

A “new morality” for South African education

Part VIII – Reflections and conjectures on educational policy

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Abstract

Educational policy in South Africa since the 1994-elections underscores the fact that where policy-matters are concerned every aspiration and strategy involved, including every aspect of the formulation and execution thereof is forever permeated by values. And where values are concerned the ultimate direction designated policy is to follow, as well as the direction in which such values are to be deployed in educational practice are – essentially – of either anastate or apostate nature. This matter is considered in the article to follow.

Opsomming

Onderwysbeleid sedert die 1994-verkieping bevestig die feit dat waar onderwys-/ opvoedingsake ter sprake kom, elke aspirasie en strategie betrokke is op waardes, asook dat elke aspek van die formulering en toepassing daarvan steeds van waardes deurdrenk is. En waar waardes ter sprake is, sal die rigting waarin die beleid ontplooi, asook die rigting waarin hierdie waardes in praktiese onderwys tot gelding gebring word, noodsaaklikewys van hetsy anastatiese of apostatiese aard wees. Dié saak word in die hieropvolgende studie van nader beskou.

1. Appraisal and possible strategy

In the previous Part we discovered that the ideal of a just state that reigns in true justice over all its citizens and does not debase itself by only benefitting the powerful and wealthy while despoiling and overexploiting the powerless and indigent is probably the finest living condition that every citizen could wish for.

As far as education is concerned, the ideal of a truly just state that metes out justice for all its citizens who are being educated irrespective of race, culture, creed or whatever is certainly embraced and acclaimed by the downright majority of South Africans irrespective of whatever differences may exist among them. This matter is approached in two possible ways. Firstly, national policy on education should highlight the crucial areas of activity with a view to amending past follies and blunders and to furnish the broad spectrum of educational aims to be pursued on national scale, like *national unity, liberty, equity and equality* for all, and also to guarantee freedom for every *societal relationship* that enjoys an educational commitment to operate according to its primordially intended and originally allocated structure (Part VIII). Secondly by formulating and developing curricula and syllabi for the various school subjects that provide the broad parameters for actual educational activities at school and in the classroom and, indeed, in every educational encounter between educator and learner the ideals of *fraternity, critical intelligence, informed* and *erudite* learners with an *all-inclusive world vision* and the like can be attempted (Part IX).

2. Provisional assessment of contemporary cultural penchants and educational aspirations

2.1 *Apposite or ideologically defiled?*

When we commenced our investigation into the possibility of developing a so-called "new morality" to underpin "values education" in South Africa, we critically assessed some major spiritual tendencies in our modern world in general and our country in particular. The noteworthy outcome of this analysis was that the two counter poles of *fundamentalism* and *relativism* were exposed as the origin of a veritable crisis in our quest for the re-establishment of a culture where proper and acceptable normative education for future generations can flourish. Any search for a final choice of values that are

to regulate our behaviour in every *modus quo* of human life should not only steer well clear of the extreme opposites of *casuistry* and *relativism*, but of every in-between ideological delusion that may adversely affect and prejudice our experience and interpretation of reality.

This approach is vital for our purpose because, as Leatt, Kneifel and Nürnberger make clear, *ideology* is a key form of falsehood that perverts people's perspectives and experiences of reality and transforms meaningful and legitimate ideals into blatant lies. In the process of laying claim to and eventually controlling the minds of persons as well as communities ideology assumes a virtually totalitarian character. It imposes absolute value on a restricted reality (the nation, the people, culture, affluence, security, revolution, etc.) for which no sacrifice is deemed too important and no moral consideration not adaptable in the service of this man-made god (1989:284). Thus it provides all-embracing answers to the ultimate questions that engross and absorb the human mind, bestowing a near religious charisma on it, a feature that Mannheim aptly labelled "self-deification" (*apotheosis*, 1972:76; cf. 76-78). Leatt *et al.* designate it as a dictatorial, intimidating and manipulating influence that distorts our way of thinking to the point where we accept – uncritically – weak, reprehensible and even blatantly false theories as the truth that needs no corroboration, no verification, no proof. Victims of ideological obfuscation usually cling tenaciously to odd and even bizarre viewpoints and to doctrines that are so patently untrue and illusory that they are duped by them (usually to their personal and group benefit) to *misinterpret* the obvious (1989:284).

The exceedingly negative impact of the ideological obfuscation of the human mind becomes starkly clear when we consider that the domination and pressure brought to bear by ideology and its introduction of slanted and prejudiced perspectives and categories as features of a specific view of life and the world will be decisive for the ultimate shaping of the everyday conjectures, convictions and judgements of ordinary folk. The decisive establishment of an encompassing, non-scientific view of life and the world by future generations is in this way fatally misdirected by ideology. Therefore, all possible measures must be utilized to expose relentlessly every vestige of such delusions that may adversely affect the formulation and implementation of sound educational policy and practice in our

country. For, is it not our indisputable mission and solemn duty forever to "try the spirits whether they are of the Lord"?

In the following paragraph we intend to sound the broad-spectrum nature of certain key cultural dynamics that are currently at work in our country and which directly motivate the design and establishment of educational doctrine; followed by some likely scenarios. This involves an initial though cursory assessment of the present mind-set of mainstream South Africans regarding the general course of a shared culture, and subsequently attempts to expose ideological delusions and flawed conjectures at play.

2.2 Afrikaner ethno-nationalism

The ideology of *Afrikaner ethnocentrism* is a form of (reactionary) *populism* that displays a distinctive authoritarian and despotic character¹ (cf. Leatt, *et al.*: 1989:98, 101; Visagie and Pretorius, 1993:55, 59 -60). This ideology came into full bloom during the decades before the dawn of so-called "true democracy". Through its policy of coerced segregation and statutory discrimination, the apartheid regime with its prejudiced and highly conservative constituency sought to control all the peoples of the country in the interests of the Afrikaner-nation and its sympathizers.

Afrikaner ethno-nationalism is inspired by the dualistic mainspring of neo-Scholasticism. It is a form of secularized Christianity where the emphasis lies heavily on the apostate extremity while a "Christian veneer" is applied to conceal the many renegade ideals that mar the integrity of its "Christian" façade. As such it did not allow a genuinely Christian motive to impel education at all levels in our country. Since its final demise in 1994 as principal strategy regulating all education and training in the country, the influence of Afrikaner ethno-nationalism has waned significantly². Its present

1 Especially during the last years of its existence, this ideology exhibited astonishing instances of the "tyranny of (the *minority* of) the people" (or rather of those who wielded power) concerning educational matters, especially affairs that applied largely to the oppressed and subjugated majority.

