

The Philosophy of Funding Higher Education after the Cold War: The Case of South Africa

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Introduction

In this essay we consider issues pertaining to the funding of higher education in contemporary South Africa. This is predicated on the premise that before and after constitutional change in 1994 the philosophy underlying and informing the funding of higher education in South Africa is similar to that which prevails in the West. This premise cannot attain validity without a reflection upon the complex history of the relations between South Africa and the West. For this reason a sustained focus upon this history shall form an essential ingredient of our approach. Here the intention is not to repeat much of what is already well established and well-known history. Instead, the intention is to highlight out of this history specific moments and issues that pertain to the subject of our essay. The historical approach we propose to pursue here is also intended to identify the differences and nuances between the South African philosophy of the funding of higher education and, the West in general but the United States of America in particular.

The thesis examined in this essay is that funding for higher education has been founded and guided more by the pursuit of ideology and less by the pursuit of knowledge for the deeper and better humanization of the human race. Education and learning through the ages in the West, but in particular since the Second World War¹, have yielded significant wisdom

¹ The name, Second World War has been the subject of critical reflection from African voices. These have expressed doubt about the meaningfulness of this name and its application (see Langley 1979: 394-416). In view of these critical voices, we use the name Second World War with reservation.

which continues to have a life of its own in the abstract. In the concrete, practical everyday world, education and learning manifest rather little effect on the humanization or civilization of the human race.

Our current traditions and institutions of learning, when judged from the standpoint of helping us learn how to become more enlightened, are defective and irrational in a wholesale and structural way, and it is this which, in the long term, sabotages our efforts to create a more civilized world, and prevents us from avoiding the kind of horrors we have been exposed to during the twentieth century – wars, third-world poverty, environmental degradation (Maxwell 2000: 31).

The persistence of these ‘horrors’ into the twenty-first century calls into question the contribution of education and learning towards making humanity wiser and demonstrate such wisdom through the humanization and civilization of the human race.

The principle of autonomy with respect to institutions of higher learning derives its meaning from the intricate but continual struggle of these institutions against external interference designed to subordinate and guide their pursuit of knowledge according to the dictates of the civil authority or the provider of funds. This is one reason why it is necessary to examine the philosophy that inspires and guides the funding of higher education.

Our examination of the above thesis shall be pre-eminently philosophical. It will identify the presuppositions, principles and ideas underlying, founding and guiding the funding of schooling in general but higher education in particular. This latter is our principal point of focus. In opting for this philosophical approach we intend to conduct a rigorous and critical analysis of the presuppositions that underlie the funding of higher education with particular reference to South Africa. It goes without saying then that ours is a historico-philosophical essay on the funding of higher education.

The Cold War and the Logic of Funding

The end of the Second World War inaugurated the period of broken and fragile peace in international affairs. It was characterized by a legitimate

desire to take stock of the spoils of war² and, on that basis to chart the way for the future. This desire could be fulfilled only under peaceful conditions. Yet, the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shattered the peace yet to be born. It changed the ghost of the atomic bomb into the reality of the nuclear arms race. The race has since never come to a complete standstill. Nor is the imperative for comprehensive, total and complete nuclear disarmament anywhere near realization. Thus the heat of the outbreak of another war was suppressed through fear of a deadly and devastating nuclear war. It is the suppression of this heat which inaugurated the Cold War: a war pursued in defence of contending ideologies. According to Yergin (1977:5,48), from whom we have borrowed the expression – shattered peace – when the Second World War ended

The victors never did find the tie that would hold them together. The Grand Alliance gave way to a global antagonism between two hostile coalitions, one led by the United States and the other by the Soviet Union – those two countries standing opposed to each other as nation-states, as ideologies, and as economic and political systems. After 1945 the two superpowers were able to approximate a state of general mobilization without general war being the consequence the United Nations itself represented a yoking together of two separate approaches to the post-war order – a Wilsonian peace, reflected in what became the General Assembly; and a Great Power peace, embodied in what became the Security Council. The genuine tension between these two approaches remained concealed for most of the Second World War. After the war, the conflict became explicit, and a major source of the Cold War.

From the end of the Second World War, the struggle for ideological dominance necessitated and dictated the nuclear arms race in the context of the Cold War. It is in these circumstances that the logic of funding higher education institutions emerged. According to this logic, funding had to be focused in two areas. One was the humanities and the social sciences. The

² We have borrowed this expression from Kent (1989).

reasoning here was that the Westerners had to understand and appreciate their political and economic institutions to the extent that they would be willing to lay down their lives if these were to be forcibly abolished by external non-Western forces. This was the sphere of the battle of the mind for winning minds. Thus the Western academic-scientific population had significant and visible expert Sovietologists, among others, whose expertise was placed in the service of the struggle against the ideology championed by the Soviet Union and its allies.

