



Issue No. 67

February 2003

Feel-Good Statistics – Hoodwinking the Nation.

...Re: 2002 Matric results

**APDUSA VIEWS
P O BOX 8888
CUMBERWOOD
3235**

e-mail: malentro@sai.co.za

FEEL GOOD STATISTICS – HOODWINKING THE NATION

Introduction

For a people who have been oppressed for centuries and who have been stripped of their land and cattle and means of livelihood; who have been stripped of all dignity and reduced to a state of absolute penury; who have had to perform all the dangerous menial work or work that is Sisyphean in nature¹; a people who have been killed like animals and who have been beaten, insulted and brutalised; a people who have been deliberately deprived of all opportunity to behave and perform as normal human beings - for such people, nothing is more important than to feel the process of rehumanisation through political freedom; a feeling that they are equal to any other group of human beings and that given the opportunity, they can be good as if not better than other people.

It is this burning desire for recognition by the rest of the world which makes ordinary South Africans want to come out FIRST in all sorts of activities ranging from sport to the discovery of the cure for Hiv/Aids. But the active participants in these activities are because of the very nature of those activities few in number. But education is an activity which involves hundreds of thousands of persons at any given time. Hence the desire to do well and excel in such an activity is intense.

EDUCATION AS A YARDSTICK OF PROGRESS.

One of the most important yardsticks to measure progress of a community is the performance of its students in formal education. Good performance is a source of pride and dignity not only of the students and their parents but of the entire community. It is indisputable that a creditable performance by members of a school is a community effort. It is not only the students, teachers and parents who are involved. Other members of the community also help to ensure that the school premises and its movable resources are not vandalised or stolen; it is they who ensure the safety of the students who have to attend classes at night or after school hours.

¹ Sisyphus a king of Corinth in Greek mythology who was punished for cheating Death by pushing a huge boulder up a hill and on reaching the top, the boulder would roll down. This process was to go on forever.

Poor performance not only demoralises the students and the parents who carry the financial burden of having a son or daughter at school, but also the members of the community in general. It casts a poor reflection on the whole community.

What applies to a community applies with equal force to a people on a national scale.

Hence for the sake of the pride and dignity of a people who until very recently were the most oppressed in the world, it is of vital importance that their children perform well in school.

Hence it became necessary for the government to ensure that when the matric results are published, the people should not be made to look for a place to hide their heads in shame. This is precisely what happened when the first matric results were announced in the democratic South Africa. The pass rate among the African schools was under 40%!!

It was also necessary for the government to avert anger and severe condemnation in the years to come from the voting public for poor matric results. It was also a manoeuvre to conceal the failure of the government and its education ministry to make genuine progress in the education of the majority of the African people.

This then gave rise for the need for FEEL GOOD STATISTICS in matric results. The directive went out from the Minister of Education that he expected a 5% increase in the pass rate each year.

Now there were two ways to increase the pass rate. The one is a concerted effort by all the role players – government, members of community, teachers, students and parents – to improve results by dedication, discipline, hard work, sacrifice by working after hours and vacation time, timeous availability of all necessary resources.

The other way to increase the pass rate is to fake the results by encouraging students to enrol for the standard grade matric, holding back weaker students from writing matric, by lowering the standard required to pass, by inflating marks etc.

With some notable exceptions, the general trend was adoption of the dishonest route.

HIDING THE TRUTH.

The first thing the Ministry of education did was to abolish the publication of matric results according to the various population or racial groups. This was in variance with the govt's well known tactic of resorting to what it calls "demographics" – a euphemism to refer to people in terms of their racial categories as set out by the notorious Population Registration Act which was the cornerstone of apartheid. What then was the reason for the reluctance to use such a popular word?

All the results of the matriculants were to be put into one basket and then shaken and mixed until the racial origins of the results disappeared. From this mixture a national percentage of passes would be worked out and announced. The results on the provincial level were likewise to be worked out.

The clear purpose of this move was to hide the truth from the public and the world about the expected poor performance of the African matriculation students. More on this later.

