything like a position of equal access. It is of interest, however, that the proportion among all African university students who are female is greater than the relevant figure for whites. The same general pattern applies to the population of Indian students.

Table 6
WOMEN'S ENROLMENT AT SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLMENT, BY 'RACE'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,002</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>1,797</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>19,025</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>4,721</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Driejmanis (1988)

Teacher Recruitment and Teacher Training
While women account for a minority of those enrolled in university, they are a majority of students at teacher training colleges. Teaching is in consequence very largely a female profession, except among those classified as Indian. In 1985 the proportion of all teachers who were female was 66.2% for Africans, 62.7% among Coloureds, 45.1% among Indians and 68.6% among whites (South African Labour Statistics, 1986). The
variation is partly a function of the fact that the profession is perceived differently by and has different implications for the different groups and that terms of employment within it vary among them. For whites, for example, the fact that teaching is comparatively low paid coincides with, if not explains, the high concentration of women in this area of employment. For the majority of black teachers, on the other hand, teaching has offered a comparatively better paid employment, although only in the mid-1980s was the blatant discrimination in terms of salaries between black and white teachers abolished. Currently there is equal pay for equal qualifications for all teachers.

However, given that the majority of African pupils are enroled in the lower levels of primary school, it is here that the majority of teachers are employed, and where the lowest qualifications are required. The preponderance of women teachers in African schools reflects their generally low professional status. By contrast, in Indian schools, where there are high levels of secondary enrolments and large numbers of teachers with degrees, earning relatively high salaries, women teachers are in a minority. While Coloured secondary enrolments and the numbers of teachers with degree level qualifications are increasing, they have not yet reached the level achieved in Indian schools. The large numbers of Coloured women teachers are also a reflection on the large numbers of under-qualified, predominantly primary school teachers on low pay.

For all women teachers conditions of employment have been harsh. Not only have all black teachers taught large classes, often on a shift system with minimal support from the inspectorate, but up until the early 1980s no women teachers had a right to a permanent contract after they married. Even today sexism within the teaching profession means that women are rarely head teachers, even when they make up a majority of the staff.

**People's Education and the Struggle Against Apartheid Education**

The struggle against apartheid education has played a key role in the general anti-apartheid movement. Education continues to be a major arena for mass mobilisation, politisation and confrontation with the apartheid regime. From the mid-1980s a feature of the education struggle has been a move away from demands only for equal education for all South Africans to demands for a new kind of education — people's education — linked to the struggle for national liberation.

One feature of the student struggles contributing to the development of demands for people's education has been a set of demands focussing on the abuse of female pupils, particularly sexual abuse by teachers and vicious corporal punishment. However, neither the general declaration on people's education adopted in 1985, nor the more specific resolutions taken at the NECC conferences in 1986 and 1987, gave specific attention to women's education as distinct from a general concern for an end to repressive conditions in all schools, for access to education, and for implementing the principles of people's education. The material so far
produced as part of the people’s alternative syllabi for history and English, moreover, has given little heed to the need to overcome gender differentiation. As with the general declaration and resolutions, they have taken national oppression as their major focus.

This Briefing has attempted to show that girls and women account for significant numbers of school pupils, university students and teachers, while at the same time they suffer disadvantage on the basis of both race and gender. The organisations that have mobilised in the education sphere, however, have not as yet examined the specific demands which women as a whole, or groups of women, might have. The demand for women’s education is a demand for women’s rights; the struggle against apartheid education is implicitly a struggle against the conditions that have contributed to the denial of education to a majority of South African women. The voices of women in that struggle are still waiting to be heard.

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Acknowledgement
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Bibliographic Note

Strains and Stresses in the Zimbabwean Education System: An Interview with Fay Chung, Minister of Education and Culture

Lloyd Sachikonye

The phenomenal expansion of the education sector in Zimbabwe since 1980 has often been characterised as one of the major achievements of the post-independence government. The relevant statistics lend credence to this claim. In 1979 about 800,000 children attended primary school. Almost 2.3 million attended in 1989. Whereas there were 74,966 students enrolled in secondary schools in 1980, the number had shot up to 695,612 in 1989. The number of secondary schools to cater for this massive expansion increased from 177 in 1979 to 1,502 in 1989.

Thus access to primary and secondary education has been one of the visible ‘fruits’ of independence. But the education has not come cheap. In 1989, expenditure on education at about Z$l.1 billion absorbed 25 per cent of the national budgetary resources. The bulk of this expenditure has gone into teacher training and salaries for the country’s 84,000 teachers. The precise amount of parental contributions is not known but it has been considerable. Parents have provided building materials and labour for the construction of schools. They also pay nominal fees for their children attending secondary school.

The significant expansion of the education sector has not only required greater financial outlays but also resulted in the churning out of thousands of qualified secondary school graduates, albeit largely without job-related skills and therefore of low employability in a society which already has an estimated 1 million unemployed. The mis-match between the academically-oriented education possessed by thousands of ‘O’ and ‘A’ level graduates and the specific technical skills required in industry is glaring. It has meant that thousands of jobs which require trained artisans remain unfilled in industry. The current education system cannot cope with the skill requirements of certain sectors of the economy. This is one of the system’s major weaknesses, the consequence of which is a huge wastage of human capital.

A major challenge is raising the quality of education provided, particularly in secondary schools, where a shortage of trained teachers and equipment and inadequate funding pose difficulties. Private schools tend, on the whole, to be better funded as fees and other parental contributions are much higher. Although the examination results achieved are not necessarily of a higher standard in private schools than in government-funded schools, this state of affairs suggests that the dual colonial education system has been reproduced in a modified form in post-independence Zimbabwe. The well-endowed elite’s private schools co-exist with the underfunded schools of the state sector.

Finally, partly due to budgetary constraints, the conditions of service (but more especially the level of salaries) for teachers have been a bone of
contention between them and the government. Teachers have repeatedly complained of low pay and unattractive conditions. In March 1990, non-graduate teachers were particularly riled because salary awards to graduate teachers, aimed at stemming their exodus from the service, were not extended to them. To have done so would have required an extra Z$240 million, entailing a considerable strain on government finances. Partly due to the absence of an effective collective bargaining mechanism, the deadlock between government and non-graduate teachers exploded into a 2-week strike in May 1990. The state’s response included the invoking of the draconian Emergency Powers Regulations and an ultimatum to teachers to return to work. In the event, about 1,000 teachers were dismissed for ignoring the ultimatum. Their reinstatement has since been demanded by the Public Services Association, the Zimbabwe Teachers’ Association, the Association of University Teachers, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and some Members of Parliament.

Editors Note: Following the end of the State of Emergency in July a high court ruling concluded that the government had exceeded their powers and that the teachers were inappropriate victims of the emergency. They were all reinstated at the end of August; however, disciplinary proceedings are being taken against some teachers and headteachers.

The following interview took place by Lloyd Sachikonye in Harare on the 18th June 1990:

What are the priorities which operate in the provision of different levels of education in Zimbabwe?

At independence in 1980 we decided that primary education must be freely available to everybody. The huge budgetary resources devoted annually to the education vote since then reflect this. We have succeeded in making primary education accessible to all children. However, what is free is the tuition which they receive. Parents have played a crucial role in the actual construction of the schools.

With respect to secondary school education, there has been a phenomenal expansion: from 177 schools in 1977 to 1,502 now. Secondary schools are fee-paying; pupils are required to pay between Z$120 and Z$180 per year. These fees are relatively high for parents with a per capita income of Z$1,000 per year. Whereas in the first few years of independence as many as 85 per cent of primary school graduates went on to secondary schools, the figure has now gone down to 65 per cent. This can partly be explained by cost considerations in that some parents simply cannot afford to send their children to secondary school.

There has also been an expansion of the numbers of pupils going into higher education but not to the same extent as in primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, this expansion in numbers has grown to 400 per cent since independence. We now produce a huge surplus of ‘A’ level graduates. But only about 2,000 out of 8,000 go on to University.
In the first eight years of independence, government invested the bulk of its resources into schools in rural areas. But there also existed a slack or over-capacity in the former white schools. This no longer exists. We are therefore now redirecting resources to the urban areas. However, even when places are available in the former white schools, parents tend to resist sending children to these. They have pride in sending children to their own schools in the high density suburbs (formerly known as townships). Indeed, the examination results achieved in some of these schools have been good if not better than those attained in the former white schools. In general, however, former white schools charge higher fees. Parents can vote to increase such fees by a simple majority.

As far as adult education is concerned, there have been few government resources going into this. In the last financial year, we put Z$4 million into adult education. We wish to change this and to increase funding particularly on literacy education.

**How is or should education be rationed?**

The education budget is far from sufficient. Price has a rationing effect. One form of such rationing was to increase the teacher-pupil ratio from 1 teacher per 22 pupils in 1982 (in the former white schools) to 1 teacher per 40 pupils. Another factor which explains the rationing is the shortage of qualified teachers. In order to encourage them to serve in rural areas, one of the conditions of their promotion is a stint in rural areas. In addition, there is a severe shortage of graduate teachers. There are only 3,500 Zimbabwean graduate teachers out of over 80,000 teachers. Although the University of Zimbabwe is supposed to produce about 400 such graduate teachers per year, very few such teachers stay on in the service because of the conditions which include low salaries. We therefore still rely on about 600 expatriate teachers, especially for 'A' level teaching.

**What is the current policy in Zimbabwe in respect of either achieving universalistic access to education or targeted training in specifically acquired skills?**

I have already referred to the strides we have made in ensuring universalistic access to education, most notably in primary education. As for training in schools, we have stipulated that about a quarter of the time spent at school should be devoted to training in specific skills. After Form 2, specialisation in those skills should be encouraged. However, we encounter a major constraint in the form of lack of qualified personnel to conduct the training. We also experience a shortage of equipment. Only about 800 schools have sufficient hand-tools for basic training, such as furniture making or wood-work. Furthermore, only 30 out of 1,500 secondary schools can provide higher levels of skills training. There is need to establish and upgrade technical high schools and have at least one per district. We also will need to put more emphasis on the training of technical high school teachers.
Is there a single curriculum in all the schools in the country or variations depending on whether schools are in urban or rural areas?

About 50 per cent of the curriculum is compulsory. This curriculum relates to core subjects, namely maths, English, African languages and science. Another 50 per cent is made up of a variety of subjects from which schools choose. We have changed the whole curriculum from Grade 1 to Form 4. This is reflected in the large range of new textbooks prescribed for the pupils and the extensive re-orientation and in-service courses for school heads and teachers during the past 8 years. The science-orientation of the curriculum is particularly marked. But in certain cases, we have realised that the primary-science curriculum was too sophisticated for the teachers and this has caused problems. However, there has been satisfactory progress overall in implementing the new curriculum in primary schools.

The same cannot be said of secondary schools. There has been uneven progress in implementing the new curriculum. One major constraint is the shortage of qualified teachers, especially graduates. We also had assumed that secondary school heads would adopt the curriculum more easily and so had not sent them for in-service training. It was not a correct assumption.

As regards the 'A' level curriculum, there have been very few changes. This is largely due to the fact that our approach has been 'bottom-up': we started with Grade 1 and the 'A' level curriculum will be the last phase of these changes. Furthermore, the number of 'A' level students, at 8,000, is relatively quite small. Still we hope to introduce changes in the near future. Each year we pay about Z$30 million to Cambridge for the setting and marking of examinations.

What balance is feasible or desired between (a) central versus local control of education and (b) between state funding and self-help or parental contributions?

Initially, at independence, we decided that schools should be controlled by district councils. It soon became obvious that the councils encountered implementation problems. Parents had few professional skills. There were problems concerning the use and accounting of funds and the hiring of teachers. Looking back, we should have put professionals in the district councils in 1980. In 1987 we decided to place the councils under central control. Thus all teachers are now civil servants paid by the central government while parents put up school buildings. A new problem is that, as a result, teachers tend now to be arrogant or unsupportive towards parents and local council authorities. This makes us feel that there is a need to strike a balance between central and local control over education provision.

To what extent do lending agencies impose constraints on education planning?

I think we have been luckier than other African countries because we have drawn up our own plans and insisted that those of donors should tally
with these. Thus we are one of the few countries which has put conditions on funding by external agencies. But this has also sometimes created problems. For example, we intended to introduce computers into schools from 'A' level downwards. The condition of one donor for the supply of the equipment was that it would be tied to importing computers from this particular donor. Thus, although in 1988 we had a good proposal for low-cost computers (that could be assembled in Zimbabwe), the lending agencies refused funding.

**What are the major difficulties facing the education sector?**

First, we experience the constraint of insufficient capital investment. The shortage of building materials such as bricks and cement is particularly acute. For example, in this financial year we have only been able to use Z$9 million out of the Z$15 million earmarked for construction. We could use up to Z$25 million per year if materials were available. The shortages are partly caused by limited foreign exchange resources.

Second, we have problems with teacher retention. Although 4,000 teachers enter the profession every year, we soon lose them but especially the experienced graduate teachers.

Third, although we initially experienced shortages of text-books in 1981-83, these have now eased due to local publishing and production. But reference text-books and library texts still remain a problem. 'A' level texts are another problem as their importation requires foreign exchange. Finally, we also encounter a severe shortage of technical equipment.

**Are notions of education for building socialism or for the achieving of self-reliance viable in the contemporary context?**

To begin with, we have a mainly capitalist economy. The ideology of the middle classes retains strong elements of what may be termed the 'Rhodesian' or 'settler' culture. This is a strong consumerist ideology. It is individualistic and acquisitive. The *nouveau riche* amongst the middle classes also acquire these consumerist tendencies. A strong intellectual culture seems to be lacking.

In addition, authoritarianism is strongly entrenched in the political and educational processes. Recent inter-party violence is one expression of this. Another is the use of beating by teachers in some schools. Yet another phenomenon of this authoritarianism is what may be termed traditionalism. This relates to fatalism: some people do not believe that they can improve their lives or environment except through the structures of traditionalism and the *Wadzimu* (the ancestral spirits). Education will contribute a more scientific analysis of problems and contribute to knowledge as to how production is organised and how society can undergo change. This will contribute to a socialist awareness.

**What realistically can education be expected to contribute to (a) development (b) socialist transformation or (c) democracy?**
On its own, education is not a panacea. It cannot alone solve national development problems. Other necessary conditions should prevail. Additional political economic policies are crucial in order to make education a more transformative force.

If you take our case, we have had a big surplus of ‘O’ level graduates with passes since 1987. We do not have sufficient training facilities to prepare them for openings which currently exist in industry. As of now, industry is short of 60,000 qualified artisans and yet we have an unemployment problem (of one million persons out of work). The mismatch between the education and skills and available jobs needs redressing urgently. As regards socialist transformation, technical skills and sound decision-making structures and a scientific approach are important pre-requisites.

Finally, education can indeed contribute to democratic development. We did not have democracy before independence and, at the moment, there is a very tenuous form of democracy in this country. Traditionalism, Catholicism and mob rule are not the same as democracy.

What can be drawn from the recent 2-week long strike by teachers?

In some countries, like Canada, where you have collective bargaining structures, teachers and local councils can negotiate and agree on increases or no increases depending on the availability of funds. In Zimbabwe, teachers seem to be unaware that income taxes, which are already quite high, will need to be raised if their demands are to be met. They should be paid more than they are presently getting, but there are limited finances presently.