Another area which deserved massive funding was the military-industrial complex. Research aimed at the development of new weapons especially nuclear weapons, was funded in order to maintain a leading edge over the Soviet bloc. Indeed it was in this period that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was born (Yergin 1977:362). This underlined the critical importance of the military as well as the necessity to forge ahead with the development and refinement of weapons in general and, nuclear weapons in particular. The Soviet bloc also responded with the birth of the Warsaw Pact (Holsti 1972:1; Remington 1971:10.). Thus two military-ideological alliances were poised against each other in pursuit of ideological dominance. Developing and perfecting the means of war was construed as an important complement to the transmission of knowledge and the defence of knowledge. Under the guise of the interests of state, both the Humanities and the Social Sciences were married to the Natural Sciences for the preservation of the state. This logic of funding encroached upon the autonomy of higher education by using the power of funds to determine and prescribe the meaning and the priorities of education. The university in the classical sense was under threat (Pan 1998:111:76-83). When this threat was actually carried out then the university became corporatised (Bourdieu 1989: 102-107) but not without struggling for the protection and preservation of its autonomy.

Although South Africa was formally not a member of NATO, she nonetheless enjoyed a privileged status within the Organisation. For example,

In November, 1972, the NATO Council requested SACLANT (the Supreme Allied Command in the Atlantic) to devise plans for the 'protection' of supply routes around the Cape. It wasn't until May,

1974, however, that the NATO press secretary admitted that SACLANT had this secret authorization to develop contingency plans for the protection of the Cape route. He also revealed that NATO planners were examining options to be applied not only in wartime but also in 'crisis situations' A key element in South Africa's military links with NATO is the highly sophisticated communication and surveillance center, Silvermine, just north of the Simonstown naval base (El-Khawas & Cohen 1976:39f).

No wonder then that in time, South Africa – with the assistance of some members of NATO (Cervenka & Robers 1978: 2) – acquired nuclear military capability (Barnaby 1977: 19). In these circumstances, South Africa adopted, adapted and pursued the same logic of funding as that which prevailed in the West.

Reactions to the Logic of Funding in Defence of Ideology

The logic of funding higher education during the Cold War did not escape the notice of those inside and outside the spheres of political authority, the owners of finance capital as well as social critics. Accordingly, there were reactions from these spheres. Those who inadvertently made the nuclear arms race a reality through their research in Los Alamos and other scientific laboratories, the scientists, had some moral scruples and hesitated on the wisdom of disclosing to politicians that nuclear weapons were scientifically feasible (Jungk 1956: 15-36). Thus even before the atom and neutron bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki those scientists who had long entertained moral and political scruples about their participation in the manufacture of the bombs rallied together and mounted a crusade against the object of their own creation. This crusade crystallized into a solid movement of opposition to the use of the atom bomb as an instrument of war. One of its major achievements was the drawing up and the presentation of the 'Franck Report' to the United States of America Secretary of War in June 1945 (Jungk 1956: 311-320). This stamped the United States as the first home of the popular movement for nuclear disarmament.

The 'Franck Report' was the product of five years' work on the significance of nuclear power – both in the sphere of physics and in the

probable application of this power in the field of war. The participants in that work described themselves as 'a small group of citizens cognizant of a grave danger for the safety of this country as well as for the future of all the other nations, of which the rest of mankind is unaware'. Clearly, the main concern of the participants was the safety of all the nations of the world in the face of nuclear weapons. Since the existence of these weapons posed mortal danger to all the nations of the world, the participants considered that the rest of mankind was entitled to become aware of this grave danger. Seen from this perspective, the fundamental thrust of the 'Franck Report' was that while the United States of America could, in the prevailing context of international politics, lay a unilateral claim to its own defence, the emergence of nuclear weapons signified the need, at the very least, to couple the notion of national defence with the concept of genuine multilateral international security. The authors of the document put it as follows:

In the past, science has often been able to provide also new methods of protection against new weapons of aggression it made possible, but it cannot promise such efficient protection against the destructive use of nuclear power. This protection can come only from the political organization of the world. Among all the arguments calling for an efficient international organization for peace, the existence of nuclear weapons is the most compelling one (Jungk 1956: 312).

The wish of the scientists then was that science should serve and promote peace not merely in the sense of absence of a hot war but through the position of human life under conditions of the progressive humanization and civilization of the world. Away from this aim and, under the grip of financial power which had acquired 'unwarranted influence' over government, the scientific endeavour becomes an instrument for the degradation of human dignity and the renunciation of civilization.

The scientists were not alone in raising their concern over the moral and political significance of nuclear weapons. In his farewell address, January 17, 1961 on the 'Military Industrial Complex', United States of America President Eisenhower expressed a similar concern when he sounded the following warning.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

The creeping power of finance aimed at influencing government in the interest of industry was thus the source of concern for former President Eisenhower. Even more worrisome was the prospect of the subtle but efficient control over government by the military-industrial complex and, indeed by financial capital in general. The realization of such a prospect would mean the subversion of democracy turning the elected government into an instrument of finance capital. There is little doubt that President Eisenhower's apprehension, expressed more than forty years ago, is true in our time as Noreena Hertz's *The Silent Takeover* testifies. It was indeed an accurate foreboding incomprehensible and invisible only to those committed to wilful blindness.

