University of Southampton

Workers' Education for Workers' Power

A Case Study of A School for Black Workers at a White University in South Africa 1988-1996

Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy

WORKERS' EDUCATION FOR WORKERS' POWER

by Mary Geraldine McKeever

This is a qualitative interpretive study of a school set up by black workers at a white university in South Africa. The history of the university is explored, as is the education system developed for the black population with particular reference to resistance in education. The education struggle is then contextualized within the broader struggle against colonialism and apartheid. The history of the Workers' School is constructed using documentary materials and interviews. Three research questions are addressed - the relationship between education for liberation and education for certification, the relationship between the radical intellectual, the worker and the university and the relationship between organizational change and social change.

My findings were that the Workers' School functioned for around three years as a democratically run school with the workers being involved in all aspects of decision-making at the school. With funding and with the capacity to employ teaching and administrative staff, the democratic nature of the school changed with less participation by the mass of the workers but increased participation by workers leaders. Gradually the school changed from an oppositional to a normal school, and when the democratic structures collapsed, the running of the school was taken over by a management committee. From 1993 onwards the school staff devoted most of their energies to supporting the fledgling Department of Adult Education of the new ANC government and played a role in the piloting and implementing the new national certified adult education programme. The conclusions were that liberatory education and education for certification were not necessarily in opposition to one another; that there was several things that the radical intellectual could do to mediate the relationship between the workers and the university and that the relationship between organizational change and social change was a complex and contradictory one as people tended to transgress under apartheid only to normalize under parliamentary democracy.

I dedicate this thesis to all the members of the Workers' School, in particular to those who lost their lives or their loved ones in this period, but also to all those who survived apartheid and who, through their work in the school, helped to open up education to everyone. In particular I would like to thank Elizabeth Mkwayi and Trevor Ngwane who conducted interviews and all those who participated in the interviews and helped me to gather materials. I would also like to thank Dr Astrid Von Kotze for allowing me access to Adult Educational Archives at the University of Natal Durban and Professors Keyan Tomaselli, Ari Sitas and Arnold Shepperson from the University of Natal for their guidance at the start of the thesis. I want to thank Professor Robin Usher, and my supervisors Professor Peter Figueroa and Dr Rennie Johnston for enabling me to start again and carry through the research. Finally I want to thank my partner Roy and my three sons, Kieran, Aidan and Brendan for their support and encouragement throughout the long research process.

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Table 1: Time Line

Hunter gatherers (ancestors of Khoikhoi and San) living in southern Africa	**Millennia BC**	
Mixed farmers (ancestors of Bantu-speaking majority) settle south of Limpopo	**300 AD**	
	1487	Portuguese expedition lead by Bartholomew Diaz reaches Mossel Bay
	1652	Dutch East Indian company founds a refreshment station at Cape of Good Hope
Khoisan conquered; slaves imported from Indonesia, India, Ceylon, Madagascar and Mozambique	**1652-1795**	Genesis and expansion of Afrikaners (Boers)
	1760's	Slaves and Khoi obliged to carry passes
	1795	Britain takes Cape Colony from the Dutch
Khoikhoi rebellion in Eastern Cape	**1799-1803**	
	1803	Dutch regain Cape Colony
	1806	Britain reconquers Cape Colony
	1811-12	British expel Africans from the territory west of the Fish river
	1812	Indenture of Khoi children on settler farms
	1815	Rising of the Frontier Boers
Shaka creates the Zulu kingdom (the Mfecane)	**1816-28**	
	1820	British Settlers arrive in the Cape Colony
Cape colonial slaves emancipated	**1834-38**	
Xhosa defeated by British forces	**1834-5**	
	1835-1840	Afrikaner Great Trek
Zulus defeated by Afrikaners at Battle of Blood River	**1838**	
Xhosa defeated by British	**1846-7**	
	1852, 1854	Britain recognizes the Transvaal and Orange

		Free State as Independent Afrikaner Republics
Introduction of Indian indentured labourers to Natal	**1860-1911**	
	1867	Discovery of Diamonds at Kimberley
	1871	Britain annexes the diamond fields
	1877	Britain annexes the Transvaal
Tswana rebellion defeated by British	**1878**	
Zulu defeated by British	**1879**	
	1880-1	Transvaal Afrikaners regain independence
Sotho rebel in Cape	**1886**	Gold mining begins on the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg)
Venda defeated by Afrikaners	**1898**	
	1899-1902	Boer War; Britain conquers Afrikaners republics
Foundation of African Peoples' Organization in Cape Town	**1902**	
63,397 Chinese workers imported by Chamber of Mines	**1904-7**	
Bambatha (Zulu) rebellion defeated	**1906-7**	
	1910	Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal and Orange Free State join to form the Union of South Africa
	1910	Mines and Works Act imposes colour bar in mine
South African Native National Congress formed, later to become African National Congress (ANC)	**1912**	
Indian general strike in Natal led by Gandhi	**1913**	Native Land Act limits African ownership to the reserves, Segregation laws; whites strike on Rand
African Mineworkers Strike	**1920**	Native Affairs Act establishes separate administrative structures for Africans

Communist Party of South Africa founded	**1921**	
	1922	White strikers defeated by troops
	1923	Natives (Urban Areas) Act provides fro urban segregation, influx control Industrial Conciliation Act excludes African from rights to form trade unions
	1924	'Pact' Government (under Hertzog), Afrikaans given official recognition
	1926	Mines and Works Amendment Act extends colour bar
	1927	Native Administration Act 're-tribalizes' African government and law
	1932	Native Service Contract Act restricts black labour tenants on white-owned farms
	1934	Slums Act municipalities given right to clear lower grade housing
Foundation of All African Convention	**1935**	
	1936	Native Trust and Land Act consolidates reserves, Representation of Natives Act removes Africans from Cape common franchise
	1937	Marketing Act gives state subsidies to white farmers; Native Law Amendment Act intensifies urban pass laws
Rent and transport boycott and squatter resistance on the Rand	**1940-5**	
Formation of Council for Non-European Trade Unions	**1941**	
Non- European Unity Movement produces 'Ten point Programme'; foundation of ANC Youth League	**1943**	

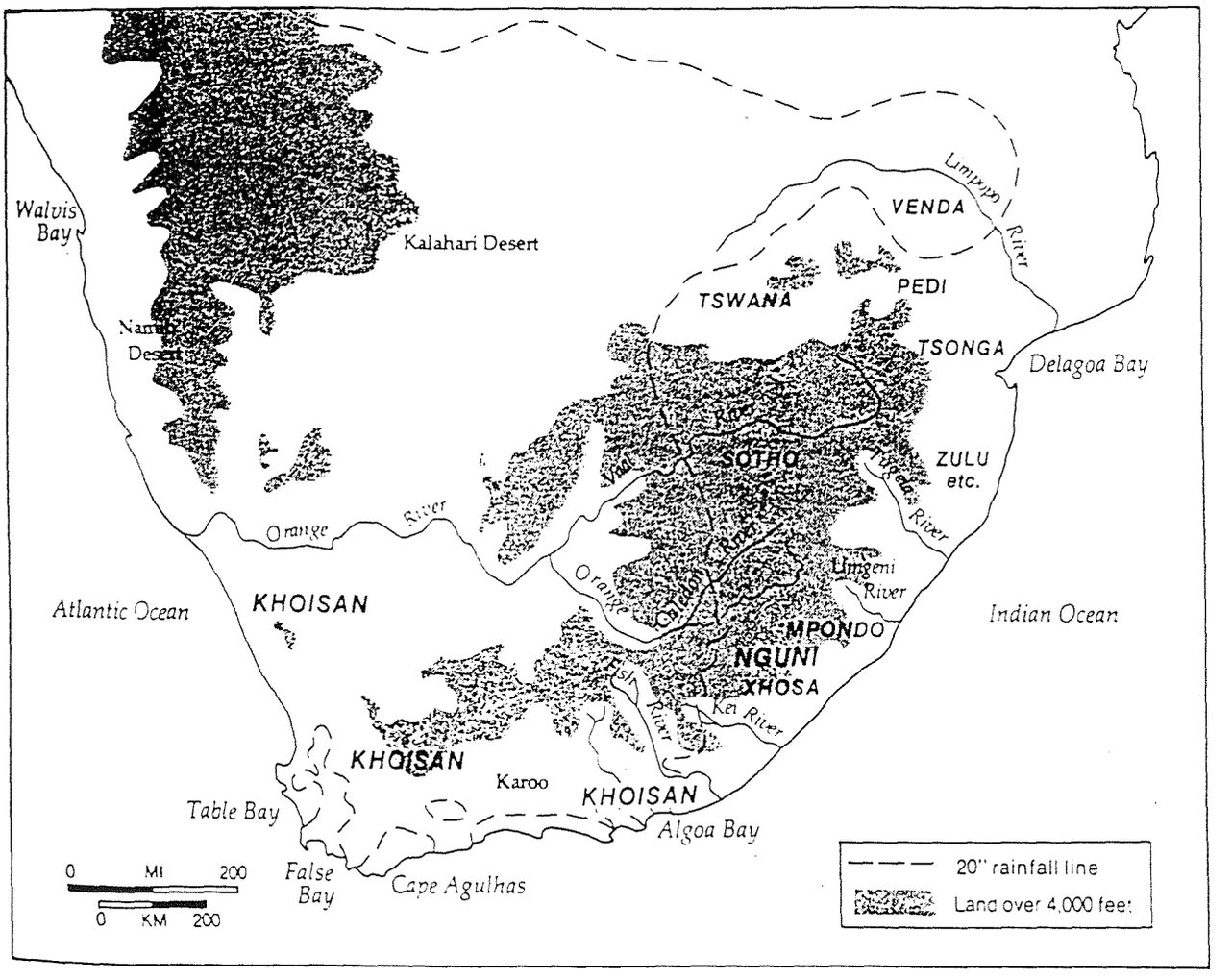
70,000-100,000 African goldminers strike for higher wages	**1946**	
Natal Indian congress resist 'Ghetto Act' restricting Indian property ownership	**1946-7**	
	1948	The Afrikaner National Party wins the election and begins to apply apartheid policy
ANC Youth League produces 'Programme of Action'; African and Indian conflict in Durban	**1949**	
	1950	The Population Registration Act classifies people according to race; Group Areas Act forces people to live in racially zoned areas; Immortality Act, Suppression of Communism Act
ANC and allies launch Defiance Campaign	**1952**	Pass Laws extended
	1953	Bantu Education Act; Separate Amenities Act, Criminal Law amendment Act
Resistance to destruction of Sophiatown, (racially mixed suburb in Johannesburg)	**1953-4**	
The Congress of the People adopts the Freedom Charter	**1955**	Native (Urban Areas) Act extends influx control
Mass Demonstration of women against the Pass Laws	**1956**	Coloureds removed from Cape common franchise
56 members of the Congress Alliance charged with High Treason	**1956-61**	
Rural revolts in Transvaal and Free State	**1956-7**	
Alexander bus boycotts	**1957**	
Pan African Congress (PAC), founded	**1959**	Bantu Self governing acts set up separate 'ethnic' homelands
67 Africans demonstrating against Pass Laws killed at Sharpville	**1960**	ANC, PAC SACP banned, State of Emergency

Umkhonto we Siswe (MK) guerrilla movement founded	**1961**	South Africa become republic, leaves British Commonwealth
	1963	General Laws Amendment Act permits detention without trial
Nelson Mandela and other leaders sentenced to life imprisonment	**1964**	Black Labour Act tightens influx control
Foundation of South African Students Organization (SASO) under Biko	**1969**	
Establishment of Black People's Convention	**1971**	
Widespread African strikes in Natal and Eastern Cape	**1973-5**	
Foundation of Inkatha under Buthelezi	**1975**	
Mozambique and Angola become independent states	**1975-6**	
Soweto Uprising	**1976-7**	
	1976-81	Nominal independence of Transkei (1976) Bophuthatswana (1977) Venda (1979) Ciskei (1971)
Steve Biko detained and murdered in police custody, UN arms embargo on South Africa	**1977**	
Foundation of Azanian People's Organization	**1978**	
Zimbabwe becomes independent	**1980**	
ANC guerrilla attacks on south African cities	**1981-8**	South African forces invade Angola and make raids into Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia
United Democratic Front (UDF) formed	**1983**	
	1984	Coloured and Indian limited particpation in

		parliament - elections widely boycotted
Prolonged and widespread resistance to regime in African townships	**1984-6**	State of Emergency; troops moved into townships
First contacts between ANC leaders and government, formation of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU); sanctions intensified; National Education Crisis Committee calls for People's Education	**1985**	
	1986	Pass Laws repealed, nationwide State of Emergency, thousands detained, prohibition on press reporting unrest
Violent conflict between supporters of Inkatha and ANC in KwaZulu and the Witwatersrand	**1986-96**	
3 week strike by African mine workers	**1987**	
Workers' School started	**1988**	South Africa undertakes to withdraw from Angola
Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) launches civil disobedience campaign	**1989**	De Klerk becomes leader of National Party and President
	1990	
Independence in Namibia, De Klerk unbans the ANC, PAC, SACP, releases Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners		
	1990-1	Lands Acts, Group Areas Act, Population Registration Act, Separate Amenities Act repealed, State of Emergency revoked; formal negotiations begin under CODESA; government backing of Inkatha vigilantes against ANC, widespread violence

ANC breaks off negotiations after massacre of 46 people at ANC funeral by Inkatha	**1992**	White voters support negotiations
	1993	Negotiations resume, interim constitution endorsed
ANC wins Election , Mandela sworn in as President and forms Government of National Unity	**1994**	
Department of Adult Education set up	**1996**	
Workers' School closes		

Table 2. Map of Southern Africa Sixteenth Century

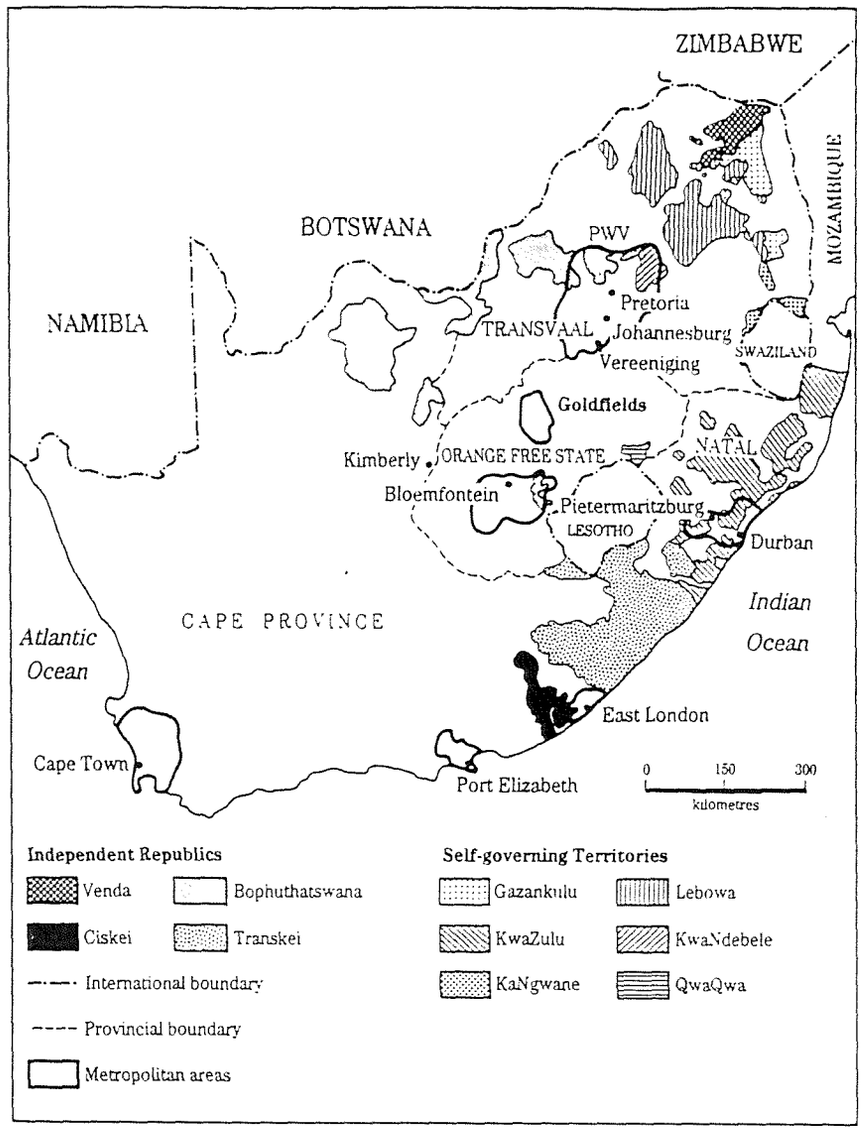


1. Southern Africa in the sixteenth century

Source

Thompson, L. (1995) *A History of South Africa*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p.3.

Table 3. Map of South Africa



South Africa's Homelands and Metropolitan Areas

Source
Murray, M. J. (1994) The Revolution Deferred The Painful Birth of Post-Apartheid South Africa, London: Verso p. 64.

Table 1: Estimated Total Population of South Africa 1989

	% of population	Number
African	75.2	27, 542, 958
Coloured	8.6	3, 168, 000
Indian	2.6	941, 000
White	13.6	4, 979, 000
Total	100	36, 630, 958

(Source: SAIRR Surveys, cited in Christie 1994: 106)

Table 2: Per Capita Expenditure on Education in South Africa under Apartheid (in South African Rands)

Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White
1953-4	17	40	40	128
1969-70	17	73	81	282
1975-6	42	140	190	591
1977-8	54	185	276	657
1980-1	139	253	513	913
1982-3	146	498	711	1211
1984-5	227	639	1112	1702
1986-7	369	887	1714	2299
1988-9	656	1221	2067	2882

(Source: Blignaut 1981 cited in Christie 1994: 108)

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Appendix 1 Table of Workers' School Minutes 1990-1993, including the type of meeting and number of people in attendance (when available).

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6.1 Analysis

6.2 Minutes of General Worker's Meeting written by Mary McKeever

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Appendix 11 Special Meeting on Finance called by Mary McKeever

Appendix 12 Two sample pages from School Newsletter

Appendix 13 Sample of Adult Education Training Documents designed for use at the Workers' School

List of Acronyms

ABE Adult Basic Education

ABET Adult Basic Education and Training

ASECA Alternative Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults

AFC Academic Freedom Committee

ANC African National Congress

ATASA African Teachers' Association of South Africa

AWB Afrikaner Resistance Movement

AZACTU Azanian Federation of Trade Unions

AZAPO Azanian's People's Organization

BC(M) Black Consciousness (Movement)

BCP Black Community Programmes

BPC Black People's Convention

BUWA Black University Workers' Association

CATA Cape African Teachers' Association

CATU Cape African Teachers' Union

CNE Christian National Education

CODESA Conference for a Democratic South Africa

COSAS Congress of South African Students

COSATU Congress of South African Trade Unions

CP Conservative Party

CYL Congress Youth League

DEIC Dutch East India Company

DC Disciplinary Committee

DET Department of Education and Training

DPSC Detainees Parents' Support Committee

FOSATU Federation of South African Trade Unions

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

IEB Independent Examining Board

IFP Inkatha Freedom Party

ILRIG International Labour Research and Information Group

JMB Joint Matriculation Board

MDM Mass Democratic Movement

MK Umkhonto we Siswe (Spear of the Nation)

NACTU National Council of Trade Unions

NEC National Executive Committee (of ANC)

NECC National Crisis (later Co-ordinating) Committee

NEHAWU National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union

NEUSA National Education Union of South Africa

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NLC National Literacy Co-operation

NP National Party

NUSAS National Union of South African Students

PAC Pan Africanist Congress

PFP Progressive Federal Party

PTSA Parent Teacher Student Association

PW Perceptions of Wits Study

RAU Rand Afrikaans University

RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme

RSA Republic of South Africa

P.W. *Perceptions of Wits* Study 1987

PWV Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging area

SABC South African Broadcasting Corporation

SACC South African Council of Churches

SACHED South African Council of Higher Education

SACP South African Communist Party

SADF South African Defence Force

SADTU South African Democratic Teachers Union

SAIRR South African Institute of Race Relations

SANSCO South African National Students Congress (formerly Azaso)

SANCO South African National Civic Organization

SAP South African Police

SARHWU South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union

SASM South African Students' Movement (formerly ASM)

SASO South African Students' Organization

SAYCO South African Youth Congress

SDU Self-Defence Unit

SPCC Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee

SRC Students' Representative Council

SSRC Soweto Students' Representative Council

STDU Staff Development and Training Unit

TASA Teachers' Association of South Africa

TATA Transvaal African Teachers' Association

TED Transvaal Education Department

TFC Teachers' Federal Council

TGNU Transitional Government of National Unity

TSA Technical Staff Association

UCT University of Cape Town

UDF United Democratic Front

UIF Unemployment Insurance Fund

WECTU Western Cape Teachers' Union

WITS University of the Witwatersrand

WSD Workers' School Documents

WSI Workers' School Interviews

WSM Workers' School Minutes

ZCC Zion Christian Church

SECTION 1 THE STUDY AND THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

This is a qualitative, interpretive study of a school set up by black university workers in 1988 on a traditionally white university campus in South Africa. The school was set up by those who, as black South Africans under apartheid, had not been able to attend school or had been unable to complete their schooling as children. The initiative came from a cleaner who had cleaned the university library for twenty years but still could not read and write, a black research assistant who was an ex-miner, a black sociology lecturer and some black and white students. It started off as a literacy project in the Sociology tearoom and was eventually given facilities of its own in a disused science laboratory on the edge of the university campus.

The school was set up in October 1988 and it closed in July 1996. Hence its life span covered the demise of apartheid and the transition to democracy, a period of truly momentous historical events. The school was started during a period of severe repression during the fourth successive State of Emergency, with widespread detentions and banning of progressive organizations, including student and educational bodies. It was closed down in July 1996. Along with many educational, non-governmental, anti-apartheid organizations it was seen as having fulfilled its role, which would now be assumed by the new Department of Adult Education of the newly elected African National Congress (ANC) government. The study is of one small school caught up in this dramatic history, with the university campus being the site of riots, disturbances, protests and strikes throughout this period.

I became involved in the school on a voluntary basis in March 1989 while working at the university as a tutor in the Academic Support Programme. I am Irish, was born in Belfast, grew up in the euphemistically called 'Troubles', and come from a working class Catholic background. After doing a first degree in English Literature, at Queens University Belfast, I did a Masters Degree in Social Work at Oxford where I met my husband Roy, a white South African. In January 1983, after the birth of our first child, we moved to South Africa where we remained until December 1993. I did not want to go to South Africa but went because my partner saw himself as having a role in the anti-apartheid struggle. However, having gone there, I became involved in literacy work and in radical adult education and I had little difficulty in relating to black South Africans, having grown up in poverty and amidst the political violence of Northern Ireland. Being identified as a white South African proved to be more difficult to handle. In the space of a few years I moved from being one of the colonized to being identified, through being white in South Africa under apartheid, as one of the colonizers. However, despite all the difficulties in this situation, I was accepted by both black and white and worked alongside the workers, students and township youth to help set up a school - the Workers' School - on the university campus.

In 1988 I was employed at the university in the Academic Support Programme at Wits but I had been involved in literacy teaching since my arrival in South Africa in 1983. On hearing that a new literacy project had been set up on the university campus, I went along to offer my services. I found a group of workers and students crammed into a small room in what had been the Careers Advisory Offices. They had nothing and the only book in the room that I saw was a copy of *Animal Farm* that one of the young students was leafing through. We decided that I would take an English class to begin with, and attend meetings whenever I could. Shortly after that, all the problems with the unions broke out (see p. 214) and one of the main workers, Audey, died. Being struck by the depth of feeling of loss at Audey's death and the bewilderment and confusion at being attacked by the union, I wrote a poem and brought it to the meeting. In retrospect, I think that my most important contribution to the school was to be there and to offer support and

encouragement when things were very difficult both outside and inside the school. I became involved on a daily basis and played an active role in setting up the school. I enjoyed teaching and spending time at the school, as often as not sitting chatting to whoever happened to be in the office at the time. I did not enjoy the meetings, as even with translation, I had to strain to try to understand what people were saying and meaning, and often I had difficulty in making myself understood. Working democratically and trying to involve everybody in decision making is a very tiring and time consuming process. The school soon attracted workers from the local shops, domestic workers, street sweepers and employees at the local railway station. Over the next four and a half years, I taught English, I was an elected member of the School Steering Committee, I acted as secretary and fund-raiser and was involved in facilitator training. It was only after leaving South Africa, and enrolling in 1995 for a PhD in England, that I chose the Workers' School as my research topic and I began to investigate the history of the university and of education in South Africa.

I left South Africa in December 1993 when I felt that I could not go on, and in retrospect I can see that I was deeply traumatized by the spiraling violence and the murder and rape of friends. Three months later, and just one month before the ANC took power, Bongani, one of the school co-ordinators, was shot dead. It was partly as a response to his murder, and to the violent deaths of other members of the school, that I decided to write this history of the school, partly as an epitaph, but also as a means of trying to understand and come to terms with what had happened in South Africa. To begin with I found it too difficult to read through the School documents and to see the signatures of those who had died. But with time and rest I was able to distance myself from the experience and in a sense remove myself from the school so as to be able to research it. This involved a process of objectifying the documents and coming to them as though they were found documents, and trying by all means to take into account the views of all members of the school as they were inscribed in the documents and in the interviews.

I have attempted to reconstruct the history of the school as a case study, using documentary and archival sources, interviews and personal correspondence. The school was set up by the workers to try to get access to an education they had been denied by the apartheid regime. So the study has involved critical scrutiny of an educational system based on racial discrimination and how this was played out on a white liberal university campus, between the workers, many of whom had never been to school, and the guardians of the educational resources of the prestigious university. The university was in a pivotal position as an employer and trainer of the almost exclusively white elite and the employer of almost exclusively black manual labour. The university, as an educational institution, was modeled on the lines of Western universities, from the architecture to the curriculum, a gatekeeper for the professions and a confirming instance of Foucault's power-knowledge formation (Foucault 1980). It was symptomatic of the historical period that the workers decided that they too wanted to share in the learning of the university. In the words of one the workers, when interviewed in 1996

> Because in that place there was no schooling for the workers. When the worker comes there he is just a worker ... he should get some schooling because Wits is a schooling place.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 150)* see footnote

It was also symptomatic of the period that they received very little encouragement from the university authorities, whom the workers saw as hostile 'owners':

> ... but we did try to go forward ... but even if you go forward and the owner of the place ... don't want what you are doing, you end up down. You end up down.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 164).

Despite discouragement, not just from the university but also from the trade union, the workers and facilitators succeeded in establishing a small school with paid teachers and

*see p. 90 and p. 98 for explanation of coding system

administrative staff who went on to play a role in the setting up of the Department of Adult Education in the new government. One interpretation of the history of the school could be that of a success story - a haphazard literacy project is transformed into a viable educational establishment, but one of the central questions in the thesis is the hidden cost of this development from 'too much socialism, too much unrealism' (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 129) to a 'normal' school, or in Benjamin's words, I attempt to 'brush history against the grain' (Benjamin 1992: 248). I look at the role of the Marxist leadership in the school and at their attempt to set up a democratically run school and the role of the intellectual and the working class, as it was played out in the school in this period of mass action and social upheaval. A central concern is thus with education and social change and the role of the university, the intellectual and the worker in this process.

Analytical Resources and an Introduction to Foucault

I am aware that it is customary to do a literature review at the start of a thesis, but I have decided to modify this for a number of reasons. Firstly, rather than looking at the workers through the theoretical lens of the university, I will attempt, in the first instance, to look at the university and the educational world from the perspective of the university manual workers. Within the university, the workers' allocated role was to shelve the books rather than read them and in their attempt to educate themselves, they did not have access to its academic resources. Secondly, the collapse of apartheid and its replacement by a democratic government is such a recent and momentous historical event, and one about which there has been so much media coverage, that an accurate description of how this was experienced in one school, in the discourses in which it was experienced, would seem to be a sensible first step.

In place of a literature review I have decided to use some of Foucault's work on power-knowledge (1980) and normalization (1979) as the lens through which to view the process of change in the school, and its parallel in the country. I will in addition draw on the work of Paulo Freire and Steve Biko to explore the central issue of the thesis, which is

the tension between education for liberation and education for certification, an issue which will be taken up in some depth in the next chapter. To a lesser extent I will draw on Gramsci (1999) regarding the question of the relationship between the intellectual and the worker. The idea of drawing on Foucault's work as the wider lens came from two contrasting images. The first was the image of black South Africans voting for the first time, standing in silence, in straight lines and in single file. The second was the office of the Workers' School on the day it closed, with its white walls, corporate ambiance and sophisticated technology. What was striking about both images was how they contrasted with earlier images of resistance in South Africa. Before the 1994 election, black South Africans invariably appeared in groups, singing and dancing. The songs and dances were often interspersed with raised clenched fists and cries of Amandla! (Strength!) In the early 1990s every available inch of space on the walls of the Workers' School was covered with political posters, the green, black and gold of the ANC and the red, black and gold of the South African Communist Party (SACP). These contrasting images left me with the question of what had happened to the colour, the movement, the song and the spirit of resistance that permeated South African life? How had this change come about? How did one way of existence change into another and what were the steps that affected this transformation?

These questions resonated with Foucault's work on power-knowledge, on dividing practices and normalization, and I decided to see if these would be useful as conceptual resources to try to illuminate the shifting relationships in this period. Although I will concentrate on the micro level of the individual school, I will suggest that there are parallels on the national level. From the right of the political spectrum, the 'extremity' of apartheid was replaced by the normality of democracy, and from the left the 'extremity' of radical education was replaced by normal schooling. When the Workers' School started there was no infrastructure. It started as a group of workers and students working together, teaching each other. Workers who could write or count would teach those who could not and the students taught, tried to organize the school in a democratic fashion and continually theorized about their lives at the university, and in South Africa, and the

workers joined in these discussions. In the end there were all the accoutrements of a normal school with classrooms, individual desks and chairs, white boards and computers. The workers were allocated to different standards, or levels, and were entered for examinations as individuals. There were registers and timetables, administrative and academic staff and a board of governors. I am interested in all the small steps in this process of transformation and normalization as they seem to confirm Foucault's argument that it is, at least partly, through these seemingly innocuous techniques that people are normalized.

Foucault demonstrates in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) how the brutal torture of the middle ages was replaced by the carceral, that is by the covert and subtle use of strategies of control of both mind and body through surveillance, normalization and discipline. It seemed appropriate to take these ideas of Foucault's and see if they are helpful in illuminating this period in South African history, which seemed to offer an example of a similar shift in power relations, with the brutality of apartheid being replaced by the normality of a democratically elected government. These changes in South Africa were compressed into a few years, and could be read as a type of potted version of similar changes in power relations, that occurred over hundreds of years in Europe. However my primary interest is not in Foucault, nor in offering a critique of these aspects of his work, nor even in seeing how they can be used in this context. My primary interest is in trying to understand the changes that occurred in the Worker's School, and I will use parts of Foucault's work as tools in this endeavour. Foucault would have been quite happy to be used in this way.

> All my books are little tool boxes. If people want to open them, to use a particular sentence, a particular idea, a particular analysis like a screwdriver or a spanner ... so much the better.
>
> (Foucault 1995: 720)

I assume the right not only to use Foucault's ideas, but to use them in ways that serve my purposes in this study. In other words, I would suggest that it is fine to use a 'spanner' as a 'hammer' if it helps to illuminate this history. My purpose is not to re-interpret Foucault, but to use his ideas in my quest for understanding. The aim is illumination of the conflict between education for liberation and education for certification, as it was experienced in this specific school, and the wider tension between the will to liberation and the will to domestication played out on the national level. This is not to suggest that the changes in the school are simply a microcosm of national changes, or that there is a one to one relationship between the two, but to suggest that there are some parallels between the two.

Foucault believed that human relations were inevitably power relations, and that a society without power relations could only be an abstraction. Those at the rough end of repressive regimes such as South Africa could only agree. In this case I am using his ideas about power and the will to power and relating them to the struggles of black workers under apartheid, fighting for power and for knowledge and freedom. The will to power is therefore not always and necessarily the prerogative of the powerful, but it is also present in the dominated. In fact Foucault was at pains to point out that power is everywhere, that all relations are to some extent power relations and that power is not some transcendental force that can be extracted from human relations; on the contrary, power is inherent in them.

Foucault developed a theory of power that did not see it as simply a top-down relation, but one that included the dominated as much as the dominators

> ... for power is not unitary and its exercise binary. Power in that sense does not exist: what exists is an infinitely complex network of micro powers, of power relations that permeate every aspect of social life.
>
> (Sheridan 1980: 139)

He argued that power was not situated in one place, but permeated all aspects of life and that power should be reconceptualized as not just a negative force, but as a productive force with dynamic potential. Furthermore he suggested that power is best understood as the capacity to become or to do certain things. It is exactly this feeling of power that Freire and Biko argued was necessary as the first step on the road to emancipation (see ch. 2). I would suggest that it is possible, even in the most oppressive of circumstances, to carve out a space in which people can create something of their own, which can lead to an experience of power and of being in control of some aspect of life.

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it excludes, it represses, it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth.
>
> (Foucault 1977: 194)

Foucault studied the emergence in the nineteenth century of the clinic, the prison and the madhouse alongside the emergence of the modern human sciences and new 'technologies' for the governance of people. He argues that human sciences and power relations constitute each other by rendering the social world into a form that is both knowable and governable, each being dependent on the other.

> Power and knowledge directly imply one another ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.
>
> (Foucault 1979: 27)

Just as power is inherent in all human relations, so is knowledge and Foucault developed the concept of power-knowledge. He argued that one of the ways in which power relations had been reconfigured from the eighteenth century was through the growth of power-knowledge institutions such as hospitals, social security services, prisons, schools

and universities. He demonstrates how all these institutions are built on a blueprint of the prison with its strict division of space and time, its dividing practices and rituals of control

> ... it is these micro-mechanisms of power, that since the late eighteenth century, have played an increasing part in the management of people's lives through direct action on their bodies: they operate not through a code of law, but through a technology of normalization, not by punishment but by control, at levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its machinery.
>
> (Sheridan 1980: 183)

For Foucault this mechanism was brought to perfection in the examination, with its marriage of knowledge and power. Critics of Foucault find this analysis too bleak, as though there is no escape and no hope, but I would suggest that, given these conditions, people are subject to conflicting desires - the will to be free is in conflict with the will to be normal. Furthermore this tension lies at the heart of the conflict between education for liberation and education for certification, and between the will to liberation and the will to domestication. However it must be said that these relationships are not simple and that the will to liberation can arise out of certified study and, as will be seen in the history of the Workers' School, the liberatory impulse can co-exist with a desire for certification. Returning to power-knowledge institutions, Foucault suggests that the way that these institutions operate is through discourse. In his work on the birth of the clinic, the prison and the asylum Foucault demonstrated how certain discourses constituted regimes of truth through processes of contest and exclusion, and how these in turn were ruptured and new regimes came into play and were implicated with power struggles.

> ... discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but it also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it ... discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses in the same

> strategy; they can on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy.
>
> (Foucault 1978: 101-2)

In a period of rapid social change, such as the transition from apartheid to democracy, one would imagine that these conflicts and contests would be expressed in different discourses which would be recorded in the documents of the era. I will thus analyze the shifts in discourse, as the school changed from an oppositional to a normal school, and the discourses it used to express itself in, in the understanding that

> Discourses are ... about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations. Thus, discourses construct certain possibilities of thought. They order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations.
>
> (Ball 1990: 17)

People are initiated into discursive practices which carry greater or lesser authority, depending on the location and the status of the speaker. A doctor in a hospital is in a different discursive position from a doctor on board an aircraft, and these discursive positionings both precede and locate the individual. Even in such loose groupings as the Workers' School, the facilitators and the workers occupied different discursive positions, which in turn were related to power and knowledge and the type of knowledge that was recognized as valuable in a school setting. I will thus be looking at who spoke in which discourses, when and why, and who was silent and also looking for evidence of conflicting and changing discourses.

While Foucault developed these ideas about how power and knowledge worked together, to many in the liberation movement in South Africa, knowledge was seen as a commodity that was kept behind the high walls and locked doors of the white educational institutions.

They could see that they needed this knowledge to succeed in the advanced capitalist society that they lived in, yet were excluded from.

> It is a lower, lower, lower standard for us blacks. You can't do nothing in the society in fact. ... because you see there is computers, there is fax machines. So most of these things we don't have ... I mean we don't have that way of dealing with them, so we don't know them. So that is why we felt we must open a school so that maybe we can upgrade ourselves to a certain level.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 151-2)

While individual workers saw education as a way of becoming part of industrial society, the mass democratic movement identified education as being a key element in its struggle for political power. Foucault's ideas of the close connection of knowledge and power would have resonated across the country. The emergence of the People's Education movement with the slogan 'People's Education for People's Power' could not be a clearer indication that the relationship between power and knowledge had become apparent to the dispossessed. While Bantu education was generally experienced as a negative thing, education in itself was much sought after. With regard to power, in this period the general understanding of power would have arisen out of the direct experience of the armed power of the state, alongside the experience of the power of the resistance movement with its mass rallies and marches. The state was locked in conflict with the mass movement and power, or at least a substantial aspect of it, was understood by both parties as being located with the state, with the apartheid government striving to hold on to state power and the mass liberation movement striving to seize that power and take over the government. This could be seen as contradictory to Foucault's theorization of power

> ... power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain ... it is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands. ... they (individuals) are always in the position of

> simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power ... individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.
>
> (Foucault 1980: 98)

So while Foucault's work on power is helpful in some respects, in others it does seem to be based on his understanding of stable European democracies with amorphous, labyrinthine bureaucracies, rather than on societies in the throes of violent conflict, such as South Africa in this period.

Just as power and resistance seem to be locked into an eternal conflict, so too do two other forces - those of normalization and transgression. Foucault concentrates on the normalizing of the individual through institutions such as schools, but my interest lies in the normalizing of the school, when and how and through which discourses it was normalized. Foucault's concept is particularly useful as the school begins to change, but at the outset the school had its own norms by which it defined itself, and ironically, the way it defined itself was precisely in how it differed from the norm, as shown in the following extract from minutes of a meeting held at the Workers' School in 1990.

> It is not a school like a DET [Department of Education and Training] school where there is just a teacher who tells you what to do. In this school it is a school to help people deal with problems in their lives. There is no big person in the school like a principal. We all decide together what is to be done.
>
> (WSM 1990: 1)

People are made 'normal' by suppressing aspects of themselves and developing other aspects and I suspect that a similar process operates at an institutional level. I will be looking at which aspects of the school remained and which fell away. I will also be looking at how change was introduced into the school and where the impetus for change came from. Was it pressure from the workers or an initiative of the staff who saw change

as being necessary for the school to succeed in the new South Africa? Foucault describes how normalization works

> The power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialists and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another.
>
> (Foucault 1979: 184)

I will be looking for discussions about standards and the academic achievements of members of the school or standards of organization within the school. Just as individual members of the school were entered into examinations and allocated a grade, so the school had to compete for funding with other literacy organizations. The examination, and the organizing of the school around examinations, was not something that was there when the school opened. I will be looking at how it entered the school and tracing its evolution in the school and the consequent changes that it brought in its wake. The school initially tried to reverse normal, hierarchical accountability practices, but the experience would appear to substantiate Foucault's theory in that power struggles continued regardless of whether the employees were accountable to those above or below them in the power-knowledge hierarchy.

Foucault states 'transgression is an action that involves the limit' (Foucault 1977: 33). In this historical period, limits were being continually transgressed on campus, in the streets and in the country. Black people were going into whites-only beaches and swimming pools, black children were going to white schools and black professionals were entering white professions and buying houses in white residential areas. On campus the Workers' School is a story of transgression. Lectures are for students, but when Trevor (the first co-ordinator of the Workers' School) lectured, the workers used to attend his lectures. The workers met with Trevor, Mothibeli (a research assistant who was an ex-miner) and some students in the Sociology tearoom, an area set aside for staff. These are the invisible boundaries that only become visible when they are transgressed. This was followed by the

workers asking for their own space on campus and their own facilities in order to learn. Again I am interested in when and how this transgression of limits stopped or slowed down.

To summarize, I will draw on Foucault's work to conceptualize the changing configurations of power and knowledge within the school. I will be tracing the micro technologies of power that transformed this loose grouping of people into a normal school. The creative use of power and the individualizing process that occurred as the school developed will be analyzed. Therefore I will be using Foucault to help trace the normalizing process in the school, with its mirror image on the national level, using him as both the wide lens through which to look at change on the macro level and also to look at the 'slender techniques' gradually introduced into the Workers' School to improve the organizational efficiency of the school. I will not be attempting a critique of Foucault, my focus being on constructing the history of the Workers' School, but I will be employing his ideas as 'spanners' in this task.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in carrying out this research is firstly to record what would otherwise go unrecorded, and by this act to establish a lasting record of the school. Part of the motivation is personal in that I was involved in the school over several years and maintain close relationships with many members of the school. It is also a tribute to the members of the school who were murdered and those who lost friends and relatives during this period, but also to the ones that have survived, albeit to spend the remainder of their working lives cleaning the lecture theaters and blackboards of the university. The Worker's School is part of the history of South Africa in this transitional period between apartheid and democracy, and as such it is worth recording and analyzing in depth. An additional motivation is that the history of the school could provide valuable lessons to others in similar circumstances in other parts of the world.

However, I find myself in a difficult position regarding academia. I am doing this for a PhD, but I have many doubts and concerns about this enterprise. My aim is to try to reconstruct the school, in as much as that is possible, and I will be drawing on conceptual resources taken from a range of disciplines and research traditions to do this. It seems to me though that the research will only be as good as five basic elements allow. Firstly there is the researcher, and I will discuss the limitations inherent in my position in greater depth later on. If I use a metaphor of fishing, I can see myself as the fisher person and the data base as the pool. What I catch will be partly dependent on my fishing abilities, but - and this is the second element- it will also be dependent on the tackle I use. A sensible fishing person would choose the tackle most likely to catch the fish she is trying to catch, and this is where I encounter difficulties, in that I don't know what fish are there, so it will be a process of trial and error, trying out different tackle depending on the type of fish I encounter. The third constraint is the question of where I am doing the fishing and here I get into the realm of virtual fishing or fishing from interviews and the remnants of memories and documents, some of them ten years old, and working in another country, in another historical time and at another university. Fourthly having caught the fish, some fish, any fish, I need to ask, who are they for? Who owns the fish, who owns the pool and who gives out the fishing licenses and do these necessarily coincide? I may catch an important defensive strategy of oppressed people in struggle and who is to say whether I have any right to write about it? My concern here is with the possibility of exposing aspects of the lives of the researched to those who may be in a position to use this knowledge to exercise control over them There is also the related question of ownership of the rights to create knowledge about others and how this knowledge might be used. There is here a question of power. Finally there is the question of how to serve the fish. The first obstacle is the poverty of writing or the necessity of transforming the research into a written text or texts, and to make matters worse, into English written texts. (However English is an international language and so potentially it could reach a wider audience than an African language). An additional problem is the inaccessibility of academic discourse to those unfamiliar with it, and in particular for people who have had little or no formal schooling. So the dilemma is how to construct a text that will be

accessible to the people it is about and which they can contest and develop. The discourse used by the workers at the school is different from that used by the lecturers at the university, and whose discourse do I use as I want to give an accurate account of what happened but I also want to get a PhD? The solution I have to come up with is to attempt to be reflexive throughout the research process, so that while I will be using conceptual resources to analyze the school, I will at the same time be looking critically at what using these resources, in this way and for this purpose, is doing to the history of the school. Secondly I have decided to work in two phases. The first phase will be analytical, with the aim of producing a text for submission for a Ph D, and the second phase will be working on the text so as to return the history of the school, along with the results of the analysis, to the workers in a form that they will be able to use.

Significance of the Study

I think that the study is significant for several audiences. It is an account of extreme conditions where education is used as a means of direct oppression, leading not only to rebellion and widespread and prolonged political and civil unrest, but also to attempts by the oppressed to create alternative, liberatory educational programmes. The Workers' School will be of interest to those involved in literacy and adult education in South Africa and elsewhere, as it was one of many anti-apartheid organizations that grew up under apartheid in South Africa. Many of these organizations no longer exist and this study will contribute to wider studies of the process of change in South Africa in this period. The other question that needs to be addressed is when the study is likely to be significant and where. It may have little significance in England but may be very significant in Africa or other countries experiencing similar conditions, or which may experience similar conditions in the future. It could also be significant, but in different ways in England and in South Africa. I think that for academics it will be of interest in its depiction of the relationships between the macro and the micro, of power and knowledge writ large, of the relationship between participative and representative democracy and the complexity of educational issues in a post colonial context. As it is written in a time of social upheaval,

it throws light on structures, which are static and taken for granted, but which, in times of rapid social change and challenge to the existing order, are revealed as constructed and therefore capable of being changed.

At the beginning of its life the school was a revolutionary alternative to formal education. At the end it was a 'normal' school and one aspect of this history will be to study this normalizing process, and to examine the technologies of power that facilitated this transformation, using Foucault's work on power on the micro level. This will then be related to the macro movement from mass uprisings to a negotiated settlement and the election of a democratically elected government on the national level.

As to the generalizability of the study, I would hope that many people will be able to see different things in it and that it will mean different things to different audiences. The historian Carr takes up the argument of Professor Tawney who argues that 'historians give "an appearance of inevitableness" to an existing order "by dragging into prominence the forces which have triumphed and thrusting into the background those which they have swallowed up"' (Carr 1980: 126). I hope in this study to do the opposite, that is to bring this submerged aspect of South African educational history back into the limelight again.

Path of the Study

I have divided the thesis into five sections. In the first, the theoretical background to the study, I introduce Foucault, Freire and Biko as the three theorists whom I have drawn on most heavily to help construct and interpret this historical account. Section 2 is devoted to methodological considerations in a context where the university, as the site of ratification of research strategies and knowledge construction, is at the same time the employer of black manual labour under apartheid. The historical background to this scenario is examined in Section 3, with particular emphasis on the history of education in South Africa and resistance to it.

Section 4 is devoted to the construction of the history of the Workers' School, with reference to my three specific areas of research interest, namely the relationship between education of liberation and education for certification, the relationship between organizational change and social change and the relationship between the intellectual, the worker and the university. I conclude the thesis in Section 5 by linking the findings of the study of the Workers' School to the above-mentioned questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEWED - FREIRE AND BIKO AND SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATORY EDUCATION

Literature Reviewed

In most theses it is customary to do a literature review, but instead, as previously indicated, I have decided to place this study of the Workers' School in the context of two slim volumes - *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire and *I Write What I Like* by Steve Biko. As also indicated, I will also draw to some extent on the work of Foucault, and to a lesser extent on the work of Gramsci.

This is a study of a struggle by disenfranchised and exploited black South African university manual workers to get access to education, and I will therefore place their struggle primarily in the context of the literature to which they had access, namely that of Freire and Biko. This is obviously not to suggest that this was their only literature as there was a wealth of oral, theatrical and musical literature that developed spontaneously in this period, which unfortunately I am unable to address, but which I would loosely term the literature of the struggle (Von Kotze 1988, Cronin 1990, McKeever 1998). However my specific interest in this study is in education and I would argue that these two books are seminal in that they enabled those who had access to them, mainly young black intellectuals, to work with their comrades, parents and communities in a way that permeated far beyond the classroom and was absorbed into common knowledge. In fact in Biko's case it is not just a question of knowledge but of a way of life. The key ideas in these two texts were absorbed into the mass democratic movement, a movement which ultimately led to the overthrow of apartheid. In this sense, these books were important influences in creating the new culture that emerged in the anti- apartheid struggle in South Africa, and as such must be regarded as among the most important educational and

philosophical texts in the literature of the dispossessed in South Africa, because as Gramsci argues

> Creating a new culture does not only mean one's own individual 'original' discoveries. It also, and most particularly means the diffusion in a critical form of truths already discovered, their socialization as it were, and even making them the basis of vital action, an element of co-ordination and intellectual and moral order. For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present, is a philosophical event far more important and 'original' than the discovery by some philosophical genius of a truth which remains the property of a small group of intellectuals.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 327)

Both Freire and Biko in different ways enabled this mass diffusion of 'truths'. In Freire's case it was the idea that education did not have to be used for oppressive purposes, but could be developed with liberatory intent, and that education need not be a process of depositing facts into empty minds and was not of necessity hierarchical and authoritarian, but could be a mutual endeavour by teacher-learners and learner-teachers to try to understand the world. Biko's idea that black people were not the victims but the active agents of history, and as black South Africans under apartheid were complicit in their own oppression by allowing 'evil to reign in the land of their birth' (Biko 1978: 29), infused not just the black consciousness movement, but the broader liberatory movement in South Africa, with the will to struggle. The ideas of Freire and Biko were thus complementary and these ideas were taken up by students, teachers, literacy projects and church groups. Indeed from the early 70's, Freirean influence can be traced across the political spectrum, from white liberal Christian groups to radical black consciousness organizations and his influence on the anti-apartheid educational movement was seminal. The test of the relevance of writers with liberatory intent is surely in how they are received by the oppressed and in South Africa, Paulo Freire's (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* provided a theoretical framework to challenge oppression. His writing seemed to be directly addressing the South African situation and it offered liberation via education and Freires book was

banned. The interest in Freire's work was spread through the University Christian movement and from there to the South African Students Organization. Despite the banning, copies of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* were smuggled into South Africa and Alexander offers this analysis of the appeal of Freire's work:

> ... although the government banned Freire's works, about 500 or more copies of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* made the rounds of the 'bush colleges' (segregated universities established in the homelands as part of grand apartheid) and were eagerly studied by the young activists of the Black Consciousness Movement. In Freire's works, they saw the mirror image of that which they rejected in the Bantu education system as well as the possible way out of the cul-de-sac.
>
> (Alexander 1989: 6)

The influence of Freire on Biko will be taken up later in the chapter after looking in some depth at some of Freire's key ideas in the South African context. Freire's work offered a way to turn education, one of the primary instruments of oppression, into an instrument for liberation. Freire's influence spread into the alternative literacy movement and there were several organizations and literacy projects which adopted a Freirean approach and which trained generations of literacy facilitators to undertake literacy work in South Africa (Wedepohl 1988, Hutton 1992). Indeed in the 1990s Freirean learning units were still being used extensively at the Workers' School in mother tongue literacy teaching. However, while Freire's teaching methods were used, his ideas of education for liberation were absorbed into the liberation movement beyond the classroom and evolved into a democratic approach to teaching and learning that was very influential in People's Education, in the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) and in attempts to formulate alternatives to Bantu education, all of which will be discussed in the following chapters. Four of Freire's concepts were of particular relevance to the history of the radical educational movement in South Africa in general, and to the Workers' School in particular. These were banking education, education for liberation and the pedagogy of the oppressed, consciousness and humanism.

Banking Education

> Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat ... In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing.
>
> (Freire 1993: 53)

Freire's critique of education uses the metaphor of banking, with the students being forced into the role of empty vessels receiving the deposits of knowledge from those who possess it. This would have resonated widely in South Africa where Bantu education was based on rote learning and must be one of the most blatant examples of an education system designed to prevent students from thinking! The banking model of education was thus one that students and young black intellectuals recognized from their own educational experiences as being part and parcel of the system of oppression designed to train them for lowly positions in apartheid society. So Freire's work provided the lever to enable them to see the reality of the education system that they had been exposed to, and also to see that an alternative was possible. In fact it is in contrast to banking education that Freire elaborates the alternative which he names 'problem-posing education'.

Freire's critique of banking education was not limited to a critique of the position of students as passive recipients of pre-packaged knowledge, but more profoundly it revealed that this type of education had the effect of throwing a smokescreen over the nature of reality and the relations of humans to this world. The banking model thus presents the world as fixed and static and knowledge as a commodity that had been packaged and was only lacking a passive recipient. Freire argued that such a practice of education was profoundly domesticating and dehumanizing in that it denied people what he regarded was their ontological vocation - that of becoming more human. I will return to the question of Freire's humanism later in the chapter, but for the present, the emphasis is on the profound damage that domesticating education does in taking away people's creative urge to uncover the nature of reality and to understand themselves in relation to the world. Freire argues

> For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.
>
> (Freire 1993: 53)

In fact one of the hallmarks of Freire's thinking is not only this distinction of humans as inquiring beings but also, and of equal importance, is his understanding of them as historical beings who are continually transforming the world and in that process transforming themselves. He summarizes the philosophical basis of his work in this statement

> History, as a period of human events, is made by human beings at the same time as they make themselves in history. If the work of education, like any other human undertaking, cannot operate other than within the world of human beings (which is a historical cultural world), the relations between human beings and the world must constitute the starting point for our reflections on that

> undertaking ... the human being exists as such, and the world is a historical-cultural one, because the two come together as unfinished products in a permanent relationship in which human beings transform the world and undergo the effects of their transformation. In this dynamic, historical-cultural process, one generation encounters the objective reality marked out by another generation and receives through it the imprints of reality.
>
> (Freire 1974: 145-6)

It is on this basis that he formulates his concept of problem-posing education as one which recognizes both the world and historically and culturally situated human beings as continually evolving and changing, and as a consequence, any educational effort must take cognizance of this fact.

> Problem posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality ... The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity ... Education is thus constantly remade in praxis. In order to be, it must become.
>
> (Freire 1996: 65)

With such a conception of the nature of reality and of people's part in the naming of that reality and the nature of knowledge creation, a change in traditional educational relationships was required. In place of the traditional hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, Freire introduced the idea of the culture circle where learner-teachers and teacher-learners 'teach each other, mediated by the world' (Freire 1996: 61).

> Through this project we launched a new institution of popular culture, a 'culture circle', since among us a school was a traditionally passive concept. Instead of a teacher, we had a co-ordinator; instead of lectures, dialogue; instead of pupils,

> group participants; instead of alienating syllabi, compact programs that were 'broken down' and 'codified' into learning units.
>
> (Freire 1974: 42)

Thus instead of arriving with a fixed syllabus, the problem-posing teacher-students, known as facilitators in South Africa, were expected to explore the major issues of concern to the learner-teachers and in an organized manner present these, or re-present these to the students as a problem, and in the process create an opportunity for knowledge creation.

> ... knowledge is not extended from those who consider that they know to those who consider they do not know. Knowledge is built up in the relations of human beings and the world, relations of transformation, and perfects itself in the critical problematization of these relations.
>
> (Freire 1974: 107)

Freire thus challenges the basis of modern schooling with its fixed syllabi and examinations and puts forward an alternative of mutual enquiry by teacher-learners and learner-teachers which attempts, not only to understand the nature of reality, but also to transform it in the interests of the impoverished and dispossessed.

Liberating Education / Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Having presented the philosophical basis of Freire's work, I will now discuss the elaboration of his philosophy into a pedagogy of the oppressed. As previously stated, the basis of education has to be communication and dialogue in a mutual search to try to understand the world.

> Education is communication and dialogue. It is not the transference of knowledge, but the encounter of Subjects in dialogue in search of the significance of the object of knowing and thinking.
>
> (Freire 1974: 138)

Freire assumes that the major issue about which the oppressed will inevitably be concerned will be the nature of their oppression and this study in turn becomes the pedagogy of the oppressed or the study by the oppressed of their own oppression.

> ... this pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation. And in this struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade.
>
> (Freire 1996: 30)

Freire is here describing how the pedagogy of the oppressed might work, or possibly has worked in some of the projects he has been involved in. My own experience in South Africa is of people coming along to schools or literacy projects with quite limited, and at the same time quite clear expectations of what they hope to achieve and how they hope to achieve it. Traditional education, for all its reliance on banking methods, is seen by many impoverished people as a route out of poverty for themselves and for their children, and is as such something that they are willing to make great sacrifices to try to attain. In fact they see it as potentially liberating. One of the central themes in this work will be this conflict between the liberatory aspirations of the facilitators and the desire for traditional education on the part of the majority of learners at the Workers' School. In these circumstances Freire's idea of a smooth transition from the unveiling of oppression to the transformation of reality seems to be overly optimistic and seems to assume that oppression takes on a monolithic and clearly visible guise

> The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation.
>
> (Freire 1996: 36)

In Chile and Brazil Freire worked with rural peasants. The impression I get from his descriptions of his work in South America is of working with stable communities of people who had only known one type of existence. Consequently when this was objectified through codifications, this could be experienced as a veil that falls away from reality or a light that is switched on to reveal the world as it has always looked, but which has not until then, been seen as such. This indicates one of the weaknesses in Freire's earlier work, which lacks an analysis of the complexity of oppression and which has what could be seen as a lack of direction or indication of the possible length and difficulty of the journey from liberatory pedagogy to liberation. Freire himself acknowledged these weaknesses in his later work as can be seen clearly in this statement concerning the complexity of oppression:

> One of the main messages of this book is that we must not lose sight of the need to recognize multiple constructions of power and authority in a society riven by inequalities of power and exclusionary divisions of privilege and how these are implicated in the constitution of subjectivity differentiated by race, class and sexual preference.
>
> (Freire 1993: xi)

Within a context of multiple constructions of power the metaphor of the veil falling away to reveal reality which is then transformed seems utopian. However it obviously did not appear so, or if it did, this did not seem to be a problem for black activists in South Africa

in the early seventies. In the Workers' School case, the learners were oppressed as black South Africans, as workers, and as men and women and I would argue they were also oppressed as the unschooled in an educational environment, and while it is on this specific oppression of the unschooled that this thesis concentrates, these constructions are not only multiple but simultaneous and co-existent. In South Africa with institutional racism under apartheid, race was obviously a primary construction of power, but it also became a focus of resistance to power with the emergence of a non-racial liberation movement. So rather than veils, it is perhaps more helpful to conceptualize multiple foci of oppression and multiple strands of resistance to them. One aspect of oppression that I have decided to leave out is that of gender. This is not a reflection of my lack of awareness of the importance of gender issues, but is a result of decisions I had to make concerning the most significant issues arising in the interviews and in the documentary data, and race and class predominated. The South African economy and societal structure were based on simultaneous divisions of race and class, so there was a situation at Wits in 1988 when 92 per cent of academic staff were white, and virtually every manual worker was black. In summary therefore, in an advanced capitalist, industrial and urbanized society such as South Africa, oppression is multifaceted and rather than conceptualizing it as veils which can be removed, an image of mutation is perhaps more appropriate. While the black consciousness movement may have both uncovered and undermined racism, no sooner was an attempt made to remove this source of oppression than oppression had mutated into another form. To put it more simply, under apartheid race was a primary focus of oppression but oppression did not disappear with the election of a non-racial democratic government, which is not at all to suggest that race did not exist as the primary focus of oppression. Therefore Freire's idea that the oppressed should be able to unveil the nature of their oppression within an understanding of their ontological existence, and work to transform it while simultaneously learning to read and write, seems optimistic.

With regard to the second point of weakness in Freirean theory about the length of the journey from liberatory education to liberation, experience enabled Freire to clarify what education was capable of and where its limits lie.

> Liberating education can change our understanding of reality. But this is not the same thing as changing reality itself. No. Only political action in society can make social transformation, not critical study in the classroom. The structures of society, like the capitalist mode of production, have to be changed for society to be transformed.
>
> (Freire and Shor 1987: 175)

While Freire argued that in naming the world the oppressed do change the world, he recognized that such a naming would not of itself lead to change on a macro level. The link between the liberatory classroom and political liberation is therefore unclear, but it is a question that confronts liberatory educators, particularly in situations such as South Africa undergoing rapid social change. In this case, while intellectuals and community activists immediately saw the potential of Freirean theory to work alongside the impoverished to try to overthrow apartheid, and they did this through educational projects, many workers joined these projects with preconceived ideas about education and placed a high value on traditional schooling, while recognizing its shortcomings in Bantu education. As previously stated, one of the central themes of this thesis is precisely this tension between education for liberation and education for certification. It would seem that there is a central contradiction in projects such as the Workers' School, which were set up as educational projects and which tried to involve the workers in liberatory education with the aim of furthering the liberation movement, when they did so under the guise of literacy teaching and education. Firstly people come along with specific educational goals such as learning to read and write or taking up their schooling where they had left off. They also come along with an understanding of the necessity of having educational qualifications in the modern world, and they come along with images of what schools are, which they had absorbed from society. It is also the case that in South Africa

the majority of black schools did not have the normal human and material resources of teachers, books, desks, windows and toilets, and if black people compared their own schools to white schools, it was these basic essentials of 'normal' schooling that they saw that they lacked, together with access to qualifications which could lead to highly paid jobs. This tension between radical intellectuals trying to implement a Freirean liberatory pedagogy and the workers ideas about the type of schooling they wanted is central to the thesis.

Consciousness

Freire argued that it was through problem posing education, or within the context of the oppressed studying the nature of their own oppression, that consciousness raising could be achieved.

> Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality.
>
> (Freire 1996: 62)

Freire's understanding of consciousness was not that of an existential individual interior journey to the discovery of the 'self'. Indeed Freire argues that the motivation behind consciousness raising is not to raise consciousness as such and he quotes Simone de Beauvoir (1963: 34): 'Indeed, the interests of the oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them.' (cited in Freire: 1993: 55). Freire argued that on the contrary it was the conditions which caused the oppression that needed to be changed and that conscientizacao involved people becoming aware of the structures that oppressed them:

> The term conscientizacao refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.
>
> (Freire 1996: 17)

Consciousness raising was thus a journey in which groups of people unveiled the complexity of their particular world and decided together on appropriate action to change it. Consciousness is a realization by the individual of his/her place in the world and liberation is not an individual but a collective social endeavor or 'a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women on their world in order to transform it' (Freire 1993: 60). It is this duality of reflection and action that is the hallmark of Freire's understanding of the limits of consciousness as it is conventionally understood. Consciousness alone was never sufficient to change reality:

> ... human beings do not get beyond the concrete situation, the situation in which they find themselves, only by the consciousness of their intentions, however good those intentions may be. The possibilities that I had for transcending the narrow limits of a five-by-two foot cell in which I was locked after the Brazilian coup d'etat, were not sufficient to change my condition as a prisoner.
>
> (Freire 1985: 154)

Freire argues that as people engage in a study of their own situation, they are able to understand and become conscious of their own position in society, and with this they can begin to emerge from that situation with a deeper understanding of their living conditions. He states that with this emergence and consciousness comes the ability to intervene in that reality in order to change it. I would suggest that this is not always or necessarily true and that consciousness of such issues as racism or sexism does not lead automatically to the ability to intervene in reality to try to end that oppression. However perhaps the more important point is Freire's, in that such an emergence *can* lead to attempts to change that situation.

> Human kind *emerge* from their *submersion* and acquire the ability to *intervene* in reality as it is unveiled. *Intervention* in reality - historical awareness itself - thus represents a step forward from *emergence,* and results from the *conscientizacao* of the situation. *Conscientizacao* is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence.
>
> (Freire 1993: 90)

To summarize, Freire believed that it was in working with the oppressed with their own ideas about the nature of reality that they could become aware of their own latent knowledge of that reality and become conscious of their own position in it, so as to begin to become controllers of their own destinies. Gramsci argues that the reason this is possible is that there is a way in which the oppressed already 'know' the reality of their positions.

> The philosophy of praxis can exert a leverage on people's consciousness because a part of that consciousness is already aware of its truth. It thus draws out and elaborates that which people already 'feel' but do not 'know', in other words that which is present in nascent or inchoate form in their consciousness but which is contradicted and immobilized by other conceptions. In order for them to break out of the state of 'moral and intellectual passivity' which these contradictions produce, an ideological struggle must take place, a struggle of political 'hegemonies'.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 323-4)

Later in this chapter I will be looking at this process at work in the contrast between the writings of the workers during apartheid and their views once the ANC came to power.

Freire's Humanism

Freire's philosophy and his educational methodology are both based on a humanist ideology that places people very much at the centre of the universe. He sees people being placed on the earth with a vocation to become more fully human. Their task is to accomplish this in the historical circumstances into which they have been born, and this attempt to become more human of necessity involves people in transforming the world.

> At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as women and men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Reflection and action become imperative when one does not erroneously attempt to dichotomize the content of humanity from its historical forms.
>
> (Freire 1996: 26)

This can best be understood in a context where oppression involves the dehumanizing of people by taking away their ability to act upon the world in order to change it. It is in this context that Freire discusses the culture of silence of the dispossessed, which he understands as the result of a learned helplessness in the face of overwhelming limit situations. However it is through identifying the limit situations that imprison them, that people are able to take the first step towards their liberation.

> Humans, however, because they are aware of themselves and thus of the world - because they are conscious beings - exist in a dialectical relationship between the determination of limits and their own freedom. As they separate themselves from the world, which they objectify, as they separate themselves from their own activity, as they locate the seat of their decisions in themselves and in their relations with the world and others, people overcome the situations which limit them: the limit situations.
>
> (Freire 1996: 80)

Freire sees education as being key to enabling the oppressed to understand the situation they are in and as key in allowing the oppressed to begin to try to overcome these limits. It is in this process of consciously attempting to transform their world that the oppressed become more fully human. This act of enabling the oppressed to overcome these limit situations is carried on by means of dialogue:

> Dialogue is not to invade, not to manipulate, not to 'make slogans'. It is to devote oneself to the constant transformation of reality. In that dialogue is the content of the form of being which is peculiarly human, it is excluded from all relationships in which are transformed into 'beings for another' by people who are false 'beings for themselves' ... They transform the world and in transforming it, humanize it for all people.
>
> (Freire 1974:112-13)

Freire thus regards this capacity for dialogue, for the sharing of ideas and the ability to consciously attempt to understand and to transform the world, as a uniquely human attribute which people can be robbed of through acts of exploitation and domination. This can render them mute in the face of what seem to be overwhelming circumstances. There can be few situations that were more limiting than the position of black people under apartheid and it is how Freire was understood in South Africa that I now turn. This section of the chapter will concentrate on Freire's concept of consciousness and both Biko's and Freire's humanism, and attempt to try to understand these in this particular South African context.

Freirean praxis in South Africa

Freire was always adamant that his work needed to be rewritten in each historical and geographical context (Freire and Faundez 1989), and it is to the way he was reinterpreted and rewritten in the South African context that I now turn. As mentioned previously, in

comparison to the Chilean peasants, the South African population was much more unsettled, with rapid urbanization and industrialization, mass evictions, forced removals and civil unrest. It is to an exploration of what these political conditions can do to consciousness that I now turn. On the one hand, in 1976 there was an uprising by black students against the type of domesticating system of education that Freire describes so well in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993: 52-60). The uprising by school students was not the result of liberatory pedagogy but of its reverse, an attempt by the apartheid government to impose Afrikaans medium study, which was immediately perceived as an attempt to turn the black population into 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' Following the Soweto Uprising there developed a mass liberation movement that ultimately led to the demise of apartheid. Thus while this confirms Freire's link between the consciousness of oppression and the struggle for liberation, the role of education in this process remains open to question.

> 'Conscientizacao' represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural by-product of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favourable historical conditions.
>
> (Freire 1974: 19)

While a small minority of black South Africans attended classes with a liberatory curriculum, this seems likely to have been a very minor contributory factor to the millions who participated in the mass liberation movement without any formal educational input. In South Africa, the site of a liberation movement involving millions, it would seem that people more frequently became politically conscious through direct experience of oppression and through participation in community, youth and student groups, trade unions and the informal networks that were formed on bus and train journeys, at churches and football matches and on street corners.

Thus in South Africa millions were introduced to the liberation struggle, not in the classroom but on the streets and it was frequently through the use of slogans and popular cultural expressions that this initiation took place. Here one of the workers, Elizabeth, describes her experience of the 1976 school uprising:

> I saw many things that hurt me in the struggle. Like 1976, yes I was there. I saw this thing after this thing happened. I was at work that time ... Our supervisor phoned for our head of department. He told our head of department we are not working, we are doing Amandla! And we didn't know that name that time, what do they say, if they say Amandla. We didn't know nothing about that word. But then we went out to Soweto, we started to see that things are changing now, so that they burn the shops, they burn the bottle stores and the offices. When we ask what they are doing now here, they said the children were burning the trains because of this Afrikaans. They don't want to read Afrikaans.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E 122-3)

Elizabeth learned from her fellow workers and neighbours why the students were protesting and while she learned what this particular struggle was about, she also learned the cultural form that the struggle took when she joined her fellow workers in downing tools and 'doing Amandla!' in support of the students. She joined in the supporting action before she knew the specific cause of this particular protest, although she would have been well aware of the many injustices of apartheid. I would speculate that many had a similar experience of being thrust into protest and only afterwards becoming aware of the specific cause. She was taken by surprise by the cultural manifestations of protest in the form of marching, singing and raising the clenched fist with a cry of Amandla! (strength!). This form of protest was subsequently used in virtually every form of cultural gathering. It is always used with gesture, often movement and it is a physical manifestation of an inner movement towards freedom. It is interesting to look at Biko's understanding of music and dance in African culture

> ... with Africans, music and rhythm were not luxuries but part and parcel of our way of communication. Any suffering we experienced was made much more real by song and rhythm ... the major thing to note about our songs is that they never were songs for individuals. All African songs are group songs. Though some have words, this is not the most important thing about them. Tunes were adapted to suit the occasion and had the wonderful effect of making everybody read the same things from the common experience.
>
> (Biko 1978: 42-3)

It is interesting that Biko should refer to music as enabling all those involved to 'read' reality and not only that, but that it allowed everybody to make the same reading of that reality. This education of a people, outside of classrooms and through the medium of music would seem to be one of most distinguishing features of the South African experience and one of the mediums through which people joined in the struggle for liberation. In this case, from one day to the next, Elizabeth's world had changed in reality, not in a codified form. It seems likely that many people became conscious of what was happening in a similar way and the question could be asked if this constitutes a change in consciousness as defined by Freire 'as the development of the awakening of critical awareness' (Freire 1974: 19). I would argue that this mass politicization did in fact constitute 'conscientizacao', in that it involved the mass of the population in a critical reading of their world and their involvement in action to try to end their oppression. This is not to say that everybody would have had the same level of sophistication in their reading of reality, and the level of consciousness would often be limited to the local struggles that people were thrust into. Nevertheless this would appear to contradict Freire's view of the necessity of educational input into this process, unless one were to include the experiential education of the struggle as an example of 'a critical educational effort'; but I interpret Freire as meaning an intentional educational effort, which this clearly was not. Paradoxically the aim of the protest was liberation, the same aim that Freire had in his work, but his emphasis is on conscious educational input, which in South Africa does not seem to have been necessary. In fact one of the workers in the

school not only knew that social change was possible, but had actually succeeded in changing things before he became involved in the school.

> I was involved in the strike of 1987 at the railways. It was very, very difficult for us because the apartheid was still very, very strong at that time. So we managed to change something, not only in the company but in the country of South Africa ... yeah at that time we want to be registered as permanent workers and we want our union to be recognized by the company, by the management and we want better wages ... and as I am talking now the union is registered under this company.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Th: 73)

Theo, a father of six children, was a member of the school employment and disciplinary committee while still studying for his Matric and working as a ticket collector at the local railway station. His participation in union activities and in a successful railway strike had given him the experience and confidence to continue to strive for change through his involvement in running the school. The fact that his union experience predated his involvement in the school again points to the possibility of people becoming conscious through direct experience of struggle, whether that be at work or in the community. While there is little doubt that consciousness could be enhanced by liberatory educational input, this does not seem to have been a necessary precondition.

However it must also be said that exposure to political unrest did not necessarily lead to a desire to become involved in the liberation struggle. The experience of many workers is quite vividly described by Dan, one of the cleaners at Wits:

> It was so heavy because it was like a big boulder we was still under, that situation of oppression ... so that time we see politics, we were not able to elaborate on them because the things were so heavy that we see too many things

> happening in front of us ... (WSI 1996 TN/D: 155) ... When we go to Soweto we find there is too much happening, cars are burning and whatever, whatever.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 158)

I think that Dan voices the experiences of many workers who were thrust into widespread civil conflict. As for Elizabeth, his world had changed but the situation of oppression was such that he found it difficult to understand what was happening in an 'elaborated' way. It could be argued that Dan describes what Freire defined as 'submersion' (Freire 1993: 90). Dan is looking back at his position under apartheid and he understands his position under apartheid as one of being too overwhelmed by the burden of oppression to do or to understand anything on a broader political front. However he did get involved in the school, but not with a motivation to change the world, rather with a desire to upgrade his skills so as to enable him to participate in a technological society.

> Most of were feeling that we need this education. Because the time of the 90's ... most things are going like technics too much, because you see there is computers, there is fax machines. So most of these things we don't have. I mean we don't have that way of dealing with them, we don't know them. So that is why we felt we must open a school so that maybe we can upgrade ourselves to a certain level.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 152)

This surely represents a reading of technological society and a consciousness of what he lacked in order to succeed and an awareness of the action needed to change this. I would argue that such a reading of the world and such action taken falls within Freirean conscientazacao, although it may not be what liberatory educators would hope for. Returning to the living conditions of many of the workers, the conditions they had to endure were so overwhelming that many lived from day to day:

> I look at Alexandra and I know from having lived there that Alexandra is one square mile. In that one square mile 250,000 people have been hoarded, and you have about 40 per cent unemployment. If you live there you will not be able to think about what happens beyond the horizon of Alexandra because what you are engaged in is whether tomorrow you will be alive.
>
> (Serote 1993: 58)

This condition of poverty was difficult enough but when civil conflict on the scale that occurred in South Africa is added to it, then people frequently lived in constant fear.

> Like before we were scared, because even at night we were sleeping. We were frightened that maybe these people will come, especially this Inkatha people. That time you know, yeah it was worse, because even into the trains, they were attacking us.
>
> (WS1 1996 MM/E:124)

People were very conscious that the world was changing in front of their eyes, they were conscious of the struggle between the apartheid government and their own people and they were conscious of their own position in the centre of this conflict. What was lacking in most cases was the relative peace and security necessary to try to understand what was happening in the broader scheme of things. But certain basic truths had been accepted by the vast majority of the people, namely that apartheid had to go and that everybody had to lend support to this struggle, whether in the community association, in their trade union or on the streets. In conclusion therefore, I would say that political consciousness can be 'raised' by life experience outside the classroom, but if the conditions are extremely oppressive and brutal, then it is difficult for many, but not all, people to see beyond 'their next meal'. However, given relative security this elaboration is possible without any formal educational input. In many cases the oppressed's readings of the world will be local and partial, as will be their actions to solve the problem as they have identified it.

For example, when Dan looked at society, he did not see multinational global capitalism, but he saw that technology was changing the world as he knew it, and that in order to succeed he and his fellow workers needed to get access to this technological knowledge. Finally, it must also be stated that the oppressed's readings of the world can be both wrong and politically reactionary at times. For example Mama Rose's analysis of the main problem in South Africa as (African) immigration:

> ... things are worse now because we find different kind of people from different kind of places like Malawi, Maputo, Zaire, Mozambique. They do what they want. They don't follow the SA procedure.
>
> (WSI 1996 EM/R 172-3)

In the following, Theo describes the violent feuds that broke out during the railway strike he described above, providing another indication that the oppressed do not always represent a monolithic group, even when involved in what could be termed liberatory action, such as striking to get union recognition.

> Yeah the strike. We came back after three months and it was very, very difficult and we were fighting black to black, because we were confused, we didn't know what was going on.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/TH: 73)

Black Consciousness

> September '77
> In Port Elizabeth weather fine
> It was business as usual
> In Police Room 619
>
> (From "Biko", a song by Peter Gabriel)

Like Freire, two of Bantu Steve Biko's preoccupations were consciousness and humanism, which he developed into concepts of black consciousness and a pan African humanism. Biko's name 'Bantu' literally means 'people', which is commonly understood in African society in the phrase 'umuntu nguntu ngabanye abantu' or 'a person is a person by means of other people' (Pityana et al 1991: 18). So Biko could be seen as literally personifying one of the central tenets of African society, that of the interdependence of people. Biko was a medical student who gave up his studies and devoted himself full time to the Black Consciousness movement. He was a national hero when he died from injuries incurred in police custody on 12 September 1977.

There is much debate about the relationship between the South African black consciousness groupings and the black power movement in the USA, but that relationship is beyond the remit of this study. As stated previously, I will instead be looking at the way in which key ideas of both Freire and Biko were absorbed into the consciousness of the mass of black South Africans as they struggled to overthrow apartheid. Rather than looking at the origins of their thinking, I will be looking at the impact of these ideas on the mass of South Africans. However it is clear that Biko was influenced by Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Fanon's books *Black Skins and White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth,* which were seminal in the sense that here were books written by a black person for other black people, on the long term damage of racism and colonialism on the psyche. Biko's first contribution was to try to understand the psychology of apartheid with its echoes of master and slave relationships.

> Ever since Hegel's exposition of the strange dialectics inherent in the master-slave relationship, we have been made aware of the extent to which the seemingly absolute or 'violent hierarchy' (Jacques Derrida) by which the master is set in authority over the slave is in truth an artificial one, involving as it does any number of relational complexities. Not only is the master dependent on the practical skills of the slave, but his entire position of authority or mastery requires that the slave through his assumed inferiority confirm him in this

> position, thus forming links of mutual dependency that have far reaching consequences ...
>
> In South Africa whites posit themselves as the norm by subsuming all other groups, at least in official parlance, under the term 'non-white'.
>
> (Reckwitz 1993: 159)

Reckwitz goes on to argue that it would normal for white to be contrasted with black, instead of non-white, which is a type of double negation and allows those accepting that position no existence in their own right, but only as non-whites. This is precisely where Biko intervened and rejected the term non-white (except for those blacks who accepted their position as stooges of apartheid), and replaced it with a positive blackness.

> The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself, to pump back life into this empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward- looking process. This is the definition of 'Black Consciousness.'
>
> (Biko 1978: 29)

Biko thus started with the definition of black people as non-whites and recognized the negation of humanity inherent in such a term. His response was to rewrite the term black and to infuse it with positive meaning. Serote analyses the impact of Black Consciousness in South Africa at the time.

> Black Consciousness transformed the word 'black' and made it synonymous with the word 'freedom'... Black Consciousness philosophy and its slogans claimed a past for black people, a country and the right of its people to its wealth and land.
>
> (Pityana et al 1991: 9-10)

Biko's philosophy can be seen as a weaving together of Freirean pedagogy, anti-colonialist psychology and liberatory theology into his own unique interpretation of black consciousness. One of the appeals of the Freiran approach was that it emphasized listening to people, and researching the conceptual structure of their world and then returning this to them in educational projects. It thus promised an alternative to the invasive educational practices of the colonialists and instead built on what people knew and drew on issues that concerned them. In fact in his trial in 1976, Biko describes his use of the Freirean method in a literacy project:

> M'Lord, this was a research carried out, I think it was 1972: the purpose was literacy. Now the particular method we were using places a lot of emphasis on syllabic teaching of people; you do not just teach the people the alphabet in isolation, you have to teach them syllables, and you have to start with words that have got a particular meaning to them, what we call generative terms. Now the preamble to it was some kind of research in a specific area where you are going to work, which carried you to several segments of the community, to particular places where the community congregates and talks freely. Your role there was particularly passive, you were there just to listen to the things that they were talking about, and also to the words that are being used, the themes being important; there we also used pictures to depict the themes that they were talking about.
>
> (Biko 1978: 112)

This summary demonstrates Biko's mastery of the Freirean literacy method. He and his fellow literacy teachers thus went to places where people engaged in their daily activities and just listened to what they said. He goes on to describe what he found significant in the conversations that he heard around him.

> ... the first thing to notice when observing such situations is the constant recurrence of what I would call protest talk about the situation of oppression that the black man is exposed to. Sometimes it is general, sometimes it is specific, but always contained what I would call a round condemnation of white society. Often in very rough language, some of which is not admissible in court ...You know when people speak in the township they do not speak of the government; they do not talk about the provincial councils or City Councils, they talk about whites, and of course, the connotation there is with reference to obvious structures, but to them it is just whites. And as I say the language is often hard.
>
> (Biko 1977: 112-13).

Biko's findings are confirmed by my own research, where fifteen years later in their writings the workers consistently talk about the 'whites.'

> Everything is easy with whites, with education, jobs and money. Life is not so difficult with them as with blacks.
>
> (WSD 1991: 16)
>
> whites introduced apartheid into our country so people were separated according to ethnics ... the black community was never given freedom of speech whatsoever.
>
> (WSD 1991: 16)

Virtually all comments understand the problem of apartheid as being one caused by 'the whites' coming into an African country. In fact some of the workers are informed as to the specific acts that were introduced to do this:

> ... the major problem with being black in South Africa is apartheid. This apartheid has three laws. The first one is the Population Registration Act, the second one is the Group Areas Act and the third one is the Land Act ...
>
> (WSD 1991: 15)

However in the 1970's black consciousness as articulated by Steve Biko was the spark that tapped into the national psyche and swept through South Africa, when a year before his death in South African police custody, Biko stood trial for his commitment to the Black Consciousness organization, the Black People's Convention (BPC) and membership of the South African Students' Organization (SASO). A description of his trial is given by the editor of his book, Aelred Snubbs, an Anglican priest.

> Steve gave his evidence and was cross-examined during the whole first week of May 1976. The proceedings were fully reported in the Rand Daily Mail. Overnight Biko became the toast of the Soweto shebeens (pubs). Here at last was the authentic voice of the people, not afraid to say openly what all blacks think but are too frightened to say. For example in answer to a question from Counsel for the Prosecution 'What do you think of Africans who work for the security police?' came straight and clear, 'They are traitors', and this in a courtroom ringed by armed Security Police, black and white! Can the example of this one man's courage have inspired the boys and girls of Soweto to face death, as they so bravely did just six weeks later. This is not to suggest that Steve was 'responsible' for the spontaneous uprising of 16 June; but perhaps the close association of these two events is not just an unrelated co-incidence. Courage is infectious.
>
> (Biko 1978: 121)

Biko was a voice of black South Africa, clear and simple and full of courage and determination. He was not only openly critical of white society but at times was provocatively and outrageously so, given his position as a black person under apartheid. At the core of this is his refusal to accept as natural any posture that would place him in the position of 'slave' and the apartheid authorities as the 'master'.

> One concludes that the South African security system is force orientated rather than intelligence orientated. One may of course add that this type of mentality, in this country, stretches all the way from state security to the style of rugby that whites adopt.
>
> (Biko 1978: 79)

However he also chided black people about their lack of courage and humorously describes their position under apartheid.

> Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars who smile at the enemy and swear at him in the sanctity of their toilets, who shout 'Baas' willingly during the day and call the white man a dog in their buses on the way home.
>
> (Biko 1978: 78)

His provocative depiction of black people in white society is offset by a description of what appears to be a sensitive and thoughtful attempt at conscientization:

> We try to get blacks in conscientization to grapple realistically with their problems, to attempt to find solutions to their problems, to develop what one might call an awareness, a physical awareness of their situation, to be able to analyze it, and to provide answers for themselves. The purpose behind it is really to provide some kind of hope. I think the central theme about black society is that it has got elements of a defeated society, people often look like they have given up the struggle ... Now this sense of defeat is basically what we are fighting against; people must not give in to the hardship of life, people must develop hope, people must develop some form of security to be together to look at their problems, and people must in this way build up their humanity. This is the point about conscientization and Black Consciousness.
>
> (Biko 1987: 114)

Biko and Freire shared an insight into the dehumanizing aspects of oppression and both tried to turn despair into hope and saw liberation as involving the humanization of people. Biko's words above are echoed in Freire's, who saw a person as having 'the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human' (Freire 1993: 37). Freire goes on to describe how in resisting oppression, people do so to try to regain the humanity that has been stolen from them.

> Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human.
>
> (Freire 1993: 38)

Like Freire, Biko understood the 'oppressor' within, or the internalization by the oppressed of the derisory images of the colonizers and the necessity of ousting these undermining images to replace them with black pride and dignity.

> At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. If one is free at heart, no man made chains can bind one to servitude.
>
> (Biko 1978: 92)

It will be seen from the above that Biko's definition of black consciousness was very much in line with Freire's ideal of an education for liberation and Biko's involvement in this grassroots activity gave him insight into black experience in South Africa, and he had the intellectual ability and the moral courage to articulate what he saw was necessary for the liberation of black people under apartheid. Being black in South Africa was for many a schizophrenic existence, with docility necessary in front of employers and a brutal regime, but with anger bubbling up when black people were free from white society. The anger is palpable in this extract from a description about being black in South Africa,

written by one of the workers at the school in 1991. This is precisely the type of violence against the humanity of people that both Freire and Biko describe above.

> Then there is the problem in the houses. We must clean the white people's dirt and then they say we are dirty. I have seen them wipe the phone after a black person is talking ... this apartheid ... this whites only signs on everything. In the house you are less than the dog. The dog's dish comes into the cupboard but your's it must stay outside on the stoep, you are not even allowed to wash your dish in the same sink as the dog, you are less than the dog.
>
> (WSD 1991: 4)

However in cases where people feel conflict about their own identity as black people under apartheid and the kind of spiritual angst this involves, there is very little evidence of the workers seeing the roots of the problem as residing in themselves.

> You know there are so many things that make it not nice to be a black person in South Africa. It makes me sad and worried to write about it because you have to be happy with what you are. You are not supposed to feel that when you are white it will be better than if you are black. You have to be proud of what you are.
>
> (WSD 1991: 16)

Maggie was a domestic worker and here she is grappling with the complexity of her position as a black person and the damage it is doing to her. On the one hand she believes that she should be happy and proud to be who she is, but on the other hand she can see that it is much better to be white. Yet she also realizes that it would be harmful for her to actively desire to be white and she recognizes that this kind of internal emotional conflict causes her anxiety and pain. However, awareness of the cause of suffering does not take away the suffering, but as apartheid began to crumble, and in particular when Nelson Mandela was released from jail, attitudes began to change, as Dan describes in 1996:

> That time we were thinking Nelson Mandela must be released and he was released of course and now we see that has now changed. We blacks we got to take out oppression and bring ourselves to light. So that thing was big to us. We grow up thinking that we can't go far in life, so when we see Mandela, we know that no it is not like that. We can upgrade ourselves till we see where we go.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 154)

In Dan's description and in Theo's below, both assume active roles in their own upliftment and both contrast the feelings of oppression that black people had felt under apartheid, with the possibilities that have opened up for them since its collapse. Nelson Mandela was in turn a personification of the central tenets of black consciousness - pride, dignity and humanity.

> ... we as black persons before we were also undermine ourselves, that if you are not white you are nothing in the world. But today we can see that to be a black person is not to say you are something that is not wanted. We can see that. We can participate in various things more especially in the working place.
>
> (WS1 1996 MM/T: 75)

This is evidence of the mass diffusion of ideas about the role of the oppressed in ending their own oppression. It would seem that Freire's ideas about liberation and Biko's ideas about black consciousness had become the ideas, and indeed 'a way of life', of the mass of the people.

SECTION 2 METHODOLOGICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

'I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention.'

Catherine Morland on History in Northanger Abbey (Austen 1994: 97).

The Researcher, the Data and the Research Methods

This is a piece of empirical research and I have taken the history of a school for black workers at a white university in South Africa as my subject and I will analyze the school in a rigorous, systematic and methodical way. I will attempt to provide a description of the school and provide explanations about why things happened as they did. In so doing, I will be provisionally accepting the epistemology of the academy, that the way to knowledge is through rigorous application of tried and tested methods to raw materials, but I will at all times attempt to be reflexive about what this acceptance of academic epistemology does to the telling and understanding of the school that I am studying. The school was in existence for over eight years and involved hundreds of people, but all that remains are memories and documents, and it is on this base that I will attempt to reconstruct the history of the school. This raises a fundamental question about how the data relates to what actually happened, an issue that will be discussed in greater detail below. I will attempt to be reflexive about the relationship between the school as it was, the remnants of its existence, the academic practices that will transform it into a thesis and my role in this enterprise. It is in this sense that I locate myself in the post modern, which views the first step in research as 'shifting the way the world is seen and the construction of a new world to investigate' (Usher 1996: 39). I understand this to mean that turning something into a research topic involves a shift in how the object is seen.

This is particularly apposite in this case, as my involvement in the school preceded any idea of researching it, and for many people in the school, research is an enterprise that is far removed from their daily concerns. So I have taken a communal experience and turned it into a topic for research, and in so doing, what were minutes of the school meetings are transubstantiated into data, and friends and colleagues are now research respondents. In doing this I am not suggesting, as Catherine Morland does in the above quotation, that I shall be 'making it up', in the sense of fabricating a history. Rather I am taking remnants of a school and using these to attempt to reconstruct the school as accurately as possible, with a view to forwarding an informed interpretation about how I think the school can be best understood. In that sense I will not be inventing the school, but rather reconstructing, or re-working the school, and as Steier claims 'We as researchers construct that which we claim to find.' (Steier 1991:1). It is therefore in and through the study that the school will be reconstructed. Steier argues for a conception of research which recognizes not only the researcher, but also the research methodology, as part and parcel of the research.

Ratcliffe (1983) argues that data do not speak for themselves. There is always an interpreter and one cannot observe or measure an event without changing it, and this holds for physics as well as the human sciences. Secondly, numbers, equations and words 'are all abstract, symbolic representations of reality, but not reality itself' (1983: 149-50). This is a challenge to traditional objective, rationalist views of research, which assume the existence of a reality that can be researched independently of the researcher, data that is out there waiting to be found and methodology which when used correctly 'is taken to be the guarantee that the knowing activities of the researcher will not leave a "dirty footprint" on what is known' (Usher 1996: 41).

In conclusion therefore, challenges to positivism have been mounted on many fronts, with the reification of method and assumptions about the objectivity and neutrality of the researcher being among those mounted by Steier:

> That is, by holding our assumed research structures and logics as themselves researchable and not immutable, and by examining how we are part of our data, our research becomes, not a self-centred product, but a reciprocal process.
>
> (Steier 1991: 7)

Finally, taking into account that I will produce a written account, I will be reconstructing this history of the school in recognition of the fact that it is impossible to directly capture lived experience, and that ultimately I will create a textual narrative, with the resulting gap between the school as it was, my research of it and the text or texts that will be produced about it. When I quote from one of the workers, it is not simply a case of the worker being able to speak through the typed script, although there is an element of that; it is a text that is a transcription of a conversation and I understand that inevitably there will be gaps between reality, experience and the expression of that experience.

Assumptions and Rationale for Qualitative Design

Traditionally in social research there has been a sharp division drawn between the qualitative and quantitative research traditions, with quantitative research being most often associated with the positivist scientific tradition, which generally is based on a design which sets out to verify or refute pre-stated hypotheses with the ultimate aim of explanation, prediction and control of phenomena. Lincoln and Guba have presented five assumptions on which positivism is based, that they argue are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain:

* An ontological assumption of a single, tangible reality 'out there', that can be broken apart into pieces capable of being studied independently; the whole is simply the sum of the parts.

* An epistemological assumption about the possibility of separation of the observer from the observed - the knower from the known.

* An assumption of the temporal and contextual independence of observations, so that what is true in one time and place may, under appropriate circumstances (such as sampling) also be true at another time and place.

* An assumption of linear causality; there are no effects without causes and no causes without effects.

* An axiological assumption of value freedom, that is that the methodology guarantees that the results of an enquiry are essentially free from the influence of any value system (bias).

(Lincoln and Guba 1985: 28)

The idea of a single tangible reality has been challenged by the idea of multiple, complex and intersecting realities which we actively construct. It is also the case that our conceptions of reality are constantly changing, so there is not one single reality 'out there', frozen in time, waiting to be researched. The argument about generalizations across time and place has come under ever increasing challenges, as the complexity and unpredictability of human existence has become more apparent. The idea of linear causality has been refuted on the grounds that everything is being continually affected by all aspects of existence, and so it is impossible to separate single causes from effects. Finally, the value-laden nature of enquiry has been demonstrated on several fronts. First there is the fact that people study areas that interest them; they select paradigms and theories that will enhance their area of interest and the researcher will also relate to the values inherent in the context. Research is always carried on from a particular perspective, and from a particular interest and so, to some extent, what we look for we tend to find.

It is also the case that positivist and qualitative or naturalist researchers tend to have different research topics and different aims in conducting research and different ways of interpreting the results. Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative researchers

> stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situation constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers stress the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.
>
> (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 8)

Qualitative research seems to have begun life in a dualistic relationship with quantitative research, from which it is still struggling to free itself, in that this definition is virtually a step by step refutation of the premises of quantitative research. Merriam defines the essential characteristics of qualitative research as

> the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation in analysis and findings that are richly descriptive.
>
> (Merriam 1998: 11)

Bogdan and Biklen offer a similar definition, stating that qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and that the researcher is the key instrument. They describe it as descriptive and concerned with process, rather than simply with outcomes or products, and that researchers tend to analyze data inductively, and finally that meaning is of essential concern to qualitative research (Bogdan and Biklen 1992: 29-33). While researchers seem to be in agreement about what qualitative researchers do, the burgeoning field of qualitative research seems to have evaded easy categorization. Tesch (1990) has produced a computer generated graphic overview of qualitative research types in relation to the purposes of research, while Wolcott (1992) has presented a tree of qualitative research strategies. Guba and Lincoln on the other hand have described four

competing paradigms in qualitative research, namely positivism, post positivism, critical theory and constructivism (1998: 195-220). They argue that qualitative or quantitative methods could be used in any of the paradigms and that methodological choice is secondary to paradigm choice. Furthermore, the paradigms are based on differences in three basic questions. Firstly the ontological question, or what is the form and nature of reality? Secondly the epistemological question, that is, what is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known? Thirdly the methodological question, that is, how can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? They argue that, for example, positivism and constructivism are incommensurable, in that they are based on irreconcilable views of the nature of reality, knowledge and methodology, as demonstrated above, and that it is important for all researchers to be quite clear about which paradigm they locate themselves in and the worldview and set of beliefs that the paradigm is based on.

These paradigms are continually contested and revised, and to the novice, research can be like building on moving sands. In terms of the four paradigms constructed by Denzin and Lincoln, I locate myself in both critical theory and constuctivism. These two paradigms appear to be commensurable if the researcher is able to accommodate both worldviews as complementary rather than oppositional. However, I can see that some researchers would be more comfortable in one or other paradigm. With regard to constructivism, my aim while a participant in the school was *Verstehen*, in that I continually tried to understand what was happening and how people understood these happenings. And this research will be, in itself, a construction based on an interpretation of what the documentary evidence reveals. However I feel that this in itself is not enough and so I also locate myself in the critical theory tradition, which is based on these beliefs as summarized by Denzin and Lincoln:

> that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of

> values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that oppression has many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of the others (e.g. class oppression versus racism) often elides the interconnections among them and finally that mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression.
>
> (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 263)

The above provides a succinct summary of my own basic belief system about power and knowledge. The complexity of oppression and the dangers of perpetuating it through research, are issues to which I will return throughout the thesis.

There are several dimensions to the problem of the implication of the researcher in the research which are exacerbated when, as in this case, I was a participant in the school that I am studying. I recognize that researchers are not always able to see their own impact on the research, as, to use the analogy of the goldfish, the most influential things and the most difficult to pinpoint will be precisely those things that have become part of 'the water we swim in'. While I agree with Harding's argument that

> the beliefs and behaviors of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of the research. This evidence too must be open to critical scrutiny no less than what is traditionally defined as relevant evidence.
>
> (Harding 1987: 9)

I think this is difficult to realize in practice. Accepting the fact that my social position will inevitably be inscribed in the research, and that my intentions in both working in the

school and in writing the Ph D have been liberatory, nevertheless this could be seen as a piece of research that will perpetuate existing power relations. It is written by a white person about black people under apartheid. It is written by an intellectual about those who are unschooled. I cannot ignore my location at a university in England, writing about a school in Africa, nor can I ignore the fact that the writing is for the award of Ph D to the writer and no benefits to the researched. I have constructed the history of the school using conventional research methods, but I remain concerned that the result is so different from the lived experiences of the workers that it will be unrecognizable to those it is about. This could be viewed as a reflection of how power permeates knowledge production and how the research exercise is geared primarily to serving the needs of the academic establishment. However, I will now discuss my understanding of the dynamics of the first of these power-knowledge anomalies, that of white person writing of black experience under apartheid. The issue of intellectuals and workers will be dealt with in Chapter 4, as will the implication of the university in colonialism and the relationship between knowledge and power. The issue of what researching the school does to the history of the school will be further developed below in the discussion on methodology.

'White' researchers and 'black' experience

There have been several criticisms of white people researching black experience. In England in 1982, black researchers at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham attacked the ethnocentrism of various white sociologists in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Their major criticisms were firstly that white researchers cannot elicit meaningful data from black respondents, because of status and power differentials between them; secondly, that the data elicited by white researchers are often interpreted in ways which pathologize black communities; and thirdly that white researchers can unwittingly enable the state to increase control over black communities (Troyna and Carrington 1989: 209). With regard to the first criticism, I would argue that the data is likely to be different, rather than unreliable, and it is possible to build honest relationships across race, class, gender and culture, but it takes time to develop trust and understanding,

both of which in this case were facilitated by working together over a number of years on a jointly defined task. However, it is also possible to build safeguards into educational research so as to cross-check the reliability of the data. I conducted interviews myself, but also have interviews conducted by Elizabeth Mkwayi, a black cleaner at the university and by Trevor Ngwane, a black intellectual, to try to get a more balanced picture (see p. 97). As will be seen in the analysis, there is a high degree of correspondence between the answers given by a worker to Elizabeth and to me, but mine includes more references to events in Europe and overseas, which is quite understandable, as I had just arrived from England to conduct the interviews. Having spent four years together in meetings and in classes, I think I was able to elicit meaningful data from all the research respondents, all of whom I had known, and some of whom I had taught for several years. In fact, the better I knew the interviewees, the more freely they spoke to me. It is also the case that status and power can also work the other way, in that the higher the status of the interviewer, the more likely they are to get people to attend interviews, as was discovered by Elizabeth who conducted interviews after I had returned to England. Whereas people took time off work to keep their appointments with me, they frequently missed appointments with Elizabeth. This could be seen as a challenge to the argument advanced by feminist researchers Oakley (1981) and Finch (1984), who argue that 'symmetry provides the sine qua non of valuable and reliable data' (1984: 209). The workers' slackness in their behaviour with Elizabeth may have arisen because they attended interviews with me out of politeness and expressed their true feelings of disinterest to Elizabeth. It could also have been because of their difficulty in seeing the point of being interviewed by one of their fellow workers. So while I agree that it is likely that symmetry will provide the best data, this is not always or necessarily the case. Parekh argues

> Most researchers in the field are white. They have no experience of what it means to be black, and lack an intuitive understanding of the complex mental processes and social structures of black communities.
>
> (Parekh 1986: 24)

This was certainly true in my case before I lived and worked in South Africa and my understanding of African life is limited to the eleven years I spent in South Africa. All I can claim to have some understanding of, is of how this particular school operated during this specific historical conjuncture. However, despite having three interviewers, I was still concerned about how appropriate it would be for me to write the history of the school. I wrote to one of the black intellectuals, an ex-lecturer at Wits, about this issue and he responded

> you are concerned about research ethics in respect of your work on the Workers' school. I sincerely feel that you should be free to do whatever is necessary to tell our story about the school. It is also your story, you are part of it, and you should ask permission of no one to tell it. The fact that you are in England and doing it for a Ph D should not make us lose the main point: telling the world about what we tried to build with workers in apartheid society.
>
> (Personal correspondence from Trevor Ngwane 23.1.1996)

I think this is an important point; history is not neatly divided into black history and white history, and the history of any country will be the history of all its inhabitants, who even under apartheid shared a history. However, in retrospect, I am able to look back at my position as a radical white in a black country under apartheid. In this I am indebted to Memmi (1965) who has looked at both the position of the colonizer and the colonized and has enabled me to look back at my position in the school. Just as blacks were considered to be non-whites under apartheid, that is, not even occupying a semantic space of their own, but existing only in relation to whites, so too, radical whites in South Africa could only reconcile their colonial background with their ethics by effectively becoming non-blacks. To act ethically they had to negate themselves and will themselves out of existence. For myself I found this position no more tenable than Biko found the position of non-whites (see p. 63), but I understand that other whites, in particular those who were born in South Africa, did not respond in the same way to these tensions. I found the

position of a white South African impossible to sustain and to tolerate, and I agree with Memmi that what I have termed the position of the 'non-black'

> ... lives his life under the sign of a contradiction which looms at every step, depriving him of all coherence and tranquillity ... What he is actually renouncing is part of himself, and what he slowly becomes as soon as he accepts life in a colony.
>
> (Memmi 1965: 20)

In South Africa I seemed to spend my entire life trying to explain to both black and white that I wasn't what they assumed I was, but the longer that I stayed the more I adjusted to all the privileges inherent in a white existence, and the more I found this adjustment ethically unacceptable. To give a trite example, the first time I was addressed as Madam, I immediately reacted by saying 'My name is Mary', but after eleven years, I just gave up trying to explain who I saw myself as. I worked as a tutor in the academic support programme for black accounting students, with the accounting profession being one of the last professions to admit blacks and the commerce faculty being amongst the most racist in the university. My job was to try to increase the pass rates of black students, which of necessity involved spending a large part of my time working with white staff concerning their attitudes to black students. This position enabled me to gain insights into the mindset of the colonialist, who, as Memmi states

> From the time of his birth, he possesses a qualification independent of his personal merits or actual class. He is part of a group of colonizers whose values are sovereign ... the colonizer partakes of an elevated world from which he automatically reaps the privileges.
>
> (Memmi 1965: 12-13)

On occasion, I attended fundraising lunches with the vice-chancellor and the leaders of big business, and would leave that situation to call into one of the workers' broom

cupboards where the workers were sharing a meagre lunch. While I continually strained to try to understand the perspectives of all I encountered, and was included in both worlds, I felt, as eloquently expressed by Memmi

> a sort of half breed of colonialism, understanding everyone because I belonged completely to no one.
>
> (Memmi 1965: xvi)

However, having said that, I think it is a mistake to assume that even under apartheid, race was always the primary frame of reference or that it was a category that people accepted passively. In fact I was able to use my position as a white employee of the university to raise money for the school and to negotiate with the university authorities, and given these circumstances, my race could on occasion become an asset rather than a liability. Indeed I was made aware of the incipient danger of contributing to the construction of a racist frame of reference (Figueroa 1991: 26-45) in the basic tenets of my research, in assuming that the workers saw themselves as black workers at a white university. It seems from this quotation that Dan saw himself as a person employed at a university, rather than as a black worker at a white university.

> You know before, we were not even having that broad mind of this is a white school in Africa. We know that this is a university. We were not thinking of that white oppression or something. We were thinking that even if the professors around and the lecturers around were white too much, we were thinking that maybe they will get interested in helping the school with what we were doing. But you know in that sense of Africa, a white school in Africa we didn't even, I mean, when you in the place you just see yourselves there, you think that you belong there yeah?
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 161)

The point that I would like to make at this stage is that there does seem to be a real danger of perpetuating racism when researching it, and of making assumptions about how the research respondents, and indeed the researcher, see the world, and this applies to any researcher, whether researching their own or another culture. There will always be blind spots and difficulties and strengths and weaknesses in the position of the researcher, and I think that the important thing is to foreground these as much as possible, so that the reader can make a judgement about how these may affect the research. Finally, I agree with bell hooks who argues that it is possible to cross boundaries and that progressive black and white people can engage in dialogue and work together (hooks 1994: 129-30).

The Researcher as Part of the Research

While qualitative researchers accept that the researcher is inevitably a part of the research, it is not immediately apparent what the implications of this are for the research. I have indicated that I do not adopt a position whereby I accept that the research methods are a guarantee of neutrality or objectivity, in and of themselves. However, I recognize that some degree of objectivity is needed in order to give a fair and impartial account of what occurred, and it is in this respect that the research methods have been most useful. In any case, I have tried to balance the documentary evidence with interviews and my own personal experience of having been there. It is also the case that emotional involvement can cloud judgment. In this case it took some time before I was able to distance myself from the school in order to conduct research into it, and I was only able to do this with time and in retrospect. Everything I have written has been the result of studying the documents and interviews, and trying to see the school from the various perspectives of the participants, and where I am relying solely on memory, I have stated this. Secondly, my focus was on the development of organization and not on the individuals concerned. Thirdly, I never saw myself as 'being' the school in the same sense that some of the workers and facilitators did, and so I did not have the same degree of emotional investment in it that they did. So although I was a full member of the school, I was still an outsider in some ways. Trevor in one of his letters to me said the following:

> This is great! Writing about something which actually happened, something we did. You don't know what this will mean for the workers who were there building the school. When I talk to Dan he talks as if the school was his personal property - no, as if *he* was the school. I think the school was different things to all of us differently. It fed a hunger we all individually felt. But it united us because the school was not the walls (remember at first, there were no walls), the school was all of us together. Even when Audy died, the space he left was a brick in the school walls we were building.
>
> (Personal Correspondence with Trevor Ngwane 23.1.1996)

I never presumed that I was the school in the sense that Trevor describes above. It was clear to me from the outset that this was a school set up and run by black South Africans, for black South Africans, under apartheid. While I saw myself as playing a part in it, my relative detachment made it easier to take on the role of researcher. Finally I also realize that memory is a double-edged sword for the researcher. On the one hand, memory is something that is beyond my control - in that it can intrude and doubtless influence the research process regardless of whether I summon it or not. Quite early on in the research, I was made aware of the problem of the unreliability of memory in that there was a lot of confusion in the interviews about the times and dates, such as the year the school started and the year that the first lot of funding came in and so on. There were many instances of events that I and other participants remembered as having happened in 1990, which turned out to have happened in 1991, or vice versa. Secondly, I was warned about the partial nature of my own memory by analyzing records of meetings. For example, in one meeting with the vice-chancellor, which discussed many important issues, my sole memory is of one issue that concerned me directly - that of the university's decision to close the gate used by the railway workers to get to the Workers' School. This made it impossible for my large class of railway workers to attend the school. I remember being upset and angry at the vice-chancellor's decision, to such an extent that it blotted out all the other issues from my memory. Therefore, despite my misgivings about reliance on

research methods as guarantors of the truth of the findings, and about the limitations of documentary evidence, nevertheless I believe that in making my research methods transparent, given the substantial data base, it would be possible for other researchers to come up with a similar account of the process of change in the school. However how the process is interpreted, is obviously open to contestation.

The Case Study

Having situated myself in the constructivist /critical theory paradigms, I then had to try to identify the form the study should take. As the school had already closed, and given the wealth of documentary evidence I was able to acquire, I was in a position to study the life span of the school. As it was a discrete object, bounded by time and place, it appeared to lend itself to a case study.

> Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. We choose to study the case.
>
> (Stake 1988: 86)

In this instance I am arguing that this case study is both an object to be studied and a methodological choice. It fulfils the conditions of case study as specified by Creswell (1994:12), in that it is bounded by time and place and I have been able to collect sufficient data to enable me to carry out an in-depth study of the school using a variety of data collection methods.

> The case is a specific. Even more, the case is a functioning specific. The case ... is a "bounded system" ... It is an integrated system ... parts do not have to be working well, the purposes may be irrational, but it is a system. Its behaviour is

> patterned ...Consistency and sequentialness are prominent ... But boundedness and the behaviour patterns of the system are key factors in understanding the case.
>
> (Stake 1988: 87)

A cursory glance at the list of minutes in Appendix 1 Research Data, gives some indication of the system operative in the school, where different patterns of meetings emerge, stabilize and then change as the school develops. Stenhouse (1983) compared the case study with historical inquiry and I have found that using an historical approach has helped to both organize and to analyze the materials. It is both a case study and an historical study in that the study was conducted retrospectively after the school had closed down, and it is the study of the history of a school. The documents, the interview data and additional archival and cultural materials that I have had access to, will allow me to create a case study fulfilling Skilbeck's suggestions:

> the case must be such that it captures the texture of reality, makes judgment possible for an audience, is not heavily theory dependent, but lends itself to comprehensive study...the case must be seen in its individuality, not as a sample but as a unique whole.
>
> (Skilbeck 1983: 16)

A final factor that I find particularly appealing about the case study is the recognition of the need to 'explicate the joint development of the case and the study', and this mutually constitutive process allows the writer to 'lead the reader into the forms of life under study by creating it as an object for the reader's imagination; he does so by playing the language-game of constructing the case through describing the study' (Simons 1980: 126); an approach which is echoed in the postmodern perspectives of textuality and knowledge production. Just as the case is constructed through the study, so the study is constructed through language which rather than simply reflecting the case, actively constructs it (Usher 1994: 16).

In constructing the case study I have tried at all times to follow these recommendations of Stake (1998) about what he considers to be the major responsibilities of the qualitative case study researcher:

1. bounding the case, conceptualizing the study;
2. selecting phenomena, themes and issues - that is, research questions - to emphasize;
3. seeking patterns of data to develop the issues;
4. triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation;
5. selecting alternative interpretations to pursue;
6. developing assertions or generalizations about the case.

(Stake 1998: 103)

There are strengths and weakness in all research approaches and Hamel (1993: 23) describes frequent criticisms of the case study: 'the case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness..and its lack of rigor in the collection, construction and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to this study. This lack of rigor is linked to the problem of bias ... introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher'(Merriam 1998: 43). A full discussion of my data collection and handling of the extensive data base follows. The history of the school has been written following the use of the constant comparison method across four different data bases - the minutes, the documents, the interviews and my own memories. The major rationale for the case study is to try to gain an understanding of a specific case, in this instance the Workers' School, and in my opinion the school is significant in and of itself as a piece of South African educational history. However the question of how representative it is of other similar liberatory educational projects will be discussed later in the thesis.

Educational and Historical Documents

> Collecting data always involves selecting data, and the techniques of data collection ...will affect what finally constitutes 'data' for the purposes of research.
>
> (Dey, 1993: 15)

When in South Africa I visited the Department of Adult Education at the University of Natal, Durban, which has an archive on alternative adult education in South Africa, and I was given access to their collection. Of particular interest was the archive on People's Education and the alternative literacy and educational movement in South Africa. I had discussions with leading academics in the field and collected a lot of materials. On returning from South Africa, I spent some time narrowing down my data base, or 'bounding the case'. My first step was to divide all the general historical, educational and cultural data into three box files. The first box was filled with documents about the history of the university in South Africa, the second was to do with the history of people's education and education for resistance, the third covered the literary and cultural movement in this period. Unfortunately I had to exclude the literary and cultural texts, but the other materials have formed the basis of chapters 6 and 7.

Workers' School Minutes, Documents and Method of Analysis

During field work in South Africa I was able to negotiate with the remaining members of the school to take the minutes of the school meetings dating from 1990-3, as these were going to be destroyed. I was also given annual reports, planning documents and documents relating to training and evaluation. The minutes are my major source of data, and as can be seen from Appendix 1, there are 285 sets of minutes of meetings, 1,106 pages in total, ranging from 1990 to 1993. These will be referred to as WSM (Workers'

School Minutes), and a specific reference would include year and page number. As there are often two or three sets of minutes for the same day, and often the minutes are several pages in length, I decided to number the pages consecutively each year, so that a specific set of minutes would be referred to as (WSM 1991: 23). The motley collection of documents, spanning 1989 to 1995, I refer to as Workers' School Documents (WSD). This collection includes annual reports, training materials, evaluations and teaching materials, all of which I have catalogued in the same way, by year and page number, so a specific reference could be (WSD 1995: 41). This organized material together with the interview data, which will be described below, is thus the case study data base.

> The research process, then, is not a clear cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern, but a messy interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, deduction and induction occurring at the same time.
>
> (Bryman and Burgess 1994: 73)

With regard to analyzing the minutes and the documents from the Workers' School, there are over 1,000 pages of original documents and in many cases handwritten penciled documents, which made photocopying en masse expensive and in some cases ineffectual. In the end, I decided to attach removable coloured labels to the original documents and to organize these around very broad themes:

Blue: Pedagogical Issues - books, classes, timetables, syllabuses, teaching methods
Yellow: Administrative, financial, administrative infrastructure
Green: Liaison, networking with other anti-apartheid organizations
Red: Workers' control, democracy, discipline, power
Orange: Mission statements, publicity

Having identified these five broad themes, the next stage of the analysis began. It became apparent that the materials were voluminous enough for several theses. There are many things that it would have very interesting to pursue, but in the end I had to select the

research questions that I was going to concentrate on, and I narrowed these down to the conflict between education for liberation and education for certification, the relationship between the radical intellectual, the worker and the university and organizational change and social change. In terms of data analysis, there would appear to be many similarities between the broad steps in the data analysis procedures of case study, ethnography, grounded theory and naturalistic inquiry. The constant comparative method of data analysis seems to be widely used, although not always with the intention of producing a grounded theory.

> Basically the constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences ... Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. This dimension is tentatively given a name; it then becomes a category. The overall object of this analysis is to seek patterns in the data.
>
> (Merriam 1998: 18)

Given the research questions, I had to make further selections from the themes that I had identified, and decided once again to leave out several constituents of even those themes which were directly related to the research questions. To give one example, with regard to pedagogical issues, which were clearly relevant to the question of the relation between education for liberation and education for certification, I had to eliminate data on such issues as the books to be used, avoided, recommended, the books bought, sold, catalogued, and photocopied. There are stories of books going missing and donations of books from benefactors. However in this process of mutual honing of data and research questions, this had to fall outside my remit. Likewise the question of timetabling takes up many pages of many documents and again I had to exclude this issue. In conclusion, the documentary materials that I have lend themselves to several analyses that are beyond the scope of this study, which thus makes no claims to being an exhaustive study of the school. However, with regard to those areas that I have decided to concentrate on, I can

claim to have carefully considered all the existing information at my disposal and to have drawn on it to write the account.

The minutes are the original minutes of workers', committee and administration meetings which were taken to record events in the school and in many cases are accompanied by registers of attendance. The minutes are written by many people, many of whom are writing hesitantly in a second or third language. Thus many are fragmentary, but others written by the school facilitators are often detailed. The meetings were always held in an African language, often two languages, and then translated into English so that those who spoke English could understand, and so as to improve the English language skills of members of the school. The minutes are mostly written in English but some are written in Zulu and Trevor has offered to help with translation. As mentioned earlier, I think it is important to try to understand what these minutes represent and how they relate to the school as it existed. The minutes were records of what was discussed and decided at the meetings. They were a means of the three different shifts of workers learning about what the previous group had discussed and decided. For many at the school, this would have been their first experience of record keeping of this type, and the minutes provided continuity between meetings and a connection between groups of workers whose working hours precluded their attending the same meetings. However it must also be said that they are only minutes of meetings and exclude other aspects of school life, such as the teaching that went on in the classrooms and the many informal discussions that occurred continually between all members of the school. They are also a record of those who spoke at meetings, and it will be important to try to trace the silences as well as the speech, but with my research interest in power and knowledge, the minutes of the meetings, which were the decision making body of the school, are extremely important sources of data. The minutes, like the interviews, being translations of speech that occurred in at least one African language, will undoubtedly lose something in the translation. There will inevitably have been gaps between what was said, what was understood, and what was recorded, and this aspect of my research will be limited to what has been recorded, which is doubtless a partial and at times distorted record of the discussions that occurred. The

fact that they are written by many people could also be a strength for analysis, in that it will allow me to group the minutes according to who wrote them, to see if there are consistent patterns in those written by the different groupings or interest groups in the school. There can be triangulation by issue and it should be possible to trace the process of change in the school through the minutes.

On another level, there is the question of what these minutes represent. The minutes were written as records of the school meetings and those attending the meetings and writing the minutes had no idea that at a later date these would be used for research, and so there is no danger of reactivity. It will interesting to compare the story of the school as told in the minutes, with the story as told in the annual reports and public documents of the school and the account as told by the members of the school in interviews, as it is undoubtedly the case that

> ... at all levels of the system what people think they're doing, what they say they are doing, what they appear to others to be doing, and what in fact they are doing, may be sources of considerable discrepancy.
>
> (McDonald and Walker 1977: 186)

The minutes which were used for internal purposes are thus quite different from the annual reports, which were written, at least partially, with an outside audience in mind. In one sense all the documents are like found historical documents, but there is the additional advantage of being able to interview the participants in the history and to communicate with them about emerging theories. My own experience in the school is also invaluable in helping me to interpret the documents. Atkinson and Coffey argue that documents

> ... are not ... transparent representations of organizational routines, decision making processes or professional diagnoses. They construct particular kinds of

> representations with their own conventions ... Equally we cannot treat records - however official - as firm evidence of what they report.
>
> (Atkinson and Coffey 1997: 47)

One of the things that struck me about the Workers' School documents, was how the minutes were part and parcel of constructing the school. It seemed that the recording of understandings of what the school was, and what it was trying to become, was one of the ways through which the school developed. As Atkinson and Coffey argue about minutes,

> They do not record everything that was said and done in a meeting, for instance. Indeed in a sense they precisely are not intended to record what was actually said. They record what was decided. In a sense indeed they constitute what was decided.
>
> (Atkinson and Coffey 1997: 57)

The Workers' School minutes are conventional in many ways, in that there is a standard format and the author is often anonymous as in many official documents, but in other ways the minutes are different. There are many variations in the minutes, with the workers often writing minutes for the first time, in a second or third language and with little exposure to the conventions of minute writing. For my own part, when I took minutes, I was always very careful about recording the workers' views on issues, as I thought that this would encourage democratic participation in the school. In Appendix 6 I have included three sets of minutes written on the same day, one by myself, one by one of the facilitators and one by one of the workers. I think that these are representative of the types of minutes that were written up to the beginning of 1992, when the school administrator took on the job of minute writing, although there are still minutes taken by other members of the school right up to the end of 1993. What is noticeable about these minutes is the different positions and perspectives inscribed into the minutes. (See Appendix 6 for a detailed analysis). Thus in constructing the history of the school I have

taken into account the various and contrasting perspectives of the minute writers. Before moving on a discussion of the interviews, it is important to stress that often it was necessary to cross check information in the minutes, annual reports and interviews, so as to try to clarify questions such as how many workers were involved in the Workers' School. Despite the substantial documentary base, the numbers of workers, students and facilitators involved in the Workers' School was difficult to determine. In the early days there was no registration system and numbers are hearsay. For example Trevor estimates that there were about one hundred and fifty workers involved at the beginning of the school (WSI 1996 MM/T:35), that is before the problems with the unions arose. Mama Elizabeth speaks of 'many, many' workers, so many that they had to use a lecture theatre instead of a classroom in which to meet.(WSI 1996 MM/E: 116). In 1990 the school began to register people but I do not have registration records. However I do have registers of meetings and annual reports for some years. In Appendix 1 (p. 331) there is a record of meetings and, where available, the numbers of people who signed the register. However it is difficult to distinguish workers, facilitators, visitors and full time students. In Appendix 6 there are minutes of three meetings held on the same day along with registers from two of those meetings. On the register for the 11 o'clock meeting (p. 362) to my knowledge at least eight of the fourteen people present were workers. The register for the 1 o'clock meeting (p. 365) ten of those attending I know to be workers and two to be facilitators, but I do not know who the others are. The 4 o'clock meeting does not have a register but from the minutes I can deduce that at least two workers were present, so on Monday 12 March 1990 at least 20 workers, if not more, attended the school meeting and if I take my own classes as being fairly typical, for every one person who attended the meeting there were at least four who did not. So I estimate that in 1990 there were around eighty workers attending classes at the school. In 1992 there were 185 workers registered at the school (WSD 1992:31-4). In 1995 there were 229 workers registered, of whom 48 dropped out (WSD 1996:43-4). I would estimate that any time there were at least twenty facilitators involved in the Workers' school programme although many more were involved in the Saturday School and Full time Students Programme. The Saturday School programme which ran in 1990-1992 had up to 400 school children attending depending

on the political situation in the townships. In addition in 1992 there were 40 students registered to write exams in the full-time programme and I would estimate that a similar number was registered in 1990 and 1991 (WSD 1992 31-4).

Interviews and Method of Analysis

Interviews are standard practice across a range of disciplines and social practices, from the clinical and carefully controlled interview of the laboratory scientist, to the high street interviews of the market researcher, to the televised interviews on the daily news and chat shows. The roles of the interviewer who asks the questions and the interviewee who answers, are thus deeply embedded in popular consciousness. However, what interview data represent is a source of considerable controversy. The idea that interviews provide a mirror on reality and how what is said in the interview relates to what exists 'in the real world', is the source of debate (Silverman 1993; Sanders 1995). In this case, although I am not a black South African and not a worker, I nevertheless spent almost five years working alongside black South Africans under apartheid in building the Workers' School and that experience did enable me to meet the more stringent of requirements that interviewers should 'have lived or experienced their material in some fashion' (Collins 1990: 232). While I can see that participants' accounts are likely to produce a more in-depth understanding, I do not think that it is necessary to be a participant in order to produce worthwhile research. It will just not be the same, but will provide a different perspective. I see interviews as occasions when it is possible for interviewer and interviewee to construct meaning about the world. To give one example, before my (MM) formal interview with Elizabeth (E), we were discussing the rising crime rate in South Africa and I asked her why this was happening.

> The cause of this is poverty. The people, they are not working you know. Others they go on strike, and after that they lost their job. That's why it is like that, because even here in South Africa, the people are not working. All over, they just sitting at the corners. So after that they just think to do something about that.

> Others they turn to stealing something, others they turning to robbery, others they broke the cars because they want something, because there is nothing for them. That's why they do these things, because there is nothing for them.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 110)

Just as Elizabeth can in the course of her interview with me try to understand the reasons why people turn to crime, so I can try to understand her understanding of this and also her motivation in setting up a school on the university campus. The interviews that both I and Elizabeth conducted thus become part of the construction of the history of the Workers' School. So just as the minutes represent one of the means by which the school constituted itself, so the interviews constitute one of means whereby the participants in the school construct its history.

I conducted the interviews in August 1996 and I arrived on the day the school was closing down. I had written to the school coordinator about my visit and he had agreed to call a meeting at the school of those workers who had been members of the school and who were still working at the university. This meeting had been confirmed by phone a few days before I arrived in South Africa. I arrived at the agreed time to find the school locked up, but met one of the workers and through him and other workers was able to set up a series of interviews on campus with both workers and intellectuals who had been involved in the school over a number of years. The interviews were opportunistic in that the people I interviewed were those that were on campus at that time. However I had known all of them over a number of years and had taught many of them. Some had visited my home when I lived in South Africa. So it was on the basis of a long-standing relationship that I was able to conduct the interviews. I interviewed seven people including a black senior lecturer and member of Wits Senate. The ex-coordinator of the school, Trevor Ngwane offered to interview another worker, Dan, who was on leave at the time of my visit and he conducted two interviews with him. In addition Elizabeth Mkwayi, one of the workers, offered to interview other workers, in particular those who

had joined the school after I had left. Elizabeth interviewed five people and got six workers to submit written answers to the questions. A full list of all twenty interviews is included in Appendix 2. All taped interviews were transcribed, typed up and given page numbers. The coding system is similar to the one used for Workers School (WSM) and Workers' School Documents (WSD) [1]. In this case WSI stands for Workers' School Interviews, followed by the year in which the interviews were conducted, in this case 1996. The interviewers are distinguished from the interviewees by the use of double initial. For example an interview by Elizabeth of one of her fellow workers, Hellen, would be coded as follows (WSI 1996 EM/H: page number), while my interview of Elizabeth was coded as (WSI 1996 MM/E; page number).

