

DA214

COMPARATIVE PASSAGES

I have been asked to comment on and compare the

- (i) Resolution on education which I have been told was passed at the UDF launch - Exhibit "A1", p. 28;
- (ii) The education clauses in the Freedom Charter - Exhibit "AU12";
- (iii) Towards an Education Charter, Exhibit "AB28".
- (iv) The HSRC Report on the Provision of Education in the RSA, 1981 (the so-called De Lange Report) - Exhibit 209

1 EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1.1 The core statements in the FC are

"enjoying equal rights and opportunities ... without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief"

and then later, more specifically with regard to education -

"there shall be equal status ... in the schools for all national Groups and races."

Compare these with the first of the eleven basic principles adopted by the de Lange committee :

"Equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education, for every inhabitant, irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex, shall be the purposeful endeavour of the State."

1.2 Subsidiary statements in the FC are

"all people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs"

and

"the Law shall guarantee to all their right to ... education their children"

Compare with de Lange Principle 2 :

"Education shall afford positive recognition of what is common as well as what is diverse in the religious and cultural way of life and the languages of the inhabitants."

2 THE COLOUR BAR, APARTHEID AND DISCRIMINATION

The FC, using the terminology of its time, states

"The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished",

while the UDF resolution, quite correctly in my view, says

"this education system entrenches apartheid."

The De Lange report

"Differentiation based purely on differences of race or colour cannot be regarded as relevant grounds for inequality of treatment and is consequently contrary to the social and ethical demands for justice."

3 THE NATURE OF EXISTING EDUCATION SYSTEMS

The FC does not take up this point, except by implication. However, the UDF resolution comment as follows -

"... separate and inferior system of education for the majority of the people of South Africa entrenches inferior and undemocratic ideas"

"overcrowded classrooms and unqualified teachers have the same root causes as high rents or housing shortages"

"unequal access to the wealth and resources of our country means that very few of the oppressed people have access to primary, secondary and higher education"

In discussing the nature of the existing system "Towards an Education Charter" places its emphasis differently and talks of SA culture as being marked by "racism, sexism and elitism", "racially based departments of education" and "racist and undemocratic bodies" in education.

The de Lange Report : The whole of Chapter 3, pp. 19-90, deals with the shortcomings of the existing systems of education in South Africa and highlights various issues already commented upon earlier, inter alia -

- a) Black and Coloured pupils are concentrated in the lower standards;
- b) the percentage of pupils who started school in 1963 and then completed 12 years of schooling was as follows:

Whites	58,4%
Indians	22,3%
Coloureds	4,4%
Blacks	1,96%

- c) to achieve parity in teacher-pupil ratios by the year 2020, 245 500 Black teachers would have to be trained in this period;
- d) percentages of underqualified teachers in 1980 were:
- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| Whites | 3,36% |
| Indians | 19,7% |
| Coloureds | 66,14% |
| Blacks | 85,0% |
- e) lack of technical education for Blacks;
- f) Blacks are required to master three languages while other pupils are expected to know only two;
- g) lack of health facilities in Black schools;
- h) the need for parity in the financing of education;
- i) marked educational disparities between the different population groups, and so on.

The chapter ends with this statement :

"Finally there appear to be serious problems with regard to the acceptability of educational practice in the RSA. This acceptability is related to two factors: in the first place, the acceptance by the "users" of the authority responsible for the establishment of the education system and in the second place the involvement of the "users" in decision-making processes."

4 THE NATURE OF THE FUTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM

4.1 General

F.C. : "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened"

"The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life"

"All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contacts with other laws."

and more specifically -

"Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children."

The UDF Resolution speaks in similar terms -

"Education shall be free, equal, relevant and compulsory in a United South Africa," and there shall be "a single, non-racial and democratic systems of education for all in a democratic South Africa."

but there are new emphasis on relevance, non-racialism, democracy and the need for a single system of education. Non-racialism is implicit in the more general statements on equality and human rights, while I shall comment on the other issues later in my statement (under curriculum, management etc).

Towards an Education Charter picks up the term of "opening the doors of learning and culture" from the F.C. and also talks of "free and compulsory education for all," but in the main directs its thinking to more specific, practical matters in its search for a positive approach to what kind of education the UDF should work for in future. (see later sections).