THE MATRICULANTS IN THE SCHOOLS SITUATED IN AREAS POPULATED BY THE AFRICAN PEOPLE.

A glance at the detailed matric results in the Pietermaritzburg area published in The Natal Witness on the 27th December 2002 revealed the sad and grim reality of the standard of education in the African areas. Comparing the results of two schools – the Georgetown High School in the heart of an African area and the Pietermaritzburg Girls High School, a former Model C school situated solidly in what used to be, until recently, an exclusively White area - one sees what the reality is and is shocked beyond belief.

Out of 130 students who passed matric in the Georgetown High School, only FOUR (4) received exemptions and special passes (i.e. 3.07%) whilst out of the first 130 students from the Pietermaritzburg Girls' High School who passed matric, ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN (119) received exemptions and special passes i.e. 91.53%.

Similar comparisons can be made all over the country. The striking contrast between the results of schools which have a predominantly non-African student population and those schools which are in the midst of areas occupied mainly by African people and with a predominantly African student population will be generally the same.

The question then is: How is it possible that after over eight years of democracy we still have this disgraceful state of affairs which was until 1994 the prerogative of a racist and brutally repressive regime?

Why has the government of the people gone out of its way to deceive the African people and the world that there has been a marked improvement in the standard of education and performance of the students?

BEFORE AND AFTER

There can be no meaningful assessment of progress in any facet of life in this country without there being an assessment of the progress of the African people and the poor among the Indian and so-called Coloured people. The reason is simple. Of all the sections of the oppressed people, these sections were most oppressed and exploited. They were hurled right down to the bottom of society. Real progress can only take place if the vast majority of the African people and the poor working class among the Indian and so-called Coloured people are direct beneficiaries of meaningful and substantial progress. This would mean the upliftment of the toiling millions who create the lion's share of wealth in society.

Progress of the toiling millions is not to be confused with the so-called Black Empowerment policy which is designed to benefit only a handful which constitutes the new black elite.²

LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD

The obvious reason why the government wants to present exaggerated figures of achievement is *to conceal its own failure*. We will all recollect what took place on the day the results were published/ announced. There was a mood of triumph which swept the country; congratulations poured in from all sides; there was back slapping wherever you went. The scene was set for a nation-wide atmosphere of celebration. The underlings outdid the masters. We witnessed an orgy of sycophantic outpouring on the part of the radio and television functionaries. Who dared to gainsay success? One by one politicians, educationists and newspaper editors had to join the

² Even the South African Communist Party is compelled to criticise its ruling partner's policy: "In many instances black economic empowerment has been understood to mean the personal mega-enrichment of a handful of individuals who happened to be black." (Natal Witness 25/103)

queue in order to sing the praise of the matriculants and the Ministry of Education – from President Mbeki down to the Afrikaner Unity Movement leader, Mr Cassie Aucamp.

The congratulatory language was lavish as it was unrestrained : “tremendous effort”..”vast improvement”.. “made us proud”...”exceptional effort”...”motion of confidence for public education”...”splendid performance”.

THE NATION HOODWINKED

It was only after nation-wide obeisance was made to a god called “Improved percentage” did educationists and other intellectuals venture to critically analyse the figures and tentative moves made to question the true meaning of the pass percentage and the performance of the students.

- Among the first were Messrs Eliam Biyela and Basil Manuel of the National Teachers’ Union and the Association of Professional Educators respectively. While welcoming the improved pass rate, they *expressed concern about the quality of the pass rate.*
- Manuel was the first to expose the fact that “in order to improve the pass rate, some schools encouraged pupils to do more standard grade subjects”. (Natal Witness – 27th December 2002)
- The editor of The Natal Witness in an editorial of the 28th December 2002 took up the theme of use of the Standard Grade to “improve” the pass rate and thereby allowing “more and more geese to be counted as swans.”
- Thereafter revelations of deceit and criminal irresponsibility on the part of a section of the teachers emerged.