All the interviews were taped, transcribed and returned to the interviewees for comment. Only one corrected script was returned (from the black academic), and I have received letters from some of the workers thanking me for the transcripts and offering to help in any way they can. I am taking the lack of response as being a reflection of the workers' and facilitators' lack of concern about the transcripts and also their trust in me to represent the history fairly. It is also perhaps a reflection of the workers' difficulties in contesting written texts in English, even texts of their own speech. I think that, had there been time, it would have been best to replay the interviews to the workers after a period of a few days, and to ask the workers if they were happy with what had been recorded. However this was not possible and in any case, during several interviews the interviewees asked me to turn off the tape when they were talking about a particularly sensitive issue or simply when they got tired of being recorded and felt like talking freely.

Piloting the Interview Questions

I constructed a list of thirteen questions before leaving for South Africa (see Appendix 3), but reduced and simplified these, having piloted the questions with Trevor and with

[1] In order to distinguish Trevor and Theo, Trevor is coded as T and Theo as Th. With Dan and David, Dan is D and David is Dd.

Rosina and Freddy, two of the workers whose command of English was weakest. It quickly became apparent which questions were difficult for the workers to understand or to answer in English, and also difficult for me to explain in English. I had intended to try to get information on informal educational systems at home, but the workers became confused by the terminology and the association of education and formal schooling was so strong, especially in research into a school at a university, that I decided to limit it to one simple question about their schooling as children. The questions were phrased in simple English, focusing on their experiences of education, their involvement in the Workers' School and their involvement in conflict on campus. (See Appendix 3 for both lists of questions.)

Interviewers: I had intended to conduct all the interviews myself, but when Trevor (T) and Elizabeth (E) offered to conduct interviews after I had returned to England, I gratefully accepted their offer. It was fortuitous that the interviews were carried out by a white intellectual, by a black intellectual and by a black worker. Before leaving South Africa, I interviewed the other interviewers and explained the research to them and left them with the same list of questions that I had asked them, and the dictaphone that I had used with them.

Trevor Ngwane (TN): He was a founding member and the first coordinator of the school. He comes from a black lower middle class background and although he suffered some disruption in his schooling, he went to the University of Fort Hare (a black university) and after being expelled from there, got his degree through correspondence at University of South Africa (UNISA). He spent some time working as a researcher for the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), before being appointed as a junior lecturer in Sociology at Wits while doing his Masters degree, and that is where his involvement in the school began. He was in his early thirties when the interviews were carried out and he is a sensitive and skilled interviewer.

Elizabeth Mkwayi (EM): She was a founding member of the school. She has worked as a cleaner at Wits for over twenty years and was in her early fifties when she conducted the interviews. She studied for Standard 8 and her favourite subject was history, which she studied with Bongani as her teacher. I taught her English for several years and even when her son was murdered she continued to come to the English class, albeit only to sleep. She tells of how eventually she gave up her studies when the murder of her son was followed by the murder of her favourite teacher Bongani and then the death of another teacher in a road accident. Like Elizabeth's son, both were young men in their early twenties.

> Yes I like History very much ... But after Bongani passed away I was very worried because I was understand Bongani very well. Oh well ... Bongani, I am sure they shot him. They shot him there in Soweto ... I just leave History, yeah. Even if this new guy came to the school, I didn't continue with history. I just continue with my English with Ephraim. Ephraim was nice and I understand Ephraim. Ephraim was a nice guy and then after Ephraim pass away ... he get accident and pass away, I just stay away from school till now. I didn't go there till now. I haven't studied since ... I just lost hope after that ... our teachers they just ... leave us ...
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 119-20)

Elizabeth was very interested in the research and in having the story of the school recorded, and volunteered to interview her fellow workers. She typifies the workers in many ways, in particular the group of older women in the school, called the mamas. I have found her to be sensitive, caring, vivacious and stoical in her determination to learn. It is also the case that I had hoped that people would speak more freely to Elizabeth, but this did not happen. Firstly, everybody greeted me in the interviews carried out by Elizabeth, and in their written interviews (an initiative that came from Elizabeth), they numbered their answers as though it was a comprehension exercise and gave brief,

succinct answers as I had trained them to do in preparation for the DET examinations! The second interviewer, Trevor, had worked as a researcher and is an experienced interviewer, and his two interviews with Dan were conducted in Dan's home in Soweto. Elizabeth conducted hers at Wits in the workers' lunch time and so it is perhaps not surprising that they did not always welcome her with open arms. She describes her experience as interviewer in a letter to me:

> Mary I am sorry to delay is because this is not an easy task. I try to talk to the people and gave them questions when I come to the next day they say oh we didn't finish. Please come tomorrow. When I came he or she is not there. Some they told me that they are busy. But I try to get few of them you will hear them on the tape but some of them I have just write their answers on the page.
>
> (Personal Correspondence from Elizabeth Mkwayi, undated circa 1996)

The dictaphone broke down and Elizabeth had problems with batteries and tapes, with the result that when she did get it going and she managed to get the workers to attend, she tended to rush through the interviews. However, there are also two longer interviews which she conducted and she also got workers to submit written answers when she was concerned about the quality of the tape. Despite these difficulties, Elizabeth succeeds in obtaining valuable information. However I am also aware that under normal circumstances the workers would not ask these questions in this way and I think that Elizabeth's interviewing experience tells a lot about the practice of interviewing and its connection with knowledge construction practices of the university, and just how far removed from normal human interaction such a practice is.

There are various schools of thought about what interview data represent. In this case I can concur with Scott that 'Interview data are the result of a series of selections made by the researcher both before and during fieldwork' (1996: 65). I did not try to get a

representative sample of workers, as I had no way of knowing who would be at the university when I arrived and, had I arrived at another time, I could have interviewed other workers and so got a different set of interview data. In short, the data set is a selection from all other possible data sets that could have been made. The researcher's account as a consequence is positioned (Scott 1996: 65). It is fortunate that I managed to interview a good cross section of workers, in that I interviewed three men and three women and this included an educational range from barely literate to matriculation level, and also included a person from the rural areas living in the university hostel and one who works on the railways and lives in a large township. In general, I was happy with the interviews that I conducted, although there were some points of misunderstanding due to language which I did not pick up at the time, but only in retrospect when listening to tapes and reading the transcripts. Although I have called them interviews and they were semi-structured, I think of them more as formal conversations, or in the words of Dexter, 'a conversation with a purpose' (Dexter 1970: 136). I was flexible in my questioning and in particular with Trevor and David (an honours education student at Wits and facilitator at the Workers' School) it was more of a dialogue than an interview. While I understand the arguments of feminist researchers for reciprocity in interviews, in particular on sensitive issues such as racial or sexual discrimination, there are occasions when it is just not appropriate. To give an example, while the workers would probably have been interested to hear of my experiences of schooling as a child, the research is about South Africa and Bantu education and I think on this occasion it would not have been a good usage of interview time for me to go into it. It is also the case that the workers were aware that I was from a different country, and so trying to build a base of mutual experience would not have been appropriate for me, as it might have been for Trevor and Elizabeth, although neither of them tried to reciprocate in the interviews.

There are difficulties in using transcripts in data analysis. Kvale (1988: 97) argues that transcripts are the transformation of one mode - a conversation or oral discourse - into another mode, narrative discourse, with the dangers inherent in this process, such as taking things out of context and obscuring what the person meant to say. These

difficulties are compounded in this case when the workers are speaking in English, which is often their second or third language. There are likely to be gaps between what the person said, what they meant and what I understand them to mean. In many cases it is the silence that speaks louder than the words, as when Elizabeth describes her reasons for leaving the school above. The depth of feeling is conveyed in the taped interview, but not in the transcript, which points to the limitations of the written word in conveying the emotional content of speech. In general the interviews provide a personal element to the construction of the history of the school, as the minutes and documents are largely concerned with organizational rather than individual matters. I think at this stage that the most valuable information contained in the interviews is historical, where the workers tell of their schooling under apartheid and their decision to get involved in setting up the school to try to get access to education in their adult lives. It personalizes the apartheid education system and the resistance to it. Secondly, interviews were the only way I had of gaining access to the history of the school that had not been recorded in minutes, or in those minutes that had survived. The school started in October 1988, but the minutes that survive only start in January 1990 and the setting up of the school is thus recorded in the interviews.

As with the data analysis of the minutes described above, the constant comparative method was used, with the interviews being first analyzed in terms of broad themes as outlined above, followed by the more focused analysis in relation to the specific research questions. The findings from the minutes, the interviews and the documentary data were in turn subjected to the constant comparative method, and it was on that basis that the history of the school was constructed.

The Legitimation Crisis: Questions of Validity and Reliability

> All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in a reliable manner.
>
> (Merriam 1998: 198)

Traditional criteria for judging research texts - internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity - have come under sustained critique by qualitative researchers who argue that a different set of criteria needs to be developed for qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln 1985, Hammersley 1992). There are those who argue for a redefining of the traditional criteria to fit qualitative research and others who suggest that an entirely new set of criteria are needed. As an example of the former, there are postpositivists who have adapted the traditional criteria to fit into a naturalistic context but they continue to use criteria based on the works ability to (a) generate generic and formal theory, (b) be empirically grounded and scientifically credible, (c) produce findings that can be generalized or transferred to other settings, (d) be internally reflexive in terms of taking account of the researcher and the research strategy on the findings that have been produced' (Denzin 1997: 8). On the other hand Guba and Lincoln (1994) call for thinking through of totally different conceptualizations of reliability and validity. Various researchers have offered alternative criteria, for example, in terms of narrative inquiry Connelly and Clandinin suggest 'apparency, verisimilitude and transferability' as possible criteria. (1990: 7). Strauss and Corbin have developed a revised set of criteria namely 'significance, theory observation compatibility, generalizability, consistency, reproducibility, precision and verification' (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 4). Postmodernist criteria challenge the generalization criteria and would judge a text in accordance with how it 'instantiates a cultural practice, a cultural performance, (story telling), and a set of shifting, conflicting, cultural meanings' (Fiske 1994: 195). Finally, critical post structuralists propose a complete break from traditional criteria and propose instead a set of criteria based on subjectivity, emotionality, feeling and other anti-foundationalist criteria (Ellis & Flaherty 1992: 5-6, Siedman, 1991).

The researcher is thus faced with the dilemma of how to produce results that will stand up to these confusing and contradictory criteria. What I offer here is a preliminary discussion of how I understand the applicability of internal validity, reliability and external validity to this particular study. Internal validity deals with how the research findings match reality and in this case I am conducting an historical study based on data which is a very partial record of a section of the life of the school that I am studying. Kvale (1989) suggests that we understand validity as a process of checking, questioning and theorizing, not as a strategy for establishing a rule-based correspondence between our findings and the real world. This seems to be a useful way of seeing it, as is Maxwell's (1992b) account of the types of understanding that may emerge from a qualitative study: descriptive (what happened in specific situations), interpretative, what it meant to the people involved; theoretical concepts and their relationships, used to explain actions and meanings and evaluative (judgements of the worth or value of actions and meanings). (Poster session cited in Miles and Huberman 1994: 278). I would hope that all four types of understanding may emerge from this study. My aim is in keeping with Merriam's suggestions that 'in this type of research it is important to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening,' (Merriam 1998: 203).

Reliability refers to what extent research findings would be replicated by another researcher. I would argue in this case that, given this data base and the same questions, another researcher could follow the steps in my analysis of the School and trace the process of change in the school. However, the account is more than that, and is inevitably coloured by my experience in the school and all the knowledge that comes from being there and having lived through and participated fully in the building of the school. Secondly, the fact that the school is now closed will of necessity make this account unique in some respects. However I would argue that this in itself should not discredit the 'results' that I come up with, as, hopefully, they will be consistent with the data collected and I will be able to demonstrate this. There is nothing to stop other researchers coming up with many other explanations given the same data set, as these data, as with life, can be understood in many different ways.

However there are also things that have been built into the study to test for reliability in that there are three interviewers all asking the same questions and both I and another interviewer have interviewed the same person, again asking the same questions. This same person also submitted a written account when asked to by Elizabeth, one of the other interviewers, (see Appendix 5 for discussion on reliability). Secondly, my main source of data, the school minutes have been written by many different people who represent different layers and interest groups in the school, so it will be possible to triangulate by writer and by issue in the school (see Appendix 6). Thirdly, I have three different data sources which again will allow for comparisons and testing of theories. Triangulation has been used 'to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it, or at least do not contradict it' (Miles and Huberman 1994: 266) and these independent measures can be the use of multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings. I would concur with Denzin and Lincoln that my use of triangulation in this study is to add to the depth and rigour of the investigation.

> ... the use of multiple methods of triangulation, reflect an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. ...The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single story is best understood, then as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation.
>
> (Denzin and Lincoln 1988: 4)

To give an example from this research, the finding about the democratic practice in the school was based on the interview with Dan who described how the school operated democratically. This was compared with what two of the facilitators, Trevor and David said in their interviews about the democratic practice in the school and these statements in turn were compared with documentary evidence in the minutes of workers describing

how the school operated to other workers at the meetings, and with evidence of the workers chairing and taking minutes of the school meetings. Finally this was compared with all specific references to democratic practice in the minutes and school reports and registers of attendance that accompany the minutes.

Finally with regard to external validity or generalizability, again it is not a question of producing formulaic results which can then to be transferred to other situations, but a question of what Stake has called naturalistic generalizations (1978, 1994, 1995). This is the type of generalizing everybody does when they draw on their knowledge, experience and intuition to make sense of the world and connect different aspects of their experience. 'Full and thorough knowledge of the particular' allows one to see similarities 'in new and foreign contexts' (Stake 1978: 6). This process of naturalistic generalization is arrived at 'by recognizing similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural covariations of happenings' (1978: 6). Finally with regard to the case study per se, it is reassuring to read this statement of Guba and Lincoln's criteria for assessing validity and reliability of case study - 'were the interviews reliably and validly constructed; was the content of the documents properly analyzed; do the conclusions of the case study rest upon data?' (1981: 378) Hammersley puts forward a similar set of criteria for judging research

> ... from my point of view ... the assessment of validity involves identifying the main claims made by a study, noting the types of claims these represent, and comparing the evidence provided for each claim with what is judged to be necessary given the claim's plausibility and credibility.
>
> (Hammersley 1992: 72)

He also develops the notion of relevance to complement his validity criteria (Hammersley 1992: 72-77). However the very idea of relevance is a value judgment and what is judged as relevant in England may not be judged relevant in South Africa and vice versa, and what may seem relevant to academics may not be relevant to manual workers on university campuses.

CHAPTER 4

THE UNIVERSITY, THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE WORKER

Research and the University

My interest in the university is fivefold. Firstly, it is the context of my study and in this case my focus is on the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, one of three traditionally white, liberal, English-speaking universities in South Africa. Secondly, the majority of members of the school were black employees or black students at the historically white university, and their position reflects 'the soft end' of the position of black people in South Africa in this transitional period from apartheid to democracy. It is therefore an opportunity to study these changing internal university relationships in some depth. Thirdly, I am now conducting the study under the auspices of another university and of particular interest is the relationship of a university to the society in which it is located, and how this relates to the university as an international research institution. One question that I will be addressing is the relationship of the white university to black South African society on the one hand, and its relationship to international research traditions on the other, and I will looking at how these changed as apartheid began to collapse and the mass democratic movement began to place increasing demands on the university. In fact the questions raised by representatives of the black community in South Africa question the fundamental idea of a university and the history of this idea in relation to colonialism. Fourthly, one of the themes of this study is the relationship between the intellectual and the worker and the process whereby traditional intellectuals, such as academics at Wits, are challenged by organic intellectuals, such as those involved in the liberatory educational movement in South Africa. Finally as a white researcher at a university in England, researching a school for black workers at a traditionally white university in South Africa, how is one to find a way through this complex history that is, at minimal, non exploitative, and that may be of some benefit to the researched? Or is it inevitable that my location and cultural and educational background will inevitably perpetuate neo-

colonial relations, or is it possible to turn the tables and use the resources of the university to further the interests of those who have been excluded from it?

The History of the University of the Witwatersrand

The discovery of gold in the Transvaal region in 1886 gave birth to Johannesburg, or i-Goli, city of gold. The University of the Witwatersrand originated from the South African School of Mines in Kimberly in 1896 to provide personnel for the mining industry and in 1910 the South African School of Mines and Technology was established in Johannesburg. In 1921 parliament passed the University of the Witwatersrand (Private) Act that become operative in March 1922 (HSRC 1972: 65). The close links between the university and the Chamber of Mines remain to the present day with the Chamber of Mines being the university's biggest benefactor. In line with racial segregation in South African society, the university went to considerable lengths to avoid admitting black students. In 1926 the university council appointed a committee 'to ascertain what procedure is necessary to empower the University to exclude students on grounds of colour' (Murray 1982: 298). The university also tried to pressurize the government into introducing legislation prohibiting them from admitting black students on legal grounds, which ironically the government of the day declined to do, saying it was entirely their decision. It was actually pressure from the government who saw the need to train black doctors due to fear of epidemics - which could not only spread to the white population, but which could also decimate the black labour force - that led to the opening of the doors of Wits to black medical students.

> A study of admission policies indicates that, at its inception Wits very much reflected the prejudices of the society to which it belonged. Only very slowly and hesitantly was it accepted that black students, African, Coloured and Asian,

> should be admitted in any substantial numbers ... The number of black students rose from 4 in 1939 to 87 in 1945.
>
> (Murray 1982: 229)

By 1953, 4.9 per cent of the student population was non-European (Murray 1982: 12). The attitude of the university is best summarized by Professor Raikes at Wits SRC dinner in 1933 'We should endeavor to maintain our ascendancy, but reaching out always for the further development of the native at the same time.' (Murray 1982: 310). The contradiction between its public non-racial stand and racist practice is evident in the conditions that black students and members of staff had to endure

> ... throughout the 1940's and 50's, black students were subjected to strict social segregation on campus. The first black academic staff member, Dr. B.W. Vilakazi, was poorly treated, being refused a lectureship and confined to the position of language assistant, despite his distinction as a scholar of African languages.
>
> (Perceptions of Wits 1997: 4)

In fact the Vice Chancellor issued a press statement to the effect that 'in status Vilakazi was a language assistant, not a lecturer, no student would be compelled to avail himself of his assistance; and the language assistant would have no disciplinary authority over students.' (Murray 1982: 313).

However, I think it is important to place South Africa in a global context in the earlier decades of the twentieth century and not see it as a total aberration. In the 1920s and 1930s there was National Socialism in Germany and Fascism in Italy and in general the universities mirrored the societies in which they were situated. Murray argues 'The very strength of assertive and exclusive nationalism and of anti-Semitism in German universities helped to ensure that they would fairly readily fall behind the anti-Semitic policies of the Hitler regime' (Murray 1982: 300). In the United States there was not only

segregation and discrimination against black applicants in the Southern and mid-Western universities 'Illustrious Northern universities such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Columbia imposed admission quotas on Jews and Catholics, and severely limited the intakes of blacks. At Princeton, blacks were totally excluded.' (Murray 1982: 300). On the other hand, it is important to see the relationship of racial prejudice and material interests, as argued by Louw:

> A common pejorative meaning ascribed to apartheid was that of an irrational belief in racism. But apartheid was never merely a subjective or irrational belief structure ... It was a racist belief and language system which was processed and reproduced in institutions like schools, universities, the courts and the media. But as a language (system of signs), apartheid was also always dialectically intertwined with an objective economic dynamic. Apartheid has always had a material base.
>
> (Louw 1994: 26)

The salient point is the implication of the university in the power structures and in the prejudices of the society in which it is situated, which is in contradiction to the university's self image as an independent agent at the cutting edge of the most advanced thought of the society, and as engaged in the disinterested pursuit of the truth. The Nationalist Party had no such illusions and as discussed in the previous chapter, in South Africa in 1953 The Bantu Education Act was passed enshrining the apartheid education system, which alongside the Land Act, the Population Registration Act, the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act and the Mixed Amenities Act, constituted the apartheid regime. In the words of President Verwoerd

> ... we can see to it that education will be suitable for those who will become the industrial workers in the country ... What is the use in teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? that is quite absurd. Education is after all not something that hangs in the air. Education must train and teach

> according to the spheres in which they live ... I just want to remind honorable Members that if the native in South Africa today in any kind of school in existence is being taught to expect that he will live his adult life under a policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake.
>
> (Hansard, Vol. 83, 3576-86)

In 1954 as a response to the new legislation the South African Institute of Race Relations sponsored a symposium entitled 'The Idea of the University'. Here a Professor of Philosophy at Wits, traced the origins of the university, not to the technical college that trained personnel for the mines, but back to rather more lofty origins: 'here we may observe the statement of the medieval writer, Jordan of Osnaburg (which is quoted in Rashdall, Vol.11, p. 2), that there are three powers or virtues by which Christendom is governed and vitalized: *'sacerdatium, imperium, et studium'* - the church, the state and the university (Harris 1954: 4). The Principal of University of Cape Town took up the idea of the university, locating it in ideas of Western democracies:

> ... according to the concepts prevalent in our Western democracies, a university is essentially a gathering of persons whose object is the search for the truth. It aims at the pursuit, preservation and dissemination of learning, and it seeks knowledge for its own sake, irrespective of its apparent usefulness or otherwise. It demands of all who foregather under its wing absolute intellectual integrity; it prizes scholarship and research as the major requirements of those who work within its walls, and it fights at all times, to secure the fullest measure possible of academic freedom.
>
> (Davie 1954: 400)

This depiction of the university appears to see no contradiction between these lofty ideals and the university's somewhat questionable position as an overwhelmingly white institution, serving the needs of the mining industry in a colonized African country. The links between the iron fist of colonial expansion and the velvet glove of the colonial

intellectual and cultural production appears to have been severed in the minds of many members of the university hierarchy who define their lives of privilege in the most altruistic of terms: 'Let us consider in a little more detail what is involved in learning or the pursuit of knowledge. In the first place it involves a single-minded and unselfish devotion to an ideal' (Harris 1954: 5). It is interesting that this statement resonates with Conrad's 'idea' that lies behind colonial expansion:

> ... the conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretense but an idea; an unselfish belief in an idea, something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer sacrifice to.
>
> (Conrad 1972: 7)

The resonance of such statements with the South African British liberal intellectuals' idea of the university's educational mission in Africa, is audible.

> If there is any meaning in the claim that segregation of the Africans from the Europeans is justified by reason of their being 'primitive' or even 'barbaric', then surely it is desirable that those who can benefit from the superior culture of the white man should not be denied the blessings of these contacts which alone can raise him from the primitive and barbaric. To restrict him to an education system based on his own African culture is to deprive him of his chances of intellectual and spiritual salvation.
>
> (Davie 1954: 11)

There is little doubt that many of the university hierarchy saw their role as a civilizing one, 'the true aims of university education are not only to impart a body of knowledge and teach certain skills, but to develop a firm regard for certain abiding values and to

encourage adherence to certain basic standards upon which the quality of our whole Western civilization depends' (SAIRR 1954: 20). It seems that for the liberal section of the university hierarchy, there was little contradiction in their position as they genuinely believed that they were being of assistance to less developed people by bringing them the riches of European civilization.

Academic Freedom

In the same year, 1954, the student organization NUSAS in a study entitled *The African in the Universities*, defined the four essential freedoms of the university - 'the freedom of a university to decide for itself whom to teach, how to teach, what to teach, and who shall teach' (NUSAS :7). In fact the right of the university to academic freedom became the rallying call of the white liberal universities over the next few decades. Government interference on admission policies, an interference that would have been welcomed twenty years previously, was now seen as an attack on academic freedom: 'Now while the frontal and frightening attack on academic freedom involves "what we teach", the citadel can also be assaulted from the rear or the side, and one of the attacks is by interference with "whom we teach"' (Davie 1954: 12). When the separate University Education Bill was introduced in 1957, both the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand sent deputations to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, stating their strong opposition to racial segregation at university. On May 21, 2,000 professors, lecturers and students of the University of Witwatersrand staged a solemn march through the streets of Johannesburg to the City Hall. A similar procession was held in Cape Town on 7 May. In April 1961 a plaque was unveiled at a formal ceremony at Wits

> We affirm in the name of the University of the Witwatersrand that it is our duty to uphold the principle that a university is a place where men and women, without regard to race or colour, are welcome to join in the acquisition of and advancement of knowledge and to continue faithfully to defend this ideal against those who have sought by legislative enactment to curtail the autonomy of the

> University. Now therefore we dedicate ourselves to the maintenance of this ideal and the restoration of autonomy to our university.
>
> (Academic Freedom Committees (AFC) of the Universities of Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1974: 12)

Similar plaques were unveiled in Cape Town both in 1960 and in 1968. In 1959 UCT instituted the annual T. B. Davie Memorial Lecture on Academic Freedom and Wits introduced a triennial Chancellors' Lecture in the spirit of the ideals on the plaque. Over the years eminent speakers from all over the world came to South Africa to give these lectures and each speaker put forward an elaboration of the concept of academic freedom. For example in 1966 academic freedom for the individual teacher was spelled out by the invited speaker -

> For the individual teacher academic freedom means the absence of discriminatory treatment on grounds of race, sex, religion or politics, and the right to teach according to his own conception of fact and truth rather than according to any predetermined orthodoxy. It involves freedom to publish and, subject to the proper performance of allotted duties, freedom to pursue whatever personal studies are congenial.
>
> (Boyle cited in AFC 1974: 2)

Another speaker stressed 'the student's right' to express and to defend their own views and beliefs' without repression by authority as an aspect of the 'protean concept' of academic freedom.' (Cohen 1968 cited in AFC 1974: 3).

Increasingly there was a shift towards a recognition that academic freedom cannot exist within the confines of the university when the lack of freedom exists outside, with Professor Kiewiet arguing in 1960 that

> ... the definition [of academic freedom] which seems to have the most dignity and creative meaning is the right of scholarship to the pursuit of knowledge in an environment in which the emancipating powers of knowledge are the least subject to arbitrary constraints. This means that scholarship and the teaching and writing in which it expresses itself must be free to deal with the major problems and issues of the age. It is vital that we go beyond freedom to pursue knowledge for its own sake, and claim for scholarship today a greater and freer role in relieving mankind of inequality, injustice, deprivation, fear, ignorance or anger. I know these are emotional words. I know also that there is a more severe definition of academic freedom that fears these responsibilities. But as an historian, I reply that we have reached a period in history where the laboratory and the library of the university are no longer in the ivory tower. Academic responsibilities have evolved with history and have become co-extensive with it.
>
> (Kiewiet 1960 cited in AFC 1974: 4)

Taking up this theme Sir Robert Birley warned :

> ... the fate of the German universities in the 1930's should be a warning to us. They believed that, as long as they preserved the right of free research and free teaching within their own walls, they did not need to concern themselves about what else was happening in their country. As a result they did nothing to oppose the rise to power of a political party which made it clear that it intended to destroy the academic freedom which the universities enjoyed. I should say that a university today should be deeply concerned about the denial of justice beyond its walls.
>
> (Birley 1965 cited in AFC 1974: 4)

Speeches and sentiments are one thing, practice another and despite these protestations the combined total of African students attending UCT and Wits had dropped from 113 in 1959 to 31 in 1973, while the total student population had increased from 10,214 in 1959

to 18,797 in 1973 (AFC 1974: 4). Although there were some changes, the appointment of black staff remained a contentious issue 'in 1984 there were just two black professors and one black associate professor, and in 1988 93% of Wits academic staff were white.'(Perceptions of Wits 1987: 35).(P.W.) However to many the university did become a haven from the harshness of life outside and also a place where academics and students took up positions in the anti-apartheid struggle. One of the research respondents, an Indian Maths lecturer, and ex Wits student who was imprisoned, tortured and released without charge by the apartheid government, had this to say about his feelings for the university

> I used to be a student here in 1959, when things were very difficult outside. When you came to Wits you felt like a human being. Whether it was actually hypocritical or show, I can't say. But then I do know that people treated me with dignity and respect. Look outside you know, outside you were actually, it was the height of Nationalist party being in power. They were trying to implement various laws - Separate Amenities - this separate but equal, but not equal at all. So you felt comfortable at Wits and there were a lot of people who had actually dedicated themselves, a lot of white people dedicated themselves to the struggle.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/K: 99)

Experiences vary and there are variations according to 'race' and according to faculty and time, but the relative liberty enjoyed on universities campuses tended to contrast favourably with the oppression suffered by all people of colour in South Africa.

The University Under Siege

Tomaselli analyses the white English-speaking university

> Universities are contradictory institutions which relate to society in contradictory and confusing ways. Universities - English language universities, that is, are loosely administered, each department a virtual independent entity in terms of theoretical position, action, course orientation and so on. Even within departments extreme differences of academic and political opinion, are largely tolerated. There is no interference from anybody - except on occasion from faculty boards - in the way lecturers conduct themselves in terms of their disciplines.
>
> (Tomaselli 1988: 3)

So within Wits, while one department trained white executives for lucrative careers in the giant Anglo-American mining corporation, individuals in another would be designing literacy and basic trade union materials for the black miners and consequently

> ... different sections of the university are concerned with different needs, different publics and different futures. These differences are manifested in different political alignments, different ways of perceiving ones practice as either student or academic, different ways of putting one's knowledge into practice, and often, a different conception of knowledge itself.
>
> (Tomaselli 1988: 3).

This is further complicated when the university operates in the international research arena. Tomaselli argues

> South African universities have always been Janus faced: one face turned towards the developed metropoles of the west, the other towards the complex

> mix of developed and developing, urban and rural that constitute their backyard ... Their constituency is international and the consequence of this is that research and publications must be relevant to existing international debates and areas of research ... the commitment is not just to excellence but to the primacy of issues deemed important to the international academic community.
>
> (Tomaselli 1988: 7)

Difficulties arise when issues that are of importance to South Africa are not important in international research terms.

In the 1980s and early 1990s university campuses throughout South Africa became the site of ongoing student protests, often leading to damage of property and to police intervention, with baton charges and teargassing being a regular occurrence. Academics often found themselves caught up in the middle of this, a position summarized in Kerr's Second law

> In his dealings on the campus, a faculty member is an ultra conservative, leaning slightly to the right of Herbert Hoover; in South Africa, that would read 'Louis Le Grange'; in his dealings off campus with the general public his position is a raging liberal far to the left of Karl Marx.
>
> (Tomaselli 1988: 2).

The security police repeatedly referred to Wits as a communist institution and in mid-1987, the government identified universities, particularly English-language campuses as sites of revolution and demanded that the universities police fellow staff and students. Failure to curb what is called 'campus unrest' would result in punitive cuts in subsidies provided by the state. The English-language universities rejected the state's demands thus tempting the state's retaliation (Tomaselli 1988: 2). In the midst of this mayhem, it was from outside the white campuses that an analysis of the historic role that the white English speaking universities had played, began to emerge. Professor Gerwel, in his

inaugural lecture as Vice Chancellor of University of the Western Cape (UWC), an historically coloured university, analyzed the university in the following manner:

> In spite of our genuine commitment to free scholarly discourse and research every South African university has a dominant ideological orientation which describes the context of its operations. This is not necessarily as restrictive as it sounds for the university can dynamically and critically interact with its context and need not be encapsulated by it, and where different ideologies exist, operate and contest in a society, it is as well for the society that a university interacts in that way and establishes a discourse with ideology ... I would further suggest that the ideology to which a university relates has a correlative in some organized political movement, the university is thus linked to some ideological establishment. This is demonstrably true of both the sub-sets of historically white Afrikaans language and white English language universities. The Afrikaans universities have always stood and still stand firmly within the operative context of Afrikaner nationalism, networking in a complex way into its various correlative institutions, whether it be educational, cultural, religious, economic or political. Equally the English-language universities operate within the context of Anglophile liberalism, primarily linking to and responding to its institutional expressions as in the English schools, cultural organizations and importantly big business.
>
> (Gerwel 1987 cited in Tomaselli 1988: 1)

By way of contrast he aligned UWC with the mass democratic movement and worked with the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and People's Education 'there is therefore an internal imperative for this university to develop a critical alignment with the democratic movement as the dominant ideological orientation. The integration of academic and intellectual life with, and the development out of it, of the reality of people's social experience and world is essential' (Gerwel cited in Kruss 1988 pp. 137-

8). UWC hosted a NECC conference in the Faculty of Education as a forum for teachers to try to implement People's Education.

Meanwhile the traditionally white universities came under increasing critique from cultural activists in the ANC

> My impression is that when I look at the liberal universities, like the University of the Witwatersrand, Natal university, University of Cape Town (UCT), and all these and even the Afrikaans universities - Stellenbosch, Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) - I see educationists who are extremely narrow in their vision, who are wearing blinkers and are completely unaware of what is happening, whose horizons really end with the little researches that they are doing about the themselves ... No education takes place where there is oppression, where people are struggling for their freedom ... my common sense tells me that the sooner the liberal universities realize they have an very definite and positive role to play and accordingly formulate policy, that will be better for all of us ... My view is that the liberal universities still live in Victorian Britain. There is nothing wrong with us learning the history of the Victorian age, but this should not be done at the expense and exclusion of 75% of the population. I think that when that is done it is absolutely criminal. When a university refuses to recognize what people are engaging in this country, it is not only marginalizing them, but it is refusing them the right to express their life experience. And in my view that is absolutely criminal.
>
> (Serote 1993: 54)

A group of academics and students at Wits conducted a study - *Perception of Wits Tomorrow begins at Wits today? The Role of the University in a Changing South Africa.*(P.W.) study in 1986, to gauge how Wits was perceived by three constituencies - community organizations in the Witwatersrand area, international academics and employees of Wits. The section of the study that is of most interest for this study is one

concerning the community groups. The study was partially inspired by a speech made by Dr. Beyers Naude, Chairman of the South African Council of Churches at UCT in May 1985 which shows a development of the concept of academic freedom in the South African context of the mid eighties.

> Educational institutions have become a target area for political action and debate. Universities need to respond to this challenge. Universities do not belong to the privileged white minorities. They belong to all the people of this land. Academic freedom must become a basis for freedom from the injustices both on and beyond the campus. This means that universities which affirm academic freedom are obliged to reach beyond the customary debate on who shall teach, who shall be taught, and on what shall be taught ... the historical concept of universities will have to be reviewed in order to make them universities of the people for the people in the full sense of the word ... this would imply an active and ongoing debate between the university and trade union movements, between the university and political groups, between university and educational groups operating on the grassroots level.
>
> (Naude 1985 cited in P. W. 1987: 1)

Community Perceptions Of Wits

The P.W. study was an attempt by academics and graduate students at Wits to start the ball rolling by consulting community groups and getting their perceptions of the university. They targeted all those groups that had had delegate status at the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee National Education Conference at Wits in December 1985. Although the researchers were unable to meet some groups due to the unstable and dangerous conditions in which they were operating, nevertheless they did manage to contact forty seven community groups and the results reveal another chasm between Wits self- perception as a liberal institution and how it was perceived by black community groups in its dormitory townships. Community groups perceived Wits as racist in both

overt and subtle ways, with few black staff appointments, lack of representation of black students in decision making and racism also 'embodied in white values'. Wits was seen as co-operating with the apartheid government, 'rather than oppose apartheid publicly they try to whisper in Botha's ear' (P.W. 1987: 9). In addition Wits was perceived as having used government policies to shield its own racism, in particular the silence of Wits on the issue of Bantu education and apartheid in education was cited as most telling. 'In short in this negative view, Wits is seen at worst as politically expedient, paternalistic, hypocritical, and biased, at best as well-intentioned, but structurally hamstrung.' (P.W. 1987: 8-9)

However the purpose of the study was not just to provide community groups with an opportunity to offer a critique of Wits but also to encourage groups to come up with suggestions for how Wits might change to meet the needs of the community. There were several suggestions as to how this might be done. Firstly it was suggested that 'the form and style of the curriculum should be presented in a way that is accessible to ordinary people' (P.W. 1987: 20-30). Some saw a distinct 'white' or western, or dominant group bias in both the content of the course and the way they are taught and suggested that there should be more African content, Black Studies courses, community development, preventive medicine, low cost architecture, customary and small claims law courses.

However the following critique of the university seems likely to have been inspired as much by the researchers as that of the community groups, as it seems to me to presuppose, not only an in depth knowledge of how university disciplines operate, but also the confidence to critique them, a level of knowledge and confidence not often found among community groups who have had little experience of the complexities of the evolution of university disciplines, for all they might be extremely skeptical about any claims that they make.

> Science and education, for example, are conventionally presented as value-free. This value-freedom is the outcome of an artificial distinction central to most

> academic courses between the technical and social aspects of a discipline. Since the distinction is viewed as untenable, the insistence upon the technical value-free dimensions is seen as a covert special pleading for certain minority interests, usually those of big business. The more Wits claims value neutrality therefore the more suspicions it arouses about the 'real' interests being served.
>
> (P.W. 1987: 20)

My interpretation is that the groups would have seen Wits serving the interests of the mines and big business, but it would have been difficult for them to pin down how this operates through disciplines. It would seem likely that a general critique was offered by the community groups and that the extension of this analysis to university disciplines, was largely the work of the researchers. However the study's account of the individualism encouraged by the university system rings true 'Wits does not prepare people to serve the community. On the contrary, it prepares students to serve minority interests.' (P.W. 1987: 20) and 'It emphasizes technical concerns at the expense of fostering an ethic of community service and as a consequence it produces self interested graduates' (P.W. 1987: 22). They argued that its courses were too theoretical and consequently it produced graduates ill-prepared to help tackle pressing community problems. Thirdly, the inevitable outcome is that dominant interests come to be served almost by default. By way of contrast the groups suggest that 'university education should train the youth for the future development of South Africa', 'raise students' awareness and critical consciousness', provide 'liberation from racism and indoctrination'. (P.W. 1987: 22). Groups suggested that there could be a practical component to degrees, for example medical students could work in rural areas, or education students could hold classes for boycotting students. There was also the suggestion of two-way courses whereby academics would give courses for the community and community groups, in turn, would run courses for academics (P.W. 1987: 22-4).

There was a very strong feeling about the moral aspects of the education system, and one based on community rather than selfish individual interests was stressed repeatedly

'education must not only free a person but instill a desire to change society if it is wrong or inhuman' (P.W. 1987: 22). There are also very interesting comments about what the university's research priorities should be

> ... there is a unanimous feeling that Wits should move its research priorities from narrowly technical considerations towards a greater responsiveness to community concerns. As with community work, this should be planned in consultation with the relevant community organizations, and indeed this kind of research can become a major bridge for building community links ... Academics need however to be sensitive and meticulous about their research methodology and care should be taken not to misrepresent community positions. Also research should not just depend on the requirements of a higher degree, ceasing when the qualification has been obtained. The period of research and the information should be attuned to the needs of the community and made available to the community.
>
> (P.W. 1987: 24)

The importance of this study is that it was the first attempt by academics and students at Wits to involve community groups in the restructuring of the university in the light of the rapidly changing political conditions in the country, and in my opinion it suggests that a partnership would be of benefit to both the community groups and the university, provided the university was prepared to work *with*, rather than *for*, or on behalf of, the community groups.

The Intellectual and the Worker

> Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 301)

Gramsci argues that social groups produce their own intellectuals and this would certainly seem to be bourne out in this account of the history of the University of the Witwatersrand which arose with the mining industry. However as discussed above universities are not simple monolithic institutions and one of the most remarkable things about Wits university, situated as it is on the African highveld, is how it presents itself in direct lineage of the Graeco-Roman empire with its Romanesque columns and amphitheatre, its concourse and Senate House, while downplaying its position in Africa and its relationship with the mining industry. This claiming of an unbroken historical pedigree and independence from contemporary society is one of the ways whereby universities safeguard the idea of their independence and neutrality.

> ... since these various categories of traditional intellectuals experience through an 'esprit de corps' their uninterrupted historical continuity and their special qualification, they thus put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group. This self-assessment is not without consequences in the ideological and political field, consequences of wide-ranging import. The whole idealist philosophy can easily be connected with this position assumed by the social complex of intellectuals and can be defined as the expression of that social utopia by which intellectuals think of themselves as 'independent', autonomous, endowed with a character of their own.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 303)

As discussed in the previous chapters, from its inception the university was tied in with racist practices and for many decades it tried to ringfence the university as the exclusive enclave of white people, with black people being employed only in menial capacities. The first line of defense to fall was the admission of black students to the university, and with this came decades of disturbances on university campuses throughout South Africa as black, and indeed also radical white intellectuals, began to challenge apartheid and segregated educational institutions. With this challenge grew up a new field of knowledge, that of resistance to apartheid or 'the struggle' as it can be loosely defined. In all areas of opposition, from civic associations to trade unions, a new strata of organic intellectuals emerged

> A human mass does not 'distinguish' itself, does not become independent in its own right, without in the widest sense, organizing itself, and there is no organization without intellectuals, that is without organizers and leaders, in other words without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a group of people 'specialized' in conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 334)

These organic intellectuals were forced into a position where they had to develop their own ideas about what it was they were fighting against, and in turn they had to put forward an alternative. They were aided in this by a small but significant group of mainly white radical intellectuals, for the most part situated at the universities and in non-governmental organizations. They saw their task as being one of both making university knowledge accessible to 'the people' or the community, or the working class and also of involving the community in the creation, and indeed validation, of knowledge through such practices as action research, popular history and the writing of biographical accounts of ordinary black South Africans alongside those of leading figures in the resistance movement. They would probably have identified with Gramsci's ideal of the intellectual

> ... feeling the elemental passions of the people, understanding them and thus explaining them and justifying them in the particular historical situation, connecting them dialectically to the laws of history, to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated - ie Knowledge.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 349-50)

It was also in projects such as these that the accessible ideas of Freire were most readily utilized as was evident in the Freirean influence in the conceptualization of Peoples' Education as described in Chapter 7. People's Education began to address an alternative to the present educational system and while this was short-lived and did not develop into a serious challenge to traditional power-knowledge institutions and practices, it nevertheless was a 'tiger's leap' at the bastion of power and knowledge, and the slender technique of the examination so well described by Foucault (1977).

At Wits the Workers' School was set up by the workers with the explicit aim of getting 'some schooling because Wits is a schooling place.' (WSI 1996 TN/D: 150). Inadvertently Dan here strikes to core of the essence of traditional education, that is schooling, with its connotations of discipline and training. As will be evident in the history of the Workers' School, the workers did not arrive as blank slates, but as people with expectations about what schooling was, the type of schooling they wanted, and the manner in which they wanted to receive it. The facilitators were forced into a position where they had to try to convince the workers that their alternative ideas about education were superior to traditional ones. However they did this without at the time fully understanding the role of educational institutions in not only creating intellectuals but also in their distribution of credentials

> ...challenging power requires (credentialled) knowledge, yet the acquisition of that knowledge is organized so that it reinforces the very credentially-based system of power that is in part the original object of contestations.
>
> (Muller and Cloete 1986: 5)

So in order for the workers to be able to come to an informed choice about traditional schooling and an alternative liberatory educational programme, they would have needed to have had that experience of traditional schooling which they had been denied as black children under apartheid. While the facilitators initially wanted to offer liberatory education programmes at the school, it was nevertheless extremely difficult to run a school without offering some type of certification programmes. As will be seen when we come on to the history of the school, the requests by the workers for examinations lead to profound changes in the school.

A home from home - the black workers, black students black intellectuals and the white university

Institutions are invariably presented from the perspective of those in power and one of the most significant powers is that of defining what the institution is. When black students arrived at Wits they arrived as a minority at what had been an elite white institution, it was like entering another world. As university students and as facilitators at the Workers' School, they were caught in a pivotal position between the workers and the university. The school became a forum in which the facilitators could define themselves, rather than lose themselves or become assimilated into the dominant white culture.

> You know no one was getting anything. You know we wanted to have our own show, something which we are doing, even with the workers and the video. It was something that we do, we don't have to wait for C. or W. or whoever you

> know, and then increasingly because the more theoretical ideas, political you know, also on my course, I had to grapple with political issues. You know increasingly it became, even with the school, it was that thing of defining ourselves, it was also fighting against something, you know.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 36)

The School became a niche for black students to work with black workers and define themselves in opposition to the university which was experienced as part of the apartheid system. It was a very dynamic place where academic and political debates continued all day long, with the workers at first listening, and then as time went on, joining in the discussions. It would be easy to underrate the importance for black students and workers of a place where they could just be themselves and escape momentarily from the brutality of apartheid outside the university walls, and the institutional racism within. The school became a space in which they could analyze their own situation and begin to develop an alternative mode of existence to the one that apartheid had foisted on them.

> In any case it just happened that we, that the school was there and then from the word go, when we started the school, whatever we were doing, or whatever else, or whatever we did, we were not just doing it. We were doing it because we wanted to be somebody. We wanted to be recognized, to recognize ourselves, to feel that we counted for something.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 35-6)

In Trevor's case, it was particularly hard for him to cope with being squeezed out of his university post. Whatever the reasons for Trevor's contract not being renewed, he experienced it as just another injustice of the apartheid system and he saw the people who had been instrumental in his losing his job, as part of the system he was fighting.

> .... I tried to remove the bitterness. I also feel that because I moved from Sociology to the school, I had so much to do, I didn't have time to get bitter. I

> think that every moment I spent at the school was an attack on them. That's how I felt. I felt they tried to get rid of me, tried to kick me out of Wits, but I am still here but I am not under their control. You know now I can do what I like, at least now I can do what I like ... I was still doing the same things, going over getting the video for the people, so I just felt ... I also had this thing that I knew that they do such things to get at you. They want to push you, they want to pull people down. It' s not just a system, it is also living human beings who want to be nasty and you don't want to be nasty yourself. You can't go around nursing grudges, you might just get negative yourself. Yeah so that was my view. But I don't forgive them. I just also feel a sense of moral superiority. Maybe that is sentimental. But I know I was doing the right thing. And they know it, I am sure they do. So I just feel that maybe today you get all sorts of nasty people, you can't go around hating all of them. Just to keep, to maintain your own integrity and sustain yourself. But that is how I think. But they did a bad thing. And one guy said to me, he was more bitter 'Every time the black students find a good lecturer, they get rid of that lecturer'. That is how he put it. That is a different thing, but I think, because at least at that time, if you were to be a good lecturer you had to question the system. There was no way that you could be a good lecturer and not be slightly controversial, I don't know.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T 41-2)

Although it was very hard for Trevor, had he not been available to work at the school full time without getting any pay, it is almost definite that the school would not have survived. It also provided him with a space in which to try to develop an alternative to traditional educational practices. It is also the case that their involvement in the school, greatly helped other facilitators, and the experience enabled them to gain confidence to do well in their own university studies. David describes his own experiences as a volunteer at the school while being a student at the university

> I think primarily at that point in time I was also struggling because I couldn't ... it was difficult for me to compete in the university, in terms of how people did things, student life basically ... Yeah. You come into a situation where there is apparently non- racialism, you begin to have certain manners as a student. I couldn't like, it was a bit strange for me and half of the problem was that I wasn't living on campus so I had to go back home every day so .... whilst people said you are at varsity and therefore, you know, they praised you. They regaled you in away, but if you started to act like there in varsity, then they would actually fight you 'hey ... he is a snob', and, this and that. So varsity culture couldn't accommodate myself to it, or I couldn't accommodate myself to varsity culture, so it was that thing of maybe straddling two cultures, you know. Here at varsity you are free, you can express your opinion. When you go home you know that things are like this or that, finish. So it was at that point of time where I was also struggling in terms of that, but also academically because one couldn't have enough time. One gets tired, leave here at five, I arrive at home I am tired. After that Bongs just said 'Aye, keep coming to the school.' I came, every time I had free time I would come to the school. I think the most important thing about the school was the fact that people were concentrating on that student culture and that people were saying 'No you don't have to live like what they are doing at Wits, you don't have to have all these things, mannerisms as a students, you talk in certain ways, you do things in certain ways. No you shouldn't, it is just nonsense.' And I think that actually contributed in a major way in sort of ... the perspective on life itself and on how you actually deal with people. So that was the most important thing about the school.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 137-8)

Black students at Wits had to surmount almost impassable barriers to succeed academically. (McKeever, M. G. and Ramoshaba, V. 1993). There were problems of inferior schooling, inadequate housing, difficulties with travel, violence, poverty, cultural differences and language differences. The school helped the students in several ways.

Firstly they were among their own people, with the workers often acting as surrogate parents, brothers and sisters. It was also a place where they could connect where they had come from, and where the majority of black people still were, and what they were now being exposed to at Wits. They had to develop a strategy, not only to survive on campus but also at home, where any changes were frequently treated with derision. Again this is another Catch 22. However the social aspects of being a member of the School were accompanied by academic benefits.

> Then of course politics - there were a whole lot of political discussions ... I think that the surprising thing about the school was the passion. When I came here the passion for workers. Because one comes from a background where yeah I mean you participate in some activities, but not so intensively in terms of your belief. That was a bit ... I was a bit a taken back. Oh these are real Marxists. But that helped then but one got more confidence to say things that were not sort of main stream within lecture halls or in tutorials. You would question more, really I began to read much more critically so this thing meant that, so that helped me as a student ... One began to have a framework of thinking about issues and ... here's Trevor, and he is a lecturer and he is saying 'Oh no they teach nonsense.' And you see, when you come to varsity you are so afraid of lecturers, especially when you see the lecturer in his varsity gown, looking around and then Trevor 'that business, and this that ... they are foolish.' Then you begin to see lecturers are just people. Maybe they have read a lot but they have their own faults. So that also helped and I think that helped in a major way because that began to build confidence to say no, you can read on your own and form your own opinions and when I began to interrogate workers, the workers would also say, no we don't think about these issues in this way, I mean we don't approach it in this way. So one is beginning to concretize what one is saying in class. Some of the history concepts, we wouldn't put them without concretizing what had been said. So generally just in terms of individual development the school actually contributed in that sense.

(WSI 1996 MM/Dd 138-9)

The pressure on black students to give up their own culture and to try to conceal or deny their own cultural background was immense. However in class with the workers, the students were able to challenge the ideas that they had been given at the university, and this had the dual effect of allowing them, not only to be critical of the ideas that they were encountering at the university, but also the ones that they had grown up with, and which they were now encountering again in class with the workers. For David and for the other facilitators the school was thus a bridge between their background and their future as teachers and community leaders. They were able to reassess where they had come from, but also be critical of the educational heritage they were being offered at the university.

Comrade Facilitators and Comrade Workers

However the ideology that inspired people like Trevor and some of the other facilitators who would have regarded themselves as committed Marxists, did lead to some problems as described by David below:

> ...you know one thing that I found strange as well, everyone was called a comrade. So whether you were a comrade or not but you were called a comrade. Now that created superficialness in a way. Because if I have some difficulty in wanting to be called a comrade, and even if I wasn't a comrade, but I just accept it because everyone there is a comrade. And then that built a culture where if you say anything wrong about workers, even if workers were wrong, you know you would be attacked and that was a major imbalance that was there. Such that we became so blinded by that ideological orientation where we couldn't even see that organizationally things were not going on well.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd 135)

I think that David pinpoints one of the difficulties that the school faced. It did provide a space where the facilitators could try to develop their own ideas and put them into practice, but this lead in some instances to an idealization of workers, and an assumption that all members of the school shared the same ideological stance. This raises the wider questions about the relations between the intellectuals and the workers, although intellectual is not a term that was ever used in the school, where everyone was a comrade and everyone was recognized as an intellectual in the Gramscian sense of the term - 'All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say; but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals' (Gramsci 1999: 304). While Gramsci acknowledges that from Plato on there were people who did have this specialist function, he argued that it was most helpful to define intellectuals in terms of their function in society.

> Can one find a unitary criterion to characterize equally all the diverse and disparate activities of intellectuals and to distinguish these at the same time and in an essential way from the activities of other social groupings? The most widespread error seems to me to be that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 304)

Gramsci goes on to suggest that a similar type of definition could be applied to workers in that it is not manual labour per se that distinguishes the worker, but the performance of this work within specific social relations. So when a cleaner cleans the university white board, he does it as a worker, but when the lecturer does this same thing, she does it as lecturer. Therefore in the Workers' School there were people whose social function was to clean or do manual labour who came to school to assume the role of students and there were university students and staff who came to the school to assume the role of intellectuals. However one of their primary considerations in the democratic phase of the

school's history was precisely to make the workers aware of the possibilities of their assuming the role of intellectual within the school.

> ... But in any case we were saying, we were questioning what we felt were traditional approaches to teaching and to knowledge. We felt that you know that Paulo Freire sentence - the teacher teachers, the students are taught, and we sort of said that is wrong, as Freire rightly pointed out, you know, knowledge is created, it is not a given, you know. Students bring their own experience which we as lecturers must relate with, so that the students can relate with the knowledge we are bringing. You know it is not a one way process.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 28)

So the approach of the facilitators was very much in line with Gramsci's thinking on creating or nurturing a new stratum of intellectuals.

> The problem of creating a new stratum of intellectuals consists therefore in the critical elaboration of the intellectual activity that exists in everyone to a degree of development ... which in perpetually innovating the physical and social world, becomes the foundation of a new and integral conception of the world.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 321)

So the role of the facilitator in this process was to try to develop the intellectual activity that was already taking place in the workers' minds and to support them in a systematic way in their attempts to try to make sense of the world around them, but this was never seen as a one way process but rather as a mutual endeavour. To give an example from my own class, I was able to move from a discussion of the nykanyamba, a mythical snake that took the form of a tornado, to tornadoes and basic science.

However where I would disagree with Gramsci was in his repudiation of folklore and myths and his uncritical acceptance of the superiority of scientific explanations of natural

and social phenomena. So while he would regard the nykanyamba as superstition that needed to be eradicated, my approach would be to allow both explanations to stand side by side and to see them both as different ways of seeing and understanding the world. Whereas I would draw on the scientific explanation if I were planning a journey through tsunami season, I would draw on the mythical one if I were an artist or a novelist, or indeed for pedagogic purposes.

However Gramsci's expanded definition of intellectuals is most appropriate in analyzing the role of the intellectuals in the Workers' School:

> The traditional and vulgarized type of intellectuals is given by the man of letters, the philosopher, the artist ... The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 321)

The intellectuals at the Workers' School were organizers and activists and they tried to persuade the workers to accept an alternative to traditional education, but accepted the workers' decision when they decided to go for examinations. However the facilitators were able to offer explanations about the workers' situation as the unschooled in an educational institution.

> And then we would have our discussion on education. Usually the discussion on education would cover things like ... We had this thing that Wits disempowers workers. It was very strong with me that they want you to feel small. Just imagine education is very important - I am a professor, you are a Standard 1 - really you can see that you are nothing ... So we would discuss the history of education, or the history of South African society, which lead to a situation where education is in this condition. Why are we as workers not educated?

> Why do we clean the blackboards for twenty years and still not get an education?
> Why is it that a young white person comes here three years and is now the boss?
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 54-5)

The people at the Workers' School were able to pinpoint the role of education in perpetuating oppressive power relations and while the response of the workers was to try to gain access to those educational resources that enabled people to assume positions of prestige and power in society, the facilitators tried to create a democratic and liberatory alternative to this hierarchical and meritocratic system. Where the facilitators were short sighted, at least initially, was in not appreciating fully the extent to which their own access to educational resources enabled them to put forward this critique of the educational system.

To conclude, the relationship of this research to the university is complex and multifaceted. I started by looking at the history of this particular English language university in Africa which saw itself as part of a western academic tradition going back to Graeco-Roman times and explored its relationship with colonialism and apartheid. The Workers' School and the black students who staffed it were part of a challenge by black workers and students to the exclusivity of traditional white institutions and a refusal on the workers' and students' parts to assume the subservient role allocated to them under apartheid. This challenge was part of the wider student revolt against Bantu education and part of the attempt by anti-apartheid organizations to set up an alternative liberatory educational programme. Part of this challenge was the exploration of how educational institutions worked and, indeed, in the case of the Workers' School direct experience of setting up and running a school. The liberatory ideals had to confront the practical realities of how education operates in advanced capitalist society and the desire for educational qualifications among those denied the opportunity of attaining them.

SECTION 3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 5

A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF SOUTH AFRICA, COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE

historians .. imagine the past and remember the future.

(Namier cited in Carr 1980: 123)

Pre-industrial South Africa

Although much of the history of precolonial Southern Africa has gone unrecorded, archeologists and physical anthropologists now believe that the hominid predecessors of modern humans originated in East and Southern Africa. Secondly 'the earliest fossils that have been discovered anywhere in the world that some physical anthropologists attribute to modern Homo Sapiens come from Classies River mouth in the Eastern Cape province ... which they have tentatively dated at more than fifty thousand years ago.'(Thompson 1995: 6). There were groupings of hunter gatherers living in South Africa for millennia BC and there is evidence that different groupings had developed specific tools in keeping with the climate and topography of the particular territory they occupied. The indigenous peoples, called the Bushmen and Hottentots by the white settlers, were the ancestors of the modern Khoikhoi and San people, or Khoisan. Inskeep in his book, *The Peopling of Southern Africa* summarizes the findings of archaeologists

> We find evidence of sophisticated and successful populations employing with confidence a wide range of skills to support themselves in their chosen, or inherited territories ...With a million and half years of experience behind him

man had reached the highest points of success in evolution of the hunting-gathering way of life in southern Africa.

(Inskeep 1978: 114-15 cited in Thompson 1995: 9-10)

There is considerable debate among scholars about the origins of pastoral farming in southern Africa but current thinking among archeologists is that it is likely that it began when hunter gathers acquired sheep and cattle from pastoralists who lived further north, where there is evidence of pastoral farming from several millennia ago (Hall 1984). By the third century AD there is evidence of people cultivating crops in several places in South Africa with some of these peoples mining and processing metals such as copper and iron (Worden 1994: 6). Archeological evidence suggests that the pastoralists arrived in several streams from East and Central Africa, while linguistic evidence suggests that they were Bantu speaking, and thus the ancestors of today's black African population. It is assumed that they migrated south in drifts, gradually expanding their territory (Worden 1994: 6). By 1000 farmers were present in much of Natal, the Cape Province, the Transvaal, Swaziland, Eastern Botswana and the north eastern Orange Free State. By 1600 farmers occupied nearly all of the arable land and all were pastoralists as well as crop farmers. The dispersal of the various African and Khoisan groups can be seen in Table 2. As will be seen there were numerous tribal groupings, amongst whom were the Ndebele, the Nguni, the Pedi, the Sotho, the Swasi, the Tswana, the Venda, the Xhosa and the Zulu. Although generally self- sufficient, trade was nevertheless carried on with non-Africans along the coastal areas, with trading in ivory, iron, tin and animal skins.

Colonialism and industrialization

The Portuguese circumnavigated the Cape at the end of the fifteenth century but it was the Dutch who first set up a settlement in the Cape in 1652, and over the next hundred years took over the land from the Khoi. The Dutch needed a settlement to provide supplies for the ships of the Dutch East India Company. In 1685 the first law prohibiting marriage

between black and white was passed, a harbinger of the enforced segregation that was to be taken to such extremes under apartheid. Slaves from Indonesia, India, Ceylon, Madagascar and Mozambique were brought to work the first plantations, while European burghers arriving in the country could lay claim to 6000 hectares of land, provided they paid a nominal retainer fee to the company. By 1795 the Boers had established themselves in the Cape colony but were defeated by the British in 1797, only to retake it again in 1803 before losing it again to the British in 1806. However it was 1820 before substantial numbers of British settlers arrived in the Cape Colony. Between 1816-28 Shaka, the Zulu king, established the Zulu kingdom causing warfare among many African tribes (the Mfecane). There is much controversy among historians about the origins and reasons for the Mfecane but it is accepted that

> ... it involved the consolidation and expansion of the Zulu kingdom in the Natal lowveld in the 1820s, and subsequent migration of other Nguni-speaking people into the highveld and the often violent competition for land and livestock with the inhabitants of those areas. Dispersal and reformation of chiefdoms took place over a large area ... the process was believed to have been cataclysmic and highly destructive.
>
> (Worden 1994: 12)

The nineteenth century was marked by British incursions into African territory and wars between the British and the Xhosa, the Zulu and other African peoples. This coincided with the intertribal warfare mentioned above and with Afrikaner expansion which began with the Great Trek 1835-40. By 1898 the Bantu and Khoisan people had been defeated. The conquest of the land by the Dutch and the English was followed by taxation of the African people who had to pay a hut tax and a poll tax which they had to raise by working on white farms, and after the discovery of diamonds and gold, on the mines. In 1886 gold was discovered in the Transvaal and by 1899 there were 100,000 unskilled African labourers working on the gold mines, supervised by a small group of skilled white miners from Europe. With the gold mines came the industrial revolution, the railways and the

birth of Johannesburg. The battle between the Dutch and the British for the control of South Africa culminated in and the Second Boer War 1899-1902. It has been argued that the roots of apartheid lie in the defeat of the Boers and in particular the brutal treatment of Afrikaner women and children but casualties were not restricted to the Afrikaners. Pampallis reports 'by the end of the war 115,000 Africans had been interned in these camps. Over 14,000 deaths were recorded and many thousands more were not. Over 80% of the deaths were among children.' (1991: 44). Causalities were high for all those involved

> An estimated 22,000 British troops died, the majority from disease. Over 30,000 farmlands in the republics and northern Cape were destroyed. About 26,000 Boer women and children died in the concentration camps.
>
> (Worden 1994: 29)

In 1910 South Africa became a single British colony, the Union of South Africa, and Afrikaners became a relatively oppressed minority with the suppression of their language and culture. With the enforcement of the English language at schools, children who spoke Afrikaans were punished. Many farmers were forced off the land and into working class ghettos where they competed directly with black workers for unskilled jobs, and it was in this context that Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid were born (Louw 1994: 24).

