

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOB-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOWETO, 1940-1990**

by

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DECLARATION


I declare that this MA dissertation THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOB-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOWETO 1940-1990 is my own, unaided work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## SUMMARY

Despite job-related education, training and development for black South Africans having existed since the 19th century at the mission schools, not much was done to promote African artisans in the townships. The concern of the Smuts government about juvenile delinquency in the townships was the reason why local authorities decided to promote black upliftment for urban Africans. The belief that African youths would not resort to crime if they were occupied resulted in the establishment in 1942 of the Orlando Vocational Training Centre outside Johannesburg.

The National Party government showed little interest in this development prior to the 1966 assassination of prime minister Dr H F Verwoerd, but nevertheless the Centre prospered under the principalship of the late G Tabor. The situation changed when the NP government realised that more Africans were needed to be trained to enable them to fill the vacancies in the industries. The Centre was purchased by the Department of Education and Training in 1975, but the Department struggled to address the new emerging challenge and by 1990 job-related education, training and development in Soweto had still not been properly established.

Key terms which describe the topic of the dissertation:

Job-related education, training and development; National Party government; Orlando Vocational Training Centre; Dube Vocational Training Centre; Johannesburg Vocational Training Centre; George Tabor Technical College; Johannesburg City Council; Department of Education and Training; Trade accreditation for black South Africans; Juvenile crime; Malapo Technical College; Manu Technical College; Soweto; A few under-qualified African male lecturers; Dedicated African female lecturers; Manpower Training Act of 1981; Unrests; The new South Africa; Dobsonville College; Local Sowetan colleges; National Business Initiative; Artisans.

## Abstract

The dissertation analyses job-related education, training and development in Soweto since 1940. The effect which the interference of the National Party government had on job-related education for black South Africans in Soweto is examined, as it is of importance to know that qualifiers were only permitted to operate as trades people in the bantustans and not in the "white" cities.

It is discussed that prior to the assassination of prime minister Dr. H. F. Verwoerd in 1966, the NP government had little interest in promoting urban black upliftment. Also mentioned is the economic situation at that time, which forced the NP government to introduce the Manpower Training Act, permitting Africans to qualify in trades which were until 1981 reserved for whites only.

At the centre of the discussion are the few Sowetan colleges which deal with job-related education, training and development in the African township. Despite the demand for skills training of black South Africans, training deteriorated and the dissertation investigates the reasons surrounding the loss of interest in the communities and why interest groups were no longer concerned about this type of training.

The dissertation concludes with a possible future perspective which needs to be implemented to enable job-related education, training and development in Soweto to expand. The need to train Sowetans in their own colleges as opposed to colleges outside Soweto is examined.

## MODUS OPERANDI

Did job-related education, training and development in Soweto achieve the expected results? This hypothesis is tested.

Data was drawn from primary and secondary sources as well as interviews with professionals involved in the Sowetan training environment.

## THE PROBLEM

Job-related education, training and development in Soweto failed to satisfy the needs of Sowetans as well as the business community and the reasons for this failure are addressed in this dissertation. I examine the development of Sowetan colleges over the last 50 years and discuss the changes in attitude of the parties concerned. The prevailing question remains: "What is to become of these colleges in the new South Africa?" This problem is presently being addressed by the National Business Initiative (NBI).

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	=	Anglo American Corporation
ATASA	=	African Teachers Association of South Africa
BIFSA	=	Building Industrial Federation of South Africa
CM	=	Chamber of Mines
COSAS	=	Congress of South African Students
CRI	=	Criterion Reference Instruction
DC	=	Dobsonville College
DET	=	Department of Education and Training
FET	=	Further Education and Training
GTZ	=	Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
IPM	=	Institute of Personnel Management
MDM	=	Mass Democratic Movement
NAD	=	Native Affairs Department
NAPTOSA	=	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NBI	=	National Business Initiative
NTC	=	National Technical Certificate
OUP	=	Oxford University Press
SADTU	=	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAP	=	South African Police
SAQA	=	South African Qualification Authority
SASO	=	South African Students Organisation
SASTD	=	South African Society for Training and Development
TAFE	=	Training and Further Education
UDF	=	United Democratic Front
WRAB	=	West Rand Administration Board

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Last but not least, I am most appreciative of the encouragement and support of my wife, Verena.



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## SOURCES

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

My reason for writing this dissertation on job-related education in Soweto is that I have been working as a vocational lecturer at a technical college in Soweto for the last 15 years. I became interested in its history and people and began gathering information about events such as the Soweto unrest of 1976. In the course of my research I struggled to find information about events preceding 1976, as there was very little interest shown by the white South African public about life in Soweto prior to this time.

I concluded that the 1976 unrest marked a turning point in South African history, as it resulted in greater public awareness of the situation in the townships. After this unrest, the press appeared to open its mind to news in the townships and Soweto received extensive coverage, but very little information is available on events before 1976. Fortunately my late father was employed by the Sowetan Town Engineers for 18 years and he referred me to the Johannesburg City Council Archives at the Civic Centre where I collected relevant information about Sowetan events before 1976.

The information I acquired from official publications was of assistance in defining my own opinion on circumstances in Soweto prior to 1976. I am especially grateful to my colleague Elias Kekana, who gave up his time to show me around and introduce me to the Soweto I am keen to know, and tell me about how Sowetans felt living under a government which denied the permanent existence of their township. Kekana was of great help during my interviews with him as he has extensive knowledge garnered from being involved in Sowetan job-related education and training for 25 years.

I was also fortunate to have met Differ Mbele who was previously involved in local politics and is now employed in job-related training. He supplied me with information to help me reconstruct events surrounding job-related education during the 1976 Sowetan unrest. Without this valuable information from both Elias Kekana and Differ Mbele, my research on Sowetan job-related education would be incomplete.

What sparked my decision to write about job-related education in Soweto were the varying opinions I encountered during my research on George Tabor the man. Former officials of the old Department of Education and Training told me that they remembered the late principal of the first Sowetan college as being shrewd, whilst Sowetan adults regarded him as a saint. I was keen to discover the reasons behind these diverse opinions and interviewed many people about Tabor. In my opinion my late father's memories of Tabor were the most comprehensive.

According to him, Tabor did not have to deal with the results of an economic depression during his principalship, which made his mission easier. He worked at a Sowetan vocational training centre during an economic upswing which contributed to the stability of his moderate principalship. Despite being opposed to Verwoerd's apartheid policies, his career benefited from the boom in the economy during Verwoerd's rule.<sup>1</sup>

My father also believed that Tabor achieved success as he was allowed certain liberties, despite the fact that the training centre fell under the jurisdiction of the Johannesburg City Council. The Department of Education and Training worked with rigid officials and free thinking independent individuals such as Winkelmann (whom I will mention in the second part of my dissertation), could not prosper in that environment. The Department laid down strict rules and regulations but Tabor breached these rules whenever he felt the necessity to do so.

It is therefore questionable whether Tabor's principalship would have been as successful during an economic depression and we do not know, for example, how he would have handled the situation during the 1976 unrest. Fate placed him at the helm of the Centre from 1948 to 1966 during an economic boom which helped make his principalship memorable. It can also be argued that perhaps more rigid principals would not have achieved as much success at the Centre as Tabor did. It is therefore Tabor who is remembered in Soweto and not the inflexible officials who were his successors.

1 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 8-13.

My research has been restricted to the history of job-related education in Soweto. In the past, so-called "trade schools" were also referred to as job-related educational institutions and in the African reserves and townships they were operated by the missions. Most of these schools were subsidised by the Department of Native Affairs and the missions adhered to the official departmental school curriculum.

In the so-called Welsh report or *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Native Education* (Pretoria, 1936), job-related education is mentioned, as most of the missions promoted skills training in the country. At mission stations such as Bothshabelo near Middelburg in the Transvaal, the German Lutheran Church preferred to train converts in basic hand skills instead of assisting them with their English. Missions run by continental countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Austria also chose to uplift converts by training them in basic skills using indigenous languages as a means of communication instead of English or Dutch.

Most missions from the British Isles preferred to teach Africans academic subjects, using English as the language of instruction. Private institutions such as Lovedale and Healdtown in the Eastern Cape were former British mission schools and are known for their academic achievements. The National Party was, however, influenced by descendants of German missionaries such as Dr Werner Eiselen, who maintained that Africans should be taught basic hand skills using their own indigenous languages as opposed to being given academic subjects in English.<sup>2</sup>

I shall not discuss the difference between the British and continental missions who promoted either English or indigenous languages at mission schools. This was done by Jonathan Hyslop in his *Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1990). What is of importance is that in 1948 the government accepted the continental perception of promoting indigenous languages as opposed to English at mission schools. This did not, however, affect Sowetan job-related education as the vocational training centre in Orlando had already opened in 1942. Black education therefore did not affect vocational training in Soweto before 1979, when the Centre was upgraded to a college by the Department of Bantu Education.

2 Department of Native Affairs, Verslag van die Naturelle Onderwyskommissie 1949-1951 (Pretoria, 1951), pp 22-34.

The Orlando Vocational Training Centre used English as the language of instruction because the Centre was operated as a private school and most technical books published in South Africa were printed in English. English had been used in job-related education from as early as the 19th century when an apprentice-system was first implemented.<sup>3</sup> English was also widely used in the South African Republic (Transvaal) when the discovery of gold encouraged foreigners to settle on the Witwatersrand. This gave English the advantage in job-related education, as very few Africans or Afrikaners were employed as qualified artisans.