Hereunder are some of the techniques of the fraud and deception:

1. Many of us heard for the first time the phrase “Gate-keeping”. This word is a euphemism for deliberately keeping back students believed to be weak academically in grade 11 so as to allow only those students considered to be likely to pass matric to write the exam.

2. The *deliberate misleading* of students by advising and /or pressuring them to enrol for the matric of the Standard Grade³. The purpose is to ensure that the student passes and thereby increases the percentage of passes. Nevermind the disastrous consequences it can have for the student! In other words, students have been advised to enrol for the Standard Grade, not because that grade is best suited for that student's aptitude and capability, but in order to impress the MEC of that area on the high percentage of passes! This concern was voiced by Dr. Chetty who is a programme director in Computational Physics at the University of Natal". Having in mind the deliberate misleading of the students, Dr Chetty stated:

“Clearly some schools in their over-eagerness to increase the pass rate are doing irreparable harm to some of our young minds. I am not sure how we can get this message out more loudly and clearly to our high schools.”(The Natal Witness – 2nd January 2003)

By the 3rd of January 2003, the matter was fully in the open. Professor Jonathan Jansen, a highly respected and admired educationist and who is the dean of Education at the University of Pretoria, publicly challenged the validity of the results in a carefully crafted article which appeared in the “Mail and Guardian’ of the same date. The article was a massive frontal attack on the system of obtaining higher pass rate at the expense of the education of hundreds of thousands of students who studied and wrote the matric exam. We urge all who are concerned about the plight of our youth to study the article. We set out hereunder some of the points made by Dr. Jansen:

- The quality of the Standard Grade Matric is so low that those who pass it are landed with a “meaningless certificate that can secure neither meaningful employment nor entry into university education.”
- Of the 440 000 students who wrote the matric exam, only 4,5% passed mathematics on the higher grade;
- Schools are under tremendous pressure politically “to boost their results” so as to avoid censure and public criticism;

³ A standard grade matric is a severely downgraded matric. It is held in such low esteem that a student with a standard grade matric will not be allowed to enrol at a university.

- Schools “encourage – and sometimes enforce – mass migration of learners from higher grade to standard subjects.” The obvious purpose is to facilitate passing matric and giving a favourable picture of progress;
- There is the wide-spread practice of holding “learners back in grade 11 so that only those with a good chance of passing in grade 12 actually make it to the final year of schooling.” This is referred to as “Gate-keeping” and has been mentioned above.

Professor Jansen’s article leaves the reader in little doubt that there has been wide-spread manipulation and juggling of results by schools, the teachers, the exam markers and the education departments. He also makes it clear that he does not believe that the claimed passes are true and credible.

THE NEAR WORTHLESS STANDARD GRADE MATRIC PASS

The criticism of the value of the standard grade matric pass is not directed at the student who writes and passes the exam. It is directed at the government and the Ministry of Education for insulting the intelligence and dignity of the students and the poor section of the country. According to the rulers of this country, the near worthless standard grade matric is what the vast majority of the poor and underprivileged deserve. Anything better is not for them.

Those who have written and passed the standard grade matric have done so against very heavy and unimaginable odds. That alone is an achievement of note and due credit must be given to them. The same can never be said for those who compelled the students to take that route. Only curses and condemnation await them.

Why do we refer to the Standard Grade pass as near worthless? It is relatively very easy to pass and as Professor Jansen remarked sarcastically : ***Special effort was required to fail the exam.***

Others educationists have stated that an “A” for the standard grade is equivalent to a “C” for the higher grade.

But the most devastating evaluation of the standard grade came from a writer in the Sunday Times of the 5th January 2003. Corna Pretorius' article had a headline which read:

“A bunch of Fs will get you through matric.”

According to Corna Pretorius:

1. A student needs 720 points to get a pass on the standard grade.
2. With one C, one E, three Fs, two Gs and one H , a student gets 742 points, more than sufficient to pass the standard grade matric!!
3. If a student gets an average of 25% i.e. a G average, he or she gets a standard grade pass.