The de Lange Report, as explained earlier, concentrated on the provision of education and had little to say on these more generally, contextual issues, because of the potential divisions among its membership. It

adopted a technical rather than a philosophical approach to broad educational issues.

4.2 Aims and Philosophy

The F.C. states that

"The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace."

Towards an Education Charter, in speaking of curricula, made the attempt to expand on this concept, stating that they should be aimed at -

"enhancing the participation of all in political, economic and social life;

integrating technical and intellectual skills to produce fully-developed human beings capable of taking control of their lives in all its aspects;

building a progressive, national South African culture while eradicating all traces of racism, sexism and elitism."

The de Lange Report pp. 207-8 speaks of education being concerned with

"the maintenance and elaboration of cultural values";

"raising the material standards of living" and "the promotion of the over-all quality of life";

"the development of innovative and adaptive abilities"; and

"the improvement of interpersonal relationships, i.e. to equip the educational client with knowledge, interaction skills and a sense of

social responsibility which can promote mutual respect, trust and cooperation between individuals and groups."

4.3 The Curriculum

This is not touched upon in the FC, but in the UDF Resolution the issue of relevance is raised and the broad statement made that "the education system should be based on the needs of the people." Towards an Education Charter says that there should be "Scrutiny of existing school, teacher-training and university courses, and the development of curricula" which will satisfy the aims already outlined.

Principle 4 of the de Lange Report speaks of education as being

"directed in an educationally responsible manner to meet the needs of the individual as well as those of society and economic development and shall, inter alia, take into consideration the manpower needs of the country."

Considerable attention was paid to curricula (pp. 27-43), pp. 98-153, 164-7) and the problems of bureaucratisation and the inequitable distribution of curriculum services were discussed. In the recommendations it is noted that

"all interested parties should make a contribution to curriculum decision-making;

"those concerned ... should take note of the needs and demands of society;

"the users of the curriculum should have the right to make a meaningful contribution to the design of the curricula ... Strong democratisation of curriculums is accepted as a principle ..."

4.4 Management of Education

Reference as already been made in the UDF Resolution to the need for a single system of education for all in south Africa, instead of the separated systems.

One of the main recommendations of the de Lange Report was for the setting up of a single central Ministry of Education that would be responsible for the financing of all education, for broad over-all education policy and control over second-tier, regional, operational, executive departments which would be responsible "for providing education within a defined area."

The de Lange Report gave considerable attention to the position of parents and community organisations at the local level of education. Two of the basic principles have to do with this :

"Education shall give positive recognition to the freedom of choice of the individual, parents and organisations in society." (No. 3)

"The provision of formal education shall be a responsibility of the State provided that the individual, parents and organised society shall have a share responsibility, choice and voice in this matter." (No. 6)

The report was concerned that there should be involvement, participation, negotiation, a "say" in what was done, and that decisions should be taken as close as possible to the issue that was being decided upon. (pp. 201-3)

Compare these ideas with the statement in Towards an Education Charter which proposes

"The development of local decision-making bodies which are democratically constituted by parents, teachers and students, whose participation and responsibility in the creation of new structures

and processes should be guaranteed. These would replace all racist and undemocratic bodies."

This is much more "direct" language, compared with the formal "technocratic" language of the Report, but the ideas and issues are similar, the emphasis different.

4.5 Adult Education and Literacy

The F.C. "Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan."

Towards an Education Charter : "The promotion of literacy in urban and rural areas."

"Examination and revision for existing courses and methods in the spreading of literacy, with a view to improving their effectivity and extending their scope."

"On-going, progressive education for all adults, especially those who have been denied an adequate education in the past."

This was recognised by the de Lange Report in its emphasis on non-formal adult education as a crucial complement to formal schooling and in Principle 7 :

"The private sector and the State shall have a shared responsibility for the provision of non-formal education."

The ideas of literacy and numeracy are taken up in the joint concept of "basic education" - "teaching a child to read, write and calculate, together with further consolidation of these skills, so that further independent learning of abstract material may be undertaken." The report also regards this as the minimum platform for the adult if he/she is to advance further, benefit from skills training etc.

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