2 This ideal still imbues the hearts and minds of many supporters of the erstwhile political dispensation. It appears as educational objective only in the case of certain separate schools that are operated self-reliantly by communities that are – mostly – present-day supporters of the ideology of racial superiority and segregation.

impact on the delineation of official educational policy in our country is negligible, if not practically nil. For this discourse it lies outside our field of interest and will not feature as subject of discussion by itself but will be referred to only in passing.

2.3 Revolutionary populism

2.3.1 Authoritarian undertones

The ideals of our present day educational policy makers and associated officials relate directly to those endorsed by supporters of the erstwhile struggle against the previous apartheid government and reveal a distinctly apostate character. Goudzwaard labels (revolutionary) *populism* a persuasive and highly credible form of “false consciousness”. All over the world the idea of greater involvement in the regime of the day and the corporate world by ordinary folk (“the people”) readily duped those oppressed, exploited and marginalized by despotic regimes and prejudiced social orders to understand conventional concepts and the customary values that apply to them (being human, the meaning of any kind of life, civilization, society, benevolence, compassion, cruelty, sin and redemption) in new and altered codes that differ radically from orthodox and long-established interpretations thereof (1984:36). He also indicates that – enthused by fanatical and confrontational programs and activities – the “new morality and legality” of this form of populism has the tendency to give even routine matters a radical mien. For instance, feelings of intense hatred for rival population and ethnic groups are intentionally stimulated; the collective struggle of humankind against evil is no longer understood as the unavoidable misfortune of an entire human race; virtue is seen as being inherent only in those who are in harmony with and support the cause; iniquity is seen as resting solely with its opponents, etc. Thus, instead of remaining mere instruments (tools) and lines of action to achieve a popular result, *means* and *methods* of changing society may easily slip out of control and become purposes and intentions in their own right (Goudzwaard, 1984:37).

Although supporters of populism in its South African manifestation were successful in overthrowing the former repressive *status quo* in a peaceful manner, this ideological construct nevertheless harbours within itself a dualism between its ostentatiously *liberalist* and up-to-

the-minute front and an ingrained *reactionism*. With its slogans of "the majority should rule", "the people will govern" and "People's Education for People's Power", the official image of *revolutionary populism* was and still is one of being fundamentally "democratic". Is it not *of* the people and *for* the people? Therefore, the ostensible will of the people is at all times perceived as embodying the ultimate and only legitimate source of authority and power of the "new" community of liberated South Africans (cf. Visagie, 1992:16; cf. 15ff). This "will of the people" is understood as the one-off guarantee of the lofty life standards by which truly emancipated men and women of all races, creeds and the like can live in peace and happiness. This commendable populist mainspring is hailed as the only legitimate future safeguard to regulate the new post-apartheid regime in such a fashion that the interests of every citizen in our new "rainbow" democracy can and will be served in an appropriate, impartial and adequate manner.

However, for the ideologically possessed mind the concept "*the people*" naturally relates to those who are in harmony with the dogmas and belief systems that hold sway and motivate those in power³. As the ideals, opinions, aspirations, etc. of the majority seldom coincide with those of the minority, the former group habitually entertains little or no compassion for either the *will* or the *needs* of any *minority*, particularly those who operate in unconcealed opposition to the rulers. Therefore, should the enthusiasm and interest of "the people" in revolutionary activities start to wane with time and the novelty of *being in power* systematically dwindles, the whole perception of "the people" as a united entity bonded in their mutual desire to safeguard their all-encompassing freedom and rightful dignity may slowly change and ultimately end up in the hands of a selected group of certain pro-active party leaders and state officials.

Lamentably, as has come to pass in the rest of the world where revolutionary populists assumed power, this has also been the case with our new "democracy". The slogan "*the will of the people*" has regrettably come to represent the will of a small but controlling

3 Power may also become entrenched in the hands of minorities, as was the case with the pre-1994 regime in our country.

group of grasping and domineering functionaries of the ruling political party and officials of the state who seemingly act as proxy of “*the people*” for the supposed “*benefit of (all) the people*”.

Indeed, it has become starkly apparent even during the initial years of our new democracy that this much applauded and commendable *will of the people* has the capacity of being readily misappropriated, abused and exploited by those in power who have either the interests of a reigning political party at heart, or simply their own personal benefits which may even include substantial clandestine remunerations. Visagie aptly demonstrates that the so-called *will of the people* can be turned, with a little adroitness and not much effort, into a comprehensive, self-seeking and dictatorial “super-value”, far removed from its admirable original meaning. It is possible that the praiseworthy “*will of the people*” may backslide into denoting the “*whims of the people*”. Or, an even worse scenario, it may attain a totally foreign meaning, namely that of “*dictated by the people*” (cf. 1992:16).

Like all ideologically inhibited movements, *revolutionary populism* has the distinct potential of degenerating into a surrogate despotic and reactionary power that creates its own *structures of domination*. Eventually, these will correspondingly manipulate and exploit, simply because the men and women who officiate in the name of “*the people*” are, themselves neither free from the destructive effects of ideology nor of their personal weaknesses. Should this ensue the likelihood exists that other ideals, aspirations, norms and values of factions opposing the majority regime will be arbitrarily relegated by ideologues of the state to positions of subordination and subservience in comparison with the all-encompassing demands of this abstract, supra-individual, dictatorial collective, namely “*the people*” (Visagie, 1992:16).

2.3.2 *Autocracy curtailed*

When the inordinate impact of the capitalist Anglo-American and European cultures on South Africans of all races is considered, the unconcealed leniency displayed by *revolutionary populism* towards an unmistakably *relativist* and *liberalist* spiritual attitude, including especially the already existing insatiable *greed* and passion for *financial gain* of certain population groups and persons is not

surprising. Materialism, the quintessence of modern Western culture has permeated the mind-set of *all* South Africans to the extent that we can claim that – inherently – our common cultural destiny seems to be inextricably interwoven with a relativist-individualist materialist *liberalism*. The birth in the West of an *avant-garde*, ultra-modern, hypercritical, super-intelligent, unconventional, sophisticated, autonomous, hedonistic, pleasure-seeking, squandering and liberated personality flaunting a completely new and superior disposition also conquered the hearts and minds of our people, ousting forever austere *traditionalism*, *conservatism*, *thrift* and *religiosity* as obsolete mental states that lack the very hallmark of human freedom, namely that of *secularized spiritual maturity*.