Corna Pretorius ends her article with a stinging attack:

“A system that demands little more than Fs and Gs is not the kind of system we should be happy with.”

THE RETARDATION AND DEBASEMENT OF EDUCATION.

One of the principal hallmarks of oppression of the African people in this country has been the deliberate retardation and debasement of education. This was reflected in the calculated and planned denial of resources in the form of school buildings, furniture and equipment, text books and study material, properly stocked libraries, well equipped laboratories, sufficient number of teachers, properly qualified teachers, locating the schools within reasonable walking distance from home and provision of safe transport where schools are beyond a reasonable walking range, availability of water and sanitation and a proper feeding scheme in view of the poverty of the parents due to exploitation.

But the story does not end there.

Apart from the material deprivation, there was the deliberate debasement of the content of education of the black child so as to implement a policy which was bluntly stated as follows in a well known and much quoted statement from the Report of the Departmental Committee on Native Education (1935-6):

“The Education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the Education of the Black child for a subordinate society.”

HAS THE POSITION CHANGED UNDER DEMOCRACY?

Very little.

Education in most areas in which the African sector of the population live, is in a state of great degradation and chaos.

School buildings are wholly inadequate and are in a state of disrepair and dilapidation; the furniture in the class rooms are either absent or totally inadequate, there are insufficient libraries and laboratories; it is common to read reports and see pictures of children being taught in the open under trees; discipline among the teachers has gone to the dogs – drunkenness, absenteeism for no valid reason, seduction of school girls, absence of punctuality. There is lack of interest by students who arrive late at school and then loll around the grounds; harassment and terrorism by gangsters and hooligans, and the theft and destruction of school furniture, equipment and teaching aid and the vandalising of the school buildings and school records.

Over and above all this, there is the massive assault on the quality of education by the government by the foisting of the standard grade matric on scores of thousands of helpless students and parents.

THE HIGHER GRADE MATRIC

Only 16.9% of the candidates who wrote the matric passed on the higher grade. The majority who passed on the **higher grade** are students who are whites, so-called Coloured and Indian. A small minority are African students who come from homes mainly of the petty bourgeoisie and the new elite. The vast majority of the African students who passed the matric exam did so on the **standard grade**.

The members of all professions – teachers, lawyers, doctors chartered accountants, economists, architects, engineers, scientists etc; those occupying the upper rung of the employment ladder – directors in industry, CEOs, director generals, managers, upper ranks of the police and defence forces, important positions in industry, commerce and the arts – ALL THESE POSITIONS WILL BE OCCUPIED ALMOST ENTIRELY BY PERSONS WHO

WOULD HAVE PASSED THE MATRIC ON THE HIGHER GRADE AND PURSUED THEIR CAREERS VIA THE UNIVERSITIES.

Politically, those persons holding the cabinet posts will most likely be university trained persons as would their advisors and members of their technical committees.

In plain language, those who occupy the dominant position in society will **generally** be those who would have passed their matric exam on the HIGHER GRADE!!

THE FATE OF STUDENTS WITH A STANDARD GRADE PASS

For a start, entrance to universities is denied to students who passed their matric on the standard grade. This in turn means that the doors to the professions are denied to them. Before their very eyes, they see their contemporaries rapidly climb up the economic and social ladder while they remain at the bottom – unemployed, deeply frustrated, strongly resentful of the patently unfair system which discriminates on the grounds of class and the carry over of discrimination based on race. They are doomed to live in a world of semi-poverty and uncertain employment which does not take into account that the person involved has spent some TWELVE years studying in school at great sacrifice by the family especially the MOTHER. Think about the cost of the food, the school uniform, the books and stationery, the washing and ironing of the school clothes, making of sandwiches.....

When you come across a uniformed member of a private security firm who speaks good English, the chances are he or she is a standard grader. When you come across a well spoken petrol attendant, the chances are she or he is a standard grader. Where the office messenger has immaculate handwriting, the chances are..... So is the office cleaner or tea maker or the packer in a supermarket.....

Many of the standard graders who are fortunate to get employment will get such employment in the categories of semi-skilled or unskilled.