The control of black labour

The earliest histories of South Africa were concerned with its white inhabitants, with the Afrikaner version mythologizing the trekkers, and the British version mythologizing Baden Powell and Cecil Rhodes, the expansion of empire and the mining of diamonds and gold. The perspective is colonialist in two senses, it is written about colonial expansion and is written from the perspective of the colonialists, and as such concentrates on the seizing and occupying of colonial territory and the setting up of the state. By the mid twentieth century British liberal historians were describing the apartheid state as a racist

aberration, with two distinct economies - white industrialist and black subsistence farming (Wilson and Thompson 1971). However this view was challenged by African scholars and Marxist historians who saw apartheid as part and parcel of capitalism in South Africa (Smith 1988). Radical historians working in South Africa under apartheid, took this one step further with an attempt to both write the history of the black working class and to write it in such a way as to make it accessible to those it is about (Callinicos 1980). I have drawn heavily on these sources in this account but I have also drawn on general historical accounts written by historians at Yale - Thompson 1995, at Cambridge - Worden 1994, and indeed on the history taught to ANC cadre in Tanzania - Pampallis 1991.

There were five main components to the control of black labour as South Africa changed from a subsistence to an industrial economy following the discovery of gold and diamonds. These were the contract system, the compound system, the Pass Laws, job reservation and the setting up of reserves for African peoples.

The contract system

> These compounded natives are the finest body of black labourers in South Africa ... Missionaries are allowed to visit them but are requested not to worry them unduly. They are enjoined to impress upon the native mind two simple Christian precepts the virtue of obedience and the dignity of labour. Thus the natives receive religion in moderate does, and in like manner their allowance of Kaffir Beer is regulated on strictly reasonable lines.
>
> (Ransome 1903: 67)

The contract system was first introduced in 1856 in the Cape as a law called the Masters and Servants Act, ostensibly to protect both workers and employers. Under the terms of the act no worker could work without a contract which stated the duration of employment, the nature of the job and the wage that the worker would be paid. If a worker broke his

contract he could be arrested and fined or sent to jail. When the mines opened on the Witwatersrand, the mine owners introduced the contract system and the length of the contract gradually increased from around three months in 1912 to ten months in 1924. No worker could get a job without a contract and they were legally obliged on pain of imprisonment to fulfill their contract. If they were ill or if they did not dig out the required amount of rock, they would not only get no pay for the shift, but they also had to work another day in lieu, in order to fulfill the contract and get paid and return home.

The compound system

> And they feel they are blessed
> those elected to enter feel they are blessed
> entering the small gateway to the hostel or compound. those unmarked, those without numbers on their wrist cannot enter...
> and these eyes have seen wonders: I saw people sleeping stacked in shelves like goods in a human supermarket
>
> (Qabula 1989: 50-1)

The second component was the compound system, a system originally developed by the mine owners in Kimberley. The early compounds on the Rand (the Witwatersrand area) were usually wood and iron shacks 'nothing more than camps', a native Commissioner reported in 1903 (Callinicos 1980: 43). The conditions in the compounds varied but in general they were appalling 'there are no floors to the huts, no bedsteads, no stoves, no proper ventilation and no light at night (Callinicos 1980: 43). Compounds were often strictly regimented, the food was often poor and the lack of privacy was particularly humiliating to people used to the privacy and comfort of their own huts.

> In the hostel there is no privacy in the rooms nor in the open. It is against the tradition that a son sees his father naked or on the toilet. But hostel life has forcefully changed all that.
>
> (Callinicos 1980: 44)

The workers were paid minimal wages as it was argued that they had only themselves to support as their families lived in the homelands and they had free accommodation. Violence, degradation and misery were endemic.

The Pass Laws

> We have a most excellent law, namely the Pass Law, which should enable us to obtain complete control over the kaffirs.
> Evidence to the Industrial Commission of Enquiry 1897 (cited in Callinicos 1980: 41)

> The Pass Law is nothing but slavery and forced labour. It was made to force the natives to work.
> D. S. Letanka, Transvaal Native Congress (cited in Callinicos 1980: 40)

The third, and probably the most hated component was the Pass Laws. These had first been introduced in the Cape in 1760 and applied to slaves, but by 1827 all Africans who came from outside the Cape had to carry a pass. With the diamond mines and later the gold mines, labourers who were squatting on white farms were increasingly moving off the land in the hope of a better life, and pass laws were introduced to prevent this. Anybody wanting to leave the farm to seek work had to pay two shillings and six pence for a pass, which was a lot of money to people who had very little. In 1896 a law was passed so workers had to wear a metal badge to show they were employed. and so had a permit to be in an industrial area. However the British introduced a pass document in 1903 which was a record of employment and without which a person could be arrested and jailed. Special

passes were needed to seek work, to go out at night, to travel or to reside in a particular area. In 1923 the Natives (Urban Areas) Act was passed which stipulated that blacks were allowed in urban areas 'as long as they minister to the needs of whites' (Christie 1994: 6).

Job Reservation

> We have some of the kaffirs who are better machine men than some of the white men.'
>
> (Manager of Geldenhuis Estate Gold Mining Company- evidence to Transvaal Mining Industry Commission 1904 (cited in Callinicos 1980: 75).

With the opening of the gold mines skilled labour was recruited from Britain and Australia, and along with their skills the workers brought a knowledge of trade unionism and set up craft unions on their arrival in South Africa, and within twenty years had bargained for paid holidays, compensation for accidents and phthisis, overtime rates and shorter working hours, in addition to very good wages. Although black workers often did the same work as whites, they were paid a fraction of the skilled wage and there was no opportunity for advancement beyond the rank of unskilled labourer. However as blacks became more knowledgeable about mining, employers began to give them more skilled work, but at their old rate of pay, and the white workers saw that their position was under threat and they campaigned for job reservation and there were serious confrontations with the government through strikes in 1907 and 1913. In 1911 The Mines and Works Act set aside thirty two types of jobs for whites only, however along side this blacks were being given skilled work but at unskilled wages and in 1918 the Status Quo Agreement was passed whereby the mine owners agreed that for every seventeen black workers on the mines, they would employ two whites at skilled rates.

The Native Reserves

> Why not the body of the land forever,
> why not my rooigrond living on, the spirits of our ancestors buried there?
> while false beliefs like glue
> hold our new homes together
>
> (Mphusu, D. cited in Callinicos 1980: 7)

The fifth component was the Land Act (1913). This act set up reserves for black people which in total comprised 13% of the land, while Africans constituted 80% of the population. They were prevented from buying land outside the reserves, and inside the reserves the size of plot was restricted and individual land ownership, rather than communal land use, was encouraged. The land that was given to the whites, was often occupied by black people who then became labourers on the white farms, and they were prevented by law from renting land from white farmers. This deprived the majority of Africans of their means of livelihood as subsistence farmers, and forced them into paid employment far from their homes and families.

Apartheid

Apartheid started in 1948, with the election of the Nationalist Party into power and ended in April 1994 with the election of the ANC in the country's first non racial democratic election. In 1948 D. F. Malan lead the Nationalist Party and started as he meant to continue, with The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), which made marriage between whites and any other groups illegal. This was followed by the Population Registration Act (1950) which was designed to allocate every person to a racial group and by the stiffening of the Immorality Act, making extramarital affairs across racial divides a more serious offense. So, having divided the country into population groups, and prohibited any sexual contact or marriage between the different groups, the next step was to set up separate residential areas for the different groups. The Group Areas Bill (1950)

and The Urban Resettlement Act of (1954) proceeded with military precision to remove whole communities out of city areas such as Sophiatown in Johannesburg and District Six and Kalk Bay Harbour in Cape Town. Indian shopkeepers were moved out of the city centres to areas outside the city, with many people losing the investments of a lifetime.

In 1950 Verwoerd became the Cabinet Minister for Native Affairs. It is perhaps no accident that Dr. Verwoerd, the main architect of apartheid, had received university training in pre-Hitlerian Germany, before taking up a chair in Social Psychology at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. He is most infamous for his input into the Bantu Education system, but he was both the main visionary and the main driving force behind apartheid. In his own words to the Senate 'all the various Acts, Bills and public statements that I have made, all fit into a pattern and together form a single constructive plan' (Davenport 1977: 267). As well as developing locations or labour reserves, 'above all with a cordon sanitaire from the white urban area' and within commuting distance from the major towns, he also planned to remove large numbers of African squatters, in particular the elderly, the infirm, women and children and the unemployed to the homelands, where he planned to try to attract industrial development. The Native Law Amendment Act (1952) limited Africans with a right to live permanently in an urban area to those who had lived there continuously for fifteen years, or had worked continuously for the same employer for ten years. This caused untold hardship, splitting up families under the hated Section 10 of the Act. In the same year the Pass Laws were extended to women, and passes, now called reference books, contained photographs, information about place of origin, employment records, tax payments and any encounters with the police. Then in 1957 it became on offense to have any mixed race groups at any educational, recreational, cultural or religious gatherings.

The History of Resistance to Apartheid

Resistance to colonialism began with battles fought with the invading armies and settlers over ancestral lands. Prior to 1902 when Britain took over control of South Africa, African

people existed in tribal groupings, but with the growth of industrialization and the occupation of their lands, Africans were forced to move to the rapidly expanding cities in order to find work to support themselves and their families. This together with the fact of having one common enemy contributed towards a growth of a national as opposed to a tribal or ethnic consciousness. All Africans regardless of tribe were subject to same unjust laws, grueling working conditions and constant police harassment. The hostility of white workers to the expanding black labour force together with the racist discrimination in all walks of life, obviated a class alliance between black and white workers. By the end of the nineteenth century there emerged an African intelligentsia who had been educated at mission schools and were English speaking and Christian. However racism permeated churches and independent African churches were founded and one, the Ethiopian Church, was set up specifically to try to draw in all Africans regardless of their tribal groups and worked under the slogan 'Africa for Africans'. They established links with the African Methodist Episcopal Church - the largest black church in the USA. One of the most significant things about the churches was that they were an opportunity for Africans to meet independently as Africans. Parsons assesses the attitude of the Ethiopians as such

> ... this is our country, these are our farms and mines, why are we not working them for ourselves and for our benefit, instead of working them for white people and giving them all the benefit?
>
> (Parsons 1982: 215)

While church activities provided at outlet for some Africans, other moved towards more political involvement, in particular around the question of voting rights which some blacks in the Cape were entitled to, as they were given on the basis of wealth. The majority of Boers and Africans and Coloured (the descendants of the Khoisan slaves and interracial relations) were unable to vote. Those Africans allowed to vote were English speaking, mission educated and pro-British, often turning to Britain and indeed visiting Britain with a delegation to appeal for the extension of voting rights to blacks in the other provinces and a repeal of racist legislation, but to no avail. They set up newspapers and sent petitions

to parliament and passed resolutions and organized discussion groups. Some stood in provisional elections, being excluded from standing for parliamentary ones, but being allowed to vote for white candidates in local elections. After the Boer war, which Britain claimed to be fighting to free Africans from the tyranny of the Boers, and with the promise of extending voting rights to all in the Cape, the British reneged on their promise. Native congresses were set up in the various provinces and although reformist and non militant, they nevertheless struggled for the rights of African people. The brutal suppression of Bamabatha rebellion in 1906, provoked an outcry from all African people and lead to the setting up of the South African Native Convention to be followed by the South African Native National Congress in 1912, which became the African National Congress, the ANC, in 1923. The rebellion was sparked when a poll tax was imposed on Zulus in Natal to force them to work on the sugar plantations and when the local people rebelled 4,000 African people were killed - mown down with machine guns while using spears and shields as their only weapons. Just as these traditional weapons were no match for machine guns, so different organizational weapons were needed which would involve all Africans. In the first constitution in 1919 one of the goals of congress was stated as

> ... to encourage mutual understanding and to bring together into common action as one political people all tribes and clans of various tribes or races and by means of combined effort and by united political organization to defend their freedom, rights and privileges.
>
> (Pampallis 1991: 68).

The ANC at this stage involved only the educated elite and was moderate in its approach, being committed to legal and peaceful protest by means of resolutions, protests and a constitutional and peaceful propaganda; by deputations and other forms of representations; by holding inquiries and the investigation of grievances and other matters by means of education, lectures and distribution of literature on the objects of the Congress (Pampillias 1991: 69). In the early years of the century women organized their own resistance against passes in the Orange Free State and set up the Bantu Women's League, which in 1943

become the ANC Women's League, with the admission of women as full members of the ANC for the first time. In fact in the 1920's with mass industrialization it was the trade unions, in particular the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU). which took the lead in strikes and campaigns and was supported in this by the more radical sections of the ANC. However by the 30's ICU had more or less ceased to exist due to, among other things, massive state repression. At this time the ANC was also riven by conflict between communist and anti communist sympathizers within the movement and it was only in the 40s that the organization began to revive with the influx of a group of young people including Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu, who campaigned to set up the Youth League and the Women's League and transform the ANC into a dynamic organization. At this time too, close collaboration between the ANC and the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses developed. However it was the setting up of apartheid that was the catalyst for the upsurge of resistance which was to evolve into the Defiance campaign, the Congress of the People and the drawing up of the Freedom Charter.

At the 1949 ANC National Congress, the Youth League argued for a change of tactics towards mass struggle using boycotts, strikes, and civil disobedience and their programme of action was accepted. There was a growing recognition of the power of the urbanized African population and with this a close working relationship developed between the South African Communist Party and the ANC, although the former disbanded itself when the Suppression of Communism Act was passed in 1950. The Defiance campaign started on May 1 1950 with a general strike in the Transvaal which was marred by the police opening fire on groups of protesters and killing eighteen people. This was followed by a day of protest on 26 June and mass rallies organized by the ANC and South African Indian Congress. On the 26 June 1951 mass defiance was staged with black people walking through European entrances at railways stations, demanding services at Whites only counters. On being arrested, all refused to pay their fines and overburdened the prisons. This lead to the banning and imprisonment of leaders of the campaign. The result was to increase membership of the ANC from 7,000 to 100,000 paid up members almost overnight. One of those who joined describes his reasons for joining the ANC at this time

I started joining the political ranks exactly when I saw that now the ANC was on a stand of making some protest with the government ... But 1949 when they asked me to do so I refused because they were always asking for point of order Mr. Chairman. Their meetings were just becoming a flop all the times ...1952 when they started taking an action then I joined their ranks.

(Silver Dollar Mabooe, interviewed by W. Nkankule, Morogoro Tanzania, 1984 cited in Pampallis 1991:198)

Then in 1953, Z. K. Matthews, Cape President of the ANC suggested at a provincial conference that the time had come for the African National Congress to consider the question of convening a national convention, a Congress of the People, representing all the people of the country, irrespective of race or colour, in order to draw up a Freedom Charter for the democratic South African of the future. Local committees organized meetings throughout South Africa and the demands and grievances of the people were gathered and sorted and the Freedom Charter was drawn up. One of those involved in collecting the demands describes his work

> I remember going into the countryside with various people ... We went right into the countryside to all the places we had known before - a whole network. We got resolutions from women, children, farmworkers ... we even got resolutions written on the back of Cavalla cigarette boxes, pieces of cardboard or paper.
>
> (Wolfie Kodesh interviewed by Pamapillas, London 1989, in Pampillas 1996: 201)

The Freedom Charter was passed, clause by clause, by 2,844 elected delegates from all over South Africa at the Congress of the People on June 26 1955 at Kliptown. Nelson Mandela describes the significance of the Freedom Charter thus

> ... the Charter is more than a mere list of demands for democratic reforms. It is a revolutionary document precisely because the changes it envisages cannot be won without breaking up the economic and political set up of present South Africa. It was not meant to be capitalist or socialist but a melding together of the people's demands to end the oppression. In South Africa, merely to have fairness, one had to destroy apartheid itself, for it was the very embodiment of injustice.
>
> (Mandela 1994: 163-4)

In 1956 20,000 women marched to the Union Building in Pretoria in protest against the Pass Laws. In the same year 156 people were arrested, including most of the leaders of the Congress movement on charges of High Treason. Central to the prosecution's case was that Freedom Charter was a Communist document and that the ANC and its allies had a policy of violence. A team of defense lawyers, including Nelson Mandela, successfully demolished the prosecution case and all charges were thrown out. However with a growing pass campaign, in Sharpville in 1960, 69 people were killed, the vast majority of whom were shot in back. This was followed by the banning of the ANC and the PAC and a State of Emergency was imposed. The ANC set up some underground grassroots structures, working closely with the SACP. However massive arrests and continued brutal state repression lead to setting up of Umkhonto we Siswe in 1961 and the decision that violence was going to be necessary in order for the African people to gain their freedom from the apartheid regime.

> The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defense of our people, our future and our freedom.
>
> Umkhonto we Siswe Manifesto, 1961 (cited in Pampillas 1991: 220)

In 1963 the headquarters of Umkhnto was raided in Rivonia in Johannesburg and on 11 June 1964 Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and Amhed Katrade among

others, were arrested, tried and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. The arrest of the majority of the ANC leadership inside South Africa, the State of Emergency and the banning of the ANC and PAC was a huge setback to the resistance movement inside South Africa, and the leadership had to be taken over by the external command in Tanzania. For a few years attention shifted to marshaling support overseas and the building of the anti apartheid movement internationally. As will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters it was black school students and the black consciousness movement who moved to the forefront of the struggle within South Africa in the late 1970s. However the events of 1976 lead to thousands of students fleeing the country and going for military training in the ANC camps. The ANC played a leading role in orchestrating the mass resistance in the 1980 s, with the still imprisoned leadership being drawn into talks with the government and with prominent business people going to visit the external command in 1985. In the 1980s the ANC thus resumed its position at the head of the mass liberation movement enjoying the support of the majority of South Africans.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATION AND RESISTANCE

Education and Colonialism

Formal schooling came to South Africa with the colonialists and the first school was opened for slaves by Van Riebeeck as he records in his diary entry 17 April 1658,

> Began holding school for the young slaves. To stimulate the slaves to attention while at school, and to induce them to learn the Christian prayers, they were promised each a glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco, when they finish their work.
>
> (Horrell cited in Christie 1994: 32)

From this it would seem that schooling, slavery, bribery and corruption all went hand in hand. However in this period there was very little schooling, even in England, and that which existed was generally of a religious nature. In traditional society in South Africa education was part of daily life and children learnt from their elders through being given tasks to accomplish. There were initiation ceremonies and people were prepared for each of life's stages and were taught about their history and traditions through songs, rituals and myths, without formal schools as such. Here one of the workers describes his life in rural South Africa.

> I am writing about my childhood. while I was young. I did not understand the society. We all understand that there are some stages that take place during growth of every human being. When I reached the age of ten, it was that time I had to learn different things about life. I learned to listen to the songs of birds, and also I was herding cattle. What makes me feel unhappy was herding cattle for a long time. I was proud of my black skin and also to be an African.
>
> (WSD 1992: 14)

So while most South Africans were educated outside school, the first mission school was set up for Africans in 1799 at King William's Town. The number of mission schools increased steadily and in 1848 the Governor of the Cape wrote to the missionaries

> ... too much pains cannot be taken to impress them with the necessity of wearing clothes and the use of money, which industriously gained, honestly obtains whatever they want.
>
> (Rose and Tummer cited in Christie 1994: 37)

The relationship between the missionaries and the colonialists remains a subject of debate but generally few Africans attended school, and of those that did, the vast majority were in the lower grades and followed a curriculum of basic reading, writing and Christian doctrine. However there were other schools which, through the construction of their own buildings and the farming of their lands, offered instruction in trades such as carpentry and wagon making. However this semi-industrial education was not sufficient to enable the pupils to take up skilled labour, and in the testimony of Jabavu, a teacher and president of the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA):

> In our schools 'manual labour' consists of sweeping yards, repairing roads, cracking stones and so on, and is done by boys only as so much task work enforced by a time-keeper, and under threats of punishment.
>
> (Jabavu 1918 cited in Molteno 1984: 67)

The education of girls is described by Cock

> Girls are carefully trained in domestic work - cooking, baking, sewing, ironing and tailoring - in addition to the usual school instruction. The aim is to prepare the girls to make good housewives and mothers, and to lift them and their families to a higher plain of living.
>
> (Cock 1980: 294)

She argues that this education was ambiguous in that, even as it offered the potential of paid employment as domestic servants, it also socialized the women into a new Western style subordinate role. In addition to the general provision of basic education, a very small number of pupils were trained as teachers and missionaries and went on to higher education. A number of very prestigious mission schools were established during the nineteenth century, mostly boarding schools, offering a European curriculum and most had teacher training facilities. However, in general, African people were skeptical about mission education, as summarized by Etherington:

> Whole tribes (of Nguni) moved away from stations. Parents withdrew their daughters from mission schools and rotated their sons so that they might earn shirts and wages without risking conversion. Magic and medicines were administered to individuals who seemed to be moving towards church membership. In Zululand and Pondoland converts were isolated on mission stations and ceased to be members of the nation.
>
> (Etherington 1977: 35)

In fact an alternative to mission schools was set up by Elias Wellington Buthelezi in the Western Cape in the 1920s who taught, according to a report from a missionary,

> ... that the people must not pray to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but to the god of Mtitar or Langalibele, as it was known, and argued that mission schools were imposing alien cultural values and ideologies on African children, divorcing them from traditional beliefs and conditioning them to accept subservient positions in the church dominated system.
>
> (Mkatshwa 1985: 239)

Buthelezi was banished and his schools closed after a few years. However with industrialization, and the growing numbers of people forced off their lands, perceptions of education changed as town dwellers began to see it as a way into the new economy and social system. In summary, up until 1953, with some exceptions, what little formal schooling Africans received, they received from missionaries, and for the vast majority of those, the education was training for a subservient role in

society, and one that had little respect for African customs and values. However some highly prestigious mission schools were open to black and white children, and although the children were segregated on the school premises, the schools were among the best schools in the country and produced a small elite of highly educated Africans.

The Bantu Education Act

> We should not give the Natives any academic education. If we do, who is going to do the manual labour in the community?
> (Le Roux 1945, Nationalist Party politician cited in Tomaselli 1989: 141)

> ... there is no place for the Bantu in the European community above certain forms of labour.
> (Hendrick Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs 1953)

> ... we shall reject the whole system of Bantu education whose aim is to reduce us, mentally and physically, into 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'.
> (Soweto Students Representative Council 1976)

In 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power and in 1949 appointed the Eiselen Commission to make plans for 'the education of natives as an independent race' (Christie 1994: 84). The commission was critical of missionary education on a number of grounds - its variability, its failure to prepare pupils for adult life as black people under apartheid and its devaluation of African culture. On the basis of this commission the Bantu Education Act was passed in 1953, placing control of black education in the government's hands and stating that all schools had to be registered with the government and teach curricula suitable to the role envisaged for the black child by the apartheid government.

> I just want to remind the honorable Members of Parliament that if the native in South Africa is being taught to expect that he will lead his adult life under

> the policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake. The native must not be subject to a school system which draws him away from his own community, and misleads him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze.
>
> (Verwoerd cited in Rose and Tummer 1975: 266)

This effectively led to the closure of most mission schools and those that remained open had to follow the government curriculum. In order to cope with large numbers of children, a system was introduced whereby one set of children attended school in the morning and the second set in the afternoon, effectively doubling the teachers' workload. There was a large increase in school enrolment after the Bantu Education Act was passed, but there was also an extremely high drop-out rate, with 70 per cent of African school children being in the first four years of school and less than 1 per cent were in Matric in the early 1970s (Christie 1994: 57) and in 1992, an estimated 50 per cent of black adults were illiterate (French 1992: 50), with many not having attended school and many of those who did, dropping out in the first few years due to poverty or other causes. Every worker at the Workers' School had been unable to complete their schooling. Indeed many had not been to school at all. The brutality of apartheid permeated all aspects of society, and schools were frequently sites of corporal punishment and abuse of children both by teachers and other children, so alongside expectations of the order and discipline, there were expectations of violence.

The schooling experiences of members of the school was varied. Trevor had the benefit of a secondary education at a prestigious boarding school and he was able to start school at four. He took the rough with the smooth in his usual good humour and contrasts the corporal punishment meted out at his primary school with the enjoyment of singing in the choir in secondary school.

> It was bad, eh, corporal punishment. I think the teachers were maniacs, not all of them, but one or two of them, they were real maniacs. They had special terms for special beatings, for example there was this thing called Robben Island. Now in Robben Island they would put two desks, sort of cordon off a

> corner, with a school desk where they put you inside, where they beat you up. And they used this tyre rubber, tin strips, heh it was painful and we were kids, just Standard 3. Well there we were not actually on the main campus of the school. Standard 3 was housed in a church and we were many, maybe fifty or sixty, maybe 100. We had two classes Standard 3 and there was this dictator - this man and this lady. The man was worse, but the both of them were just crazy about beating up kids and you know .. beating you on your nails, I don't think I got beaten up a lot. But I just remember that we were always terrified. They had another plan, another strategy for beating you. I don't know what they called that ...oh the vice grip. They put your head between his knees and then they beat your bum, something like that. They were maniacs. It's true ..
>
> (WS1 1996 MM/T: 3)

Such reports of abuse were widespread in Bantu education schools (Holdstock, 1990 34-72). However it was not all bad as Trevor reports

> I was in the school choir - the church choir. So it was fun, because you sat in the gallery you know, sing there. I like singing very well. Already my voice was baritone, so you know, like 'Hey this guy sings' but we were not serious, we sang seriously, but youngsters it was just fun. It was fun, although there was practice.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 4)

By way of contrast to Trevor, Mama Hellen only started school when she was ten and had to leave when she had completed primary school as there were no secondary schools in the area. Dan, an orphan, whose schooling was also disrupted describes his experience of schooling in Soweto in the early 1980s

> I started school here at Diepkloof from my Sub a. to my Standard 2. Then they take me to the Homelands. And at the Homelands I never get that chance of going to school, because things were not all right. Me I find myself I was taken from here to another place, to another place, to the certain place.

> So for me I wasn't stable at one place and I was not having anybody to say 'This is my child, I can put him in the right way' or whatever. Because I grow up knowing that I am just a boy without parents under my granny ... Since I started school I never failed to the Standard 5 but every time when I was at school, I wasn't happy. I was like scared something will happen to me. I don't know. I grow up like that, feeling like something will happen to me at school or what.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D 151-2)

Dan's unsettled childhood, with its disrupted schooling and pervasive fear was doubtless replicated across Soweto in the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising and the violent death of so many school children. David describes a similar generalized fear and suspicion of adults and teachers in general,

> I think when I was young, one of the issues in terms of education was the fact ... that education ... was also seen as a way getting out of poverty and that kind of a thing. So the whole issue was around how education could help in terms of bettering your life situation. But then the second other thing was around fear - the fact that you had to go to school for you feared that you would be punished by the teacher. I think that was another thing that sort of dominated our lives, you would do things to avoid being punished, but you do things that you know will get you punished, even if they found you. So there were those things which leads to a situation where you begin to see life a bit differently, you know, you learn to fear, you learn to be, you are always cautious, always suspicious. You don't do things spontaneously as a kid. But that was also related to the fact that you grew up in particular circumstances, circumstances where they were constraints around money, generation constraints, there are problems around drunkenness, a whole lot of things, a whole lot of social problems, so because of all those things you tend to have

> a skewed understanding of life, and that your primary aim, thing, your orientation, is all you want to do is to get out of that ...
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 129-30)

David was exceptional in being able to find an educational route out of poverty. The majority of black children were forced to drop out of school against their will, and regardless of their academic ability as described by Elizabeth and Hellen.

> Yes I did well at school, but the only problem there was no books for me, you know, my mother was struggling to get the books for us because my mother must buy food for us, yeah, do everything for us, uniform, everything ... so it was hard to me to go to the principal every time to ask something, you know. I were shy that time, you know. So I just chose to left school. Well after that I was looking for job.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 113)

> When I was still young I was just thought that maybe I will learn. I just told myself that I will learn more and more so because of the bad living like you see, like when your parents have nothing. So that is why I didn't have enough education and that is why I am still like to learn.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/H: 65)

Theo also had to leave school because his parents could not afford to keep him there but he immediately started night classes. His clear thinking and ability to organize made him an ideal candidate for the school management committee, a duty he fulfilled with diligence and flair until he got promoted at work, and was as a consequence no longer able to attend the school.

> So I have this mind that I must go on with the studies. Maybe I will be somebody among the community ... I can say I felt that, I felt that I must. It was, I can say my parents also motivated me to be something although they haven't got money. They told me that even if you are going to work you can do it alone, it doesn't matter. And my father told me that I want you to be a

> teacher one day. So I can say that motivated me to study. Yes, because I was doing very well at school, I was doing very well. As I say, so I saw that I can be something.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Th: 68-9)

One of the most unfair aspects of this totally inequitable education system was that it was free for white children, while black children had to pay school fees which were beyond the means of many parents, thus depriving many bright and enthusiastic pupils such as Theo of an education they desired. As Table 5 indicates, while there was a proportionate increase on spending on African children and a large increase in the number of African children attending school between 1953 and 1989, other indicators such as teacher pupil ratios, teacher qualifications and university entrance figures all reflect the structural inequalities. In 1971 the teacher pupil ratio in white schools was 1:20 whereas in black schools it was 1:58, and that was excluding the homelands where the schools were poorest. (Annual) Survey of Race Relations in South Africa (SAIRR) cited in Christie 1994: 128). In 1988 32 per cent of teachers in African schools had below a Standard 10 qualification and only 5 per cent had a university degree, in comparison to the 1979 figure for white teachers, none of whom had below a Standard 10 qualification and 32 per cent had a degree (SAIRR Surveys cited in Christie 1994: 130). Finally with regard to university entrance, in 1981, 94 per cent of white pupils passed Standard 10, and 49 per cent qualified for university entrance, while in the same year 53 per cent of Africans passed with only 13 per cent qualifying for university entrance, a figure that was to go down to 36 per cent passing, and only 7 per cent obtaining university entrance in 1990 (Christie 1994: 121-4). Thus despite a substantial increase in expenditure on African education, things were getting worse instead of better in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Segregation of the education system

Having set up a segregated school system, the government went on to segregate the universities beginning with The Extension of University Education Act which set up tribal colleges for different African 'tribes'. The Coloured Person's Education Act placed the education of 'coloureds' under the Department of Coloured Affairs and made coloured education compulsory. Then in 1965 The Indian Education Act placed the education of Indian children under the Department of Indian Affairs and Indian education was also made compulsory. In 1967 the National Education Policy Act set out the principles for education in white schools. There were thus four different education departments, from primary to university level, catering for the four different population groups and offering different curricula for pupils, a minority of whom would go on to segregated universities and study courses in appropriate subjects in their own geographical areas. However things did not go according to plan.

> Since their inception, the three African universities - of the North, Zululand and Fort Hare - have been in constant turbulence. They have all been marked by regular closures, suspensions and expulsions of sizable numbers of students and the stipulation of increasingly rigid conditions for admission or re-admission ... Their curricula have been restrictive, limiting areas of study largely to the social sciences and the humanities ... there are other such matters as the allocation of resources, the quality of education, the degree of autonomy and academic freedom have been some of the perennially troubling issues at these institutions.
>
> (Nkomo 1984: xx)

One of the research respondents, who attended Fort Hare from 1980-1983, and was expelled each of those years following disturbances on campus, describes his educational experience at Fort Hare taking a course in Personnel Management:

> The way he was teaching, he gave us questions and answers, and so he would dictate and say Question 1 What is Personnel Management? Answer ... and

> then he would write it. And at the end of a year we had exactly one hundred questions and the exam was based on those questions.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 12-13)

This rote learning system was notorious in African education to discourage students thinking for themselves. The other anomaly in this supposed respect for African cultural patterns is that the vast majority of staff at black universities were white:

> At Fort Hare 131 out of 188 staff are white; at Turfloop 140 out of 228; at the University of Zululand, 111 out of 187; and at Medunsa 155 out of 174.
>
> (*City Press* 27. 3. 83)

Murphy in his 1973 study of black education in South Africa, predicted that Bantu education was likely to develop a culture of its own which would 'lead to educational outcomes different from those intended by the South African government'(Murphy cited in Nkomo 1984: xx1). Nkomo in his thesis on the disturbances at the 'tribal' universities states

> A common thread running through the van Wyk, Snyman, Jackson and Cillie Commission reports is that all the grievances are related to the general socio-economic conditions to which blacks are subjected.
>
> (Nkomo: 1984 xix)

The Van Wyk Commission (1974) was appointed to investigate disturbances at the University of the Western Cape (UWC); The Snyman Commission (1975) investigated disturbances at the University of the North; The Jackson Commission (1975) investigated the status of Africanization at the University of the North and the Cillie Commission investigated the 1976 Soweto upheavals. Thus while specific grievances, such as Afrikaans as the medium of instruction and inferior segregated education generated student uprisings, investigations indicate that the participants that were interrogated by the Cillie commission consistently referred to broader issues. This became evident in the 1970s but came to the fore in the 1980s as students consciously linked up their difficulties with the apartheid system.

Resistance to education

From the beginning, Africans resisted the school system, starting with the slaves who Van Riebeck tried to teach. They ran away and stayed in a cave for five days rather than attend school. There were many strikes by boarders at mission schools, usually about food, with students at Kilnerton Training College going on hunger strike in 1920 'for more food', and in the same year theological students at Lovedale set fire to buildings in protest against the quality of the food. In the period 1939 to 1946, there were more than twenty five strikes and serious riots in schools. In 1953 the causes were analyzed in a newspaper report:

> At almost every African mission boarding school, conditions are deplorable, and this has been the root of all the minor revolts which have taken place from time to time at these institutions. Food and Nazi-like control are usually the main causes for dissatisfaction.
>
> (*Torch*, 3 November 1953 cited in Christie 1994: 226-7)

However it was not only pupils who resisted. In 1944, parents of pupils at Brakpan Mission School persuaded their children to boycott in protest against the dismissal of a politically active school teacher and in 1952, parents organized a boycott of Orlando High School Soweto, after three teachers who opposed the Eiselen Commission were fired. The ANC Youth League was formed in 1944 and set up a shanty school for children who had been excluded from the local school through lack of space. However with the Bantu Education Act, and the institutionalization of apartheid, resistance became more widespread and education was increasingly connected with wider political issues.

Opposition to the Bantu Education Act of 1953

Teachers were the first to react to the act as their workload was doubled, in that they now had a morning and afternoon shift of pupils, and in addition class sizes were to be larger without any improvement in salary. In 1952 CATA condemned the Eiselen Report and called meetings to resist Bantu Education. The government refused to recognize CATA and dismissed militant teachers from schools. Then in May 1954 the ANC launched a Resist Apartheid Campaign and education was one of six issues which included, The Pass Laws, The Group Areas Act, The Native Resettlement Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and anti-trade union measures. There were divisions within the boycott movement from the start and there were problems with organization and with facilities for the children who would normally be at school, in particular primary school children. The historian Lodge describes the boycott:

> ... by Wednesday, 3,000 Brakpan children were out of school - the highest figure for any single location. In Germiston parents marched with their children in a procession. All Benoni and Germiston schools were empty, and in Kathlehong only 70 out of 1,000 odd pupils at a community school attended. On Thursday a march by women and children was broken up by police ...
>
> (Lodge cited in Christie 1994: 230)

In total the boycott involved 13,000 children and Verwoerd issued a threat that children who did not return to school by 25 April would be excluded from the education system and in the event some returned, but many thousands remained on boycott and got expelled. One important thing to arise out of the boycott was the African Education Movement which arranged a series of cultural clubs in opposition to Bantu education, and some were very successful and provide an early example of an attempt at alternative education despite harassment by police and banning of leaders. These clubs faced the same problems that the Workers' School faced in the 1990s with lack of facilities, teachers and resources but also in getting people to accept that an alternative to state education was worthwhile, while the latter offered

certificates and job prospects. This is an issue that will be explored in greater depth at a later stage.

In the wake of Sharpville and the imprisonment of black leaders, the 1960s were relatively quiet but school protests continued, with strikes, protests and demonstrations by school students. In 1961 the African Students Association was formed but its leaders were banned and it was suppressed. However the end of the sixties saw the birth of black consciousness groupings and following the formation of South African Students Organization (SASO) at university level, The South African Students' Movement (SASM) was formed in 1972 to organize high school pupils. This signaled a shift towards black consciousness and away from NUSAS, the white, Congress-aligned student body. SASO argued that black students needed to organize on their own, but in this case they included Coloured and Indians as blacks. It was very influential in the 1970s and its influence spread beyond educational to cultural and community groupings. Here is a statement on what black consciousness stood for:

> It is the inalienable birthright of any community to have a political voice to articulate and realize the aspirations of its members. In this, our country, Africans, Coloured and Indians comprise the Black Community, which has been deprived of this inalienable right, and for too long there has been a political vacuum in the black community. We are therefore working towards the formation of a black peoples' political movement, whose primary aim is to unite and solidify black people with a view to liberating and emancipating them from both psychological and physical oppression.
>
> (Christie 1994: 237)

From March 1973 the government cracked down on these organizations, but charismatic leaders such as Steve Biko refused to be silenced and challenged the government, the police and the courts, as well as challenging black people to stand up and resist apartheid. This quotation addressed to his fellow black people captures the spirit of his challenge:

> ... in a true bid for change we have to take off our coats, be prepared to lose our comfort and security, our jobs and positions of prestige, and our families, for just as it is true that 'leadership and security are basically incompatible', a struggle without causalities is no struggle. We must realize the prophetic cry of black students 'Black man you are on your own!'
>
> (Biko 1978: 97).

In 1972 all black universities closed after conflict with authorities after the expulsion of the student leader, Tiro, who had made a speech against the discriminatory educational system. Technical colleges and some teacher training colleges and white universities held meetings and demonstrations in support. In 1973 and 1974 there was widespread industrial unrest with more than 300 strikes involving 80,000 black workers. In September there were major revolts on the mines with 152 mine workers killed and 500 injured.

The Soweto Uprising

In Soweto rising unemployment, overcrowding and continuous police harassment were creating conditions for a conflagration. In an English newspaper report, Soweto was described as follows by a US government official, Mr. R. H. Crawford

> I cannot understand how intelligent people can tolerate these modified concentration camps called townships. I consider most of these townships to be a form of human degradation and breeding grounds for frustration. What appalls me is that a country so sophisticated technically can be so retarded in social motivation toward the less fortunate.
>
> (*The Daily Mirror*, Friday June 18 1976)

The article describes the township as a powder keg, an image supported by analysts such as Harsh

> ... given the highly charged atmosphere, and the scores of black grievances ranging from low pay and poor housing to the pass laws and political repression, virtually any issue could have set off a generalized upheaval. The one that did was the regime's decision to teach half the courses in African secondary schools in the Southern Transvaal through the medium of Afrikaans. This roused the ire of African students, parents, and teachers, both because of the practical difficulties of forcing students to suddenly learn through a language in which they were not fluent, and because of the deep hatred among Blacks for the language used by the police, the courts, and the apartheid administration.
>
> (Harsh cited in NECC 1987: 51)

In 1976 SASM called a meeting to discuss the issue of Afrikaans medium instruction and an action committee was established consisting of SASM's Regional Executive Committee and representatives from every secondary school in Soweto, later to be known as the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC). June 16 was chosen for a peaceful demonstration against Afrikaans and 15,000 to 20,000 school students took part in the demonstration which was fired on by police resulting in the death of several children that day, and the beginning of nation wide unrest which moved beyond the educational issues to challenge the whole apartheid system. The thinking of the students is conveyed in this leaflet that has survived,

> Now is the time to take an active role in the struggle for human dignity
> Awake and rise against the unjust system
> Students you have an important role to play in the change
> All oppressed people must stand up and counted. So unite now.
>
> (Student Pamphlet cited in NECC 1987: 54)

Youth took to the streets, burning beerhalls and government building and building barricades. One of the workers at the Workers' school describes her bewilderment that day

> I saw many things that hurt me in the struggle. Like 1976, yes I was there. I saw this thing after this thing happened. I was at work that time ... Our supervisor tell our head of Department, we are not working, we are doing Amandla. And we didn't know that name that time, what do they say if they say Amandla. We didn't know nothing about that word. But then we went out to Soweto, we started to see that things are changing now, so that they burn the shops, they burn the bottle stores and the offices. When we ask what they are doing now here? They said the children were burning the trains because of this Afrikaans. They didn't want to read Afrikaans, so that is why they start to say Amandla! ... Because the police they started to shot the childrens ... they were attack the people, shot the children, go to the school, intimidate the children there at school you know. And then after that when children go outside of the classes and saw them with stones you know, they started to shot our children.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 122-3)

The Soweto uprising spread across the country with widespread rioting, burning of buildings, killing of suspected informers and on-going battles with the police who used dogs, guns, teargas and helicopters to crush the uprising. The security forces detained without trial and in 1977, the death of Steve Biko in detention caused international outrage and in October 1977 black consciousness organizations were banned. In all, over a thousand people were killed and while it is beyond the scope of this chapter to analyze the uprising in any depth, it is nevertheless interesting to look at the impact that it had on relationships between students and those in authority, such as their teachers and parents. Maria Tholo, a black teacher kept a diary of events in Guguletu in Cape Town at this time and she describes the challenge that the youth began to pose to their teachers.

> On August 29 1976, at a Parent /Teacher meeting in Guguletu in Cape Town, one of the teachers told the following story:
> The other day I went into class to start Social Studies and as I picked up the chalk one of the children asked me to please write down the word

> 'American', and when I had done that to define the word. I said something like 'a person who belongs in America, who was born in America..'
> 'Define the word 'African' he said. I used a similar definition. Then they all shouted. 'Are Americans only white or are Negroes also Americans?'
> Everybody is American I answered.
> 'Good, now define the word African again.'
> 'Well here an African is usually taken to mean a black person'
> 'Right now you are clever!' they chorused
> And then the children ask the teacher:
> 'Why if we are all Africans, when some immigrant from Portugal, who has been thrown out Angola, comes in, why is it he gets all the rights you can't get being born here, because of the colour of your skin? Why is it he gets first preference in getting a job, he gets citizenship and we can't even be citizens in our own country? Teacher, if you cannot answer those questions you are not fit to be a teacher, so leave the blackboard.
>
> (Tholo 1980: 34)

In summary 1976 was a watershed in South African history, it marked the beginning of the end of apartheid and it marked the emergence of politically conscious youth at the forefront of the struggle, challenging the authority of their parents, of their teachers and of the government. Initially in Soweto in 1976, students stoned buses and trains carrying adults to work, but in the course of the year the students united with their parents and workers in three stayaways and succeeded in getting a rent increase halted. It was also the case that the 'struggle' provided a smokescreen for criminal elements who settled personal scores and intimidated people. However the leadership of the students saw themselves as having an important role to play in the much bigger struggle for the liberation of the African people and the end of apartheid. Relationships between parents and children changed and it was only in the 1980s that the adults began to comes to terms with all that happened and begin to lead the youth again.

> ... we have turned our children into a generation of fighters, battlehardened soldiers who will never know the carefree joy of childhood. What we are

> witnessing is the growth of a generation who has the courage to reject the cowardice of its parents ... there is a dark terrible beauty in that courage. It is also a source of great pride - pride that we - who have lived under apartheid, can produce children who refuse to do so.
>
> (Qoboza, *City Press*, 20 April 1986)

Resistance in Education after Soweto

1980 saw the beginning of another round of school boycotts. These originated in coloured schools in Cape Town and spread to Indian schools and finally to African schools. 140,000 students joined the boycott and hundreds of teachers came out in support. As in 1976, educational issues sparked the boycott - protests against poor facilities, lack of qualified teachers, corporal punishment, security police on school premises and a demand for independent Student Representative Councils (SRCs). Christie quotes two student statements both made in 1980:

> We must see how short-term demands are linked up with the political and economic system of this country. We must see how the fail-pass rates in schools are linked up with the labour supply for the capitalist system.
>
> Our parents, the workers are strong. They have power. We the students cannot shake the government in the same way. We have got to link up our struggle with the struggle of black workers. Our parents have got to understand that we will not be 'educated' and 'trained' to become slaves in apartheid-capitalist society. Together with our parents we must try to work out a new future, a future where there will be no racism or exploitation, no apartheid, no inequality of class or sex.
>
> (cited in Christie 1994: 247)

The Marxist influence seems to have been strong in this movement, as it was in the Workers' School and other interesting factors about the boycott, apart from the

obvious growing political awareness of the students as evidenced in these statements, were the setting up of alternative educational programmes in schools and the democratic nature of the organization of boycott committees - both of which will be seen and analyzed in depth in the Workers' School. The alternative education programmes included the history of black people in South Africa, June 1976, the nature of education and sports policy, all of which was interspersed with relevant films and music. Again similar topics emerged at the beginning of the Workers' School. There was variation from school to school with some programmes attracting students and being genuinely educational, whereas at other schools they referred to the 'borecott' and students stayed away from boredom rather than political commitment.

However this letter written by black leaders from church, legal and educational groupings in the Cape is indicative of a different strand in the wider struggle, being a letter written by the educated black middle class and addressed to the Prime Minister. Although the tone is quite different from that of the militant youth, and its recommendations are restricted to educational concerns, it is nevertheless uncompromising in its rejection of apartheid education. They put forward several recommendations such as a commission of inquiry involving educationalists from all racial groupings, the setting up a unitary system of education, the opening of all educational establishments and opportunities to all people of all races, equity in terns of resources, increased teacher training and it concludes with

> Provision of free and compulsory education to every child of school going age, up to and including High School education.
>
> (cited in Christie 1994: 26)

COSAS had been formed in 1979 - a non-racial student organization affiliated to the ANC - and it began organizing in the schools around issues such as democratically SRCs, poor Matric results, corrupt marking practices and age restrictions. Age restrictions were a major problem for all those who had missed out on school due to the disruptions in education. Many had lost years of schooling and were now beyond the normal school-going age, and through no fault of their own, had failed to complete their schooling. Then in 1984 another period of school boycotts and protests erupted

beginning in the Eastern Cape and near Pretoria, and issues included those listed above and the end of corporal punishment and sexual harassment of students by teachers. Schools were closed and COSAS, AZASO, and NUSAS, (all student bodies with different political affiliations), launched the Education Charter Campaign in February 1984.

In August elections were held for the Indian and Coloured houses of the tricameral parliament, causing widespread protests across the country. In the same month rents and service costs were increased in townships around Pretoria, the Rand, The Eastern Cape and the Vaal Triangle. Rent protests and educational protesters joined together and there were rent and school boycotts, marches and battles with the police. A stay away was supported by more than 20,000 people and over 200,000 Vaal students went on boycott which lasted into 1985 and spread to other areas.

Students began to become more militant and barricaded streets and waged war with the police and army. They burnt property and attacked people they saw as collaborators, and took part in necklace killings and held peoples' courts. They built street and yard committees and their slogans were 'Liberation Now, Education Later!' 'The Year of No Schooling!' Many students were killed and detained and education broke down completely in some areas. One of the research respondents described a typical school day in 1983 in Soweto, and it should be noted that this was before the boycotts of 1984 and 1985 when there was virtually no schooling at all:

> Typical we would start at 8.30. The official time was 8.00 but because of this and that it started at 8.30. You got through three periods and then it is lunch. In those three periods you might have one period free because the teacher is not in class. So after lunch you would have half the class, some people have gone home, others are gambling, you know all sorts of things ... You know in class typically at that level you would be discussing around movies you had seen at the weekend and sometimes you go and play soccer, so that was a typical day ... So, the other thing was that the class was mainly dominated by females so we got a bit naughty, but we could kiss them and do all sorts of

> things, but they accepted, they just thought, these youngsters, they are just naughty!
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd 131-4)

Many schools had closed down and many were continuously disrupted and even those that did manage to stay open found it extremely difficult to function as centres of learning as the whole system of Bantu education had been discredited and the authority of teachers undermined, a situation that was particularly extreme in Soweto. In this context this statement by John Samuel is apposite,

> In the past fifteen years, education in this country has been disrupted, undermined and undeveloped. During this time the basis of learning as a social activity has been destroyed. Learning as a social activity is an important ingredient in generating a sense of community. The erosion of this in urban black communities manifests itself in many different ways, not the least of which is the rapidly increasing rate of teenage pregnancy, greater drug abuse, gang formation, etc.
>
> (John Samuel: ANC Education Desk 1990)

The history of adult education

> ... the struggle of the black man for freedom in South Africa is at the same time a struggle for education and knowledge.
>
> (Roux 1970: 141)

To date I have looked at church and state education for children but there is also the history of adult education which includes literacy work, workers' and trade union education and then in the 1980s Peoples' Education. Most of the literacy work was carried out by the Communist Party and by the churches in the early decades of the century. The first attempt at establishing night schools for adults was carried out by the Communist party starting with skilled white workers. However the strike by white workers against the threat of black labour and under the slogan 'Workers of the world

unite for a white South Africa', divided the party and in the end, those in favour of shifting emphasis to working with African workers won the day. In 1924 party schools were organized and they were successful in recruiting and training political leaders who became involved in political and trade union campaigns. There was continual harassment by the state and poor facilities and difficulties with the pass laws and migrant labour systems compounded the difficulties:

> The night school was held on the ground floor of what was actually a slum tenement. There were few desks so that pupils sat on benches or on the floor. There were no blackboards so comrades blackened the walls. The nearby rooms were occupied by poor white down- and -outs, by prostitutes and methylated spirit drinkers.
>
> (Roux and Roux 1970: 67-8)

Splits within the Communist Party had a detrimental effect on the night school movement and in 1938 when a founding member, Eddie Roux, broke with the Communist party, the schools mostly collapsed, although there is a record of a school conducted by the Central Branch of the Communist Party in Johannesburg in 1946, teaching, 'English, Arithmetic and History to an average of forty pupils (Rheinallt Jones Collection. University of the Witwatersrand library, AD 483 B50 (a), p. 3). Roux moved to Cape Town and started an educational newspaper under the title 'Umvekele-Theba' (The African Defender), with the motto 'There is no knowledge which white men have which black men cannot have as well.'(Roux 1970: 141-2). He also published texts in easy English on ideological issues, scientific concepts, agricultural and ecological issues. The school in which he worked in Cape Town, later became influential in instigating a liberal night school movement which offered formal examination courses. There are a few other records of classes set up by radicals which were short lived and Bird summarizes the work of the communist party and others, in a way which appears to simplify a complex movement:

> All these radical organizations were concerned with political education. They worked under difficult conditions. They distanced themselves absolutely from formal channels of education. Their aim in general was to train leaders

> and allow as many as possible to understand the structures that oppressed them.
>
> (Bird 1980: 198)

I would speculate that while the teachers may have been clear about what they wanted to achieve, although the experience of Roux seems to suggest that there may have been divisions there too, it seems unlikely that some of the adults coming along to learn at a night school would not have had aspirations towards an education that could improve their working conditions in the short term. Roux describes one of his fellow teachers, a member of the Internationalist Socialist League:

> Jones started night classes for Africans, teaching them to read and write. He got them to write on their slates : 'Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains and a world to win'.
>
> (Roux 1948: 131-2)

This pinpoints one of the central tensions that was to arise in the adult education movement in the 80s and 90s with some people seeing it as primarily a vehicle for political education and others seeing it as avenue for people to acquire certificates and skills. There is also a problem with programmes that set themselves up as teaching English or Arithmetic and then teach political education, although it could be argued that the state and Christian groups also did precisely that and it must be kept in mind that there was little alternative in South Africa, when any open political work would have met with severe repression. One of the problems that experienced literacy or adult educators faced was how little literacy or numerical skills did alter the oppressive conditions under which their students lived, and the need for more radical change became apparent to teachers and students alike. However there was a continual conflict of interests and expectations in these situations that both facilitators and learners had to confront. In fact in Cape Town there does seem to have been a definite shift 'the Cape Town night school in 1939 'in response to persistent demands' added a Junior Certificate class which soon became the largest in the school.'(Roux, E. in Rheinallt Jones Collection AD 834 B 82 (a) undated p.1). This was also the experience in the Workers' School, where certification and political education were

always in tension, and in addition examination classes tended to take priority over literacy and other non-examination work.

In 1938 students at University of Witwatersrand opened the African College, and in 1941 the first of many Mayibuye schools opened with the following liberal curriculum and it was staffed by students and school teachers.

> a. Teaching of English, arithmetic, civics, and government - with special emphasis on the native laws and geography, with proposed extension to include Hygiene and Debating and Speaking for higher classes ... In the course of these discussions, the pupils will be able to see European approaches and attitudes more clearly when these stand out in contrast to their own.
>
> (Rheinhallt Jones Collection, AD 343, B82(a), Misc. 73/41 p. 4-5)

The tone here is imperialist and patronizing with no intuition on the teacher's part that they might have a few superstitions and prejudices of their own to contend with! In contrast to the Communist Party night schools, both teachers and pupils were expected to remain silent on politics. Meanwhile the Transvaal Teachers' Association became interested in the night schools and in the war years, when to quote the Prime Minister Smuts 'segregation had fallen on evil days', various night schools united under the Johannesburg Central Committee for Non-European Continuation Classes and became known as the J4Cs and they were instrumental in getting a 'department of non-European Adults' opened at the Technical College. One of the groups was the SAIRR, which since 1929 had been the spokesperson for the South African liberal establishment, and they recommended 'that experiments be made by the research section of the National Council for Adult Education with a view to ascertaining what will be the best method and technique for a large-scale combating of illiteracy.' (cited in Bird 1980: 203). In 1945 an official committee on Adult Education was set up which included liberals from the SAIRR. They were successful in getting government funding for night schools in Johannesburg suggesting 'the formation of a Committee under the auspices of an approved body to supervise those night schools which are prepared to come under the Committee, provided that they are in no way connected

with any political group or used for political purposes.' (Rheinallt Jones cited in Bird 1980: 202). In 1947 there were nineteen schools attached to the J4Cs and by 1957 there were thirty two with a total enrollment of 3,000 taught by 160 teachers, many of whom were paid Africans (Bird 1980: 204).

The Institute of Race Relations set up a project using the Laubach literacy method, under the slogan 'each one teach one and win one for Christ' and worked through employers and with state approval and described their method in a 1958 report 'We help sponsors to train teachers and see their classes initiated. Classes range from domestic ones for two or three learners, to large ones run on mine compounds and in Durban night schools ... No class is initiated without the approval of the Union Education Department.' (Bird 1980: 204). The passing of the Bantu Education Act resulted in the withdrawal of many radical teachers from the adult night school movement in protest against apartheid but others such as Dr. Franz Auerbach remained, arguing that 'It was more important to educate people than to salve your conscience' (Bird 1980: 205). In 1955 the Native Affairs Department took over adult education and insisted that all classes register regardless of whether they got a subsidy or not. At this point there were about 10,000 adults enrolled across the country in schools controlled by city councils and church groups. Through various laws such as the appointment of a European head in all schools, the necessity of not only submitting a map of the building in which the school was held, but maps of all the surrounding area, the stipulation that the adult schools had to follow the school curriculum, and the restriction of access to adults over the age of eighteen who were in full time employment and legally entitled to be in the area, the numbers in the schools had dwindled to 2218 nationally by 1962 and in 1966 all permits were withdrawn from the night schools in the white areas.

Although affected by the closure of night schools, the Institute of Race Relations set up the Bureaux of Literacy with the following aims:

> ... to foster literacy by training personnel in the techniques which had and were being evolved to make adults literate in the shortest possible time, to provide the basic literature required for this, and, primarily through

> missionary societies and other bodies, to foster the distribution of Christian and other healthy and useful literature.
>
> (Bureaux of Literacy, cited in Bird 1980: 209)

The mining houses responded positively to the bureau's 'healthy' literature and subsidized their work. There was a growing need for more skilled workers and it was increasingly argued that black workers should be trained to occupy these positions, even by pro-apartheid Afrikaans business men. In this period there were some on-site industrial training programmes such as Communication in Industry which was simultaneously introduced into black primary schools, and was very much aimed at improving industrial relations using rhymes, plays, and walks as teaching devices. There was also an organization called Operation Upgrade which worked through the apartheid structures and again used a chiming approach to learning. The mines put considerable resources into an on-site training programme for workers which was open to those workers who volunteered to attend in their spare time. In 1975 the Department set up a number of adult education centres, all set in industrial areas, and offering school curricula, and by 1977 there were 15,580 adults enrolled at these centres.

Radical adult education

As has been previously discussed following the night schools of the Communist Party in the 1920s and 1930s, alternative educational programmes were developed during the school boycotts in the 1950s and the 1980s. In the late 60s and early 70s with the growth of black consciousness there were sporadic attempts at setting up classes and interestingly around 1970, the Rev Colin Collins of the radical University Christian Movement (UCM) imported the translations of Paulo Friere's work whose educational influence spread throughout the radical educational movement. The late 1970s and 1980s saw the birth of several radical literacy organizations, many of whom were later to join together to form the National Literacy Co-operation, of which the Workers' School was a member. The aim of this grouping was to ensure that adult education

had a voice in the broad based liberation movement, which was shortly to become the government of the country. Alongside this, and arising out of the crisis in the black schools, People's Education, the subject of the next chapter, emerged.

CHAPTER 7

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER

People's Education

> The notion of people's education has acquired wide political currency in South Africa. To ordinary black South Africans, it describes a promised liberation from an inferior and disabling education system. Conversely the state regards it as a threat to law and order that must be curtailed. To academics it is a concept to be dissected, defined and given an academic lineage. To the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), its patron organization, it has become the focus of an increasingly complex strategy of contestation and challenge. For all, people's education is less a concept with a precise semantic content that the symbol of a national educational and political movement in the making.
>
> (Muller 1987: 319)

South Africa is unusual in that the struggle for power and the struggle for education are explicitly inter-linked. It can be partly understood in terms of the history of Bantu education, which rendered visible the role of education in perpetuating the apartheid regime, and also by the fact that in 1976 it was school students who led the first major challenge to apartheid, a challenge that was taken up by ever increasing sections of the population throughout the 1980s. In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed, a national front of 600 anti-apartheid organizations. The UDF demanded one parliament for all races and organized consumer boycotts, rent boycotts and encouraged the formation of area and street committees, called 'organs of people's power'. In 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a trade union federation, involving 500,000 workers nationally, was formed. In the same year the government declared a State of Emergency and 20,000 people were detained. The struggle had moved

onto a national plane and, the stronger the repressive measures, the stronger the resistance to them.

The History of People's Education

In 1985 education had broken down in many areas of South Africa, a crisis that was particularly intense in Soweto. Muller reports

> At the beginning of the year 25,584 students registered for Standard 10 classes in DET schools. A total of 10,523 eventually wrote the examination. Of those originally enrolled, 19.1% passed at ordinary grade, while 5.2% obtained university entrance qualifications.
>
> (Muller 1987: 321)

Amidst the call by the youth for 1986 to be declared the 'Year of No Schooling', and with the youth slogan 'Liberation Now! Education Later!', the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC) was formed in 1985 (Hartshorne 1986: 64). It can be understood as an attempt by the adult leadership to both protect and control the youth, who, in the banning of their organizations, the detention of their leaders, and with many being locked out of schools, were increasingly coming into conflict with the army and the police and, indeed, within their own communities. In October 1985 the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee ...'estimated that 25% of emergency detainees were students who, along with other youth groups, comprised 60% of all emergency detainees' (Muller 1987: 320). The presence of the army on school premises exacerbated the situation, and as a parents' memorandum to the DET in October stated 'the presence of the army in the township is a situation of conflict and war. No normal community life can reign with the army in our midst.' (Muller 1987: 320).

National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education, University of Witwatersrand, Dec. 1985

The SPCC's initial brief was to negotiate with the Department of Education and Training to try to persuade them to give in to some of the students' demands, and they decided to call a National Consultative Conference in 1985 to take forward the educational struggle. A delegation was sent to Lusaka to discuss the issue with the ANC and the message came back that the students should return to school but not give up the struggle. It was out of this that the idea of 'People's Education for People's Power' was born and the youth were advised to return to school with the slogan 'Education for Liberation'. The December conference thus recommended a return to school, but with the aim of transforming current educational structures into People's Education.

The organizational vehicle was to be the NECC, which would operate nationally and democratically. Local groups were represented on regional crisis committees which in turn were represented on the National NECC structure. The most important point about People's Education was its shift

> ... from what had become a rather barren exercise, the recapitulation of the failures of Bantu education, to a consideration both of the alternatives now and the form and character of longer-term post-apartheid education system.
>
> (Hartshorne 1986: 69)

The SPCC conference provided the first national forum for parents, students and teachers and for all those concerned to end the school crisis. One hundred and forty seven organizations were represented, with the black consciousness aligned Azanian People's Organization, the ANC aligned UDF, and trade union delegations, alongside youth, community and church organizations. The state of emergency, the South African Defense Force (SADF) occupation of the townships, the banning of the student organization COSAS, and the need to resolve the educational crisis were all national concerns. The

keynote address was given by Smangaliso Mkatshwa, secretary of the Catholic Bishops Council. He acknowledged the importance of the conference

> Today's conference is reminiscent of the 1955 Congress of the People which had a more ambitious programme. Although modest in its aim, this consultative conference is nonetheless an historic event ... The call is now for education for liberation, justice and freedom.
>
> (Mkhatshwa 1985: 1)

He analyses the relationship between race and class in South Africa and describes himself as a socialist and describes the struggle as 'national and democratic, and the main content of it the liberation of the African people' (Mkhatshwa 1985: 1). This reflects a growing realization on behalf of the anti-apartheid movement that nothing less that the overthrow of apartheid would solve any major problem such as education. He cites Paulo Freire's idea that there is no neutral education and argues

> 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.
>
> (Freire, cited by Mkhatshwa 1985: 4)

He also quotes Cabral:

> ... the struggle for liberation which is the most complex expression of the people, of their identity and their dignity, opens new perspectives for its development. The dynamics of struggle require a practice of democracy; of criticism, of analysis of self criticism ...
>
> (Cabral, cited by Mkhatshwa 1985: 4)

This is a broadening of the conception of education to include a role in the struggle for liberation and of the struggle as a vehicle for education, so that it becomes a dynamic process. He defines People's Education

> ... when we speak of people's education, we mean one that prepares people for total human liberation; one which helps people to be creative, to develop a critical mind, to help people to analyze; one that prepares people for full participation in all social, political or cultural spheres of society. Education based on values of consumerism or affluence, of military adventurism and aggression and on racism is certainly not our ideal type of education.
>
> (Mkhatshwa 1985: 7)

He argued that it was not possible to set up alternative educational systems and the task was to take over from within, but in the knowledge that ultimately it could only be done with access to national resources, but that nevertheless this provided an opportunity to experiment and learn.