Also in our country, this scourge of self-styled autonomy and concomitant non-compliance with justifiable demands of the establishment, coupled by an inflexible rebuff of all forms of extra-personal authority by many of its citizens foreshadowed the rapid deterioration of the reputation and influence of all social institutions, especially family, church and school. As part of a global relegation of most forms of authority, a novel and uncharacteristic concept of the nature and function of the family and the school also developed. In many sections of the South African population this brought about a full-blown breakdown of parental authority and discipline in the family, the undisputed and undeniable preconditions for all successful extra-parental forms of education (confessional, public, etc.). The end result was escalating demands for nonconformist (alternative and arbitrary) value selection and application that eventually signalled the danger in afflicted communities of a collapse of normativity across the board.

These voguish changes in many communities – especially those that were marginalized and left disadvantaged in the past under a system of White supremacy – regarding central concepts pertaining to values that are designated to regulate eventually all human options and actions in the community, impact destructively on conventional values-education in general. Many modern young men and women from previously ostracized communities, and especially those at school and other tertiary institutions for education are unremittingly sacrificed to the influence of anonymous but distinctly apostate powers that progressively alienate them even further from religion, church and family.

Characteristic of the current spiritual and mental allegiance of the majority of South Africans is, then, the preponderance of various and divergent expressions and offshoots of *relativism* that seem to have gripped the hearts and minds of people regardless of race, creed, or whatever. These range from a more sophisticated, refined and well-developed *individualist liberalism* with its characteristic theoretical balancing on the brink of mayhem and chaos, to the crude and subversive sub-cultures in our society that are driven brazenly by personal avarice and greed.

Revolutionary populism, as it developed in South Africa, is distinguished by the fact that it exhibits some imprints of Black (African) Theology (*Theology of the Oppressed*) (D. Tutu cited by Leatt e.a., 1989:118; Tutu, 1982; Kairos Theologians, 1985:11-12, 13, 14ff, 20, 23, 24), thereby partly mollifying its overtly secular character. Nonetheless, it is predominantly dedicated to the promotion of the interests of an idol, namely “the people”. Accordingly, its values remain directed, not at God, but primarily at a national fetish, thereby imbuing it with a predominantly secular and apostate nature. As such it is one-sided and unfit to be considered a legitimate objective for future education on national scale.

2.4 Affluent delinquency

With the deterioration and eventual demise of the erstwhile key influence of Christianity⁴ in the Western World, this hitherto dominant cultural⁵ power and stimulus in South Africa⁶ also came under pressure and inevitably underwent radical changes (cf. Goudzwaard, 1984:49-59; 61-77; also Schoeman, 2000:111 ff.). Especially after the Second World War the new motivating force that underpinned cultural development in our country seemed to change

4 By not only tolerating, but eventually even *accommodating* the existence of a profane sphere of human life adjacent to the fundamental principles of Christianity, the germ of complete secularization was implanted in the dualistic nature of medieval Scholastic thought and its later Protestant version known as neo-Scholasticism. Since the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth century this pernicious process continued in Western culture until it inevitably changed the pseudo-Christian nature of the latter into the virtually completely secular one that we encounter today.

5 With a culture that was but a historic extension of that of Western Europe and of Great Britain.

6 Namely that of the ruling minority that – until 1994 – wielded sole political and economic power.

slowly and in due course emerged as that of *continuing material prosperity* and *on-going economic development* at all costs and despite any detrimental impact on nature or humanity. In this process Christian principles were relentlessly modified, undermined and marginalized. As the country grew prosperous, more and more powerful secularizing forces came into play. Thus, a culture of *affluence* and *greed* (Goudzwaard, 1984:49-59; 61-77; cf. also Schoeman, 2000:63ff) became a supplementary motivational force for the majority of our people⁷, despite race, culture or creed. The devious illusion that gaining material wealth and prosperity – that the ultimate objective of life comprises abundance, hedonistic pleasure and decadence after the example set by the mainly White and affluent section of the population – also influenced other peoples and cultures adversely, especially the formerly marginalized and unprivileged indigenous African cultures.

In our times the vital question is to what extent the superficial values of our present society that uncritically metes out admiration for those with great personal wealth and at the same time turning a blind eye to the shocking poverty of the majority of South Africans can be held responsible for the shallow materialism that is fast becoming a permanent feature of a totally new culture of *affluent delinquency*? Is this popular fallacy regarding the *ultimate objective* of human endeavour not a precondition for developing an attitude towards life that tolerates and sanctions criminals to be idolized and venerated as role models and heroes⁸? Are we not confronted by and fighting against an emerging completely apostate culture where crime, corruption and the like are not only condoned but actually acclaimed by the naïve serfs and gullible champions of the assumption that the choice for violence, crime, lawlessness and eventual "mobocracy" is the sole avenue to future prosperity, luxury, self-indulgence and happiness and have thus chosen wrongdoing as their way of life?

7 For those who still wished to justify their motives and actions against the backdrop of Christian values, this problem was "solved" by the introduction over a long period of time of a fundamental dichotomy: the Christian sphere of life was restricted to and concentrated in the church and worship, while the profane remainder was abandoned to hedonistic and self-indulgent influences and motives.

8 Cf. the malignant influence of too many modern media where delinquency, violence, racketeering, gangsterism and the like are portrayed as prototypical and eminently acceptable life-styles.

This altered cultural force is apostate to the core. It is explicitly directed at a Godless objective, namely that of acquiring as much material profit as possible, regardless of either the means or the consequences. Therefore it does not qualify as an appropriate objective for the future education for our youth.