With Hertzog's appointment as Prime Minister the situation began to favour Afrikaners in job-related education as European migration decreased and industrialists were forced to make use of the local labour market. Afrikaners dominated skilled labour in the 1930s, but in the 1940s many white men were shipped off to North Africa and Italy during World War II.<sup>4</sup> This was to the advantage of skilled Africans as it was then that the Smuts government realised that Africans needed to be properly trained to fill the vocational posts which became available to black South Africans during the war years.

Job-related education for black South Africans therefore only began to develop in the 1940s which is where my discussion will begin. The early development is mentioned merely as an introduction. Reading Ken Hartshorne *Crisis and Challenge: Black education 1910-1990* (Cape Town, OUP, 1992) provided me with additional material on educating black South Africans. Information regarding Sowetan job-related education is very scarce as it appears that authors preferred to write about black South African education in the general sense and much emphasis has been placed on the education crisis which led to the Soweto unrest in 1976.

I chose here to concentrate on Sowetan job-related education, as education of black South Africans covers a vast field which has yet to be properly addressed. It is a pity that Soweto only became a matter of public interest in 1976 with the student riots. As previously mentioned, very little has been written about Soweto prior to the riots which put Soweto into the spotlight.

3. H Wolpe, Ideology, policy and capitalism in South Africa (London, OUP, 1995), pp 64-78.

4. M Legassick, British hegemony and the origins of segregation (Oxford, OUP, 1994), pp 44-58.

This was also the case with Sharpeville, which was virtually unheard of prior to the organised resistance against identity documents in the 1960s. The violence put Sharpeville on the map, as it did Soweto. Violence erupted in the townships, but the public could not understand why it took place in Soweto and not in New Brighton, for example. The research concentrated on the question of why violence had erupted in Sharpeville and Soweto, which is what the public was interested in, rather than on the constant social and economic changes in Soweto. Universities such as Witwatersrand held regular workshops on Soweto and eventually Belinda Bozzoli published her classic *Class, Community and Conflict* (Johannesburg, 1987), which helped put historians on the right track. Research was done on the social and economic changes in Soweto which contributed to the eruption of riots in Soweto.<sup>5</sup>

I have been involved in job-related education for 19 years, including 15 years in Soweto, during which time I experienced the 1985 riots. As not much has been written about Sowetan history and certainly very little on Sowetan job-related education, I believe that a research paper on these subjects will be of interest. Being employed at a Sowetan college provided me with the opportunity to research the old Department of Education and Training publications for information. Unfortunately large amounts of information were lost when the college was transferred to the Department, which complicated my research.

My late father always said that some South Africans live on "their little islands of safety", referring to the white suburbs. Surrounded by either security guards or crime, depending on where they live, most whites do not know what is happening in neighbouring townships. Most South Africans barely know each other, as Soweto is a different world compared to a wealthy suburb such as Bryanston. My father's views contributed to my decision to write on the circumstances in Soweto as I see them.<sup>6</sup>

5 B Bozzoli (ed), Town and countryside in the Transvaal: capitalist penetration and popular responses (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), pp 3-8.

6 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, p 33.

The townships which make up the city of Soweto were seen by the National Party as being "temporary" and as such, they had to be handled by the Johannesburg City Council. It was Verwoerd's intention that urban Africans would eventually be relocated to the reserves or bantustans. He believed that black South Africans would have stopped moving to the cities by 1978 and that by 1999 they would all have relocated back to the bantustans (homelands).<sup>7</sup> He was convinced that the industrial demand for skilled African labour would dwindle by 1978 and that African labour would be replaced by European immigrants.

It was necessary therefore, to touch on the political background in this study, as Sowetan job-related education depended entirely on the goodwill of the National Party (NP). The first vocational training centre operated under the shadow of closure and had to obey rigid government policies. The existence of the Centre was thanks to the diplomacy of Tabor and his City Council, as the Centre addressed the labour shortage in the townships to the satisfaction of the NP.<sup>8</sup>

Sowetan job-related education must be seen in this light up to 1972, after which the attitude of the NP changed. As South Africa could not exist in isolation it depended on trade with Europe, America and the Far East. The country traded minerals for technological merchandise, which increased the demand in the mines and industries for more cheap, skilled African labour instead of expensive European immigrants. The recession which reached a climax in 1975 also contributed to a change in attitude in the NP government. Suddenly Sowetan job-related education and training was in demand to help address the labour shortage and additional vocational training centres such as Chamdor and Apex in the vicinity of Soweto had to be established.

7 D Posel, The making of apartheid 1948-1961: conflict and compromise (London, OUP, 1995), pp 49-75.

8 M Wilson & L M Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa (Oxford, OUP, 1975), pp 221-227.



Circumstances in labour-based training began to change before 1976, but the Soweto unrest accelerated the implementation of these changes, culminating in the introduction of the Manpower Training Act in 1981.<sup>9</sup> From then onwards black South Africans were permitted to become qualified artisans and flooded the building industry working as painters, bricklayers, carpenters, plasterers, wiremen and drainlayers. This marked the end of discrimination against black South Africans on the labour market. It also accelerated the upgrading of vocational training centres to colleges in the townships. Prior to 1976 urban colleges had been the privilege of whites, coloureds and Indians only and black South Africans were forced to enrol at colleges in the homelands if they were interested in further education. Black South Africans were only permitted to enrol at former "white" colleges from 1982.

These changes went by largely unnoticed due to the 1985 unrest. With the exception of Dobsonville, Sowetan colleges did not flourish and expand. I believe that despite these setbacks job-related education and training can still be saved provided that the recommendations of the National Business Initiative report are implemented and action is taken against the under-qualified lecturers and their groundless grievances. As a lecturer I am aware of the so-called grievances of these under-qualified lecturers. They complain constantly about discrimination at the colleges, despite its non-existence in the post-1976 Soweto. In my opinion their complaints have nothing to do with racism as the qualified African female lecturers are constantly under criticism from these people. I shall attempt to show that envy is at the root of their grievances.

9 K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge: Black education 1910-1990 (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp 149-151, 163-171.

The Department is presently trying to upgrade the trade qualifications of these rigid lecturers but many of them are reluctant to comply. The reason behind this reluctance appears to be that these lecturers demand that academic qualifications be fully recognised as equal to trade qualifications regardless of the obvious differences. They hide behind prejudice and wilful excuses which are not tolerated by the ANC government. The Department of Education is interested in results in the form of good pass marks for Sowetan college graduates. Under-qualified lecturers cannot fulfil this requirement and therefore the Department has threatened them with dismissal. This threat has in turn driven them into the arms of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) instead of the National Professional Teachers Association of South Africa (NAPTOSA).

Two completely divergent opinions have surfaced. The under-qualified lecturers blame their shortcomings on the mistakes of the apartheid era, and conveniently ignore the fact that most African female lecturers managed to improve their qualifications despite apartheid. Apartheid cannot be cited as the only cause of their shortcomings. Most of my Sowetan colleagues are serious about education but unfortunately it is the few prejudiced exceptions who give Sowetan colleges a bad name.<sup>10</sup>

Added to these woes is the constant reduction in subsidies which Sowetan colleges receive from the Department. Lecturers teach under the threat of having their housing subsidies, pension and medical aid funds reduced and salaries have been static since 1994. All these difficulties have affected both qualified and under-qualified lecturers and have in turn put pressure on Sowetan job-related education, training and development.

10 Interview with R Maiketso, July 1999, pp 1-2.

There is also an external factor in the form of gangsterism or *tsotsis* threatening the very existence of Sowetan colleges. Prospective donors blame everything on the high crime rate in Soweto, which is (according to the local press) also responsible for the burglaries at the colleges. The National Business Initiative has recommended that Sowetan colleges merge with Highveld and Roodepoort to help integrate them into the local infrastructure. This will provide Sowetan colleges with the opportunity of receiving donations via the governing councils of the greater college of which they will be a part.<sup>11</sup>

Despite Sowetan colleges having lower registration fees compared to Johannesburg or Roodepoort, Sowetan school leavers are aware that they will receive training of a higher standard at colleges outside Soweto. They are mindful of the lower teaching standards at Sowetan colleges. At the same time it is extremely expensive to commute by taxi from Soweto to Johannesburg and back again. Sowetans are generally not wealthy and would be far happier if their children could receive competent training at a Sowetan college.

These are some of the key issues which were taken into consideration when the NBI report was introduced. It is important to ask where Sowetan colleges will develop from here. In the past they were denied a stable future as the NP government saw the future of black South Africans in the bantustans (homelands), but Sowetans have now become permanent residents of Johannesburg and demand the same benefits, including job-related education.<sup>12</sup>

11 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 6-7.

12 Interview with R Maiketso, July 1999, p 5.

Sowetans believe that they have been denied privileges and are impatient about the present pace of development in the townships. Their expectations include the improvement of job-related training in Sowetan colleges. The ANC is obliged to comply, as most of the 5 million Sowetan residents support the ANC. The private sector has come to terms with the demand to improve the situation at Sowetan colleges, although business people are still very reluctant to donate proper equipment to Sowetan colleges.<sup>13</sup> Developers are cautious to invest in Soweto, but are no longer afraid of taking on Sowetan partners to share the responsibilities. The reasons why the Department failed to uplift job-related education and training for black South Africans have also been debated here. Educators could not address the shortcomings without the assistance of the private sector, a fact which was ignored for too long by rigid political ideologists.

Political incentives have dominated African education from 1948 to 1972 and I have also discussed the gist of the economic factors which prevailed at the time. The government was well aware of the financial limitations of providing black South Africans with a proper education. It can be said that Sowetan job-related education and training falls under a broader political framework because of the effects which constant changes had on Sowetan colleges, making their future questionable. I conclude that the future of Sowetan colleges could nevertheless be guaranteed by following the recommendations made in the NBI report.

