

What Rev Buti has to say about projects like Thusong and the sportsfields, is of great interest to us. Izwi has always maintained that such projects are wrongly given a priority, and has insisted that housing should be the priority. Rev Buti insists that these sites and buildings do not stand in the way of housing. But this is quite puzzling, in that what we see, apart from a few sub-economic houses, is the rapid, efficient development of these projects which undoubtedly take up space.

The crucial question which this poses, is that given the reality that Alexandra is a small area, with 60 000 people, where are the houses going to be built to accomodate everyone? It is this that makes us believe that Alexandra is intended primarily for fewer people, and especially for those who can afford expensive housing, and who are in a position to enjoy tennis, etc. What is 'perfectly clear' to the Department of Community Development, must surely also be clear to Rev Buti, that even a redeveloped Alexandra cannot accommodate its present inhabitants and that some of the Blacks may find it necessary to resettle elsewhere. (This comes from a letter from the Department to Percy Williams of the Save Alexandra (Coloured) Party - reproduced below). It will consequently be of great interest to see how Rev Buti manages to keep his promise, in a situation which seems to make it impossible for him to do so.

Report on school results

1982 School results were bad in both Minerva Secondary and Alex High School, but scandalously bad at the High.

Why is this so?


The question is confused and confusing as everyone involved in education shifts blame and responsibility. The Department of Education and Training says it is largely due to underqualified teachers that we have such bad results. Teachers blame pupils and say they are lazy and do not take their work seriously. Some pupils blame teachers for incompetence, some blame themselves as they feel they are not capable of comprehending school work. Parents blame their children or teachers, or both children and teachers.

Teachers get caned

At the meeting of teachers and inspectors held at Minerva, where the new regional director, Mr Van Zyl, was introduced to teachers, Alex High School was criticized for the high rate of failures in both JC and matric. The fault, it was said, lies with teachers who are irresponsible and fail in their duty to apply restrictive and disciplinary measures on pupils.

A pupil at Alex High reported to IZWI that some teachers told them about the meeting, and said that they were blamed undeservedly, as they felt that pupils fail because of their laziness. One teacher went further to say that pupils misinterpret the role of teacher, and expected teachers to spoon-feed them, whereas he held that the role of a teacher is to guide.

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1981-10-09

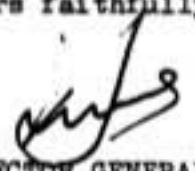
PERMANENCY OF COLOUREDS IN ALEXANDRA

I refer to the letter addressed to you by the Administrative Secretary of The Honourable S P Kotszé, Minister of Community Development, dated 25 September 1981 and wish to inform you that cognizance has been taken of your representations.

You are aware of the overcrowded conditions in Alexandra and that redevelopment of the township is under way. However it is perfectly clear that even a redeveloped Alexandra cannot accommodate its present inhabitants and that some of the Blacks may find it necessary to resettle elsewhere. It is, therefore, inevitable as well as imperative that additional land will have to be identified, preferably in the vicinity of Wynberg, where the Coloureds of Alexandra can settle permanently and where all necessary facilities can be provided for them.

Unfortunately, suitable land is not easily available in that area and the Department is still busy with certain preliminary investigations in this regard.

Yours faithfully



DIRECTOR GENERAL:
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our opinion is that teachers do not themselves understand the concept of teaching, and that under the bantu education system teachers cannot help but miseducate.

Some dictate, some educate

A teacher in class dictates terms to the pupils; he acts as an arbitrator and gives orders and instructions and so on. Moreover he believes that somehow he is entitled to do these things because he has a certificate, and has been appointed as a teacher. This sort of behaviour itself miseducates, in that it suppresses the initiative of pupils and instils in their minds undemocratic ideas.

We hold that a true teacher is one who is capable of unfolding pupils' potential, arousing curiosity and encouraging initiative and self-direction on the part of pupils.

A tyrant solution

The reality in present bantu education schools, is that teachers have a completely different approach. This can be illustrated by the solution suggested by teachers at Alex High for solving the high failure rate at that school. Their plan was to lock gates, keep pupils in class and force them to read! The effect of these measures is a tense situation in which any real education is impossible.

From the above it can be seen that few people really understand the problem or the remedy thereof. This makes it desirable that we should try to analyse and explain the situation.

An explanation

In this article we are going to attempt to give an account of the school situation by showing how it fits into our society. This needs to be done because schools are not **neutral**, but part of the political struggle that exists in South Africa. Education never exists in a social vacuum, but is necessarily social and therefore political.

Our society is capitalist. It functions on the basis of private ownership of the means of production, by which we mean land, farms, factories, machines, banks etc. There are two main classes in this society, capitalists (bosses) who own



and control these means of production – and workers who do not own any means of production, but sell their labour power to the bosses in order to live. There is a necessary struggle between these two classes as to who must own the means of production. This is why there are always strikes, disputes and other conflicts at factories, taking the form of disagreement over wages and working conditions. Workers and bosses enter into a hostile relationship and conflict of interest, in that bosses want profits as high as possible, while workers want higher wages and better working conditions.