3. Starting point for an even-handed critique of ideology

It is perplexing to contemplate how effortlessly different people with diverging convictions regarding fundamental issues interpret the very same reality (states of affairs) differently, offer dissimilar significance to, and provide disparate solutions to the same predicaments, and often react to exactly the same conditions and situations in completely divergent ways. When considering the realities that shape and determine the potential for developing a “new” normativity for the education of South African citizens of all ethnic groups and denominations, we have to account for the fact that distorted and biased interpretations of the realities of everyday life may result in self-induced personal, as well as collective tunnel-vision that will seriously encumber the just and impartial balancing of the interests of subordinate persons, groups and communities. This problem is caused and intensified by the uncritical rejection of the existence of *ontic normativity* that present the *universal* and *constant starting points* of all our eventual interpretations and applications of values in the *direction* indicated by the Holy Scriptures. For this reason it is not entirely out of order to demand of every viewpoint on the education of future citizens to be constantly aware of and able to articulate their deepest mainsprings and convictions regarding educational theory and practice.

Throughout all our analyses it has become clear that it is always essential for responsible citizens of a state to account critically for and express their approval or disapproval of the special way in which supporters of prominent views of life and the world interpret *structure* and *direction*. This is necessitated by the fact that the pernicious and coercive nature of every form of particular (personal) ideology is ignored by the ideologically obfuscated mind that is involved. Therefore, the inherent falsehood of all ideological constructs, as well as their destructive effect on society in general and inter human relations in particular must be relentlessly exposed and rebuffed at all times by all citizens, especially by policy makers, and also by educators *in whatever locus*.

What, then, is the source of diverging, often radically conflicting effectuations of principles? As has been noted in previous contexts above it is in the light of the Divine Revelation of God in Jesus Christ that the Christian discovers – contained in the Holy Scriptures and in the ontic structures of God's creation – the one and only *true direction* in which all human endeavours should be deployed, namely in loving service of God and our fellow humans. The blatant conflict between Light and darkness is of universal compass and does not exclude any human person or any societal collectivity. Moreover, this perpetual struggle rages relentlessly also in the hearts of believers and tear them apart. This terrible ignominy makes us painfully aware of the subtle and often almost imperceptible way in which apostate forces undercut and destabilize the authentic and rightful normative foundations of creation. The moment we reject the existence of a supra individual, trans personal Sure Ground in which all our pre-effectuated norms are – finally – anchored, we run the risk of succumbing to subjectively favoured and arbitrarily interpreted values to direct our ventures and endeavours. On account of the *religious antithesis* between *Light* and *darkness*, the particular *direction of enforcement* or *effectuation* may vary according to the basic polarity of *anastate* or *apostate*, thus giving rise to *anastate/ apostate* belief, *anastate/apostate* love, *anastate/apostate* justice, *anastate/apostate* formation of culture, *anastate/apostate* education, etc. Educators at home, in the school and in the church should carefully take note of this state of affairs when they reflect on the introduction and promotion of specific norms in educational situations. All other approaches to this question should be evaluated against this backdrop.

The point at issue for those who desire a more wholesome upcoming culture and education is how to counter-act this explicit choice for a completely secularized life as pictured in the paragraphs above? As has been noted above (Part VI, par. 3.1), should the *Origin/ origin* of principles and norms be vested in the individual person who refuses to be held accountable to some higher authority, then there is no reason whatsoever why values should not be regarded as completely uncertain, ambiguous, changeable, subjective and capricious. As we noted above this is a fallacy. By virtue of the creational order for all things, the particular and unique *structures* of diverse phenomena remain the same for everyone, at all times and under all circumstances; only the *direction* of their implementation(s) may vary.

In our efforts to develop a culture that will allow citizens of various cultural backgrounds who desire the re-establishment of time-honoured normativity to accomplish this, and that will at the same time secure a constituency that will not, inevitably, accept anything that a powerful regime may attempt to impose on them, we will consider some general and more wide-ranging issues that impact directly on the formulation of educational policy. It is not our objective to follow the post-1994 development of official policy on education. In our endeavour to evaluate the true nature of contemporary policy on education and educational matters, it will be appropriate to go back almost two decades in the past to examine the ideals that motivated educational policy-makers during the final years before the current government took power in South Africa. In the policy-documents on education that were discussed during the early 1990's we have the most pristine, well-considered, coherent ideals in this regard before countless follies and indiscretions began to mar the original meaning that was attached to these innovative programmes and procedures. In the following paragraphs we will mainly revert to publications of the *National Education Crisis Committee* (the so-called *NEPI*-documents) when we discuss existing educational doctrine and strategies.

When considering the discussion of the selected number of issues in the paragraphs below, it is important to consider that all those who enjoy the luxury of general franchise and are about to cast a vote during an election are well-aware of, as well as imbued and driven by a great variety of *values* of diverse nature that all play integral parts in the blending/ merging of a voter's desires and aspirations with politicians' purported intentions and agendas. Indeed, the majority of issues (whether they are of moral, jural, economic, social or whatever nature) politicians have to address on behalf of their constituencies are permanently and inescapably *value-related* and *value-determined*.

4. Justice for all

4.1 Contesting the restraints of spiritual servitude where a just state warrants freedom of thought and expression

A peaceful life for everyone as warranted and sustained by a truly just state where all good and agreeable things are within reach of all its citizens becomes reality when the interests and aspirations of all members of the community are openly and unequivocally ac-

cepted by every other person and every societal relationship. As we have come to know in Part VII of this research paper, justice is not served by giving precedence to the interests and rights of majorities while ignoring those of minorities. Justice is not founded in or determined by (numerical) *laws*. This simply means that – as is the case with a so-called “democracy” – the majority is not inescapably right and the minority lastingly wrong. Sheer numbers do not make it possible to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Justice is *regulated* by *values* that apply to the juridical facet of our lives. And the way in which this delicate matter is approached and balanced so that justice can be meted out for everyone regardless of differences of whatever kind that may exist, is impelled by either *anastate* or *apostate* forces.

True justice implies that all members of a society, as well as all societal institutions be treated *equally* and *fairly*. It should be effected consistently and without fail in meticulous compliance with the distinctive demands relating to the *divergent structures* of every one of the many uniquely different non-governmental (non-state like) social forms . Only when the typical *normative* (value oriented) *structure* of any particular “community” and the *normative* (value related) *direction* in which this normative structure is concentrated are conscientiously acknowledged and not endangered, can humans live their lives in *true responsibility* to God, to one another and to their natural and cultural environments.