13 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 3-4.

CHAPTER TWO

JOB-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
IN SOWETO UNTIL 1976

Training and development of job-related education for black South Africans before 1942

The past 200 years has seen job-related education for black students in one form or another. This originated in the eastern Cape during the late 18th century. Although initiated by the various European Missionary Societies, mission schools lacked the funds to purchase expensive building material and were very isolated. They could not afford to hire qualified artisans and building material had to be manufactured. Due to the fact that most missionaries were trained to be self-sufficient, they in turn trained converted Africans in the various trades to enable them to assist missions in expanding and constructing sufficient buildings in the eastern Cape.

Only much later, once they were well established, did the missions set up primary as well as secondary schools. Thereafter there was no need to employ these African artisans, resulting in their seeking employment as bricklayers and carpenters in the eastern Cape as early as the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Although they were not recognised as qualified tradesmen in the Cape, white entrepreneurs employed them as cheap labour and they worked as tradesmen or artisans.

As a result of European immigration in the late 19th century, there were comparatively few African artisans. One of the reasons was that missions failed to train black artisans in great numbers in the Transvaal. Colonial and republican governments of the late 19th century were already promoting white artisans, but missions still continued to train small numbers of skilled African artisans. The gold mines appreciated the mission-trained artisans as they could assist skilled white mineworkers on the Witwatersrand.

This led to the mines establishing schools for unskilled Africans where they were trained to assist white mine-workers. This resulted in job-related training emerging at the dawn of the 20th century, although the mine schools were by no means modern vocational training centres.<sup>2</sup> Black miners were merely trained in the handling of basic handtools and to communicate in *Fanakalo*. They were unfortunately not taught the various aspects of the tradesman's skills.

- 1 A L Behr, New perspectives in South African education (Pretoria, Butterworths, 1984), pp 173-176, 193-194.
- 2 K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp 22-27, 47-52, 61-66, 92-93.

Due to the "Civilised Labour Policy" (which promoted white labour only) of JBM Hertzog, who was prime minister at the time, many white labourers received job-related training. Although in-service training centres and technical colleges appeared, black labour was still ignored. It was the government's official policy of the 1920s and 1930s to promote skilled white labourers, rather than unskilled Africans to serve the white private sector.<sup>3</sup>

According to Hertzog, Africans belonged in the African reserves and were only permitted to work as unskilled labour on farms and mines, and in industries and white households. Although the government had already considered establishing vocational training centres and technical colleges in African reserves (such as in Zululand and the northern Transvaal) to enable Africans to improve their standard of living, not much was done to improve the skills of urban black labourers in cities such as Johannesburg.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s mission schools operated in townships (locations). Government subsidies and school fees were insufficient to meet expenses, so the missions promoted job-related training in the locations, hoping that eventually the students could produce and sell furniture and the proceeds could go to the improvement of the school's facilities.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately the government was reluctant to permit industrial training in townships and these ideas came to nothing.

At this time there was a demand by manufacturers for more skilled black people. Many whites were abroad during World War II and there was a shortage of skilled labourers which had to be addressed. The Chamber of Mines supported the notion, as there was a great need for more skilled black mineworkers. JC Smuts, who became prime minister in 1939, sympathised with the capitalists more than Hertzog had and encouraged the establishment of in-service training centres for black people.<sup>6</sup>

3. W T Welsh, Report of the interdepartmental committee on native education (Pretoria, 1936), pp 9-18, p 23.
4. C F J Muller (red), 500 Jaar Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis (Pretoria, Academica, 1987), pp 422-424, 437-445.
5. K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge, pp 61-65, 219-232.
6. M Swilling, R Humphries & K Shubane, Apartheid City in transition (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp 12-15.

Skills such as operating heavy machinery and working with electrical handtools were taught at these centres. Both the industry and mines had an interest in this training which only served the purpose of satisfying the industrial needs but still left African trainees without any proper skills accreditation or qualifications. Furthermore the training was often only recognised in the company where it took place.<sup>7</sup>

The Minister of Native Affairs, Deneys Reitz, dropped influx control in 1942-3 and the Smit inter-departmental Committee for Social, Health and Economic Conditions was appointed to investigate urban Africans.<sup>8</sup> The Elliot Committee was also appointed to investigate the situation in black locations. Both committees concluded that during the 1930s Africans had arrived in the cities in great numbers and therefore accepted the permanence of African urbanisation.

Both committees believed that the uncertainties which unemployment held for urban Africans created gangsterism, as African youths could not find work as semi-skilled labourers and thus youngsters joined criminal gangs in an effort to cope with their lack of employment. The findings of both these committees were that jobs had to be created for urban Africans to prevent unrest.

The Johannesburg City Council agreed with these findings. The Council appointed the Crime Investigation Committee to look into the situation in local locations.<sup>9</sup> The findings of this body were submitted in 1943, but by 1941 the Council was of the opinion that Africans should receive such training in order to combat crime. This would give youths an outlet to use their energies productively.

Although it was generally believed that training would help urban black people to take their rightful place in society, most industrialists used trained Africans only as temporary skilled labourers. When these labourers were due to receive wage increases they were simply replaced by unskilled labourers. This was common practice in 1939.

- 7 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes of 690th Special Meeting of 1943, (Johannesburg, Civic Centre), pp 649-655.
- 8 M Wilson & L M Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa (Oxford, OUP, 1975), pp 221-227.
- 9 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes of 690th Special Meeting of 1943, pp 649-655.



Most of the skilled labourers found better employment elsewhere, and these opportunities encouraged rural Africans to move to the cities. It was the City Council's belief that the urban Africans should be permanently employed and hoped that by establishing a new vocational training centre they would be encouraged to settle into permanent positions of employment.<sup>10</sup> There was a large influx of people from the rural areas seeking training and many had to be turned away due to the preference given to the urban Africans.

The private sector was reluctant to agree to the liberal idea of permanent employment for skilled labourers as this was considered unprofitable. During the 1940s Africans were paid minimal wages but qualifiers from vocational training centres expected higher wages. The industrialists were only interested in profit and wanted to keep wages as low as possible.<sup>11</sup>

Although Africans were capable of working as artisans in the different trades to overcome the skilled labour shortage, no one was concerned about providing the recognised trade qualifications. Africans in possession of trade certificates, however, expected higher wages, but the industry was not prepared to comply. Perhaps the higher wage issue for qualified African artisans was one of the main reasons why the private sector would not support the City Council's establishment of vocational training centres for almost thirty years, despite the fact that the Centre assisted in rectifying the shortage of skilled black labour in Johannesburg.<sup>12</sup>

It is therefore highly unlikely that combating crime was the only reason a vocational training centre was established in Soweto. There were also economic considerations presented by the town councillors during their meetings in 1941, although these were not recorded. My late father was employed by the Soweto Town Engineers and claimed to have overheard councillors discussing these matters publicly. Apparently some councillors hoped that the training centre in Soweto would satisfy the expectations of businesses, that is to produce skilled black labour for the private sector.<sup>13</sup> It was hoped that the sector would eventually sponsor the training centre in order to address the serious shortage of skilled black labour.

10 The City Council of Johannesburg. Minutes. Meetings 1941-1942, pp 71-76.

11 Ibid., 1941-1942, pp 73-75.

12 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 2-3.

13 Ibid., pp 3-5.

Most urban Africans lived outside Johannesburg which meant that there was a huge amount of unskilled labour in the area, so it was obvious that there was a great need for vocational training centres. From 1904 onwards Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner to South Africa, began to resettle urban Africans on the banks of the Klipspruit outside Johannesburg.<sup>14</sup> This marked the beginning of the townships as we know them today. The townships provided labour for the industries and subsequently they grew rapidly during the 1930s and 1940s. The drought in the 1930s also contributed to their growth because many rural Africans moved to the townships. The emergence of the industrial manufacturing sector and the absence of skilled white labour during the war years guaranteed the permanence of urban Africans in former whites only vocational positions.

The Smuts government recognised the permanence of urban Africans in satisfying the labour needs of industries. The Fagan Report of 1947 approved the training of semi-skilled and skilled African labour as it would contribute to the permanence of Africans without exploiting them. The report recommended a settlement to eliminate unnecessary juvenile crime by creating enough work for urban Africans. It was hoped that a peaceful balance could be reached by educating urban Africans.<sup>15</sup>

The government was in favour of establishing Africans in urban industries to combat restlessness, which they claimed was the main cause of juvenile crime. Ideally, every urban African adult had to be employed and the youth had to go to school, which meant that they could be controlled. The Smuts government encouraged job-related in-house training in order to prevent further turmoil in townships and promised to subsidise in-service training. It was in the interest of the Smuts government that projects such as a vocational training centre be established in the townships outside Johannesburg.<sup>16</sup>

14 M Swilling, R Humphries & K Shubane, Apartheid City, pp 1-11, 12-15.

15 C F J Muller, 500 Jaar, pp 463-468.

16 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes of 690th Special Meeting of 1943, pp 649-655.