Thus it is clear that the purpose of granting millions of students a standard grade matric is to relegate them to a subordinate position in society.

Thus it will be seen that the policy, reflected in the Report of the "Departmental Committee on Native Education" about the two different systems of education in a racist and exploitative society, is being implemented and practised in a non racial and democratic South Africa!

Let us then sum up this aspect:

"The education for a child studying to write and pass the matric exam on the **Higher Grade**, prepares that child for life in a **dominant society** and the education for a child studying to write and pass the matric exam on the **Standard Grade**, prepares that child for life in a **subordinate society.**"

OUR DEMANDS

1. The first demand has to be an instruction to the government to be transparent and open with the public. At all times the truth has to be told although in some cases it may appear to be unpalatable.
2. The government must cease forthwith to show contempt towards the people by practising deception on them. On no account must statistics be used to deceive people.⁴
3. The public must be told in plain and unambiguous language what progress in education is being made in the areas inhabited by the African people. In order to judge progress, the starting point has to be the publication of matric results of candidates from schools in areas occupied by African people and their pass percentage.
4. It matters little that the results reflect the backwardness of education in those areas. The important thing is that all concerned

⁴ Statistics constitute an invaluable tool in the hands of those who wish to act in the interests of society. But like any other tool it can be misused. It has been said that if you squeeze statistics hard enough, it will confess to anything you want it to say!

will know what the actual position is and that will constitute the basis to judge whether progress is being made in the years to come.

5. If the results turn out to be poor, as they are expected to be, there will be tremendous demand and pressure on the government to take active and urgent steps to ensure that results improve. Improvement of the results, this time has to be true improvement and NOT by the bag of dirty tricks like "gatekeeping"; ill advising students to enrol for the standard grade, etc.
6. For results to improve genuinely, there are no magic formulae; there are no short cuts!

THE ETHOS OF LEARNING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

There must be a strong desire on the part of the people to pursue knowledge and understanding through learning and studying in formal institutions of education as well through informal methods through the institutions and organisations of the people. The entire community must be involved in the pursuit of knowledge. Reading must become a nationwide habit – whether at the place of work (newspapers, magazines, books), at home (selective television shows, daily newspapers, library books, journals), at the pubs (chess, draughts, bridge, regular debates and discussions on matters which affect the community, the nation or the international community or any part of it).

Apart from sport which is a great generator of community spirit, there should be encouragement of public speaking, debates, symposia, eisteddfods, lectures on a variety of subjects of interest to the community and amateur drama.

In this kind of atmosphere, formal education will fit in with the greatest of ease. Children will find school a joyous and stimulating experience.

THE RESOURCES FOR LEARNING AND EDUCATION.

The majority of places of learning are grossly and shamefully under-resourced due to substantial reduction of the budgets. The lion's share of

the multibillion rand budget goes towards the salaries of the teachers, administrators and the vast and parasitic bureaucracy. Only the miserly crumbs of the budget goes towards what one may call the lifeblood for a student.

The basic resources of education are there for all to see. Adequate school buildings which will keep the children warm in winter and cool in summer. They will provide shelter against rain and storm. There has to be proper and adequate sanitation facilities with water-borne sewerage system or any other form which is approved and accepted by the World Health Organisation. It is appalling and disgraceful to see children being taught under trees for shade. It is disgusting to view from time to time Mr Nelson Mandela thanking some large capitalist firm or one from overseas donating classrooms. Apart from Mr Mandela's propensity for the limelight, there is the whole question of dignity of a nation. Why must we adopt the demeaning posture of outstretched hand holding a begging bowl? In any event there is no way that these carefully selected and planned publicity events will ever come anywhere near solving the educational needs of this nation.

There can be no question of creating an ethos of pursuit of knowledge by reading and studying if there is no adequately stocked library in schools.⁵ There can be no incentive to learning and studying if those contracted with the educational departments to supply learning material do not deliver on time.