The ideal is that a genuinely just state comprises *liberated, equal, critical, informed* and *erudite* citizens who have the capacity, the power and the option to rise above all forms of spiritual servitude coerced by *ideology* (cf. Part VII). Spiritual servitude of whatever kind by any part of the citizenry of any country is a sure sign that true justice is not meted out for all. By educating everyone at each level of education to become critically conscious of the pernicious ramifications of ideological tyranny and repression, much can be done to sensitize future citizens to be wary enough not to become

9 In this regard Troost (1983:145) makes the following significant remark: “Christians decry the dictatorial absolutism and the disappearance of authority in the name of solidarity, equality and partnership. Nor do they accept the humanistic, pragmatic view of authority as a practical necessity, founded in the majority will of a collectivity.”

uncritical dupes of distorted and partisan life and world views that display ideologically tainted qualities. These have to be deliberately refuted and neutralized right from the beginning with appropriate values education (cf. Part IX) in all societal relationships with an educative purpose.

As was the case under the apartheid regime, ideologically determined and coerced education is eminently suitable for political exploitation and indoctrination, especially when curricula, programs, courses, syllabi, textbooks and the like are prescribed by ideologues and functionaries of the state. Such a situation reflects the doctrines of ruling political parties and other politically committed organizations and is readily and expertly (often insensitively) applied in the pursuit of political influence and for sustaining and safeguarding established political interests and power.

What is needed in our country is the fulfilment of the most laudable ideal of a society where equity and equality among its members is no longer a wish, but a fact because all citizens of the state are unified in their desire to sustain a just state where free, equitable and equal people live in peace and harmony, free from the spiritual servitude caused by ideological dictates of whatever nature. By analysing critically the nature of state policy on education it may be possible to detect indicators that may facilitate our scrutiny of the true mainsprings that impel the aspirations and deliberations of current policy makers on education and decide whether they are of God-directed or secular quality.

4.2 Educational equity and redress as guaranteed and sustained by a just state

In 1953, after the re-election to office of the National Party, the late dr. H.F. Verwoerd, then Minister of so-called "Native Affairs" and later Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa, expressed the official apartheid policy regarding proposed "reform" in South African education broadly as follows: Education was to be managed (read "exploited") in such a manner, that the natives (i.e. the in-

10 The following perceptions regarding *equity*, *redress*, and *equality* in South African education, as well as related matters are dealt with in more detail in Schoeman, 1995:102-120, cf. Higgs, 1995:97-120.

digenous peoples of the country) will be taught from childhood to accept the inevitable reality that equality with Whites is not for them; that they would not be allowed to perform tasks above a certain level in areas reserved for Whites, and that they should, therefore, not yearn after the "green pastures" offered by the White community (Verwoerd, 1963:78, cf. also 62, 68 ,71, 73-74). This callous and uncompromising stance of the apartheid government caused an inequitable educational system that even in our day destabilizes and debilitates normal educational activities at primary, secondary as well as tertiary levels. Until the surrender of power in 1994, the former government never abandoned the idea of racially differentiated and inequitable education. No clear-cut attempt was ever made to redress imbalances in the educational system at grassroots level. Neither was there ever any sign of support programs aimed at helping disadvantaged learners/students at schools and institutions for tertiary education to improve academic achievement. This arrangement that provides well for particular sectors of the population but "bypasses" the rest proved to be untenable and was eventually rejected completely by the majority of the general public.

Equal rights and redress were appositely identified by opponents of apartheid education as the *central demands* in the reconstruction of education in the country. On the issue of equity and redress, the Draft White Paper (Government Gazette on Education and Training, 1994; cf. also ANC, 1992:49) was explicit: All education and training programs would in future be completely committed to the Reconstruction and Development Program of the government. This implied that race, culture and gender inequalities would receive major consideration in policy regarding all sectors of education and training programs, the future allocation of funds and resources, the appointment of teaching and administrative personnel, and the like.

However, a significant difficulty concerning affirmative action programs directed at equity and redress for those historically discriminated against and disadvantaged by apartheid education, is formulated as follows in the NEPI-report on Human Resources Development: "... poorly-conceived affirmative action policies can do more harm than good to the very people they are intended to benefit. In particular, strongly preferential policies can result in individuals being recruited and promoted into jobs for which they

lack the requisite skills and knowledge. This leads to poor job performance, which further undermines individual self-confidence and morale. At a more general level, racial tensions are aggravated still further, and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of organizations can be seriously impaired” (NECC, 1992c:65; cf. also Ramphela, 1993:12, 13; Claassen, 1993:82-83).

In the same NEPI-report on Human Resources Development (NECC, 1992c:70), it is unequivocally stated that demands for equity cannot be easily asserted “on their own terms”, that is, without careful consideration of their particular *social* and *economic goals* (cf. the perceptive analysis of this controversy by Strauss, 2009:589-595). Politically speaking, the right to free and unimpeded participation of all citizens may well be a primary equity issue. But, although adequate education and training are prerequisites for worthy citizenship, *demands for equity* in the area of economics and job-opportunities relate to matters like the right of all citizens to education, open access to all levels of education, and meeting the vocational education and training needs of disadvantaged groups. In other words, demands for equity in the economic field can only be satisfied if certain conditions are present. If this is disregarded, education and training programs may not, as a matter of course, benefit and assist disadvantaged people. It is pointed out that it is by no means clear that the demand for mass access to tertiary education is always a criterion for future equity: On the contrary, it has become known from studies about university education in sub-Saharan Africa, that access to university education has produced “an élite middle class, inefficiently employed in the bureaucracies and insensitive to the needs of the majority” (NECC, 1992c:71; cf. 70-71).

Redress and the quest for equity in education is, without doubt, very important if the ideal that education and training in South Africa will eventually become equitable and free from domination and coercion is ever to be realized. This action to ensure redress and equity in the area of national education was aimed at eventually restoring equity in the South African society as a whole, because social equity is partly dependent on equity in education. Indeed, the equal distribution of resources and benefits at all levels of education is still regarded as a mandatory addition to reconstruction and development at national level, and is to be supported without reservation.