The development of the Orlando Vocational Training Centre from 1942 to 1948

Encouraged by Smuts, Orlando Vocational Training Centre was established early in January 1942 and H S Keigwin accepted the first principalship. There was not much of an official opening or ceremony at the institution as training commenced immediately. After thorough planning and preparation in 1940-1 it was a humble beginning as the Chamber of Mines and Association of Industries failed to support the project. Students served an intensive three year apprenticeship and the demand to attend the courses was tremendous, despite the lack of advertising. The first Africans to qualify from this training centre were employed by the Building Division of the Johannesburg City Council (Non-European Affairs Department).<sup>17</sup>

Only local urban Africans aged between 14 and 19 were accepted for training and many rural Africans were turned away because of limited space. African representatives of the Advisory Boards to the City Council visited the training centre and were so impressed that they encouraged the youth to attend the courses on offer at the Orlando Vocational Training Centre. Although the training centre was popular with the local African community, it nevertheless took many years before such training was accepted by the private sector.<sup>18</sup>

Sixty students were trained in carpentry, bricklaying and gardening. Training was provided free of charge to students with Standard Six Mathematics and Science. The students received breakfast and lunch daily as the City Council believed in taking care of the basic needs of the students during their practical training. The buildings had thatched roofs and tarred floors and all the furniture was manufactured by the students.<sup>19</sup> Because students older than 14 or 15 were accepted, the training centre was an attractive option for school leavers. Some students were members of prominent township families and they were expected to contribute to the progress in the townships. Generally they performed well and satisfied the expectations of the Johannesburg City Council.

17 City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1941-1942, page 76.

18 Ibid., Meetings 1944-1948, pp 25-26.

19 Ibid., p 25.

Unfortunately the training centre did not assist in combating crime. The City Council hoped that the private industry would become involved, which would give the Centre more scope for expansion but entrepreneurs were interested in obtaining skilled and semi-skilled African labourers in the shortest time possible instead of training learners for three years. This also contributed to their negative attitude towards the Centre.<sup>20</sup>

White entrepreneurs had no faith in "township education" and preferred to train these urban youths in facilities outside the townships. *Tsotsis* (gangsters) contributed to the belief that "township training" was unsafe.<sup>21</sup> Small tools were constantly being stolen or mislaid and the Centre suffered heavy losses. To avoid any further embarrassment the City Council announced that these tools were being broken by the trainees and not stolen.

The Centre was operating on a deficit, because it did not manage to employ all the students on Council projects such as building the library in Orlando.<sup>22</sup> To prevent inefficiency the students were in constant need of supervision which was expensive and resulted in the Centre being non cost-effective. The principal was paid by the Transvaal Provincial Administration and the Centre was recognised as an industrial institution. Inspectors from the Department of Education inspected the training centre regularly, but as it did not comply with the rules and regulations it could not be accepted as an official trade school.

For 30 hours a week the students were trained by eight instructors, most of whom were African lecturers. In their spare time the students levelled off a football field and played soccer. Students also built cottages for the African staff members. The intake increased from 60 in 1944 to 80 in 1945 and 120 pupils in 1947.<sup>23</sup> In 1948 the school had 160 students of whom 60 were bricklayers, 50 carpenters and 50 tailors. Tailoring replaced gardening in 1946-7. More workshops were built by the students and the City Council accepted on principle to provide hostels for the students in order to have them under control.

20 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 3-4.

21 Ibid., pp 6-9.

22 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Special Meetings 1955, pp 1051-1052.

23 Ibid., Meetings 1944-1948, pp 25-26.

The Orlando Vocational Training Centre was administered by the Non-European Affairs Department of the City Council of Johannesburg. The principal reported to the Manager of the Non-European Affairs Department and was permitted to address committee meetings of the City Council, which were chaired by the Town Clerk. The principal had some influence in the Non-European Affairs Department, because he supplied the City with skilled labour. The surplus labourers established themselves in townships as entrepreneurs, although many former students were forced to go to the reserves to work as artisans, as their courses were not accepted as proper trades in the so-called white cities.<sup>24</sup>

Industries were not keen to employ skilled students as artisans, because they were not in possession of recognised trade certificates. The Council therefore urged the Department of Manpower to test students upon the completion of their courses, but the Department was reluctant to comply. The *Blanke Bouwerkersunie* also pressurised the Department into not recognising such courses because most white bricklayers and carpenters felt threatened by Africans.

The City Council felt misled, as the expectations regarding the Centre did not materialise. Unfortunately the Centre was also affected by the National Party (NP) takeover in 1948. The ideology of the Nationalists had no place for black artisans in "white" South Africa. According to the Sauer Report, craftsman training for Africans was limited to bantustans (African reserves) and although the industry was permitted to continue with so-called in-service training for African students, Africans were not permitted to become artisans in "white" South Africa due to job reservation which restricted black people to work as skilled and semi-skilled labour only.<sup>25</sup>

The "liberal" Johannesburg City Council could not afford to ignore the new government policies and in 1948 the conservative councillors suggested that the Centre be closed. The suggestion was ignored by the majority of the town councillors.<sup>26</sup> The Centre continued to train Africans to enable them to work for the Council and this gave the Centre a reason to survive the NP onslaught.

24 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes. Meetings 1944-1948, pp 25-26.

25 J Posel, The making of apartheid (Oxford, OUP, 1991), pp 1-8, 49-60, 75-90.

26 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes. Special Meetings 1955, pp 1051-1052.

The Centre managed to survive by providing the City with the necessary skilled labour to build housing schemes such as Dube in the townships. The Non-European Affairs Department's Building Division of the Council employed some of the Centre operatives as bricklayers and carpentry assistants to white artisans.<sup>27</sup> In reality some African labourers were already operating as independent artisans in the townships.

Further development of the vocational training centre from 1948 to 1955

In 1948 the Centre was situated on the outskirts of Soweto next to the old Potchefstroom highway. The area between the Centre and Orlando was open veld, and the Centre was not fenced in. The City Council purchased an old farmhouse alongside the Centre, which was occupied by the principal. The principal and black instructors, who were living in close proximity to the Centre, took care of the hostel. The hostel was officially opened by the Mayor of Johannesburg in November 1949 and provided accommodation for 100 students. Visitors' Days were held annually for the purpose of informing the community about the Centre's operation and to sell the students' furniture to the parents. A telephone was also installed at the Centre.<sup>28</sup>

In 1948 George Tabor, who was considered an eccentric by some, became the principal of the Centre. Being critical of the official labour practices of the National Party government ensured his popularity in townships and the City Council respected his opinion. He was educated abroad and came to South Africa as a young man to work at mission schools. He was employed by the City Council and was not afraid to criticise both the City Council and the National Party government.<sup>29</sup>

Tabor had a reputation for being strict but fair to his students. He also assisted in obtaining appropriate work for his students, because he believed that his students should have the opportunity to work as artisans instead of as skilled labourers. For this reason he preferred to find employment for them in townships and not in the industries. Building companies operating in townships were also approached to employ students from the Centre.<sup>30</sup>

27 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Special Meetings 1955, pp 1050-1052.

28 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1949-1950, pp 17-19.

29 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 7-9.

30 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 4-5.

George Tabor's administration appears to have been haphazard. It proved difficult to obtain documentation about his principalship. Nevertheless, former students spoke highly of him and gave me useful information. He was remembered for constantly pressurising the City Council to obtain official recognition for "his" students' trades, although this was unlikely under the rigid National Party government in charge.

With the introduction of the Native Builders Workers Act in 1950 most of Tabor's graduates were eventually tested by inspectors from the Department of Manpower, who granted "Certificates of Proficiency". 80% of the students passed their tests and obtained qualifications, but these were unfortunately only accepted in the townships and bantustans as trade certificates. Tabor therefore continuously approached the authorities to obtain acceptance for these qualifications and the Centre was regularly upgraded.<sup>31</sup>

By 1950 the Centre had received electricity, thereby improving the quality of workshop training. Students were given free medical examinations and were required to pass an acceptance test before being enrolled at the Centre. These tests were introduced by Tabor due to the increase in demand for training at the Centre in the 1950s. Applicants arrived from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South West Africa (Namibia), but had to be turned away due to the policy of giving preference to locals. The intake was maintained at 160 students. Despite the Centre still receiving a subsidy from the Department of Education until 1955, applicants were required to pay a small enrolment fee from 1950 onwards in order to cover expenses.<sup>32</sup>

George Tabor approached private industries for financial assistance and the Rotary Club provided four bursaries for boarders. Nine bursaries were donated by the National War Memorial Health Foundation in 1951. Companies such as SA Breweries and Gencor hesitated in their support of the Centre due to the introduction of the Bantu Education Act in 1953. The future of the Centre was insecure and the City Council offered to sell the vocational training centre to the new Department of Bantu Administration.<sup>33</sup> But the Department was not interested in job-related training at the time and instead referred the City Council to the Department of Manpower for assistance.

31 City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes. Meetings 1950-1951, page 12.

32 Ibid., Meetings 1951-1952, pp 12-13.

33 Ibid., Special Meeting 1955, pp 1051-1052.

The Department of Bantu Education not only laid down rules and regulations to the mission schools, but also controlled most of the schools in the townships. Before 1955 most black schools were controlled by the various missions. The government subsidised mission schools and only in the 1930s, according to the findings of the Welsh Report, did it become involved in building more government schools for Africans. This gave them control of so-called native or bantu education.<sup>34</sup>

During Verwoerd's administration the race to control black education intensified and the Centre was caught in the crossfire. As the Centre was subsidised, the Department believed that it could also influence job-related training in the townships with the assistance of the Department of Labour and the Department of Manpower. It was also the official (NP) government policy in the 1950's to control the training of Africans. The City Council disliked the government's interference and sought a way of running the Centre more independently.<sup>35</sup>

Dr Werner Eiselen, the new Secretary of the Department of Bantu Affairs, concluded in his thorough investigation in 1949-1951 that black pupils should receive more job-related training and less academic education. It was the official policy that Africans assist whites, which meant they required training. This would have made it easier for urban Africans to adapt to the white South African market. As the official government expert on "bantu" affairs, Dr Eiselen was convinced that whites should not burden African people with foreign social sciences such as white history and religion. He felt that it caused nothing but confusion in the African communities.<sup>36</sup>

As the son of a German missionary, Eiselen believed that Africans should be allowed to develop according to their own potential. Eiselen believed that job-related training was acceptable to Africans as this type of education was understood in a so-called "basic-minded" and "innocent" society. It was Eiselen's belief that academic education should only assist Africans in obtaining job-related knowledge. He felt it was unnecessary to force theoretical ideas on them, as these would not be comprehended in African societies.<sup>37</sup>

34 K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge, pp 27-31.

35 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1952-1954, pp 24-29.