Fay Chung is the Minister of Education and Culture in the Zimbabwe government; Lloyd Sachikonye is a researcher in the Zimbabwe Institute for Development Studies (ZIDS) and an editor of ROAPE.

The Impact of Rapid Population Growth and Economic Decline on the Quality of Education: the Case of Zambia

Mwelwa Musambachime

Precisely because Zambians were so educationally disadvantaged during the colonial period, the provision of schooling was given high priority by the post-independence government. Education was seen as a right, as one of the fruits of independence, as well as a means by which the skills necessary to promote development could be imparted. While enormous strides were made, enormous difficulties were also encountered. As Musambachime notes, high rates of population growth necessarily put pressure on educational budgets. But while Zambia shares this problem with many other developing countries, its difficulties have been exacerbated by the particularly extreme economic crisis the country has suffered. The consequence has been a worrying decline in the quality of education provided and in the proportion of the student population served.
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Precisely because Zambians were so educationally disadvantaged during the colonial period, the provision of schooling was given high priority by the post-independence government. Education was seen as a right, as one of the fruits of independence, as well as a means by which the skills necessary to promote development could be imparted. While enormous strides were made, enormous difficulties were also encountered. As Musambachime notes, high rates of population growth necessarily put pressure on educational budgets. But while Zambia shares this problem with many other developing countries, its difficulties have been exacerbated by the particularly extreme economic crisis the country has suffered. The consequence has been a worrying decline in the quality of education provided and in the proportion of the student population served.
The social and economic effects of population growth are major concerns of policy makers, planners, researchers and analysts in developing countries. The issue they face is how to utilise severely limited resources to provide for the needs of a rapidly growing population. One of those needs is education. The urgency of providing adequate schooling is all the greater given disappointing performance over a number of years entailing a growing gap between targets specified in development plans and what is actually achieved. The gap reveals a growing inability on the part of many developing countries to maintain the quality of education, let alone the scope of provision required. This Briefing examines these issues in Zambia, focusing particularly on problems emanating from a rapidly growing population, where the situation is further exacerbated by a declining economy.

Zambia has had three population censuses. The first, taken in 1963, put the country's population at 3,490,170, while the third, in 1980, registered a total of 5,661,801. The most recent estimate puts the figure at 7,500,000. In comparative terms Zambia is one of the most sparsely populated countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Given an area of 752,972 square kilometres, the population density has increased from five persons per square kilometre in 1963 to 7.5 in 1980. This is extremely low when compared with Malawi and Zimbabwe, which have about 40 persons per square kilometre, or Nigeria with over 80. But even if these figures may suggest that Zambia is relatively under populated, the country is not free from concern about population, for it is characterised by a population growth rate which, estimated in 1988 to be 3.7%, is one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa and is surpassed only by Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and the Congo, which have registered between 4.0 and 4.6 per cent (Jackman, 1973; Ohadike, 1981; CSO, 1985).

What makes Zambia's population particularly problematic is that close to half of it is below the age of 15 years. Projections relating to the period from 1990 to 2000 suggest that the population in the age group 7 to 15 years will increase by 1,103,535 by the latter date. This will be predominantly felt in those regions along the line-of-rail. It is here that the nation's large cities and towns are located, which, together with Provincial and District Centres, account for some 43 per cent of the population, making Zambia the third most urbanised country in sub-Saharan Africa after Algeria and South Africa. The concentration of so many in the urban areas has contributed to a gross inequity in the planning of development and provision of services through the diversion of resources from the rural areas to meet the requirements of the urban sector (Musambachime, forthcoming; Chidumayo, 1979).

Background

At the time of independence from Great Britain on 24 October 1964, Zambia inherited an exceptionally weak educational profile. There were about 100 university graduates and under 1,000 who had completed secondary school. The educational system was woefully inadequate to
meet the challenges of the post-colonial state. All but a few schools were run by Christian missionaries whose paltry and modest budgets did not allow large enrolments. There were few trade schools or teacher training colleges and no universities. The school system such as it existed was closely patterned on the British Grammar School and segregated by race. European children had the best schools, followed by Asian, Coloured and, finally, African children. This arrangement was a reflection of the colonial political economy, influenced by South Africa, in which racial segregation was a commonly accepted feature of life. The new African government had no alternative but to take drastic measures in educational policy (Lungu, 1985; Mwanakatwe, 1971).

The first major attempt at reform involved the passage of an Act in 1966 aimed at addressing the obvious anomalies in the educational sector. Among other things the Act empowered the government to abolish racial segregation in schools, introduce non-fee paying registration in mission-controlled and public schools via government assistance with student tuition, boarding fees and teachers' salaries, 'nationalise' mission schools which now became 'aided' schools and abolish Cambridge Higher School Certificate (Form Six) programmes. The latter provision enabled ordinary level school certificate holders to enter the newly established University of Zambia.

These measures permitted rapid expansion of the public school system so that by 1969, each of the fifty districts in the country had a secondary school. Marked expansion in school enrolment continued over the next decade, as primary level enrolments rose from 378,000 in 1964 to 810,000 in 1973, and those at secondary level from 13,850 to 65,750. Technical and vocational training colleges enroled about 3,000 in 1973 as against none at all in 1964. Enrolment at the University of Zambia grew from 312 in 1966 to 3,000 in 1973 (Small, 1977).

These developments were made possible by a favourable economic climate. Copper, the country's major export, contributing about forty per cent of government revenue and ninety-eight per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings, was fetching a very high price on the London Metal Market. From 1973, however, this picture began to change as the oil import bill started to rise, while revenue from copper began to dwindle with the fall of the world price (Hall, 1973).

As a result of this situation, from the late 1970s onwards, Zambia became confronted with rising government deficits and balance of payment problems. Industries which were increasingly unable to import raw materials and spare parts began to cut output and reduce their labour force. The economy began to stagnate and the Gross National Product fell by 12 per cent, indicating a crisis in the once buoyant economy. Unemployment increased. With reduced revenue there was now less money to spend on social services or subsidies to farmers. The government resorted initially to domestic borrowing, but later turned to external sources — private banks, government and multinational corporations and
international agencies. Aggravated by extensive borrowing and rising import costs, domestic price levels more than tripled between 1970 and 1981. These conditions, exacerbated by prolonged drought which forced the country to import maize from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Malawi, forced the government to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance.

Following Zambia’s approach to the IMF in 1978, and after negotiations, a short-term rescue package of US$390 million was agreed subject to the government accepting a comprehensive set of conditionalities. Between 1981 and 1983 the IMF allowed a further release of US$710 million. Although every effort was made to observe the conditionalities set, the state of the economy continued to deteriorate. Zambia’s national debt rose from US$3.2 billion in 1980 to US$3.5 billion in 1984, and the trend continued upwards. By 1985 it stood at US$4.8 billion and in early 1990 was estimated to be US$7.5 billion. The repayment rate in 1984 was at US$610 million, equivalent to 60 per cent of the country’s export earnings. After 1985 it jumped to a level of 100 per cent. By the end of the 1980s debt serving of official loans stood at US$1,152 million and on private loans at US$510 million per annum.

In the mid-1980s the worsening economic crisis forced Zambia to accept the IMF recommendation to devalue the Kwacha through the process of auctioning. Zambia’s currency subsequently dropped from the rate of K2.50 per US dollar in 1985 to K21.1 in 1987. The government also endeavoured to restructure the economy by decontrolling prices, removing subsidies on consumer goods, crops and inputs, and slashing the level of government expenditure to reduce the budget deficit. But these measures did little to help as the economy continued to experience poor terms of trade. In 1987 the government decided to discontinue the IMF programme and introduce its own aimed at developing from the country’s own resources. Although this arrangement is still in place, the worsening state of the economy has prompted renewed negotiations with a view to a return to the abandoned IMF programme.

Most important for this study, the overall decline in the economy as well as specific elements of IMF conditionality have seriously affected the government’s ability to provide adequate educational facilities and opportunities to the nation. In combination with the inexorable rise in population, it was almost inevitable that the sector would experience deterioration (Musambachime, 1990).

**Implications of Population Growth and a Declining Economy for the Provision of Education**

Even so, adequate provision of education and training has remained an important priority, highlighted in the country’s various development plans. In the Interim National Development Plan (which ran from July 1987 to December 1988), the Party and Government specified two overall objectives of the education sector: to improve the quality of education and
to increase access to educational facilities. Substantial expenditure was directed at achieving these objectives, resulting in an overall increase in enrolment at all levels. In the Fourth National Development Plan which came into effect in January 1989, the chapter on education begins with the following statement:

*The Party and its Government attaches great importance to education because of its central role in national development as a source of educated manpower needed for national development in all areas of human endeavour* (GRZ, 1989:298).

Major challenges faced by the government in materialising its evident resolve have included the need to create places to increase enrolment, maintenance of the quality of education and the balancing of educational services across different regions.

But the difficulties encountered in meeting these challenges have been enormous. In the Fourth National Development Plan it was admitted that:

*The quality of education during the period (1983-1988) declined due to financial and other constraints such as excessively large classes, poorly furnished classrooms, dilapidated buildings, scarcity of textbooks, science equipment and other essential items. A combination of these factors, together with accommodation problems led to a fall in teacher morale* (GRZ, 1989:298).

This trend has continued and its seriousness has deepened. We can explore the nature of the problem by looking in turn at various levels of the educational system.

**Primary Education**

It is the aspiration of the government as affirmed in various official documents that every child should have nine years of education, the first seven comprising primary school and the last two at the secondary level. Between 1975 and 1988, primary education registered a phenomenal increase from 872,392 to 1,409,848 pupils. Total enrolment was above the projected figures by eleven per cent in 1984 and four per cent in 1988.

The official age at which a child could be enrolled in school was seven years. However, in spite of the fact that the planned figures were exceeded, the planned goal of enrolling all seven year old children was not attained in the period under study. In 1984, there was a shortfall of 21,000 places, and in 1988, though slightly improved, the deficit still stood at 15,000. The plight of the seven year olds was made even worse by the large number of over and under aged children in Grade 1, accounting for about six per cent of the entire enrolment. The shortage of places was acutely felt in the large towns of Lusaka, Ndola and Kitwe, where available places were only sufficient for 66 per cent of the seven year old children.

Given declining real expenditure from a figure representing 45.3 per cent of the recurrent budget in 1975 to one representing only 43.3 per cent in 1983, enrolment increased without a proportionate increase in the number of classes, and in consequence average class size increasingly exceeded the limit of forty pupils, especially in the urban areas. In the most densely
populated cities of Lusaka, Ndola and Kitwe, double and even triple sessions were introduced. The system allowed more pupils to be taught by one teacher, but even so, abnormal class sizes of between 60 and 90 pupils were not unusual and affected the quality of education in several ways. First, the practice reduced the number of contact hours between the teacher and pupils to a maximum of two and a half in a triple session and three in a double session system. It was not uncommon for parents to fight for their children to be in morning sessions because they assumed — often after observing a noticeable drop in performance of their children when they were in the afternoon class — that the teachers were at their best in the morning and were tired by the time they taught the afternoon classes even though they used the same materials for all groups.

Second, double and triple sessions and large class sizes reduced the ability of the teachers to give individual help to pupils, although this is crucial where children do not have systematic pre-school learning experiences, as is broadly true in the Zambian case. Most children in Zambia, indeed, require intensive initial training in such basic school activities as the right way to hold a pencil, writing figures and letters, counting, adding, subtracting and multiplying, and forming words or sentences. In subsequent grades individual help is equally important in teaching the English language and other subjects such as science where observation and experimentation are of vital importance. Individual help is also of immense importance in teaching slow learners. But none of this was possible, given the large size of classes.

Third, the system inhibited the creativity of the children who in many cases remained unable to discuss problems coherently or work on group projects. And fourth, the system did not provide for accelerated progression for the exceptionally bright and gifted children who were in consequence forced to advance at the same pace as the rest of the class (G.Lungwangwa and Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe: 1989).

Another target which remained unachieved was to enable every pupil who completed grade four to enter grade five and proceed to grade seven. The progression rate was 91.2 per cent in 1983-84 and only slightly higher at 91.7 per cent in 1988. The shortfall was due to the lack of adequate facilities. The situation was particularly severe in the rural areas where there was an acute shortage of upper primary school places. In some remote places, three or four lower primary schools fed one upper primary school.

Secondary School
Secondary education was initially divided into two sectors: junior school, lasting three years, and senior, another two. This was later rearranged to two years in junior and three years in senior secondary schools. Combined enrolment increased from 73,049 in 1975 to 115,088 in 1983 and 144,108 in 1988. The progression rate from primary to junior secondary rose from 20.1 per cent in 1979-80 to 22.4 per cent in 1982-83 and reached 24.4 per
cent in 1987-88. The progression rate from Grade 10 to 11, up to 1984, stood at 49 per cent.

To cater for the increase in enrolment, there was an increase in self-help projects which largely involved the conversion of idle and dilapidated buildings in former primary boarding schools into junior secondary (now referred to as basic) schools. The self-help schools facilitated an increase in the number of classes from 3,997 in 1987 to 5,102 in 1987-88 and an improvement in the natural progression rate to a level of 27.7 per cent in 1989. These efforts were supplemented by an increase in government expenditure from K16.25 million in 1975 to K51.06 million in 1983. During the same period capital expenditure fluctuated from K8.13 million in 1975 to a low of K0.92 million in 1979 and K9.04 in 1983. According to the Fourth National Development Plan, capital investment in this sector was well ahead of other educational programmes with more than three-quarters of planned funds being spent.

Technical Educational and Teacher Training
Between 1975 and 1983, enrolment in the technical education sector (trades schools, technical colleges and Zambia Institute of Technology and Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts) rose from 5,421 students to 6,211. At the same time the cost per student increased from K1,233.35 to K2,242.58. Recurrent expenditure rose from K6.9 million (about 8.9 per cent of the education budget) to K13.95 million (6.2 per cent), but this entailed a slight decline of 2.7 per cent in real terms. Nor did capital expenditure keep pace with the increases in student numbers. There was an increase from K3.17 million in 1975 to K3.64 million in 1976, but then a drop to K3.47 million in 1977. From 1978 there was a sharp decline which bottomed out in 1981 when the expenditure was just K0.005 million. This was increased to K6.72 million in 1982, but fell again to K2.06 million in 1983.

In spite of the fluctuations, however, technical education has become established on a reasonably sound footing, yielding skilled individuals whose presence has contributed considerably towards decreasing the skills shortage in junior secondary school as well as in producing artisans and technicians in a variety of fields.

University Education
Initially the University of Zambia had only one campus and offered degrees in Education, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering and Medicine, as well as diploma courses in adult education and social work. Following a presidential directive to create two additional campuses, a new facility offering degrees in Business and Environmental Studies, was opened in 1979 on the Copperbelt. University enrolment overall increased from 2,569 in 1977 to 3,923 in 1982, but then dropped slightly. In 1987-88 it stood at 4,225.