Class (room) struggle

The conflict or struggle does not end up at factories: it is repeated on other levels. In locations there is a struggle over rents, housing and services. And there is a struggle also in schools. What we should ask, then, is how education fits into our capitalist society, what form the struggle takes, and in particular, what significance examinations have in this situation.

Black schools are predominantly attended by working class pupils. As we all know, the state and the bosses do not have the interests of the working class at heart, and they never will have as long as there is capitalism, because the bosses and the state will always live at the expense of the working class. What they are interested in is to exploit us. Why, then, does the state offer schools and education?

Future workers

Working class children are potential workers of tomorrow. They are necessary to replace their parents when they die or get too old to work. So the state wants children to be educated, so that they may be able to do their jobs in the economy, to read and write, to calculate, understand English and Afrikaans and so on. Some of these children are going to be semi-skilled or skilled workers, others bank tellers, clerks at WRAB offices to collect rents and things like that.

But of course the capitalists do not have it all their own way, for, as we have said, there is a struggle between them and the working class. What this struggle involves, in the sphere of education, concerns what should be taught and how. The state wants to use schools to control pupils and shape and prepare them for their future in labour. Pupils, on the other side, want to use school to get an education that will develop their minds and characters and make them fit to know and understand the complex world of today.

Ibhongo

This struggle at schools can be illustrated by what has been happening recently at Ibhongo Senior Secondary School, in Jabulani, Soweto. According to a news report in February 1983, 'Students at the Ibhongo Secondary walked out in protest . . . Earlier the students had held

a meeting during which they indicated that they were unhappy with the formation of the 'Committee of Nine', a body said to consist of school teachers who are allegedly victimising "politically minded" pupils at the school.

Critical minds

What does this mean - "politically minded"? You can be sure that students who are defined in this way are pupils who resent being locked in the school premises during the day, as if it were a kind of concentration camp - or pupils who are critical of the teaching staff - or who demand an SRC, or who sometimes try to raise questions about important social and political matters. This is the sort of attitude that develops critical minds: and this is what the state does not want. A critical attitude is quite undesirable in pupils who are intended as labour units in commerce and industry.

Critical minded human beings who question authority and make demands, while in school, are the sort of people who would question the rights of bosses to own the means of production, or make demands like higher wages etc. Capitalism is not fond of this sort of employee, it prefers cheap and docile labour.

Why did you fail?

Examinations are said to test whether or not pupils learned their work. But there are already inequalities that exist among pupils brought about by our society in terms of pupils' family background, reading opportunities etc.

Some pupils are from ambitious families, where there is already some education they know the advantage of education and encourage their children to work hard at school whatever they might be taught, or under whatever conditions. The child thus motivated by careerism works hard to obtain a certificate. It also helps if their family has spacious accommodation, so that the children can study properly.

Other pupils are from poor families with little or no education. Such children might well be more interested in learning why they are in the situation they find themselves in. Geography might appear irrelevant. What they need to understand is how it happened that they became poor; whether out of misfortune, conquest, personal laziness or what.

They sometimes arrive at school with an empty stomach, or a stomach filled with junk food, so that their level of concentration is low. These are some of the factors that contribute to a failure rate in the hundreds.

Examinations that do not take these inequalities into account, are clearly not fair.

Failure swells the working class

What the examinations actually do is reproduce the inequalities we have mentioned, by selection and rejection. This is useful to the capitalist economy, as knowledge and skills become concentrated in the hands of a few, thereby rendering those who are unskilled and lack knowledge workers, to be placed under the supervision and control of the others.

Those who are in this way rejected by the system not only lack knowledge or skill, but the absence of these puts them in a position of lack of self-direction and self-government.

We can see from the above that education is not accessible to everyone, but is turned into private property, just like the means of production (land, factories, machines etc), to be owned by a privileged few.

Schoolgirl's attack

A SOWETO school teacher had to run for his life this week when a group of angry female pupils threw empty tin cans and a dustbin at him after he had sent them out of class as punishment.

About 30 female pupils stormed into the classroom while Mr Gregory Lebele, a teacher at Seipateng Higher Primary School in Diepkloof, was still conducting a lesson, demanding to be readmitted to the class, and when he refused, tins and stones were hurled at him.

The male pupils intervened, saving the teacher who is still limping from the powerful blow he received from the dustbin.

When The SOWETAN interviewed Mr Lebele, he said he suspected the influence of some female teachers at the school. He said it was only after a certain female teacher accused him of doing a senseless thing by sending the pupils out of class that he was attacked. He said the pupils took advantage of him after he was ridiculed by the female teacher.

DET chief liaison officer Mr Job Schoeman said the question of discipline on the part of pupils not only rested on the shoulders of the teachers but on parents as well.

Izwi salutes the girls at Seipateng. We cannot think of any missile better than a dustbin to throw at a tyrant teacher. Like every other person, teachers must be taught the golden rule - Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

A person who was once an excellent teacher in Soweto has said, 'If a teacher enters class with a cane, assault him.' The same is now accomplished by the girl pupils of Seipateng. They have returned rubbish for rubbish, and their teacher will remember his lesson at least for as long as he limps.

We therefore advise all pupils, to have dustbins ready, for use against any act of tyranny or folly from their teachers.