36 J Hyslop, Social conflicts over African education in South Africa, (Johannesburg, 1990), pp 177/8, 208-213.

37 K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge, pp 33-36, 65-73.



A vocational training centre would have suited the Department of Bantu Education for the purpose of training urban blacks in the various skills, but due to the resistance of Tabor the City Council offered to sell the Centre to the Department of Bantu Education for a high price, which the government was not prepared to accept.<sup>38</sup> To rent the place was also far too expensive, which left the City Council with no other alternative but to register the Centre as a private school in 1955. The government was not prepared to assist because of the City Council's persistence in training black artisans. Without an adequate government subsidy for the Centre the Council was forced to increase the fees and introduce additional courses such as drainlaying (plumbing) and plastering.

Contractors operating in the vicinity of the vocational centre (when the new Dube township was being built) hired students to assist with the building of houses. Instead of paying the trainees, the Centre received a remuneration and this gave it the means to survive. The contractors in the townships helped by employing many of the former students from the Centre.

Discipline was strict and students' attendance topped 95% at the Centre with the introduction of basic academic classes such as drawing, bricklaying and plastering.<sup>39</sup> The students respected Tabor and this contributed to the harmony at the Centre at a time when the mission schools were in turmoil due to the takeover by the Department of Bantu Education in 1954-5.

The vocational training centre from 1955 to 1967

In addition to these developments the Centre was forced to employ white instructors. As the City Council could not find qualified motor mechanics in the townships, three white instructors were employed and the staff increased to more than a dozen members in 1956-7. The intake of students increased to 240 in 1958 and a new course for motor mechanics became very popular.<sup>40</sup>

38 The City Council of Johannesburg. Minutes, Meetings 1956, pp 11-12.

39 Ibid., Ordinary Meeting 1955, pp 1050-1052.

40 Ibid., Meetings 1956-1957, pp 14-15.

Some graduates established themselves as entrepreneurs (so called backyard mechanics), which made inspectors from the Department of Manpower doubt that the Centre was serious about proper training for Africans. White trade unions complained about the competition and this led to the course being dropped in 1960, which left the NP government with suspicions of the "United Party Council's" ability in operating the Centre.<sup>41</sup> The police complained about the backyard mechanics' involvement in theft. Stolen cars were brought to Soweto, where they were stripped and the parts were sold to the owners of *spaza* shops (hawkers) in the townships. The Centre became an embarrassment to the officials as it was allegedly seen as being responsible for the training of "criminal elements".<sup>42</sup>

As it was the intention of the institution to prevent crime, Tabor believed that the government was looking for reasons to close the Centre and therefore did everything in his power to comply with the rules and regulations laid down by the Department. Tabor was quite successful in that he managed to maintain a *status quo* and was responsible for the improvements at the Centre. The buildings were painted white with red roofs and in 1959 a fence was erected around the premises. The Centre was renamed Dube Vocational Training Centre in 1959, due to Dube township being erected in the area.<sup>43</sup>

A National Technical Certificate (part one) was introduced at the Centre in 1961. This included subjects such as building drawing, science and theory. At the invitation of the City Council sceptical officials from the Department of Bantu Education inspected the Centre. This inspection resulted in the Department's acceptance of the Centre to serve Johannesburg as an in-service or in-house training centre for the City Council's own Building Division.<sup>44</sup>

41 M Wilson & L M Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, pp 221-227.

42 H Kelm, Interview, 1/9/1991, pp 11-12.

43 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1959, p 2352.

44 Ibid., Meetings 1960-1961, pp 65-66.

Despite receiving funds from the City Council, the Centre was forced to close the hostel in 1966 due to financial constraints. The Centre had to be financially independent and could therefore no longer afford to provide any extras for students. Profits were used for the maintenance of the buildings.<sup>45</sup> Tailoring was scrapped and a new wireman's course (light current construction electrician) was introduced. The staff was reduced, but the principal received free accommodation in a house in Power Park, alongside the Soweto highway (the old Potchefstroom highway). Instructors were also encouraged to improve their academic qualifications and were required to obtain their Technical Teacher's Diplomas at the former South African Correspondence College (now Technisa).

During the 1960s the Centre underwent changes under the guidance of Tabor and the City Council. The Centre officially became a vocational training centre and could thus operate without government interference. The City Council decided to continue with academic education for students, introducing the National Technical Certificates (parts one to three).<sup>46</sup> In addition to their practical training, students also attended classes and could qualify from the Centre with "a Technical Matriculation Certificate" (Building Drawing, Theory and a choice of Science or Mathematics). This clashed with the official policies of the Department of Education, because operating as an in-service training centre for the City Council, the Centre was not permitted to offer academic education.<sup>47</sup>

Due to the findings of the Eiselen Report in 1949-51 it became official government policy, with the introduction of the Department of Bantu Education in 1954, to control technical education. It was therefore unacceptable for the City Council to offer a Technical Matriculation Certificate at the Centre. Examinations were written with the help of a private correspondence college, which registered courses with the Examination Board. Apparently this was illegal and the Centre faced closure but was eventually saved by an invitation from the Council to the Minister of Bantu Education to visit the premises.<sup>48</sup>

45 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Special Meeting 1966, pp 2-3.

46 Ibid., Meetings 1963, pp 2053-2054.

47 Ibid., Meetings 1966, pp 1521-1522.

48 Ibid., Special Meeting 1966, pp 2-3.

The Minister was impressed by his visit to the Centre in 1966 and permission was granted to continue with training. The establishment of a Technical High School (Jabulani) was planned. This meant that students could obtain their Matriculation Certificates at the new high school.<sup>49</sup> Tabor believed that it was a small price to pay as the Centre had been established for the purpose of assisting in the practical training of artisans and this remained his priority.

It is thus incorrect to refer to the Centre as a school, because it was a vocational training centre and not an academic school. During committee meetings of the City Council the Centre was referred to as a "trade school" which created some confusion about its actual status. Tabor suggested to the manager of the Non-European Affairs Department that the Centre should not be referred to as a school and in this way an understanding was reached with the Department of Bantu Education.<sup>50</sup>

Although the British Royals had passed the Centre in 1947 and 1995, they had not visited the premises. This meant that the most important visitor to the Centre was the Minister. His official visit in 1966 secured the continuation of Dube Vocational Training Centre, as the Centre was set up for the sole purpose of providing job-related training for Africans in townships.<sup>51</sup> The Centre conformed with the official government policy of operating separate facilities such as Dube for Africans in townships. Although the UP (United Party) controlled City Council was in opposition to the National Party government, the principle of separate development for races was still maintained. The existence of the Centre was therefore secure as its only purpose was to assist in the upgrading of urban Africans. The Minister accepted the upliftment of urban Africans and this became the sole reason for the survival of the Centre in the 1960s.<sup>52</sup>

49 The City Council of Johannesburg. Minutes, Special Meeting 1966, pp 3-4.

50 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 13-14.

51 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 15-16.

52 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Special Meeting 1966, pp 3-4.

Tabor had served the City Council as the principal of the vocational centre for 18 years when he was asked to retire in 1966, making him the longest-serving principal in the history of the Centre. He remained professionally involved as a consultant for the Centre until his death in mid-1970. The City Council appreciated his "extraordinary qualities" in dealing with every situation and his "outspokenness" has become legendary.<sup>53</sup> He was not afraid to criticise and this made him unpopular with the rigid officials and bureaucrats. He administered the Centre autocratically but was prepared to listen to reason, which contributed to his popularity in Soweto.<sup>54</sup> He sacrificed his free time to assist students in solving job-related problems and often went out of his way to find employment for his students, making him very popular.

Although counselling was not part of his job description, the gesture was appreciated and Sowetans who remember him speak highly of him. He also socialised with people on Parents Day. Parents and students were free to visit him at his home in Power Park to discuss job-related problems, and he always tried to assist them.<sup>55</sup> Upon inquiring about him nothing negative was ever said and it appears that he knew how to deal with people and obtain the necessary results.

Sowetans become nostalgic when they discuss Tabor and the Centre during the "good old days". Apparently the situation at the Centre was better in his time and there were few disciplinary problems. The creation of the Centre from grass roots level is attributed to him and by the time he retired his institution was known countrywide.<sup>56</sup> His successors were town officials who could not match his popularity and it is not surprising that in 1975 Sowetans requested that the Centre be named after him.

53 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Ordinary Meeting 1963, pp 2053-2054.

54 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 13-14.

55 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 3-8.

56 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 12-13.

Because Tabor left behind very little documentation, it is rather difficult to separate fact from fiction. Apparently he left all his filing to his clerks. Although he did leave his mark on the Centre most information (such as minutes of meetings at the Centre), was lost with the handover of the Centre to the Department of Education in 1975. Tabor was constantly mentioned in the minutes of the City Council.<sup>57</sup> I received most of my information about Tabor and "his" Centre from the minutes of these meetings. Unfortunately he is only remembered by his former students in Soweto where his memory has remained alive.