In 1987, the federal structure under which the University had operated since 1979 was abandoned. In its place two independent universities were
established — the old University of Zambia based in Lusaka and the Copperbelt University based in Kitwe, which took over the premises of the Zambia Institute of Technology. The plan to establish a third, rural, campus specialising in agriculture has not yet seen fruition, largely because the restructuring of the university sector occurred at a time when the country was experiencing a sharp decline in the state of the economy.

Financing of Education
In the introduction to *The Growth of Education in Zambia*, written by John Mwanakatwe, a former minister, President Kaunda observed that 'in the process of development since independence, education has had a very high priority among competing interests' such as health, for example (Mwanakatwe, 1971:iix). Nobody can dispute this. Both recurrent and capital expenditures on education have been much higher than on health. Table 1 shows details of government recurrent and capital expenditure on education between 1964 and 1984.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current Expenditure millions of Kwacha</th>
<th>% of budget</th>
<th>Capital Expenditure millions of Kwacha</th>
<th>% of budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963/4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>109.5</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>230.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNZA/ERIP Report 1986

In nominal terms, current expenditure has consistently grown since independence, although when calculated as a percentage of the government's recurrent budget, fluctuations become apparent. It is, however, important to note that with the population growing at about three per cent per annum and also given the declining value of the Kwacha after 1976, in real terms, the money being spent on education has been declining each year, leading to the general difficulties which have already been alluded to: overcrowding in classrooms, shortage of textbooks and learning materials, dilapidated buildings, lack of desks for pupils and of transport for inspection and general administrative work, absence of funds for in-service refresher courses locally or outside the country, all of which has contributed to a general decline in teaching standards.

Apart from the government, other bodies also contributed to the cost of education, including both local and foreign companies which contribute through donations and bursary schemes, as well as paying an education levy to the government. Parents of pupils also contribute through the payment of fees, sports and building funds, payment of travel expenses and purchase of uniforms. In fact, the contribution of parents to education is on the increase as the government continues to reduce expenditure in the sector in accord with IMF conditionalities.
Cost Sharing
In 1986 the government introduced a system of cost sharing under which parents and guardians were expected to contribute towards the cost of keeping pupils in boarding schools. This added to the burden following from the government's earlier decision to gradually phase out the issuing of textbooks and exercise books to pupils which were henceforth to be provided by parents. In 1988 cost sharing was extended to universities and colleges. In a ministerial statement to Parliament, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology conceded that:

the severe economic crisis Zambia is going through has had and continues to have a profound negative impact on the provision, development and progress of higher education, science and technology in our country. When students and teachers waste their time, at great cost, for lack of textbooks and other learning and teaching materials; when buildings and equipment deteriorate for lack of maintenance; when expensive laboratories are not used for lack of reagents and spare parts; and when research workers cannot keep up-to-date with developments in their areas of specialization due to lack of current journals and other essential publications due to isolation because there are no funds to facilitate their attendance at professional meetings and conferences abroad — these must be cause for great concern. In substantial measure, this is the reality we now face in our institutions of higher learning and research establishments. The Government accepts the validity of this concern (MHEST, 1989:12-3).

The cost sharing programme, under which the government took responsibility for seventy-five per cent with the remainder coming from the student, was to apply not just to the university, but also to teacher training and vocational education. To assist students coming from low income or unemployed families, a student loan scheme was promised. The mechanics of how this scheme was to be administered and the loans recovered, however, were not initially spelled out (Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail, 6 February, 1990).

Within two months of the introduction of the cost sharing scheme, there were serious riots at the two universities resulting in their indefinite closure. At the Copperbelt University in Kitwe, where the disturbances were most serious and extensive, the whole of the 1989-90 academic year was lost, and each student was required to pay K750.00 towards the cost of repairs. In the face of these developments the Government promised to review funding and hinted at the possibility of raising allowances to a level that would permit students to meet their expenses on food and text books. The University of Zambia re-opened in January 1990 amid high expectations that student allowances would be raised. But this was not immediately forthcoming and although student dissatisfaction was subdued, there were indications that it could explode at any time.

Meanwhile, the poor conditions of service prevailing at the universities, teacher training, technical and vocational collages and in secondary schools have contributed to a flight of lecturers and teachers in specialised areas such as mathematics and the sciences. Many are going to Botswana and the Bantustans where conditions are much better. These departures, which
are often at very short notice, have reached alarming proportions. Many departments are inadequately staffed, leading to cancellation of courses and suspension of programmes. Even with this, however, remaining staff are so overloaded that the quality of their teaching and supervision has necessarily been affected. The efforts of the government to stem the brain drain which have exacerbated already difficult conditions are at best feeble.

**External Aid**
The decline in the economy led to a sharp drop in the per capita investment in education by about 40 per cent. This affected every aspect of education provision. For example, textbooks and instructional materials were hard to come by, as were science equipment, classroom desks and stationery. Buildings were in a state of disrepair, essential journals and literature were unavailable and production facilities were not provided.

It is to these needs that much of the external aid to education by donor agencies and international organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and UNDP directed their resources. Some agencies focussed on a given level, whether primary, secondary, teacher training, technical and vocational training, special education for the handicapped or university. Others directed their resources at specific activities such as building and maintenance of classrooms, laboratories, teachers’ houses and other educational facilities, training of nationals either within Zambia or in the country of the donor agency, providing expert personnel in specialized fields in such areas as mathematics, sciences, engineering, medicine or computer programming. The volume of assistance in this area increased from US$50 million in 1984 to about US$82 million in 1987.

The government welcomed this assistance from new and old donors. To distribute this aid according to areas of need, the government established general levels for selection and prioritisation of the externally funded projects as follows: basic education, 25.7%; maintenance of educational facilities, 26.3%, vocational training and technical education, 22.3% and skills oriented training, 22.5%. Overall this alleviated some of the problems and difficulties the government would have otherwise had in providing education and educational services. It must be pointed out, however, that while education has been treated favourably by foreign aid givers, it has been in competition for assistance with other sectors and has received much less than has been apportioned, for example, to agriculture and cooperatives.

**Conclusion**
In the period following 1964, educational provision in Zambia was not only tremendously expanded, it was provided free. In addition the curriculum was changed and replaced by one which improved the quality of education to a level comparable with that abroad. Within a few years, the results began to be seen in the rapid production of the much needed and valuable local labour force across the various professions. But this was only possible because the size of the population was relatively small and
the country's major export, copper, was selling at a very high price which yielded considerable government revenue. From 1974, however, economic decline has led to a progressive decline in the quality of education provided. Many primary schools in the urban areas are over-enrolled and teachers are over-worked, having little time to prepare their lessons adequately or give individual help to pupils requiring it. Only about a fifth of the number in grade seven in any case manage to obtain places in secondary schools. But there, as well, they face over-enrolment, lack of chemicals, textbooks and teaching aids and inadequate staffing, especially in mathematics and science subjects. The few that make it to university and colleges face similar problems.

The reduction in government expenditure on social services which is part of the restructuring effort will necessarily contribute to a further decline in the quality of education as inadequate funds are set aside each year. The decline in quality will subsequently find its reflection in the low calibre of labour resources available for absorption in the market. Its impact will ultimately be felt throughout the social and economic sectors. As does any other nation, Zambia has to choose between quantity and quality, mediocrity and efficiency, a discontented or contented student and working population. In a declining economy with a rapidly increasing population and diminishing reserves, however, the choices are extremely difficult to make.

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Bibliographic Note

The 1990 Zimbabwe Elections: A Post-Mortem
Lloyd Sachikonye

The recent presidential and general elections held in Zimbabwe saw a bitterly contested struggle between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). This article reviews the election manifestos and electioneering practices of each side against the background of Zimbabwe's post-independence development and its class/ethnic relations. It considers the question of whether ZANU-PF's victory by a huge majority makes Zimbabwe de facto a one-party state.

In the presidential and general elections held on 28-30 March 1980 ZANU-PF emerged with a comfortable victory over a myriad of opposition parties. ZANU-PF, which incorporated the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU) in a unity agreement sealed in December 1987, won 116 out of the contested 120 parliamentary seats. Yet in spite of the consensus which this suggests, the campaign was thoroughly vitriolic and one of the most strenuous the party, led by Robert Mugabe, has ever waged. Analysts did not fail to observe that he did not take time off from the hustings to attend the Namibian independence celebrations.

The major factor behind the vigorously and bitterly fought campaign was the then 10-month old opposition party, ZUM, led by a former ZANU-PF stalwart, Edgar Tekere. In this Briefing we review the major issues debated in the campaign, the conduct of electioneering and the patterns of the results and assess their overall significance.


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The Election Issues

Major issues concerned the trajectory of the democratic process in the country, the land question, the state of the economy and questions of unemployment, housing and transport. There were sharp differences between the primary contending parties, ZANU-PF and ZUM, over the issues of socialist ideology and the one-party state system. In its manifesto, ZANU-PF asserted that it was ‘firmly committed’ to the establishment of a socialist society in Zimbabwe, explaining that:

\[
\text{to that extent, it endeavours to empower the peasantry and the working class. In its evaluation, the Party believes that the fundamental principles to guide this process must derive from Marxism-Leninism as an ideology. But, as we have emphasized before, this ideology must be adapted to our own objective and historical circumstances (ZANU-PF:1990).}
\]

This theoretical commitment to Marxism-Leninism is consistent with ZANU-PF’s ideological pronouncements since coming to power in 1980, if not before. But they are contradicted by its record in office during the past 10 years as regards policies, programmes and the tendency towards accumulation on the part of its leadership. It would appear that ZANU-PF prefers to stick to its initial ideological formula rather than concede the radical high ground to any another party.

ZUM, for its part, rejected Marxism-Leninism and asserted that its political and economic policies would not be ‘constrained by any foreign ideologies’ (ZUM, 1990). It argued the case for a mixed economy characterized by ‘free enterprise leaving room for state participation only where free enterprise is unable to provide the required services’.

It is on the question of the one-party state system, however, that the two parties are most clearly at odds. Although there has been no detailed elaboration of how and when the ZANU-PF government would introduce the one-party state, it was implicit in its leaders’ election statements that the results would signify a mandate for the establishment of such a system. Party leaders vigorously defended the case for the one-party state. This provided ZUM with the political ammunition it needed to paint ZANU-PF as seeking to construct an undemocratic and discredited political structure. ZUM argued that:

\[
\text{a multi-party state facilitates the competition of ideas on public policy and on how society is going to achieve its goals. The one-party state tends to make leaders complacent because there is no opposition to fear (ZUM, 1990).}
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ZUM occupied the democratic high ground on this question and spoke the ‘political language’ of the 1990s, in contrast to ZANU-PF’s familiar but now well-worn arguments from the 1960s. Put on the defensive, ZANU-PF leaders qualified their advocacy for the one-party state case with reassurances that it would never be imposed on Zimbabweans. Their fall-back position involved support for holding a referendum on the question. ZUM, of course, castigated both the one party state and any notion of a referendum.
In addition to questions of ideology and the one-party state, the third major campaign issue concerned the unresolved land question. Central to it was the question of redistribution to the peasantry of unutilized and under-utilized land owned by the agrarian bourgeoisie. ZANU-PF acknowledged that while it had proposed in 1981 to resettle 162,000 peasant families on 9 million hectares, only 51,235 families had benefited to date through resettlement on some 1.5 million hectares (ZANU-PF, 1990). To meet its original target it was proposed that a ZANU-PF government would introduce a Land Acquisition Bill in Parliament, empowering it ‘to proceed speedily in acquiring land, wherever it is, for resettlement purposes’ (ibid). It was argued that the falling away of the British-brokered Lancaster House Constitutional constraints in April 1990 would untie the hand of government over the land question.

ZUM attacked ZANU-PF’s record on land redistribution, contending that the constraints imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution were not the sole explanation for the failure to meet targets. The ZANU-PF leadership itself had become part of the ‘land question’:

they have become land grabbers notwithstanding the Lancaster House Constitution
... You are either part of the problem or part of the solution. The ZANU-PF leadership cannot, and must not, have it both ways (ZUM, 1990).

For its part, ZUM proposed to set up a Commission of Inquiry to re-examine the land issue, comprised of land-owners, peasants, chiefs and local government representatives. The Commission would recommend to the government ‘equitable redistribution of land for optimal utilization and productivity’.

The state of the economy was the fourth major election issue. ZANU-PF remarked that it would shift economic development ‘in favour of the masses’ through people oriented social and economic schemes, the localization of the major means of production, and the encouragement of local and foreign investment in selected areas in order to expand the production base. It would also support the interests of emergent businessmen and small traders through legislation enabling those who owned property at growth points or service centres to secure title deeds. In addition, the government would endeavour to create job opportunities to alleviate the unemployment crisis. Finally, it would continue to enter into joint ventures with private companies and to increase state participation in financial and industrial enterprises. ZANU-PF held that there should be continuity and that the state and emergent bourgeoisie should acquire an increasing stake in the capitalist accumulation process. There was nothing inherently ‘socialist’ in this unveiled economic programme.

ZUM for its part called for unabashed privatisation of large sectors of the economy and promised to reduce the budget deficit through the pruning of the bureaucracy. It proposed to reduce the tax burden on individuals by removing all tax on essential food items and non-luxury commodities and by reducing income taxes for all categories of earners. It further
proposed to reduce government spending by abolishing the Ministry of Political Affairs with its retinue of seven Ministers and Deputy Ministers which is currently sustained by an annual budget of Z$18 million.

Other ZUM proposals aimed at the improvement of the economy included reduction of corporate taxation as a means of wooing local and foreign investors, rationalisation of the allocation of foreign currency by including major users on the allocation committee and the running of parastatals on sound business lines. In its statements on urban housing, transport and unemployment crises, ZUM capitalised on festering working-class grievances and anxieties. Yet ZUM’s economic programme can hardly be judged to have been more specific, let alone more ‘progressive’ than that of its rival. If anything, it lacked even the veneer of the ‘economic nationalism’ which characterized the ZANU-PF’s programme.

A final central election issue was the political alliance between ZUM and the white-led Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ), the descendant of the Rhodesian Front once led by Ian Smith. ZANU-PF condemned this alliance as ‘unholy’; it was unthinkable and despicable that a supposedly radical party would link with erstwhile white oppressors. It was claimed that the real brains and strategists behind ZUM were CAZ, and by implication that the ZUM leadership consisted of puppets. To this criticism ZUM retorted that all ZANU-PF’s post-independence governments contained several former prominent Rhodesian Front supporters and ministers. It therefore viewed as hypocritical ZANU-PF’s attack on it for its alliance with CAZ.

**Conduct of the Election Campaign**

The campaign itself was robust, vitriolic and revealing. ZANU-PF had the advantage of incumbency. But in addition it monopolized the state controlled media to put across its campaign message despite earlier assurances that the opposition parties would be allowed equal access to the media. ZUM was therefore at a major disadvantage in pushing its own message. So obvious and calculated was this that ZANU-PF’s assertions that ‘every Zimbabwean was entitled to receive accurate information from established mass media institutions and that journalism should be used to inform accurately, promote peace, development and national unity’ rang hollow. Stressing that party propaganda should be issued by individual parties through their own agencies and that all political parties should be given equal access to the media, ZUM proposed, if elected, to dissolve and privatise the state-owned Mass Media Trust so that it could operate professionally without government interference. The evident unequal access to the media with respect to both news coverage and advertising severely limited the capacity of the opposition parties to reach the voters, particularly in rural areas.