In all the hoodwinking exercises by the government and the shenanigans by other role players, there have been very moving accounts of how schools with inadequate textbooks or laboratory facilities performed outstandingly well. That happened because of a combination of factors – dedicated school principals and an equally dedicated band of teachers, a community actively interested in the education of its young and students who were brought up in an environment in which success in learning was very highly prized.

⁵ It was stated in the American Library Association Conference in 2002 that only 10% of the high schools in S.A. have libraries. There are no prizes for guessing the bulk of those libraries are in schools which have a predominance of higher grade matric students. This means that very few libraries are in high schools situated in areas occupied by African people.

Instead of lavishing praise on that school⁶, the government would do well to make a careful scientific study of that community and the school and to make detailed findings as to why the community enjoyed success. That study and the findings could contribute towards a model which could be applied in all areas where the results were not good. Let us be clear on this. It does not mean an exemption, or more correctly, an evasion of its responsibility to provide all the learning material. including a proper library.

THE TEACHERS

Of the three components necessary to ensure success in the system of education at a community level, the teacher is the most important. It is the teacher who imparts knowledge and skills in the various subjects. It is the teacher who through his or her attitude and conduct towards the student and to their profession determines the nature and character of the student. It is the function of the teacher to inculcate in the student a love for the segment of knowledge which is called a subject. It has often happened that where a teacher has a deep love for a subject, that teacher will inspire his or her students to adopt a similar attitude to that subject.

What we are saying is that a teacher is central to the whole process of education and without a dedicated input from the teacher, there is no hope for the students.

Yet notwithstanding the centrality of the role of the teacher in the process of education, we know that it is the teacher who has betrayed his or her vocation, the students, the community and ultimately the nation.

Let us be very clear about this. We are not tarnishing the entire profession. There are highly dedicated teachers and school principals who make great sacrifice to ensure that the best has been done for the students and that in the end the matric results are such that students, the community and the teachers can be proud of. There have been glowing accounts of performances which can be described as miraculous.

⁶ The praise is in fact a subterfuge to hide the fact that in spite of the gov't's failure to do its duty, that school did well – no thanks to the education department!

Yet these dedicated men and women are a minority.

The majority are a disgrace to the profession. They have been publicly pilloried for their conduct by no less a person than President Mbeki. These teachers bring with them the worst vices of society. They steal time for which they are paid by loafing during school hours; they spend time at the shebeens, at times with their own students; they violate basic rules of punctuality; they become experts in the deplorable tactic of malingering; they are notorious for sleeping around (hence frighteningly large numbers of them are stricken with Aids); they abuse liquor and are frequent seducers of their own pupils.

Until such time as the teachers can be whipped into line and made to perform their duty in a professional manner, there can be no such thing as education.

There have to be strong disciplinary measures taken against teachers who do not live up to the expected standard of a professional teacher. It is better to get rid of such persons from the education system because for as long as they remain in the profession and continue with their execrable behaviour, they will infect all those near them with that behaviour.

There was a time in the past when there was a system of inspectors and when principals had certain powers on the behaviour and conduct of teachers. Teachers feared visits by inspectors and made sure that they were up to date with their work. Then came the South African Democratic Teachers Union on the scene. Because they very opportunistically took up a pro ANC position, they used their links with the ANC to abolish the system of inspectors and whittled down the powers of the school principals. This was the Magna Carta for the hoodlums, malingerers and the loafers. There was no discipline. Cynically, these characters succeeded in replacing the previous system of discipline with what they called "self discipline" and "self review". The ANC allowed this anarchy to prevail because these were "comrades". Now, after over a decade, the government has realised the havoc, which the lack of disciplinary measures has wreaked on the system of education. Hence they are considering empowering school principals with discipline. SADTU has howled its opposition, not unexpectedly because the last thing SADTU cares for is the progress and welfare of the students.

THUGGERY IN THE COMMUNITY

Many schools are at the mercy of thugs and gangsters who march into schools and terrorise teachers and pupils, They come armed with guns and deadly knives. There is very little that students and teachers can do. The police are not of much help for a variety of reasons. So fearsome these thugs and gangsters have become that they can actually bring a school of hundreds of persons to a halt. Teachers, the more likely targets of the thugs, have had to flee the school premises.