It was to his credit that Sowetans believed in his abilities. His students had the choice of complying with the set rules and regulations or being expelled from the Centre. The rule was quite simple; to complete the daily work load. Tabor was not concerned with the students' private lives and what students did after hours was of no concern to him.<sup>58</sup> Although some students were caught in possession of dagga and other drugs during unexpected police raids, Tabor claimed that the Centre could not be held responsible. This gave Tabor an official reason to close the hostel and in doing so he saved his reputation as well as that of the Centre. He knew that the hostel could not be controlled by a handful of inexperienced African instructors. It became far too expensive to control these hostel dwellers.<sup>59</sup>

Some students, while under the influence of alcohol, assaulted each other after soccer matches and this sometimes lead to the interference of black instructors. As the lecturers were accommodated near the Centre they could easily intervene or contact Tabor when these assaults became serious. The riot police were sometimes notified if the situation became uncontrollable.<sup>60</sup> On occasion pupils were sometimes badly hurt during fights and had to be taken to hospital. Fortunately the students respected Tabor as the law at the Centre and usually obeyed when he intervened in their clashes.

57 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 19-21.

58 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 15-16.

59 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 11-13.

60 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 16-17.

Only in serious cases were wrongdoers expelled. Generally, students were only expelled from the Centre for a certain period of time and parents were notified when a pupil misbehaved. Upon Tabor's request, corporal punishment was meted out by the parents of the pupils concerned.<sup>61</sup> By leaving the punishment up to the parents Tabor maintained discipline. Former students have informed me that some of the parents were prepared to employ the services of a "kangaroo court" (a vigilante or citizen's court, which was common practice in the old townships) to punish their children.<sup>62</sup> Students had to endure lashes on the soles of their feet with a bamboo cane, which was extremely painful. It is perhaps because of this that disrespect towards Tabor became uncommon.

Tabor lived near the Centre and is reputed to have walked to work daily. Some students who lived nearby would accompany him and someone would always carry his heavy briefcase. He knew most of his students by name and should he have decided to go for a walk in the neighbouring township, no harm would have befallen him. Tabor was thus unique and upon his death the City Council lost "a valuable employee" who simply could not be replaced by rigid Council officials.<sup>63</sup>

#### The changing fortunes of the training centre from 1967 to 1976

In the late 1960s the economic upswing of Verwoerd's days came to an end due to an international recession, which also affected South Africa. The Johannesburg City Council was also affected by the recession and surplus buildings belonging to the Training Centre had to be sold to the neighbouring police station. Although there were twenty members on the lecturing staff and 300 students, some lecturers had to be retrenched to make the Centre more cost-effective.<sup>64</sup>

61 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 23-24.

62 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 2-3.

63 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 24-25.

64 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1970, pp 129-130.

There was also a declining interest in the Centre among the local black community after Tabor's retirement, because parents had no faith in the rigid officials operating the Centre. School leavers preferred to attend Jabulani High School to Dube Vocational Training Centre. This contributed to a decline in number to 230 at the Centre in the late 1960s.<sup>65</sup>

More lecturers had to be retrenched when the Department of Bantu Education established the Polokwane Vocational Training Centre in the vicinity of the Centre. The City Council believed that this was done purposely to undermine the Dube Vocational Training Centre.<sup>66</sup> Fortunately for the Centre, Polokwane Training Centre did not last and was forced to merge with the existing high schools, but confidence in the City Council's ability to maintain a training centre was shattered. By 1970 the school's future was uncertain. George Tabor advised the City Council to involve the public in promoting education, training and development in Soweto. The Council had already asked the public to make small cash donations to maintain schools in Soweto with the assistance of the READ project. Private industries such as SA Breweries and Gencor helped the Centre to purchase inexpensive modern equipment. By 1972 the Centre was able to open new workshops for fitting as well as sheetmetalwork. The intake reached the 300 student mark and 23 instructors were employed at the Centre.<sup>67</sup>

There was a definite change in attitude in the NP government, seemingly brought about when the Johannesburg City Council approached the public for donations. Dr J B Jacobs initiated the implementation of the various Training Acts in the House of Assembly during the early 1970s, thereby encouraging private industry to become involved in the training of semi-skilled and skilled black labour.<sup>68</sup> The Department of Bantu Education and the Department of Manpower decided to subsidise training instead of trying to close institutions such as Dube.

65 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 25-26.

66 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Ordinary Meeting 1972, pp 1982-1983.

67 *Ibid.*, Meetings 1970, pp 129-130.

68 Technikon RSA, Personnel Supervision and Welfare (Johannesburg, 1978), Lessons 13-14.



As it was Verwoerd's belief that black people were only in the cities temporarily, very little was done to build more township schools in the 1950s and 1960s. After his death the National Party government admitted that the township schools were overcrowded and therefore something had to be done. An initiative from the City Council of Johannesburg was welcomed because it helped lessen the financial burden on the government. Industry was also encouraged to assist in education and training by being partly exempted from taxes. This made helping underprivileged urban Africans all the more appealing.<sup>69</sup>

As a direct result of the influence on the government by Afrikaner business people such as Anton Rupert, the government's views on black skills training also began to change. Rupert believed in the feasibility of training urban Africans instead of promoting expensive European immigration to the country. Dr Jacobs was a labour consultant before he joined parliament as a popular National Party MP and was therefore aware of the industrialists' plans to influence the government in accommodating training for black South Africans.<sup>70</sup> The government realised that the authorities needed help to promote the training of skilled and semi-skilled black labour and therefore the private sector was urged to become involved. Due to a serious shortage of trained black labour in South Africa in the late 1960s, the training of skilled black labour became a priority.<sup>71</sup>

It was Verwoerd's policy to eventually replace black with white labour but after his death European immigration to South Africa slowly declined with a loss of immigrants in 1976, resulting in a shortage of skilled labour.<sup>72</sup> The NP government was therefore pressurised to employ more skilled Africans in the factories in order to satisfy the needs of private industries. Although the recession of the 1970s reached a peak only in 1975, the decision to accommodate Africans in the industry became irreversible. White artisans became chargehands, foremen or supervisors as companies experimented illegally with skilled and semi-skilled African labourers employed as artisans.

69 Hyslop J. Social conflicts over African education in South Africa, pp 410-420, 429-434.

70 Technikon RSA, Personnel Supervision and Welfare, Lessons 13-14.

71 Hyslop J. Social conflicts, pp 429-439.

72 Ibid., pp 424-428.

At the training centre it was said that the government was only interested in creating cheap labour in order to please big business instead of helping Africans to uplift themselves. Not much was done to recognise qualifiers certificates as trade qualifications. Black qualifiers became "operatives" after leaving the Centre and were only allowed to assist white tradesmen. They were forbidden to work independently as tradesmen and although they were capable of operating as tradesmen they received the same low salaries paid to skilled or semi-skilled labourers.<sup>73</sup>

This understandably created frustration among skilled members of the African community. Many were forced to work as labourers instead of tradesmen in Johannesburg.<sup>74</sup> An "Old Students Association of Dube Vocational Training Centre" fought for recognition of their training and the granting of trade certificates. The former students appealed to their Black Local Urban Representatives (councillors) and the City Council of Johannesburg for help, and although assistance was promised none was received because of the unrest in 1976.

Africans who qualified also approached ATASA (the African Teachers Association of SA) and SASO (the South African Students Organisation) for help. Apparently the racial discrimination against "black artisans" was discussed at these meetings but there was nothing black activists could do to improve the situation. It disappointed both activist and qualifier. As most of these troubled qualifiers were only interested in improving their positions at work, many were not drawn into the emerging Black Power Movement in Soweto. It was more important to them to find employment than to join "the struggle". They knew that their only possible assistance was through official channels.<sup>75</sup>

Although the group was small, qualifiers were reasonably active. The chairmanship rotated among the members and everyone involved in the group donated what he could afford. The money was used to purchase paper, envelopes and stamps. The group's chairman was responsible for correspondence requesting the assistance of various organisations and assembling the members for regular meetings. The burning issue was to receive recognition for their training and therefore letters of appeal were sent to the Department of Manpower. According to Elias Kekana the Department failed to reply and most of the former students lost contact during the unrests in the townships.

73 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 7-9.

74 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 18-19.

75 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 8-9.

The fees at the Centre were R50 per trimester or R450 for a full three years' training. The course included 21 hours a week practical workshop training and nine hours academic education in the classroom. Pupils were required to have a minimum of Standard 8 with mathematics and science before they were admitted. Classes commenced at 08h00, finished at 15h00 and included two breaks.<sup>76</sup> A shop was established on the premises where students could purchase their lunch. The Centre therefore became firmly established in accommodating skills training in the African townships of Johannesburg.

The Centre had an administration block, which included the offices of the principal and his clerks, half a dozen classrooms and a dozen workshops. A security guard was on duty at the gate to prevent unwelcome guests from entering. The thatched roofs were replaced with asbestos in the 1950s and 1960s and in the 1970s the roads on the premises were tarred. Trees and shrubs were planted and the garden was maintained. The tarmac in the workshops was replaced with concrete slabs and proper toilet facilities were installed.