At the same time the quality of some of the ZANU-PF political advertisements appearing on television left much to be desired. One, subsequently condemned as both intimidating and misleading, claimed
that supporting ZUM would, like AIDS, lead to death, whereas voting for ZANU-PF would lead to life. In the event, it was largely left to the alternative weekly and monthly press (despite its smaller circulation) to give reasonably fair coverage to both parties and to put the election issues into perspective (See Moto, Parade, Financial Gazette, various issues).

Towards its close, the campaign was characterized by intimidation and, in several instances, was punctuated by political violence. The Catholic Justice and Peace Mission referred to incidents of assaults on ZUM candidates in the Chinhoyi and Karoi areas by ZANU-PF youth supporters. Clashes between ZUM and ZANU-PF youth were also reported in Chitungwiza, Mufakose and Glen View suburbs of Harare (see Financial Gazette, Moto, and Parade, various issues).

To a significant extent inflammatory statements by party leaders created the context for these developments. The ZUM leader, Edgar Tekere, alleging that ZANU-PF intended to rig the elections, contended that if that occurred a military coup could not be ruled out. The ZANU-PF leader, Robert Mugabe, warned white supporters of ZUM: 'if the whites in Zimbabwe want to rear their ugly terrorist and racist head by collaborating with ZUM, we will chop that head off'.

The worst incident of the campaign involved the shooting and seriously wounding of leading ZUM organizer, Patrick Kombayi, in Gweru in the Midlands Province. It was thus against a background of escalating intimidation and violence that several ZUM candidates came under severe pressure to withdraw from standing. The harassment of ZUM candidates has, moreover, continued after ZANU-PF's overwhelming victory.

Political violence has become a sad and deplorable feature of recent Zimbabwean political culture. There was post-election violence in 1985 against opposition parties as well. Like that of 1990, it was mainly perpetrated in urban centres. The same social groups — the unemployed youth and women — were mobilized by ruling party politicians to 'teach a lesson' to those opposition candidates who had 'dared' stand against them (Sithole, 1986). It is an undemocratic political culture which smacks of authoritarian intolerance. The spectacle of thousands of youth and women hounding other citizens from their jobs in local councils or in schools or from their houses because they 'dared' stand as candidates against the ruling party reflects badly on the capacity of that party's leadership to promote a civic political culture. In the absence of strong democratic structures, traditions and procedures, the idea of a one-party state system is particularly ominous.

The Election Results
The election results accurately reflected the preferences of the voters. Nor were there were any reported irregularities in the counting of the votes. But although ZANU-PF won with a comfortable margin, ZUM performed much better than had been foreseen, gaining 17 per cent of the total vote.
Overall, however, ZUM won only 2 seats. Of the remaining parties, only ZANU Ndonga gained a seat.

In the presidential election, Edgar Tekere received 413,840 votes as against 2,026,976 for Robert Mugabe. But the latter figure represented only about 42 per cent of total eligible voters, underlining the disturbing dimension of voter apathy which characterised the election. Indeed there was a lower turnout in absolute numbers in 1990 than in earlier elections in 1980 and 1985. Whereas 2.7 million and 2.8 million Zimbabweans voted respectively in the first two, only 2.6 million voted in the 1990 election out of an estimated eligible voting population of 4.8 million (see also Cliffe et al 1980; Sithole, 1985). This decline raises questions about depoliticisation and apathy which must be worrying to both the ruling ZANU-PF and ZUM parties. The fact that the voter turn-out did not exceed 54 per cent, despite the intensive campaign and extension of polling days to three, may signal a creeping malaise in a fragile democratic political culture which is already under severe pressure. The introduction of a one-party system would most likely deepen the apathy and cynicism apparent amongst voters.

Another trend discernible from the patterns of voting involves the urban and rural political divide. Much of the vote for the opposition and, in particular for ZUM, originated in the major cities. In Bulawayo, ZUM received 21 per cent, in KweKwe 21.8 per cent, in Gweru 22.5 per cent, in Harare 30 per cent and in Mutare nearly 35 per cent of the votes, with an overall average in these cities of about 26 per cent, well above its national average of 17 per cent. Assuming this to suggest that the party held some attraction for the urban working class, some possible explanatory factors may be noted.

In the first place, it is probable that ZUM's populism fed on genuine grievances and anxieties of the working class: falling incomes, skyrocketing cost of living, and housing and transport crises. Employment openings have been severely limited since independence, hence the weak bargaining position of unions. Meanwhile, the privileges and wealth which the political class is amassing — some in less than savoury ways, as the Sandura Commission's report on the Willowgate car scandal demonstrated — are becoming increasingly obvious, leading to disenchantment which may well have translated itself into a protest vote against ZANU-PF. Secondly, ZUM's organizational structure in the cities played an important role in political mobilization despite the obstructive efforts of ZANU-PF controlled state institutions. The relative concentration of large numbers of people in the cities provides space for a political opposition culture involving rallies, leaflets and T-shirts emblazoned with slogans. The lack of an organizational infrastructure in rural areas and of access to the media to put its message across to them hampered ZUM's mobilization of the peasant masses. Its failure to penetrate these areas resulted in the bulk of the peasant vote going to ZANU-PF in almost all the provinces with the exception of Manicaland, where Tekere once had his political base as ZANU-PF provincial chairman.
This result may also reflect the tactics of ZANU-PF, which was not above insinuating that a vote for ZUM would imply 'a return to war' and discontinuation of food relief. The peasants would hardly wish this upon themselves; they had sacrificed enough. Nor did those in drought stricken regions contemplate having their lifeline in the form of government food packs cut off.

Significance of the Elections
The significance of the 1990 elections goes beyond their specific results. First, it must be recalled that they were held a few weeks before the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution, whose provisions thus continued to constrain government policy. Among other things, the ZANU-PF government (assuming it had the political will to do so) remained unable to undertake major reforms such as the redistribution of land. It was also constrained from legislating for a one-party state system. Whether the government will now move faster on the question of land reform in the post-Lancaster epoch remains to be seen. As the opposition’s critique suggests, some of those within the state apparatus have a vested interest in maintaining the present land-ownership structure. How such interests will be reconciled with a comprehensive agrarian programme is still an open question. As for moving towards a one-party state, it would be ironical if Zimbabwean democrats were to look back to the 1980s (when the Lancaster House Constitution was still intact) as an era when they possessed the right and freedom to form, or belong to, a party of their choice.

Secondly, the elections revealed developments relating to the Zimbabwean political culture, such as creeping apathy and the use of tactics of intimidation to hound and discourage political opposition. Apart from causing distress to its victims, the latter could undermine the legitimacy of existing political institutions and processes.

Of course, there is resistance both to envisaged one-party state system and political intimidation. Trade unions, cooperatives, students, church groups and the alternative press have argued strongly against these trends (see also Sachikonye, 1989) and have sought to prevent the subordination of civil society to both ZANU-PF institutions and the state. They maintain that the fragile democratic structures and values in Zimbabwe require the preservation of that autonomy.

The role of these organizations rooted in civil society assumes added significance in the light of what some observers see as a puzzling emulation of certain aspects of the 'Malawian political model' by the ruling party leadership. The accent on the mobilization of youth and women — who have been central in post-election political violence — is reminiscent of the tight leash Kamuzu Banda has had on marginalised and manipulable social groups to undergird his authoritarian rule. Perhaps symbolically a fortnight or so after the Zimbabwe elections, Banda officially opened the spanking new ZANU-PF headquarters. Given their resilient if still fragile
democratic culture, however, it is far from a foregone conclusion that Zimbabweans would easily acquiesce to a one-party state or other authoritarian political model.

Thirdly, although ZUM’s election performance registered the clear existence of opposition, questions must be raised about the nature of its opposition. ZUM’s populism was not socialist-oriented. Rather, its ideological pronouncements put it to the right of ZANU-PF. The party’s position on the land question, free enterprise and privatisation suggested the significant influence of CAZ on its policy formulation. Thus its major weakness was that it did not provide a clear alternative to ZANU-PF. But this in turn suggests that political space exists to the left of ZANU-PF within which a new opposition grouping might well in future tap the working class vote.

Finally, the wide margin of its electoral victory demonstrates the handsome political dividends of the unity accord between ZANU-PF and ZAPU. Although voter apathy was deep in the constituencies it had traditionally held, ZAPU successfully managed to deliver its erstwhile vote to the united ZANU-PF through the latter’s winning of all the seats in Matabeleland. In essence, given ZANU-PF’s huge victory, Zimbabwe is to all intents and purposes a de facto one party state. Why the party’s leadership should still be obsessed by the one-party state model, therefore, bemuses many a democrat in Zimbabwe.

Lloyd Sachikonye is a researcher in the Zimbabwe Institute for Development Studies (ZIDS) and an editor of ROAPE.

Bibliographic Note

Reference was also made to the March-April and May issues of Moto, 86/7 and 88, Gweru, 1990; and to various issues of the Financial Gazette, March and April 1990, Harare and Parade.

The Politics of Literacy and Schooling in Zimbabwe
David F. Johnson

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According to a recent paper by Fay Chung (1988), then the Minister of Primary and Higher Education in Zimbabwe, there have been many significant educational achievements since the country gained independence in 1980. While acknowledging gains that have been made, this
Briefing argues that an imbalance exists between quantitative expansion and qualitative change in education. Noting an absence in the Zimbabwe case of the use of markers traditionally applied when assessing qualitative change, a number of such criteria are suggested, against which performance of the education system can be evaluated.

Educational opportunities for black Zimbabweans were extremely limited before independence in 1980. The colonial regime practised a policy of racial and class discrimination by employing a strict zoning system to prevent children enrolling at schools outside their residential zones. Thus only 42 per cent of children of primary school age were at school in 1979 and only 20 per cent of these had access to secondary school places (Stoneman, 1989). This limited access to schooling largely explains the 45 per cent illiteracy rate amongst adults. A large proportion of those who did attend school found themselves confronted by curricula which were inextricably tied to an ideology of racial superiority. Thus many received an inferior education designed to prepare them for menial tasks in society. Those who slipped through the net for the recruitment of cheap labour, found that higher education provided them with little more than the ability to read and write accurately, and to make limited decisions in their working environments.

It is understandable, therefore, that the new ZANU-PF government saw as its immediate priority the deracialisation of education and the need to make it more accessible to the large majority of the population.

Deracialisation of Education

According to Chung, racial integration was achieved by simply placing black townships within the same boundaries as former white-only areas. However, this intervention was limited in that it was tied to a narrow, deficit theory of education (Giroux 1988). In other words, black children were granted the entitlement to education as formerly obtained in the white areas, but there was no attempt to transform the material and ideological basis for education. In this respect the new government failed from the outset to recognise the need to develop an alternative pedagogical practice as an integral part of a political programme.

Moreover, because re-zoning could hardly of itself create a set of different economic circumstances for families, it meant that children's educational experiences were separated from the economic, political and ideological trajectories of their families and communities. Education became compartmentalized, eschewing the relationships of class, race and gender which give it its social meaning. Thus while schools ostensibly became non-racial, class relations remained largely intact.

Chung also argues that democratisation of education was achieved two years after independence. She claims that the biggest achievement of the new government was to increase enrolments for primary, secondary and tertiary education. Indeed primary school enrolments increased from 0.819 million in 1979 to 2,265 million in 1986, although in 1988 there was a slight
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decrease, suggesting that enrolment trends were beginning to stabilise (Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education, 1988).

Secondary school enrolments showed a dramatic 600 per cent increase between 1979 and 1985 and increased even further over the next three years (ibid). There are also signs that enrolment trends in the secondary school are beginning to stabilise but uneven patterns are still quite evident. The urban secondary figures continue to increase while rural schools are showing a decline in enrolments. A number of reasons for this pattern may be advanced but mainly it is felt that it reflects acute population drift from the rural areas into the cities.

There can be no question about the importance of these achievements. The ZANU government has translated a popular demand in the struggle for national liberation into an education policy option for the newly independent country. Education is to be made accessible to all who want it. The attempt to achieve this, however, has resulted in a myriad of problems.

Education and the Economy — Problems with Quantitative Expansion

The most important consequence of the rapid expansion of the Zimbabwean education system is the concomitant escalation of recurrent educational expenditure in the State budget. Whereas in 1979-80 the budget allocation for education was Z$118.7 million, in 1985-86 it totalled Z$640.5 million (Zimbabwe, CSO, Monthly Digest of Statistics, June 1982; Ministry of Education, Vote 20, 1985-86). The amount provided in the Estimates of Expenditure for the 1988-89 financial year was Z$856,849,000, representing an increase of Z$145,510,500 over the full provision for the previous fiscal year.

Many of Zimbabwe's critics, such as the World Bank, argue that the educational budget is not being distributed effectively. For example, as much as 80 per cent of the budget goes on teachers salaries. The per capita expenditure for primary, secondary and tertiary sectors respectively in 1985 were Z$181, Z$269 and Z$5,940 (Ministry of Education 1985). Thus the tertiary sector which constitutes only six per cent of the school population receive 24 per cent of the expenditure. According to Pakkiri (1989), when these figures are plugged into a rate of return formula, the results indicate that the resources are not being allocated efficiently.

The difficulty Zimbabwe faces is not unique and has plagued other African countries. At the heart of the problem lies the question of whether money being spent on education would not better put to use in furthering economic growth and hence creating employment. The other side of this coin is that human resource development is seen as a priority for developing countries. Zimbabwe is often regarded as having gone further than most African countries in attaining the objective of 'universal free primary education'. The realisation of this popular demand has often been closely tied to the argument that investment in education is in line with increasing productivity. Mass education is therefore related to economic
advancement. Thus the expansion of mass education has been used as a marker of progress, which usually gives the country both national and international credibility. Unfortunately the corollary of educational expansion is often high expenditure and in the case of Zimbabwe, the rate of expansion and the size of the education budget has raised serious problems. Educational expansion can no longer be justified as a productive investment in an economic climate of a negative growth rate. Zimbabwe's preoccupation with creating a national pool of expertise at all levels of education without significantly restructuring the economy has brought it into open confrontation with international aid organisations like the World Bank which have constantly urged for adjustments to be made to the educational system so as to rationalise or cut educational expenditure.

The World Bank makes two recommendations in this regard. The first argues that the costs of education must be shared by the public. According to Pakkiri (1989), this is already being done and Zimbabwe, moreover, has an outstanding record of public input into education both in the colonial and in the post independence periods. The second recommendation is more contentious. The World Bank recommends that there should be a more efficient use of finance for education and that priority be given to primary education. In a document, 'Statement on the World Bank's Document — Financing Education in Developing Countries' (1987), the World Bank's position has been severely criticised by most developing countries who hold the view that human resources must be developed at all levels lest African countries find themselves right back where they started — with a shortage of middle and high level personnel.

Schooling in Zimbabwe — Problems with the Quality of Education
It has already been pointed out that there were major problems in education before independence. Subsequently, considerable attention has been given to the issue of quantitative expansion in education. The extent of qualitative change, in contrast, has been limited and any discussion concerning it has centred around the pass rate for the 'O'-Level examinations. The use of this criterion has meant that the external curriculum shapes not only what is taught but how it is taught and evaluated. Moreover, the use of 'O'-Level results as a benchmark of educational success severely limits the possibilities for critical teaching and learning in schools. Other aspects of schooling and the development of a critical literacy are very rarely focused on.