Writing eight years after President Eisenhower, Noam Chomsky, the social critic and activist, cautioned against the uncritical immersion of the university into the aims and programmes of the ruling elite and industry. He argued for what Bronowski (1971:241) would define, two years later, as the 'disestablishment of science'. According to Chomsky,

The universities will not be able to isolate themselves from the profound social conflict that appears likely The linkage of the universities to other social institutions ... guarantees this. In fact, there may be very serious questioning, in coming years, of the basic assumption of modern society that development of technology is inherently a desirable, inevitable process; and with it, a critique of the role of the university in advancing knowledge and technique and putting it to use On the other hand, there is little doubt that government research contracts provide a hidden subsidy to the academic budget, by supporting faculty research which would otherwise have to be subsidized by the university. It is quite probable that the choice of research topics, in the natural sciences at least, is influenced very little by the source of funds It is doubtful that scientific education can continue at a reasonable level without

this kind of support. Furthermore, radical students will certainly ask themselves why support from the Defense Department is more objectionable than support from capitalist institutions – ultimately, from profits derived by exploitation – or support by tax-free gifts that in effect constitute a levy on the poor to support the education of the privileged. It is impossible to escape the fact that the university is ultimately a parasitic institution, from an economic point of view. It cannot free itself from the inequities of the society in which it exists. At the same time, it is dependent for its existence as a relatively free institution on values that are upheld in the society at large (Chomsky 1973: 310f).

It is clear, in the light of the foregoing, that there is a link between the university and society at large. Also, the university is also linked inextricably to funding provided by either the government or finance capital. It is this bounding which renders the university dependent upon the government and finance capital. Herein lies the vulnerability of the university as it is structurally poised to be influenced by the wishes and prescriptions of government and finance capital. It is also necessary to recognize the potential of students to influence the university and, by implication society, towards either complacent acquiescence to the existing situation or a radical critique of the status quo demanding change. Furthermore, Chomsky argues that the advancement of science and technology unaccompanied by a profound understanding of the instrumentalisation of these disciplines is unlikely to be morally responsive. As such it will deepen the social inequities through the protection of the privileges of the few at the expense of the many. Despite its bondage of dependency upon the ruling elite and finance capital, the university ought to defend morally responsive social values questioning the systematic and structural impoverishment of the many for the delight of the few.

It is significant that at the time when Chomsky wrote, the ‘student revolt’ was a common experience across the West. Students posed the fundamental question: what university, where the university? The meaning and function of the university in society had to be re-examined in the light of these questions. The questions could neither be ignored nor taken lightly for many reasons. One obvious reason was that the students could in future

occupy positions of influence in the affairs of society. To have them ill-equipped for this task would spell disaster. Another crucial consideration was that not all students had the natural inclination or the will to pursue only science and technology. This consideration underlines the point that the strict division between and among the various branches of learning is founded on the untenable presupposition that the human being consists only of either the scientific-technological part or the creative-artistic part. This fragmentation of the human being is reflected in the fragmentation of science and society (Bohm 1971: 27). But the human being, like the universe of which it is part, is a wholeness. Therefore a wholistic orientation and representation of learning is to be preferred to the dominant fragmentative paradigm. The inflexible dogma of specialization is a serious obstacle to the attainment of a wholistic education.

The logic of the strict division between the natural sciences and the Humanities and social sciences was based on philosophical dualism designating two categorially different spheres in one single human being. This in turn became the seedbed for fragmentation in science and society. It nurtured the ascent, backed by finance capital, of science and technology to primacy over the Humanities and the social sciences. The primacy of science and technology reinforced the 'unwarranted influence' of the 'military-industrial complex', of finance capital over democratic government. Thus the door was cast wide open for the substitution of democracy with tynocracy (Singer 2003: 20), that is to say, money-based governance. Economic globalization is illustrative of the tynocratic form of governance.

Economic Globalization and the Funding of Tertiary Institutions

The fall of the Berlin Wall signalled the end of the Cold War. For the Germans, it held out the promise of the reunification of the two Germanies separated by war and ideology. For many Eastern bloc countries it opened up the glittering lure of Western style democracy and intensified the desire to become part thereof. The ideological attraction of the West was virtually irresistible. The 'transition to democracy' became the norm and so the former Eastern bloc countries were dressed in the garb of 'transitional societies'. In these circumstances, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. One

result of this dissolution was that the military personnel, especially the nuclear scientists, were without employment. At the same time there were fears that if the nuclear scientists were not quickly employed then they could sell their expertise even to those who would undermine the intentions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. On this basis, the West absorbed some but not all of these scientists. Consequently, the threat to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was not wholly averted.

Another result of the collapse of the Eastern bloc countries was that the vast military weaponry was almost suddenly rendered idle. Accordingly, it remained dangerously available threatening the security of some countries and strengthening that of others. Together with the unemployment of many military personnel this situation gave rise to the corporatisation of the military; a phenomenon which in the past existed covertly. The already cited title of Singer's book, *Corporate Warriors*, describes this phenomenon and, its content defines it.

Instead of dissolving as did the Warsaw Pact, NATO opted for continued existence on the ground – among others, that there was a need to fight 'Islamic fundamentalism' as former NATO Secretary General Willy Claes averred. In the meantime, some former Warsaw Pact countries were admitted as members of NATO and this became the source of enduring concern for Russia. Other former Warsaw Pact countries were also admitted as members of the now expanded European Union. For the former Eastern bloc countries the funding of large and specialized military establishments including the colossal propaganda machinery ended and, was considerably reduced with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. The absorption of the redundant labour force into other sectors of employment became problematical and, continues to be so. The situation was comparatively better in the NATO countries. Even so, the problem of assimilating a strategic labour force into the Western employment structures without affecting the prevailing unemployment negatively was not solved completely. These changed conditions did have an impact on the philosophy of the funding of higher education.