However, the demand for equity in education is a thorny matter. Redressing past inequalities in education would, obviously, demand sacrifices from, and be painful to many. Yet, notwithstanding the favouritism and inequality to which millions were subjected in the past, it was realized that it will be wise to prevent redress from deteriorating to the level of blatant inverse discrimination, especially in the appointment of academic and administrative staff at educational institutions. Visagie formulates this proviso as follows: "... when a disadvantaged person with a lower qualification than her privileged competitor is appointed, such an appointment should be defensible in the light of considerations such as material (if not formal) compatibility in terms of academic competence" (1993:28). *Legitimate calls for equity should, therefore, never be confused with demands for affirmative action.* The latter is too often associated with the "lowering of standards, the promotion of people beyond their level of competence and the advantaging of some groups at the expense of others" (Ramphela, 1993:12; Claassen, 1993:82-83). Affirmative action can be justified only as an important *strategy*, an indispensable *aid* to achieve equity. Only such a focus will "minimize the temptation to pursue short-sighted affirmative action policies" (Ramphela, 1993:12, 13; cf.. also NECC, 1992c:65; Claassen, 1993:84-86). Emphasis should rather be laid on the creation of opportunities and the recognition and development of potential, lest the initiative to produce equity in South African education becomes a malevolent monster that, in the end, destroys itself.

It was self-evident from the outset that mere revision and adaptation of democratic principles to the existing structures of domination imposed by the apartheid-government would be insufficient. Such a policy might even have been regarded by some as offensive and a futile attempt to renovate existing structures without removing the essence of their malice and corruption. Nonetheless, there was evidence of a realistic wish to preserve, even in this process of radical *transformation*, those elements, however rare they may have been, that have always been legitimate parts of education and educational structures, of the "world" of primary human experiences, even during the regime of apartheid (Visagie, 1993:31). This attitude proved notably conducive for critical and unbiased scientific discourse. It seemed to acknowledge that disputes cannot be solved in their entirety, as "wholes"; that problems should be

tackled and resolved in a “piecemeal” fashion, i.e. is *bit by bit; one by one*. This implied that durable, extensive and long-term educational change could not be effected in “one fell swoop” as was envisaged by certain trends in revolutionary thought. It was realized that educational change, as part of greater social transformation, cannot simply take place in terms of utopian projects aimed at the abrupt, complete and all-inclusive reconstruction on “grand scale” of society (Popper, 1957, 1:158ff). Therefore, the remodelling and modification of education was to occur within the structural boundaries provided by education itself. Thus, educational change was seen as commencing by altering existing structures, thereby providing a stabilizing influence and the guarantee of a fundamental constancy that would prevent chaos during the process of educational transformation.

4.3 Educational equality as guaranteed and sustained by a just state

Since the early fifties of the previous century, ethnic dissimilarities in the country, including cultural differences ostensibly causing incompatibility between Western and African cultures, have been presented by ideologues of the apartheid government as reasons to establish *compulsory inequality* at all levels of education in South Africa. The idea was that each ethnic and cultural group in the country should have its own schools, different educational authorities and systems, each with its distinct and separate syllabuses, textbooks, examinations and the like (cf. Griessel, Louw & Swart, 1986:171-181,183-184; Swart, 1984:16-17).

When it became obvious that a change of government in the country was imminent and unavoidable, the inordinate emphasis that had traditionally been placed on supposedly “cultural” impediments that demanded dissimilar “culturally” oriented education (cf. the idea of education as an “own affair” that accompanied the imposition of a tricameral government) (cf. RSA, 1983:50; 1984: Articles 14[1], 14[2] and 15; NECC, 1993:13; also Morrow, 1986:245ff) gradually disappeared from the discourse on education during the last years of the former minority government, and was – apparently – ultimately abandoned altogether.

The discourse on equality in education, as was embodied in policy statements of the former government shortly before the 1994

elections (Department of National Education, 1992:6), accommodated *equality of opportunity* in education to the supposed, but overtly false, "fundamental principle" of *separateness*¹¹. Consistent with this altered perspective on education, equal but separate education was envisaged to become the hall-mark of future education in South Africa. The principle of equal opportunity in education was, on its part, attended by ideas like "open competition" and "pure merit". In the final instance, "open competition" and "pure merit" were to decide – on supposedly neutral grounds – the degree of success that was eventually to be attained in the educational process.

That the quest for equality in education extensively underpins the current state of national education is understandable. Therefore, the fundamental assumption undergirding future education in South Africa is the complete equality of all cultures involved (cf. Government Gazette, 1994:9ff). Indeed, *cultural equality* was justifiably recognized at last as the prerequisite for an egalitarian society. Historical disparities regarding cultural preferences would therefore be barred from future education.

It was envisaged from the beginning that, with the ultimate establishment of equality in the area of education, traditional relations of domination that were created by apartheid education would be effectively disposed of. Regarding the contemporary view of equality, the following is important. Those who insist on equality in education do not necessarily turn a blind eye to the existence of distinct innate (inherited and not "artificial") differences between individual persons. They do, however, demand that all different forms of treatment be mandatory (natural), and never arbitrary; that "unequal" treatment of pupils and students is compelled on other grounds than blatant racism, sexism, etc. Considering the traditional unequal access to the curriculum and curriculum resources that were distinctive features of education during the apartheid era, redress would henceforth imply "clearly defined measures for remedying inequalities in disadvantaged schools and for ensuring equity in access to the curriculum and its resources" (NECC, 1992:4).

11 As "separateness" is subordinate to more profound values, it cannot, in itself, be a fundamental principle. At best, it can be held as a (spurious) *ideal*.

What complicates matters is that in different contexts “equality”, in itself, may mean different things. Thus, equal opportunities or resources are not the same as, for instance equality of outcomes; equality of content differs from equality of options, etc. (NECC, 1993:41). Differences in socio-cultural backgrounds of pupils and students may, for instance, cause “equal access to library facilities or laboratory equipment” to mean “different things to children from various home environments, and different things to children with varying future work prospects” (NECC, 1993:41). Equality in education requires “compensating additional provision of equipment or resources for children from disadvantaged backgrounds”, which implied “that schools must spend more on the poor than on the rich” (NECC, 1993:41).