In view of this, we have selected a set of qualitative indicators — curriculum development, teacher education, language and literacy — for discussion in respect of the Zimbabwean situation, albeit recognising that they by no means exhaust the list of markers by which qualitative progress can be judged. It is argued that a critical theory of literacy and schooling which seeks to empower both the learner and the teacher is still lacking in Zimbabwe.
Language, Literacy and the Curriculum

It may be argued that no educational organizations or movements existed during the struggle for independence which could be drawn on subsequently for a qualitative transformation of education. Nor was there evidence of a home grown emancipatory theory of education or even a clear notion of what would be involved in such a transformation. The absence of a well organised internal mass educational movement, made up of democratic teacher organisations, parent-teacher-pupil bodies and so on, left the new government with the task.

The result is that despite great strides in quantitative improvement, schooling in Zimbabwe remains locked into a pre-independence mode. Since the role of the teacher has remained generally undefined in the new social order, the old power differential between the teacher and the pupil persists largely intact. Johnson (1987) found that this power differential manifested itself in many ways in the classroom, but most commonly in how rules are made, how discipline is enforced and what patterns of communication prevail. Traditional classroom methods are still the order of the day even though materials put out by the Curriculum Development Unit (a structure which deals with the development of school materials) are stressing more progressive methods. A recent study by Strachan (1988) suggest that teachers are opting for commercial packages because they are better bound and more expensive (suggesting that that which actually costs money is necessarily of more value than that which is given away freely).

Within schools and the classroom, English language teaching remains an area unaffected by political and ideological change. Zimbabwe has opted in classroom practice to model the teaching of English on British, English as Second Language/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) packages. Although these models are largely successful in helping learners acquire a communicative competence, they very often fail to instil a critical and analytical ability in students. Students in present day Zimbabwe need more than functional competence. They need to develop a critical literacy which helps them understand their reality in terms of the social forces which shape it (Bizell 1982). They need to master genre like written argumentation and critical analysis if they are to arrive at a 'critical view of their reality' (Freire 1985). Contrary to Freire's thesis on the achievement of critical literacy, the methods employed to teach English, for example, are still very much based on models which emphasise correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. Taylor (1989) argues that this kind of linguistic fundamentalism results in an intellectual fundamentalism which impedes the students' ability to write or think critically.

The situation as it was before independence did not allow learners to write or read for the real world. They were given exercises based on a narrow curriculum which were carried in complete isolation from real events. Research (Johnson 1988) shows that the focus of the classroom topics may
have now changed a little. The following question, for example, illustrates an attention to real world issues:

State and explain what you consider to be the most important principles for socialist education. With reference to Zimbabwe give some considered examples for the adoption of these principles.

But in spite of this improvement, a tension still exists between the processes of task setting, which is done exclusively by the teacher, text production, which is an exclusively student event, and text analysis, where again only the teacher is involved. The use of subjective or norm referenced procedure for assessment is an unending source of conflict between students and teachers.

These are all very specific issues, but they are indicators of day to day classroom life. Their importance in any analysis of the qualitative aspects of education cannot be over-emphasised. Treated collectively they suggest the absence of a comprehensive theory of education linked to an active political programme which seeks not merely to reform the traditional classroom but strives to alleviate the political and ideological constraints which govern the curriculum and the management of schools.

**Teachers and the Politics of Empowerment**

Finally it is essential that the teachers as actors in the broad political and education process receive specific attention. The role of the teacher has remained largely undefined but the recent teachers strike in Zimbabwe has brought the question of the teachers' role sharply into focus. Teachers as a unified body have been marginalised in the struggle for a free and democratic education system. Often theoretical literature has lumped teachers in with the ruling class. The teacher has often been characterised as 'just another brick in the wall' or an extension of state control (Althuser 1971) who serves to encourage passivity and social conformity (Illich 1973; Reimer 1971). Recent work provides a clearer analysis of the teacher's class position. Apple (1986), for example, argues that teachers have a contradictory class location. They cannot be lumped in with the middle class nor do they occupy an amorphous position between classes but are rather located simultaneously in two classes. They share the interests of both the petty bourgeoisie and the working class.

Fundamental to the creation of an emancipatory theory of literacy and schooling for Zimbabwe is the need to redefine the nature of teachers' work. The popular view of the teacher locked into the role of passing on knowledge should be dispelled in favour of a role which hold teachers up as critical intellectuals.

At present teachers are still locked into a hierarchical system of education management. The Ministry of Education drafts circulars containing rules and regulations, tasks for various school regions an so on, which are then passed on to regional offices. Here administration functionaries discuss these circulars and pass them on to head teachers who are expected to implement them. Head teachers in consequence can become disempow-
ered in the running of their schools, and left merely with the role of interpreting the circulars to teachers who are then to carry out the instructions. Head teachers and teachers are thus not involved directly in decision making about educational process and as such are not allowed to assume the role of critical pedagogues.

Stoneman (1989) argues that problems related to curriculum development are related directly to the traditional methods of teacher training. The content of teacher training has not been improved significantly since independence. There have been attempts to send groups of students to Cuba for courses in pedagogics and political economy but it would appear that no empirical evidence has been advanced to measure the value or success of such courses and the reality is that teachers teach mainly as they themselves were taught. There has been little encouragement from the government to create opportunities through which teachers might explore the relationship between teaching and the production of knowledge. Teachers have not, for example, really been involved in the process of research. They are either used as subjects or asked to implement the research findings of others.

Conclusion
It has been argued that Zimbabwe has made significant strides in the expansion and democratisation of education. These advances have had both qualitative and quantitative implications. But problems remain for which there are no ready made or easy solutions. It can only be suggested that Zimbabwe should continue to problematise the relationship between education and the economy and the current imbalance between quantitative expansion and the quality of education.

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Bibliographic Note:
Makonde: Sculpture as Political Commentary
Michael Stephen

"Culture is Created by the People and Not by Artists (Samora Machel, soldier, polemicist, poet and first President of Mozambique).

Art is a living, changing entity, reflecting the broader social order in which it appears. In recent months a particularly striking example of African art, the sculpture of the Makonde, who live on both sides of the border between Mozambique and Tanzania, has formed the basis of an exhibition which has toured the UK. Changes over the years in the style and form of sculpture produced by the Makonde have mirrored economic and political changes experienced by the Makonde people. Their 'traditional' carvings were restricted to the Mapiko masks used in initiation ceremonies. But after World War Two and within the context of Portuguese colonialism, new carvings began to appear in white wood, as peasants began to devote part of their time to sculpting in response to emergent demand from the colonists. The intricate, intertwined figures carved in black wood, most commonly associated with the Makonde and forming the bulk of the Malde collection which has been on tour, are a more modern creation. New designs and the utilisation of new motifs began to appear in the late 1950s, but interestingly their form varied depending on whether they were produced by the Makonde in Tanzania or Mozambique. The former were more directly a response to market forces. The art of the Makonde in Mozambique, while sharing the same response, was integrally connected with the struggle against Portuguese oppression launched by Frelimo. It is the concern of this piece through exploring these differences, to illustrate the nature of the organic tie which, in this instance, has bound a people's art to their collective political aspirations.

Background
Amongst examples of African art, Makonde sculptures are renowned, but the context in which they are produced is little known. The political as well as the cultural history of the Mozambican Makonde is poorly recorded and little disseminated. Like their once hostile Makua neighbours, they were portrayed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as raiders and looters of the new beleaguered colonial coastal settlements (Alpers, 1975). The Portuguese established Effective Occupation in that part of northern Mozambique inhabited by the Makonde within a decade
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Museum of Modern Art, Oxford. Makonde: Wooden sculpture from East Africa. Artist: Ogasti Ndege; Title: Man and woman suffering through having failed to take advice from their elders on how to conduct their lives; Photo: Jim Chambers; Collection: The Malde Collection
of the Berlin Conference, but their complete control was only imposed subsequent to an attempted German invasion in 1917, when the boundary between German East Africa and Mozambique was formally drawn.

The Makonde suffered severely from the European incursions into their territory. Many of the 50,000 Mozambicans who died when serving as porters during World War I were Makonde. A flu epidemic in 1919 further exacerbated the situation, making for what the colonists perceived to be a labour shortage in northern Mozambique (Vail and White, 1980:211). Increasing exactions by the Portuguese administration were never passively endured by the Makonde, however, who strenuously resisted taxes, forced labour and forced cotton growing by sabotage, arson, occasional insurrection and flight either to Tanganyika or into the wilderness to form new communities (Isaacman and Stephen, 1980).

 Strikes and peaceful protests against particularly oppressive aspects of Portuguese rule were violently repressed. Several small anti-colonial organisations formed abroad, among them a Makonde union known as MANU. Its influence spread back to the home population and in 1960 its supporters led a peaceful protest against the administration at Mueda in the heart of Makonde country. An eye witness account by the then 22 year old Alberto Chipande, a future Minister of Defence, of the massacre which ensued, referred to hidden colonial troops having suddenly materialized and 'killed about 600 people' (Mondlane, 1969:117-118).

It was against a background circumscribed by the demands of colonial capitalism and dominated by the political struggle which contested it that Frelimo was formed in 1962, uniting all effective opposition to colonialism. In 1964 Chipande led the first armed action of the liberation struggle against the administration at Chai in Cabo Delgado. The party programme of the new movement supported the development of democratic organisations among various sections of the national population, such as women and youth. It also promoted the spread of literacy, partly as a basis for the communication of internal propaganda. Diplomacy abroad and adherence to the popular and pan-Africanist causes of the day also featured among its concerns. From this liberation front grew a socialist party of a distinctly Mozambican character with a determination to advance the interests of the workers and numerically superior peasants. From its earliest days cultural development was affirmed as an important element in the building of a new nation. In this the Makonde sculptors would play an important role.

Sculpture for Liberation
There is a most eloquent photograph in Iain Christie's recent biography of the late Samora Machel (1988:22). Taken in 1973 in the Frelimo liberated zone in Cabo Delgado, it portrays Machel, the guerilla leader, addressing the author. Around him stand his armed comrades, who, however, pay him little heed. Rather, they are engrossed in discussing their Makonde comrades' black wood carvings which stand among them on the ground.
They are linked in struggle for liberation — the leader, the journalist, the soldiers, the carvings and the soil on which they stand together.

The previously little known shiny black figures were to become increasingly effective anti-colonial symbols at fraternal fund raising events or presiding over the bric-a-brac of post-1968 liberal homes far from Mozambique. They failed to breach the profit motivated barricades of the commercial art world in any significant numbers, however. Before this could occur the revolution that they so ably represented had to be assimilated.

The original sculptors were peasants working cooperative fields, as sculptors still do in such communal villages as Namdimba, Muila and Idovo. But some were also Frelimo cadres, organising food or serving as porters (interview, 31 July 1979). It was through association and discussions with the Frelimo fighters and mobilisers that politically conscious motifs became established in the modern Makonde repertoire. Frelimo organised the sculptors into their first cooperative, named Kampula, and significantly, they chose Sumaili Mpocha as their leader. Although it was the younger men who were the political innovators, Mpocha had been the first among them to become a sculptor and was also the oldest. While most of the members of this first cooperative were peasants, their number also included a former quarry worker, a plantation worker and a tailor.

From an early stage the colonial authorities recognised the extent and depth of Makonde support for Frelimo at all levels and attempted to undermine the party's success in combating tribalism which this, as well as the support of other groups, represented. They claimed that the Makonde Frelimo were killing Makua and that the latter should join the Portuguese war against them. They also told the Makonde that although they were numerically dominant in Frelimo, they were being led astray by southern Ronga and Tonga who dominated the leadership (Isaacman, 1983:102). All of this merely served to intensify the political understanding of the Makonde and indeed of Frelimo as a whole. While initially drawn to Frelimo as Makonde, they returned to advance the struggle as Mozambicans.

Their sculptures represented this enhanced political awareness as they came increasingly to depict the dual themes of misery and ridicule (Isaacman and Stephen, 1980:614). Prior to the war of liberation, motifs characterising Makonde sculpture included naturalised figures, animals, busts and Christian religious themes, all of which are well represented in the museum of Nampula which specialises in the culture of northern Mozambique. These figures are generally aesthetically uninspired and somewhat lacking in character. The sculptors themselves referred to them as 'dollies' and 'toys' as if, they too, found them lacking. Like many of our own toys and dolls, the extremities are barely in evidence or missing altogether, and sexual distinction is almost absent. This latter feature is
popularly ascribed to the vigilance of the guardians of colonial morality, the clergy.

Then with the outbreak of the war of liberation, the figure of suffering represented by the man in a *thanta* (short loin cloth) became common. Preoccupied by the day to day misery of the colonial regime, he typically clutches his head (interviews, 28 & 31 July 1979). Another common representation of oppression is that of the man or woman with a chain, worn like a belt around the waist. She or he is characteristically being taken by the *cipalo* (African policeman) to be beaten or to be transported to the sweet and deadly chocolate fields of Sao Tome.

Perhaps the most graphic example of the exploited and the ridiculed is appropriately preserved and exhibited in the Museum of Natural History in the capital, Maputo. Two African bearers transport an indolent colonial in a *machila* (hammock on a pole). One leg droops lazily over the side, perhaps swinging in time to their work song which, as all over Africa, was invariably a song of derision and contempt.

One sculptor, Pundhi, and his first teacher, Nancoco, now working in the provisional capital, Pemba, maintained that they had no fear of producing 'political' figures. The colonists appreciated the apparently subordinate attitude of the figures they carved and so encouraged them to develop their craft and produce sculpture as a source of cash income with which to buy food and other essentials. It was Sonto Nampade of Nandimba who pointed out that the new forms of 'ridicule', and the ultimate Makonde expression of the new man and the new life, *Unidade de Povo*, were introduced by and for the purpose of increasing support extended to Frelimo (interview, 31 August 1979).

**Peasant Sculptors**

In the colonial period sculptors worked relatively independently. Nanelo Mtuamanu (interview, 1 August 1979) became a sculptor by imitation, taking up the craft as a means of improving his income. As a peasant he had grown maize as a subsistence crop but was then forced to grow cotton, albeit without financial success. As a peasant sculptor, life was still a struggle but he could pay his tax and buy his tools and 'pingo', the black wood. But he felt exploited. Individual colonists bought as many as twenty of his figurines in Mueda and Mocimba da Praia for anything between 2$50 and 5$00 (Portuguese Escudos) each, while his poll tax stood at 50$.

Even the introduction of the extremely arduous to work, hard black wood was a recent innovation, demanded by the colonists. The Europeans wanted a lasting investment in art in the same way that they created a demand for the heavy, carved, hard wood furniture which has become symbolic of the period and serves as heirlooms in Portugal. The change from soft white wood to hard black wood was thus not an expression of black consciousness but rather another stage in the extraction of surplus labour value.
During the armed struggle all this changed for Mtuamanu. He joined another of the sculptors' cooperatives organised by Frelimo, in this case one named Beira after the city in central Mozambique. The product of its members' labours altered with the change in their conditions and relations of production. They began to organise their timber supply collectively and to work together at a central work site. And they began to carve both figures of suffering and caricatures of ridicule intended to represent their immediate oppressor — the local cipai, Luis Camoes — as well as Caetano, the dictator and enemy, far away in Portugal. Vessa Maliwa (interview, 31 July 1979) recalls how he heard that Luis Camoes had a damaged eye. The sculptors began to incorporate this characteristic feature in carving their figures of ridicule, but it also served to demonstrate that Camoes was human like them. Perhaps he is the figure portrayed as the burden of a woman, the one eyed chongo in the Malde collection (No. 102) and the helmet mask named Askari ya Pikipiki in the catalogue.