One of the implications was that finance capital took charge of determining, through 'unwarranted influence' the course and priorities of funding higher education. It determined that science and technology would receive priority funding. The logic here was that these areas promote

advancement and economic development despite the irreversible damage that they inflict on the environment – thus, exposing humanity to mortal danger became the higher value than the preservation of human life. This calls into question education's credentials as the vehicle for the humanization and civilization of humanity. This questioning is reinforced by the fact that finance capital, inspired by the principles of the 'Washington consensus' (Kelsey 1995:18), preserved the structural unemployment inherent in the free enterprise economic system, to the detriment of the many. The attribution of all this to finance capital is rather too easy and unfair because governments were not necessarily coerced to succumb to the 'unwarranted influence of finance capital'. The point is that

Western governments saw themselves facing a stark choice between the promotion of profit through the free market, and the protection of the welfare state through government intervention. Pressure and encouragement from international economic interests made the latter increasingly difficult, even for governments of a social democratic stamp. The neo-liberal model implemented through structural adjustment became dominant. Attributing this solely to the hegemony of international capital is too easy. Governments of individual countries, especially those free from 'conditionalities' attached to loans, still had policy choices about which path to take and how far and how fast to move (Kelsey 1995: 17).

In these circumstances, economic globalization announced its advent.

Reactions to Economic Globalization

Reactions to globalization continue to be many, varied and even mutually contradictory. Those concerned over the boundless pursuit of profit cautioned against further advancement along this path of self-destruction. Soros is among those who belong to this category. He argued, in defence of capitalism, that:

The functions that cannot and should not be governed purely by market forces include many of the most important things in human

life, ranging from moral values to family relationships to aesthetic and intellectual achievements ... yet market fundamentalism is constantly attempting to extend its sway into these regions, in a form of ideological imperialism. According to market fundamentalism, all social activities and human interactions should be looked at as transactional, contract-based relationships and valued in terms of a single common denominator, money But market fundamentalism has become so powerful that any political forces that dare to resist it are branded as sentimental, illogical, and naïve. Yet the truth is that market fundamentalism is itself naïve and illogical (Soros 1998: xxvi-xxvii).

Soros advances an intricate but persuasive argument demonstrating both the naivety and the illogicality of market fundamentalism. He also argues that the capitalist system is like an empire except that it does not have sovereign title to territory over which it exercises authority. Despite this defect, the capitalist system does influence and, even controls the lives of people. It consists of two spheres, namely, the centre and the periphery. The former is the provider of capital' and the latter 'is the user of capital. The rules of the game are skewed in favor of the center' (Soros 1998: 105). In this game competition' without moral scruples is the golden rule to 'success'.

The internal disposition to belong may remain – it may be argued that it is innate in human nature – but in a transactional market, as distinct from a market built on relationships, morality can become an encumbrance. In a highly competitive environment, people weighted down by a concern for others are liable to do less well than those who are free of all moral scruples. In this way, social values undergo what may be described as a process of adverse natural selection. The unscrupulous come out on top. This is one of the most disturbing aspects of the global capitalist system (Soros 1998: 199).

For Soros, it is questionable to abide by the rule of moral unscrupulousness just in order to attain monetary 'success'. Even if there may be justification for playing the game of competition according to its rules, 'we ought also to be concerned with the rules by which we play' (Soros 1998: 197). And here

Soros poses the challenge of moral sensitivity to the rules of competition which determine and measure pleasure and happiness on the basis of the amount of money one has. Failure to pose this challenge is tantamount to what we consider to be the fallacy that 'financial markets are not immoral; they are amoral'. Our argument against its fallacy is that amorality can be judged only from a moral standpoint. Accordingly, the definition of one sphere of reality as 'amoral' is, paradoxically, a moral option. Thus the capitalist system made a moral option when

.... After 1984, the goal of full paid employment, as traditionally understood, was treated by policy-makers as unattainable, unaffordable and undesirable. The rhetoric of the market redefined workers as 'human resources', as mere commodities to be purchased by capital for the lowest market price in the quest to maximise profit, and shed when profitability declined (Kelsey 1995: 259).

The putative amorality of financial markets, reducing human beings to commodities, conceals the metaphysics of killing inherent to the distorted (The Group of Lisbon 1995:90) contemporary understanding of competition. Arnsperger explains this metaphysics thus.

In a metaphorical sense, firms can 'kill' one another on a market; customers can 'kill' a firm by arbitraging away from it in favor of another firm; and people can 'kill' one another in competing for jobs or positions. In a much more literal sense, a firm can kill people if it decides to relocate and move from one country to another almost overnight, leaving all its former employees with the choice between being jobless and uprooting their current way of life by moving (Arnsperger Discussion Paper 9614, IRES Institut de Recherches Economiques).

