

## 2. DISASTER BENT

We could be forgiven for thinking that the South African Government has deliberately decided to copy the lemmings and embark on a course of national suicide. Early 1987 has seen it saying "No!" to talking to the ANC, "No!" to listening to the National Education Crisis Committee, "No!" to the Indaba, "No!" to the repeal of the Group Areas Act and "No!", in the most humiliating manner possible, to its only Coloured ally's swim on a 'white' beach.

It has seen it, more than once, rush out new Emergency proclamations in the middle of the night to block loopholes in old ones and to subvert a series of important Court judgements. These judgements had restored considerable credibility to the judicial system and at least partially reinstated the Courts in their role as defender and protector of the individual against state intrusions on his rights. It has

seen Mr Pik Botha spending as much of his time attacking the United States as he has ever done attacking the Soviet Union.

Is all this the inevitable response of Nationalist Afrikanerdom to sanctions? Is it saying to the world "There is nothing worse you can do to us now, so to hell with you. We will do as we like, and damn the consequences?" It would seem so. Against this bleak background the one bright spot has been the decision of Mr Wynand Malan, M.P., Dr Denis Worrall and other prominent Nationalists not to take the suicide course, and to resign from the Party. For the first time a number of Nationalists are leaving the NP because it is too reactionary and not, as has invariably been the case in the past, because it was becoming too 'liberal'. We must now wait to see, if there are enough of them for their defections to restore some sanity to Government actions.□

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by Tony Morphet

## "PEOPLES EDUCATION : WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED?"

Resistance to Bantu Education has been continuous and sustained for 30 years and more. The system has never won the support of the people who have been compelled to use it. Over the period the expression of the resistance has changed from the early reluctant compliance and strategic use of the resources, to outright rejection and revolt - the latter particularly over the last ten years. As yet the response of the State shows no sign of a willingness to relinquish its grip, nor to reorganise its position. The De Lange Report, which was the most significant attempt at reform, failed to achieve even its limited goals. A measure of the current position of the State is given in the "notice" published by the President under the Public Safety Act (December 1986) which makes any form of "alternative" education **within** the schools punishable by fines of R4 000 or two years imprisonment.

But the coercion of the State shows, better than any analysis, the degree to which it has lost the battle for educational authority. Since 1976 it has been driven steadily back from any claim to being the legitimate source of educational policy. The bid for legitimacy was the *raison d'être* of the reform movement and that is now plainly in ruins.

It is the disintegration of the framework of legitimacy which has caused the breach into which the new proposals for alternative education policies have moved. The State continues to exist as a coercive military/political unit, but where the policy making source for the society should be, there is little more than a vacuum. In an important sense, for Black people at least, there is no educational policy - only an imposed order.

Peoples Education is the most prominent grouping which has moved into the open space and it is busy working with the issues of policy, without having the political capacity to implement its decisions through an established legislative process. The movement openly and explicitly anticipates that, within a reasonable period of time, it will gain the necessary political capacity through the formation of a new state authority. At the present it appears as a part of the embryo of the new order.

The starting point for any examination and critical understanding of the movement must be its problematic political position. It is a necessary and constructive attempt to respond to the disintegration of the authority of the apartheid state; and it is part of an effort to build a new and