The interlinkage of peasants with tools, pumpkins and pots which characterises Unidade de Povo figures, directly represented the unity in action that Frelimo was carefully building. Examples of this motif from the Malde collection, produced by the Makonde in Tanzania, and there named Ujamna, are much more massive in scale than those from the Mozambican cooperatives, perhaps in consequence of the peculiarities of demand reflected in the market. One of the Tanzanian examples shown by Malde (No. 226) is particularly heavy, as it is essentially a log carved in bas-relief. Those from Mozambique are lighter in conception, carved outward as if were, with the figures carefully balanced and interwoven into the whole, creating a greater sense of life and movement. They more clearly express the task and challenge of building the new nation. Without obvious antecedents in either Mozambique or Tanzania, they first appeared around 1959, an indication of the association of their birth as a political expression with that of Frelimo.

**Art and Political Ideology**

In contrast, the shetani (spirit) figures carved by the Makonde appear to have no overt political associations. Like the rest of the black wood work, they represent a modern addition to the Makonde tradition, but one that draws even so on the Makonde cosmology and collective experience — of work in the fields, of village life and of respect for the ancestors. But if not a direct political expression, the difference in shetani carved in Tanzania as against those produced in Mozambique may indicate the nuances of differing political interests.

In Tanzania the production of shetani is uninhibitedly market led, specifically in response to the popular demand of the west for the exotically erotic. Figures of this mode overflow with sexual activity, their sexual organs gleefully exaggerated and central to the theme portrayed. The sequence in the Malde collection produced by Steffano Alberto, an acknowledged master of the school by fellow proponents and commentators alike, depicting a period in his life when he passed from dejection
through a delirious love affair and then to family contentment, ably illustrates this dominant characteristic which is so markedly lacking or restrained in the *shetani* of the Frelimo tradition of Mozambique (Nos. 136-138).

The latter conspicuously lack sexual organs and display no explicit couplings, and may thereby be regarded as reflecting the somewhat puritanical view of sex, immodesty and coarse humour developed by Frelimo. This is not an indication of the failure of the party's leadership to escape the formative influence of colonial mission school morality, nor of the 'drab hand' of East European socialist state morality imbued by those who profited from education there. It is rather a statement of the predominance of Mozambican political culture in art.

Mozambique's conservative neighbours, Malawi and Swaziland, conduct periodic persecutions against persons, generally women, viewed as exhibiting overt symbols of their sexuality and thereby posing a threat to the reactionary status quo of paternalistic and oppressive male domination. Frelimo, on the other hand, has campaigned openly against all forms of sexism and racism inherent in the traditional and colonial society which it is intent on overturning. The formal advocacy of equality of the sexes in all spheres has entailed a confrontation with prostitution, ribaldry and other forms of economic and social exploitation of women. During the liberation struggle 'the women's question' cost them some degree of conservative support. It remains the stage of fierce debate. Frelimo under the late President Samora Machel has been characterised as joyless and calvinistic even by some of those who would otherwise applaud it. But Frelimo has continued to articulate the position that there can be no emancipation of Mozambicans as a whole without the emancipation of women. The difference between Tanzanian and Mozambican *shetani* may be a reflection of this ostensibly central plank in the Frelimo revolution.

The story of Makonde sculpture and its association with Frelimo in the Mozambican context involves not only the intertwining of art with political ideology, but also with political and economic organisation. Frelimo structures at Mtwara in Tanzania were crucial to the setting up of marketing arrangements for the products of sculptors' cooperatives. In turn, part of the profit was shared and another went to the support of the armed struggle. This precisely parallels the arrangement in agricultural cooperatives, organized to produce maize, groundnuts and beans. One part of the product was characteristically eaten and the other went to support militants in the field.

Frelimo has not sought to dictate to the arts, but rather to create the conditions under which they might flourish. Its members and supporters have always numbered poets and painters and, of course, sculptors, whose work has revealed the political realities of life. Today poetry, painting and sculpture have been demystified. At the same time that specialists are acknowledged and their work fully appreciated, Mozambicans also claim
song, dance and indeed poetry as belonging to the whole people and each individual as capable of contributing to cultural expression.

'The Stone Horsemen Have Fallen'
In the first post-independence decade the initiative moved from the rural to the previously restricted urban areas. Mozambicans have liberated their towns, a process which has entailed not merely a revolution in economic and regional traditions, but also the unfurling of public art. The very walls have been liberated by the political mural which has emerged as a wholly new art form. As Sachs has noted, 'this euphoric wave of public art was largely unprogrammed ... It appears everywhere and reflects an immense variety of hands and emotions' (1983:1). It was only after their spontaneous appearance that large, officially sponsored murals began to appear on official buildings. At the same time a small number of large scale wooden sculptures have brought the revolution to open sites in the urban areas, such as the Square of the Mozambican Women's Organisation and the garden of the museum, both in Maputo. The stone horsemen of the colonial era have been defeated, the statues of the conquistadors having disappeared along with their pedestals.

As art was always one medium through which the political struggle was expressed, influenced by Frelimo and in turn serving to communicate the rage and sorrow which motivated its formation, art continues to be upheld as of central importance to public life. Frelimo's relaxed attitude towards art and artists is perhaps in consequence of the fact that so many of its members are themselves sometime artists, albeit more in the literary than the representational sphere.

In the thread connecting the era prior to the liberation struggle to the present, Makonde sculpture figures prominently. The white wood Mapiko masks were once secretly carved, stored in the secret imbona (tree house) or licuta (grass hut) of the Makonde and used in ritual secrecy in rites of initiation. In serving to conserve and cement the celebrants' conception of traditional society, they were necessarily involved in a formal curtailing of the power of Makonde women. The masks were the medium manipulated to link selected ancestors with the present.

But over time their origins became lost and they began to objectify hierarchism and obscurantism, as they were absorbed into the ideological panoply of the chiefdom system of regulos and their capaios imposed by the colonial administration. The regulos adapted 'tradition' to colonial capitalism and were content to assist in institutionalising it in the interests of creating a future 'independent' Mozambique. This clique used its powers of mystification and coercion in an attempt to appropriate the natural outrage of the populace. They encouraged racist attacks on whites and appealed to tribalism. They encouraged the traditions of the secret sects and opposed sexual equality. In the manner of traditional rulers they even divided the future government posts among themselves without reference to the people.
It was not without struggle that the Frelimo ideology triumphed on the Makonde plateau. The chiefs no longer rule, nor do the conservative secret societies continue to operate. But their ceremonies and the Mapiko masks have been liberated from repressive obscurity. In 1978 the Mapiko danced its way south to the capital to join in the national presentation of all of Mozambique’s dances in a celebration of the new nation and of the diversity and richness of its culture. In 1981, its rehabilitation from being the accomplice of counter revolutionaries complete, it appeared on the 50 centavo denomination of a new issue of postal stamps dedicated to the celebration of Mozambican sculpture.

As the fate of the Mapiko mask has represented the general transition from art symbolising the rigidities of traditional inequalities to art as popular and public celebration of unity, other elements of the Makonde sculptors’ repertoire have had a more specific connection with the course of the armed struggle. Some motifs have spoken directly to the underlying unity of the Mozambicans as a people, created by virtue of their oppression and subordination to Portuguese colonialism. In this they have served as prominent symbols of collective struggle in an international arena, as well as expressions of political comment in the Mozambican context. Neither art nor the artist is ever outside of the course of social events. The artist creates, but only within the confines of broader social discourse and understanding. It is in this sense that culture is ultimately created by the people as a whole. Makonde sculpture represents this process in a particularly explicit manner.

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Bibliographic Note
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The interviews referred to were conducted in villages on the Makonde Plateau in 1979 by A.Isaacman, the author and four students of the Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo as part of a major research, training and oral archive project centring on the forced cotton growing regime in Mozambique.

There are a number of discussions and debates concerning Makonde art in the volumes of the *Journal African Arts* and the article 'Modern Makonde Carving' by Jeremy Coote in the MOMA catalogue is a useful summary account. There are no recent histories or accounts of the Makonde themselves and the standard ethnography in the tradition of that school is Jorge e Margot Dias, *Os Macondes de Moçambique*, 3 vols, Lisbon, 1964-1973. An interesting small monograph which has appeared since independence is R.T.Duarte, *Escultura Maconde*, Maputo, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1987.
Reviews


A growing awareness of the resilience and importance of black working class culture, expressed through the diverse forms of song, dance, music and (occasionally) writing has come to mark the cultural scene in South Africa in the last decade. Gone, hopefully, are the days when academics and political activists either dismissed culture as irrelevant, or tried to decide for workers whether the culture that emerged was ‘suitable’ or not in an ideological or political sense. This arrogant viewpoint, based on ignorance and manipulation, is being replaced to some extent in contemporary South Africa by debate. What is becoming clear is how little was actually known in the past by middle-class activist and intellectual alike about what black workers believe, want or perceive. It is also beginning to dawn on people that the many forms of expression in existence among the black proletariat in South Africa are a crucial constituent of any future political or cultural dispensation.

The 1980s have made these cultural forms more available outside their immediate contexts. Groups such as Savuka and Abafana Bomoya have spread Zulu migrant music to a white and an international audience; choirs such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo, who have always had a big reputation, are increasing their following; and no longer are mbaganga musicians, isishameni dance troupes, isicathamiya choirs and the like treated with the scorn they once were.

In this revival, the culture of migrant and contract workers has been particularly forceful. These are the ‘people between’, who traditionally have found few meaningful entertainment activities or means of expression in the cities and compounds. Consequently, out of extremely impoverished circumstances, they have created a culture which uses traditional and rural forms as a basis and expands and changes these forms to fulfil new needs. They are uniquely situated to mould traditional and modern, rural and urban, ethnic and class identities into exciting new forms. Mandlenkosi Makhoba, foundry worker and actor, explains his experience and expressive urge:
I work here in Boksburg but my spirit is in ... the countryside. I was born there and my father was born there. But for twenty years now I have worked in the factories on the East Rand ... I tell you this story to remind you of your life. I tell you this story so you will remember your struggle and the story of the struggle we fight. AMANDLA! (from The Sun Shall Rise for the Workers, Johannesburg: Ravan Press: 1984).

It can be seen through statements such as this that these writers and performers — many using African languages out of preference and necessity — see other black workers as their primary audience.

Furthermore, in this cultural upsurge the democratic organisations of the working class have been of enormous importance. It is difficult to see how this cultural expression would have been possible outside of the last two decades’ growth of the trade union movement. In the factory and workplace workers from different backgrounds and life experiences — among them migrants — can begin to build a common purpose that stems from their class interests. The trade unions also provide a platform where workers engaged in economic and political struggles can tell the stories of their lives, depict the struggles taking place in the workplace and communities and put forward their opinions about the prevailing political order through the medium of plays. For instance, in the words of the actor, Simon Ngubane, the play developed by striking Sarmcol workers in Mpophomeni (The Long March) had as its aim

to show the real struggle about what happened at Sarmcol. It makes a great difference if you see what’s happening rather than just hear about it from other people. The play starts from when we began to organise inside the factory, then the strike, then how we organised in the community (South African Labour Bulletin 11,4 (Johannesburg, 1986) — quoted in Pippa Green’s ‘A Place to Work’).

Yet the price of cultural activism and change, like everything else in South Africa these days, is often high. Simon Ngubane, for one, was murdered by politically motivated assailants in 1986; Temba Qabula, a prominent COSATU activist, poet and actor, was forced into hiding during the UDF-Inkatha clashes in Natal after receiving death threats; and on one occasion a play about rent boycotts was attacked by vigilantes, its road manager killed and its costumes and props burned.

Von Kotze’s book traces the genesis and burgeoning of one of the most important parts of this battle for working-class culture: the theatre movement which arose from the initiative of members of the trade union federation FOSATU (later COSATU) in its Natal operational region. Beginning with its early, tentative steps as a means to build up support for union recognition at a conflict-torn Dunlop factory in 1983, the book traces the growth of trade union theatre and the changing concerns and increasing self-confidence of its participants. Important milestones along this road are documented: the decision after the success of the Dunlop play that culture was a vital trade union activity and not simply a useful means of occasional support for isolated trade union issues; the consequent formation of the Durban Workers’ Cultural Local (DWCL) by a core group of cultural activists; the opening of the Clairwood Trade Union and
Cultural Centre in 1985, a venue which visibly provided an autonomous base and centre for trade union culture in its own right; and a number of plays either initiated or assisted by the DWCL (and its support organisation at Natal University, the Culture and Working Life Project), ending with the well-known and influential play by strikers from Sarmcol, *The Long March*. The dynamism and responsiveness of cultural activists to political events in South Africa is also traced. For example, the formation of COSATU in 1985 seems to have gone hand in hand with a shift in theatrical concern from shop floor orientated to wider political issues, the radicalisation sharpened by the declaration by the country-wide State of Emergency the same year.

The success and popularity this theatre has achieved in a relatively short space of time is striking, an expression of the conditions under which black workers endure. The actors have to perform in exceptionally crowded, improvised conditions at union meetings and other gatherings, and the stage props they have to rely on are sometimes rudimentary in the extreme. Volunteers who participate in these plays tend to come from a cultural background to which Western notions of 'theatre' are alien. One reads again and again of actors whose previous performance experience before taking part in these plays was limited to sketches at school, participation in rural traditional oral forms, or other types of display such as boxing, soccer and gospel groups.

Trade union members are often not fully literate or proficient in English, and their resultant oral and vernacular predilections have allowed an immediate, wide-ranging response that not much other theatre in the country enjoys. Audience participation is desired and expected: in the singing of songs, the chanting of slogans and so on. At times the division between actors and audience is broken down by shrewd improvised means. 'Scabs' on stage threaten to report the audience (which boos them) to the boss; or the audience is invited to submit 'demands' for a fictional labour dispute taking place on stage.

The DWCL has relied on workshopping as a way of formulating and rehearsing plays, and von Kotze goes into this process in some detail. She shows how a more democratic, flexible and representative product emerges from such a pooling of resources, skills and life experiences in the making of the plays. The book further points to the political, as well as the artistic, gains from this technique. A sense of unity, respect for collective procedures and a transformed understanding of different experiences of oppression and their causes, are some of the advantages the author notes. Moreover, this theatre is responsive and responsible to the views of its constituent trade union organisations. Often participants are elected to these plays by the trade union concerned. Shop steward, union meeting and community responses and suggestions have shaped the ongoing additions and alterations that are made as the plays are performed over time.
Given the political profile of COSATU in South Africa at present, it comes as no surprise that this theatre is politically committed and takes up a combative anti-apartheid pro-working class stance. Von Kotze identifies two main types of plays which have emerged over the first five years of the theatre movement. The first — which she calls ‘plays for mobilisation’ — are propaganda tools used for publicising areas of conflict. They are generally initiated by workers from within a work-place or factory to mobilise support for strike action or related campaigns such as consumer boycotts. The second type are ‘educational plays’, which aim to deal with (and facilitate) discussions and debates and to widen understanding of issues. The concerns dealt with in this latter type are diverse and include: the disintegration of moral values caused by migrancy; the history and inter-relationship of capitalism and apartheid in South Africa; the localised history of communities such as the, now destroyed, Mkhumbane (Cato Manor); generational conflict; the sexual exploitation of women; the problem caused by ‘sell-outs’ in the factories and right-wing vigilantes in the townships.