Although the goal of complete equality of educational accomplishment is evidently not realisable, there appeared to be a “wide range of possible interventions aimed at compensating individuals for non-educational and prior educational disadvantages” (NECC, 1993:41). Nonetheless, realities concerning disadvantaged home backgrounds and the job markets to which disadvantaged pupils/students have access severely influence the preferences and abilities of pupils/students to make use of educational opportunities (NECC, 1993:42): When a technically or commercially skilled workforce was required by the job market, pure academic training of pupils/students is clearly not entirely appropriate, etc.

The assumption regarding the essential *inequality* of the different ethnic groups in South Africa, as is reflected in the bizarre statement of the late dr. H.F. Verwoerd as we have seen above, was based on an exaggerated emphasis on cultural diversity, with a notable disregard for commonality and national cohesion. This tradition of legalized discrimination allowed for neither equal power/resources in the field of education, nor for common citizenship. Indeed, in no way did it guarantee equal rights/responsibilities for all citizens of the country. It produced a *statutory* system of *segregated* and *stratified* education that obliged the different cultural (racial) groups of the country to maintain separate and disparate educational systems. Due to this policy, certain minority sectors of the South African population were to receive superior education in comparison to the inferior education received by the less fortunate “non-White” majority.

The grave effect of unequal education under an apartheid regime, as has been briefly portrayed above, is that most South African citizens, especially the marginalized (chiefly Black) youth, either received no education at all, or very little education of exceedingly low quality (cf. NECC, 1992b:1). It is therefore understandable that one of the major features of the all-encompassing social change that was introduced into the "new" South Africa was educational transformation to redress historical inequalities.

Clearly, and especially in educational terms, the ideas of *equality* and *separateness* are completely incompatible (cf., eg. NECC, 1993:14, 35). In the past it was conveniently ignored that pupils and students with deficient cultural backgrounds or inferior education may be handicapped severely even before the quest for success in education commences. Due to disparities that were caused by decades of inferior education, most people in South Africa even today have a serious backlog in comparison to their more fortunate counterparts who received adequate education and training. Existing disparities cannot be eradicated by merely removing discriminatory laws and regulations that cause inequality in education. Free competition and equal educational opportunities are equitable and non-discriminatory *only* among equals. Levelling the playing field in this regard involves explicit, well-structured and especially even-handed affirmative action.

5. A free society as guaranteed and sustained by a just state

5.1 Freedom of societal collectivities with an educational mission as warranted and sustained by a just state

As was explained in a previous context, human society is a complex collection of diverse, uniquely structured societal collectivities and institutes, each exhibiting its distinct normative organization and value related responsibilities for all its human subjects, and each intricately interconnected with all remaining relationships. The undisturbed and effective functioning of every societal relationship in concert with the rest depends completely on the recognition of the peculiar normative structure and distinctive value-related goals and intentions of every such relationship. Attempts at dominating and controlling any of these unique structures by any other more powerful relationship will certainly destabilize the former and terminate their effectiveness and capability to achieve their pre-ordained

missions. For this reason a meticulous re-interpretation followed by a determined re-instatement of the legitimate authority of every societal collectivity is one of the indispensable ways of curbing the value crisis rampant in modern societies. This would imply that family, church and school reclaim and salvage their lawful – albeit *relative* and *relational* – right to operate and perform according to their distinctive value-related missions as obliged by the inalienable structural uniqueness of each. It also guarantees their incontestable and distinctive *authority* and relative *power* over their subordinates.

Despite the admirable objectives of present-day legislation on educational policy, warning signs of the proximity of another style of domination in respect to societal relationships and especially education on national scale abound. Without doubt, education at all levels runs the risk of being misappropriated – particularly by the state – for non-educational purposes that place demands on these institutions that exceed their specific spheres of competence. As mentioned above, the danger is imminent that a biased interpretation of so-called “democracy” by “the people”, may – as under the former minority regime – once again *instrumentalize education* (cf. Visagie, 1992:16ff). This must never be allowed to happen. As Visagie points out attempts to define the immeasurable mission of educational institutions regarding values-education in general in socio-economic and political terms only, creates favourable conditions for the emergence of yet another “super-value” with its attendant relations of domination (cf. 1992: 16; 1993:32-35).

The demand for free and equitable standing among societal relationships presupposes circumstances where the customary tensions that arise between freedom, responsibility and authority are reconciled. With its vast assortment of complexities, impediments and quandaries the route to true *justice for all*, requires great circumspection, tolerance and flexibility from all societal relationships. As we have remarked above, as well as in a previous context, educational institutions display a particular brand of competence that earmarks their activities as “educational” in contradistinction from the non-educational activities of non-educational institutions. Policy-makers must come to appreciate that the moment external authorities like “the people” or “the state” prescribe to educational institutions what they essentially are and what their objectives should be, the purpose of education is no longer decided

with reference to its true normative nature and internal normative structure. Only if sensitivity is displayed for the legitimate claims of institutions to specific spheres of competence will all weighty, but nonetheless secondary, non-educational objectives that may be imposed *in emergenc*ies on educational institutions be considered, but then also only in their relation with the primary function of these institutions.

5.2 Economy, society and education as guaranteed and maintained by a just state

Any society and the economic situation that holds sway at a certain point in history are irrevocably related to one another. Since the dawn of time, the primary source of tension and lack of unity that has emerged in human society has been the economic and political imbalance that persistently tears it apart; the uncomfortable reality that – for whatever reason – there are those members of society who possess *means* and *power* and those who do not.