Many resolutions were passed at the conference beginning with ones indicting the apartheid system which 'divides people into classes and groups ... is essentially a means of control to produce subservient, docile people ... indoctrinates and dominates ... is intended to entrench apartheid and capitalism.' (Resolutions of the National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education 1985). By way of contrast People's Education was heralded as education that:

> ... enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial democratic system ... eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of one person by another ... eliminates capitalist norms of competition, individualism and stunted intellectual development, and replaces it with one that encourages collective output and active participation by all, as well as stimulating critical thinking and analysis ...

> equips and trains all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial democratic South Africa ... allows students, parents, teachers and workers to be mobilized into appropriate organizational structures which enable them to participate actively in the initiation and management of people's education in all its forms ... enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression at their workplace. (Resolutions of the National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education 1985)

This is a definition of education for liberation which provides a critique of the system it is rejecting, and outlines the values on which the alternative system will be built, and the organizational means by which this will be carried out. It goes on to elaborate the organizational structures of parent, teacher and student associations in schools and community-based organizations which will carry on the task of promoting People's Education, using the conference papers as working papers.

The students' role in People's Education

However, the initial reason for calling the conference had been to resolve the issue of the ongoing chaos in the schools and to come to a decision about whether the youth should remain on boycott or return to school. This can be understood as an attempt by the parents and the broader liberation movement to take control of and guide the youth, while recognizing the important role that they have played. [The conference]

> I) commends the students and their organizations for the principled and courageous manner in which they have conducted the struggle against inferior and racist education;
>
> ii) salutes the heroic sacrifices made by our students through out the country;
>
> iii) acknowledges that the boycott campaign has resulted in fundamental political, organizational and educational gains in spite of the many problems

> experienced by the students, and that it has also helped to raise the level of consciousness and organization of the oppressed and exploited people Therefore resolves
>
> I) to call on all students throughout the country to return to school on Jan 28 1986.
> (Resolutions of the National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education 1985)

Many youth saw themselves involved in a heroic struggle for which they were prepared to die, sentiments which were understood and respected by their elders. But it was also the case that education had broken down and a whole generation of children were being deprived of schooling. So a return to school to carry on the struggle was a way of trying to resolve this situation. The conference then went on to make a list of demands which they wanted to be met by March - postponements of examinations; erection of school buildings; release of all students and teachers in detention; the unbanning of COSAS; the recognition of democratically elected SRCs; the lifting of the state of emergency in all parts of the country. Other resolutions demanded free textbooks, establishment of PTSAs to replace statutory school committees, non- payment of school fees, the formation of a national parents crisis committee, the abolition of corporal punishment and ending sexual harassment of female pupils. The tasks given to the youth were to return to school, to form democratic SRCs, and work with parents and teachers in PTSAs and, alongside the radical teachers association National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), to take the Education Charter to every school and home in the country and to get people's views about the type of education they wanted. The student leadership recognized that there were a lot of unanswered questions such as 'What resources have we got, how should these resources be distributed and who shall see to it that there is democracy when dealing with these questions?' (Johnson 1985: 19)

The role of teachers in People's Education

The NECC recognized the impossible position that teachers found themselves in

> ... pressured and criticized from all sides, often for inadequacies for which they are not to blame, treated often by departments, not as professionals but as instruments of policy, it's not surprising that in many areas the morale, confidence and self-image of teachers is at a low ebb.
>
> (Hartshore 1986: 11)

They decided to try to win over the conservative teachers union and to work with the more progressive teachers unions and associations to try to turn teachers into agents of social change. They saw the need to persuade teachers to align themselves with the movement

> History teaches us that the lack of qualified i.e. skilled and politicized teachers and the absence of resources, have in the end, stymied all alternatives. Teachers need to be prepared for alternative education and through alternative education for the future.
>
> (Mkhatshwa 1985: 10)

They saw teachers as a key link who could help students in setting up SRCs and could work with students and parents on the PTSAs and could play an important role in those areas where meetings were being held between DET and NECC and regional directors of education. They were also aware of the fact that teachers often felt undermined by politicized youth 'many teachers are often well-intentioned but feel threatened when their students make relevant demands on them ... we must think of ways of transforming teachers into agents of fundamental social change.' (*Ekapa*, April/May 1987, cited in Kruss 1988: 30). NEUSA took a leading role in this, working with teachers to develop and distribute People's Education teaching materials and worked to create education

which 'must be the outcome of a collective effort and democratic processes, arising from the struggle against apartheid and exploitation.' *(SASPU National*, Vol. 7, no. 2 cited in Kruss 1988: 30).

Second National Consultative Conference of the National Education Crisis Committee, Durban, March 1986

> Ever since 1976 the people have recognized that apartheid education cannot be separated from apartheid in general. This conference once again asserts that the entire oppressed and democratic community is concerned with education, that we all see the necessity of ending gutter education and we all see that this is a political question affecting each and every one of us.
>
> (Sisulu 1986: 1)

Despite the call to return to school, and despite some concessions from the state such as free stationery and the release of some student leaders from detention, students were nevertheless reluctant to return, and boycotts and protests continued as the national situation became more unstable. 1986 can be seen as a year of deadlock between the anti-apartheid movement and the state as analyzed by Randall

> The State is determined to maintain its hold on black education, employing the security forces to enforce this if necessary, while powerful forces in the black community are equally determined to wrest that control.
>
> (Randall 1987: 68)

At the second consultative conference delegates were physically attacked by busloads of people (believed to be members of Inkatha). The conference was significant in that a political analysis of the state of the struggle and a definition of people's power was given by the keynote speaker Zwelake Sisulu. In his analysis he states that the anti apartheid or

liberation movement are not poised for an immediate transfer of power and defines the current position as

> We are however poised to enter a phase which can lead to the transfer of power. What we are seeking to do is to decisively shift the balance of forces in our favour. To do this we have to adopt the appropriate strategies and tactics, we have to understand our strengths and weaknesses, as well as that of the enemy, that is, the forces of apartheid reaction.
>
> (Sisulu 1986: 3)

The educational struggle is viewed as an aspect of the overall liberation struggle and people's power is central to the success of the struggle. He describes the spread of organization of communities throughout the country as a positive development, in that the tactic of making the country ungovernable had resulted in some communities beginning to govern themselves, dividing the areas into zones and blocks and setting up street committees which were vehicles of people's power. People had been very successful in dealing with crime, in cleaning up the townships, in setting up People's Parks, and this was possible because these organizations were formed out of, and were accountable to, the people in each area. His definition of People's power is probably the most influential part of his speech

> Struggles over the past few months demonstrate that it is of absolute importance that we don't confuse coercion, the use of force against the community, with people's power, the collective strength of the community. For example, when bands of youth set up 'kangaroo courts' and give out punishments, under the control of no one, with no democratic mandate from the community, this is not people's power. When disciplined, organized youth, together with older people, participate in the exercise of people's justice and the setting up of people's courts, when these

> structures are acting on a mandate from the community and are under the democratic control of the community, this is an example of people's power. We have seen that people's power, unlike the exercise of power by individuals, tends to be disciplined, democratic and an expression of the will of the people. It develops the confidence of our people to exercise control over their own lives and has the capacity to achieve practical improvements in our every day lives.
>
> (Sisulu 1986: 8-9)

The Worker's School provides an example of how people's power works, although it might be more correct to cite it as an example of workers' rather than people's power, as it was workplace- based. Sisulu stressed that the initiative and control had to come from the people and must advance the broad mass of students, not just a select few. In discussing the type of alternative education system, the educational system for white students was rejected as 'education for domination' and a democratic educational system was envisaged based on the Freedom Charter

> ... in effect this means taking over schools; transforming them from institutions of oppression into zones of progress and people's power ... when we fight for and achieve democratic SRCs and parents committees we are starting to realize our demands that the people shall govern and the doors of learning and culture shall be opened.
>
> (Sisulu 1986: 12)

Between States of Emergency

Following the March 1986 conference the NECC established the People's Education Secretariat, under the leadership of Zwelake Sisulu. The secretariat was to set up offices in each region to gather information, and contributions were to be presented to a proposed national conference in June 1986. Prior to the State of Emergency which was declared in June, the leadership in the NECC were optimistic about establishing an alternative

education authority to state education through the Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSA), which were to be formed at each school to replace the statutory governing bodies. With Bantu education completely discredited and unworkable, there was confidence that parents, teachers and students could take over the running of the schools and sort out the problems. Parents were highly motivated to get the schools working again and so there was no difficulty in getting their support for anything that would get the children back to school and off the streets. The longer term strategy is described by Vusi Khanyile, NECC executive member

> ... in demanding people's education for people's power in people's schools, we aim to shift the balance of educational power, beginning by establishing a people's authority alongside existing state authority ... we believe that it is the basic right of every community to run its own schools, to decide who teaches where, who goes to which school, and what should be taught.
>
> (Khanyile cited in Kruss 1988: 21)

He argued for state funding and for the supply of the necessary infrastructure but that control and management of the schools should be handed over to the community. However the political unrest meant that the success in PTSAs was variable, with some having already taken on educational responsibilities while others were not functioning at all. The NECC tried to enter into negotiations with the DET to suggest that the schools should be handed over to the communities, but the DET argued that the NECC was not a 'legally recognized representative body' and thus had no legal position from which to negotiate. In the end the DET refused to negotiate with the NECC and I agree with Auerbach that the government was extremely short sighted in this response

> ... the government had absolutely no idea of the dimensions of the crisis ... otherwise it would have seen the emergence of the NECC as the most positive

> development in recent education history and the only hope of negotiating a resolution to the ongoing crisis.
>
> (Auerbach cited in Zille 1987: 6)

Another State of Emergency was declared in June 1986 and virtually the entire leadership of People's Education were detained, including Sisulu, Mkshtswa, Khanilye and Rensborg. Regulations were introduced whereby students had to re-register when schools were re-opened in July. All students had to carry ID documents and schools would be fenced and security guards used, and in addition any student could be barred without any reason been given. In December and January the promotion and discussion of People's Education was banned on school premises. Schools where normal schooling was not taking place were simply closed down.

People's Education and the Universities

It is probably People's Education that presented the most far reaching challenge to the white universities, in particular to the education faculties of the universities. It presented them with a challenge to play a role in the transformation of South Africa. The basic call was for universities to transform themselves from 'ivory towers into people's universities' and NECC leaders entered the debate on academic freedom with the question

> ... in the light of present realities we must ask academic freedom for whom? ... the reality in South Africa is that it operates within the context of detention of lecturers, teachers, students and parents. It is connected with banning of student leaders and organization, the closing down of schools, the lack of facilities, inadequately trained teachers, the teaching of an inferior Bantu education system and the lack of democratic structures within the very universities where one finds the outcry for so-called academic freedom.
>
> (Molobi 1987: 27).

People's Education thus brought the educational experiences and needs of the majority of South Africans and the mass suppression of the educational aspirations of black people under apartheid, into the debate about academic freedom. As Muller argued,

> ... People's education needs all the resources of all the major universities, if it is to succeed, and universities have been called on to reorder their priorities, on the basis of community needs rather than minority needs. Academics have been challenged to rethink their traditional neutrality and scientific objectivity, because despite this neutrality they have served the needs of the minority elite.
>
> (Muller, cited in Kruss 1988: 35)

In a research study carried out by Wits academics into community groups' perceptions of the university, which was discussed in Chapter 4, community groups were divided about the role that Wits could or should play in the formulation of People's Education. On the one hand there were those who saw Wits as playing a central role, but others were more skeptical and suggested that Wits could second academics to the proposed Peoples' Education committees, and help in those People's Educational programmes in existence, but also felt that Wits could be of most help by restructuring its own educational courses to accommodate People's education. (Perceptions of Wits 1987: 24-5)

However the groups challenged Wits to change its practice in three main areas - firstly accountability within the university and accountability to the community, secondly implementing People's Education in the universities themselves and thirdly support for People's Education in schools. The community groups called on the university to examine its own structures of accountability, as well as to create new ones to enable consultation with the broader community organizations. They suggested that community groups should be invited to sit on the University Senate alongside business interests. There was also a need for the university to consult and be accountable to the community and work with the community rather than for it. They also saw the need to build in special

checks and structures to ensure that community interests were heard. There was a general desire to break down elitism and condescension and the notion of experts and finally that

> ... any aid programmes would be questioned as to their underlying political intention, the interests they serve, the controls they would impose and their commitment to fundamental political and social change.
>
> (Kruss 1988: 36)

In my opinion this is an example of the community groups leading the university rather than the other way round, with the broad alliance of parents, teachers, students and workers and community and educational activists assuming a leading role at the forefront of the struggle to sort out the educational crisis, and coming up with ideas and suggestions for all parties concerned. With regard to implementing People's Education in the universities, the groups saw the need for the universities to evaluate their own courses, entrance requirements and general educational practices, so as to turn themselves into centres of People's Education. They could be instrumental in developing academic leadership and a new kind of research capability based on community consultation. The third area where the universities could help would be in becoming integrally involved in the development of a new education system at school level which would need academic and technical expertise, and also intervention would be needed in the rigidly controlled black teacher training colleges to train People's Education teachers. As a response to the Perceptions of Wits study an Education Policy Unit was set up at Wits to collect and disseminate resources on education as well as to conduct curriculum research and evaluation with local community groups.

People's Education and the Working Class

COSATU, the trade union federation pledged its support to the educational struggle and to People's Education

> We in the working class must recognize the sacrifices of our children and we must advance the claims they have made for a proper system of education. Just our responsibility as parents means that we cannot stand back. The students themselves have called for our support and assistance as parents and as workers.
>
> (Kruss 1988: 38)

The COSATU executive called on members to give maximum support to the struggle for People's Education and the building of democratic SRCs and control over schools. However it also supported the aims of People's Education as specified in the 1985 conference resolutions for 'the achievement of a high level of education for everyone and dispel the myth that education is to be restricted to the classrooms or to the young people only' (Kruss 1988: 37), and argued that parents and workers must have access to People's Education. In all spheres of life traditional boundaries were being extended and People's Education aimed to include groups normally excluded from education such as women and workers. It was argued that People's Education

> ... must bridge the existing gap between theoretical knowledge and practical life and the gap between mental and manual labour should be closed and workers needed to understand how machinery and technology worked ... workers should not only be able to do their work but be enabled to understand the processes of which they are a part in the workplace.
>
> (Kruss 1988: 37-8)

They critiqued the present school system which 'puts forward only the ideas of capitalist educators and of racists' and 'destroys ideas of democracy rather than building them' (Kruss 1988: 38). They argued that the workers should be involved in the decision about how the wealth they create is distributed, especially regarding education.

> Education is always presented to workers as matter which is too difficult for them and which they must leave to experts. But in fact there is no reason why

> workers cannot play an important part in the planning of education in society and controlling that education.
>
> (Kruss 1988: 38)

This is obviously an issue that will be looked at in greater depth in the Workers' School, where this idea was put into practice.

The Significance of People's Education

I will be assessing two aspects of the significance of People's Education, firstly its significance in the broader scheme of things and secondly its significance for this particular study. On a political level the struggle for liberation and the struggle for the end of Bantu education became inextricable. This was seen as a situation of mutual dependency, not just in the educational but in all spheres of community life. It became apparent that the youth could not succeed without support from parents and teachers, and that they in turn could not succeed without community support. It also brought together anti-apartheid forces both within the country and those in exile to try to resolve the crisis in the schools. The idea of persuading the youth to return to school with the purpose of setting up People's Education through PTSAs, was in theory a means of continuing the struggle. but also of allowing the youth to be educated. The key to this was the setting up of PTSAs as described by Molobi

> PTSAs are to the NECC what street committees are to civics and the UDF. They are the basic organs of people's power in that they democratically take decisions at school level. They connect the school with the community it serves, involving parents and the community in the functions of a school. The school cannot therefore pursue a line ideologically and academically hostile to the broad community. These are the concrete manifestations of the slogan 'People's Education for People's Power'.
>
> (Molobi cited in Christie 1994: 281)

Another extremely important aspect of People's Education was the realization that education could be changed, that it was not fixed or immutable, and that it could be used to promote justice, freedom and democracy rather than competitive individualism. There was also the awareness that education was a matter that concerned everybody in society, and that everybody had a contribution to make to the debate about what was to be taught and how it should be taught. On a national level it brought together groups who had been working in isolation and provided a national forum where educational issues could be debated. It raised fundamental questions such as what do people consider good education to be? How will alternative education work? What role do process and method play? One of the issues addressed was the question of what role teachers would play and the role of schools or departments of education,

> ... in the faculties or schools of Education ... the time has come for us to consider training 'Educators' - persons who would be equipped with the skills, expertise, knowledge and more importantly ATTITUDES to teach or educate or assist to learn both children and adults.
>
> (Kruss 1988: 37)

In the event the NECC employed 'educationists' who were defined as people 'concerned with and involved in the issues of the education struggle, because education is located within the broader society, not apart from it' (Obery 1986: 9). Finally one of the distinctive characteristics of People's Education was the emphasis on process, firstly with the recognition that it was a process that could only be achieved when apartheid was abolished but also it would develop as a process

> ... the centrality of process raises questions such as the role and function of educators, their relationship to learners, the teaching procedures used, learner

> involvement in the production of materials, subject content and relation to the curriculum, methods of evaluation an systems of accreditation and so on.
>
> (Kruss 1988: 26)

Underlying these questions are key educational debates which People's Education proposed to resolve in ways different to apartheid education and it was in this working out of an alternative education system with students, parents, workers, communities that the key to the process lay.

> People's Education practice begins from the realization that the forms that the alternative take are as important as their content, for the processes by which the new evolves are as much a challenge to dominant concepts as the substance of alternative education can be.
>
> (Gardiner 1987: 1)

Again this is a question which will be dealt with in some depth in my treatment of the Workers' School. If I try to assess the significance of People's Education in the mid 1980s in South Africa then I would describe it as the crest of a wave of the mass movement. It advanced like a wave and then hit the obstacle of the armed might of the apartheid state and was forced back, but the ideas that it inspired permeated the schools, the teachers' associations, the universities, the trade unions, the community and church groups and so in 1988 groups such as the workers at Wits decided that they wanted to share in the learning of the university and believed that it was their right to do so.

Critics of People's Education

People's Education has not been without its critics. There is firstly the question, usually addressed to the ANC leadership, of the ethics of involving school students in boycotts and campaigns to make the townships ungovernable and of using education as a political weapon. In the words of Barney Desai, PAC, 'South Africa is reaping the whirlwind of

slogans such as 'liberation before education' and seeing the results of using children in sustained campaigns of disruption' (cited in Green 1991: 15), or in the words of Max Green 'it is very hard to get the genie back into the bottle once it has gotten out' (Green, 1991: 12). However it gets back to the question of the relationship between education and the political struggle.

> A dichotomy ... [is] present in Peoples' Education between those who see it as a vehicle for mobilization and those who see it as a foundation for future education. These different aspects are blurred in the consciousness and activities of those in the field. This lack of definition can result in generations of students remaining without education other than that of a politically stimulating nature.
>
> (Adler 1986: 1)

This obviously raises many ethical issues about the relationship between education and politics and education and propaganda. It is probably accurate to say that there were people supporting both positions in the educational movement, those whose primary motivation was educational, and those whose primary motivation was overtly political, and who would use any vechile that presented itself, if it helped to overthrow apartheid. Secondly, there were those critical of the ambitions of People's Education with Professor Mphahlele accusing it of 'intellectual dishonesty' for 'promising to deliver alternative educational material, before they could possibly have reflected sufficiently on the philosophical basis of an alternative educational system' (cited in Kros 1987: 7). Kros herself argues that People's Education was little more than 'well -intentioned frenzy to take advantage of the gap created by the State's momentary dithering at the end of 1986.' (Kros, op. cit., p. 8). There is also the debate surrounding who 'the people' are. Levine argued that 'the people' can include different social groups, and it tends to conceal class differences. He says that the outcome of a people's struggle depends partly on which class leads a people's movement 'Thus, a people's struggle may not necessarily benefit the working class' (Levine, cited in Christie 1994: 283). Mashamba, on the other hand, argued that 'the concept of the "the people" recognizes the leading role of the working

class within the perspective of the national democratic struggle' (Mashamba, cited in Christie 1994: 284). A UDF booklet explained its own position which is reflective of the broad mass democratic movement in South Africa:

> ... when we refer to the concept of 'the people' we refer to a grouping of people from divergent backgrounds, brought together by their common opposition to apartheid. For this reason all those who oppose apartheid and support a non-racial democratic South Africa form part of the people, regardless of their race and class.
>
> (UDF cited in Louw 1994: 29)

This is part of a much wider debate about race and class and the liberation movement in South Africa. People's Education tried to address what had become a seemingly insoluble problem and it is easy to forget the violent and chaotic conditions under which People's Education came into being. It was an attempt by parents, teachers and community organizations to provide leadership for youth whose only experience of education had been one of disruption and violence, and it was an attempt that was met with severe repression by the state. Its significance is not so much in what it achieved, but in that it showed how education could be different, and could be progressive and promote justice and freedom, and that education could involve all sections of society who could make a contribution to it through being involved in the process of its reconceptualization. This issue will be developed further in my analysis of the Workers' School.

SECTION 4 HISTORY OF THE WORKERS' SCHOOL

CHAPTER 8

THE DEMOCRATIC PHASE 1988-1991

> Learn your ABCs; it is not enough
> but learn them!
> Do not let it discourage you. Begin!
> You must know everything!
> You must take over the leadership!
> (Bertold Brecht reproduced in Sunrise, Workers' School Newsletter,
> Vol. 1 no. 1 p. 2 WSD 1992: 199)

The Democratic Phase

In order to present an account of the school as close as possible to that recounted by the participants, I have decided to write a narrative account of the school with minimum formal theorization so as to give centre stage to the voices of the workers and the facilitators at the school. However this account will inevitably be selective as the documentary data is both voluminous and diverse, and the account is inevitably informed by my own analysis of the school's history which I see as evolving through three distinct phases which I have named the democratic (1988-1991), the administrative (1992-1993) and the governmental (1994-1996). Secondly, as this is a period of accelerated social change I will introduce each phase with a short historical account detailing the major events and concerns of the period. Thirdly, I have been guided in my selection by my three areas of interest, namely the conflict between education for liberation and education for certification, the relationship between the intellectual and the worker and the relationship between organizational change and social change. In this case I will be

tracing the change from *democracy* to Democracy, or from grassroots democratic practice to parliamentary democracy. In summary therefore, while I will keep formal theorization to the minimum in this narrative account, it is inevitably coloured both by my experience at the school and by my research interests. I was involved in the school on a daily basis during the democratic phase and my involvement, although still substantial diminished during the administrative phase, until in the later months of 1993, I attended only to take my English class. I was not in South Africa during the governmental phase.

The best of times, the worst of times 1988-1991

There was revolt on an unprecedented scale from 1984-1986, with urban unrest, school boycotts, industrial strikes, rent boycotts and open confrontation on the streets of the townships, with the overall aim of making apartheid unworkable and country ungovernable. This insurrection was met with brutal repression by the state, with the arrest of 25,000 people following the 1986 nation-wide State of Emergency. This was supplemented with blanket restrictions on press freedom, proscriptions on political organizations, prohibitions on public events and a drastic curtailment of civil liberties. The open repression of the security forces was supplemented with a dirty war of vigilante attacks and assassinations, including that of the widely respected Wits sociologist Dr. David Webster, who was assassinated in broad daylight in the Johannesburg area. However most of the politically motivated deaths were the result of indiscriminate attacks on trains and taxis, on funeral vigils and residential areas, or were the result of conflict between Inkatha and the ANC. It seems that in this decade there was a two pronged strategy employed by the government under Botha, and to some extent by De Klerk, of engaging in negotiations with leaders both in jail and in exile, while at the same time trying to undermine and weaken the opposition through this medley of acts of oppression.

However the 1980s also saw the emergence of the trade union federation COSATU which climbed from 450,000 at the time of formation in 1985 to more than 1.3 million in 1994 with over 1,000 full time officials and 25,000 shop stewards (Murray 1994: 143). By

1990 an estimated 2,000 civic associations (civics) were in operation throughout the country, with rent boycotts in place in 49 of the Transvaal's 82 townships (Murray 1994: 169). The civics organized around local issues such as housing, sanitation, transport, land allocation and they represented often very mixed constituencies of migrant hostel dwellers, squatters and home owners. They both represented local grievances and acted collectively to try overthrow apartheid. They organized street committees and in some areas had taken over the local government. With the banning of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the anti apartheid movement regrouped under the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). In this the trade unions, civics and political organizations worked above ground, and in time the still-underground ANC, COSATU and the SACP evolved into a tripartite alliance. The ANC drew together Christians and communists, workers and business people, pacifists and ex guerrillas, all united in the desire for a peaceful transition from apartheid to a non racial democratic government.

In October 1988 when the school started it was the darkest hour of state repression. It was not only brutal political oppression that the workers in the school had to endure but also extremely difficult living conditions. In fact the Wits workers were amongst the more privileged of the black population in that they had a job. It was estimated that at that time at least 5.5 million, or somewhere between 40 per cent and 46 per cent of the economically active population were unemployed. Seen in comparative terms, this rate is roughly equivalent to that of the Great Depression in the United States in 1929. One of the most glaring things about South Africa was the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty mass unemployment and deprivation, with just over 5 per cent of the population owning 88 per cent of the wealth. It has been suggested that South Africa exhibits perhaps the most unequal wealth distribution in the world (Murray 1994: 28). The high unemployment rates meant that one salary was frequently supporting extended families who often lived in overcrowded and flimsy dwellings: 'one in six South Africans, or about 7.8 million people out of a total population of close to 40 million live in informal housing' (Murray 1994: 50). Even for those living in houses made of brick, overcrowding was endemic - 'it has been estimated that the average four-roomed 'matchbox' house

accommodated thirteen people.'(Murray 1994: 51). Amidst this poverty, overcrowding and unemployment, crime grew at an unprecedented rate

> In 1990, over 15,000 persons were murdered, a per capita rate that surpassed US figures by an astonishing five times. According to the estimates of HSRC in South Africa, in 1990 a serious assault was committed every four minutes, a car hijacking every 9; a break in every three; a rape every 26 and a murder every 45 minutes.
>
> (Murray 1990: 56)

With these social conditions alongside the widespread political unrest and the growing movement to overthrow apartheid, it seems likely that Prime Minister De Klerk decided to try to preempt revolution or a bloody racial conflagration by taking the initiative in the dismantling of apartheid. On 2 February 1990, De Klerk announced at the opening of parliament that the restrictive legislation of the apartheid state would be repealed with the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the SACP, the imminent and non conditional release of Nelson Mandela and the lifting of banning orders on leaders, some of whom had been banned since 1952. In fact meetings had been taking place since 1985 between the exiled ANC and influential political, business and academic leaders from South Africa. For example in July 1987, sixty one white South African intellectuals, most of them Afrikaners, went to Dakar in Senegal to hold three days of talks with the ANC, led by Thabo Mbeki (Thompson 1995: 243). However in December 1991 formal negotiations began on a new non-racial constitution. So in this, the first phase of the school's existence, things had changed utterly, with the movement from the brutal repression at the end of 1988, to the euphoria accompanying the release of the political leaders in 1990, to the beginning of a negotiated settlement, with its accompanying violence and political instability.

Starting the School

It is always interesting to trace things back to their origins and to discover the coincidences, the serendipity and the ill winds out of which institutions emerge. The minutes of the School that survive start in January 1990. However the school started in October 1988. I joined the school in March 1989 and this account of the school's origins is based on interviews with Trevor, the first coordinator of the school and Dan and Elizabeth, two of the founding worker members. The person who took the initiative in trying to open the educational resources of the university to the workers was a Mr. Mothibeli, an ex-miner, who was employed in the Sociology Department on a research project on the mining industry. Among other publications, he co-authored a paper on the tacit knowledge that black miners have of the hazardous conditions of working underground. He was also a poet and was active in the black consciousness cultural movement. In this account Dan describes how he got involved with Mr. Mothibeli

> At our lunch time we were just sleeping around, not doing anything. Then it is when that somebody told us that there were some videos that we can sit and look at and learn something. Because those videos, workers rules, and how we must work with our bosses, and how they must treat us in our working day, something like that. It's when we started to look for those videos. We saw there was an old man called Mr. Mothebeli there. So that old man was the one who used to organize the videos and he invited us at his office, in the sociology department. So we start to go there for our lunch times, every week for maybe one session or two session of videos, to get those videos. Some of them were mine people, showing, how they work in their mine. How is the situation of working under the ground and maybe working in the offices around there. It is when we started to see we can relate our cleaning in Wits and they working in their mine areas.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 149-50)

Dan describes his idle lunch hours being interrupted by an invitation to come and watch a video on the mines. It is clear that Dan made the connection between the miners work and his own work as a cleaner, something that could be described as an emerging class consciousness. However the workers had difficulty in understanding the English spoken in the films

> Then we started to say 'No man, we must try something to make ourselves to understand everything that we were seeing in those videos'. This is when we started to say 'No we can talk with other workers to see if we can start with other workers, to see if we can open a little school, for us the workers'. Not maybe for everybody but we were just trying to do the thing for the workers, to try to understand what was going on in our workplace.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 150)

Trevor describes his own encounter with Mothibeli

> Now I was working with Mothibeli ... and he had this idea that videos should be shown to workers and not just students. You know because he would see me carrying the Teach Master for the students, you know. And then he started going there and he found some good films and then he said 'No we must show it to the workers', so he started showing it to the workers. You know. Soon it was once a week at the library. It wasn't so many workers, but it was a handful, but I am sure worth his while, worth our while. So then I was friends with Dan and Mama Cynthia was the cleaner there, I knew her. We would go to his video things. So he said you must be there to translate, to show the workers.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 34)

The initial motivation seems to have arisen from the fact that the workers felt unable to understand their own position in the workplace, a fact that was made more acute as their place of work was an educational institution. I expect that not being able to understand

the English in the videos was symptomatic of a much more serious problem for the workers of not being able to function adequately in an English speaking environment. The videos must have revealed that Wits had educational materials that were directly relevant to their lives and enabled the workers to begin to identify how Wits was failing them in not offering the educational resources they needed in order to function adequately on campus and in their lives beyond work.

> Because in that place there was no schooling for the workers. When the worker comes there he is just a worker. What he is doing, he should get some schooling because Wits a schooling place. What they is doing they must do something for the workers so that he must understand the workplace.
>
> (WS1 1996 TN/D: 150)

As discussed earlier, in this period in South African history black people were pushing against apartheid barriers in all spheres of life, and in this, the Wits workers were not exceptional. However they also decided that if something was to be done, that they would have to do it themselves.

> .. then we the workers, we started to say no we will organize ourselves and we call a meeting so that we can talk about opening a little bit of class, not a big school. So it's when we started organizing ourselves ... Most I was organizing, you know. I was trying to talk to people, to workers at their workplace and tell them about the school. We try to upgrade ourselves as workers because there is no one who cares for us, so maybe if we the workers can start now to show that we can help ourselves maybe they will end up helping us.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 150)

This self reliance is something that runs through the history of the school on all levels, and the other side of this coin is the shame the workers felt at having to depend on others

for help with literacy. Here Dan describes the position of black workers who have worked their whole lives at a university, but retire being unable to read and write.

> ... It is a lower, lower, lower standard for us blacks in South Africa. You can't do nothing in the society in fact ... They feel terrible. That was the terrible thing, even today, it is like that. Because you know when we look at ourselves, you work there until getting old and when we are old going out from Wits, maybe with a pension, like that. So when we go we must apply for many things. You have to get maybe your child or somebody to go and sign for things, because most of us don't even know how to write and read and so some other things they are so deep you can't even understand O.K. So we must have somebody to help us and that is not good, because there is some places where we must go alone and do things. So if Wits did help us ... maybe that little bit of education, even if they don't give us till today B. A. or whatever, but that little bit they can give us. That light in fact, to go on with our lives. All the workers they feel better if they get that.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 151)

The workers felt need for an education that would equip them to understand their position as workers was thus accompanied by an awareness of the need for literacy in contemporary society. Their initial scheme was to try to provide this basic education but also to try to get access to the technological skills that they saw were necessary for survival in an industrial society. All of these readings of the world were incisive and accurate as can be seen from this extract.

> So we, most of the workers were not educated, like maybe people they will think, we were just trying for nothing. Most of us, we were trying to get that education with our powers. So we go on with that school. Yeah most of us were feeling that we need this education. Because the time of the 90s it was another time that shows us that most of things are going like technics too much, because

> you see there is computers, there is fax machines. So ... most of these things we don't have. I mean we don't have that way of dealing with them, we don't know them. So that is why we felt we must open a school so that maybe we can upgrade ourselves to a certain level.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 152)

This quote begins with a reference to the discouragement that the workers faced on all sides when they tried to set up their own educational project. One type of discouragement was from fellow workers who said that it was a waste of time. Despite such discouragement, and far from being overwhelmed by technology, the workers saw that they had not been introduced to it, had not been taught how to use it, and they saw that such a technological training was essential in the modern world. However the fact that they worked at a university where there was an influx of black students gave the workers an additional incentive

> It is because we were in the education institution, so we end up thinking that no, if we can open up our little school that maybe the university will be interested, even the students themselves cause they are learning every day. So maybe they know about the situation that most of their old parents, or maybe their fellow workers, in fact the workers in their school, how they end up in that situation. So the thing that lead us to have that power is that well, we were moving in the campus.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 154)

So the workers' strategy was to open a school, to try to encourage students to come and help them and then on that basis, to approach the university to ask for support with accommodation and finances. In fact the school started in the Sociology tearoom, initially using facilities in the Sociology department, then moving to disused offices in the Careers department and finally getting their own premises, the Wedge, rent-free from the university, as described here by Elizabeth:

> Yes, we tried to continue with them there, and then after that we go back to Professor Eddie to see if he can write a letter to the principal to see that they can give us something, if they can give us classes, because that Careers room it's too small for us. And then after that Professor write for the principal, the principal give us the Wedge.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 116)

Problems with the Union

However the school had barely got off the ground when problems arose with one of the unions on campus. There were two unions NEHAWU, an ANC aligned union and BUWA, a black consciousness aligned union. It is possible that it may have been the involvement of Mothibeli, who was known to have black consciousness sympathies, and the fact that the black consciousness affiliated union supported the school, that led to the ANC aligned union withdrawing its support from the school. Here Trevor describes his initial meeting with the union representatives.

> We made an appointment with NEHAWU ... We met the shopstewards, I think maybe two or three of them. Jo and two others and then we had all these documents like Learn and Teach magazines to show them and some learning codes, the reading codes, and the workers were taken up. You know the workers thought the books were great things. But then H. came in and pulled the workers out and when they came back they wouldn't co-operate ... I don't know what he heard or saw, but maybe he didn't like our politics, but he just told them that they had to fight the school, at all costs and from that day it was just way down.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 53)

Here Dan, one of the workers and a member of NEHAWU, gives his analysis of what happened.

> ... you know there were two unions at the university so there was a union called NEHAWU and Meshawu (BUWA)*[1], the other one got most of the workers and the other one, you know it has got some support but not like the other one. So at the school, there was that disturbance people were saying we were organizing for the other union which is called Meshawu(BUWA), meanwhile we want to take over Meshawu (BUWA), and make them come to the school and end up making them join that union. Meanwhile, people were confusing themselves that time because it was the time of, how can I put it, it was confusion that time.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/ D: 158)

While the lack of financial support from the university was disheartening, this campaign by the union against the school was much more damaging. In fact the school had no interest in aligning itself with either union and wanted to open its doors to all workers, on campus and outside the campus, employed and unemployed. However the union spread the word that not only was the school trying to recruit for their rival union but also attacked the teaching methods of the school which at this time were almost exclusively Freirean.

> Most of the workers they end up hearing some people saying 'Hey if you go to that school, it is not good, that because that school they try to organize people for Meshawu, (BUWA) and that school if you go out of from this work, it will never give you nothing, because there is nothing like certificates and whatever.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 158)

Again this points to the difference between the conditions that Freire worked in and those in South Africa where people had expectations about what schools should do and how they should do it. In fact the workers involved with the school had to defend the school to other workers by saying that the school did offer a traditional education.

[1] Dan refers to MEHSAWU but to my knowledge the union, at this time was called BUWA

> On top of that we did try and tell the people the real story and that if you are a worker, you are a worker. You go for that school, if you are maybe going up with your classes you end up to Form 5, you will get your certificate because there is some places where we write our exams.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 158-9)

As stated previously it may have been Mothibeli's presence that caused this sudden volte-face by the union, or it could have been Trevor's association with Winnie Mandela, who was studying at Wits at this time and was one of Trevor's students. It was also an unfortunate co-incidence that when Trevor's job at the university was not renewed at the end of 1988, Winnie Mandela made an appointment with the Vice Chancellor as Trevor recalls

> Oh yes she actually made an appointment with T ... who was the Acting Vice Chancellor, and we went up there to actually discuss this question of me being expelled. Now the reason she supported me was because she was my student in that option. I remember she was very happy because I also gave her a platform. You know she also had to present on a Friday and she took it so seriously. The day she came to present she was wearing ANC colours ... a whole long paper, which was a bit stilted, but I think she felt, she was happy. In that case, that didn't work. I think Mandela was trying to use her political recognition, power ... her scandal with Stompie, she got completely discredited, and then I got my note saying Your appeal has failed. Maybe even if that had not happened to her they would have felt we can still afford to kick him out. I am just saying, things played into their hands.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 40)

This was the period in 1989 when the scandal broke about the murder of the teenage activist Stompie and Winnie Mandela was implicated in this crime and ostracized from

the liberation movement. It could be that Trevor and the students at the school were seen as being part of her retinue, which included her infamous football club. Whatever the combination of factors, the leadership of the union forbade its workers to attend the school on pain of exclusion. They locked an elderly woman in a room until she agreed to leave the school and they beat and intimidated other workers. I had joined the school by this time and I remember the 'confusion' as Dan describes it, of not knowing why the union was acting like this and not knowing what to advise the workers to do and the fear of being seen to be associated with Winnie Mandela. I had a class of six or seven workers and I can clearly recall an occasion when only one of the workers came to class and told me that the workers were not coming back because they had been threatened by the union that if they attended the school, they would be sent to jail for being a member of Winnie Mandela's football team. The worker who came to the school that day never returned to the school, nor did the other people in the class.

For a period of months the facilitators at the school stopped going out alone and walked in groups to the station to get the train for fear of attack. Both Trevor and David, an Honours Education student at Wits and facilitator at the Workers' School, offer theories as to how this situation could arise. Trevor analyses it as being symptomatic of this period of South African political life when the ANC were still in exile and freedom of association and information were severely restricted in all walks of life, creating conditions in which rumour and suspicion could take hold.

> I am saying it because when at that time which is less possible now, comrades were able to actually discredit you by just saying, either you are working for the system or for a rival political organization, or you are just dangerous. Then they would tell that is a message from Lusaka. I'm telling you it was like that. O. K. you can understand that you know the underground. How are people going to actually keep control? But that was just Stalinist politics - They are bad, forget about them. So from that day we had a problem. Yeah and we tried many things

> but we never really succeeded. I think that although today NEHAWU are not vehemently opposed, they never really gave us their support.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 53)

In fact David gives an account of his schooling and how the conditions at this time seemed to dictate extremes of behaviour, with people having to be either for or against a particular movement. He describes how decisions taken by those organization were binding, regardless of whether people agreed or disagreed with those decisions.

> For example you would have an understanding that certain things are wrong, for example like stealing but you didn't say to people look you are doing this wrongly. You either had to be with them or against them. I think that is one thing, I don't know whether one can explain it in terms of ... also the mentality of how the poor think. Something like that, people have particular kinds of mental frameworks and then that also pushes in particular ways ... For example in growing up things were clear, it was either you were this or that. It was either this was the situation or not, you know. So there wasn't this thing of things being complex and nuances or whatever else, no ... if you belonged to a particular political organization, you belonged to them, finished. Whether that organization does bad things, you are there, you can be silent but your are. Also with your friends when you fight with other boys it is clear, whether your friend is right or wrong, that's not the issue. The issue is they are actually fighting with your friends so you have to fight. Even if within families, you see that certain things are not being done correctly by the family but because it is your family ... so that sort of life. So I am saying it is linked to some kind of thinking because of ... it is a mentality of survival, you do things so that you survive, you get support, you know. In other words you have to belong and in particular situations, you belong to different things, whether it is the family, your group of friends, your soccer club, but it was clear you know. There wasn't this thing of you know, contradictions, where you might find that in your soccer club you

> play with your soccer mates who are from different political organizations, but when it comes to politics you would beat the same person you played soccer with without even thinking twice, no this is my soccer mate. That kind of a thing. So it was clear that there were certain realities to a certain thing, There were a primary reality to something else and I think that sort of helps in terms of your survival ... So that is why I am saying, it might be a bit difficult but I think that there are certain ways that people think because of where they are, their social circumstances.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 53)

This describes one of the many 'Catch 22' situations that the workers were in. To try to keep their jobs, they needed union protection, but in a situation where the union acted against their interests or in ways which they felt were wrong, they had no way of challenging it. The union in turn had to acquiesce to the liberation movement, or to those who claimed to be spokespersons of it. In the event several NEHAWU members continued to come to the school and ignored the mandate, but the majority felt intimidated and left the school.

One man left the union which the school strongly advised against, but he was adamant that he had no choice but to leave. Whatever the explanation, it is clear that the union's discrediting of the school and threats to the workers who attended it, was the most severe problem that the school had to face. In fact Dan considered this problem with the union to be the fundamental reason that the school did not grow from strength to strength

> ... people didn't go well at school because of those intimidations ... So the people end up going back, not coming to the school, so we end up calling at the school, not knowing what to touch, where to go. Even the students at that time, they were going and coming but we trying to get straight people. Like we did get the school going, they were some few people to help us to make that school going.

> So when the union started to make people afraid that is where everything goes bad ... But all of the troubles, they end up with the union.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 159)

It is quite likely that the school would have closed down had it not been for two factors. Firstly, there was a small group of workers who were members of BUWA which supported the school and encouraged its members to attend the school, as Elizabeth describes.

> Because NEHAWU told the people that they mustn't go to the school. If they go to the school, they will not give ... the union protection for them, so the people started to drop out of the school. I don't know why they do that because there was other lady, this lady was a NEHAWU shopsteward, she just go to the people and tell them that they mustn't go to the school. And then after that the people was ascared to go in the school. Even Mama Tryphina tried to hide her books when she go to school because she know that if this lady can see her go to school, she will punish her. You know, that is why other people drop out of the school. We just went, we were just few now, but we tried to go. We were not ascared for anybody because our union told us we must to school, that was why.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 117)

So it was that an organization that was supposedly working in the workers interests turned out to be most effective in destroying their attempts to educate themselves. The majority of workers joined the union that they first encountered at work and were often oblivious of the wider political alignments of the unions. This is another example of the primary realities that David refers to above, over which people have little control. The workers who remained at the school were soon joined by workers from the local area including a large contingent of workers from the local railway station whose union (an ANC aligned union!) was also very supportive of the school. However another factor that saved the school was the dedication of the facilitators. When Trevor was no longer

employed by the university he worked full time (without any pay) for the school and was supported in this by many students he had taught. In supporting the workers and by remaining on campus Trevor felt that he was not only helping the workers but also acting like a thorn in the side of the system which had failed the black population on every side.

> For example we felt angry that the workers were working at Wits but they weren't getting education. They work here but they are being exploited. You know that kind of thing. So in a way, on the one hand it was humanitarian, you know, wanting to help the people, maybe broadly the struggle as defined then, but I think also more importantly, we thought that we were doing something that we know that they would never do, and that they won't like. Although you know we knew we wouldn't be attacked for that, but we knew it was against them ... The class struggle, the establishment as such. It was just one thing. They are teaching wrong. They are treating students badly, you know. Their theories are wrong. I think it just became a thing like that you know. And I think I was even a bit wild, in the eyes of other people. Maybe I was you know. I was just full of energy and confidence and I made a few interesting friends who changed the way I looked at things ... students, but the kind of students who drop out. They who know all the answers. They would say 'Oh that? That's rubbish!' But it gave me an angle, it gave me space you know, to operate and be myself.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 28-9)

Education for liberation or education for certification?

The school was thus sustained by the remaining workers and Trevor and a group of his ex-students and friends and volunteers such as myself. At first it had only one room and of necessity only one class could be held at a time, as described by Trevor

> With teaching we couldn't all teach, because there was maybe one class in use and there were five maybe ten of us intellectualizing about it. So we wouldn't be

> like, you are teacher and you are students. We would all participate, especially in history. Although obviously the focus was on getting the workers to learn something ... Okay yeah, another thing, one major activity was preparing lessons which we did collectively. We would discuss it. It wasn't something that we planned. If one of us was going to give a lesson we would say, 'I'll teach the Khoikhoi'. The other would say 'Oh what are you going to cover? Why not use this book?' That sort of thing. And then also there would then be theoretical discussions about why it should be taught in this way, that is among ourselves as we prepared for the next meeting or lesson ... And then the workers would come and they would have a history lesson.
>
> (WS1 1996 MM/T: 55-6)

At this early stage everything was done collectively, from the preparation, to the teaching, to the evaluation of lessons. The subjects taught were limited to history, Maths, English and African languages. There was no syllabus or course outlines and the courses developed from the discussions that arose in class, with facilitators drawing particularly on materials produced by progressive literacy and educational organizations. This phase was obviously a very creative one for the facilitators at least, where they felt that they could start from scratch to design a radical and liberatory educational programme. However the workers began to ask for tests and shortly afterwards they said that they wanted to write examinations.

> Soon the workers wanted to write and then they wanted tests. They wanted to write a test. And I think we resisted the tests for a long time ... Yes. By then there was also the thing of exams which soon became an issue. So we were saying that we were not prepared to write Bantu education, so we went to great lengths. We went to the British Council, to write the GCE, which I am sure was taking on too much for such a small organization. Yeh, but I think that thing of going to GCE for exams was an attempt to exactly solve that problem of

> confidence, that people wanted something to show, that whole debate about certificates.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 50-1)

While the facilitators tried to argue against the practice of tests, the workers insisted that they wanted to write examinations and the facilitators decided to register them for GCE exams as an attempt to overcome the difficulty of Bantu education, but also to try to enable the workers to get what was perceived as the best possible education and qualifications that would be internationally recognized. At that stage the facilitators had little idea about the standard required in GCE, or what would be necessary in order to prepare the workers adequately for these exams. Their priority was to try to meet the workers' request for examinations, while trying to avoid the pitfalls of Bantu education. The facilitators had to adjust their own perceptions about examinations in the light of the workers' requests.

> You know, after you finish you want something to show. Whereas I think my view and other people's view was that it is not the certificate which counts, but what you know. But then this is the real world you know. I remember even we approached Learn and Teach, but that time the Literacy people had not yet cracked that thing. They had no certificates. In fact they were opposed to it. It was only later that they tried to satisfy learners and even then it was called attendance certificates or something.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 51)

One of the hallmarks of progressive literacy teaching in South Africa in this period was that it was an alternative to the hierarchical school system and some organizations even struggled against using books in the classroom, while trying to elicit Freirean generative themes from the learners. However learners repeatedly asked for books, tests and examinations. Without these recognized symbols, learners thought that it was not a proper school. For people who had been shortchanged in education before, anything that did not

seem proper was regarded with suspicion. However at the Workers' School, at least at the beginning, the facilitators spent a lot of time putting their case for an alternative educational programme to the workers.

> We would explain to the workers that the method of education, being used was not the correct one. It was easy because the struggle was on the up, so everything was for liberation. With education also for liberation, so it made sense to workers ... I think that some of the workers might have left ... I think like I was saying there must have been confusion among the workers and maybe even disbelief. This is not education. It would differ with individual workers, but I do know that there would have been a definite tension between what the workers expected a school to be and what came about. But I suspect that those meetings which we were having, were exactly aimed at addressing that issue. Yeah, I am sure of that ... But from the word go, we realized that the workers would have to be convinced that that is what a school should be. I think the workers had a different idea. I think that a school should have a principal. But we were also very much conscious that we had to win the workers over, persuade them, that a school is not what they had been taught, a school is what we were trying to build.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/T: 50)

I think that the workers were willing to give this alternative education a go to begin with, but the requests for examination courses increased. In fact one of the reasons that they had set up the school in the first place, was in the hope of improving their employment prospects.

However this group of workers and students formed the nucleus of the school and by the time the minutes start in 1990 the school had been given its own premises in the Wedge, a building on the university campus. The physical threat from the union had abated but the workers who had left the school did not return. However, sharing a building with the

union must have gone some way to making the school seem less of a threat, especially with its walls decorated with posters of the liberation struggle, similar to those in the union office - an indication that both were on the same side. However the union still refused to co-operate and the school kept on trying to win their active support.

The Workers' School meetings took place in the school office and everybody sat around in a circle, with the school adopting the Freirean practice of the circle rather than the teacher standing at the front of rows of desks. The teachers were called facilitators and the students called learners or workers, and instead of a principal the school had a co-ordinator. The workers' general meetings were held once a week and these meetings were the main decision making forum of the school. There were three meetings with the same agenda on that day so as to accommodate the three different shifts of workers - the 11 o'clock, 1 o'clock and 4 o'clock. There was at least one translation of everything that was said between one or two African languages and then into English, so as to improve everybody's English language skills. The pace tended to be slow with lots of repetition as people came in intermittently in their lunch breaks and were often tired after a very early start. Attendance also varied considerably (see Appendix 1).

In 1990 the minutes begin with a statement from Trevor, the school coordinator.

> Trevor explained what the school is about. It is a workers' school. It was started at the university because it was felt that our mothers and fathers should not work here and not get the benefit of education. It is not a school like a DET [Department of Education and Training] school where there is just a teacher who tells you what to do. In this school it is a school to help people deal with problems in their lives. There is no big person in the school like a principal. We all decide together what is to be done. Everything is discussed together and then we decide what should be done.
>
> (WSM 1990: 1)

The above account of what was said is written from the perspective of the school facilitators most of whom were young black people, who in deference to African tradition, regarded the older workers in loco parentis. The university presented a microcosm of black society in that while the older workers had been denied an education, their children, in some cases, did have that opportunity. The school was attempting to extend that educational opportunity to the workers but in a way that was different from a traditional school, in that the school was run by the workers.

Trevor, at this time, had been working for a full year as school co-ordinator without getting any payment other than 'transport' money donated by the workers. The facilitators, who were mostly students and township youth had met in the holidays and had drawn up plans for the new year. It is possible to trace three different cultures in this meeting. There is firstly the culture of democracy with the workers participating fully and explaining how the school works to new members. Secondly, there is an organizational culture with an agenda, a chairperson and a secretary to take the minutes. Thirdly there is the beginning of an educational administrative culture with registration forms, timetables and syllabuses. These three cultures interpenetrated each other as can be seen in this section of the plans where there is an attempt to wed the administrative and the democratic.

1. Registration Forms: We have a new registration form so we have a record of everybody who comes to the school. The workers from last year can help the new workers to fill in their forms.

2. Class Registers: We will get a register book for each class. The class will decide who will take charge of the register.

3. We can still have three groups - BASIC, INTERMEDIATE and MATRIC

> 4. Facilitators: We are very short of facilitators. We have made posters asking for people to come to the school and teach. Each worker can take a poster to the place they work.
>
> (WSM 1990: 3)

When the school started there was just one room and so only one class could be held and it was attended by all present. However with larger premises, and the beginnings of an administrative structure, several classes could be held simultaneously. It is interesting that registers were the first type of administrative form that were introduced into the school. Presumably this was the administrative device that people associated with school. In a traditional school the teacher calls out the register, which fulfills the dual function of administering and controlling. The Workers' School attempts to use the device but to keep the control in the hands of the workers, who kept control of the registers and who are encouraged to teach other workers, and to try to recruit facilitators for the school by taking posters to their place of work. A key question here is whether it is possible to take over devices developed for purposes of control and use them as devises to empower, or whether we just accept with Lorde, that 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' (Lorde 1981: 99). This is an issue to which I will be returning. In this extract Dan, one of the cleaners, describes the conduct of the meetings

> In fact every Wednesday we were having meetings, in fact for the school committee, and to the school committee we were trying to organize ourselves for classes, to organize all the classes, to move in a right way. So those meetings, they were going on in fact and we did try our best. And then Thursday we had general meeting. So general meeting all the workers they come to the school, and you know and put whatever they wanted to put forward, so everytime when we had that meeting, it happened that every worker is got his chance to chair the meeting, and there is a secretary from our, from the workers. Somebody can write the minutes there, so they were going O.K. The workers were so involved

> in that thing, they were enjoying it so well, because it is where we are seeing, it is where we are going.
>
> (WSD 1996 TN/D 162-3)

All the decisions about the day to day running of the school were taken in meetings with the workers and decisions were taken collectively. From the beginning the school introduced this system as part of a skills for democracy training programme. The workers were encouraged to take turns to chair the meetings and to take minutes. Learning how to conduct meetings and how to take minutes were seen as essential skills for empowerment and training for democratic practice for the new South Africa. I think this provides an insight into the practice of democracy at the school. Obviously as some of the workers could not read and write they could not take the minutes but this did not prevent them from participating in the meetings at which they discussed which course to take to try to improve their school. In fact one year later at the first meeting of the year on January 1991 (see Appendix 4), it is one of the workers, George who is taking the minutes and he here describes what the school is, and how it operates.

> ... the workers school is a school for workers were workers can proud himself and to open his mind to know everything. The workers sometimes he/she don't know how to read and write, and the workers school can teach such kind of people to read on his own and to write ... to have a meeting at school we want to control the school well and to look where the thing is going wrong. To solve our problem with people ... to get any different points from other people.
>
> (WSM 1991: 1)

This provides a succinct summary of the aims of the school, its ambitions and its democratic practice. It demonstrates that the school was at least partially successful in teaching these essential skills. It would be easy for people who have had access to education and who have never had to doubt themselves, to underestimate the significance of black workers under apartheid taking control of the running of their own school.

George, defines education as something to make one feel proud of oneself and something that opens the mind. The aim of literacy is to enable workers to function independently. The democratic practice is described in very similar terms to those used by Dan above, with the emphasis on participation and discussion to solve difficulties. My own impression is that the participative democratic practice of holding meetings which allowed everybody to state their case, followed by a collective effort, had become 'naturalized' in African society at this time. By this I mean that democratic practice was almost second nature, it was just the way things were done. However the facilitators did raise the issue of democracy and of democratic practice in the school and invited comments by the workers. The comments by the workers provide a concise summary of their understanding of democratic practice.

> The School is here for people to give their ideas so that it isn't just the Principal who sets the rules. So we feel that everybody should be a part of the running of the school. People could say their views on the issue of democracy. Mama Susan said that it is very important that we hold together and help each other when we have problems. Baba Phineas feels that it is truly important to discuss together as it is only through that that we can build.
>
> (WSM 1990: 85)

This democratic process is time consuming, and rarely straightforward as seen in this record of the discussion that took place about the question of raising the school fees through which the workers were financing the school.

> Some people feel that the money should be raised so that the school is self-reliant. Counter argument: many of us left school due to lack of money and we can't repeat this injustice to ourselves. Suggestion that everyone pay R5 unlike last year where it was voluntary to pay. Postpone the issue until there is more of us..
>
> (WSM 1990: 11)

This type of decision making was never cut and dried, there was always room for exceptions to the rule and it was never final but always open to review, so decisions were always provisional and always tried to accommodate conflicting and contradictory points of view. Human considerations and flexibility tended to take priority over organizational efficiency.

Other evidence of democratic practice is that of workers coming to the meetings with ideas about how to get the university and the union to act on their own mission statements. Here one of the workers, a laboratory technician, suggests trying to get the university to allow the teaching of technical subjects at the school, which would help with recognition for the school but also provide much needed teachers.

> Shad notes that technical subjects can be taught at the school in response to the university's desire to upgrade technical assistants. Co-operation with TSA (Technical Staff Association) might get us teachers/facilitators.
>
> (WSM 1990: 12)

By the time the minutes begin in 1990 there is a very basic structure to the school, with three groups of learners, Basic, Intermediate and Matric with different subjects offered to each group and with different teaching strategies, especially regarding exam orientation. It was only as the workers began to ask for structure and examinations and syllabuses that the facilitators had to rethink the relationship between liberatory ideals and the 'dividing practices' of traditional schooling. One of the first problems raised in the minutes in 1990 was to do with allocation to different standards

> ... question of standards raised. It was felt that people want to know an exact standard they doing. It is pointed out that this has problem ... many standards will need many learners in each class and many teachers each ... It is also a long

> process e.g. towards writing Matric if people have to start where they left off. Grouping necessary e.g. Matric classes to Basic literacy class.
>
> (WSM 1990: 6)

The school was having to confront the complexity of division according to standard in a situation where the adult educational system itself was undergoing change. It is interesting to trace the workers comments as recorded in the minutes of the meetings as the vast majority of them are about the basic requirements of a traditional classroom, ie a teacher and a book. Here are just a few of the practical suggestions that the workers offered.

> People say that they need teachers/facilitators as a priority.
>
> (WSM 1990: 26)

> Mama Matilda asked for a suggested list of reading books esp, for English and Afrikaans so she can read at home. Baba Phineas said that we should make a list of books for all subjects so that if people can buy them.
>
> (WSM 1990: 84)

> Mama Leah says if we do a subject like history we need a textbook to read at home. We need a book for each subject. Facilitators need to explain everything they ware doing.
>
> (WSM 1990: 157)

The facilitators did however attempt to reconcile their liberatory ideals with the practicalities of the examination system and there is evidence of extensive attempts at training the facilitators in progressive adult educational methods and of negotiation with the adult education branch of the DET. The facilitators and workers had to learn how the DET operated as it was in a state of flux and had changed radically. They had to find out

about current legislation, syllabuses, examinations, arrangements for registration and writing of examinations. On the one hand there was the practicalities of the examination system, but there was also the additional problem of knowing how to place adults who had extremely varied educational backgrounds and whose formal school record often bore little relation to their abilities to take up where they had officially left off. This led to a process of trial and error with both workers and facilitators trying to work out where to place students and often only learning after the event, when exam results came back. This was coupled with frustration at the syllabus which was designed for school children and thus unsuitable for adults, at the feasibility of covering it in the time available to the workers who generally had just one class a week on each subject and only for a limited number of weeks of the year. I would estimate that they would have had a maximum of twenty hours a year in each subject in class, and often with an inexperienced teacher who was not qualified to teach that particular subject. Here the workers are discussing how to get extra classes.

> Suggestion that people come in the afternoon to have extra lesson - one hour is too little. Those who can should come because others cannot make the afternoon slots. Mama Elizabeth suggests that they have some work to do outside of the school. Mama Joyce says dedication can help us to be strong. We should organize ourselves, transport (by train is a problem) but we can try to find alternative, maybe taxi. Two hours is much better than one hour ... Mama Mavis suggests that we should not repeat what we did in the morning because there are many subjects.
>
> (WSM 1990: 111)

Here the workers are trying to fit the school into their lives as wives and mothers and taking into account the dangers of travelling by train after a certain time as the train massacres generally occurred at peak hour. Initially the workers wanted to do six subjects but given the Monday meeting, there was only four time slots each week, a situation that led to requests for classes in place of meetings

> The issue of 6 subjects and only 4 time slots. Perhaps have the meeting once a month or twice. Mary says that this might be difficult because as it is the agenda is not covered and decisions might be taken undemocratically. Perhaps to discuss next week. Perhaps to have learner representatives.
>
> (WSM 1990: 56)

The other problem that arose was that the longer the workers spent in class, the less time they had to run the school, with a result that more and more responsibility fell on the volunteer facilitators who were very difficult to attract. In fact many student facilitators came for one or two classes but then did not return. The problem of irregular facilitators was biggest in literacy classes as described below.

> Mama Tryphina and Mama Leah have problems with facilitators. They change all the time and they can't get used to them. Basic Literacy - Tswana, Pedi. Mama Leah wants to read. They would like one person to be consistent. Sometimes facilitators lose patience. They need somebody who will listen to the learners - what they want to learn and how they want to learn it..
>
> (WSM 1990: 143)

Here is a literacy class with only two people, but both speak different languages. The facilitators could generally come only one day a week while the literacy students came to the school four days a week and so could have four different teachers, each using a different approach. The workers were quick to pinpoint the problem and the solution, that is: they needed one suitable person to teach them for their four lessons each week. Freirean materials were used in literacy classes, but when used by inexperienced facilitators were often far from liberating for either learner or facilitator. I think that the school also underestimated how long it would take workers to become literate, given their working conditions and the erratic nature of the teaching they received at the school. However it was recognized that the training of literacy facilitators was a skilled job that

would need to be done by literacy specialists outside the school. All facilitators were encouraged to attend the training courses where the basic principles of adult education were discussed (see Appendix 13). I ran some of these training sessions as did Nazir, a member of the Education department.