Thus 'competition' is the euphemism for the licence to kill under the guise of 'civilised' conditions arising out of the constitution of the state. Surely, the option for this kind of immorality cannot be successfully defended on the plea that financial markets are amoral. It needs no special pleading to submit that the sphere of amorality is inconsistent with Aristotle's definition of the

human being as 'a rational animal'. The sphere of amorality precludes the humanization of human relations (Ramose 2003:467-468). It is an impediment to civilization. In order to appreciate this argument one needs only to consider the abuse of Aristotle's definition in the conception and implementation of colonization as well as the oppression of women (Ramose 2003: 1-4).

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the economic motif has taken precedence over and replaced the primacy of the ideological struggle 'won' by the West. The door was thus cast wide open for economic globalisation to step in and impose its dictat upon the destiny of higher education. In essence, the dictat consists in the hierarchisation of disciplines. According to this hierarchisation, science and technology are positioned at the apex. This means that the biggest slice of funding will go to these disciplines. Although the hierarchisation on this basis is designed to determine funding priorities, it has also had the effect of undervaluing the Humanities and Social Sciences. These are regarded to be of less importance and virtually no value in the quest for the creation and accumulation of wealth. The undervaluation of these disciplines is one of the tragedies of our time because it is based upon the tenuous and dangerous presupposition that science and technology can and, may advance without the benefit of conscience as well as critical self-reflection emanating from the Humanities and Social Sciences. Soros is both sceptical and critical of this blind compulsion towards the self-destruction of global capitalism. In the light of this he warns that

I can already discern the makings of the final crisis. It will be political in character. Indigenous political movements are likely to arise that will seek to expropriate the multinational corporations and recapture the 'national' wealth (Soros 1998: 134).

This prediction of rebellion may not be dismissed as illusory wishful thinking. On the contrary, it must be taken seriously since it touches upon the exigencies of justice that will ultimately challenge any oppressive and dehumanising power. It is therefore to be expected that the power of finance capital shall not remain forever unchallenged. Indeed,

An individual may perceive a way of life, or a method of social organisation, by which more of the desires of mankind could be

satisfied than under the existing method. If he perceives truly, and can persuade men to adopt his reform, he is justified. Without rebellion, mankind would stagnate, and injustice would be irremediable. The man who refuses to obey authority has, therefore, in certain circumstances, a legitimate function, provided his disobedience has motives which are social rather than personal (Russell 1975:172).

Higher education institutions would undermine the very reason for their existence if they were to permit and condone the condition of irremediable injustice created by market fundamentalism in the name of economic globalization.

The Significance of the End of the Cold War for South Africa

Education in South Africa is inextricably linked with the history of education in Africa as a whole. The relentless exercise of the 'right of conquest' by the colonial conqueror deprived universities in Africa of independence and thus restricted serviceability to themselves and their peoples. For example, the evolution of universities in South Africa is intricately linked with the history of the colonisation of the country. The rise of universities in South Africa was the initiative – and, by virtue of the 'right of conquest' – the prerogative of the colonialists. Accordingly, the inspiration, intention – deliberate or inadvertent – as well as the constitution of universities in South Africa derived from the epistemological paradigm of the colonial conqueror (Phillips 2003:123). The dominance and exclusivity of the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror in the evolution of universities in South Africa is also evidenced by the fact that the rise of scientific institutions in the country is reported as the sole effort of the colonial conqueror (Naude & Brown 1977: 60-85). Having thus established epistemological dominance by virtue of which the colonised were reduced to consumers rather than producers of knowledge the coloniser moulded the university in Africa into a transmission belt for the import and distribution of colonial values and goods into Africa (Mazrui 1984: 273-275). By the same token the university in Africa was moulded into the facilitator of the export of African wealth to the colonising power. It is doubtful if decolonisation has relieved the university in Africa of epistemological subservience to the

former coloniser (Hountondji 2003: 502). Nor is it now beyond dispute that the university in Africa is in a position to facilitate the pursuit of African interests above those of anyone else (Odora-Hoppers 2000. 7). It is debatable if decolonisation has indeed brought about a just and equitable compensation to the enduring miserability resulting from the exercise of the 'right of conquest.' It is crucial, though, to keep in mind that paradoxically, the university in Africa also produced African leaders of the struggle for independence and liberation.

The dominance and exclusivity of the epistemological paradigm of the colonial conqueror in the educational landscape in South Africa preserved and assured the cultural affinity with the West. It made South Africa a natural member of Western culture. Thus South Africa was on the side of the West during the Cold War. This meant that the funding of the military-industrial complex was also a priority for colonial South Africa. As already stated, South Africa also acquired nuclear military capability during this period: a financial venture for which post April 27 1994 South Africa is still saddled with a financial burden. And since the birth of apartheid, South Africa was locked in the defence of two ideologies, namely, the capitalist system and apartheid. The latter also required large amounts of money to initiate and sustain its systems and propaganda.