Increasingly people are faced with situations where they receive no help from the police. Therefore, there is marked increase in people taking the law into their own hands and dealing physically with the thugs and gangsters. The police, who never seem to find the time nor a vehicle to come to the defence of the people, act with surprising swiftness against people whenever they mete out "justice" to the thugs and gangsters.

The justice system has not coped with the work load. It is time for the government to engage in innovative thinking. It is time for the introduction of the PEOPLE'S COURTS. We are not referring to kangaroo or bush courts. We are referring to a court with limited jurisdiction – say R1000,00 fine or imprisonment or community service up to six months. The judicial officer should undergo a crash course in basic criminal procedure and should be nominated for known qualities of maturity, wisdom and sense of fairness.

In this way, transgressions can be dealt with swiftly. The offences for which these courts should have jurisdiction should be those which interfere with proper schooling – unauthorised entry into the school premises; interfering in any way with student or teacher; damaging or stealing school property etc etc.

Once the hoodlums and thugs realise that there is pain waiting for them in the immediate vicinity, the mindset of immunity will give way to another reality, which is punishment by society. Others like them will learn to give a wide berth to students, teachers and school property.

THE NEED FOR AN OVERSIGHT BODY

Education is too important a social function to leave entirely in the hands of the government. The present government whose inner controlling core are members of a Communist Party who were nourished since their political infancy with the noxious fare of Stalinism. The modus operandi of this group is indoctrination and brain washing.

All ruling classes desire to lay their hands on a system of education. The inculcation of education means inculcation of ideas, values and skills. No ruling class will tolerate a system of education which undermines that ruling class but will do everything in its power to ensure that the system of education reinforces its basic ideology and strengthens its hold on power.

I.B.Tabata in his book, “Education for Barbarism” pointed out the potential danger of misusing education:

“When politicians, however, want to juggle with the social order, they make for the system and content of education. Hitler threw to the winds the rich legacy of education in Germany that had been steeped in the culture of centuries and prided itself on its modern scientific approach. Instead, he introduced barbaric ideas based on superstition and race fanaticism. In the name of race superiority, education was debased and scientific theory prostituted.”⁷

Because education is such a potent force which can be used either for good or evil, it is wise and necessary precaution that the government’s control and implementation of education be overseen by an independent body of educationists who have proved themselves to be persons of integrity, courage and independent thought and who care for this nation and its children. It is people like Professor Jonathan Jansen and others like him.

With a body of such persons who will oversee education in the country, it is unlikely that Professor Asmal and his minions will try a conjuring trick with figures and statistics about the real worth of the matric passes.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

⁷ Page 13

And what of the hundreds of thousands of students who pass the matric on the standard grade and those who drop out before writing the matric exam? We know that the National Youth Commission has shown itself to be worthless. A few young people made large fortunes or went through large fortunes. They were the chosen few, chosen for their connection to the ANC.

The fate and fortune of millions of youth who have been thrown out of main stream economy or employment, constitute one of the greatest crises facing this country. Soon they will become adults – father and mothers. What is their future and that of their children?

A Commission of Inquiry will make a thorough investigation about the entry of the children in school; the steps and procedures, if any, to identify the potential of each child and what route of study each child must take so as to release to the fore the aptitude latent talent the child has.

Not all students can become lawyers, doctors, accountants and other professions. Their potential may lie in a different direction and that potential must be tapped to the full. Plumbers, carpenters, wiremen and wirewomen, cabinet makers, bricklaying and building, agronomy and a host of other useful activities which will provide a decent living and sufficient satisfaction to the person engaging in such activities.

As far we know there is no such policy and no such assessment takes place on any significant scale. The students are literally thrown to the wolves and in their interaction with wolves, themselves become wolves.

There are dire consequences awaiting society if the problems of the marginalised youth are not attended to as a matter of urgency.

18/2/03