

WORLD education NEWS & REVIEWS

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Transforming Education in South Africa: from Political Expectations to Reality

by Sarie J. Berkhout

Since the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in May 1994, South Africa has undergone tremendous change. This is especially visible in the political arena where Parliament now functions according to the rules of the negotiated agreements and a new constitution. Newly-passed legislation and a newly-structured public service sector reveal the contours of a society in which formerly apartheid structures increasingly are being replaced.

The immense challenges posed by such a transformation are daunting. Although apartheid theoretically has been dismantled, the legacy of the past probably will continue to haunt South Africa for some time, especially if the public's expectations of a just and equal society do not materialize rapidly. Apart from the greater transparency of government processes and the changed tenor of the public debate, the daily experience of most people has not changed. The promises that fueled expectations of a sudden and radical restructuring of the education system have to a large extent remained just promises.

After initially working within the boundaries of a negotiated interim constitution, a final constitution was accepted by consensus in May 1996. The prominence of education in the political debate and in the transformation process is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that one of the last points of dispute before acceptance of the final constitution was the right to public education in the language of one's choice.

In terms of the new constitution South Africa is now a

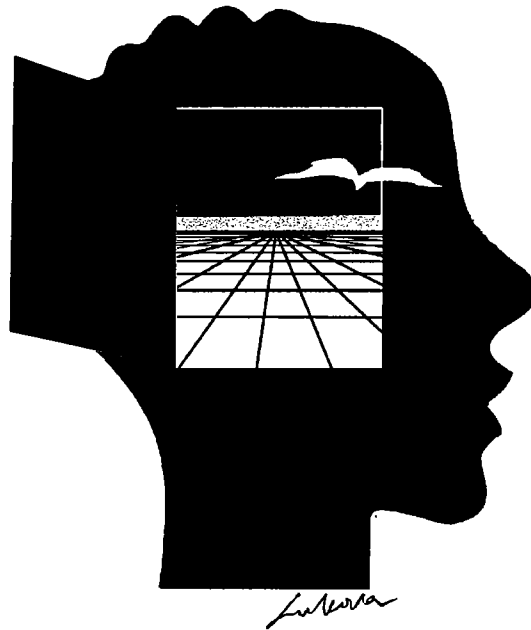
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country with eleven official languages, namely: Afrikaans; English; isiNdebele; Sesotho sa Leboa; Sesotho; Setswana; siSwati; Tshivenda; isiXhosa; Xitsonga; and isiZulu. This situation, coupled with South Africa's history of emotional political responses to language and cultural issues, could easily have resulted in cries of "neo-apartheid;" only a last minute compromise kept the process on track.

A *Bill of Rights* (Chapter 2 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*) now provides for basic education (including adult basic education) as well as for further education. The State has to take reasonable measures to make such education progressively more available and accessible, and has to provide education in the official language or language of choice, keeping practicability, equity and standards in mind. The right to establish and maintain independent educational institutions has also been established.

The past two years have been marked not only by the formal acceptance of a new constitution, but also by the national parliament passing legislation to determine education policy (RSA 1996a), to regulate the governance and funding of

schools (RSA 1996c) and to establish a national qualifications framework (RSA 1995). Within the context of the semi-federalist status of the political system, the control of education (excluding higher or tertiary education) has been assigned to the provinces, and a national education department established to set general policy and ensure equity. This meant that the plethora of 19 racially and/or ethnically based ex-depart-



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The Coming Crisis in International Education in the United States

by Philip G. Altbach

If the 21st century is to be the global era, then American universities will need to be international institutions. A central part of this profile is made up of the foreign students studying in American universities. However, the news on the foreign student front is not good. According to figures just released from the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors* study, the increase for this year is just 0.3 percent—the smallest increase in the 26 years that the IIE has been tracking flows. If something is not done, the United States will lose its standing as the preeminent place of study for the world's students. At present 453,787 foreign students study in the United States. This constitutes almost half of the world's total number of foreign students. In addition 59,074 foreign scholars chose to study in the United States—an increase of 23 percent over 1994-95 numbers. The changes this year reflect a leveling off in scholar flows following two consecutive years of falling numbers.