With the Fall of the Berlin wall, South Africa also had to contend with the burden of redundant military personnel. Some of these formed themselves into private security corporations ready to fight anywhere in the world in return for remuneration. What the security forces did in secret (Shutte, Liebenberg, & Minnaar 1998; Stiff 1999) in the past now became daylight activity and thus the corporatisation of the military became a fact of life of South Africa. Against this background, the present South African government is considering amendments to the Defence Act so that such activity may be regulated. At the same time, the present government is confronted with the problem of unemployment arising from redundant labour produced by the collapse of the Cold War on the one hand and the closure of 'border industries' which could no longer make high profit from the cheap labour coming from the Bantustans. The challenge of unemployment was aggravated by inequities in wealth. The new political dispensation held out only the promise but not the reality of bridging the gap between rich and poor in South Africa. The change in political dispensation increased

considerably the number of those entitled to share the national cake. But it was only the logic of sharing which was inevitable. In reality, those who owned and controlled the wealth of the country continued to do so even in the new dispensation. Accordingly, the larger share of the cake remains in their hands despite the legal force of the Black Economic Empowerment programmes. In the domain of learning the right to education³ would be recognised but receive fragile protection and insufficient promotion. It is under these circumstances that 'redress' (National Commission on Higher Education, 28 - 29 April 1996: 110) became the continual theme of educational politics in South Africa. The necessity for redress must be seen as part of the structural poverty inherent to and sustained by the prevailing capitalist system in South Africa. It is from this perspective that government comes face to face with the dilemma to either comply with the demands of the already mentioned 'Washington consensus' or to opt for an independent policy responsive to the exigencies of social justice and implementable at the rate determined by government itself. To all appearances, the government chose for compliance and thus gave economic globalization the privilege to prescribe the priorities of the educational curriculum.

The entry of economic globalization into the scene only weakened but did not sever the link between the government and the nation (Green 1997: 186). Education then has served and, continues to serve in the processes of nation-building through the construction of national values (Green 1997: 131-136). But the imposed primacy of science and technology over the Humanities and the Social Sciences undermined the moral authority of the university and thus exposed it to the whims and caprice of the state (Heinrich 1989: 95). The university's compliance with this dictate of finance capitalism weakened the cohesion of democracy (Dlamini 1997: 43). This subservience of the university in a way proclaimed its death as finance capital triumphed over the principle of university autonomy (Pan 1998: 90).

According to economic globalization, the aim of education should be the enhancement of marketability and profitability⁴. From this point

³ For a discussion of this right in terms of right of access and right to instruction see, Postma (1997: 235-238).

⁴ For a critical discussion of this point in the context of the United States of America, see, Pan (1998:3-9).

onward the market rather than the university or society dictated educational priorities (Karnouh 1989: 113). And so the dogma of the production of an employable graduate was born. According to this dogma, the graduate should of necessity be open to life-long learning since this is the only way to ensure one's marketability. Having rejected Marx's vision of an 'all-round man' globalization resurrected it in different words. The privatisation of university faculties or even an entire university changed from a distinct probability to reality (Kelsey 1998:51-53). Extra labour in the metropolis even under the guise of 'foreign aid' or 'volunteer corps' could no longer be exported either easily or sufficiently to the former colonies. Structural unemployment is continuously tackled by the abandonment of skills which are neither marketable nor profitable. This goes under the benign name of 'right-sizing', or 'restructuring' and hence Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes whose basic message is that there is nothing wrong with the dogmatism of the thought structure of marketability and the making of maximum profit at whatever cost. The only wrong that there is, is the apparent inability of the many to understand that the fault lies with them. Their fault consists in the failure to adjust to the existing economic structure. On this reasoning, the university could not but be transformed into a business enterprise. The perestroika which heralded the end of the cold war in world politics meant 'restructuring' (Berman 1989: 115). In effect funding would be reduced and the question was: who must be on the firing line?⁵

The Mirage of the 'employable graduate'

Under the guise of globalisation, economic fundamentalism has imposed the training of an 'employable' graduate as the overriding purpose of all education. But globalisation in theory and practice undermines the achievement of this goal for the majority of human beings. The youth are educated and encouraged to expect that at the completion of their study money, the sovereign, will provide employment for them. But in the globalizing age just the opposite is true. Against this background, in his Encyclical letter, *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), the Supreme

⁵ For an answer based on the idea that research is the 'cancer' of university life, see Piccone (1989: 129).

Pontiff, Pope John Paul II, has the following to say about the employment issue especially with regard to the youth.

... the question of finding work, or, in other words, the issue of *suitable employment for all who are capable of it*. The opposite of a just and right situation in this field is unemployment, that is to say the lack of work for those who are capable of it. It can be a question of general unemployment or of unemployment in certain sectors of work. The role of the agents included under the title of indirect employer is *to act against unemployment*, which in all cases is an evil, and which, when it reaches a certain level, can become a real social disaster. It is particularly painful when it especially affects young people, who after appropriate cultural, technical and professional preparation fail to find work, and see their sincere wish to work and their readiness to take on their own responsibility for the economic and social development of the community sadly frustrated. The obligation to provide unemployment benefits, that is to say, the duty to make suitable grants indispensable for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families is a duty springing from the fundamental principle of the moral order in this sphere, namely the principle of the common use of goods, or to put it in another and still simpler way, the right to life and subsistence (*Laborem Exercens* 1995: 376-377, par 18).