Because the Centre is surrounded by marshlands there are no neighbouring houses. Burglaries at the Centre were comparatively uncommon in the 1960s, but in the 1970s tools were constantly being stolen. Over the weekends criminal elements would enter the premises and break in through doors and windows. Usually it was only small handtools that were stolen as they are easy to carry.<sup>77</sup> It became expensive to constantly replace the stolen tools, as the subsidies from the City Council diminished annually. Under these conditions private industries were not prepared to donate equipment to the Centre and therefore the Council considered selling Dube Centre to the Department of Bantu Education.

In the 1970s the townships were joined together to form Soweto (South Western Townships) and were placed under the administration of the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB). The City Council's Non-European Affairs Department was incorporated in WRAB and because the Centre had to support the Council's Non-European Affairs Department, the Council's decision to sell the Centre to the Department of Bantu Education went ahead.<sup>78</sup>

- 76 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1968, pp 2-3.  
 77 Ibid., Meetings 1972, pp 129-131.  
 78 The City Council of Johannesburg, Soweto: A City within a City (Johannesburg, 1973), pp 8-9.

The transfer negotiations between the Council and the Department lasted from 1972 to 1975, as the Council expected a fair price for the vocational training centre. The staff, under the principalship of T Jones, was employed by the Department. The Centre was renamed the Johannesburg Vocational Training Centre and shortly thereafter it became George Tabor Vocational Training Centre (in honour of the late George Tabor).<sup>79</sup> As the staff's performance was to the satisfaction of the Department, the transfer went ahead smoothly and no jobs were lost. In 1975 the Centre accommodated 350 pupils and had assets to the value of approximately R1 000 000.<sup>80</sup>

The Centre's workshops were well equipped for providing trainees with superior training in the various building trades. Although the buildings were desperately in need of repairs, the management at the Centre was efficient and the Centre was ready to operate. The Department promised to assist with the implementation of new technical courses, which would improve the situation at the Centre tremendously.<sup>81</sup>

During those days the Department of Manpower, with the help of private industry, established vocational training centres such as Chamdor near Krugersdorp, Sebokeng in the Vaal-Triangle, Boithusong in Bloemfontein, Emthonjeni in Port Elizabeth, Boskop in Potchefstroom, Apex in Benoni and Pinetown outside Durban. The centres were administered by governing councils, equally represented by government officials and industries. Courses were approved by the Department and the centres were exempt from paying tax. This allowed for the courses to be offered free of charge provided that the company registered with a Training Board and sent trainees to an approved centre to attend such courses.<sup>82</sup>

79 George Tabor Technical College, Annual Report 1979, (Pretoria, Department of Education and Training, 1979), pp 3-8.

80 Ibid., pp 1-2.

81 Ibid., pp 11-12.

82 B J Erasmus & P S Van Wyk, Training Management, a practical approach (Johannesburg, Thomson Publisher, 1996), pp 9-17.

The implementation of the Black In-Service Training Act in 1975-6 led to the establishment of more privately operated in-service training centres and regulated the training for Africans. In order to uphold the rules and regulations laid down by the act, the centres had to be inspected regularly by government officials. African operatives could become assistants and function independently, which made the government reluctant to act against Africans working in trades, in steel foundries or other heavy industries. Employers became responsible for the training of African employees when necessary. Private applicants had to pay a reasonable fee for the training.<sup>83</sup>

According to my own observation, the companies were not keen on training Africans due to the fact that they would have to pay trained Africans more than the unskilled African labourers. Most of the companies which employed me as a foreman promoted cheap skilled African labour schemes for the sole purpose of being exempt from taxes.<sup>84</sup> The promotion of black upliftment in the townships was not on the agenda. As the scheme benefited the employer and not the employee, skilled operatives asked for the accreditation of their qualifications, but to no avail. Their qualifications only covered certain tasks of a trade which was insufficient for recognition as a qualified artisan.

Something drastic had to be done to satisfy operatives. At colleges "sandwich courses" were introduced, in which the trainees were instructed to complete their tasks in the shortest possible time. Certificates were issued and were generally recognised in the private sector. Private colleges were established where students could attend academic courses covering commercial, secretarial and managerial subjects. Although most of these courses were not approved by the Department of Education, they were, however, accepted by the private sector.<sup>85</sup>

83 "The Black Employees In-Service Training Act of 1976", Government Gazette, (Pretoria, 7 July 1976), pp 1-4.

84 Ibid., pp 6-9.

85 The Institute of Personnel Management, The Manpower Training Act of 1981 (Johannesburg, IPM, 1982), pp 5-8, 108-116.

Many labourers attended these institutions and were later unpleasantly surprised when the courses were not recognised. With the establishment of these private institutions in the vicinity of the Centre, serious competition emerged. The Department planned to build more classrooms and to promote National Technical Certificates (parts 1 to 3) as well as workshop training to combat the competition. A course in welding was introduced and the lecturers increased to 26. Officials of the Department inspected the Centre regularly for the purpose of improving the quality of the courses, thus attracting more students in Soweto. As a result the enrolment at the Centre increased.<sup>86</sup>

Religious education was introduced and although some students attended morning services there was resistance to the prayer sessions. Students preferred not to attend the sessions and arrived at school late. Corporal punishment was introduced to maintain discipline, something which had been unnecessary during Tabor's principalship, as he had punished students by expelling them.<sup>87</sup> A governing council was established and was served by nominated and elected officials from the Department and private industry. The chairmanship was held by government officials and therefore the industrial officials served on the board only as advisors.<sup>88</sup> The Department was rigid and made the principal fully responsible for the running of the Centre, which presented him as an dictator in the Sowetan community.

English was still maintained as the first language at the Centre and although the Department felt quite strongly about introducing Afrikaans as the second language at schools in Soweto, the Centre was not affected by this policy. Most of the books needed for special training were written in English and many were published abroad. There was little opportunity to promote Afrikaans in the technical subjects, even at the "white" colleges.<sup>89</sup> Provision was made for Afrikaans students at "white" colleges, who wished to study managerial subjects. Technical subjects were offered mainly in English, which was to the benefit of African colleges.

86 George Tabor Technical College, Annual Report 1979, pp 11-13.

87 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 27-28.

88 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 16-18.

89 "Regulations on Technical Colleges", Government Gazette (Pretoria, 15 October 1979), pp 6-9, 11-13.

Because of the strong English influence in Johannesburg, Sowetans are more fluent in English than in Afrikaans. Since the establishment of Soweto most of the literature available there has been in English and many of the township children therefore communicate in English and not their own indigenous languages.<sup>90</sup> Sowetan adults also communicate in English. Sowetan youngsters emulate the African-Americans, and have little in common with Africans from the rural areas, where Afrikaans is still widely spoken.

Most Sowetans are born and bred in townships and have little opportunity of communicating in Afrikaans.<sup>91</sup> Most work in Johannesburg, where they communicate in English with white people. Students from the Centre were Sowetans and found the language policy of the NP government offensive. Some white lecturers taunted their students by speaking Afrikaans --but were given instructions by the Department in 1976 to communicate in English. The Department was thus more lenient towards the Centre as it took into consideration the difficulties being experienced in technical education.

Neutral observers such as my late father were aware of the frustrations of Sowetans. He also noticed the changes at the Centre which surfaced after Tabor's retirement.<sup>92</sup> Many students openly discussed the politics of that time with African instructors during breaks, something which had been uncommon during Tabor's principalship. It was therefore surprising that the relationship between the students and lecturers at the Centre did not begin to deteriorate in 1975. This was one of the reasons why African instructors were gradually replaced by white tradesmen, who were later officially appointed as lecturers by the Department.

90 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 23-28.

91 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 12-13.

92 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 27-28.

Applicants for a position as a lecturer had to hold a trade qualification (a Trade Diploma, Trade Certificate or five years' practical experience as an apprentice), which was recognised by the Department of Manpower. They had to be in possession of an NTC 3 (Technical Matriculation Certificate) and supply proof of eight years' practical work experience. Thereafter, lecturers who had served the Department for twelve months were entitled to apply to study for their Technical Teacher's Diplomas at the Pretoria Technical College for one year at the expense of the Department of Education. Lecturers were encouraged to pursue their studies in order to obtain N6 diplomas. Although N1 to N6 takes two years to complete, the course is recognised as a qualification equivalent to three years above a Matriculation Certificate provided the candidate is in possession of a trade qualification.<sup>93</sup>

Experienced tradesmen were capable of maintaining discipline in the classrooms and workshops, but constantly caught students in the toilets with alcohol and dagga in their possession. The Sowetan environment was blamed for this misconduct. Copies of the Code of Conduct were distributed amongst the students and wrongdoers were expelled, but the tense situation at the Centre continued. Instead of the usual 80% pass rate as previously experienced, only 60% of the students passed their courses and absenteeism increased from 5% to 20% in 1975. Records were kept and student progress reports were regularly sent to the parents but unfortunately most of the pupils did not deliver the reports to their parents or these reports were "lost" in the mail.

Parents complained at Parent's Days that they could not constantly supervise their children, as working parents had to travel to Johannesburg daily and only spent time with their children over the weekends. These children were therefore without proper supervision most of the time and many decided to join streetgangs to keep themselves occupied. Most lecturers realised that the situation in Soweto was getting out of control and that this could affect the training at the Centre. Many streetgangs were under the influence of criminal elements such as *tsotsis* and this put the Centre at risk. Students manipulated by *tsotsis* allegedly informed their gangs about the availability of handtools, which resulted in an increase in burglaries.<sup>94</sup>

93 Department of Education and Training, Rules and Regulations (Pretoria, DET, 1979), pp 8-13.

94 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 12-13.