> Training Workshop for Facilitators: Last Thursday we had a workshop run by Nazir from the education department. A whole lot of things came out of the workshop. When you teach adults you must respect them. You as a teacher must respect the fact that everybody knows things and that you are not the only authority.
>
> (WSM 1990: 46)

The first attempt was to organize facilitators into teaching teams so that there could be cross fertilization of ideas and sharing of materials. As with everything else, there was a conscious attempt to involve the workers in facilitator training and the workers soon saw that there was a lot they could teach the young facilitators, and there were some worker facilitators who had the advantage of being both student and teacher in the school and so were able to provide a unique perspective.

> It was agreed that there was a great need to set up teaching teams consisting of facilitators teaching the same subjects in order to discuss common materials.
>
> (WSM 1990: 61)

> It is necessary that facilitators have a forum where they can discuss how to facilitate lessons. We can discuss this and share ideas ... it was said that it was also important that workers came. The workers know the things that work and that don't work. They can give ideas.
>
> (WSM 1990: 86)

> The facilitators cannot do their work without us. So how can they meet alone?
>
> (WSM 1990: 53)

I think that at this stage while the formal hierarchical structures of traditional schooling were being introduced, this was offset by the open dialogue amongst the workers about their study needs, amongst the facilitators about their training needs and between the workers and facilitators about the whole teaching process. For the most part difficulties were discussed openly and solutions arrived at collectively. The workers felt able to bring their problems with facilitators to the meeting and had an input into facilitator training. Indeed it was often at the initiative of the workers that classes were divided.

> The reason for the meeting to divide the literacy, Standard 4 and Standard 5 students. Three different groups because literacy students would like to study how to write their home language before they have to write and speak English and Afrikaans.
>
> (WSM 1991: 150)

However while this democratic practice was continuing, the educational system was creating hierarchical structures. It would seem that a social institution such as schooling which is based on dividing and categorizing people, by its very nature, undermines democratic practice. It was very difficult to continue to treat people with equal respect while allocating some to the highest class and some to the lowest class in the school. It also became increasingly difficult to continue to value each person's individual contribution when the workers entered for examinations and some passed and some failed. This became a major concern for the facilitators who felt at least partly responsible for the workers' failure, and they began to see that the school had a problem when it registered workers for exams but was not able to offer adequate tuition.

> Question about what we are doing for the examination candidates. At present examination candidates in one class because of shortage of facilitators.
>
> (WSM 1991: 39)

> Results: this years results are not good. Many people took a lot of subjects and they faced problems. Suggestion that workers only register for three subjects so that they can cope well with the three ... workers need to take the initiative and not be too dependent on the facilitators ... A point was made that the minimum the workers need is the right books and a teacher for the subject. It is too much to expect workers to be able to direct their own studies in the library when they work full time. We need to train the facilitators so that they learn how to teach.
>
> (WSM 1991: 162)

The high failure rate became the focus of much debate in the school. While the literacy facilitators were being trained by outside organizations, there was the recognition that training was also needed by those teaching examination classes

> We need special training for people who are going to write examinations. The facilitators do not know automatically what is required of the workers - the level is difficult. Facilitators need special training in this. Trevor wants to look into educational methods, organizing teaching teams, looking at materials that are going to be used in the classroom.
>
> (WSM 1991:166)

> ... we need teachers who teach DET syllabi to come to the school and advise us on teaching DET.
>
> (WSM 1991: 173)

It is ironic that by 1991 the school was turning to the DET, the discredited education department for Africans under apartheid, to get advice about how to help the workers get

through the exams set by the DET. Despite the release of the political prisoners and the repealing of apartheid laws, education still remained racially segregated at this stage. GCE had been abandoned as being too difficult. The facilitators had come a long way from their liberatory ideals at the beginning of the school, but they were genuinely democratic in that they adjusted what they had wanted to do to meet the desires of the workers, despite serious misgivings. By the end of 1991 the school still operated democratically, with the school's life being discussed openly between workers and facilitators and with control remaining in the workers' hands. At the beginning the school was a radical educational project using a radical syllabus and now three years later, it remained a radical educational project but had reverted, at the workers' request, to the traditional syllabus. Examinations had become the educational priority of the school and both the workers and facilitators had to try to change their practice in order to meet the examination requirements. For both this meant that liberatory education had to come second place, as classes now had to concentrate on the examination syllabus. The needs of examination candidates for teachers, for books, for space and for resources became a priority.

Democratic Structures

The school had been run by an ad hoc committee in 1989, and in 1990 a priority was to get the school committee elected, to set up subcommittees and to draw up the School Constitution and have it passed by the school. An ad hoc committee was elected and set itself the following objectives.

Long Term

1. To set up a duly constituted committee to run the school.
2. To set up links with other democratic organizations.

Short Term

3. To organize classes and the general daily running of the school.

4. To expand the present ad hoc committee to include worker representatives, full time student representatives, facilitators.

Modus Operandi

The Ad hoc committee is the active structure governing the school at the moment but the old committee will not be dissolved until further discussion and finally the achievement of the objective 1 above.

(WSM 1990: 66-7)

It is interesting to speculate as to where these initiatives and knowledge about how to set up organizations came from. I assume it came from the facilitators' involvement in trade union, student, political and community organizations. In 1990 the constitution was drawn up and went through several translations, and many drafts before being passed and a steering committee elected (see Appendix 7). There was never any difficulty in getting people to see the need for a committee nor for a constitution. Where the difficulties continued was in the question of getting workers to be involved in the committees and in the daily running of the school. This problem is raised again and again throughout the history of the school and it is never resolved, despite individual approaches to the workers and every effort being made to draw them into the running of the school. There were always several workers who attended all meetings and many others who attended intermittently but the majority just attended classes and only occasionally attended the meetings.

On the committee there are workers, full time students and facilitators. We need to work out why the workers aren't attending. Dan said that it is not a problem that is starting now. We need to look into it and find out what the people feel about the Monday meeting. We don't know what the people's problems are.

> People could report to say why they can't come. We could visit the workers to find out what is happening.
>
> (WSM 1990: 98)

I think that initially the workers were happy to attend meetings to get premises and teachers, but after that they just wanted to attend a traditional school, to come for classes. However the facilitators, myself included, saw it differently, and really pushed for the workers to retain control of the school. I think that the workers were happy that the meetings were being carried out in their names but they had to prioritize and probably chose to miss the meeting rather than a class and also saw the classroom education as being more important than the democratic education in the meetings.

> Baba Samuel feels there is no problem as such, perhaps it is because people don't realize the importance of the Monday meeting.
>
> (WSM 1990: 96)

It was also the case that the workers did not come to the school to learn how to run democratic organizations, but with a desire to learn in a classroom setting with a teacher and the correct books, a point that will taken up in greater depth later in this chapter. By the time the school reopened for the new academic year in January 1991 democratic structures were in place:

> There is a school committee to organize the work. They met every week. Also general meetings, on a fortnightly basis. On the other Monday we have general discussions on social and political issues affecting the workers. Workers are free to attend committee meetings.
>
> (WSM 1991: 23)

Each committee member who had skills had a worker working alongside them to pass on skills. For example I was the school secretary and I trained Theo. We would meet in my

office at lunchtimes and I taught him how to type up minutes, write to funders and correspond with other organizations. There was also an attempt to rotate positions between the incumbent and the trainee

> Alternate chair and secretary to be female and male respectively to avoid stereotypes ... To rotate chair and secretary. First have alternate chair and see them do the job. Then provide skills for democracy training.
>
> (WSM 1991: 52)

The next step was to set up subcommittees to covers all aspects of the school's work and to attempt to get workers running and being involved in all aspects of the school life. To begin with, workers were elected to subcommittees more or less randomly and without the necessary explanations as to what the subcommittees were and what they hoped to achieve. For example one of the workers makes the comment

> Finance - elected Baba Samuel - expressed the problem of what the subcommittees are and he doesn't know anybody and needs to talk to the other people.
>
> (WSM 1991: 66)

On another occasion when this question was asked again, this was the explanation that was given

> Request for clarity on subcommittees: the main objective is to involve more of the people in the school in to the running of the school, and to spread knowledge in the school. It is trying to involve everybody so that everybody knows how to answer any question about the school.
>
> (WSM 1991: 89)

As a result of this difficulty a workshop was arranged on workers' democracy and the involvement of the workers in all aspects of the school. The workshop seems to have been concerned with the more general issue of workers' democracy and the struggle for socialism, and there seems to have been some confusion regarding political terminology among the workers and about how this related to the functioning of the subcommittees.

> What is workers democracy? - explicit training in skills for democracy. Getting subcommittees going - trying to involve workers in running the school. (WSM 1991: 67). Workers must know their rights. Workers raised that they want socialism democracy and they raised the fact that they are not well educated so they need someone to guide them, on how to run the subcommittees ... Cde Manyoni told the house that workers must feel free at school and work hand in hand. This will be in order to remove the obstacles that stand on the way which is leading social democracy.
>
> (WSM 1991: 68)

In fact this echoes a difficulty that runs through the school regarding the relationship between the broader political struggle and the day to day functioning of organizations such as the Workers' School. This was something that people were having to confront, and for which there were no guidelines. In the event the school veered from traditional school practices such as intensive revision sessions for examinations to trying to relate the work in the classroom to the struggle.

> Meeting of subcommittees: We will look at ways of teaching. The first thing is to try to relate the work in the classroom to the notion of workers democracy ... we need special training for literacy teaching. There is no literacy syllabus and the committee needs to look into it ... intensive teaching for people writing in May/June. Political education - we need to link the classroom work and the goal - socialism.
>
> (WSM 1991: 81-2)

Alongside this training for democracy there was the appointment of a workers' employment committee to decide on the appointment of staff. In this they were assisted by the development of the employment policy guidelines below. These points were drawn up by facilitators and not workers, although it was unlikely that the workers would have objected to them, they just would not have expressed them in this manner. The issue about the power relations in the school was addressed in the previous chapter and will be dealt with again in subsequent ones.

> 1. Our first consideration is to build the school.
> 2. In building the school we follow and build workers' democracy and workers' power.
> 3. We employ comrades to develop their potential as members of the working class and do not hold against them their formal educational disadvantage.
> 4. [illegible]
> 5. We must develop a systematic career development to strengthen the comrades and thus the school through getting a programme of self development in a systematic fashion. Also in line with last year's policy of developing from within.
>
> (WSM 1991: 38)

The experience of employing staff at the school was a new experience for the workers involved. It demonstrates the idea of workers' control and workers democracy being put into practice. The workers' control over the employment of facilitators was evidence of their control at the school and their ability to both tackle and resolve a very difficult situation. By this time there were many part time facilitators at the school, many students and many unemployed township youth who were personal friends and contacts of members of the school. The majority of those from the townships lacked any formal educational qualifications but many had been active in community groups, youth groups and civic associations. In a sense they had been trained in the struggle. When it came to a

question of who to employ, it seemed only fair to employ people who had been working at the school on a voluntary basis and to allocate jobs according to willingness, aptitude or interest. It did mean that staff were employed who had no training or experience in doing the jobs they were employed to do, such as setting up administrative and financial systems. Again considerations of individual need and potential, and ethical considerations about what was fair and just, took priority over bureaucratic efficiency.

After many meetings and consultations with all the potential employees, the workers came to their decision about who to employ and at what rate. This is a decisive shift in the school with the workers now being the employers of the facilitators, and it must be said they had no training and little support in enabling them to carry out this difficult task. They had to look at the situation in the school and come up with solutions and draw up job descriptions that covered the tasks that needed to be done, given very tight financial restrictions. The employment of facilitators, although a very difficult task, was nevertheless the means of ensuring that the workers retained control over the school.

> But democracy, by definition, cannot mean merely that an unskilled worker can become skilled. It must mean that every 'citizen' can 'govern' and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this.
>
> (Gramsci 1999: 318)

In conclusion this phase of the school's existence was exemplified by its democratic practice which involved the workers in all aspects of school life including the chairing of meetings, occupying key positions on the steering committee and in the employment of staff. The school had succeeded in drawing up a constitution, passing it and electing a steering committee. It also attempted to set up sub committees to cover all aspects of the running of the school, so as to involve the workers in all aspects of the school's operations. However it is important to see the school as part of a much wider democratic movement. Murray describes the civic movement in the following terms.

> ... yet even before the conspicuous post-1990 political apertura, the process of nascent democratization 'from below' was already underway, germinating as it were, in the pores of the crumbling apartheid system. The political opposition to white minority rule, which was largely embodied in the civics and in the trade unions and civic movements, was characterized by an anti-authoritarian and anti-statist orientation.
>
> (Murray 1994: 167)

All over South Africa, in every sphere of life, groups such as the Workers' School were being formed by local people to try to meet immediate needs such as education, sanitation, transport, housing, health or any other issues that concerned communities. Murray has defined the civics as social movements and in a similar manner the liberatory educational movement at this time could be seen as an embryonic social movement

> Strictly speaking, the civic associations were social movements in the true sense of the term. Although they differed in many respects, they tended to share several important characteristics. First because their executives were elected by local members / supporters, they were directly accountable to their active constituencies and not to higher bodies or to external organizations. Second, their organizational structures were based on active grassroots participation by the membership and they depended upon the voluntary effort of local leaders and on financial support from members and supporters. Third, they alone possessed the capacity to define local grievances and assume sole responsibility for deciding which strategies and actions were appropriate to the local context.
>
> (Murray 1994: 169)

The Workers' School, although not a civic association, nevertheless did share all these democratic features of the social movement, in this the democratic phase of the school. However the mass participation of workers in the running of the school did not materialize and the responsibility fell to a few. This does not seem to have been due to

any non democratic practice but due to the fact that the workers' primary concern was to attend a school in order to learn, rather than to learn how run a school in a democratic fashion. Again it was not that the workers were opposed to the democratic running of the school, it was just that they did not regard it as a priority to attend all the meetings and all had full and busy lives. It is a problem that seems to be endemic in all democratic structures of people, in general, being happy for others to act on their behalf as opposed to the grind of involvement in the nitty gritty of running organizations. The major obstacle to the mass of Wits workers attending the school continued to be the union's lack of direct support for the school and to a lesser extent a decision on the part of some workers to wait and see how the school developed. The lure of certificates seems to have outweighed the benefits of participation in democratic educational projects. However while the general move was towards an examination structure there were conscious efforts to try to link up political education to the events in the country at the time, both in terms of specific subjects and in terms of political education. Some facilitators complained

> The school was set up to raise consciousness and it seems we are now bogged down with state syllabi. Perhaps we should have a special session for general political awareness education.
>
> (WSM 1990: 56)

There was a two pronged attempt - firstly to introduce some radical material into classes

> Gweje in History prefers International Labour Research Information Group (ILRIG) books with a view towards integrating formal educational system with revolutionary input or a broad general education i.e. for all subjects stick to the syllabus but provide broad general education.
>
> (WSM 1990: 143)

The second approach was to introduce some direct political and social education sessions which took place every alternative Monday and were an attempt to address the violence engulfing the country and understand its causes and work out solutions to it (WSM 1990: 252). An attempt was made to involve all the workers in the discussion and posters were prepared from newspapers of topical events, such as Inkatha attacks on the townships, the train massacres, battles between hostel residents and township residents, the army and the razor wire erected around townships and squatter camps (WSM 1990: 252).

Direct Action

In 1991 the school began a campaign to try to get the university to employ the co-ordinator of the Workers' School as a university post. The high turnover of student volunteer facilitators remained a major problem and the school had done everything in its power to try to recruit student volunteers.

> Facilitator Recruitment:
> We have a problem in that a lot of facilitators are not coming now. It is also unclear how many will come back. Facilitator recruitment
> 1. We make notices
> 2. We approach student organizations
> 3. We write an article in Wits Reporter
> 4. We make an appointment with the Head of Dept of Education here and see if we can get student teachers.
> 5. Put ad in Wits Student
> 6. We use the newsletter to try to recruit students/facilitators.
>
> (WSM 1991: 129)

Facilitators such as Trevor were approaching their third year of working at the school without any pay, and the workers and facilitators felt that it was the university's responsibility to train its workers and to support them in their efforts to educate

themselves. However the university refused to contemplate employing a co-ordinator for the school.

> We have received a letter from the Vice Chancellor offering R5,000 and refusing point blank to appoint a co-ordinator. We need to do something to try to get support for our school and we need to take mass action - get all the workers into the concourse asking for the school - two full time jobs. It is important that the school becomes stronger and more organized but the reason it isn't organized is because we don't have money.
>
> (WSM 1991: 39-40)

The decision to plan for mass action to get the university to appoint a co-ordinator was symptomatic of the time when mass action was the choice of strategy of ever- increasing sections of the population. At this stage mass action would have been the 'natural choice' of youth such as the facilitators at the Workers School and students at the university and also of organized workers. A petition was drawn up and taken to all staff and student associations on campus, approaches were made to the unions and the school tried to join forces with the students on campus (see Appendix 8). As always getting the support of the union was problematic but members of the school approached the union with the petitions and were received sympathetically. The union said that while they supported the demand for a school co-ordinator, they were unable to bargain for this as they had already submitted their demands for the year. Secondly, they were unable to participate in a demonstration as they had signed an agreement against industrial action. However the school proceeded by setting up desks around campus to ask students and staff to sign the petition (Desks in concourse WSM 1991: 84). Then there was a demonstration by members of the school and students which is reported as having been very successful.

> Demonstration: We had a demonstration and workers reported back on the demonstration. It was very nice and it went very well and there was no disturbance but we are not sure what the outcome will be. There was a lot of

> support and a lot of people are willing to come and teach at the school. We need to go out and get these students to come. The student from Wits Reporter said that if we have another one we must let the student organizations know. The publicity subcommittee can work on how to let the students know.
>
> (WSM 1991: 88)

The other point that arises here is that demonstrations with their toyi-toying (a dancing march) were often jubilant occasions and people returned to the school feeling encouraged and refreshed. The demonstration did not succeed in its aim of getting a university post and the reasons given by the Vice Chancellor were that the union had not put it forward as one of their demands, and that the university was not responsible for secondary schooling but he nevertheless offered to make a financial contribution to the school

> We had a report back - Charlton is refusing to pay R24,000 we need for the co-ordinator. He said that we must give him an up-to date budget and he will see what is left over.
>
> (WSM 1991: 113)

In fact the university continued to support the school financially, which with other funding allowed the school to employ staff. This campaign is an example of the kind of direct action that the school was involved in, in this period. Just as they worked alongside student and staff associations on campus, they were also involved in active work alongside other organizations, for example in one meeting there was correspondence from other literacy organizations, an invitation to workshop on Aids materials; a new journal and book from ILRIG, and information from the Workplace Information Group. There were requests of help from other groupings such as squatters' associations, ex-political prisoners, trade unions and civic associations. However in this period it was with other literacy organizations that the school developed closest links and the school became a member of the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC), a national grouping of literacy

organizations. In addition, the school was the recipient of help from other non governmental organizations, and in its turn the Workers' School helped others to try to get established. Again this mutual support and solidarity was very much the spirit of the times. The school's external relations with other anti-apartheid civic and educational bodies was at this stage, informal and generally harmonious and supportive. To give an example, in written correspondence other organizations were addressed as Comrades and letters were signed 'Yours in the struggle'. This phase is thus one of mass participation in setting up of organizations such as the Workers School to take the place of the old apartheid structures which had broken down. Local people emerged through these democratic structures and took control of them and established links with other similar organizations on a provincial and national level. The school was thus integral to the social movement emerging from the residues of apartheid. With a negotiated settlement on the horizon, and with the prospect of an end to apartheid and a democratically elected government, the Workers' School, together with all other non governmental organizations, had to redefine themselves and shift their perspectives in the light of the these monumental changes.

CHAPTER 9

ADMINISTRATIVE PHASE 1992-93

> The old is dying and the new cannot yet be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms;
>
> (Gramsci 1971: 276)

The Interregnum

Before continuing with the narrative account of the history of the school, I will again situate the school in the wider political events of this dramatic period. The launch of the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991 was the turning point of negotiations to lay the groundwork for a new constitution that would extend equality to the nation's disenfranchised black majority. This transitional phase was extremely volatile and unpredictable. It was a period of uncertainty, with promises of freedom on the horizon but with the realities of poverty, violence and political instability, still constituting the daily experience for the majority of the population. By May 1992 negotiations had become deadlocked, leading to bitter conflict and culminating in the massacre at Boipatong on 17 June 1992 of forty people in an ANC stronghold by Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters from the local hostel, assisted by government security forces. The ANC withdrew from negotiations, and the more radical elements in the movement were able to instigate mass action to try to bring down the National Party, culminating in a two day general strike on 3-4 August, which paralyzed the entire country. This was followed by a disciplined march by 100,000 ANC supporters to the Union buildings in Pretoria. Then in September, Mandela and De Klerk entered into a summit and managed to reach agreement on a number of sensitive issues. This was followed by a bizarre alliance on the right between the IFP, the Conservative Party, right wing white supremacists and black homeland leaders - all united in their opposition to the

ANC. However, while diplomatic negotiations continued, a campaign of political violence was orchestrated by 'unknown assailants' with the killing of innocent civilians continuing apace, a stark contrast to the honeyed speech of the negotiations. Then in November 1992 De Klerk and Mandela agreed in principle on the goal of forming a government of national unity, with a governing alliance between the ANC and the National Party in order to facilitate a smooth transition to democracy. In bilateral talks in December 1992 and in January 1993 the ANC and the National Party inched closer to agreement. The assassination of popular ANC leader Chris Hani in April 1993, alongside the continued jockeying for power on the top, was accompanied by even greater violence on the ground - between July and September 1993 nearly 2,000 people died in politically orchestrated violence - a rate of eighteen people being killed each day. Eventually on November 17 1993, after nine months of often bitter debate, the twenty one-party negotiating council adopted an interim constitution, containing a Bill of Rights along with other guarantees of citizenship. This agreement which effectively ended white minority rule after 341 years, marked a watershed in South African political history. The participants endorsed provisions creating a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) which was to come into existence with nationwide elections scheduled for 27 April 1994, and was authorized to rule for five years until 1999 (Murray 1994).

After its unbanning the ANC had to transform itself from a hierarchical, military style, exiled operation into a mass democratic party involving the illiterate and impoverished masses, the demobilized guerrillas, and the millions of battle hardened youth who had missed out on any formal education. These constituencies had to be nurtured alongside the more cosmopolitan returning exiles and the liberal-leaning white constituency, which the ANC was trying to reassure. While trying to create a mass party on the ground, the ANC was at the same time at governmental level brokering the negotiated settlement as described above, often amidst much criticism from its rank and file who saw it as conceding too much, too soon. For example, the call by Nelson Mandela to ANC supporters in Natal to throw their weapons into the sea was heard with stunned disbelief by the residents of ANC strongholds under daily attack from Inkatha vigilantes.

The trade union movement meanwhile was evolving from worker-controlled democratic organizations into bureaucracies with increasing divides between the workers and officials. Like all other bodies the trade unions had to adjust to the new conditions and the debate focused on whether officials of the union could simultaneously take up positions in the government, even if only in the transitional phase. While there was much overlap between the leadership of the SACP, COSATU and the ANC, the rank and file of COSATU nevertheless guarded its independence so as to be able to continue to represent working class interests, regardless of who was in government. The civics faced a similar dilemma and after a lot of debate, the civics decided not to simply collapse their organizations into the emergent local ANC branches. Civic leaders argued that the civics needed to maintain independence from particular political movements to ensure that they were able to negotiate the interests of their constituents with whatever party or coalition of parties formed the government of the day (Murray 1994: 170-1). In 1990 civics formed regional federations and led local campaigns on issues such as the writing off of rent arrears and the delivery of services, and in 1992 the South African National Civic Organization (SANCO) marked a decisive step in the consolidation and amalgamation of the civic movement which led in turn to the setting of Local Government Negotiating Forum, which brought civics into negotiation with white local authorities. Therefore, while on the one hand civics seemed to grow in stature, being represented on local government and negotiating with business, on the other hand the more involved they got in official bodies, the further removed they became from their local areas and local grievances. This tendency towards bureaucracy would seem to be a paradox at the centre of civil society.

Restructuring and Employment 1992-3

This period of the school's history is recorded in the six hundred and forty pages of minutes, of the one hundred and thirty two school meetings recorded in this period (see Appendix 1). The vast majority of minutes were concerned with changing the structure of the school to meet the needs of workers, and to an increasing extent, to meet the needs of the facilitators and administrative staff employed at the school. This period is marked by a significant decrease in the number of worker meetings with very few minuted records of the ordinary workers participating in the meetings. However there is evidence of considerable input from the worker leaders on the employment and disciplinary committees, and indeed one of the characteristics of this period is the conflict between the workers on the employment and disciplinary committee and the employees of the school, in particular those employees who had been employed as a result of their voluntary effort in the school, and who in many cases were unqualified to fulfill the tasks allocated to them. There is also evidence of facilitators and workers working together to create the Workers' School Newsletter (see Appendix 12). With regard to teaching, although a few facilitators had either got degrees or were university students, the majority of facilitators employed by the school only had a Matric qualification, and had themselves experienced an inferior and erratic education. All this was occurring at a time when the whole Bantu education system had been discredited, but had still not been replaced with a more equitable one, and while the whole country was undergoing momentous change as apartheid crumbled, but had yet to be replaced by a democratic system. It is understandable that in situations of such insecurity and uncertainty, the appeal of structures and procedures and established ways of doing things are very seductive, but such periods also provide openings for rapid development and change for those able to 'surf the zeitgeist' or seize the day.

The Workers' School entered 1992 with substantial funding from outside sources, and with a significant increase in university funding it was in a position to employ both teaching and administrative staff. The existing staff had been on temporary contracts

which were due to expire at the end of January. The school decided that it needed some help in drawing up employment contracts and in setting up the school management structures now that money was available for paid staff, and it paid organizational development consultants to run a two day workshop at the school. This was the first time that the school called on traditional organizational consultants to help them, but the school did however remain committed to the principle of worker control and the workshop report begins with a statement

> It was agreed that the procedure would be for matters dealt with to go to a general meeting for final discussion and agreement. Where the workshop was unable to reach consensus, this would be reported to the General Meeting.
>
> (WSM 1992: 35)

The democratic and socialist ethos still pervaded the workshop with no consensus being reached on the issue of differentials in pay at the school

> ... no consensus could be reached on this. Some people thought everyone should earn the same amount as they all gave valuable service to the Worker's School. Others felt that there should at least be a distinction between the co-ordinator and everyone else. Comrade Trevor, the present co-ordinator felt that everyone should earn the same. Comrade David made the point that just because there was a hierarchy of authority did not mean that there has to be a hierarchy of pay. He drew the analogy of the man who leads his family but does not give his wife only the feet of a chicken to eat and keep all the rest for himself.
>
> (WSM 1992: 37)

This period of the school's history is typified by a conflict between these contradictory ideologies and even on such a basic issue as pay, there was a questioning of the ethics of 'normal' employment practices. The separation of authority and pay would appear almost non-sensical or comical in a business setting, but this norm was seriously debated at the

Workers' School, where issues were brought back to first principles and 'normality' was challenged. While this issue remained unresolved, where the workshop provided clarity was in spelling out the relationship between the workers and the facilitators, with the workers very much at the helm.

> Who manages Workers School? The workers - through the General Meeting and the Committees. The workers need to make sure they are in control, not the people they pay to do some of the work. They also need to be sure that they are fair to the people employed by the Workers School. To do this, it is necessary to make formal certain things, so everyone knows where they stand. Everyone needs to know what the contract is between the workers and the staff, what the conditions of employment for the staff are, what jobs they are supposed to be doing and what they will get paid.
>
> (WSM 1992: 38)

The shift in the school's power structure was most evident in its employment practices, with the workers now becoming the employers of the facilitators and, perhaps inevitably, it was a relationship that was fraught with tension. This was an attempt to reverse 'normal' employment practices, with accountability going downwards to the workers, the poorest paid, rather than as in 'normal' employment practices of accountability, going upwards and outwards to those occupying a higher social position, and with better educational qualifications.

As a result of the workshop, contracts were drawn up with job descriptions, conditions of employment, a disciplinary code and a grievance procedure. There was thus an attempt to reconcile 'normal' employment practices with a radical power structure, much as there was an attempt to teach a traditional curriculum in a liberatory way. The workshop also allocated portfolios to the subcommittees. However, while there were formal contracts, the day to day running fell to the staff who had to sort things out for themselves, often

with dissension arising, in this case because they did not have the power to take any decisions.

> ... a komoreiti (comrade) felt that it is not necessary to hold an office meeting since it can't take any major decisions ... Seeing that the office meeting is one issue no one can run away from, the comrades agreed that it should occur every Wednesday from 9 o'clock. If people are late they have to explain reasons for their being late. This was seconded and an addition was made that explaining to the office meeting shows accountability and commitment to workers' education.
>
> (WSM 1992: 1-2)

There is a note of complaint here about having meetings when the meeting is unable to take decisions with the counter argument that having office meetings shows accountability and commitment to workers' education. This is the first note in the minutes of a rift between people with an ideological commitment to workers democracy, and those with a more pragmatic approach to the job. On the issue of who should be employed at the school, a Commission of Inquiry was set up consisting of workers.

> There was a proposal that the school should employ from people we have here at the school, and that the special committee must interview everybody. It was suggested that the committee that will interview people should have more workers ... the house agreed that the committee will consist of workers only.
>
> (WSM 1992: 63)

The report of this inquiry is in Appendix 10. However, bad feelings were growing about who would be employed. At this stage there were many unemployed people and students who attended the school on a daily basis and did some teaching. From their perspective, they should all have been eligible for employment.

> Now the school is playing trick with other cde who come and work full time but at the end don't get paid. Comrade the number of nine. The office is huge.
>
> (WSM 1992: 29)

I interpret this to mean that there are nine people who work at the school on a regular basis who have not been employed and who see this as a 'trick'. Another area about which there was much debate and some bad feeling was the issue of the full time students programme, which the school had decided to close due to lack of resources. However this decision was not popular among some staff members who reported this in the minutes as though it were an attack on the youth and this is the first hint of resentment at the priority given to workers at the school. I expect to non-Marxists this prioritizing of workers over other groups such as parents or youth was puzzling.

> Phasing out of full time student programme - re-directing students to other programmes. The school belongs to the workers. The parents don't have a vote at the Workers School, so the Freedom Charter is slashed - the doors of learning shall be closed to the youth of the nation.
>
> (WSM 1992: 417)

The closing of the full time programme was obviously seen as an attack on the youth or the parents, but was intended as neither. It was an attempt to try to limit the schemes that the Workers' School was involved in, so as to improve the efficiency of the school. However it was also part of the shift in the school from trying to respond to need, to a more 'realistic' approach. When the school opened if somebody came along and said that they wanted to do agriculture, the school would try to provide it, even though it had neither a teacher nor any way of obtaining one, but it would undertake to try to meet the student's need for this subject. This approach led to the setting up of three educational programmes at the school - the Saturday School for school children whose education had been continuously disrupted at Soweto schools, the full time programme for young adults who had been excluded from schools before completing their education, and indeed the

workers' programme. So while this recognition of limitations on what the school could hope to achieve was both sensible and realistic, it was also another step on the road to an acceptance of realism, sensible solutions and constraints, rather than one based on ideals or ideas of what should be possible. For those excluded through this decision, it was seen as an attack on the principles of the Freedom Charter which declared that the doors of learning and culture would be open. However it was also the case that many young facilitators were desperate for money, and the full time programme provided a source of ready income, however small, and they could see that if this closed, then they would be out of a job. Some were adept at using the language of liberatory education to further their own interests when the occasion demanded it. Interestingly, the very same thing happened again in 1993 with fourteen full time students being registered and this resulted in a debate about who qualifies as a 'worker' and an ironic note about the privileging of workers.

> All has been said and done as regard the Matric students, they have all been phased out and doors closed. Anyone above the age of 23 could be enrolled at the school as long as there are vacancies. For those lucky enough to work - admission into the school is automatic regardless of age.
>
> (WSM 1993: 21)

This points to a problem with defining the difference between an unemployed worker and a young adult who was similarly unemployed, but who had been excluded from school because of age restrictions, and who generally still lived with their parents. In a situation where educational needs were so diverse and so urgent, any project with an open admission policy would inevitably find itself overwhelmed by demand and, in order to insure its own survival, had to restrict entry in some way.

The conflict between the democratic practice of the election of leaders and the normal business practice of appointments of staff is evident in this discussion about whether the co-ordinator should be appointed or elected. This typifies the transitional phase when two

systems, the democratic and the hierarchical are rubbing against each other and the school is changing.

> On the issue of whether the co-ordinator should be elected or employed, the answer is that we work on the assumption that the co-ordinator is elected. The employment should not be mixed with being elected. If anyone is elected that should not be a guarantee to employment. Employment should be based on abilities and not an election. If one is employed the final decision will rest on the general meeting.
>
> (WSM 1992: 411)

The meeting is obviously grappling with these two contradictory systems expressed in different discourses and practices, and as the debate progresses it becomes clear that 'the employment should not be mixed with being elected' and it is finally resolved that the workers' meeting will be final arbitrator. There was a similar debate and confusion about the criteria for the selection of employees. On the one hand everybody could see the benefits of having staff who were qualified, yet most members of staff, both those who had been employed and those who worked at the school on a voluntary basis, had no formal qualifications, and one of the aims of the school was to help such people acquire skills.

> The issue of certificates will be looked into by the employment committee. The school does not want to create the impression that it will dump the uncertificated comrades for certificated ones. The school will send people who are committed to working for the school to training courses.
>
> (WSM 1992: 406)

Again it is a question of a conflict between two ways of approaching organization and employment. The idea of employing people who are not qualified to do a job, seems nonsensical according to business ethics which have become naturalized. However the

school recognized that those who had no certificates could be trained and decided to give jobs to those who had shown their commitment to the school by working on a voluntary basis. However by the end of the year the conflict between part-time staff, full-time staff and the steering committee had become serious. Alongside the full time staff, there were many part time facilitators paid on an hourly basis, who began to demand a basic salary from the school.

> Demands of Part time Facilitators: Part-Time facilitators are asking for R400 as a basic salary plus money for attending classes. [Full time facilitators earned R800 a month] The DC committee will look into that. The Teaching Methods committee was given a task of looking into how many part-time facilitators are needed.
>
> (WSM 1992: 334)

Part of the problem was that the people employed full time by the school were often away on training courses, and so part-time staff were employed to cover in their absence. In fact by this time two staff members, still receiving full time salaries, had been on a course for three or four months and had not returned after their training, and there were rumours that they had other jobs. There was no control over the appointment of part time facilitators and this was open to abuse by full time staff delegating work they were being paid to do. Within a week or so, the part time facilitators had modified their demands

> The Part-time facilitators want a living wage of at least R400, they do realize that the school has no money though. They are asking for R100 boost. If they don't get the R100 they are not going to set the papers for exams .... a comrade said that he could not understand the threat behind the demand. Other comrades seconded that the R100 should be given to facilitators. The school's management is poor, the school's budget was not drawn properly. The school employed comrades to do most of the teaching but some ended up doing jobs

> they were not employed for and doing less teaching. The school makes a lot of mistakes ...
>
> (WSM 1992: 359-60)

The part time facilitators reduced their demands to R100 on the grounds that the school did not have the money to pay them more. There is a division between people who worked out of a sense of commitment and those who were now treating the school as an ordinary employer. The first target to be blamed for the conflict was the school steering committee, which was seen as being responsible for this state of affairs, through its policy of employing unqualified people and then sending them off on training courses. At first the committee proposed to accede to the demands and give the facilitators R100 and they then suggested that the full time facilitators might be prepared to share their salaries with the part time ones.

> The answer was maybe the full time facilitators will be prepared to share their salaries. A response was that the full time facilitators are earning far less than some part time facilitators, sharing is out. The school keeps employing more and more people while there is less and less money.
>
> (WSM 1992: 365)

Even the suggestion that the full-time and part-time employees might share salaries, indicates the flexibility in both the organization and in people's thought about how the school could be run. The next suggestion was that everybody in the school should donate for the part time staff.

> Everyone must donate including the employed staff ... the salaries issue is a very hot issue ... tempers go up and then down. Cde Madoda says if we collect from the workers we oppress them; so he is sorry he can't accept the R5s. The workers are already oppressed so he does not want to oppress them further.

> Another comrade said they are like the disabled people now, being provided with donations.
>
> (WSM 1992: 380)

Some of the part-time staff obviously felt exploited and betrayed by the school while still agreeing with the ideological basis of the school, and refused to take money from the workers as it would add to their oppression.

> A comrade said it is hurting because they work so hard for the school but the school does not care for their needs. It is discouraging. It doesn't give any incentive to return to the school next year.
>
> (WSM 1992: 389)

Others had no such qualms and treated the school as an antagonistic employer, as evidenced in the upset that Madoda feels compared with the monetary basis of Bulelwa's refusal to mark papers.

> Comrade Bulelwa said she will not make any marking because she will not get any R5 for doing that.
>
> (WSM 1992: 379)

While most members of the school would have supported the demand of the facilitators for some type of guaranteed wage, there was simply no money to pay it. It was also the case that the school had now changed from an organization staffed by committed volunteers to one where some members of staff saw it as primarily a commercial arrangement. However the year ended with the part time and full time facilitators coming together to try to sort out their differences and to work together for the benefit of themselves and the school, seeing the roots of their problem as being inequality within the school, rather than as symptomatic of the much wider problem of lack of educational opportunity, unemployment and lack of resources.

> ... let us try to find the solutions together instead of pointing fingers at each other ... the problem of part time facilitators is not money but social inequality at the school. The division caused by some people being full time facilitators and other part time will stunt the progress of the school ... we must come together and find solutions together for the benefit of the workers.
>
> (WSM 1992: 410)

1993 began with the meetings of the employment committee which had to decide on the appointment of a new co-ordinator and whether to re-employ the existing staff. Relations between the staff and the workers on the employment committee remained strained

> The employment committee is expecting so much from us but they are not telling us what we must expect from the school. Is the employing committee dismissing us? The answer is that the employing committee is trying to restructure so that people can do specific jobs. The employing committee must make sure they employs people who know the job rather than fumble. A suggestion from one comrade: an independent person should be present when applications are reviewed to see the process is not biased.
>
> (WSM 1993: 10)

Everybody was interviewed and the workers committee asked Roy (my husband) to sit with them on the committee, as an independent person.[Roy was employed at the university and often acted as spokesperson for the school with the university authorities, together with playing a role on the steering committee]. In the event the existing staff were re-employed.

> Employment Committee 7 full time staff - co-ordinator, two admin and four facilitators. The co-ordinator and administrator and treasurer will teach 13 hours a week and the facilitators will have 27 classes a week.

(WSM 1993: 26)

Some of the facilitators remained unhappy with the policy of having workers coming in to inspect classes

> Members of the Steering Committee must be allowed to pop in at any time in a class to check what is going on. The co-ordinator must warn the facilitators that the workers will be coming for evaluation. The after effects of the evaluation are the concern of one comrade. The workers are not fair - they tend to favour some comrades/teachers over other comrades/teachers ... Facilitators must agree to disagree with the workers, they should be strong and accept criticism. They should ask the workers how do they want to be assisted.
>
> (WSM 1993: 86)

This checking up on facilitators by the workers was deeply resented by the facilitators. I assume that it must have been difficult for the facilitators to be employed as teachers, but then to be checked up on by their pupils. Things are always more difficult if they go against the norm. However serious problems were rising in the running of the school. On the one hand, all the paid staff continued to attend numerous training courses including courses on numeracy, leadership, administration, adult basic education and computing (WSM 1993: 78). The school was continually approached by other organizations and with elections in sight and a new government just around the corner, there appears to have been a flurry of all types of training courses and seminars. Just this cursory glance at one set of minutes is an indication of the extent to which training occupied the full time staff, thus rendering them unable to fulfill their duties as administrative or teaching staff, a situation that had not been anticipated, when unqualified staff had been employed.

> Sonto presented the list of courses and seminars. The courses on management are necessary but the school has financial problems at present. If possible one comrade will be elected ... because of mother-tongue literacy problems, the

> house agreed that Bongs, Jacob and Kagiso (all facilitators at the school) will attend training in mother tongue literacy training. Voter Education: Everyone can attend the Voter education workshop. Comrades interested in attending winter school in Cape Town: Sonto, Muntu, Jacob, Thembi (all facilitators at the school) ... matter of contribution toward costs must be discussed .
>
> (WSM 1993: 108)

The staff attendance problem was partly due to attendance at training courses and meetings (the above includes all seven full time members of staff), but it was also the case that some simply did not come to work, and in the absence of a functioning committee, these problems were allowed to develop. Secondly, there was a major problem in worker attendance both at classes and in meetings as described by David

> I think from 1993 there definitely was a clear shift. It was clear to everyone that the school is changing in a particular way. For us, who were sort of ideologically conscious, we were saying 'No, it is getting messy now'. Now for others, people were saying, 'No it is not getting messy, it is just that we are becoming a normal school.' You know that kind of thing. And that is where, then, also the leadership of the school changed. Trevor left, Bongs took over for a period of time, but structures in the school at that point in time had died. So because of all those things you had now a situation where decision making actually, the co-ordinator had much more power to make decisions, rather than go through structures, because structures were not there.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 135)

Both Trevor and Bongani belonged to the era of ideologically motivated volunteers and both were becoming increasingly involved in ANC politics outside the school. Neither felt at home in the school once the full time staff were appointed and they moved on to other jobs. At this time two of the leading working members had major problems in that Joe's brother was shot dead and Theo lived in Kathlehong, an area that was under

sustained attack from Inkatha for a long period of time. I had withdrawn from the school except to teach my weekly English class as I was employed full-time at the university and was also planning to leave South Africa. The railway workers could no longer attend because of the gate being closed and the number of Wits workers who attended was falling away.

> The school has few literacy learners and fewer Wits workers. The school is dying a slow death - spirit of the worker' school is gone. Everyone must contribute his/her ideas for building worker's school. The School must be in the hands of the workers.
>
> (WSM 1993: 112)

There were people in the school who were very concerned about this state of affairs and it also led to a problem with the constitution which stated that

> ... the steering committee should consist of twelve workers ... The steering committee composed of office workers mainly. Some lines of constitution must be deleted. Interim constitution necessary.
>
> (WSM 1993: 42)

In any case, the school needed to change the constitution so as to include a dissolution clause in order to get a fundraising number. In the event the new steering committee had only two workers on it, which was yet another indication of changes at the school (WSM 1993: 44). Yet another special meeting was called to ask the workers why they were not attending the meetings, and as in the past, the reasons given were the unreliability of facilitators and difficulties with examinations, books and finishing the syllabus (WSM 1993: 112). However the workers' absence from meetings meant that the highest decision making body in the school - the Workers' Meeting - was no longer functioning as such. In the event there was a Strategic planning workshop to try to address these problems and the major problems were identified as the collapse of the whole democratic

structure of the school and also a lack of accountability on the part of some members of staff.

1. Weakness of the steering committee
2. Failing to hold general meetings
3. SRC does not exist
4. Subcommittees are non-existent - especially the discipline subcommittee
5. Office meeting also not taking place
6. Workers' democracy is dying due to the problems above
7. Office meetings have stopped. Makes work to be uncoordinated
8. Administrator not available for her duties
9. Absenteeism very high
10. Late coming also becoming a problem, also absconding during work hours.

(WSM 1993: 124)

It seems that the democratic structure was being held together by several individuals and once they left, or could no longer attend on a regular basis, then things began to fall apart. Here David, who remained at the school after Trevor left in 1992 and Bongani left in 1993, analyses what occurred

> I think people started, which was correct I suppose, we were entitled to salaries, then it began to be seen, it's a job, so that volunteerism, that spirit changed. It is just a job and with that also we now have external accountability, so that changes certain practices within the school because you now want to sustain the funding ... because I think it was that thing, that it became difficult to sustain the ideology, where people saw their positions as just jobs, where there were certain things you couldn't articulate properly because that would then threaten funding and you know those kinds of things. So that required a different type of leadership. So I think that was a major sort of shift ... And people began to

> complain that, which was correct, that there was no structures and procedures in place other than for meetings, but the issue was, what happens when meetings don't sit or the workers became weak, it became difficult for things to be done. That is where you began to be having facilitators and staff actually controlling the school more than before ...
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd:142-3)

Here David pinpoints the change in the school from a volunteer to paid employee ethos which was accompanied by a consciousness of having to act so as not to jeopardize funding. The school was thus no longer controlled by the workers but by the staff and by the funders. It was also the case that the majority of workers, now that they had succeeded in getting funding for their school, wanted to hand over responsibility to the staff so as to enable them to get on with their studies.

The Intellectuals and the Workers

The other issue that needs to be addressed is the issue of power in the school, and the extent to which the school had been sustained by the ideological commitment of a few facilitators is an interesting question. David states that some people had felt unable to voice their disagreements with Trevor publicly.

> One couldn't debate with Trevor if one saw that what Trevor was saying was not correct ... No I think at that point in time, my sense of the thing was that he as an individual was so politically clear such that people felt that they couldn't say no. I think there was that thing. Especially among the facilitators. So they would think that for example, people were not comrades. They didn't agree with some of the ideological orientation you know ... couldn't really say that. Not because there was any suppression but the sort of, they anticipated that this would be the response, if one said this kind of thing.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 144)

It is certainly the case that Trevor is a charismatic person who had excelled academically and he is articulate and persuasive, but he is also very sensitive to the feelings of others. I can imagine that it would have been difficult for any of the other facilitators to challenge him on any theoretical issue. But I do not think that was the case with the workers, who were generally less in awe of academic prowess and my impression was that they respected Trevor for his human rather than intellectual qualities. There was never any indication that the workers felt in awe of him in the way that some facilitators may have done. Once Trevor and Bongani left, it was certainly true that people began to challenge the worker-centredness of the school and the problem of different ideologies was for the first time brought into the open.

> If we see ourselves as opposing workers democracy, how do we then relate with the vision of the school. Uneven levels of beliefs in worker democracy. Most facilitators believe in worker democracy but it should not only be a term ... People started to say there are no procedures. Workers are not that perfect.
>
> (WSM 1993: 189)

In the earlier democratic period of the school, power obviously circulated around those who operated through a workers' democracy and workers' power discourse, to the extent that others who did not share this, felt unable to express their skepticism and criticism of it. This is a good example how the power relations work through discourses to create structures which support them, such as the democratic structures in the school, but at the same time, and in this case unconsciously, to silence and subjugate alternative interpretations and views. However by the end of 1993 the school's old structures had collapsed and its old leaders had left, and with a new South Africa just around the corner, the school had to renew itself in order to keep up with the times and so employed a new co-ordinator, Pat

> I think when Pat came in, the shift was radical in the sense that it was no longer driven by ideology or any political consciousness, it was merely the practicalities.

> This office doesn't seem nice, let's paint it. All these nice things, then it is a normal office.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd 145-6)

Financial Control

However before going on to look at changes in the teaching at the school in this period, I want to look critically at my own role on the Steering Committee and difficulties I had in this position. As I was acting as school secretary, and had been successful in raising significant sums of money for the school, I was asked to step in to try to sort out the school finances, an issue that had been left to untrained administrative staff. It quickly became apparent that the finances were in a chaotic state and that more money was being spent than the school could afford, if it was to hope to remain open. Matters came to a head when I was asked to sign a requisition for R400 for a facilitator whose mother had died. She had asked for a loan of R700 and the general meeting had agreed to give her R400, but I refused to sign the requisition. I first addressed the administrative staff meeting and then called a special general workers' meeting to explain my actions (see Appendix 11). I found it extremely difficult to do this, especially as the person concerned had just been bereaved, although it was not her mother, as understood in Western culture, but a female relative to whom she did not appear to have a very close relationship. This is not to make a judgment but to say that every member of the school was a member of an extended family, and so would have been similarly entitled to such a loan if this were granted. What was difficult for me was my position as a white person who had raised the money for the school, now laying down the law about how it should be used. I was very conscious of having enough money to live on yet I felt compelled to insist that the school

was unable to help out in this personal tragedy. When I spoke to Nonceba and explained my actions, she said 'You don't understand our African customs'. In retrospect she pinpointed the conflict between my own unquestioned beliefs about the correct way to use funding and an African custom of donating money to the bereaved, something that I had seen happen frequently at the school. Initially I think that the majority of the school would have agreed with using school funds for this purpose. However I had no difficulty in persuading them that it would mean an end to funding. What was more difficult was to explain why I had gone against the decision of the school meeting.

> Mary reported that she had been asked to sign a requisition for the R400 for Nonceba and she had refused to sign. Trevor raised the problem of a member of the school going against the decision of the meeting. Roy said that if a member did this they should put their case to the workers, if what they did was to go against school policy. Mary said that the reason she did not sign was that the loan was against school policy. Comrade Moss asked for this policy of no loans to be explained. When was this policy made? In the constitution it says that you need two thirds majority to change a policy. Mary clarified the difference between salary advances and loans. All facilitators could get a salary advance up to R50 a month. Comrade David said that policies like these need to be written down as we cannot trust our memory.
>
> (WSM 1992: 21-2)

In retrospect I realized that the mores around the use of public funding were so ingrained in me that I had assumed that they would be universally accepted and understood. I began to question why this was the case and realized that it is a custom that has become an unquestioned law. It seems to be based on a value that puts the organization before the individual in need, while paradoxically the African approach was to give priority to the individual in need. The other issue in this is my own role in the school and the power that I had in being able to overturn a democratic decision and to persuade both the workers and the staff about the correctness of my decision. I felt uncomfortable and isolated as a

white person in this position and felt a bit like a scapegoat in being the person who was asked to sort out this very sensitive issue. However once I put the case to all concerned and my argument was accepted, I was able to continue as normal with the school and was not conscious of any resentment from anybody except Nonceba, which was perfectly understandable in the circumstances. However it was the first time that I became aware of the role that I was playing in the school as a financial guardian. I saw that I was actually instrumental in this process of normalization, a position that made me feel uncomfortable. However I also knew that my presence in the school enabled the school to raise money and without this guardianship, it seems likely that some of the money would not have been granted.

Teaching 1992-3

With the employment of full time facilitators, teaching began to settle down and training continued. Much as the minutes written by one of the workers, George (see Appendix 4) is a demonstration of ownership of the school by the workers, so the following input by Kagiso, employed full time by the school, is an example of the type of development that previously unqualified, unemployed facilitators had achieved. In fact he is an example of a person who was educated in the struggle.

> Com Kagiso made an input on workers' education, paying attention to the school's vision, the teaching methods employed at the school. He made examples of teaching methods such as authoritarian method, democratic method of teaching. He elaborated on the importance of education as a reciprocal process where the facilitator can learn from the worker and vice versa. The discussion was further directed at the constitution of the school. He emphasized the issue of consistency on the part of the workers and facilitators.
>
> (WSM 1992: 55)

All the facilitators and workers would have been familiar with the authoritarian method from their own schooling, and so would have associated it with apartheid and Bantu education, and the majority would have therefore been very open to the idea of a democratic approach to education as to everything else. The input from Trevor is both influenced by Freire and by the give and take of the building of the school.

> Com Trevor explained on the Teaching Methods. He said the teaching method is learner-centred. He explained how disempowerment occurs in a traditional classroom. He said that traditionally the teacher has been the mediator between the learners and reality. This makes the teacher to think he/she knows more. However, what should happen is that the teacher/facilitator and learner should both interpret reality and from that basis there is learning reciprocity.
>
> (WSM 1992: 58)

There was inevitably a conflict between the teaching methodology and the examination system that people could not articulate at this stage. There is no choice or very little choice about the interpretation of reality that would enable people to pass an examination syllabus with its predetermined courses and correct answers. This conflict was not consciously spelt out by facilitators or workers but it was a conflict that they existed within. The job descriptions point to another aspect of the problem of reconciling examinations and revolution, facilitators are required to

> ... be prepared, be punctual, keep registers, set exams, be available for consultation and espouse the interests of the working class internationally and have experience in working with community-based structures.
>
> (WSM 1992: 89)

This is an example of an attempt to reconcile the political beliefs of some members of the school with pedagogical practice. The attempt to make the school more successful in terms of exams took different forms. There was a recognition that the workers had to play

their part in this and attend regularly, and letters were sent to workers in this regard. The concentration on exams contributed towards a shift in the school's organizational structure as described by David.

> I think the other thing that also contributed is the whole system of exams ... standard 8, 9, 10 exams. And that was a major contributory factor to everything changing because that also meant external accountability and then workers began to say, 'Yes we want to have certificates', 'Yes we want to be taught what is required by the DET' ... and you know people started to complain about too many meetings. Whereas in the past, those meetings were decision-making forums. People said no, we are here to learn more than anything else ... so it gave other people sort of influence to say 'Workers don't want meetings, they want certificates', and so that is where there was then that shift.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 145)

For their part the facilitators formed themselves into teaching teams and the leader of each stream was responsible for checking that the teaching in their stream was progressing smoothly, and monthly reports were written and given to the co-ordinator. The facilitators also set up bridging classes for people who fell in between the entry points for adult examinations

.

> Intermediate class is needed to bridge between Basic and Standard 5 and between Standard 5 and Standard 8. It is difficult to jump from Basic to Standard 5 and Standard 8. If a person has failed they should repeat the class failed.
>
> (WSM 1992: 390)

One of the facilitators negotiated with the Staff Training and Development Unit (STDU) and was able to get access for twelve workers to attend the STDU computer training

courses at lunch hour (WSM 1992: 100). Exam techniques courses were introduced before exams and appear to have been well received.

> On the question of exam techniques, this was implemented to workers during the suggested day. During the process workers showed understanding and promised to put the techniques into practice during their exams ..
>
> (WSM 1992: 164)

There was obviously a lot of improvement but problems persisted as reported in the monthly reports

> Facilitators employed by the school brought their monthly reports. The problems are organizational e.g. not planning properly. There is also a lack of discipline. Other problems include absenteeism of facilitators and students because of lack of money and other problems ... guidelines from commercial streams are not satisfactory ... there are clashes in the timetable; students are not participative ... New students every time, every day. Deadlines must be set.
>
> (WSM 1992: 317)

While these problems persisted, all literacy facilitators were now attending regular training courses. However there was a problem beginning to arise of the school paying for people to attend courses and then the person moving on to a better job. Similarly the school had a policy of paying the workers' registration fees for the exams which they then paid back, and there was a decision to continue with this, but on an individual, rather than a collective basis.

> The suggestion ... seconded was that the school should pay for those who are in financial problems and taking each and every case into consideration. Those who were assisted should then pay back the school in installments.
>
> (WSM 1992: 294)

Once again there is a shift from a system wherein everybody was treated the same, to a system where people are treated as individuals and each treated according to his/her individual need. However when the exam results were published, the progress was evident in some classes - 'Exam Results: Standard 5's passed impressively' (WSM 1992: 290). However others did very poorly and the school decided to launch an enquiry into why the results were so poor. In discussing the reasons for failure with the workers, the major problem identified by the workers, was the quality of the teaching at the Workers' School.

> One worker could not understand. - some learners from other centres referred to books. Facilitators must not be changed often ... Are interviews conducted before teachers go on to teach? There are no interviews - qualifications, well some are qualified.
>
> (WSM 1993: 112)

> Standard 8 Learners don't have teachers especially languages, South Sotho and Physical Science. More than one teacher in a subject - Mathematics 3 teachers ... History teacher did not ask where students left off with Bongani, he just started from scratch. He even threatened learners about taking them back to Standard 5 if they don't participate in class.
>
> (WSM 1993: 129)

The school was still to some extent failing both examination candidates and literacy learners. With regard to literacy, one of the major problems was working in a country with eleven language groups. When asked why he was leaving one of the literacy learners said that he did not think he was learning anything

> Comrade Makhunga left the school because he did not see any progress. This makes it necessary for the school to have its own curriculum so that learners can have something that will prepare them for more advanced.
>
> (WSM 1993: 142)

However it was also being recognized that it took a long time to train a person in basic literacy and workers needed time to attend class on a regular basis, to have a trained facilitator and relevant materials. In the end it was decided to employ 'an outside evaluator for needs assessment' (WSM 1993: 183). The school recognized that it would have to develop its own expertise in this area.

> Little information about ABE [Adult Basic Education]matters. Moving away from DET will alleviate the problem. We have to find information on our own from libraries, Zenex Resource centre can be utilized. Staff workshops on literacy should be ongoing. Initiate debates ... The school should be clear on method of teaching. How long does it take one to become literate? How does the method we use link with our vision. Irrelevant material. Criteria for selecting material is unclear. Workshop need soon. Skills upgrading for facilitators.
>
> (WSM 1993: 190)

At this stage in South Africa, all of adult education was in a state of flux with the elections imminent, and there was a discussion about amalgamation of organizations within the NLC. There was also a merging of groups concerned specifically with literacy and those concerned with Adult Basic Education and there is a record of an organizational audit of all organizations within the NLC (WSM 1993: 196). The school faced a choice, either to become a DET adult education centre, or to retain its independence, and concentrate on what was unique about the school, which was the alternative democratic approach to workers' education. The school decided to concentrate on literacy and worker education, to the exclusion of formal DET examinations. There was a discussion as to why this change was necessary and it was argued that the DET

programme was undermining worker education, that some subjects could not be taught properly by the facilitators at the school and that the pass rate was very bad and thus undermined the confidence of the workers (WSM 1993: 129).

The School drew up the following objectives

> To ensure that we cope with the transition period and to ensure that the project utilizes its resources effectively, it is becoming necessary to narrow our focus in terms of the services we are offering
>
> 1. To build worker education under worker control
> 2. To focus on Adult Basic Education (literacy and numeracy)
> 3. To focus on ABE Intermediate (Second languages, Social Studies and Maths)
> 4. To focus on ABE advanced (Maths Science, English, computers)
> 5. To introduce Trade Union Education
>
> (WSM 1993: 201)

The shift in emphasis is as interesting as it is contradictory. On the one hand the school appears to be following its original remit but in a completely different way. There is again a clash of two discourses, that of the oppositional rhetoric of liberatory education and the discourse of service provision. Thus by the end of 1993 the stated aim of building workers education under worker control was in conflict with the failing democratic structures within the school and with the introduction of the practices and indeed the discourse of service provision wherein power remains in the hands of the service providers, and not in the hands of the recipients of the service.

There are detailed records of the workshop which attempted to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school in terms of its aims, its internal relationships and its external relationships. It was a period in South African history when everybody was seen as

having a role to play in the transformation of society and the school saw itself ideally placed to enable workers to 'participate in the transformation of society', and to expand its conception of adult education to one that included skills (WSM 1993: 186). While it sought to retain what it saw as its internal strengths of empowering workers and the involvement of learners in decision making structures, it nevertheless also had to face up to a myriad of internal weaknesses which included 'unable to handle structures - too many and dysfunctional, poor co-ordination, lack of focus, lack of communication within the school, lack of discipline and trust among staff members, lack of proper planning and planning procedures, unsystematic administration, lack of skills and different ideologies among staff members.' (WSM 1993: 188). One example of the conflict in ideologies is given by David who describes the subversive practices of some dissenting facilitators

> You know not just in terms of articulating it, but in practice, teaching workers in particular ways, this things of worker centredness being done in a different way, where if people haven't prepared they will actually give learners classwork and say it is learner centredness. That kind of a thing where you speak the language but the action is different, so is discourse, the appropriation of ... So people said everything comrade whatever and then stole money from the school, so that was the sort of the orientation of some of the facilitators.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 144)

However despite all these internal problems the school decided to build on its strengths of worker centred education, despite the subversion as mentioned above, and to begin to play a role in the policy debate around adult education which was being worked out in literacy and adult educational organizations. So the focus became external rather than internal with the emphasis on adult educational policy initiatives which were due to be implemented in the new South Africa (WSM 1993: 190).

Democracy/Discipline 1992-3

I have titled this section democracy/discipline as once the school became an employer part of the function of the democratic structures was to discipline staff and to try to instill a learning discipline into students. However at the beginning of 1992 it was proving difficult to get the democratic structures, in particular the subcommittees operating.

> Comrade Kagiso raised the problem of the programme of action going according to plan. In particular there is the problem of the workers joining the subcommittees. The subcommittees exist in name only with the leaders only - problem of railway workers not coming - people to go and meet and find out why.
>
> (WSM 1992: 11)

There was an effort to speak to workers and to try to get them to attend a meeting to discuss this issue but to no avail. These same questions were being asked in 1990 and the facilitators do not seem to be any nearer to answering them. The violence on the trains and the general mayhem leading up the elections was undoubtedly a factor for those workers living in the townships.

> Meeting of workers: Many facilitators and no workers attend ... Some workers say they travel by trains so they are treading carefully because of violence. Bra Phil says his colleagues in Standard 8 do not use trains, they just don't want to attend meetings.
>
> (WSM 1992: 101)

> Why are workers not coming to meetings? Workers do come to meetings, maybe today we don't have good attendance because we have just opened. About those who defy the meeting? We must look at this issue at the committee meeting ...

> workers must be part and parcel of school's decision making. In classes we must tell workers about general meeting.
>
> (WSM 1992: 257)

One of the workers states plainly that she will only attend meetings once she sees that the classes are going well.

> Comrade Flora said if she was satisfied with the school she would participate in meetings. The DC felt it was unfair for Comrade Flora to be passive even though she saw the problems in the school.
>
> (WSM 1992: 269-70)

Flora obviously came to the school expecting things to run smoothly and she is refusing to attend meetings until her classes are running properly.