These changes will affect American higher education significantly. American colleges and universities will not benefit from the infusion of new ideas from abroad. American students and faculty will not have direct contact with foreign colleagues. These contacts are especially important, since so few Americans study overseas. This year, 84,403 American students went abroad—about one-half of one percent of the student population in the United States. The presence of a half million foreign students and scholars is the most important single element of globalism on American campuses. We can interpret this decline in popularity as an indication of the decline in the status of American higher education—considered for decades as the best academic system in the world.

A combination of government policies and current conditions in higher education also contribute to the present decline. New immigration rules that are soon to come into effect will have a chilling effect on foreign student numbers. A hefty fee will soon be imposed on people coming to the United States on student or scholar visas. Other "loopholes" are being plugged. Most damaging, perhaps, is that colleges and universities are being forced to police foreign students and scholars for immigration violations. Declines in research funds and other fiscal problems in higher education have also had a negative impact on foreign student flows, as 16.5 percent of foreign students are funded by American colleges and universities.

At the same time that the United States is making it more difficult to gain access to its higher education institutions, other countries are opening their doors. They see the importance of internationalization—recognizing that foreign students contribute to the local economy—since the vast majority of them fund their own education. In the United States, for example, 67.8 percent of all foreign students list personal or family funds as the primary source for their study,

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and contribute more than \$7 billion to the American economy. The European Union has several major programs to encourage intra-European study and additional funds have been allocated to attract students from Russia and other Eastern European countries. Japan has a goal of attracting 100,000 foreign students by the year 2000. Australia is aggressively and successfully recruiting students from Asia as a means of making up for budget cuts at home. British universities have long been active in attracting students worldwide as a means of making up for budget shortfalls. Only the United States seems to be turning its back on foreign students and scholars.

Foreign students and scholars contribute an immense amount to American higher education. Two-thirds pay for their education in the United States. Foreign students earn about one-third of the doctoral degrees awarded annually. They serve as research and teaching assistants in fields that attract few Americans at the doctoral level. Foreign scholars provide their (modestly paid) expertise to the laboratories and research projects in which they are located. Foreign students and scholars lend a multicultural and multiethnic presence to American campuses.

Current trends are alarming. American higher education needs foreign students and scholars. United States policy is aimed precisely in the wrong direction and will result in future declines—much to the detriment of the nation's colleges and universities. The following initiatives should be implemented to ready higher education for the global imperatives of the 21st century.

The newly implemented and more restrictive immigration rules must be changed to make it easier—not more difficult—for legitimate students and scholars to enter the United States for study and research.

More American colleges and universities should recruit students and scholars from overseas—recognizing not only the economic benefits but also the curricular advantages of having foreigners on campus.

These institutions should at the same time make sure that foreign students on campus are provided with the best possible academic experience and are fully integrated into the American student population.

Programs such as the highly respected Fulbright scholarships and others that receive funding from American government sources should be adequately funded.

More American students should be encouraged to study abroad. American participation in overseas study is very limited. Most Americans choose to go to Western Europe. Worse still, hardly any students travel to developing countries.

Current American policy will have two highly negative results. The United States will no longer be the most attractive destination for foreign study, and American higher education will find it much more difficult to internationalize. If the United States is to maintain its worldwide academic leadership, it will need to reverse this trend.

AFGHANISTAN

NO WOMEN ALLOWED Kabul University reopened in March for an uncertain academic year short of cash, stationery and bereft of women students or teachers.

The Taliban, an Islamic movement, closed the university indefinitely when it swept into the Afghan capital last September. Its extreme interpretation of Islam excludes women from all but segregated basic education. Students must have beards.

Founded in 1932, Kabul University was once one of the finest in Asia with an impressive campus set against a spectacular backdrop of mountains. It boasted 900 lecturers, more than 300 holding doctorates from all over the world. But since the Soviet Red Army rolled into Afghanistan in December 1979, the university has faced such a daunting saga of problems, including a huge brain drain, that it is remarkable it is open at all.

In March, 1995, classes resumed at the university after much of it had been reduced to rubble in the fall of the Moscow-based government in 1992. It had about 4,000 students. By the time the Taliban came and closed the university, the student body had risen to 10,000, including 4,000 women.

The Taliban bans on women are a big barrier to foreign aid. Women are forbidden to work outside their homes or to attend schools and colleges for education. Because of this, no government has yet recognized the Taliban. Yet the Taliban insist that women will be allowed to work and be educated—albeit on a segregated basis—when the security situation settles. Western governments have yet to be convinced.