The Transformation of Education in South Africa

It is pertinent to note that most of the preparatory material on the transformation of education in South Africa has adopted the logic of the dominance of the market in pursuit of unrestricted profit. As though the adoption were insufficient, the advocates of the transformation of education in South Africa have also borrowed the terminology from New Zealand. For example, we have the 'New Zealand Qualifications Authority', and the 'South African Qualifications Authority' (Kelsey 1998: 65). The irony is that they have done both the adoption and the borrowing at a time when the morality as well as the efficacy of a globalised educational system in New Zealand were called into question. The Green Paper on Higher Education

Transformation proceeds from the correct insight that a new social edifice in South Africa must be constructed. However, it is basically at fault in the belief that the desired new society must be built upon the foundations of the old society. By so doing, it condones the so-called right of conquest and its ensuing consequences upon the conquered people of South Africa. This condonation places the latter in the position in which education will remain beyond the reach of the many because of the structural economic inequality inaugurated by the unjust wars of colonisation. Thus for as long as the beneficiaries of conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation are exempted from material redress of the situation the constitutional right to education will be only formal, lacking in substance. The massive debt owed by students especially in historically Black universities and their assertion of the right to education manifested through virtually endless strikes and damage to university property are deeply rooted in the condonation of the 'right of conquest'. It is pertinent to observe that in their protests against debt repayment or the demand for bursaries, alternatively, a waiver on tuition fees, students have by and large failed to situate their inability to pay in the logic of conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation. This applies equally to the argument for redress as this at best referred to 'historical inequalities or injustice' but without being specific about the content and meaning of this phrase. This vagueness and lack of specificity is not particularly helpful. It continues to have the negative effect of sustaining the myth that the money for both the repayment of debt and the redress of 'historical injustice' shall eventually be found but from nowhere. Instead of recognising the problem as part and parcel of the logic of conquest in the unjust war of colonisation, policy-makers of the 'new' South Africa have been quick to criticise students for clinging to 'a culture of entitlement'. It is odd that for the same policy-makers the conqueror's entitlement – in the name of the questionable 'right of conquest' – to privileged economic sovereignty over the material and 'human resources' of the country has not become the object of criticism as well. The students were told by the then Minister of Education – Sibusiso Bhengu – in a meeting held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria that the repayment of their debt to the universities was 'non-negotiable'. So they and, by extension their parents or guardians, had to find money despite the meagre wages and salaries they received for centuries if they were lucky to be absorbed into the

'labour market'⁶. Nowhere does the Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation bring under the prism of critical questioning the prevailing orthodoxy that 'higher education provides the labour market ... with high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy'. But as we have submitted the modern globalised economy cannot and does not intend to engage all the available 'competencies and expertise'.

From the Green Paper to Law

The technopols steering educational transformation in South Africa finally succeeded to have the Green Paper translated into law. The process leading to this end-result was in many ways characteristic of globalisation. For example, the many consultations that took place between the technopols and the various stakeholders in education had only the semblance but not the substance of democratic decision-making. This was because thorough debate was neither encouraged nor particularly welcomed. Instead, the technopols did not tire to alert the stakeholders present of the overriding importance of producing either a declaration or 'consensus' at the end of the sittings. At other times debate was dismissed as either academic or being subject to the strictures of time. Celerity and lack of democratic decision-making were some of the trademarks of the technopols at these putative consultations. As a result, consultations served as vehicles to inform the stakeholders of decisions already made and to legitimise those decisions on the plea that prior consultations took place.

The Green Paper proceeds from the assumption that provision of qualified 'human resources' for the 'labour market' is both desirable and necessary 'for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy'. It also assumes that the 'labour market' and the 'modern economy' are

⁶ It is proper to note that the present author personally attended several meetings at university, regional and national levels at which the question of the transformation of education in South Africa was discussed. He was also a member of the University of Venda Committee dealing with the same subject. He has also written an extensive commentary on 'The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation' in South Africa.

uncontestable and uncontested 'ideas' or 'values'. Accordingly, the structure, governance and funding of higher education must submit to and be shaped in a manner responsive to the imperatives of the 'labour market'. The Green Paper clearly takes the position that the submission of higher education to the dominance of the 'labour market' is a necessary and irreversible reality that stands above the pale of critical questioning. It is submitted that this position is scientifically untenable and morally indefensible.

The Moral Challenge to Globalization

The Green Paper expressly advocates 'moral development'. It identifies one of the 'deficiencies' of the 'existing system' and even criticises it in these terms:

Despite acknowledged achievements and strengths, the present system of higher education is limited in its ability to meet the moral, social and economic demands of the new South Africa (The Green paper on Higher Education Transformation in South Africa, p. 10).