> Baba Theo raised a concern that we must make sure that we provide teachers because that is the main problem.
>
> (WSM 1992: 282)

However the workers also decided to investigate the reasons for lack of attendance by facilitators and to begin to discipline those facilitators who are not attending. Here one of the workers is nominating another to investigate what is happening in this area.

> Terrence said that they suggested Comrade Phillip to look at timetable and classes issue because workers complaining about not getting classes and facilitators ... the special committee for employment can act as interim disciplinary committee.
>
> (WSM 1992: 79)

In fact investigations were carried out by two workers and they reported

> Comrade Theo looked into the students and office staff's attendance. The attendance by students is very poor ... Baba Mbolambi raised the issue of coming to school but not finding any facilitators. It transpired that comrades do not like teaching as from 5-6.
>
> (WSM 1992: 174)

Here another worker complains about the administrative staff not producing financial statements when asked to do so. I interpret the 'well, well, well..' to be a note of chagrin from the facilitator taking the minutes.

> Bra Joe raised a concern that the school was supposed to get financial statements once a month. Collin answered that Wits is holding us back, they'll only give us the statement tomorrow. Bra Joe said it seems work is not done, if people want to work they must work if they don't want to work ...well, well, well.
>
> (WSM 1992: 240)

The steering committee decided to introduce a series of class visits by the disciplinary committee to find out what was happening in the classes. Here the purpose of the class visits is explained

> Class Visits: the purpose of class visits is to assess the progress in class and solve some problems as well as encourage facilitators and students.
>
> (WSM 1992: 256)

However the facilitators did not take kindly to having their classes interrupted by worker inspectors.

> Comrade Phil responded to the DC that he felt bad that his job of checking classes was taken by someone in the office. Another thing was that when classes

> had no facilitators, he would go into the office to find facilitators. This action was seen by facilitators as irritating. People in the office started to look at him with certain unhappy stares. Another thing was that comrades felt angry when comrades disrupted his class. However comrades who had disrupted his class apologized.
>
> (WSM 1992: 270)

Relationships continued to deteriorate and in the end there was a complaint registered by the facilitators and administrative staff

> Some workers attitude towards us: the way some workers are treating us is a cause for concern. We follow worker's democracy but now it seems that we are on the receiving end, the workers need education on manners and democracy. The DC is the problem. Also it oppresses us unconsciously. It was said that Sonto works at the NLC. Terrence made hurting remarks like Sonto came here and the school helped her and now she wants to leave the school, even Bra Joe asked questions like 'Where are you working now Sisi?' Bra Joe's words when he tells us that we are not working and that they made a mistake by employing people who didn't have certificates ... the issue of discussing people in their absence was also touched - this amounts to gossip.
>
> (WSM 1992: 378)

The workers were at times quite heavy-handed and blunt in their criticisms of some staff members and in fact it was a school decision to send Sonto on a training course as she had no qualifications and it turned out to be a rumour that she had found a better job. However there is no doubt that her attendance was a problem. In his interview David analyses what he thinks were the main problems with the workers' leadership style and suggests that the romanticism of workers at the school made it difficult for facilitators to challenge this when they thought that the workers were abusing their positions of authority.

> I think the second major imbalance was not being critical of what was happening in the school around the worker-learners. Some of the worker-learners did make mistakes, so this was a sort of idealization and romanticisation of workers ... It was harmful in the sense that workers became confident which was good, but that confidence was also being used in a narrow way. Where you would have, you wanted to build a culture of accountability on the part of facilitators to workers, but I think at times workers would abuse that. Because workers would come in you know, do this and that to facilitators, and you know even though it wasn't discussed, individuals would come to you and say this isn't right. And you would say 'Why don't you raise it?' and the person say 'No, if I raise it in a meeting I'll be crushed so I don't want that' ... So that type of a thing, so because of that kind of community culture, people actually were suppressing some of their feelings and that is where it was bad only in that sense, because the workers were becoming more like their supervisors because that is what they were actually doing. So in that sense it was bad. But in giving workers' confidence it was great I think.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 142)

David suggests that there was a problem of idealization of workers that arose from a blind belief in Marxist doctrine, so that workers were expected to be able to do everything, and in some cases, they were regarded as being always right, when they were often wrong and made mistakes. There were cases when some workers abused their positions of authority in an authoritarian manner, modeling themselves on their own supervisors at work, who were often extremely harsh. However when facilitators felt they had been treated unfairly by the workers, they did not feel able to complain about the workers' behaviour, as the whole ethos of the school was one of support for the workers. I do not think that there was any major damage done and the dominant feeling among the facilitators was one of annoyance at the workers for interfering, but it did point to the power relations in the school so that people did not feel able to voice different views nor to be critical of the

workers. This was not a result of deliberate suppression but of inexperience, or the wrong kind of supervisory experience on the workers' part coupled with an idealization of workers on behalf of some of the facilitators.

However one of the results of allowing workers to assume positions of authority in the school was the school's decision to press for worker /learners to be included in all decision making forums of the NLC. The school was also involved in conducting research into the running of literacy projects and it was reported

> ... research questionnaires were sent out, they are coming back. Most teaching projects use democratic teaching methods but undemocratic running of the school.
>
> (WSM 1992: 133)

In fact the school, in particular Trevor and two workers, Theo and Phillip, had been influential in getting a decision passed that all future meetings of the NLC should send one learner and one facilitator delegate. At one NLC meeting Theo was treated in a patronizing fashion by some staff and this made him determined to press the case for learner involvement in these structures. Again it is an indication of the school's success in empowering workers that the workers felt confident enough to challenge professionally staffed literacy organizations about the involvement of learners in decision making.

> An issue which he (Trevor) raised was that learners should be the ones in control. He said that certain organizations paid lip service to learner control and empowerment ... Comrade Theo and Comrade Philip should be in the forefront of organizing learners to take control over their organizations and over learning.
>
> (WSM 1992: 268-9)

In the interviews I conducted with the workers I was struck by their confidence and their pride in what they had achieved in the school. In his interview Theo argued that the workers had achieved a lot and did a very good job in very difficult circumstances.

> I became as the Head of the Disciplinary Committee at Wits Workers' School ... That is a very hard position, it is difficult. But I tried to, I mean I, and my other colleagues who were working with me on this disciplinary committee, we have tried to discipline teachers, also students. But I can say things were going very well although there were some difficulties with money, but we have tried by all means to work with the comrades ... we were able to hire facilitators, we were students at the moment, we hired the facilitators to help us with education and we were running the school very well ... It was difficult to be a student on the other hand, you are a member of the school, it is difficult you know, you have to look at the problems in the school and you have to study again ... The only thing is if you are serious there is nothing wrong, you can cope. Yeah.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Th: 69-70)

Direct Action

To conclude this account of the Administrative Phase, the school continued with its direct action strategy. As a result of the investigation and general dissatisfaction with the DET, the school embarked on a campaign to find out what the examination results of other adults in other adult education centres were. This determination to find out why so many adults were failing was fueled by the announcement by the DET of the doubling of the price of the exam registration fee.

> Registration R30 per subject ... a concern was raised over the R30 registration. The DET is making a profit at the expense of the workers who do not have the

> money. This education has been made a commodity. We must expose this during literacy day as a first step, but the workers must still register for their exams ...
>
> (WSM 1993: 283)

The school then initiated a campaign against the DET. There were several avenues pursued simultaneously. Firstly a letter was written to the examination centre where the workers wrote asking for a breakdown of all the results (WSM 1990: 279). Secondly, International Literacy Day was used as a forum where the campaign could be publicized and arrangements for marches communicated to the other organs of the NLC (WSM 1992: 283-5).

In fact petitions were taken to all the adult education centres in the townships by workers and facilitators who lived nearby, announcing the march and campaign against the increase in fees and asking for a breakdown of examination results.

> Comrades must take the petitions to the adult centres near them in the townships ... we will ask for a list of adult centres where we will take our petitions for support. Petitions were made, letters were sent to various liberation movements e.g. COSATU, SADTU
>
> (WSM 1992: 308)

On the day before the march when everything was organized there were several phonecalls:

> The magistrate phoned. The town clerk phoned - will support if we march on Wednesday ... Lieutenant De Beer phoned he said we must make a fax. We cannot March tomorrow because the DP is marching according to the magistrate, the Town Clerk and the Lieutenant ... There was a concern about not marching because of the vast preparations made so far ... the solution Let's meet tomorrow at 12 o'clock, then we will know whether we are marching or not. Trevor

> promised to convince the police that we have to march because we are oppressed but Oppenheimer has no reason to march.
>
> (WSM 1992: 311)

This is interesting for a number of reasons. Even the most brutal and autocratic regimes have chinks in their armour and in this case Trevor was able to charm his way into getting permission to march. Secondly the response to the protest was unexpected and conciliatory in the extreme. I can only assume that both the police and the DET felt in such a weak position in the face of the rising tide of protests, that they deemed it wise to concede. However activists such as Trevor would have been very sensitive to the nuances in a situations such as this, so as to be able to judge just how far they could go. In the event the march went ahead and was well supported by adult learners from all over Soweto and was very successful as reported in the minutes

> DET Report: After March: In terms of the registration - it will no longer be in Sept but in October. The fee for each subject will be R15 not R30 ... the DET will also offer us Syllabi, more teachers if need them and study aid. DET also said the Workers' School might also be an exam centre.
>
> (WSM 1993: 332)

This was an example of a campaign spearheaded by the Workers' School that was of benefit to all adult students in the province, with the reduction of registration fees and the delay in the registration deadline. However the school remained skeptical about the prospect of becoming an examination centre, something that it had pursued at an earlier date, when it had no independent funding.

> Comrades cautiously accepted what the DET offered ... comrade said that this issue of being given a school secretly or in an underground way might be problematic for the school. Comrades felt that having another school at this point in time might not be necessary. A question was asked about the issue of

> the high failure rate. Comrade said that DET was trying to handle us in a soft way because it didn't want the school to make the other schools conscious of DET's exploitation. Other issues that should be raised with DET had to do with the exam period and the curriculum for adults. DET should not [use] the curriculum used by full time young students. A further issue was that DET should make it clear how adults get certification - how many subjects and the aggregate makes it possible for a pass and a certificate?
>
> (WSM 1992: 333)

The school did not rest on their laurels having gained some concessions from the DET but decided to push ahead with the other issues as demonstrated above. While the school was successful in its DET campaign, the campaign for a university post for the school co-ordinator proved to be more difficult. Early in the year a delegation, of which I was a member, went to meet the Vice Chancellor with the following mandate

> *Give Annual Report and thank for money
> *Ask for long term commitment so we can plan our year
> *Ask for student cards, sports facilities, library facilities, labs, more space, time off to study, gate for the railway workers, free education for members of the school. Trevor mandated to type up demands. Mary and Bongani elected as delegates.
>
> (WSM 1992: 11)

As previously stated my recollection of the meeting was the Vice Chancellor's refusal to allow access to the campus for the female railway workers who had been attending my class for over a year. They had cut across some barren land between railway and university property and had got onto the campus through a disused gate. The university had recently sealed up this access point, thus making it impossible for the female railway workers to come to class. The Vice Chancellor said that it was a necessary security

measure. My own feeling at the time was that this was an act of meanness on the part of the university as the female cleaners posed no threat to university security. Likewise on the issue of the workers getting time off for study, the university refused to budge, arguing that the workers had very good working conditions with a thirty seven hour week (WSM 1992: 28).

The gist of the Vice Chancellor's argument was that the university was not funded to provide workers' education (WSM 1992: 76). However access to the other facilities were agreed upon, the workers could use the library to study in, they could book the sports facilities, they could try to book the laboratories if there was any space. The university also promised financial support by way of donations rather than any guaranteed funding (see Appendix 9). The school then embarked on another plan to organize support for the school and to draw on solidarity actions from the unions and student organizations. However there is no record of any further mass action that year and the only other correspondence from the Vice Chancellor recorded in the minutes is the following

> The Vice Chancellor said before we talk money with him, we have to apologize for that statement our annual report. Comrade Roy is asking a mandate to write a careful letter to the Vice Chancellor. Mandate given.
>
> (WSM 1992: 225)

Unfortunately I do not have a copy of the annual report in which the particular offending statement is recorded. The school had not intended to offend or to bite the hand that fed it and once the letter was written, and in particular once Pat the new school co-ordinator was appointed, relationships between the school, the union and the university became more harmonious. When the school ran out of money the University agreed to allow the school to draw on university funds for two months. The union agreed to lead a delegation to Dickson, (the Head of Personnel and liaison person between the university and the school) to put in joint demands for workers' education, but this meeting did not take place. The university wrote a letter for the School to show to funders which clarified the

school's relationship with the university (see Appendix 9). While the university was still saying that the school is beyond its jurisdiction, the school was also moving into new territory which was less focused on the university and more on national policy.

Conclusion

This period saw the school change from a democratically run, participative organization with the workers very much at the helm, to a 'normal school' with the setting up of administrative, financial and management structures. With external funding came accountability and regional and national involvement in the development of structures for adult education under the new government. This transformation has been analyzed as it occurred in small steps and shifts. This was accompanied by the falling away of the democratic structures within the school, despite concerted attempts to revive them, and a significant reduction in the workers' role in running the school, and also a significant decrease in attendance by the workers at the school. This can be explained partly at least by the violence, political instability and the uncertainty of the period which included extended periods of student disruptions and police presence on the university campus. It also makes it clear how much of an uphill battle it is to try to introduce practice that goes against the norm, even in times of rapid social change, because even though the liberatory movement may be for social change, the ideas that people have of beneficial change are conditioned by the norm, so that what they suggest to replace the old will often be informed by the weight of normal capitalist, consumerist culture, with values of the market impregnating all aspects of life, in particular organizational life. So it seems like there were two phases of the school's existence - the radical alternative youth of the organization followed by the middle aged spread of more conformist organizational practice.

CHAPTER 10

THE GOVERNMENTAL PHASE 1994-1996

The New South Africa

Negotiations ended with agreement on an interim constitution for South Africa which was largely a compromise between the ANC and the Nationalist Party, and the election date was set for April 26-8 1994. The constitution contained an extensive chapter on fundamental rights protecting people from being 'unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly', on the grounds of 'race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language.' (Thompson 1995: 250). Another unique feature was the adoption of eleven official languages - isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Lebowa, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Afrikaans and English. The most racist of constitutions was thus replaced by one based on a respect for diversity in language, culture and lifestyle.

However in the run up to the elections, violence escalated with events such as the march by Inkatha supporters in down town Johannesburg which was fired on from a building where the ANC had offices, which resulted in the death of fifty nine people. There were over forty bomb explosions in April alone, with one car bomb near the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg killing nine people. However the violence was fiercest in Natal with bloody reprisal attacks continuing apace between ANC and Inkatha. At the end of March de Klerk declared a State of Emergency in Natal while Buthelezi, head of the Inkatha Freedom Party, adopted a policy of political brinkmanship refusing to participate in the negotiations, until, on April 19, an agreement was reached between Mandela, De Klerk and Buthelezi to include the IFP in the ballot. The election was on the whole peaceful, with its images of long silent queues of black voters, and although there was undoubtedly some corruption, particularly in Natal, the election was judged as being 'substantially free

and fair' (Thompson 1995: 254). The ANC won 62.7 per cent of the vote, the National Party 20.4 per cent, the IFP 10.5 per cent, the Freedom Front 2.2 per cent, the Democratic Party 1.7 per cent, and the Pan African Congress 1.2 per cent. On May 10 1994 Nelson Mandela took the presidential oath in the presence of the Secretary General of the United Nations, forty five heads of state, and delegations from any other countries, including the United States, Russia, China, Japan, Germany, and Britain. In his speech he declared

> Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud ... Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another.
>
> (Thompson 1994: 254-5)

The ANC had based its election campaign on the ambitious Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and had undertaken

> * building one million houses
> * creating 300,000 to 500,000 farm jobs a year
> * redistributing 30% of agricultural land
> * providing clean drinking water for the five million people currently denied access to it
> * introducing adequate sanitation for the 21 million people without it
> * supplying electricity to 19,000 black schools, 4,000 clinics, and two thirds of homes, all then without it
> * redressing the imbalance in access to telephone lines one line for 100 blacks, 60 for 100 whites.
> * a ten year transition to compulsory schooling
> * Class sizes to be no more than forty by the year 2,000.
>
> (Callinicos 1996: 14)

However when the euphoria of the elections died down, the newly elected government had to confront a huge state bureaucracy with virtually all the key positions in the judiciary, the police and the state bureaucracy dominated by white males, mostly Afrikaners, who had been recruited and trained in the apartheid milieu. At its conference in December 1994, the ANC resolved 'Until we transform the State machinery as a whole into a loyal instrument of democracy, transfer of power to the people will not be complete.' (Thompson 1995: 258). In addition to this unwieldy and at times hostile state machinery the new government inherited enormous economic and social problems. In 1993, a Natal university report stated that 'seventeen million people - 42 per cent of South Africa's total population - were living below the poverty line; the World Bank noted that 60 per cent of the economically active population were functionally illiterate, and COSATU declared that between 6 and 7 million people were unemployed (Thompson 1995: 256). In Education, the minister, Sibusiso Bhengu, inherited nineteen education departments with immense disparities between the traditionally white schools and universities and those for other races, a dearth of qualified black teachers and unrest continuing in both schools and on university campuses.

By the first anniversary of the end of apartheid the only thing that the government could boast was that nearly every six year old pupil was being provided with a peanut butter sandwich for lunch (a not insignificant boost for malnourished children), free health care for infants and 250,000 newly electrified homes. By 1996 when the Workers' School closed down, many government departments had not yet got beyond policy formation and structural planning in preparation for the implementation of the RDP, and in addition there were already many cases of corruption in the new bureaucracy.

This account of the governmental phase of the Workers' School can be best understood within the context of the reconstruction programme of the new government and the enormous tasks that faced those trying to carry it out. As stated in the previous chapter, the minutes of school meetings are from 1990-1993. In this account of the school from 1994 to its closure in July 1996, my sources are limited to interviews with members of

the school, annual reports and internal documents. I was not in South Africa during this period and so am unable to draw directly on my own knowledge and experience, as I was in the earlier part of the history. I had hoped to interview the last school co-ordinator, Pat, when I was in South Africa but he did not keep the appointment we had made. The chairperson of the Steering committee Baba Manyoni who worked in the Traffic department at Wits, had been in an accident and was in a coma. However I was able to interview David who continued to be involved in the school until it closed, and both I and Elizabeth interviewed other workers who had attended the school in this period.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the school evolved through different stages from a democratic school to one that was dictated by the needs of the administration, to what I have termed the governmental phase. The change was not just in how the school was managed but also in its pedagogical focus. With its focus on state examinations, and with the employment of administrative and teaching staff, the school shifted towards normalization during 1992 and 1993, as recorded in the previous chapter. The democratic structures had ceased to function and with the more politically conscious coordinators leaving the school, the new co-ordinator was quite different in his approach, in being diplomatic with both the university and the trade unions.

> ... like in the past when we talked to the university, it was in an oppositional mode, we were always fighting. Then Pat, when he came in, he started to talk of 'Lets engage with them, discuss' and then you know ... he ... the co-operation between him and Dixon. That helped because of certain things we could get from the university, whereas before we just wanted money, and go and not get anything or get a bit.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 146)

His interest was less in the individual school, and more in national policy formation. The school changed in line with the new political changes. Instead of collages of political posters, the office was painted a neutral magnolia. As the school became less

oppositional, outside funders and other organizations began to react to the school in a more positive way. It is important not to under estimate the significance of positive reinforcement for the school, which had so little encouragement and much outright hostility

> So that also then changed, and still in the process of that, still other people, external people, began to say that still the school is good, the school is good, it is doing this and that. Whereas in the past, they were saying too much socialism and unrealism in the school. People were saying, in terms of what the school is wanting to do, yes, it is beginning to do so. So really it was a period of what, one could call normalization. I don't know, but there was that sense that people now saw the school as a school, and not anything else. Then because of that we began to say, what is our external image? And we became much more conscious of that.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 146)

So as the school began to normalize it received positive reinforcement from outside agencies and funders, and in turn it began to become conscious of its own image - something that would never have occurred to people in the earlier days of protest, where the whole emphasis was on what the school was, rather than what it appeared to be. The other aspect in this transition is, of course, the collapse of apartheid and the setting up of the first democratic government in the country, and so organizations such as the Workers' School which had been in opposition to apartheid, were now on the winning side and had to adjust to this new position. The period when this political activity was most intense was in 1993 and 1994 when the handover of power was taking place. Although some of these events occurred in 1993, I include them in the governmental phase as these were actions specifically designed to influence government policy. Here David explains the school's role in the transformation process

... we began to participate ... politically. I think in policy issues we were driving them as the school ... For example in 1993 there was an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) conference, we were key in organizing it. In other conferences, we were key developing, organizer, secretary of the conference that kind of thing. In 1993, there was a huge conference on what they called putting ABET on the national agenda. Simply saying that our conception of adult education needs to change and this is how we want to actually see adult education and secondly we want people nationally to recognize that adult education is important. So there were structures, when they set up, The South African Adult Basic Education and Training Committees, which were key, and we were driving it essentially from the school. And all these conferences I am talking about. For example when the elections came in 1994, the Ministry didn't have an infrastructure. We were helping in terms of infrastructure and drawing up formula, so in that sense the school was making major policy interventions, whereas in the past, well I suppose because of the difficult situation also, in the past we were just reacting to things, whereas at that point in time we were the key. People would actually phone the school to ask what was happening in government because we were actually helping it, the government.

(WSI 1996 MM/Dd 146-7)

Due to the period, these interventions have not been minute-ed but have been recorded in the policy documents of the period but unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go through all the documents to pinpoint the specific contribution that was made by the Workers' School. I understand this as being an example of the School moving onto the national stage and trying to ensure that Adult Education would not be neglected by the new government.

Yeah. It is just that it wasn't documented, as such. Really it is the policy documents that I can say, this is where we contributed here and there. But I think we did contribute major things as the school, around some of the developments.

> And also within the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC). I think that when we were playing a part in the NLC before, around 91, 92, the NLC was not that strong. But we did contribute by seeing that the NLC took a particular direction which helped. But I think from around 93, 94 we were actually key in terms of being able to influence where the NLC should be going. I became the chairperson of the province and that also helped.
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd 147-8)

So there was a major shift in the school in the election period with the school becoming instrumental in setting up the Department of Adult Education. However this emphasis on national policy was unfortunately accompanied by still further weakening of the workers' participation in the running of the school

> So the image of the school, after Pat came in, it sort of changed radically. But internally also it changed because concrete structures were dead, so there was no form of any workers' participation, you know, so it was just us talking of how workers should participate, but in a sense the culture had changed, as I understand, it became technical to talk of worker participation. People began to say, no let's have systems and procedures in place, so that even if we talk of worker empowerment, we talk of empowerment within an organizational setting and of course with donors, donors wanted to have certain procedures, structures in place so if you didn't have that, you were seen as a bit, very different organization, so you had to build that in you know. But as I said the important thing was that in the school, workers began to be alienated in a way ...
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/Dd: 148)

Although I do not doubt the validity of David's analysis, I did not pick up any evidence of alienation on the workers' part. People had different reasons for continuing with or dropping out of the school. For example, Freddy, a literacy student was quite happy with the new arrangements at the school and here he describes the changes

> Now it is better. Because we now and then we got a teacher. Before sometimes we was shortage for a teacher and then gone to sit in the class until the time when you are going to be finished. There is no teacher who is going to teach us ... Now you got a better people for the committee, is that when they set up those things, after that come to tell us ... It's still all right. There is nothing wrong and workers have still got a chance when they think they don't like it. They have to say it. So they have to say it 'No, no no, this one is no good.'
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/ F: 80-1)

Freddy obviously has no problem with the change in the school's practices and it seems he prefers the system of having paid regular teachers and he is happy with the new management of the school and is confident of being heard if he has difficulties. Elizabeth had more personal reasons for leaving the school.

> Yes ... I like History very much. But after Bongani passed away, I was very worried because I was understand Bongani very well ... Bongani, I am sure they shot him. They shot him there in Soweto ... I just leave the History, yeah. Even if this new guy came to the school, I didn't continue with history, I just left history. I just continue me with my English, because after Bongani, Ephraim, come to Workers School ... so Ephraim was nice and I understand Ephraim. Ephraim was a nice guy. And then after Ephraim pass away ... Ephraim got accident when he came back from Zimbabwe ... And then when Ephraim pass away, I just ... I just stay away from school till now. I didn't go there till now, I didn't go there. I haven't studied since ... I just lose hope after that. Our teacher they just ... leave us ...
>
> (WSI 1996 MM/E: 122-3)

For Elizabeth it was the tragic death of her teachers that caused her to leave the school while other workers such as Lucas were unable to adjust to their familiar teachers leaving

> I was very interested in my subjects but unfortunately I could not go any further with my studies because our school teachers left us so there was nobody to carry on with us. Mary went to overseas and teacher Trevor get other job in town.
>
> (WSI 1997 EM/L: 167)

Other workers such as Dan just drifted away from the school.

> ... but the problem is that in Wits school itself, we never go back ... until we hear that the school is going to close. So you know when we hear something like that we feel terrible. But we must try to make sure that the school must go on and even we the people must start when we did left off. Cause it is not good to start a thing and end up losing it like that. Yeah ... still we feel that something is still lacking for us somewhere, somehow, we got to move on as the workers and do again, try something to bring things to us.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 161-2)

Dan seems to feel that there is something lacking but he is unable to put his finger on what it is, or was, that caused the workers to stay away from the school and lose something that they had set up. Perhaps the running of the school and the democratic control of the learning process was not something that they had consciously sought to achieve, and so when few vestiges of it remained, they did not feel a sense of loss. I think that the other factor was that people just got tired and were happy to hand over the reins to others. It is also the case that those workers who played a role on the steering committee continued to do, personal circumstances permitting.

Reconstruction and Development

However probably the biggest influence on the school, as on everything in South Africa, was the election of the ANC in 1994. The overwhelming gain of a democratic

government, the end of apartheid and promises of a new future would have outweighed all other minor gains. It was also the case that people were exhausted and needed time to recuperate their energies, while waiting to see what the new government would bring. Here a document written at the beginning of 1994 gives a flavour of the transitional phase of the handover of power:

> 1993 has been a year of many historical events for South Africa, the events at the World Trade Centre saw the ultimate adoption of South Africa's first democratic constitution. Millions of South Africans will be voting for the first time for the government of their own choice.
>
> (WSD 1994: 24)

The question of adult education had been addressed by the trade union federation COSATU and the ANC had drawn up proposals on education and training. However it was with the Independent Examination Board (IEB) that the school was most closely related and the setting up a council for Adult Basic Education was seen as a guarantee that adult education would be placed firmly on the agenda. However it was still unclear what priority would be given to adult education nationally.

> What remains to be seen is what slice of the cake will be allocated to the adult education movement in this country. It is common knowledge that approximately half the country population, through no fault of their own, are non-literate. It is further acknowledged that only 1% of that half is being reached by the effort of government, non-governmental organizations and the commercial sector. It should then become the priority of the new government to channel a reasonable amount of its resources to adult basic education. The question of reconstruction and development will not be realized with a mass of non-literate people. Though not a prerequisite, adult basic education is a vital component of development.
>
> (WSD 1994: 24-5)

The school describes how it has responded to the national changes and it rewrites its mission in terms of the reconstruction and development agenda.

> The Workers' School has not remained untouched by the changes that are sweeping through the country. Such changes do have an impact upon us in so far as our role and orientation is concerned. The school like any other non-governmental organization is seriously reassessing its role within the changing environment ... The school took a decision to scale down our programmes to adult basic education and trade union education ... Furthermore, learners will as a result of this, gain necessary skills to effectively participate in organs of civil society and contribute to the broader move towards reconstruction and development.
>
> (WSD 1994: 25-6)

However despite all the internal changes and national developments the school remained committed to liberatory education and this statement formulated in 1994 could equally well have been formulated in 1989, and so is an indication of how the school, to some degree at least, had remained constant to its original vision through all these changes.

> Wits Workers' School is an independent, non-governmental organization specifically established to help workers to be literate in all spheres of their lives: economically, politically, socially and educationally. The school was established as an instrument for worker control and worker liberation ... The Workers' School aims to provide education to workers in a democratic environment, according to the principle of learner control. We seek to provide an all round education which equips workers for the world of qualifications, as well as for the movement for a better future. We combine textbook knowledge with workers' broad experience and interest to provide an integrated living education. General knowledge about the world through the study of workers' history and struggles,

> natural sciences and economics, are combined so that workers can lead fuller and more rewarding lives.
>
> (WSD 1994: 22)

However the most striking thing about this phase of the school history is the shift in focus from the individual school to adult education at a national level. At the beginning of 1994, the school, in common with all of South Africa, was aware that they were living in a time of accelerated change. An internal document begins with the following statement.

> 'Change is the only constant' (WSD 1994:1) ... There are developments where we can actively influence, or struggle to influence them, but are not doing so because of our way of planning ... it is therefore important to understand our everyday tasks within a context that is very dynamic. If we cannot clearly understand this dynamic environment, we won't be able to sustain ourselves.
>
> (WSD 1994: 1)

While recognizing the need to remain alert to the pace of change and the need to be aware of the opportunities that this was throwing up, there was also a very definite shift in the management of the school. At the beginning the facilitators worked out of a sense of commitment to the struggle, broadly defined, and the struggle demanded hard work and discipline without any monetary rewards. In the second phase the school became an employer, and certainly by comparison to other better funded and more established organizations, paid quite badly and expected a lot of its staff. In this new phase a more nurturing approach to staff was adopted.

> At the moment there is a need to further improve conditions of employment in line with the demands placed on staff ... the school should shift from merely demanding commitment and dedication from people without the necessary support that is demanded by staff ... In this regard financial incentives are important ... there should be periodic counselling of staff as part of developing

> staff. This mechanism should deal with the emotional and psychological aspects of staff in terms of the pressures of work and also in terms of individual needs ... Through this the staff would be able to develop holistically.
>
> (WSD 1994: 1-2)

The school thus becomes a place where staff are valued and nurtured, a stance that must have been very seductive to people used to hostility and being undervalued and unrecognized under apartheid, and the emphasis is on what the school can do for the staff as opposed to the earlier emphasis on what the staff can do for the school. It is a clear example of power being reconfigured or repackaged to be more palatable. However there was a sense in which all plans had to be provisional, and there was a need to remain flexible until such times as the new adult education system had been developed and implemented. There was also recognition of a need for an effective management structure at the school with the introduction of management training workshops for steering committee members and the tentative suggestion of an advisory committee.

> This idea of an advisory board should be looked into carefully as it could overshadow workers already involved in the school. It could sap away the confidence of the workers to take control over their education.
>
> (WSD 1994: 6)

In another document the difficulties experienced by the steering committee in 1993 were given voice - lack of finances and financial self sufficiency, restructuring of the school, person power limitations, employment of staff, controlling staff, staff discipline, staff dissatisfaction and demoralization, relations with the university, relations with NEHAWU, drop out of learners, weak organizational structures and a hostile environment for worker democracy and workers' control (WSD 1994: 24-5). There is no doubt that these difficulties within a very uncertain and constantly changing context, made the job of the steering committee very taxing and they had to face up to fact that

they had made mistakes, but given the conditions, and given their acknowledgment of these mistakes, the important role they had played had also to be acknowledged.

> Given the difficult nature of the challenges facing the Steering committee, at times the committee made mistakes which resulted in contributing further to the challenges it faced. For example, the committee throughout this year took a reactive response which was at times not systematic. Despite all these limitations, workers were able to show clear leadership and vision for the school. Indeed their power as workers was clearly illustrated in their review of the school's direction, in their review of staff involvement and delivery ... The steering committee is lead by worker learners to ensure that workers' control happens in practice. More importantly workers leadership is in line with the school's understanding that it is only through control by workers that exploitation and inequalities can be removed from this earth. Those who produce should be the ones who control.
>
> (WSD 1994: 32-3)

Thus the basic philosophy of having workers leading the steering committee was again reiterated and endorsed and its duties spelt out within a broader socialist framework but it is important to point out that this control by the workers was not the control exercised in the earlier democratic phase of the workers meeting, but of worker leaders taking leading positions in managing the school. So while the school had not succeeded in drawing a mass of workers into running the school, they nevertheless did succeed in getting workers to assume leadership positions in the school, even after the democratic structures had fallen away.

However, the National literacy co-operation, of which the school had been a member since its inception, now proposed that all literacy organizations should merge so as to pool resources and improve delivery. However the school registered concerns about the prospect of merger, with worries about losing its identity and its position at Wits, with its

particular worker control culture. There was also a concern about the position of employees without formal qualifications, and it was generally recognized that the workers' control of the organization would be very difficult, if not impossible, if the Workers' School were to merge with other professionally staffed organizations (WSD 1994: 7).

Then during 1994 and 1995 the school took a leading role in piloting the new IEB adult education examinations, with the co-ordinator of the school being co-ordinator of Gauteng ABET task Team - which had been established in all provinces and at national level to advise the ministry of education on the structuring of adult basic education in South Africa. In fact the ABET team worked from the school premises.

> The Workers' School welcomes the political changes in the country, especially as it would lead to the realization of the policy work that we had been formulating in the field of adult education over the past years. The implementation of the new dispensation in education will mean that amongst other things adults will, for the first time, have access to education that is relevant to their experiences. The Independent Examination Board's proposed four levels on adult basic education and their partnership with the Alternative Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults (AESCA) is something that should be welcomed by all concerned since these are the indications of concrete steps towards the standardization of adult literacy and basic education in South Africa.
>
> (WSD 1995: 7)

The school's definitions of its aims and objectives have moved in line with national reconstruction and development with the aim of creating a 'fair and just society' through education, and by enabling learners to participate in local community and trade union structures, while also working on a national level to eradicate illiteracy. The development and piloting of a curriculum specifically designed for adults in South Africa was a major step forward with AESCA developing secondary level education with 'flexible access,

taking into account learner's educational attainments, learning skills and life experiences (ASECA booklet, p. 2 in WSD 1995: 36). Evidence of the school's involvement in the reconstruction programme is again given in a document written in 1995 where education is seen as instrumental in building a democratic society

> 1. to create a fair and just society through the empowerment of non-literate adults by exposing them to basic education through the learner-centred teaching methodology.
> 2. to empower learners to participate in the democratization of society by offering organizational skills that would enable them to participate effectively in community structures.
> 3. to work towards the building of a national organization with a national capacity that would contribute to the eradication of illiteracy. This would be achieved by our participation in the NLC of which we are an affiliate.
> 4. to help build capacity within the labour movement by offering training for union shopstewards.
>
> (WSD 1995: 7)

By 1996 the school's mission statement has shifted more specifically to the eradication of illiteracy through influence on national educational policy

> Wits Workers' School is committed in the quest to eradicate illiteracy through the provision of quality Adult Literacy and Basic Education. In its quest, the school strives to influence Education Policy Development and Implementation.
>
> (WSD 1996: 20)

In the Annual Report the school co-ordinator surveys developments since the ANC came to power

> It is now approximately 15 months since the democratically elected non-racial government was established in 1994. It would certainly be wrong to argue that there are no changes brought by the new government ... In the education sector, it is almost certain that the National Qualifications Authority will go through parliament in due course ... the establishment of a separate division of adult education in the office of the Ministry of education ... is something that should be welcomed with optimism.
>
> (WSD 1996: 22)

While considerable progress had been made the task was enormous. The school introduced a management committee to run the school and the steering committee's role was now to advise on policy issues only. There was also a shift from literacy and numeracy to the concept of 'community education.' The shift is not explained except in so much as the school set up a satellite school at Kathlehong with the Kathlehong Civic Association in line with the RDP. However it seems that most of the energies in the school were engaged in trying to develop and implement some kind of standardization in the diverse field of adult education - 'a widely apparent factor within the adult basic education field is its fragmentation and non-standardized nature' (WSD 1996: 27). While this diversity had its positive aspects in that many original and innovative materials had been developed by literacy projects, others were using materials designed for use with children. The training and selection of facilitators was unclear and there was no standardized assessment or exams framework for ABE. While the School and ABET had been involved in the attempt to develop a systematic structure for ABE, a national consensus agreement had been reached regarding the levels, but not on the content of the various levels. It was recognized that once the broader curriculum framework was in place then assessment criteria, accreditation, materials development and tutor training would follow. The school, alongside the other literacy organizations was involved in trying to pool together all the work of the various organizations nationally, to harness it into a more standardized framework.

The major educational challenge is to lay the structural foundations for coherent effective large scale delivery by

* establishing what the core subject areas should be
* drafting curriculum guidelines in all the core subject areas
* laying out of minimum standard requirements to be met by providers
* ensuring the setting up of nationally recognized assessment and certification facilities by examination bodies
* ensuring that stakeholder and practitioners are able to understand and implement the new curriculum framework through training

(WSD 1996: 9)

At literacy level there were enough materials to use from NGOs but the problem of assessment and certification remained. The IEB had as yet no statutory recognition of its qualifications but this was being negotiated. The school decided to offer IEB exams from July 1995 from levels 1-5, that is from literacy to Matric. The school was thus involved on all levels of developing, piloting and implementing the new adult education which was an enormous task. In terms of public relations the school had moved into the limelight with frequent television and radio appearances and broadcasts.

The SABC has increasingly used Wits Workers' School as a case for public awareness and advocacy on adult basic education. Our learners have participated in the production of the SABC programmes. The school has appeared on
* NNTV's Literacy Alive programme
* Agenda/Newsline programmes
TV1's Good Morning South Africa programme
UKUNFUNDA NOKUBHALA KUYIMPILO (To read and write is life)
Radio Setswana and Radio Zulu

(WSD 1996: 48)

However in July 1996 the school, along with many other non governmental organizations, closed as part of a national rationalization of resources, and consolidation of funds into the newly established Department of Adult Education. In 1994, there were fifty thousand non-governmental organizations in South Africa, many of which had been formed in the culture of resistance and those that were not absorbed into the new bureaucracy, remained an independent critical voice in the new South Africa, contributing to a vibrant civil society.

> Many provide services, from human rights vigilance and development assistance to policy research, which are just as necessary in the new South Africa, as they were in the old.
>
> (*Business Day* November 9 1994, cited in Thompson 1995: 275).

Organizational Change and Social Change

One of the issues that I began investigating at the beginning of this study was the relationship between the changes that occurred in the Workers' School and the changes at national level to see if there were parallels between the two. There does seem to have been a clear correspondence between the two with evidence of shifts in the discourse through which the school defined itself as the school changed. One of the clearest indications of the changes in the school is provided by comparing the discourses in use in the first and the last document. Both documents are in Appendix 1. The first is a record of minutes held in January 1990, when the school had been in operation for over a year. The last document is the annual report 1994-5, written in July 1995, one year before the school closed. Both of these are reports of the school co-ordinators, the first being a record of Trevor, first school co-ordinator, describing what the school was about. The second is written by the last school co-ordinator Pat as part of the school's annual report. The most striking thing about both documents is how focus has shifted from the individual educational project, to involvement in national policy formulation and implementation. In the earlier document the language is simple, the audience is members

of the school and it includes the ideas and voices of the workers. It is a record of people getting together to try to help themselves. The second document starts with an assessment of national policy changes and from the position of someone who is party to these changes and feels that they have to deflect any possible criticism of inaction on the part of the government. The position adopted is one of doing things *for,* rather than *with* other people. To return to Brecht's words, the school, or rather the intellectuals within it, had indeed taken over the leadership but the workers remained cleaning the university, and the vast majority had been excluded, but had also excluded themselves from this policy formation. Therefore by the time the school closed in 1996 things had both changed utterly and remained the same. Firstly with regard to the intellectual and the worker, the workers remained in their jobs while the intellectuals had mostly been absorbed into the new government. Many of those who had pioneered education for liberation were now formulating a standardized national adult education programme based on a certificate system, and one that was appropriate for adults in South Africa. The school itself had in one way become the government in that it was dissolved so as to enable the pooling of resources for this national adult education programme. To my knowledge only one worker, George, succeeded in getting to university and Theo was promoted from a labourer to a ticket collector on the railways. Theo's son was studying at Wits and several of the other workers had children attending the traditionally black universities. Here Dan, speaking in 1996, gives a summary of how things had both changed and remained the same for the workers.

> Now the life of the worker in the new South Africa, yeah, that thing eh, it is not so changed, I mean, we still the same because the way we used to do things before, we are still doing it, nevermind there is something like, there is no more that thing of pushing us like horses, make us like we don't even think for ourselves or maybe I wake up at home and going to work and I don't know why I am there. No, things are now moving, because even our bosses, they say they can't even push us like yesterday, because our rights are there. They now realize that we are the people, they are the people, we mean, we are all together, so

> things are now working. But for a worker generally no, still we feel that something is still lacking for us somewhere, somehow, we got to move on as the workers and do again, try something to bring things to us.
>
> (WSI 1996 TN/D: 162)

Dan thus describes the biggest change as being treated as a thinking, feeling human being but in other ways things remain unchanged for workers in general and he seems to feel a sense of bewilderment as to how to proceed to improve this position.

SECTION 5 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

History of the Workers' School

I have divided the thesis into five sections. In the first I described the study and my own background as a researcher and introduced some of the work of Foucault that I have drawn on in the study. Having sketched the larger picture, I then went on to discuss my understanding of educational research methodology and to describe the approach that I adopted in this thesis, together with a description of fieldwork, archival searches and documentary accumulation and analysis. However, one of the main concerns of this thesis is with educational institutions such as universities, and how power relations are perpetuated through them, and so I looked in some detail at the relationship between apartheid and the university and the position of black students and black workers at the university in this period (see Chapter 4). As this is a study of people excluded from the university who did not have access to the university libraries except in their capacity as cleaners, to place their study in the context of the literature to which they had no access, would seem to obscure this exclusion. Therefore, rather than simply accepting the requirements of the university and going to the library to do a literature review, I have instead examined the Workers' School and related educational, cultural and historical documents for evidence of a filtering down of ideas into the daily lives of the oppressed, and by this means I hope to place their struggle within the context of the literature to which they had access (see Chapter 2).

In this case I have selected two texts - *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire and *I Write What I Like* by Steve Biko - as examples of how literature could be viewed in a research project with liberatory intent. These works have not been viewed in terms of their academic antecedents, but in terms of their success in being absorbed into the

daily lives of the mass of the oppressed, and in some way enabling them to change the conditions that oppressed them. In the first instance I was able to trace the influence of Freire across the educational spectrum from the black consciousness movement in the early seventies, to People's Education in the mid-eighties, to the Workers' School in the early nineties. Biko's influence was more ephemeral and more difficult to 'prove', but I argue along with Pityana et al (1991) that Biko's advocacy of black consciousness was not just an academic exercise, but was absorbed into the liberation movement and became a way of life for the majority of black South Africans in this period, led by the epitome of black pride and dignity, Nelson Mandela. While only a small minority of South Africans actively support the political parties that advocate black consciousness, nonetheless Biko's philosophy went far beyond party politics and was catalytic in the restoration of black pride and dignity to the majority of black South Africans emmiserated by the brutality of apartheid.

Having introduced Freire and Biko, I then went on, in Section 3, to place the Workers' School within the South African historical context and in relation to the history of Bantu education and resistance to it (see Chapters 5, 6, 7). To do this it was necessary to begin archival studies into the history of education in South Africa and to study the history of the white university (see Chapter 4) and of educational provisions for black people from colonial times. I was given access to the educational archives at the University of Natal, Durban. It was evident that it was only with industrialization, in particular with the discovery of gold, that colonialism took on its particular class/race form in South Africa, with class divisions being drawn on racial lines, and perpetuated through an educational system that set out to train black people for subservient positions in society. A struggle by black workers and students against this inequitable education system was first looked at in its historical context before being examined in depth in my particular research into the history of the Workers' School in Section 4.

What I have constructed therefore is an historical account of a liberatory educational project in South Africa, within the broader context of the history of colonialism and resistance to it. I studied the evolution of the Workers' School from an informal group of workers and students to an organization that was instrumental in setting up the Department of Adult Education in the new government and in piloting and developing

the new national adult education certificate programme. I traced the steps in this transformation and explored in some depth the conflict that ran through the school, between education for liberation and education for certification, the role of the intellectuals in the school, the relationship between the intellectuals, the workers and the university and finally the relationship between organizational change and social change (See Chapters 8, 9, 10). I would now like to conclude the thesis by presenting what I believe to be the main insights that the study has revealed.

Education for Liberation

Education for liberation will be interpreted in different ways in different countries and at different times. In South Africa, liberation meant one thing for the majority of the population, that is the ending of apartheid, and liberatory educators could not avoid confronting the wider political context within which all education took place. One of the most revelatory signs of this mass desire for liberation came from an eight year old Soweto school child writing in 1986:

> When I am old I would like to have a wife and to [two] children a boy and a girl and a big house and to [two] dogs and freedom.
>
> (Ravan Press 1986: 55)

Here the child's picture of 'normal life', that could have been written by any eight year old in the world, is imploded by the specific historical circumstances in which this child is growing up. Education for liberation thus has a unique history in South Africa in this period, with the desire for freedom permeating all layers of black society, with the result that education for liberation was first and foremost education that was oppositional in some way to apartheid, and from 1976 onwards, also oppositional to Bantu education with its harsh discipline, rote learning and training for servility. This is not to suggest that there was no variation in the response of liberatory educators in South Africa, and we saw how the liberatory content of education has been variously interpreted by different groupings, such as the overtly political night schools of the Communist Party in 1920s and 1930s (see Chapter 6), the marriage of

Freirean literacy and black consciousness in the late 1960s and early 1970s (see Chapter 2), and People's Education in the 1980s (see Chapter 7). However after the Soweto Uprising, and after years of violent conflict in schools and on university campuses, it became clear that education was a national issue that could not be separated from the struggle against apartheid. In fact school students played an active role in the liberation struggle from 1976 onwards, and in the late eighties when the liberation movement was trying to make South Africa ungovernable, the students boycotted schools with the slogan 'Freedom Now! Education Later!' In this instance the students decided to suspend their education in order to conduct an all-out offensive to gain liberation. We saw how the parents and community leaders in the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee had to try to persuade the students to return to school with the aim of changing the whole education system from within (see chapter 7). Where this movement ran into difficulties was in underestimating the enormity of the task of revamping an entire educational system, in particular one that had such a history of inequality, injustice and violence. What form the new liberatory educational programmes would take, and how they would relate to certification were all issues that People's Education was only beginning to grapple with, when it were banned and virtually the entire leadership detained.

South Africa is also probably unique in having a Freedom Charter that was drawn up by the Congress of the People in 1955, with democratic government being but one of many freedoms that the liberation movement pledged itself to struggle for, including freedom from hunger, unemployment, illness and homelessness. The Freedom Charter's educational slogan, which was reproduced on many t-shirts, banners and posters was 'The Doors of Learning and of Culture Shall be Opened!' While in the Freedom Charter there are pledges of free, compulsory, universal education at all levels for all people, alongside the eradication of illiteracy and the encouragement and development of national culture and talent, there is also in-built into this ideal, a vision of a liberatory educational system:

> All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands; the aims of education shall be to

> teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace.
>
> (The Freedom Charter 1989: 29)

These ideals of the opening up of knowledge and culture to all, and the vision of South Africa as part of 'human brotherhood' is related to the strong culture of non-racialism that developed in the liberation movement in South Africa. Therefore liberatory educators in South Africa did not start with a blank slate but had to find their place in relation to a national liberation movement with liberatory educational ideals that had filtered down into everyday life and speech, and even onto clothing.

Education for Certification

Freire presented education for liberation and what he describes as banking education, as being in opposition to one another and this has been interpreted by some liberatory educators, to mean that liberatory education must of necessity have nothing to do with traditional schooling or certification. However things become less clear cut once these general ideas are related to the lived experiences and desires of people such as the workers at the Workers' School. For the impoverished and dispossessed, certified education is often the only legal means they have of escaping from a life of poverty. What is enticing about education, is that it seems to be within reach. Even if the majority of black adults in South Africa did not have an opportunity to attend school for as long as they might have wished, the percentage of black children getting access to schooling had increased dramatically. The overall effect of this was that schooling was both desired and valued by the mass of the oppressed in South Africa.

It was made even more desirable by the fact that the best schooling had been kept as the preserve of whites and this had the effect of creating a demand for 'proper' schooling, such as the whites had, in schools with facilities and qualified teachers and examinations. In fact many of the workers understand their own lives of poverty as arising directly from their lack of education and some blamed their parents for not allowing them to attend school: 'Our father lost our life before because of those cattle

we were looking after' (WSI 1996 EM/C: 181). Others blamed poverty and the lack of any person to guide them (WSD 1992: 14).

The perception of schooling as the route to material well-being, comfort and security, and the lack of schooling as the reason for poverty can be a profoundly domesticating and debilitating one, in a situation where people are denied access to that very education. Some go so far as to say that they can do nothing without schooling (WSI 1996 TN/D: 151), or indeed that they *are* nothing - 'but if you did not go to school then you are nothing' (WSI EM/H 1996: 167). This leads to a situation in which people place little value on the knowledge that they do have, and overvalue the schooling that they lack. It is as such undermining of people's traditions, oral literature and informal knowledge systems. It is also a source of the specific oppression of the unschooled, and those deprived of the opportunity to complete their schooling in a society that values education. In the Workers' School, education was placed by many workers as second only to food in terms of priority, as can be seen in statements such as 'I give her what I can afford, she eats, she goes to the school, she has the uniform' (WSD 1991: 19).

However it must be said that the people who attended the Workers' School would have been amongst that section of the population that placed the highest value on education. There is little doubt that the vast majority of learners wanted a certificated adult educational programme that would be accessible and relevant to their lives and that would enable them to make good the years of schooling that they had missed out on as children. For the majority of the population education was chaotic, being continually disrupted by boycotts and hampered by poor facilities, inadequately trained teachers and a reactionary curriculum. Therefore any move towards a 'normal' educational system, that previously only whites had enjoyed, would have been welcomed by virtually everybody. If such a programme were available to all those who needed it, and if it were developed as planned by skilled practitioners from formally non-governmental organizations, then there is no doubt that this would have been a huge improvement on the old DET Adult Education programmes. What was desired first and foremost was 'normal' schooling for everyone, with equal educational opportunities for all children and access to literacy and general education

for adults. So while the normalization that occurs in schooling is not always to be desired, the chaotic conditions prevailing in South African education were of benefit to no one and produced what has been called the 'lost generation', that is a whole generation of school children who reached adulthood without any experience of normal school life, and as a consequence, with no educational qualifications. In reality there was not just one, but many lost generations.

It thus becomes clear that there is not a simple dichotomous relationship between education for liberation and education for certification. In the case of the Workers' School, the impulse of the workers in setting up the school was a transgressive and liberatory one, but they did so in order to get access to what Freire termed 'banking' education. As discussed previously, the lack of basic education was one of the most debilitating things for the workers who faced daily humiliations in a society that operated on the assumption that everybody was literate. As a consequence, access to literacy and basic education was experienced by the workers as liberating in and of itself.

Freire tried to combine literacy teaching and liberatory education and while this may be possible at literacy level, in modern industrial society, basic schooling lasts for up to fifteen years and is accompanied by certificates. This presents huge problems for adults who try to make good the years of schooling they missed as children. In order to feel competent, they need to be able to access information for themselves, and this requires at minimum, literacy, numeracy and a degree of technological knowledge. Therefore on returning to school, and with limited time, they need an educational programme that will meet these needs in the quickest and most efficient way possible. In some ways, trying to combine probing basic ontological questions during the acquisition of basic skills is akin to a person learning to drive being confronted with a driving instructor who starts the first lesson with the question 'to drive or not drive?', an approach that would be more mystifying than liberating to most learners.

Training for Democracy

While it is difficult to combine liberatory and certified education in the classroom, it may on occasion be possible to introduce the liberatory element into the running of the organization itself. As the history of the Workers' School demonstrates the running of the school provided the workers with the opportunities to learn many skills and assume responsibility for decision making in all aspects of the school's management. It also provided them with opportunities to meet funders and people in high status occupations such as the Vice Chancellor of the university, staff at various embassies, funders, community, educational and trade union leaders. They were able to attend conferences in different parts of the country and these experiences were on the whole liberatory for those workers involved. That is not to say that there were no problems, but these were balanced by the workers' growing confidence in their abilities to take control of their own lives. It is difficult to say if the problems that arose between the worker leaders and the staff they employed were inevitable and could have been expected due to the reversal of norms, lack of experience and training on both sides, and the confusion that all these issues gave rise to. However the difficulties need to be balanced by the significant opportunities afforded to the workers and facilitators to develop their skills, their leadership potential and expand their life experience, especially for those who had been regarded as minors under apartheid, in fact called 'boy' and 'girl', and who had been destined to lives without any possibility of advancement.

Liberatory Educators and State Education

In South Africa there were progressive adult educators who tried the alternative of introducing liberatory elements into traditional certified schooling. They continually ran into the problem of having to follow the syllabus and to prepare students for examinations. So the liberatory potential of education is undermined by what Foucault described as the slender technique of the examination which he saw as exemplifying how power and knowledge are inextricably linked and perpetuated through institutions in the modern world. Even if the new department of Adult Education in

South Africa were to construct a national certificate in 'liberatory education', the very fact that it would be examined would undermine much of its liberatory potential and turn it from an open-ended uncovering of the world, to a set course with more or less fixed outcomes. However education, whether the acquisition of basic skills or the pursuit of individual interest, despite being presented in the banking format, can nevertheless be used by those who acquire it to further their own liberation and indeed that of others. For example, the leading facilitators at the Workers' School used academic resources to try to elucidate the position of black people at a white university under apartheid in South Africa. Similarly all of us drew on these resources in our teaching and in our work with other organizations. It is therefore not a simple case of certified education of necessity leading to domestication, but it will always be up to the learners how the knowledge acquired in class is used. Perhaps liberatory educators need to accept that this tension is inevitable and that learners will invariably turn education to their own ends, whatever these may be.

As detailed earlier, the Workers' School, along with many other non- governmental organizations, was forced to close due to centralization of educational funding and the personnel, or the qualified among them, were absorbed into the new governmental structures. On the one hand it augured well for national education that such experienced people were absorbed into policy making bodies, but on the other hand, it did mean that the most vociferous, critical and conscious layer of civil society was no longer independent of the government, but was a part of it, with the restrictions on freedom that this almost inevitably involves. It also meant that they were now preoccupied with designing a national certificated system that in Freirean terms would be regarded as ultimately domesticating, but from the perspective of the workers as a possible route to liberation. In South Africa therefore a liberatory educational programme for the majority of the people meant access to the education they had been denied under apartheid, or the freedom to learn what they wanted to learn, and the first step of the liberatory educator had to be to respect these wishes.

The worker, the intellectual and the university

Gramsci states that all people are intellectuals, but that not all people have the social function of being intellectuals (1999: 304). He differentiates between traditional and organic intellectuals, and argues for the function of intellectuals to include that of organizers and administrators (1999: 321). However this distinction is only partly helpful in analyzing the different types of intellectual that emerged at the Workers' School, positioned at it was at the university. Trevor and I were academic staff of the university, albeit only in humble positions, and so could be categorized as traditional intellectuals. However we were also organic intellectuals in that our origins were in oppressed groups and we saw our role as participating in articulating the needs and desires of these groups. Both Bongani and David were honours education students, and while not employed at the university, they nonetheless had access to traditional university knowledge and both lived in impoverished circumstances in Soweto. The distinction between the traditional and the organic intellectual is therefore not clear cut in this situation where the leading organic intellectuals, such as Trevor, David, Bongani and I, all had had access to traditional knowledge but had emerged out of oppressed groups and I would suggest that we occupied an interim position of traditional/organic intellectuals. Thus while the school did attempt to overturn the traditional knowledge hierarchy, that hierarchy was nonetheless reproduced in the school's intellectual leadership in that all the leading facilitators at the school had been university educated. By way of contrast the majority of facilitators in the school had not had any tertiary education and often had had their schooling disrupted. While they had been trained in the struggle, their training had been patchy and, while many were organizationally skilled, they often lacked the confidence to hold their own in intellectual debates and discussions. So while they would also fall into Gramsci's organic intellectual category they did so more as organizers, than as people providing intellectual leadership. Thirdly there were worker leaders at the school such as Theo, who had taken years at night school to try to complete the schooling his parents had been unable to afford. His knowledge had been extremely hard won and it gave him confidence and authority. The school provided a forum for such worker leaders to develop their leadership potential and also provided a base in which they could develop their intellectual strengths. People such as Trevor were able to condense and

to share the knowledge they had gained in their university education with the workers leaders, who in turn were able to challenge this traditional knowledge through their own experiences. By way of contrast to both the traditional/organic intellectuals and the worker leaders, the young facilitators and employees of the Workers' School had not had the time, nor the opportunity, to consolidate or expand on what they had learned at school and in the struggle, but the school nevertheless undertook to train these facilitators. While this led to internal problems in the running of the school, it was doubtless of benefit to the facilitators who would have been otherwise unemployed. In the school there was thus a clear distinction between the traditionally educated, the community educated and the worker autodidacts. Finally there was another type of intellectual. These were people like Elizabeth or Dan who were neither leaders nor organizers but who thought deeply about things and who voiced the experiences of the groups to which they belonged, and who seemed to have a closer affinity to traditional wisdom than academic knowledge. For example Elizabeth's theories about the reason for crime (see p. 75) is derived from her experience of living in poverty rather than from reading theses on criminology, but here again participation in the school enabled her to test her theory against those developed at the university, through the intervention of the traditional/organic intellectuals.

In Chapter 4 I looked at the history of the University of Witwatersrand and at the role of the traditional intellectual and I have discussed the different types of intellectuals that emerged at the Workers' School above. However I would now like to look at the university's role in the creation of intellectuals. Foucault's work is important in this respect. Firstly he attempted to trace things back to their origins in his archeological studies and uncovered no firm foundations for disciplines, but conflicting and changing contests over meanings and practice. One of his most original contributions was *I Pierre Riviere (1975)* where we see representatives of the emergent disciples of psychiatry and medicine putting forward differing interpretations about Riviere's condition. This is related to Foucault's work *Madness and Civilization* (1995) which takes up the idea that there is no original object or concept of madness, but that madness, like many other concepts, is continually contested and changing. In many cases it is in professional training that these shifts occur and Foucault, rather than

looking for the originary concept of madness began to investigate the discursive rules by which disciplines constituted themselves as authoritative.

> Foucault attempted to examine the discursive rules through which knowledge comes to be produced, encoded and displayed. For according to him, it is only by means of such rules that any author can claim a legitimacy to speak, write or authoritatively pronounce on a given topic in the first instance.
>
> (Prior 1997: 64-5)

The university, as the training ground of an increasing number of professions is often the site of this contest over meanings. One of Foucault's central concepts is that of discipline with its dual connotations of control and scholarship, and rather than focusing on the individual, he shifted his focus to the discursive formations through which all of us speak, and to an extent are 'spoken', or are formed. To give an example, if a teacher decides a child has a behavioural disorder, then this identity to an extent creates the child, and in being inscribed in the child's school records precedes the child, so that much of his or her subsequent behaviour will be seen in this light. He argues

> Discourses are practices that systematically form the object of which they speak ... Discourses are not about objects, they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so, conceal their own invention.
>
> (Foucault 1974: 49)

Foucault takes on another meaning when he is read in a colonial context and we begin to look at how, for example, black South Africans were constituted through the various discourses of apartheid, capitalism and indeed progressive discourses such as Marxism. For example, the idea of 'worker' has developed and changed with different societal groupings, and in South Africa what has been called 'the working class' came into being through colonial expansionist and industrial practices, which forced the local inhabitants into wage labour. This concept of the working class, again much contested, has been used by Marxists to subvert capitalist practices, much in the same way as Steve Biko subverted racist discourses.

> We must make allowance for the complex and unstable powers whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.
>
> (Foucault 1982: 101)

We saw how Biko took one of the founding concepts of apartheid, that is blackness, and turned it around into a source of pride and dignity. Another example of subversion of discourses 'from within' came from the facilitators at the Workers' School who did not prepare their classes and called it 'learner centred education', which in turn contested the liberatory educational discourses in use at the school.

From a Foucauldian point of view the university is a power-knowledge citadel which in South Africa had been built specifically for the white population. In Chapter 4 we saw how the university claimed its authority from Graeco-Roman times and how one of the most striking aspects of Wits was its alienation from its African hinterland and its identification with European, in particular British civilization, the resources of which it guarded for the white minority. In the Freedom Charter the demand that 'The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Open!' suggests that knowledge and culture were envisaged as being held behind the heavy locked doors of the white universities. While this could be dismissed as an elitist view of knowledge and culture, in another sense this was true, in that the knowledge that was held at Wits was knowledge that had passed through the sieve of western disciplinary matrices and had been ratified as 'real' knowledge, through various procedures designed to separate the wheat from the chaff, or spurious from genuine knowledge. Access to this knowledge was by way of an educational system that excluded the majority of the population. The intellectuals at the school were among the first from their communities to gain access to this knowledge and through their position at the school were able to critically assess its strengths and limitations. This knowledge was claimed to be 'universal' but had in effect been based on the exclusion and exploitation of large sectors of the world and access to this knowledge was restricted to the privileged few.

Given these circumstances one of the roles of the radical intellectual is in opening access to this knowledge, and in a limited way the establishment of schools for manual workers on university campuses does help to breach the exclusivity of the university. A second role could be in contesting the basis of much disciplinary knowledge by testing it not just in the sieve of the disciplinary practices that have evolved in the university, but through the sieve of the lives and experiences of those who have had no part in its composition, but who nevertheless are often subject to its practical consequences. To give a practical example, if university lecturers were to present their current theories to interested lay groups, and individuals, communities and interest groups could in turn present their perspective to academics, then this could not only be mutually beneficial, but also go some way towards democratizing knowledge. A third role for the radical intellectual is in contesting the conventions of academic writing which excludes the majority of the population, and in extending the basis by which knowledge is ratified to include those about whom the knowledge has been constructed. A fourth role could be in being continually vigilant about how knowledge is used and whose interests it serves as knowledge, like education, can be used to subjugate or to liberate humanity.