The gains of the cultural organisation of workers have been many. ‘Plays give a message to the people to think’, notes Temba Qabula. Other activists point out that this theatre has helped forge links between workers and other township dwellers by reflecting worker concerns at home as well as in the factory. It has also strengthened worker unity, shown divisions which do not assist the struggle for liberation, and provided a platform for debate and a model of democratic, collective procedures of operation. Mi S’Dumo Hlatshwayo adds: ‘We’re talking about a whole new world with COSATU. It’s our responsibility as cultural workers to broaden it. To extend it’ (p.77).

The cultural activists here involved are aware that their world-view has been downplayed in South African history. The need to begin creating the possibilities for workers to control their own creative power is an implicit theme throughout the book, and is the desire to put ‘across a true picture of things — our picture’. It is interesting to note the overwhelming audience demand for realism in these plays: accuracy of presentation always, we are told, outweighs theatrical licence in evaluations by audiences. Thus, while various forms of stylization and symbolic and humorous depiction do occur (the appearance of a masked actor in a huge, grotesque likeness of Maggie Thatcher is one of the high points of The Long March) communication of working class experience and consciousness, and portrayal of the brutal realities of life for the vast majority of people in South Africa, is of paramount concern.

There are, however, a few weaknesses in this generally informative and fascinating work. While von Kotze does touch on some of the problems that have accompanied the inception of this kind of theatre — in the production and presentation of The Long March, for instance — a full discussion of problems this form of theatre (and, indeed, COSATU) have had in their attempts to forge a unified working class consciousness in the
strife-torn regions of Natal still under Inkhata sway are rather lightly touched upon. The collapse of the KwaMashu Street Cleaners' Play, under the pressures of the divergent political opinions of its members and worsening political situation, leaves the reader with several unanswered questions about the extent of the political and ideological cleavages being faced; as does the incident of the burning of The Long March's vehicle by a group of self-professed 'comrades' in Soweto.

We are told early on that the book does not intend to take up the debate regarding 'working class culture' and 'popular culture' which has occurred spasmodically in various progressive and labour journals in South Africa over the past few years. There are seemingly good reasons for this, as we are told that Organise & Act must be seen as basically an introduction to its subject matter. Nevertheless some of the consequences of this are to be regretted. There is no consistently precise overall sense as to what the boundaries of working class definition and ideology might be, except in the most obvious sense of the division between the apartheid government and its allies on one side and the 'oppressed' on the other. This means in effect that the working class and its organisations blurs too easily into the pan-class popular-democratic forces it is allied with at present in the struggle against apartheid. The problematic areas of the interstices of racial, class, ethnic and gender identities consequently do not really begin to be explored in any useful manner. At times, attitudes which must appear controversial to any socialist are recorded uncritically in the course of the book, for example, the ethnicist statement about Pondo-speakers and the patriarchal-incorporative message lurking behind at least one of the plays.

Furthermore, despite the disclaimer that 'there is no recipe for making plays', a strong identification of the author with certain practices and goals within the trade union movement becomes discernible as one reads. Again, this might not necessarily be a bad thing: the practical and theoretical pros and cons of the 'true/false consciousness' discourse in the book is implicitly steeped in need to be conceptualised and discussed. The early disclaimer does not fit very easily with the increasingly imperative and teleological tone of the book as a whole.

Finally, von Kotze describes herself as a 'participant observer' in some of the plays, and documents the interaction of militants from the unions with cultural activists such as herself who, from the springboard of extra-union and radical middle-class theatre groups, have become increasingly drawn into and identified with trade union culture. The commitment and insight she can therefore muster give this book a quality and interest that would probably be missing from a more distanced, academic study. I am less happy, however, with what seems to me a lack of critical discussion of the exact (and shifting?) relationships between the cultural activists — even those who are shop stewards or strikers — and the class as a whole they speak for and to. The vision of a participatory and unified working class is ever present in the words of the cultural workers quoted in this book. Unfortunately, the complexities of interaction between self-conscious
cultural purveyor and newly-elected actor or partly-conscientised community sometimes are blurred into a facile organic relationship as a result. This leads to one or two unconscious ironies, such as the rejoinder by actors in *The Long March* to advice from an audience that ‘together as actors we decide not to change things without the advice of our organisers’. This is coupled with a downplaying of the implications of the role of the core-group of activists within the DWCL in shaping the direction, form and ideology of many of the plays discussed here. Moreover, for some working-class actors these plays seem to be perceived as in part an enabling device, allowing them to become more proficient in English or more ‘professional’ as actors. These gains are heartening, but there is no discussion of how such individual advancement accords with or contradicts the anti-specialist and anti-elitist thrust of this theatre as a whole. The book’s lingering tendency to collapse activist into community (or, on a different level, performer into audience) is in my opinion too easily made.

Nevertheless, this is a valuable book. Its author, and the tirelessly committed cultural workers she speaks of, are to be congratulated on their achievement. One comes away from *Organise & Act* with an overwhelming impression of the importance of what has been begun here. One of the members of the DWCL, Mi Hlatshwayo, has since been elected the first full-time cultural co-ordinator of COSATU, and has taken on the task of facilitating and consolidating culture on a national scale. Recognition that ‘the struggle for cultural transformations must be central to the general struggle for liberation’ seems to be forthcoming in progressive circles in South Africa now, in a way which must be satisfying and heartening for the activists who have been involved in this generative experience in Natal.

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During May and June, the local and international public witnessed one of the most brutal forced removals of squatter communities ever to take place in South Africa. In two separate but related paramilitary operations, residents from Old Crossroads, wearing bits of white cloth to identify themselves — hence the name ‘witdoeke’ — forcibly removed over 70,000 people from the surrounding squatter communities. In less than a month, the ‘witdoeke’, with the uncontested support of members of the South African Police (SAP) and South African Defence Force (SADF), had removed not only the most consistently resistant squatters in the Cape Peninsula, but also, and perhaps more crucially, the support bases for United Democratic Front (UDF)-affiliated organisations operating in the area. During this process, squatter linkages with progressive organisations were severed and, for the moment, political control returned to local state authorities — black and white. In a series of bold strokes, Crossroads, once a symbol of defiance and resistance to the removal strategies of the apartheid state, had become a symbol of right-wing vigilante reactionary ‘black-on-black’ violence. The long-held dream of ‘local political activists...
incorporating Crossroads into the progressive movement had turned into a nightmare'.

With this dramatic paragraph, Josette Cole introduces her powerful book on the Crossroads experience. In it, she traces the history of 'squatting' in and around Cape Town — and at Crossroads in particular — since the mid-1970s. This is a story of housing shortage, influx control, 'coloured labour preference', broken families and the struggle to find a place to live. For complex and peculiar reasons, not least of which was the determination of the people involved, Crossroads, alone among the major squatter settlements of the western Cape, gained official tolerance as an 'emergency camp' in 1976. In the space provided by this first retreat in the state's assault on the African population of Cape Town, the community developed and grew. And it acquired both an army of external contacts, helpers, do-gooders and political associates, and an internal complexity of political organisations and conflict.

For some years the insularity of Crossroads from changing national political struggles — best symbolised by the Crossroads reprieve in the midst of the 1976 Soweto uprisings — continued. But eventually the intensity of events elsewhere touched Crossroads too. 'Progressive' organisations, like the United Womens Organisation (UWO) and the Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO) worked hard at pulling the people of Crossroads into the mainstream of the politics of making the townships ungovernable — confronting the state and its allies in the streets and their homes, driving agents and agencies of the state out of the townships and squatter communities. To some degree these organisations succeeded. Many of the youth of the squatter settlements joined the 'comrades' and, as in other cities, tried to attack the state where possible. The 'comrades' also sought to establish alternative structures of government, such as 'peoples' courts', and to bring pressure to bear on 'the system' through consumer boycotts of businesses 'in town'.

In the Crossroads case, the reaction of some other forces within the community to the activities of the comrades was both negative and effective. With gathering momentum from the end of 1985, vigilante groups — which had been called together at various times in previous years too, when their bits of white identifying cloth had given them the name 'witdoeke' — began to attack representatives of progressive organisations. Those who had control of effective structures of power within Crossroads, far from delivering those 'alternative structures of government' into the hands of progressive organisations, used them instead to mobilise elements in the community against the comrades. With the approval, aid and perhaps inspiration of the state on their side, local leaders led attacks on whole chunks of the Crossroads complex and destroyed them. In the process, many thousands of people lost homes which ranged from makeshift shelters to relatively substantial residences. The land which they had occupied passed into the hands of the state and under the effective control of the local leaders. Forced to find shelter elsewhere, many of the refugees bowed — after three years of resistance

— to the wishes of the state, and moved to the new township of Khayelitsha. What the state on its own had not achieved, its new-found allies delivered. Thus the description of the 1986 Crossroads violence as the most brutal forced removal even in the appalling history of population relocation in South Africa. But the theme of forced removal connects here with others of at least equal significance.

Crossroads demonstrates absolutely that ‘black-on-black’ violence in South Africa is not simply the ‘tribal’ or ‘warring political factions’ story told by the state’s propaganda. But at the same time the book demonstrates that ‘black-on-black’ violence is not merely a state conspiracy, orchestrated and created by the state alone. There are real and substantial forces within communities like Crossroads which have given rise to increasing conflicts. Crossroads shows how the roots of those conflicts may lie in competition over a variety of opportunities for accumulation. Those opportunities may broadly be of at least three types. First, control of areas of land may provide ‘leaders’ with the opportunity to extract ‘rent’ in the form of settlement and/or ‘membership’ fees. Second, control of access to the community may yield the ability to determine who shall trade or carry on other economic activities, with concomitant collection of charges or protection money. And third, control of whatever structures of ‘government’ exist — elected or appointed committees, for example — may allow special opportunities for corruption as, for example, when monies collected to pay legal fees are diverted into the pockets of community ‘leaders’. For any of these forms of accumulation to proceed requires a degree of political control over the communities concerned and usually an ability to exercise
force, through 'homeguards' (as in the Crossroads case) or vigilantes of one sort of another. Furthermore, such opportunities exist whether or not the community under discussion is a squatter settlement, a typical 'township' or a rural, concentrated slum like those in KwaNdebele. What is central is that a degree of control over the community concerned must be established in order to allow these opportunities to be realised, and herein lies the potential for destructive conflict.

It took some time in the Crossroads case for conflict within the community to explode into violence. But the manoeuvring of individuals and groups for positions of control, and their involvement in processes of accumulation allowed by their positions, is laid bare by Cole. Chief among the political figures within Crossroads emerged Johnson Ngxobongwana, whose position was secured by gradually eliminating all opposition: the women's committee, the Sizamile committee when it opposed the Noxolo committee, ultimately his own executive when it proved inconvenient. But Ngxobongwana's rise cannot be understood solely in terms of his ability to outmanoeuvre opposition figures in Crossroads. His relations both with the state and with the wider community in Crossroads, as well as with other outside political forces, require consideration.

Cole shows how negotiation with the government over the building of New Crossroads (a section of new housing built by the state which housed some Crossroads squatters), over upgrading the squatter community and over raids and removals allowed Ngxobongwana to strengthen his position. Indeed, the implication is that negotiation with the state may on occasion help to consolidate the limited power which communities like Crossroads have at their disposal. This point would support those who now argue for more engagement, especially through negotiation, with state structures. But in Crossroads, an authoritarian leadership used the process and results of negotiation to bolster its own position. Would a process which insisted on more thorough report-backs and community decision-making, more mandating of negotiators and more accountability, allow negotiation between community leaders and the state to achieve position results in terms of security and power for the community (as in Crossroads), while also avoiding the pitfalls of concentrating power in the hands of a potentially corrupt stratum? This question is crucial as many communities in South Africa face the prospect of a long haul without security, upgrading, or any increase in community control, unless they enter into negotiation with parts of local and central state structures. It is often the case that the widely-rejected community councils/black local authorities engage with the state, re-establish some level of control over communities with the aid of the army and police — especially the 'kitskonstabels' or council police forces — and enjoy the spoils of an income associated with new funds for housing, infrastructure and upgrading.

Ngxobongwapa's authority in some ways came to approximate community council structures (p.159). This similarity makes even more urgent the question of why so many in Crossroads continued to support him, at least
implicitly. Cole shows that the answer to this question is complex. Among other things, the support of a network of headmen is crucial to the position of Ngxobongwana. But in addition, Ngxobongwana’s leadership at least appeared to have delivered security to many residents — security to stay in Crossroads, to improve dwellings, to remain in the western Cape. What Cole does not explain is why many residents were prepared to go so far as to support actively the attacks on people within Old Crossroads and the destruction of the satellite communities. As she says, ‘the rise of right-wing vigilante movements here as well as in the country as a whole’ cannot be ‘wished away’ (p.163).

In the Crossroads case, because of UDF support for Ngxobongwana, there was no division between violent opposition to ‘sell-outs’ and support for a corrupt authority structure. At first UDF affiliates simply worked directly with Ngxobongwana. Cole accounts for this alliance — later perceived as a grave error on the part of the UDF — partly in terms of Ngxobongwana’s ability to produce the right rhetoric, and partly because of his effective opposition to influx control in the western Cape. In the process, evidence of his use of violence to maintain his position against opponents appears simply to have been ignored, a point Cole downplays somewhat. There is, for example, extensive early evidence of Ngxobongwana’s profoundly anti-democratic tactics in reports in the *Cape Times* of 8 May 1984 and the *Cape Argus* of 24 July 1984. As Ngxobongwana’s grouping became increasingly hostile to the activities of the comrades during 1985, however, the latter sought — with some success — to divide the headmen from Ngxobongwana by stressing his monopolisation of resources. However, by early 1986, the old order had been re-established by Ngxobongwana’s persuasion of the headmen, and through them their supporters, to back him against the comrades. There may be a finer line than many would prefer to notice between the ‘sell-outs’ and the ‘progressives’.

Why did ‘progressive’ forces fail to make more headway in Crossroads? One reason advanced by Cole is that many people were upset by ‘kangaroo courts’ (as Ngxobongwana lieutenant Sam Ndima called them), and by the enforcement of consumer boycotts which people felt that they had not participated in discussing. These activities on the part of the comrades may have prepared the ground for reaction, but by themselves do not explain the inability of the progressive movement to win the hearts, minds and practices of some of apartheid’s best-known outcasts. Yet open discussion on questions about why people have been prepared to support outfits like Ngxobongwana’s, and to reject the progressive movement at decisive moments, would clearly be of great importance. It is one of the great merits of Cole’s book that she does not flinch from posing these questions.