Through the ages serious social, economic and political problems prompted the rise of many revolutionary actions. The harsh and depressing shortcomings inherent in most societies are unequal distribution of material goods, racial oppression, shameless gender inequalities, social immobility, exploitation of the powerless and indigent, absence of political power sharing for all, lack of participation of all ranks of the community in the government of the day and the like. Under such intolerable circumstances, the rallying of revolutionary forces, insurrection and ultimately open rebellion¹² against oppressors and exploiters are not uncommon in the history of humankind. In our times, the apparent callousness of governments and communities world-wide to take seriously and come to

12 *Revolution* is a well-planned and regimented act of violence with the sole purpose of forcefully overturning and ultimately ousting an existing *political, economic* and social dispensation with its distinctive and exploitive structures (the *status quo*), and replacing the latter with new ones to create a new political, economic and social order. This act of organized violence is essentially *idea-driven*: it is always preceded by well-planned strategies and tactics (mainly ideologically rhetorical) aimed at changing the existing ideas (hopes, aspirations, mind, mentality, etc.) of a certain group of people (the alienated, deprived and exploited masses). Once *revolutionary theory* (ideology) has become well established in the hearts and minds of a particular subjugated and browbeaten class, the stage is set for the entry of *revolutionary practice* (action).

grips with the terrible plight in which the majority of people in under-developed countries live has turned into a tormentor that should plague the conscience of all those who eat food and enjoy a safe haven. Indigence, malnutrition on unthinkable scale, famine, overt starvation, general ill-health, rampant disease, raging epidemics, lack of personal freedom, absence of even the most basic human rights, gross social injustice, persistent manipulation and abuse of nature, humans and the like have beset the marginalized and exploited millions who try to exist under the most outrageous living conditions. This bizarre picture is offset by that of a small minority of exceedingly powerful and staggeringly affluent people living under copious and bountiful circumstances, nurturing their insatiable greed and enjoying their decadent gluttony in luxury and unspeakable wealth.

The deep chasm between the super-rich and the exceptionally poor fractions of global society has nowadays been broadened to include under the caption "affluent" also those who are able to subsist under relatively acceptable living conditions with relatively acceptable incomes; those who may possess some assets, an adequate income and even property. These uncritical impressions and un-nuanced perceptions of social reality have, in our times, given rise to unbalanced and unacceptable social theories in which only two rival positions are recognized by *revolutionaries* and *reactionaries* of all types and classes. We are all well acquainted with those whose ranks range from freedom fighters to blatant terrorists, all mobilizing under the banner of *socialism*, single-minded in their efforts to overthrow forcefully the much loathed *bourgeoisie*, the reviled privileged who ostensibly profit so much from *private ownership* and who, under all circumstances, refuse to renounce and abandon the *status quo*.

Almost twenty years after a so-called "democratic" government secured power in South Africa, we still have not rid ourselves completely from the burden that the former social arrangement placed on our shoulders. People still live in separate social environments and remain essentially strangers to one another, being divided, amongst others, on the basis of material possessions. Small wonder that the demand for *social justice* is still warranted and maintained despite the vast political changes that have swept the country since the last decade of the twentieth century.

From a South African point of view all the foregoing perspectives are important when educational policy is formulated: With the great majority of its citizens living under the bread line, economic redress should be – at all times – a matter of top priority for the Government and the public sector as a whole. But, despite the urgency for economic rehabilitation and redress on national scale, the danger of back-sliding into yet another ideologically warped “economism” is imminent. For it is the shift in meaning of the principle of justice (moral, economic, social, etc.) that eventually caused even the central commandment of love, the very essence of the Christian faith, to become so weak, if not entirely impotent and powerless as it is today. In our search for solutions to unacceptable social and economic conditions in South Africa, it occurs too often that redress and amends are downgraded to monetary compensation¹³ (financial “hand-outs”) only, while – as Goudzwaard (1984:54) appropriately expresses it – all other signs of misery, loneliness and discrimination are simply brushed aside and conveniently ignored. Under such circumstances, the plight of those in tribulation – financial or otherwise – does not really touch and perturb private persons or even groups of people (like churches) any longer. Besides, solidarity with the poor and miserable, as well as the mitigation of their dire situations, is too easily and conveniently considered the exclusive responsibility of the state (cf. Goudzwaard, 1984:54).

Only when our social and economic activities are, in all respects, permeated by the profound petitions of the *central commandment of love*, will they be redirected at the true goal and purpose of all reality. Regulated by this pre-effectuated, constant and universal biblical notion that holds good for literally all avenues of human life, even our acquisition of material wealth will neither be isolated from the well-being of the rest of society, nor become totally absorbed by it. Consistent with this regulative principle, economic life is given every opportunity to develop freely, in accordance with its own nature, but – whilst retaining its distinctive features – will always be constrained by what will eventually benefit every other member of society as well. The dynamic and value-regulated unfolding of

13 “Justice is often confused with *affirmative action* and thus foolishly misunderstood as simply receiving financial compensation for injustices inflicted” (cf. Goudzwaard, 1984:53).

economic activities should, therefore, not only encompass the acquisition of personal material wealth, but should, additionally, be directed at social improvement and amelioration. Consequently, also our economic activities are sanctified and dedicated to the service of the Lord. They are liberated and sanctified by the redemption of Christ and therefore devoted to His service, and secondly, they become part of our total commitment to His service and that of our neighbour (Goudzwaard, 1984:152-153).

6. Conclusion and preview

When we discuss official policy on education and educational affairs, the crucial question that has to be answered is that regarding the distinctly value-related *direction* in which policy-makers have chosen to move. Clarity in this respect is vital as it will allow contending parties a clear insight into the deepest motives of their adversaries. Only when the fundamental differences caused by profound intentions and commitments have been brought into the open can any meaningful communication and fruitful discussion in this regard ensue. Frankness among opponents has the additional advantage that every party is given ample opportunity to make itself clear on all contended matters and to render its fundamentals and tenets precisely defined and well-understood. Thus all avenues are left open to unrestricted communication and self-criticism, making it possible even to heed the serious and candid views of outsiders, thus allowing for both *diversity* and *difference* in educational policy without causing further social division and stratification. Along these lines it may even be possible to allow people to grow sensitive to what Visagie appropriately labelled our “habitual misunderstanding of and our own complicity in the structures of domination that warp relations in our society” (Strauss & Visagie, 1993:1).

Our foregoing overview of educational policy in South Africa underscored the fact that where policy-matters are concerned every aspiration and strategy involved, including every aspect of the formulation and execution thereof is at all times interrelated with values. And where values are concerned the ultimate *direction* designated policy is to follow and the *direction* in which such values are to be deployed in educational practice are – essentially – of either *anastate* or *apostate* nature. The preceding review of the

driving forces that undergird aspects of current policy on education speaks for itself.

In the final part (IX) of our study we will focus on essentials of and guidelines for a viable *praxeology*, namely a practical course of action whereby values education is permitted to become an *intentional, well-planned* and *routine* activity of every encounter by educators and learners, thereby offering adequate opportunities to achieve the all-encompassing objective of apposite and relevant values-education in our country.

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