Organizational change and social change

Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) outlined some of the ways in which institutions such as prisons changed as ideas about society changed. In this study I have been looking at how the Workers' School changed in relation to the rapidly changing conditions in South Africa in this period. We saw how the participation of the workers in decision making had been eroded and control of the school had passed from the workers to the staff and an external management committee. From one perspective the story of the Workers' School is like a train going backways along a track. It goes from transgression to normalization to governmentality rather than, as one would expect in the narratives of liberation, from a situation of oppression to transgression. In fact the history of the Workers' School moves from the democratic to the administrative to the governmental, and in this case the democratic phase of the

school does not coincide with the election of the ANC, but rather predates it by several years. The history of the school can be read as one of normalization

> By normalization Foucault means the establishment of measurements, hierarchy, and regulations around the idea of a distributionary statistical norm within a given population - the idea of judgment based on what is normal and thus what is abnormal.
>
> (Ball 1990: 2)

The school started out as a democratically run project, very much a child of its times in South Africa, where at that time in every sphere of life new organizations were developing with the collapse and overthrow of the old apartheid structures. This period was typified by mass participation and involvement, or grassroots democracy in practice. So at that time in South Africa, organizations such as the Workers' School were 'normal'. However, as has been demonstrated, when the school closed in 1996, it had become a 'normal' school, in the Foucauldian definition of the term, or a 'banking' school to use the Freiean terminology. This transformation has been one of the foci of this thesis. The introduction of examinations into the school has been discussed at length, as has the dividing and hierarchical practices that accompanied it. Foucault argues that control is enforced by way of three simple mechanisms - hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination (Foucault 1977). As explained, the school started as a type of Freirean culture circle and developed into a school for workers, led and governed by workers. This was a reversal of the normal hierarchical relationship, with the workers who were the students at the school, in control of it, and there followed a period of conflict between the workers and the employees with each challenging the other's right to control. In the end the school reverted to a situation whereby it began to change its practice in accordance with the demands of funders and tried to present an image to the outside world which would be looked on favorably by those in power, thus conforming to what it believed to be the expectations of those in positions of hierarchical observation. As discussed earlier it was also a period when the school became a 'normal' school and the facilities and security that accompanied this was generally welcomed by the workers. While it would be simplistic to argue that the school was normalized by way of Foucault's

three mechanisms, nevertheless all three were evident in the process of transformation.

By 1996 the majority of these previously oppositional democratic structures had been handed over to, or had been absorbed into the new government, and while on a national level the country was run democratically, the level and diversity of democratic participation which emerged in the anti apartheid struggle had diminished considerably. So one of the issues that interest me is the contradiction of democracy that this period of South African history appears to present, with the ubiquitous democratic participation of the dispossessed without state power of the early days, being replaced by state power, but without the same degree of mass democratic participation under the ANC government. It was as though the people literally handed over the power and the decision making to the government. This raises questions about the relationship between *democracy*, or grassroots democratic participation and control by the impoverished and dispossessed, as for example, occurred in the early years of the Workers' School, and *Democracy*, that is the handing over of control to expert representatives, or what the last years of the Workers' School represent. While from Foucault's point of view there would be little point in trying to define democracy, many political theorists and historians have nonetheless done so. For example Arblaster argues that at the root of all definitions of democracy lies an idea of governments existing by means of popular support and authority. There is no doubt that the ANC government had the overwhelming support of the South African people. However I would agree with Carr who argued that

> To speak today of the defense of democracy as if it were defending something that we knew and had possessed for many decades or centuries is self deception and a sham. The criterion must be sought not in the survival of traditional institutions, but in the question of where power resides and how it is exercised. In this respect democracy is a matter of degree. Some countries today are more democratic than others. But none is perhaps very democratic, if any high standard of democracy is applied. Mass democracy is a difficult and hitherto largely uncharted territory; and we should be nearer the mark,

> and should have a far more convincing slogan, if we spoke of the need, not to defend democracy, but to create it.
>
> (Carr 1951: 76)

Thus for Carr the type of democracies that exist in America or the UK are not to be judged by their histories, but by an examination of their democratic practice, and the reality is that there is very little direct participation by the mass of the people as evidenced by electoral apathy and disinterest in the political process. By way of contrast, South Africa did have a mass democratic movement and as the Workers' School demonstrates, some degree at least of mass democratic participation, albeit only in opposition. One of the problems in South Africa was that the mass democratization process that developed in the eighties and early nineties did not manage to maintain its momentum, and by the time of the elections in 1994, people such as the Wits workers were effectively excluded, and also to an extent had excluded themselves from direct participation. While South Africa has one of the most radical constitutions in the world and in this period enjoyed a vibrant civil society, it is still less than what could have been, had all those who had participated in the mass democratic movement been able to sustain the same degree of democratic participation of the early years of the school. Instead there was what Gramsci has called the Interregnum (Gramsci 1971: 276) or a period of protracted negotiations at governmental level from which the mass of the people were excluded. This was followed by the elections. One of the most striking images of the beginning of the governmental phase was the long lines of silent voters, standing seriously in single file waiting to cast their votes for the first time. This was a marked contrast to the jubilation that accompanied the release of the political prisoners from jail three years earlier. I would argue that this control that voters exerted over their own bodies and this induction into the 'proper democratic' practice of the individual casting of votes in silence, could be read as being symptomatic of this normalization process with its accompanying dividing practices. So while the majority of the population had gained freedom from apartheid, and South Africa was for the first time governed by a democratic government with the support of the mass of the people, it could be argued that freedom had also been in some sense diminished through this process of parliamentary democracy and that freedom of movement, gesture and expression had

been curtailed. It was not that it had been curtailed by outside oppressive forces but that people were governing themselves. Instead of toyi-toying, people were putting Xs into boxes in individual voting booths, and waiting to do so in single file, and in silence. So on the one hand this could be regarded as the final gesture of liberation, but on the other it could be seen as the introduction, into the previously ungovernable South Africa, of the systems of normalization and governmentality. Through the electoral process, the ANC inherited the existing parliamentary institution rather than 'creating' one based on the mass democratic movement. Whether such a thing is possible or indeed desirable is the topic for another thesis. Nevertheless it is undoubtedly the case that the vast majority of black South Africans gave their full hearted support to the new government and saw the election of the ANC as the birth of a new era in South African history in which all South Africans could participate in building a more just and equitable society, as described by the worker poet Qabula

> We have come a long way
> with our efforts
> with what we are doing
> We have scraped through broken glass
> and sharp bottles
> We have been suppressed
> so we would never dare raise our heads
> We have broken through the rubble
> and we are making our very own world
> At the dumping ground

(Qabula 1989: 4)

Appendix 1 Table of Workers' School Minutes 1990-1993

Date	Register	Meeting	notes
29.1 1990	14	Workers'	
29.1 1990	10	Workers'	
29.1 1990	6	Workers'	
5.2.1990	11	workers'	
5.2.1990		Workers'	
19.2.1990	10	Workers'	
19.2.1990	21	Workers'	
19.2.1990	5	Workers'	
26.2.1990	6	Workers'	
26.2.1990	18	Workers'	
27.2.1990		ad.hoc co	
2.3.1990		ad.hoc co	
5.3.1990	24	Workers'	
5.3.1990	13	Workers'	
5.3.1990		Workers'	
12.3.1990	14	Workers'	
12.3.1990	19	Workers'	
12.3.1990		Workers'	
19.3.1990		Workers'	
19.3.1990	18	Workers'	
19.3.1990	10	Workers'	
23.3.1990		Committee	
26.3.1990	10	Workers;	
26.3.1990		Workers'	
2.4.1990	10	Workers'	
2.4.1990	14	Workers'	
9.4.1990	11	Workers'	
9.4.1990	10	Workers'	
20.4.1990	10	Workers;	
23.4.1990	5	Workers'	
23.4.1990	12	Workers'	
27.4.1990	13	Workers'	
2.5.1990	14	F.T. Stud	
4.5.1990		Workers'	
5.5.1990	10	Workers'	
7.5.1990	14	Basic Lit	
9.5.1990		F.T. Stu	
14.5.1990	13	Committee	
14.5.1990	15	Workers'	
14.5.1990		Workers'	
25.5.1990	10	Committee	
28.5.1990	12	Workers'	
28.5.1990	7	Workers'	
4.6.1990	10	Workers'	
4.6.1990	10	Workers'	
5.6.1990		Sat.sch.	
8.6.1990	10	Committee	
11.6.1990	17	Workers'	
11.6.1990	11	Workers'	

Date	Register	Meeting
15.6.1990		Committee
18.6.1990	12	Workers'
18.6.1990		Workers'
25.6.1990		Workers'
25.6.1990		Workers'
9.7.1990	5	Workers'
9.7.1990	3	Workers'
16.7.1990	5	Workers'
23.7.1990	7	Workers'
23.7.1990	6	Workers'
27.7.1990	10	Fin.Comm
30.7.1990	14	Workers'
30.7.1990	9	Workers'
6.8.1990	20	Constitut
13.8.1990	10	Workers'
13.6.1990		Workers'
13.8.1990	6	Workers'
17.8.1990		Facilitat
20.8.1990	15	Workers'
20.8.1990	7	Workers'
10.9.1990	14	Workers'
10.9.1990		Workers'
10.9.1990	9	Workers'
17.9.1990	13	Workers'
17.9.1990		Workers'
17.9.1990	7	Pol.Ed
1.10.1990	11	Workers'
1.10.1990	13	Workers'
15.10.90	12	Constitut
15.10.90	5	Constitut
22.10.90	12	Workers'
23.10.90		Union/stu
28.10.90	9	Workers'
5.11.1990	6	Workers'
5.11.1990	8	Workers'
11.11.90	9	Workers'
19.11.90		Workers'
23.11.90		AGM
13.12.90	6	Planning

Date		Register		Meeting	
21.1.91		14		Workers'	
21.1.91		8		Workers'	
25.1.91		7		Committee	
28.1.91		18		Workers'	
28.1.91		11		Workers'	
31.1.91		12		Committee	
4.2.91		9		Workers'	
4.2.91		11		Workers'	
4.2.91		17		Workers'	
15.2.91		9		Committee	
16.2.91				Sat/Sch	
22.2.91		16		Committee	
25.2.91		13		Workers'	
25.2.91				Workers'	
1.3.91		22		Workers'	
1.3.91		6		Committee	
8.3.91		15		Committee	
9.3.91				Facilitators	
15.3.91				Committee	
18.3.91		24		Workers'	
19.3.91		12		Workers'	
22.3.91		10		Committee	
23.3.91				Workers'	
25.3.91		19		Workers'	
8.4.91		14		Workers'	
15.4.91		17		Workers'	
15.4.91				Workers'	
22.4.91		20		Workers'	
24.4.91				Sat/Sch	
29.4.91				Workers'	
13.5.91		16		Workers'	
17.5.91		14		Committee	
20.5.91		14		Workers'	
24.5.91		12		Workers'	
27.4.91		12		Workers	
3.6.91		14		Workers'	
7.6.91		14		Committee	
10.6.91		12		Workers'	
14.6.91		9		Workers'	
17.6.91		10		Workers'	
24.6.91				Workers'	
15.7.91		13		Workers'	
17.7.91		12		Committee	
22.7.91		18		Workers'	
26.7.91		12		Committee	
26.7.91				Workers'	
29.7.91		14		Workers'	
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2.8.91				Workers'	
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6.8.91				Workers'	
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16.8.91				Workers'	
16.8.91		17		Workers'	
19.8.91		17		Workers'	
19.8.91				Committee	
23.8.91		13		Workers'	
23.8.91				Office	
26.8.91				Workers'	
27.8.91				Office	
30.8.91				Committee	

Date		Register		Meeting	
20.1.1992				Admin.M	
24.1.1992				Committee	
27.1.1992				Committee	
4.2.1992				Admin. M.	
9.2.1992				Office Mm	
14.2.1992				Plan.Wks.	
16.2.1992				Par.Sat.S.	
17.2.1991				Facilitator	
21.2.1992				Committee	
23.2.1992				Employ. c	
24.2.1992				Workers'	
26.2.92				Admin. M.	
28.2.92				Committee	
2.3.1992				Workers'	
6.3.1992				Committee	
9.3.1992				Workers'	
11.3.1992				Job Desc.	
13.3.1992				Committee	
16.3.1992				Workers'	
18.3.1992				Admin M.	
23.3.1992				Workers'	
no date				Workers'	
27.3.1992				Committee	
1.4.1992				Sat.Sch	
1.4.1992				Admin M.	
8.4.1992				Admin M.	
10.4.1992				Committee	
15.4.1992				Admin M.	
22.4.1992				Admin M.	
27.4.1992				Workers'	
28.4.1992				Admin M.	
4.5.1992				Workers'	
15.5.1992				Committee	
17.5.1992				Par.Sat.Sc	
18.5.1992				Workers'	
20.5.1992				Admin M.	
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5.6.1992				Committee	
8.6.1992				Workers'	
10.6.1992				Admin M.	
17.6.1992				Admin M.	
19.6.1992				Committee	

Date		Register		Meeting	
21.6.1992				Sat.Sch	
22.6.1992				Workers'.	
24.6.1992				Admin M	
1.7.1992				Admin M.	
3.7.1992				Committee	
6.7.1992				Workers'	
8.7.1992				Admin M	
10.7.1992				Committee	
19.7.1192				Workshop	
20.7.1992				Workers'	
22.7.1992				Admin M.	
7.8.1992				Committee	
12.8.1992				Admin M.	
17.8.1992				Workers'	
19.8.1992				Admin M.	
26.8.1992				Admin M.	
31.8.1992				Workers'	
9.9.1992				Admin	
14.9.1992				Workers'	
16.9.1992				Admin M.	
23.9.1992				Admin M.	
25.9.1992				Committee	
28.9.1992				Workers'	
30.9.1992				Admin M.	
7.10.1992				Admin M.	
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26.10.92				Workers'	
4.11.92				Admin M.	
10.11.92				Workers'	
11.11.92				Admin M.	
13.11.92				SteeringC	
16.11.92				Workers'	
18.11.92				Admin	
21.11.92				AGM	
23.11.92				AGM	
25.11.92				Admin M.	
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no date				Steering C.	
no date				Parents	

Date		Register	Language	Meeting	
8.1.93				Workers'	
13.1.93				Admin M.	
18.1.93				Workers'	
25.1.93				Workers'	
27.1.93				Admin	
29.1.93				SteeringC	
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12.2.93				Steering	
16.2.93				SatSch	
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1.3.93			Zulu	Workers'	
4.3.93				Admin M.	
8.3.93			Zulu	Workers'	
10.3.93				Admin M.	
15.3.93			Zulu	Workers'	
17.3.93				Admin	
21.3.93			Zulu	Workers'	
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24.3.93				Admin M.	
29.3.93				Workers'	
21.4.93				Admin M.	
28.4.93				Admin M.	
5.5.93				Admin M.	
12.5.93				Admin M.	
19.5.93				Admin M.	
26.5.93				Admin M.	
2.6.93				Admin M.	
14.6.93				Workers'	
18.6.93				SteeringC	
27.8.93		9		Steering C	
30.8.93		16		Workers'	
13.9.93		19		Workers'	
15.9.93				Admin M	
22.9.93				Admin M.	
29.9.93				Admin M.	
18.10.93				Admin M.	
18.10.93		12		Workers'	
20.10.93				Admin M.	
27.10.93				Admin M.	
28.10.93				Committee	
30.10.93		16		Sat.Sch.	
3.11.93				Staff	
10.11.93				Staff	
17.11.93				Staff	
25.11.93				Staff	
27.11.93					

Appendix 2 Record of Interviews

Mary McKeever interviews with **Trevor Ngwane**, ANC councillor and ex co-ordinator and founding member of the Workers' School 1988-1993

Date: 4. 8.1996

Duration	**Location**
Interview 1 : 90 minutes	Workers' School and Coffee Lounge at Wits
Interview 2: 90 minutes	
Interview 3: 90 minutes	
Interview 4: 45 minutes	
Interview 5: 45 minutes	

Mary McKeever interview with **Rosina and Freddy**, two cleaners at Wits

Date 5..8.1996

Interview 6: **Duration**: 45 minutes **Location**: C leaners' room at Wits

Mary McKeever interview with **Elizabeth Mkwayi**, cleaner at Wits

Date 5.8.1996

Interview 7: **Duration** 90 minutes **Location:** Lecture Theatre at Wits

Mary McKeever interview with **Hellen Tabudi**, cleaner at Wits

Date 5.8.1996

Interview 8: **Duration:** 25 minutes **Location**: Cleaners' Broom Cupboard

Mary McKeever interview with **David Diale**, Department of Adult Education and facilitator at the Workers' School 1991-1995

Date: 6.8.1996

Interview 9: **Duration**: 90 minutes **Location**: Wits Workers' School

Mary McKeever Interview with **Dr Kanti Naik**, Senior lecturer in Mathematics at Wits, among first Indian students at Wits, among first black academic staff; member of Wits Senate

Date: 6.8.1996

Interview 10: **Duration** : 45 minutes **Location**: Dr Naik's office at Wits

Mary McKeever Interview with **Theo Ndaza**, ticket collector South African Railways

Date: 6.8.1996

Interview 11: **Duration**: 30 minutes **Location**: Wits Workers' School

Trevor Ngwane Interview with **Dan Moghale**, cleaner at Wits

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 12 Duration: 45 minutes **Location:** Dan's home in Soweto

Trevor Ngwane interview with **Dan Moghale**, cleaner at Wits

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 13 Duration: 30 minutes **Location:** Dan's home in Soweto

Elizabeth Mkwayi Interview with **Catherine,** laboratory Assistant Chemistry Department Wits

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 14 Duration 20 minutes **Location:** At Wits

Elizabeth Mkwayi interview with **Ethel**, cleaner at Wits

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 15: Duration: 10 minutes **Location:** At Wits

Elizabeth Mkwayi interview with **Clarabelle,** cleaner at Wits

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 16: Duration: 20 minutes **Location:** At Wits

Elizabeth Mkwayi interview with **Susan**, Team Leader, Cleaning Department

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 17: Duration 10 minutes **Location:** At Wits

Elizabeth Mkwayi interview with **Ishmael**, laboratory assistant, Wits

Date: circa October/November 1996

Interview 18: Duration: 10 minutes **Location:** At Wits

Appendix 2.1

Written Responses to Questions

Date: circa October/November 1996

Jeffrey Nyandeni, Laboratory Assitant, Physics **(WSI 1996 EM/J: 165)**

Gladys Boikanyo, Team Leader Cleaning Department **(WSI 1996 EM/G 166)**

Lucas Thapane, Electrician **(WSI 1996 EM/L : 167-8)**

Hellen Tabudi, Cleaner **(WSI 1996 EM/H 169-70)**

Ethel Ndlovu, Cleaner **(WSI 1996 EM/E 171)**

Rose, Laboratory Assistant, Chemistry **(WSI 1996 EM/R: 172-3)**

Appendix 3 Interview Questions for Discussion / Piloting at the School

1. Can you tell me about things that you learned at home from your parents or grandparents?

2. When did you first learn about apartheid?

3. Did you go to school when you were young?

4. What did you learn as you were growing up?

5. Can you tell me about Bantu education?

6. Did you learn things at work? (from fellow workers, training on the job, trade unions?)

7. How did you become involved in the Workers' School?

8. Can you tell me what you did at the school?

9. What stands out in your memory about the school ?

10. Were you involved in any protests or strikes at the university?

11. Were you, or people close to you involved in the struggle for freedom?

12. What was the struggle for? What were people struggling for?

13. Looking back over the past few years what is the most important thing you have learned? (in the school, at work, at home, in South Africa)

Appendix 3.1

Final Core Questions

These questions were reduced to the following after discussion and piloting with Trevor and with Rosina and Freddy, two of the workers who had most difficulty communicating in English.

1. Can you tell me about your education as a child?

2. Why did you join the Workers' School?

3. What did you do at the school?

4. Were you involved in any protests or strikes at the university?

5. Have things changed in the new South Africa?

Appendix 4 Analysis of Minutes

Workers' Democracy at Work in the School

I have included these two extracts from the minutes, the first extract from the 15 January 1990 and the second extract from 21 January 1991. The first extract was written by me in my capacity as minute taker. The second was written by one of the workers, George. In the first I record Trevor's words as he explains to the workers why the school was set up and its basic philosophy. In the second extract, one year later, one of the workers is taking the minutes and as such provides an example of the skills for democracy taught by the school. It is also an example of one of the workers describing to other workers how he understands the school. 'The workers' school is a place where workers can proud himself to open his mind to know everything.' George has absorbed the ethos of the school and here describes it in his own words, with pride and learning being the aspects that he selects to emphasize. He explains the democratic nature of the school decision making process 'to have a meeting at school; we want to control the school well and to look were the thing is gong wrong. To solve any problems with people. To get any difference point from the people.' This indicates that George felt in control of the school and was participating in its democratic practices in explaining the purpose of the meeting and indicating ways in which problems might be solved.

Minutes 15 January 1990

Appendix 4.1
Workers' School Minutes

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Planning Document
3. Peoples views and questions
4. Orientation Week

1. Welcome: Trevor explained what the school is about. It is a workers school. It was started at the university because it was felt that our mothers and fathers should not work here and not get the benefit of education. It is not a school like a DET school where there is just a teacher who tells you what to do. In this school it is a school to help people deal with problem in their lives.
There is no big person in the school like a principal. We all decide together what is to be done. Everything is discussed together and then we decide what should be done.
There was a question about the number of subjects we do each day. Mama Elona explained how the school worked - the workers do one subject a day but the full time students might do more than one.

2. Planning Document: Everybody got a copy of Plans for 1990. We met and made plans and we couldn't decide on things until they were discussed. Most of it wasn't discussed except We read the document. It was said we need a syllabus and we must stick to it, even in the Intermediate Class.
Mama Helen felt that the facilitators will want to be paid. It was felt that we should ask the union to help with both facilitators and workers. We can work tomorrow on going to the unions so maybe they can announce in the meetings. We must first go to the unions.
On the question of workers facilitators Mama Helen pointed out that when you teach you are also learning.

Appendix 4.2
Workers' School Minutes

MINUTES BY CAST GEORGE

21 Jun 1991

MAJOR Destion Bhoo Meeting

- The workers school is a school for workers were workers can proud himself or to ~~op~~ open his mind to know everything. The workers sometimes he/she don't know how to read and write; the workers school can teach such kind of people to read on his own and to write. The workers school facilitators they don't get ~~the~~ paid and they get paid if the company sponsers the workers school.
- To have a meeting at school; we want to control the school well and to look were ~~than~~ the thing is going wrong. To solve our problem with people. To get any difference point from other people. The eleven o'clock meeting ~~people~~ they have ~~dece~~ decid to have one o'clock meeting with ~~other~~ all people.

School committee — the we have not conclud
- Learning process Next week.

C Biology standard 10 they want the temporary facilitators and Biology std 8. The one o'clock meetings to have the vernecular subject and Biblical studies they want it to std 8.
- Notice for the facilitators

Appendix 4.3 Workers' School Annual Report 1994-5

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR"S REPORT

Patrick j. Mathebane

INTRODUCTION

It is now approximately 15 months since the democratically elected non-racial government was established in 1994. It would certainly be wrong to argue that there are no changes brought by the new government. Changes in health, agriculture, justice, social welfare sectors etc. In the education sector, it is almost certain that the National Qualifications Authority and the South African Qualifications Authority will go through Parliament indue course.

The National Qualifications Authority will bring a fundamental change and development in the field of educational qualifications, most notably adult literacy and basic education, a sector that is known for its lack of national norms and standards.This move will bring adult literacy and basic education in the same equivalency as formal schooling. The South African Qualifications Authority is a body that would ensure the implementation of the NQF.

The establishment of a separate division of adult basic education in the office of the Ministry of education and the appointment of Mr. Khetsi Lehoko as the chief director for ABET is something that should be welcomed with optimistism. Mr Lehoko is well known to most people within the progressive mass democratic movement as an able adult

Appendix 5

Three interviews with Hellen Tabudi (Reliability)

I have included these extracts from three interviews conducted with the same person. I interviewed Hellen when I was in South Africa. Elizabeth interviewed Hellen and then asked her to write her answers to the questions. Although the answers are not identical, there is a high degree of correspondence between all three interviews in all questions except question 6 which concerns changes in the new South Africa. In the first two interviews Hellen discusses how the new government is much more open and accessible and so it is easier for people to see what is happening. She gave a different answer when I asked her the same question and she describes how with the lifting of sanctions people from overseas are now visiting, and people from South Africa are now going overseas to compete in sport. My interview was just after a black ex-miner Renfrew Christie had just won a major race and so Hellen incorporated that into her answer. This shows that answers can vary depending on what is happening in the outside world at the time. I would argue that this is not an indication of unreliability in that both changes are accurate and she just happened to discuss different changes with me and with Elizabeth. Secondly the changes in work at Wits were described in similar terms by several workers. Her final answer stating that black people are not so good I understand to refer back to several conversations we had had in the past about corruption in employment practices whereby black supervisors would employ their relatives and friends. Hellen generalizes her experience to state that black people do this, but white people do not. It is also possible that she may have been trying to demonstrate to me that she did not think that all black people were good or that all white people were bad. So it is possible that my whiteness may have influenced her answer on this question but as this is only one section of one question, I do not think that this indicates unreliability in the interviews.

Appendix 5.1 **Written Interview with Hellen Tabudi** (Cleaner)

1, When I was young, the ~~our~~ education was fine, and it was wonderful I was filling great it w –

1, when I was young Education was fine, and all the children must start to School at the age of eight years, but I Started at ages often.

I have pass my Standard VI in 1958, and I Could not go feather ~~bec~~ becouse of ie many. My perents were very poor they Couldn't aford to let me to the Other School, at Our times there were no Secondaries School at the rural areas

2.) I have join wekers School to ~~up~~ great my Standard and to talk better English and to understand each other. becouse ~~many~~ ~~pe~~ English language is the Oficial language At work we alway make meetings, we ~~recive~~ the news letter at wits, there is many things that we have to understand that can help us, but if you did not go to School then your are nothing. That is why I try to join the workers School.

3, Mary. I got something I gane alot, but we did not have inought time to learn, Our time was very

Short - for me, and ~~I~~ ~~Always~~ my School in 1958. it is very long time

4, Yes I did involve in strikes and protest for ~~no~~ dimiding mony in ~~up~~ university.

5, I go back to School as an adult. becouse want to understand ~~wha~~ what are they talking about in the meeting So that I can answard the questions. if is needed.

6, Thing are not yet better in better in new South Africa they are still complicated.

7, Marry, Before ~~th~~ things were hided, people never know whether the government is wrong or wright, becouse the goruament its selfves were hiding their ploblemes. Their wrong there were not alowed to be ~~publ~~ published to the peoples.

The new goruament of nower days. Their wrong and wright people know: very ~~a~~ quick becouse their wrong and wrights they are alowed to published to the people. that is the comfition to people, we don't know the difference between New South Africa and old South Africa.

That is the end. 170

Appendix 5.2

Extract of Interview with Hellen Tabudi and Mary McKeever

Hellen: Maybe they think that the people they will know everything you know, and understand. So now Bantu education you can't understand anything you see, and you won't learn anything and in Bantu education it was not good.

Mary: So can you tell me about your school. Was it nice? Was it strict?

Hellen: Oh it was very nice, if it was before. They were learning children, like before it was very good. Because I can see the other people that they were before, they know everything. You see, so now

Mary: So what about Bantu education, what was it like?

Hellen: It wasn't right because to learn in your language it is not right, you can't know anything.

Mary: OK. Can you tell me why you became involved in the Workers, School?

Hellen: I came to the Workers' School to learn more, and to understand the other, maybe to know anything. The thing is that you are working with and maybe if you, they have written something on the doors, you can understand you see. And then maybe when you are in the meeting and then maybe when they talk, they talk something in the meeting, you have to understand because when you don't undersand it is not nice. And then maybe they can just give you some other letters

and you can't read. So I was just trying to pick up my education.

Mary: Say in your job, is your job better now.,or is it just the same ?

Hellen Now in my job, I can say it's better because they are no more following us and they have tried to call the meetings and to tell us that we have to be free. Anyway I think the things will never get to be just so fast. Maybe they will come very slow, you know things when they talk about the things like that they can't just make it just fall, very fast. They will take time but it better because they are not following. The things that people they don't need ... is following people at the job.

Mary: And as a black person...do you think that it is good now in the New South Africa?

Hellen: Well you know now maybe the people, the black people they not so good. I cansay that they are very good, no. Because people, other people they, they when the people have like I say, when I say I am a boss, they you know, they, they just saying that. You know people they just make themselves bigger than you, they can see you like you are nothing but you see,anyway what can we do? At the work, I can say people, the black people are not like the white people. The white people they say something, they mean it, but some other ways, they can talk in other ways maybe they don't show you, that this one I don't like. I can take my relative to work there and not that one and you know like that.

Appendix 5.3

Interview with Hellen Tabudi and Elizabeth Mkwayi

Elizabeth: Mary it is Hellen Tabudi

Elizabeth: Let's start. Can you tell me about your education when you were young?

Hellen: Yes I was young, education was fine. All the children must start the schooling at the age of eight or ten. I have passed my Standard Six in 1958. I could not go further because of the lack of money. My parents were very poor. They couldn't afford to let me. About times there were no secondary school in the areas, so the schools were very far, waste money.

Elizabeth: That's all, O.K. Question no 2. Why did you join the Workers School?

Hellen: I have joined the Workers school to upgrade myself and to talk better English and Afrikaans, to understand each other because English language is the European? language and at work we always make meetings and we receive the newsletters at Wits. There is many things that we have to understand that can help us and if you didn't went to school then you are nothing. That is why I tried to join the Worker's School

school then you are nothing. That is why I tried to join the Worker's School

Elizabeth: All right. question no 2. Can you tell me what you did there at the Workers School?

Hellen: I did not, our time was very short for me and I left my school in 1958, it is very long time

Elizabeth: Question no 4: Were you involved in any protests or strikes at the university?

Hellen: Yes I did involve in strikes to protest in university

Elizabeth: and...Hellen did you get money that time you were demanding money?

Hellen: No everytime when we need money then we have to make strike and toyi- toyi and we have to

Elizabeth: OK Hellen. Let's go forward. Question no 5 Why did you go back to school as an adult? I do back to school because I want to understand what they talking about in the meetings so that I can answer the question if it is needed and to gain something about that.

Elizabeth: Question no 6: Are things better in the new South Africa?

Hellen: Things are not yet better in the new South Africa, not completed because things are, you never know what is going on about things like the old ways we didn't really know..

Elizabeth: Last question, what were like before?

Hellen: Before things were hided. People never know whether the government is wrong or right because the government itself was hiding their problems and their wrongs were not allowed to be published. The new government of nowadays nationally, they are wrong and right, people knows very quickly, they are publish, the things they got a right to publish the things. But we don't know the difference between the new south Africa and the old south Africa.

Elizabeth: You can maybe understand that in the old South Africa maybe there was something, maybe happened to me, you can still understand there is maybe something now.

Hellen: The old South Africa you never know what is happening so they were hiding and they do everything wrong and you have to say yes. You don't know what is wrong. The things they are never published. Now things they are published and now we can understand the people they are doing wrong. Quickly they just tell the people, these people they are doing the wrong. They pinch money or they do this or they don't do this, so they might waste the money so we know very quickly and other old government, you don't know that they were wasting the money, or they were using the money carefully, nobody knows. Only they know themselves what they are doing. I can say that maybe they were doing a secret, but today they keep on telling us that,

Appendix 6

Three set of minutes taken on the same day 12. 3. 1990 (Different voices inscribed in the minutes)

I have selected these three sets of minutes from the same day as they illustrate the different interest groups in the school and how these are inscribed in the school documents. These three meetings all have the same agenda, or in true democratic fashion, an optional chair's guide. The first item on the agenda is people's views on the school's practice and in the second and third sets of minutes this item appears to take up most of the meeting, or certainly those aspects of it that the minutes takers recorded. In this case the first set of minutes is written by me and is tied into the agenda and is quite general and is written from the perspective of an overview of the school. The second set is written by a full time student and the third set by a worker. The second and third sets of minutes are remarkable as they concentrate almost exclusively on the practical concerns for teachers, classes and exams of the full time students and workers respectively. The history of the school was thus constructed on the basis of minutes taken by all the different groups in the school whose interests when not explicitly stated, are nevertheless inscribed in the minutes.

Appendix 6.1 AGENDA 12 March 1990
Workers' School Minutes → optional chair's guide

1. Welcome / Siyabingelela
2. People's views on the school practice
   Imibono ngomsebenzi esikoleni
   - general views
   - attendance
   - time-table / subjects
   - books
   - exams
3. Democracy in the school
   UKubambisana esikoleni
   - why democracy
   - how to have democracy
   - school committee
   -
4. Teaching Methods Workshop
   - date and time
   - content & preparation
   - teaching teams
5. Reports / Imibiko
   - Saturday School
   - Exams
   - Finance
   - National Literacy Conference
   - Zulu class

:3

Minutes 12 March 1990 11 o'clock meeting

1. Mama Gloria wasn't here so we decided to proceed with Trevor as the chair. Every Monday we have a meeting at the school to discuss the AGENDA. We would like if other people can also join in drawing up the AGENDA.

2. People's views on the school practice:
Mama Matilda asked for a suggested list of reading books esp. for English and Afrikaans so she can read at home. ~~Mama~~ Baba Phineas said that we should make a list of books for all subjects so that if people can buy them they can study at home. Language is most important - English Afrikaans Zulu, Venda etc. Every facilitator should make a list of books for every class in relation to the levels of the people in the class. We had a report from The British Embassy that Norman Ling had put in request for books for us for R5000. He said he would get in touch with the committee and they would be in touch with us this week.
Question about how many subjects one should do in Form 1. We have only space for 4 subjects - Tue-Fri. People can try to make arrangements for other subjects in the afternoon. Mama Matilda can't come after work but can come on a Saturday. There was a suggestion that people can ~~come~~ do 3 subjects one year and 3 the next.

3. Democracy in the School:

The school is here for people to give their ideas so that it isn't just the Principal who sets the rules. So we feel that everybody should be part of the running of the school. People could say their views on the issue of democracy. Mama Susan said that it was very important that we hold together and help each other when we have problems. Baba Phineas feels that it is truly important to discuss together as it is only through that that we can build.

Mary said that the school is changing and growing. There are a lot of new facilitators and new workers and we need to build the school so that the workers keep running the school and we all continue to discuss everything to do with the school.

The question is how it is to come about. The question of the Monday meetings. We need to discuss this. We don't know the problem people have. Maybe the workers who can't come they should let people know. For the workers they have a sewing class. They changed it because of the Maths class on Tuesday. They changed the sewing class to Monday so they wouldn't miss Maths.

The question of the meetings for the full time students. The only problem is a clash with their other subjects. Otherwise they are happy to attend. There is a school committee and we think the full time students can have a place on the

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school committee. They were asked about this. They can have a meeting during the week and discuss this and elect their rep for the committee.

4. Teaching Methods Workshop It is necessary that facilitators have a forum where they can discuss how to facilitate lessons. We can discuss this and share ideas. We are think of a Sunday because of the Saturday school on Saturday. We need to get the feeling of the facilitators. It can be discussed at one. It was said that it was also important that the workers come. The workers know the things that work and that don't work. They can give ideas. There was different times that suit the different people and we can discuss it at 1:00. Tomorrow we can decide on the time.

5. Report back.
Saturday School: Every Saturday there is school where children come for standard 6 – standard 10. There were a number of problems – first problem was the lack of facilitators. The second problem was a space crisis. Last Saturday we tried to have classes despite the problems. They had a small meeting where people discussed ways of working together – democracy. There should also be a committee for the Saturday school.

Exams Report back on JMB applications. The full time candidates have decided to register with JMB if this possible as there is no chance of registering for DET and work in November. There was a question about the workers registering and we have

Financial Report Shadrack didn't come as he is at work. He will come at 1:00 and it was stated that it is important that everybody knows how the money in the school is being used.

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REGISTER

12 March 1990
11h00
THE WORKERS' SCHOOL
GENARAL MEETING

. Gwoeje Methula
2. Rosina Nonyukela
3. Jeanette Tawe
. JOSPHINE SHOCO
NATALIE HARVEY
. GLORIA GEXE
7. Matilda Maruping.
) ,MPhino mabeba
1. Phineas Mumya'
9, Susan Lebello
'LEAA RATSHEFOLA
2. M. Mkewe
3. Bongani Shiaguemyano.
14. Trevor Ngwane

Appendix 6.2 Workers' School Minutes

THE WORKERS' SCHOOL → 1 — 2 MINUTES GENERAL MEETING 12/3/90
13h00

① Is better to do three or four subjects this year and four next year. You can have a greater chance to pass three or four sub.

② For December exam std 10. We are late to register. but a student can register at private school. and for JMB the letter we send tommorow.

③ JMB Two year and failed do you have a chance to write ΔET.
(if you have money and enough chance to prepare)

④ Democracy in the school.

- Full time studen must elect their representative in the School committee
- The full time student must have a meeting this week to elect the Representative.

⑤ Chose a day! Friday. 1h00

Dr We must just look how the workers are to represented

Str This coming Sunday must be a teaching meth workshop. 9h00

– Disscussion in the workshop.
if you have a idea to be discussed in the workshop have to hand it to. Trevor, Bongs. Gweje, Mary.

NO financial report. because Shadrack was not here.
9.1

explained everything to me

Dion → Contact people in JHB

— not in Canada

↓

Haven't got hold of them

Talk to them during the week → Recommend he gets in touch with you

Will hear from us

Dolly

REGISTER

General Meeting
13h00

12 March 1990

1. Peter Mommburu
2. SAMUEL Tshabalala
3. BRIDGET MHLANGA
4. David Diale
5. Vusi Khumalo
6. Doreen Makhaye
7. IRIS MOKARENG
8. Ruth Ramalepe
9. Lekwna Melitte
10. Sonia Learmont
11. P. J KHOLO
12. Sweje METHULA
13. MARGARET MAKHERE
14. BARBARA MOKAWENA
15. ESTIA PAPADOPALUOS
16. Rebecca Tsoletsi
17. Ishmael Malau
18. Samuel Malalleda
19. Bongani Shongwenyana

Appendix 6.3 Workers' School Minutes

Agenda 3:00 12 March (1990)

1. welcome
2. people's views on the school practice
   imibono nayomsebenzi esikoleni

(a) Book: we do not have books for subjects

(b) subjects: we only have three subjects
Maths, History, English; Science
we do not have business economics and economics
we need to do two subjects a day. If this could be arranged properly.

(a) contd: noted that facilitators could recommend books and give the list to students to buy those books:
Phillip suggest that the facilitators could also help to buy those books ie learners give them money to buy books.

Books* recommended should relate to the syllabus for those who want to write exams. ~~request for books~~ — Std 8

Table and chairs still a problem. More classes must be opened. ie relate to Saturday School.

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time extension: that the school should close at 6pm to allow for maximum study. Someone coming at 5h00. Khulekani staffe to help him from 5h00 to 6:00pm - anyone interested in Basic study could ask for Khulekani.

3. (Democracy in the school) skipped due to time

4. Teaching Method workshop (Reported & people felt they donot have a problem.

5. Reports.

Language: Venda language requested for std 8. Khulekani can teach Zulu.

subjects: problem that subjects tend to die out with time.

11h00: we donot have a definite programme this are cases that are comes and we are not (Babalwa)

Khulekani says he can teach Zulu on introduction during the history slot

Teaching method

discussions in class about a particular subject should be matched with other skills eg reading & writing exercises in class emphasised.

Appendix 7 Draft Constitution

THE WORKERS' SCHOOL

DRAFT CONSTITUTION

We are a workers school. The school is run by the workers for the workers. We are employed at the University of the Witwatersrand, but the school is open to all workers who want to learn. In the school we have the workers, the students, the children, the facilitators and a co-ordinator.
We have three different projects -
The Workers' School - for the workers
The Saturday School - for children from the townships
Full-time Matric programme - for young people unable to study at school

1. Everything about the school is discussed at weekly general meetings of all the workers and facilitators.

2. A steering committee is elected each year to carry out the decisions taken at the weekly meetings.

2a. On the steering committee there are seven workers from the school, a representative from BUWA, a representative from NEHAWU and the school co-ordinator.

2.b. The members of the steering committeee are elected at an Annual General Meeting of the school.

2.c. The co-ordinator of the school is elected at the AGM. He or she is accountable to the general meeting of the workers and facilitators

2.d. Members of the steering committee will hold the following jobs : Sponsorship, Finance, Teaching Methods, Facilitator Representative, Teaching Resources , Chair Person and Secretary. It will be the Job of the Steering Committee to set up subcommittes.

2.e. Any number of people can join the Steering committee to serve on any of the subcommittees.

2.f. All members of the steering committee must report back everything to the general workers meeting.

2.g. The Full Time Matric students and the Saturday School children can send representatives to the Steering Committee.

2.h. It is the Job of the steering committee to ensure that all members of the school act in a comradely spirit and obey all the school rules. The committee will investigate complaints against members of the school but will not undertake any disciplinary action against any member of the school without consulting the workers meeting.

3. All workers who are employed pay R2 joining fee and R5 a month membership fee. This fee is compulsory. Any worker who does not pay the fee must explain their case to the member of the steering committee responsible for Finance.

3.a. All full time students must pay R2 joining fee and R5 a month.

3.b. All Saturday School students must pay R2 joining fee and R5 a month.

3.c. A financial statement must be produced for the workers meeting at least once a month.

4. The co-ordinator and the facilitators are volunteers. If we get money all the facilitators will be paid. Until that time facilitators are helped with transport costs if they need it.

4.a. How much money the facilitators get and how often they get paid depends on how much money we have.

4.b. All money raised through sponsorship will belong to all the workers in the school and all the workers will decide how the money will be spent.

5. In the Workers School everybody is equal. It doesn't matter if you are black or white or a man or a woman. But it is a workers school and we want the workers to progress. We want many workers to be facilitators and we will try to encourage them.

5.a It is the facilitators job to discuss everything they are teaching with the workers. It is the workers job to help the facilitator with planning the work.

5.b. The facilitators must know that it is not just the workers who are learning but the facilitators are also learning. The workers can teach the facilitators many things.

5.c. We are not just trying to pass examinations but we are trying to help workers make their voices heard in the trade unions, in the civics, in the townships and all the places where workers gather.

6. If changes are to be made to the Constitution, then a Special Meeting will be called. No changes can be made without a two-thirds majority in favour of the proposed change.

Appendix 8 Workers' School Petition

(FEB 1991)

WORKERS' SCHOOL PETITION

If you clean a place of learning, it is only fair that you get some share in the learning. But to share in the learning, the workers need a school. If a school is to run properly the school needs a co-ordinator. Therefore we the undersigned support the workers on campus in their request for a paid co-ordinator post at the Workers' School.

NAME	SIGNATURE	JOB	ORGANISATION

Appendix 9 Correspondence from the University

Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050, South Africa

Telegrams: Uniwits Fax: (011) 339-4215 Telephone: (011) 716-9111

20 July 1992

Mr T Ngwane
Coordinator
The Workers' School
UNIVERSITY

Dear Mr Ngwane

Thank you for your letter of 3 July 1992.

I now understand that you wish to preserve an adversarial relationship between the University Administration and The Workers' School. I find that unfortunate, but it will not prevent me from continuing to try to find funding for you.

I have managed to acquire R9 500,00 from uncommitted funds donated to the University which I can make available to The Workers' School. Please let me know whether you are prepared to accept this amount.

Yours sincerely

R W CHARLTON
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

RWC/sa

cc Mr B A Dickson

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
Private Bag 3, [illegible] Telegrams: Univers [illegible]

Fax: 339-2223
Ref:
Enq: Mr B A Dickson
Tel: (011) 716-3538

25 January 1993

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

THE WITS WORKERS' SCHOOL

The Wits Workers' School was created by workers employed by the University. Its primary function is to assist fellow workers to improve their qualifications at the secondary level. The University, in terms of its Private Act, may only be involved with education at a tertiary level and is therefore not entitled to create a forum for secondary education. Nevertheless, the University has provided the School with accommodation, furniture, equipment and administrative support. It is not, however, able to provide the School with financial support from its own income and consequently the School has to raise its own funds. Any donations made to the School may be channelled through the University Foundation in order that the donor may derive the maximum tax benefit.

B A Dickson
Deputy Registrar and Head of Personnel

BAD/imt

Appendix 10 Workers' Employment Committee Reports

1992 February 23

Reports.

The Reports from Commission Of Inquiry
The Commission of inquiry took a resolution that three people Must be Employed in the Administrative Office on full time basis

that is:

(1) Co-Ordinator
(2) Secretary.
(3) Finance.

It was not the aim of the commision of inquiry to reduce the number of the office workers but it was forced to build up the job discription by the following Reasons

(1) Shortage of Money.
(2) The high number of the office Workers.
(3) Complains of the Workers: the demand for Effective learning and teaching.

The Question of paying Office bearers Equally pay, was rejected by the Commission of inquiry because it was stated above that the School has not enough money to pay all the Office bearers Equally.
It was agreed that the Salary Must be differentiated according to their Experience. It was agreed that three people will be regarded as the full time teachers who had good knowledge of teaching. Who had at least past Std 10 and Obtain good results and Experience

in adult Education.
It was hoped by the commission of inquiry that Three facilitators can be Employed Temporarily by the School Such facilitors Must be those Students who came to learn at School on the other ~~other~~ hand they will be paid a certain amount ~~by the School~~ and trained by the school. The commission decided that it will be wise to report ~~St~~ these matter to the Steering Committee before they report back to the general Meeting.

Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee recomended that new Employees will have to ~~Singa~~ sign a contract which will be binding to them. It was agreed that the Co-ordinator will rearrange the report from Commission of Eqiury in order to give a clear report to the general Meeting. ~~formulate the School policy and~~
The Steering Committee was Mandated to Secrutise the minutes from Hap workshop Step by Step in order to formulate the School policy and this will be reported to general from time to time before the before the school policy is fanalised.

Closing time 18:30.

Type 4

Special Commission of Employment

present Abel Makhunga
Joe Mehuni
Theo Ndadza
Sehatch
Terence Ndau

After a long discussion and study on the informa given by the Comrades who are interested in Serving the school. We finally came up with ~~abou~~ eleven Comrades ie office bearers including facilitat originally we were instructed to come up with Nine Successful Applicants. Unfortunately there ~~wo~~ is to little money for too many people. We would like to say that we regret that we could not get all the Comrades to fill all teaching posts fulltime. furthermore we would like to thank all ~~these~~ Comrades who showed interest in the School and we also appreciate their Cooperation. We had quite remarkable responses from all Comrades. We also noted that we have an awful lot of people with remarkable skills and talent, people who have studied very important Courses at Univers to name just a few. We have Comrade Ouper Radithlolo who has a BA. ped. and an Honours. English. Such a Comrade would be of grea to our School. and Comrade George who has a a BSC. We regret that we could not accomodate these Comrades.

OFFICE WORKER

1. Trevor
2. Sonto / Kaguso ½
3. Collin David ½

FACILITATORS

1. Bongi / Literacy History AFL
2. Jacob / Maths Science AFL
3. Ephraim / English / Commerce

TRAINEES:

1. Bep / Literacy
2. Mandla / English
3. Thembi / Science
4. Philemon Physics Science.

Appendix 11 Special Meeting Finance

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS MONDAY 27 JANUARY 1992 at 1.00 and 4.00

SCHOOL MONEY

Last year the school spent over R70,000. We only paid people to work at the school from August. We still have R70,000 in the Wits account but by May all the money will be gone. And we have no promises of any more money. The funders will wait to see how we manage the money they gave us before giving us any more.

Many comrades are worried about how the school funds are being used. It is very important that this problem is sorted out as soon as possible.

1. LOANS

It is school policy that no loans are given. Facilitators are allowed to have a salary advance up to R50 a month. If they have not paid by the end of the month, the money is deducted from their salaries.

There are many reasons for our policy of no loans :

a) When funders give us money we sign a contract which says how the money will be spent. If we sign a contract saying we will buy books, then we must buy books. This contract is legally binding. If we use school funds for any other reason we are breaking the law.

b) If funders give us money they have a right to see our books. All money coming into the school and all money going out of the school has to be recorded in our books. If we give out money in loans then we will have broken the contract and they will give us no more money. They can take us to court for breach of contract.

c) People have too many problems - this one has a problem with rent, another with funeral, another with fees, another with a phone bill etc etc. We cannot use school money to help with these problems. We can make a collection, but we cannot take the money for books, or paying the facilitators for this. Anybody can see that in a very short time all the money will be gone and we will have no school.

c) On Monday 22 January 1992, a facilatator came to the workers' meeting and asked for a loan of R700 to go to Cape Town because her mother had passed away. The meeting did not know that this facilitator had already got R300 in December and R200 in January and also they didn't know how much money we have and where all the money is going. The meeting decided to give her R400 although many people were not happy to go against the school policy As one of the comrades put it " If you have a door, you come through the door, you do not come through the window".

When I heard of this, I did not sign the requisition and decided to call this special meeting today. Maybe I did wrong because I went against the decision of the meeting. But the meeting went against the school policy - it is for the workers to decide.

2. INTERIM PAYMENT OF FACILITATORS

I do not understand why we were asked to pay six other comrades R200 each for the month of January. We are already paying seven comrades to work at the school. We have four full time workers, Trevor, Bongani, Kagiso and Sonto. We have three part time workers, Colin, David, Muntu and we have one person Moss who does piece work for R100 a month. There was no teaching for over two months and surely these comrades, employed by the school, could have done all the work that was necessary. It is clear that the school cannot afford to pay thirteen people when it is closed for teaching.

3. CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

I have heard that six people at the school got a Christmas present of R300 each. If this is true it is wrong. In December the school was closed and the wages bill was over R6000. It seems to me we are not using our funds well. It is no good to use a lot of money up when the school is closed and run out of money when the classes start.

Every member of the school must please attend Monday's meeting. We must work together to make sure that if we make a door, every member of the school, must use that door.

Mary McKeever

Appendix 12 Two sample pages from School Newsletter (JAN 1992)

History of the workers' struggle

by T. Ngwane

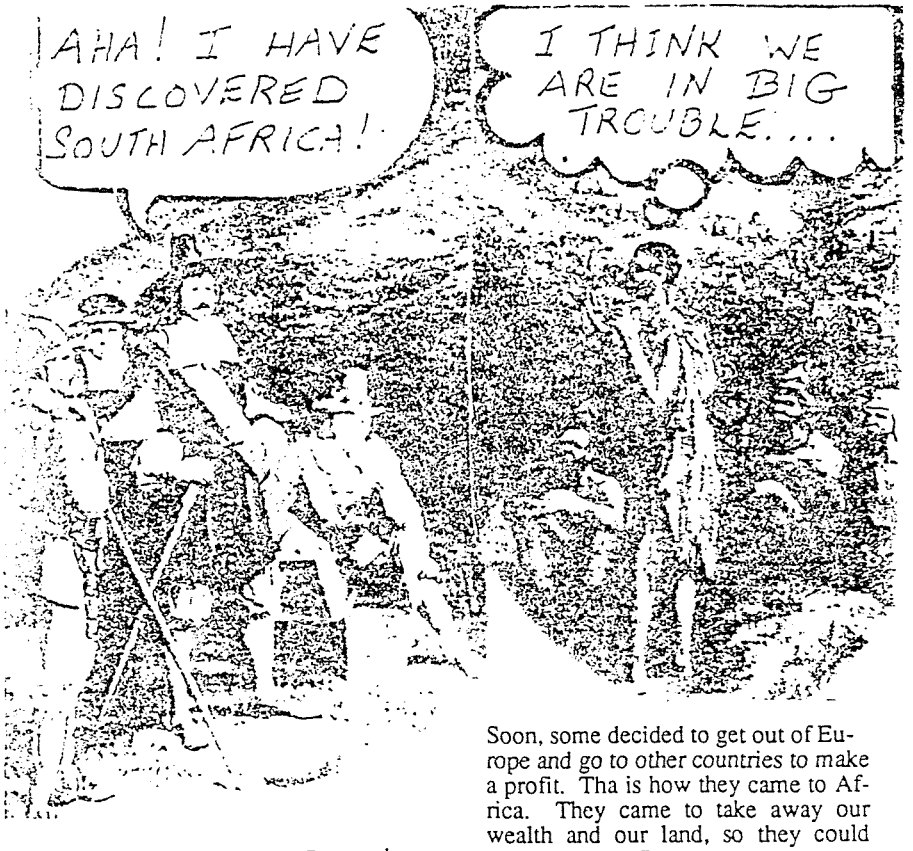
The history of the struggle for liberation in South Africa is written in the blood of the people. The blood is red. So is the flag of socialism. The red flag which will do away with the rule of profit and exploitation.

There will be no low wages, retrenchments, hunger and suffering. Our struggle for liberation is a struggle against capitalism.

where did it all start ?

A long time ago in Europe, a new type of people came to exist. These people spent all their time trying to make money. From morning till night their factories and mines, their offices and companies were busy making profits. Everything which was made was sold to make more wealth for this new class of people.

These people were the capitalists. The bosses. Ongxowankulu. Their way of life of making money all the time, is capitalism.
The history of the rise of capitalism in Europe is also written in blood. The blood of the peasants. This is so becouse the capitalists can only make good profit by making other people work for them. In Europe, just like in South Africa before capitalism, people used to live on the land. They used to farm and eat what they planted. The capitalists were therefore short of workers. So they took away the land of the peasants and forced them to go to towns and work in the factories. Many died of hunger in the towns. Many died in the mines and factories because they worked too hard and ate too little. Many died because they tried to get their land back. This is the history of the rise of capitalism in Europe.



When you work for a profit you become greedy and selfish. You can neverr be satisfied. Profit means that you must always increase your wealth. You must make more money than the other person. This is what happened to the new class of capitalists in Europe. They fought among themselves to make more profit.

Soon, some decided to get out of Europe and go to other countries to make a profit. Tha is how they came to Africa. They came to take away our wealth and our land, so they could make more profit.

NEXT ISSUE: JAN VAN RIEBEECK ROBS THE KHOISAN PEOPLE

How to bring peace

by D. NGWENYA

It is important to note that men who were generals of the police and army-during the Botha era of total onslaught are still in these positions during the De Klerk period of reform. I think this opens the way of the modus operandi behing the recent killings. I t also make one wonder whether the Peace Accord will work with the present army and police officials still in control. It will be no use until we call for the disbanding of the SAP and SADF so that we can start on a clean slate with regard to violence.

The following recommendations, I think, will be the way to start on a clean slate :

* Give all senior personnel in the police and army retirement and bar them from in anyway being advosors or whatever.

* Let respectable elements of all parties be involved in the screening and appointment of any new generals in the army and police. This will ensure impartiality in the status of the police.

Imfundo Yabadala

by H Buthelezi

Ngimukise duze nezithelo
Ngiyozwa nokunyakaza
kwamagatsha ,
Ehaya imvunge yolwazi,
Ebelesel' ebonakala
ngokwethaba
Njengesineke
sensizw' iqomisa .

Ngisondeze ngakuyo
ngiyibheke,
Kade ngim' ehlane
ngikhangezile,

Khathisimbe
ngofinyelel' eduze,
Isinyakaza ngokunye
ngomhlomunye,
Ngivul' izandla nginxusile....

Ngise ngakuyo ngiyozikhalela
Ngithambis'inhliziyo
esilugqinsi,

Ngob' isigaya okungenambithwe
nalidlalibhavuma
Nempel' ayiyocangcathwa lenhliziyo,
Ngob' isigaya nokungenambithwe
muntu.

Ngiholele duze ngiyozigculisa,
Ngesih' esinjengesejuba ngikhangeze
Izithelo zemfundo ngizigculise,
Ngobumnen' obunjengobejuba
ngikhangeze,
Ze nami ngikwitiz isilumbi
njengoPitilitifu.

Ngibhekise kubo ngokungenamahloni,
Ngigqilazwe imicabang' efojisayo
phela,

Enhliziywen' ingidlavuza
okomzwangedwa,
Umphefumul' uklavuzwa
ukungaphumuli-

SENGIGXADAZELA
NJENGOMLUMB' UQOBO
LWAKHE.

Problems in my life

BY P. LEKOPA

I talk about my life from the beginning. I had a hard life in South Africa. I carried a dompass. Even if I went to buy something from the shop I had to carry a pass. If I had forgotten the pass at home the policeman arrested me and sent me to prison for six months. If I was out of work I went to the pass office to put the stamp called a springbok in the dompass.

If I didn't have a springbok stamp I would be arrested. I suffered from 1964 to 1975. In 1976 I joined the ANC movement. We fought the government, many comrades were killed by the police, but the struggle has never stopped.

I like the ANC because it fought for the human rights. Every year we commemorate the death of our comrades on March 21 and June 16

FORWARD WITH THE STRUGGLE !!!

Ta ku xambila

by cde Matimba

Hi lembe ra 1968 ku xa mbila ka mina ndzi ya tirha a Pretoria. Ndzi fike ndzi kuma ntirho a Pretoria a femeni ya C C M ka masipala.

Ndzi tirhile vhiki rinwe. Va ndzi hlongola vaku a ndzi swi koti ku vulavula xilungu. Ndzi ya ka masipala a hofisini. Va fika va nzdi bela xitembe vaku a ndza ha laveki a Pretoria. Va ndzi nyika 45 minutes ni va ndzi nga ha ri kona la Pretoria.

Kambe hikwala ka ku hlupheka ka mina a ndzi fambangi. Ndzi suke ndzi ya a Maraba Stad. Ndzi ya lava kona ntirho. Ndzi wu kuma. Mhaka yi nga humelela yi kulukumba. A yi ri yo khomitwa ndzi hlongorisiwa hi maphorisa vusiku nnahlekani. Hi siku rati Nwendzamhala, 1968, hi mahlambandlopfu maphorisa vava va fika la andzi thsama kona a phele ndzava.

Siku rero ari ndzi Pelelangi. Madyambu ya kona ndzi vuyi ndzi ya a Pretoria A, ndziya teka xitimela ndzi kongoma ka rikwevhu a Giyani

Kuva kuhela ka ntirho.

Appendix 13 Sample of Adult Education Training Documents

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION

BE FRIENDS - A SPIRIT OF COMRADESHIP IN STUDY

LEARN FROM EACH OTHER - EACH ONE TEACH ONE

FRANK AND FREE DISCUSSION BETWEEN EQUALS

LET THE LEARNERS DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT TO LEARN

LEARN TOGETHER THROUGH DISCUSSION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

RECOGNISE AND BUILD ON WHAT THE LEARNERS KNOW ALREADY

DO WORK THAT IS RELEVANT TO THE LEARNERS' LIVES

LINK UP EVERYTHING YOU DO WITH LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

ENCOURAGE EACH PERSON' S CONTRIBUTION

DON'T CONFINE DISCUSSIONS ALONG NARROW SUBJECT LINES

ENCOURAGE INTEGRATION BETWEEN SUBJECTS AND BETWEEN LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM AND LEARNING FROM LIFE

life is the adult learner's living textbook

(WSD 1990: 36)

90: 32

RESPECT

HOW CAN A PERSON LEARN BUT FROM ONE WHO IS HIS FRIEND ?
How do you show respect for another person ?
- never tell people what to do
- decide together on what is to be done and when and how
- listen seriously to what they say
- never laugh if anybody makes a mistake and discourage all laughing at mistakes
- encourage the class to criticise your teaching
- be open to all suggestions coming from the class
- encourage each person to participate
- respect the person's right to remain silent if they want to
- don't look at what is wrong in an answer but what is right
- don't correct mistakes in spoken English
- write what the people say on the board
- ask people how they would like their work to be marked ?

EXPERIENCE

LIFE IS THE ADULT LEARNERS LIVING TEXTBOOK

- get learners to discuss the topic - have they ever come across this before ? Has anything happened in their lives that relates to this ? How is this thing we are learning related to life ? How does it fit into life outside ? What is the relevance of it to the workers lives ? All teaching must be based on reality as it is experienced by the learners. As you go on you will discover that people in the class know an incredible ammount of things. You will find that the workers questions are much more profound than those of people whose minds have been deadened by school. Allow discussions to go freely. Don't expect the workers to accept the narrow subject boxes into which our learning has been compartmentalised. It is fine in a Maths class to discuss the planets and the stars. Its fine in a history class to discuss things like What is water ? It is fine in a biology class to learn how taps and valves work. It is fine in an English class to discuss how you can transplant a forty year old tree and how you can ensure how it survives. And its fine to discuss sex education in Economics.

RELEVANCE

- it must relate to what is relevant to the workers lives
- in literacy start with the person's name and address
- In numeracy work with money to teach counting
- in science work on things that we all see in our daily lives
- in history look at peoples own history
- in a language class, find out what they nned the language for - eg for communicating, for writing letters, for filling forms etc

LEARNING AND TEACHING

What is the relationship between learning and teaching ? How do you teach a child to walk ? How do you learn to ride a bicycle ? How do you learn to read and write ?

The idea of teaching in schools - that teacher has all the knowledge which they then give in a parcel to the pupils.
People only learn if what they they are learning relates to what they know already . People only learn if the thing to be learned makes sense. People learn on their own and by their own efforts ie walking is not something I can give to you - walking is something each child learns for themselves. We learn by doing.

(WSD 1990 : 37)

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