One direction which Cole unfortunately did not explore has to do with the significance of attaining security in a place to live. While she has a vital sense of the importance of security to the people of Crossroads in the early years, and its role in committing them to seemingly hopeless struggles at
a time when they had nothing, she seems to miss the point when considering the implications of Khayelitsha. Simply because abolition of group areas and allocation of cheap land closer to Cape Town would be better does not mean that Khayelitsha 'offers no meaningful solution to any resident' of the squatter camps (p.80). It may be a poor option, but it offered greater degrees of security, and perhaps better opportunities for some at least, for example in accumulation, than the squatter settlements have generally. And in the manipulation of options the state and the 'leaders' of squatter (and other) communities may have a common interest.

At the level of state policy, Crossroads demonstrates great changes in the attitude of state officials and ministers to the settlement of Africans in the western Cape. The impossibility of entirely excluding Africans from the area seems finally to have taken hold of the official mind by degrees. With the decision to lay out a gigantic new area of land for African settlement in the western Cape — Khayelitsha — the motion of 'orderly urbanisation' seems to have become established policy in the area. Indeed, similar developments elsewhere in the country suggest that a much more complex series of different residential environments was now meant to complement the attempt to divide (and control) the African population. Attempts were made to 'sell' (sometimes literally) this new strategy to Africans. The prospect of success was uncertain, but simply to dismiss the state's strategy, strengthened as it was by active or passive allies in local communities, would be a mistake. Herein lies the national message of the Crossroads experience. Cole's book opens the way to discussion of appropriate tactics to address the state's urban strategy, even at this stage of South African history.

Crossroads is a textured and detailed account. Thus it raises many issues in ways which simply do not arise from generalised studies of recent South African politics. It is for this reason, that it must be read and considered deeply. How tragic it is that we lack similar accounts of events elsewhere: of the destruction of Langa at Uitenhage, of warlordism at Inanda in Natal, and of fighting in the dust-bowl of KwaNdebele. Only such detailed work will help to produce an understanding of the possibilities of organisation to counter the destructive effects of the state's urban strategy. One must hope that more Josette Coles will be able to provide those accounts.

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Computerizing Apartheid is an authoritative information source on the trading of information technology with South Africa. Although subtitled 'export of computer hardware to South Africa', the report's scope is
broader considering software and licences, exports from the Republic, and the growing acquisition of key western information technology companies. Also, the report contrasts the ineffective US military-technology sanctions with those applied to COCOM (Warsaw Pact) countries.

The report divides into three principal sections: the use of foreign computer equipment; computer sanctions; and, computer manufacturers' involvements. The first two sections are easily understood by the non-expert reader as most technical detail is supplied as concise footnotes, leaving the text clear. The last section contains a comprehensive list of manufacturers and the equipment they supply.

Foreign computer equipment is essential to maintaining the apartheid system. It is not merely the economy that is dependent on computers, but the entire state apparatus: without computers, the army and police would not be able to function; without computers, racial segregation could not be maintained. This fact is not lost on the single largest consumer of computer goods — the government.

In recent years it has begun a drive to local-source components, even funding South African Micro Electronics Systems (SAMES) to build a fabrication plant for silicon chips. SAMES produces simple chips for telecommunications and the military, but cannot produce complex circuits like microprocessors: these require large investments in machinery and skills (skills which are scarce even in Europe and the US). In fact, South Africa only manufactures 25 of the 2,000 chip-types it uses, and then only to a 'below world average' standard; the remainder must be imported.

Some research towards self-sourcing has been through the two-thirds state-funded CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). Some of CSIR's research is in civilian areas, other work with the SA police and SADF. Together with Armscor, it forms the backbone of South African military research. It is reported how CSIR proudly claimed in 1989 that it had created South Africa's first Supercomputer. The truth behind the propaganda is, however, that the design was simply an assembly of 'transputers' (from the UK): it did not use SAMES chips, and its construction was basically a 'wiring-up' exercise on imported complex components — that is, from a source which would dry-up were sanctions imposed.

The Government's attempts to second-source are hindered by computer consumers who regard local equipment as substandard and lacking credibility. Stockpiling because of sanctions fears, and distrust of local-sourcing has led the industry to grow to be the largest spender of foreign exchange — and the least successful in generating export revenue. Revenue is generated from computerised-arms sales and the export of software from Syspro, Pink Software, Comcon, SKOK, and Altech. The reviewer was surprised to find one such piece of software gathering dust on his shelf: 'TurboCAD' had only 'Published by Pink Soft International (UK) Ltd' as origin information on it; clearly the authors did not desire the
source to be evident. This software will be dusted-off and used for diagrams in the next ROAPE on Apartheid.

More sinister is expansion through the investment in foreign companies. One example is Altech's British subsidiary Peek Holdings which owns several companies with military connections. Two are Sarasota Technology (manufacturers of nightsights), and Husky Computers (manufacturers of ruggedised computers). Both supply the British armed forces. Altech also has other subsidiaries in Europe and the US which are not traced in the report.

*Computer sanctions* are theoretically in effect against South Africa restricting the sale of equipment to the military and police. Here the report clarifies the different emphasis between US technology embargoes to COMCOM countries and to South Africa: items may be sold to South Africa as long as they have a possible civilian use; the same items may not be sold to the Warsaw Pact if they have a possible military use. In reality, the logic is flawed; there is no restriction.

An example to illustrate the reality is CSIR: computers can be sent to the Centre if the projects they are ordered for are for civilian use, but not if for Police or SADF use. The reports cites many examples of exports declared as for civil use, then surfacing within the military — for example, a Marconi radar in 1983 which was put into service as an intricate part of the South African fighter control tracking system.

Even when embargoed equipment is 'passed-on', action is rarely taken against offending companies. By comparison, US firms who commit indirect violation of the COMCOM restrictions can receive fines of millions of dollars and 'withdrawal of access to US technology' — which, practically, means bankruptcy.

*Computer manufacturers' involvements* are detailed at length in the report. Listed are scores of companies involved in the supply of systems to South Africa, and 19 specifically linked to the arms industry. Only Scandinavia, Australia and Canada implement proper computer sanctions against South Africa. The worst record goes to the US; the UK is not far behind. The report suggests that pressure be put on computer manufacturers by buying only from companies which do not supply the Republic, namely Data Australia, Norsk Data, Dansk Data and Nokia.

The report encourages the asking of three questions:

**What sanctions should be imposed?** Any sanctions should be comprehensive and bilateral: they must cover not only hardware, software, technical documentation, components, licences, and access to international networks, but reciprocal trade in *South African* software, services and weapons must be halted for isolation to be complete. In 1989, the president of the South African Computer Society said the crunch would come if countries stopped selling technology — software and books: 'companies are taking the precaution of buying locally but in the long term we can't beat sanctions — they'll kill us'.
Who would comply? Global compliance may be impossible to achieve: Taiwan, South Korea, and Israel supply technology and also collaborate with South Africa in the arms trade. It is known that a community of 100 Israeli software specialists work with Armscor in Pretoria. These countries are unlikely to break relations. With these exceptions, sanctions could be introduced widely. Despite some leaks, some supplies, and some local development, the Warsaw Pact has dramatically suffered from US technology embargoes: sanctions work. Even Japan was coerced to stop 'filling-the-gap' when US firms were forced to cut many links with the Anti-Apartheid Act.

What would be the effects? Effects on the state could be guessed to be greater than might initially appear given the large number of computers already there, and local manufacturing ability. Sanctions would mean that no working machine could be discarded: the entire range of makes and models would need to be kept working. Intellectual resources would be thinly spread, and sanctions-busted spare parts would cost dearly in foreign exchange.

When the last two US computer companies closed their subsidiaries, a computer manager was quoted as saying 'South Africa will face the constant danger of being out of step with the rest of the First World': just the fear of sanctions has already panicked the regime into funding a chip fabrication plant; the psychological pressure from isolation by real sanctions, the frustration of poor-quality local spares, of feeling left behind, could convince the powerful white technocracy that reforms must continue — that Apartheid must go.

Computerizing Apartheid is recommended: it is comprehensive and thought-provoking; its informative contents are of interest to both the casual computer purchaser wanting to buy a 'clean machine', and the more avid sanctions watcher.

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incomes, let alone the incomes of the poor, discounted except for a handful of countries. Meanwhile average incomes in the first and second worlds have more than doubled.

With the major exception of China, effectively the whole of the third world has been attempting to develop inside the world capitalist market, because it has had no choice. Statist or socialist experiments are no exception to this generalisation, for whatever their attempted internal arrangements all had the major parameters of their situation dictated by their historically determined internal structures and their relations to the world market.

The whole adds up to a comprehensive indictment of market-led solutions. The Warrenite thesis of the continuing progressive character of world capitalism may have looked plausible at the end of the 1970s when half a dozen NICs were represented as heading a field of general advance. Since then there has been a general and rapid retreat, whilst few would any longer include Brazil and Mexico amongst the NICs; only Thailand and Malaysia are plausible ‘new NICs’. Furthermore the NICs are increasingly seen as special cases, succeeding through bucking the system in ways unavailable to the rest, rather than through following its rules.

The triumphalism of market theorists, reinforced by the failure of centralised state planning to advance the second world beyond the middle-income level, neglects both the latter’s clear success in the critical jump from low to middle-income levels (they were by far the fastest growing group in the 1950s and 1960s, a fact too easily ignored at present), and the near total failure to achieve this in the market-dominated third world.

Africa has been the most dominated part of the latter, the most divided (with over 40 states averaging barely 10 million inhabitants) and therefore the least able to insulate itself against world market forces. Its record is accordingly the worst even in third world terms. The African debt crisis needs to be seen in this context. It is not an inexplicable intrusion into an otherwise unproblematic development trajectory, but a consequence of the conjuncture of elements intrinsic to the system. Parfitt and Riley emphasise that analysis has to take place at both macro and micro levels. In their valuable study they discuss three frequently cited possible immediate causes: the oil shocks of 1973-4 and 1979-80; incompetent lending policies by commercial banks; and incompetent state-oriented policies by sub-Saharan African governments. The latter explanation is of course the one emphasised by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI, the World Bank and the IMF), and indeed forms a central part of their campaign for fuller incorporation of third-world countries in the world market on first-world terms. This policy has turned Africa’s debt crisis into a powerful weapon as indebted countries find all other options than capitulation to BWI demands progressively shut off.

Parfitt and Riley also discuss ex-president Nyerere’s contention that the fall in commodity prices, particularly in the 1980s has been a major cause of the crisis. More generally, commodity price instability — affecting most
severely ‘monocultural’ suppliers of primary commodities — interacting with western adoption of monetarist policies in the early 1980s, may be nearer the mark. Which brings us full circle, for the state-interventionist policies so deplored by the BWI were introduced by many governments explicitly in an attempt to escape from primary commodity dependence. After the first oil price rise produced excess liquidity, the commercial ‘bankers laid siege to potential borrowers’ who naturally took loans offered at negative real rates of interest — with the full support of western economic advisers. When the west later solved its problems by monetarism, there were two consequences: interest rates rose to historically high real levels, and prices of commodities fell sharply. As it was still far too early for even sensible investment projects made with the new borrowings to be yielding a return, borrowers faced steeply rising payments and steeply declining export earnings simultaneously. On top of this the second oil price hike meant that many had to borrow more short-term even to keep their new industries running — a policy that, with the harsh new terms, rapidly proved unsustainable so that many expensive investments fell idle.

Although many African countries had indeed planned and invested badly, and would have entered crisis sooner or later, many had behaved more sensibly. But the combination of rising interest rates and oil import costs with declining commodity prices, swept the strategies of all away in the same hurricane. The following decline in oil prices from 1984 produced similar consequences for many oil-exporting countries previously protected from the harsh winds, whilst offering only marginal relief to the oil importers whose economies had already been devastated in many cases.

Interacting with the external factors are the internal ones. Although state intervention, usually involving promotion and protection of industry, has played a key role in just about all successful development experiences in recent decades, from the Soviet Union to South Korea, it is not just a simple question of whether the market or state is ‘best’. Planning or interference with the market can be done well or it can be done disastrously. Or the interference can be on behalf not of general development, but of narrow clientelist groups in third world societies. Thus a major theme of this book is that progress can only come about by a widening of political accountability to the general populace rather than to selected clientelist groups’. Corrupt, undemocratic societies, in general promote parasitic client élites which have to be paid off to maintain political stability. As their main interests are in tapping into existing sources of wealth (including aid) rather than developing new ones, increasing urban bias develops, but with few attempts to make industries competitive, whilst the countryside stagnates and the country as a whole becomes reliant on food imports. Unfortunately, IMF stabilisation programmes are more likely to hinder any progress towards democratic accountability, as governments are obliged to become more repressive to sustain the austerity programmes, and may use the IMF funds to finance continuing political support by their clients.
The case studies cover a wide range including: the ‘absolutist kleptocracy’ of Zaire; Sierra Leone where an overdose of privatisation and ‘getting the prices right’ have to the IMF’s embarrassment left the country still in deep crisis; Nigeria, trying to adjust to a decline in its oil revenue, but with corruption and clientelism still rife; a failed miracle in the Ivory Coast, where BWI textbook emphasis on primary commodity exports worked for a time until prices fell; and a claimed success story in Ghana, where Jeffrey Haynes shows that the five per cent growth of recent years has been associated with large donor inflows and debt reschedulings, but offers no hope that the country can sustain growth without a continuation of such inflows. But this is precisely the problem: we know that countries can grow if provided with net inflows (such as presently developed countries enjoyed during their development processes), whilst the debt crisis has meant that most countries have been forced to attempt to sustain outflows; we don’t know that BWI policies as such rather than the inflows that they have sanctioned, have anything to do with the ‘success’ in Ghana. The book could have done with a final case study of Zimbabwe which broke with the IMF in 1984 over its conditionality, which was already affecting the social programme, but has still sustained four per cent growth since despite large net outflows; it has now reduced its debt to manageable proportions and were it given Ghana’s levels of inflows would probably be growing at double the rate.

After describing some of the proposals that have come from various sources to deal with the debt crisis, the book concludes with the author’s own very constructive proposals. Action is needed, they stress, by both debtors and creditors. For the latter this must involve a gradual writing down of debt, because few countries are in a strong enough position to emulate Zimbabwe, and in Ghana and Ivory Coast the problem is merely being postponed. Second a new flow of aid and investment is needed, and third, even more important, a liberalisation of trade must occur at the developed world end. But along with these Parfitt and Riley grasp the nettle of advocating an alternative type of conditionality to that of the BWI: the above package should be made conditional on beginning the process of democratisation, dismantling the clientelist structures and empowering the poor, especially the rural poor, and meeting basic needs. There will naturally be opposition to this in the South on grounds of imperialism and paternalism, but despite the element of truth in such an accusation, the balance would be on the side of the good, unlike the case with present conditionality. In the North there will also be opposition because the clientelist structures are substantially an outcome of Northern desire to control the South: what else are Mobutu and Mengistu but clients of the USA and USSR? As the authors say, ‘It may well be that this is the most ambitious of our proposals, but in the long term it is perhaps the most essential to African development.’

Colin Stoneman is at the Centre for Southern African Studies, University of York, and is an editor of ROAPE.
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