The Times Higher Education Supplement 3/21/97

ALBANIA

REOPENING Schools and higher education institutions, shut after an armed insurrection, reopened on April 29 under armed guard in the Albanian capital of Tirana.

Schools throughout the small Balkan state were closed on March 2 under a state of emergency as Albanians, distraught over the loss of life savings in fraudulent savings schemes, plunged the country into violence. More than 300 people have been killed.

Education Director Tomi Tomorri said only schools in the capital would reopen, that school guards would be issued weapons, and police officers would check schools. It was not known when schools elsewhere would reopen.

China Daily 4/26/97

AUSTRALIA

MILLIONS EARNED In 1997, commercial companies operated by Australia's universities are expected to double the combined income they earned just three years ago. The institutions that were the pioneers in this area have been so successful that, today, all but two of the nation's 36 public universities have their own companies to market research discoveries and sell education locally and overseas. Several operate more than one company.

The total income for the 50 or so commercial entities operated by universities exceeded US\$280 million in 1996. But given federal cuts in higher education spending and the need for universities to find millions to finance faculty salary increases this year, pressure is growing for these businesses to become even more entrepreneurial. Several campus companies have set up shop offshore, establishing language and cultural centers, for example, in Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand. Last year,

Macquarie Research Ltd., the commercial arm of Macquarie University, earned more than \$4.5 million in fees from consulting and testing, research projects, training, and sales of hardware and software. The company also earned a contract to provide teacher-training services to the Republic of Maldives.

The commercialization boom has had its critics. Many faculty members have resented the push to generate revenue from private sources, which began under the former Labor government and is now a key element of the new conservative government's higher education policy.

Chronicle of Higher Education 4/11/97

CANADA

CHANGES IN TEACHER CERTIFICATION Most Canadian provinces have been looking closely at updating their teacher preparation and certification requirements to reflect current ideas of effective teaching. Two common themes run through recent and proposed changes—more emphasis on continuing in-service professional development and at least four years of university training, either in a BEd program or a combination of an arts or science program, plus an education program.

Under reforms now being implemented in Quebec, future teachers graduating in 1997 and in 1998 will have obtained their teaching certificate at the end of four years of university, during which they will have completed a minimum of 700 hours of practical training.

In Nova Scotia, a proposal for a minimum five years of undergraduate education for teachers is being considered. All students would have to complete a minimum of 100 hours of professional development over five years.

Canadian Educ Assoc Newsletter 1/97

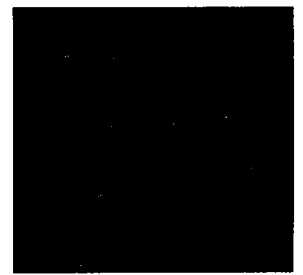
CHINA

DEMAND FOR POSTGRADUATE DEGREES Over 240,000 students, teachers and enterprise employees took the national entrance examinations for postgraduate schools held in January. This was the highest number of applicants since China resumed granting postgraduate degrees in 1978, and represented an 18 percent increase, or 38,000 more applicants, than in 1996.

Some 421 universities and 322 other higher learning institutions will enroll 51,000 students this year, said the State Education Commission. The biggest increase is in "enterprise" employees, workers trying to qualify for employment in high technology projects. The most popular subjects for postgraduate degree seekers are in industrial and technical subjects, foreign languages and medical sciences. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, philosophy and liberal arts were less in demand.

China Daily 1/24/97

CHINESE LANGUAGE EXAM About 20,000 foreigners in more than 30 test centers in China and abroad took the Chinese Proficiency Test, or HSK, in January. The two-hour, 45-minute test of proficiency in the Chinese language includes listening comprehension, structure, reading comprehension, and fill-in-the-blanks. The test is given in January, May and July for non-native students of Chinese. Those who pass are awarded certificates of levels 1-11. A level 8 certificate enables the holder to



UPDATES

apply to graduate schools in Chinese universities, according to rules made last year by the State Education Commission. More than half of those taking the exam were from Japan and Korea, particularly from companies doing business with China. *China Daily 1/14/97*

FIERCE JOB COMPETITION Large numbers of college graduates in China are facing fiercer competition for jobs than last year, according to the State Education Commission. A total of 900,000 college students will graduate in July, compared with 860,000 last year. Specialties in demand are engineering, medicine, pharmacology and teaching, while students of literature, history, agriculture, forestry, finance and economics will find it hard to find employment.