Unfortunately, this is stated only as a desideratum. The Green Paper does not give substance to what it means by 'moral development'. Yet, even the dumb can talk about, the deaf can hear of and the blind can see the increasing joblessness, the ubiquity of job insecurity, rising crime, the intensification of the poverty of women, resort to commercial sex, the racialisation of poverty and in a word, the deadly poverty increasing by the day in South Africa. This is the content of the moral, social and economic challenge of globalisation. This prevailing reality shows that the structural adjustment of the 'new' South Africa is in many ways similar to that of New Zealand from which it so uncritically borrowed. Kelsey (1995: 271, 283, 285) says in this regard:

The result of a decade of radical structural adjustment was a deeply divided society. The traditionally marginalised had been joined by growing numbers of newly poor. The social structure was severely stressed. Hundreds of thousands of individuals, their families and

communities had endured a decade of unrelenting hardship. The burden fell most heavily on those who already had least. This was neither coincidence nor bad luck. It was the calculated outcome of a theory which many New Zealanders viewed as morally and ethically bankrupt The impact of structural adjustment was never arbitrary. The fictional level playing-field was premised on the structural poverty of race, gender and age The evidence was clear that, with the onset of structural adjustment, the colonial legacy of poverty, dispossession and alienation that operated since 1840 had taken another, equally pernicious form.

The parallels with the history of South Africa since colonisation speak for themselves. For some casting one's eye back to colonisation is an illicit violation of the cult of an eternal present – the present which is supposed to be always better than the past. They regard this look back at history as hollow nostalgia and a spurious excuse for laziness. It is indeed prudent to warn against blaming the past for everything. However, it is wise to discern the causal and logical links between the past and the present. One may argue – reasoning by analogy – that it is impossible to eradicate the natural biological link between parent and child although it is possible to deny any other link between them. From the time she was conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation Africa applied the wisdom to distinguish between the self-righteous blame of others and moral responsibility. In the case of moral responsibility, Africa continues to seek redistributive justice as just one exigency of historical justice. Strategies to conceal and mute this exigency of justice in the 'new' South Africa are a fragile attempt to eternalise the untenable thesis that a long lapse of time transforms an original injustice into justice.

The Africanisation of the Curriculum

Just as Aristotle became known to the West through the Arabs, so did the university tradition of Africa become known to Africa through the European conqueror (James 1954: 154). However, the latter transmitted and conveyed the African university tradition as a distinctive part of their own history and culture (Jackson 1970: 21; Williams 1976:219). In this way the European

conqueror denied their indebtedness to Africa. This denial constituted the basis for the invention of Africa (Mudimbe 1988). The underlying and basic educational problem remains the same, namely, a clash of cognitively dissonant epistemological paradigms. The desideratum for the resolution of this epistemological conflict crystallises into the necessity for the Africanisation of the curriculum across every level of education. The educational curriculum is linked organically to the survival of a people and society.

The school, including tertiary education, is the specific terrain where the struggle for control over the curriculum ensues. This struggle for the control as well as the distribution of both the economic and the cultural capital of a particular society finds expression in the curriculum. The curriculum is therefore the crucial instrument in the struggle for the control and distribution of the economic as well as the cultural capital. In South Africa this struggle has so far been won by the European conqueror. The Africanisation of the curriculum is not simply a struggle for power but it is an exigency of justice. Concretely, the curriculum of the conqueror must be interrogated in relation to:

- (i) the fact that its ultimate basis is the so-called right of conquest. This is particularly significant because the dominant beneficiaries from conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation apply the unwritten law that studies by the conquered on conquest shall be ignored (Kelsey 1995: 295).
- (ii) its orientation of education to capitalism euphemistically described as the free enterprise system. According to this system, an irreconcilable distinction between labour and employment must be maintained. Upon this distinction, only the employed are likely to survive the vicissitudes of life if they are frugal. The rest of the labourers are assigned to despondency and occasional stirrings of conscience from the wealthy. These stirrings of conscience are known as charity or humanitarian aid. But 'charity cannot take the place of justice unfairly withheld ...' (Quadragesimo Anno 1995: 74: par 137).

- (iii) the right to life – which must become an integral part of the curriculum in tertiary education. All mechanisms and strategies designed to undermine this right ought to be exposed through philosophical analysis in relation to other sciences – the social and the natural sciences. In a word philosophy should become an indispensable part of the curriculum in primary through to tertiary education in order to overcome the deification of finance capital, the labour market and its aggressive technology.

Conclusion

We have shown that the right to education in the ‘new’ South Africa is restricted and frustrated by the retention of structural poverty. Access to adequate and full education remains restricted to the few. The right to education is thus available in form but conspicuously absent in substance. The continuing dominance of the epistemological paradigm of the descendants of the colonial conqueror speaks to the exigency to realise epistemological parity among all the stakeholders of education in South Africa. Without this the struggle for a genuinely South African educational curriculum must continue.

The quest for a genuinely South African educational curriculum cannot be realised without facing up to the dehumanizing and uncivilizing challenge posed by finance capital. Higher education is, by definition, one of the crucial sites in the rise against the challenge posed by finance capital. It is pertinent to acknowledge in this connection that:

Since the dominant voice in any society is that of the beneficiaries of the status quo, the ‘alienated intellectual’ who tries to pursue the normal path of honest inquiry – perhaps falling into error on the way – and thus often finds himself challenging the conventional wisdom, tends to be a lonely figure. The degree of protection and support afforded him by the university is, again, a measure of its success in fulfilling its proper function in a free society. It is, furthermore, a measure of the willingness of the society to submit its ideology and structure to critical analysis and evaluation and of its willingness to overcome inequities and defects that will be revealed by such a critique (Chomsky 1973: 303).

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