Holders of master or doctorate degrees from key universities are most in demand by employers, while job opportunities for graduates of two- or three-year colleges have dropped by half. In Beijing Normal University, every student will have two job offers. The status of teachers and their income have improved greatly in recent years, drawing more students to the teaching profession. *China Daily 4/08/97*

DROPOUTS DECLINE In 1990, 32.9 million children aged 6-14 dropped out of school, or 18.6 percent of the age group. By 1995, the dropout rate had fallen to 8.8 percent, according to the State Statistics Bureau. The State Education Commission has established that 98.8 percent of all children were enrolled in primary schools by age seven. The biggest obstacle to eliminating illiteracy is a lack of funds. In 1995 the government launched a five-year project to put \$3.9 billion into poverty-stricken areas by 2000. Special attention has been given to the education of girls in impoverished areas, where parents tend to send sons rather than daughters to school. As a result, enrollments of girls have greatly increased.

China Daily 4/4/97

BACK TO SCHOOL Teachers in primary and middle schools across China have been ordered to return to the classroom for professional training. Currently, China has nearly nine million primary and middle school teachers, a number which is expected to rise to 10 million teachers by 2000.

About 90 percent of teachers in primary schools, 70 percent in junior middle schools and 55 percent in senior middle schools meet the qualification standards set by the State Education Commission. In rural areas, however, where 17 percent of teachers now work, many teachers are former farmers who graduated only from junior middle schools and are paid less than employees in urban areas.

Starting this year, teachers at all grade levels, including kindergarten, must pass qualification examinations before they are allowed to enter the classroom. Special training centers have been set up throughout the country where unqualified teachers can train full time for several months, or part-time for one to two years.

In addition to improving teaching skills, teachers also will be required to study educational law and policies, research of teaching methods, psychology and moral education. *China Daily 4/12/97*

CYPRUS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION is offered at the University of Cyprus and at several non-university sector

institutions. These are: The Cyprus Forestry College, The Higher Technical Institute, The Higher Hotel Institute, The School of Nursing, The Mediterranean Institute of Management (for staff in-service training), the School of Health Inspectors, The Police Academy, and the School of Tourism Guides. Degrees awarded by these institutions are recognized by the Ministry of Education. In addition, there are a number of private postsecondary institutions offering one- to four-year courses in various fields of study such as business administration, secretarial studies, hotel and catering, banking, accountancy and computer studies. The degrees offered by these private institutions are not yet recognized, but a process of accreditation of these institutions is in progress and the government will release a list of those which have been accredited by the end of this year.

Correspondence from Christodoulos Cleopas, Director of Higher & Tertiary Education, Cyprus 4/8/97

GREECE

NEW QUALIFICATION The *Ethniko Apolytirio* is the name of the new national final secondary education qualification which will be awarded for the first time to students completing the third year of the *lykeio* (upper secondary education) at the end of the 1999-2000 school year. *Le Magazine, European Commission #6/96*

INDIA

DEGREE RECOGNITION DROPPED The Medical Council of India, a government agency, has ruled that medical degrees from Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union will not be recognized after this year. Furthermore, Indian physicians in training will be required to serve their internships in India and not in Russia or other former Soviet Republics. The council reportedly took its action because of concern that many of the medical schools in question no longer follow the training criteria established in the Soviet era.

The Chronicle of Higher Education 4/25/97

PROTECTING THE DEGREE MARKET Foreign universities trying to enter the Indian higher education market have discovered that their degrees will not be recognized. The Ministry has warned students that they sign up at foreign universities at their own risk. The University Grants Committee plans to prepare a "code of conduct" to regulate their activities.

The move follows a feverish attempt by British, Australian and Canadian universities and professional colleges to enter the market in the wake of economic liberalization which has relaxed foreign exchange restrictions. Leading newspapers have been flush with advertisements for courses in business management, computer sciences and engineering. Target groups are children of the English-speaking elite in the cities of New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

The response has been overwhelming, displeasing the government. Officials in the education ministry say that they are flooded with inquiries from parents, students and heads of Indian universities about the status of the degrees/diplomas awarded by foreign institutions.

"Unless a university has a bilateral agreement with an Indian institution or the arrangement is covered by our educational protocols with these countries, we have nothing to do with them," the education ministry said.

Times Higher Education Supplement 1/24/97