Although the governing council was informed of the tense situation at the Centre, most of the board members chose to ignore the warning. The Department felt that there was no need for alarm and advised the lecturers to remain calm when activists were stationed at the gate to stir up students at the Centre with their grievances against Afrikaans. Although Centre students in general still felt that it was not an issue affecting their training, some gullible students were intimidated into joining stayaways. Before the unrest began, the police were called in to remove activists from the gate so that training could continue normally.<sup>95</sup>

The Centre in the crossfire of change from 1942 to 1976

Even before the tense situation in Soweto erupted, the Centre had been affected. Fortunately the activists failed in their attempts to intimidate Centre students into demonstrating in front of the gate because they felt unaffected by the dissatisfaction. They also had to pay for their studies and could not afford to waste any valuable time, money and effort by being idle. Their training therefore continued relatively undisrupted.<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile at Jabulani Technical High School, English and Afrikaans were compulsory subjects for obtaining a recognised Technical Matriculation Certificate. George Tabor Vocational Training Centre only taught students building drawing, theory, science or mathematics up to N3 level (Technical Matric) without English and Afrikaans. To obtain a full Matriculation Certificate students had to attend English and Afrikaans classes at Jabulani.<sup>97</sup> Students, however, demonstrated at Jabulani against the introduction of Afrikaans as a subject, resulting in 80% stayaways as well as riots in the vicinity of the school. There was no rioting at private training centres around Soweto as their students, like those at the Centre, were not affected by the introduction of Afrikaans as a compulsory subject. Private schools gave students a choice of studying Afrikaans or an African language.<sup>98</sup>

95 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 33-36.

96 Ibid., pp 29-31.

97 George Tabor Technical College, Annual Report 1979, pp 9-13.

98 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1995, pp 4-7.

Some trainees received remuneration while in training and therefore many in-service training centres had an attendance level of about 60% during the riots. Government schools were affected because their schools were situated in the centre of Soweto but the George Tabor Vocational Training Centre was situated on the outskirts, next to a police station and surrounded by a marsh. Activists were easily spotted at the gate and were forced to hide in the marsh when the riot police arrived. Dube township was out of the way and therefore activists chose to ignore the Centre. Thus not many activists demonstrated outside the Centre and the few that did, failed to make any significant impression on the students.<sup>99</sup>

Organisations such as SASO (South African Students Organisation) had no interest in the Centre, following the 1975 ordeal with the "Old Students Association of George Tabor Vocational Training Centre". Old activists knew that there was a difference between academic education and technical training. SASO was not interested in harming vocational students' livelihood and therefore the Centre was ignored by the protest organisers. George Tabor Vocational Training Centre thus survived the riots unaffected because the use of Afrikaans as the language of instruction had never been enforced.<sup>100</sup>

Demonstrating activists at the gate became reasonably isolated cases. The demonstrators were far removed from the main events in the centre of Soweto and there were no academic schools in the vicinity of the Centre. Leading activists had no interest in disrupting the training at the Centre because students made it clear that they preferred to be left undisturbed.<sup>101</sup> Centre students were apparently disinterested in participating in the 1976 riots. They struggled to find employment after qualifying, and the situation worsened during the recession in 1975. Job prospects were bleak, which was, according to student activists, another reason for not involving the Centre in the student riots.<sup>102</sup>

- 99 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 32-35.  
 100 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 27-29.  
 101 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 33-37.  
 102 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 28-31.

Although the Department of Bantu Education pressurised academic African schools into accepting Afrikaans as a compulsory subject, technical training was not affected and inspectors tolerated the language situation at the Centre. While lecturers at the Centre were involved in trying to combat theft and burglaries by the students, the unrest of 1976 almost passed unnoticed. Petty crime was fast becoming a major problem and the handful of activists trying to cause disturbances at the gate were of scant concern to the administration. Upon enquiry I was informed by former students that these disturbances prior to the 1976 riots were apparently not even reported to the proper authorities.<sup>103</sup>

It was difficult to maintain a Vocational Training Centre which was constantly being threatened by closure, theft, burglaries and the distribution of alcohol, dagga and drugs among students. Another disheartenment was that it was taking years for the legal status of the Centre to be resolved. Although it had been established in 1942 as a trade school, its status as such was not formally recognised by the proper authorities.<sup>104</sup> The old Department of Education permitted the Centre to continue operating as an industrial school and eventually it became an in-service training centre for the City Council.

Only upon the transfer of the Centre to the Department in 1975, did the George Tabor Vocational Training Centre go public. This meant that the existence of the Centre was in the balance for 33 years. However, the situation improved during the 18 years that Tabor was principal. It is obvious that Tabor had diplomatic skills, which helped convince both the City Council and the Department not to close the Centre in 1972. Without Tabor the rigid authorities would in all likelihood not have accepted the necessity of training African artisans in Soweto. It is thanks to Tabor, along with the cooperation of the City Council, that the future of training for Africans in Soweto was secured.

103 Interviews with D Mbele, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 28-31.

104 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1944-1948, pp 25-26.

Tabor believed that urban Africans should be self-employed as artisans in the townships and that this would contribute to combat unemployment. Unfortunately his vision did not bear fruit, but he did manage to convince the Minister of Bantu Education in 1966 that the Centre should serve the needs of the City Council of Johannesburg in the townships. The Centre was Tabor's greatest achievement and marked the beginning of job-related training in Soweto. He became a pioneer in job-related training for Africans and "his" Centre became an example of quality training for Sowetans.

Only later, once the Centre was operating, did private industry show any interest in sponsoring it. Tabor helped convince the Council to involve the public in the development of Soweto, which became a reality in 1972. He never tired of repeating what he firmly believed and he is also credited for never losing his temper, which was an important factor in gaining acceptance for the Centre.<sup>105</sup>

In addition, he was popular because he lived opposite the Centre and Sowetans considered him to be a part of their environment. When the old farmhouse which Tabor and his family had occupied was demolished, he chose to settle in Power Park instead of Johannesburg. He spent most of his 18 years' service as principal in Soweto, which was of utmost importance in receiving acceptance in Soweto.<sup>106</sup>

Tabor became a legend. A so-called brave white man, who was not afraid of living on the outskirts of Soweto. It is not entirely true that his family were the only whites living in Power Park as there were other white families residing in the area at the time. What set Tabor apart from his colleagues was that he enjoyed working in Soweto, something which no one else living in Power Park did in the 1950s and 1960s. This convinced Sowetans of his dedication to the Centre and helped improve the Centre's image in the townships.<sup>107</sup>

105 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 12-14.

106 Ibid., pp 17-19.

107 Ibid., pp 21-23.

Until as recently as 1985 whites had to apply for permits from the police if they were planning to travel into Soweto. Whites preferred to enter in groups, as they were less likely to be attacked, and some carried guns concealed in briefcases and were constantly afraid of being assaulted. There was also a domestic crime problem in Soweto and gangsterism (*tsotsis*) flourished.<sup>108</sup> Cars driven by whites became easy targets for hijackers operating on the streets. For this reason the police had to be aware of the movement of whites in the townships. When whites were reported missing the police were immediately notified by the authorities to put out a search for them. White activists were also restricted and were not permitted to overstay their welcome. They were often forcibly removed if caught openly conspiring with African activists at meetings which were held regularly in the townships.<sup>109</sup>

Most whites dealing with Tabor therefore considered him quite strange and eccentric. He was aware of the possible dangers he faced in the townships, but being a Christian he was not afraid and left his fate in the Lord's hands. His conviction explains why he criticised the system and shared the belief of the City Council that job reservation should be demolished. He was not an activist although he was under suspicion. He was allegedly seen at a United Party general election meeting and is therefore likely to have supported the party in 1966.<sup>110</sup>

Before the Centre opened, academic mission schools flourished in the townships. With the exception of in-service training centres operated by mines and private industries, no provision was made to accommodate the need for further vocational education for urban Africans.<sup>111</sup> The problem was addressed with the establishment of the Centre and had it not been for the National Party government takeover in 1948, training could possibly have led to a new class of African artisans.

108 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 8-9.

109 The South African Police, Annual Police Reports (Orlando, SAP, 1985), pp 8-23, 31-46, 58-74.

110 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 17-21.

111 The City Council of Johannesburg, Minutes, Meetings 1944-1948, pp 25-26.

It was not the United Party's belief (according to the Fagan Report and the findings of the Elliot Commission) that Africans would replace white tradesmen, but that they would rather occupy vacancies when white tradesmen were unavailable. The Building Industry was one such field experiencing a serious shortage of white bricklayers and carpenters. This prompted the Council into only training Africans who were employed at either the Housing Division of the Non-European Affairs Department or in the Building Industry in the townships.<sup>112</sup>

With the introduction of the Builders Native Workers Act of 1950 the Centre was no longer permitted to train African artisans. It could only train skilled labour.<sup>113</sup> Skilled black labour could only assist white tradesmen, which meant that the Centre lost some of its credibility. The urban African school leavers in the 1970s were extremely dissatisfied with this state of affairs.

The Centre only provided for male students. Female students were accommodated at Jabulani High School in the 1970's which meant that practical training in the townships was restricted to males. Intelligent girls preferred to study commercial, secretarial and managerial subjects which meant that they were better qualified than their male counterparts. Because of this, technical education lost most of its attraction in the townships.<sup>114</sup> African female matriculants found employment as clerks, secretaries or managerial assistants far quicker than their male counterparts. In comparison with the men their school results were generally outstanding and according to the Department of Education and Training, females outnumbered the males in obtaining Matriculation Certificates.<sup>115</sup>

Upon Tabor's retirement, the Sowetans' attitude towards the Centre changed. They believed that only stupid people went to trade schools. When the Centre was transferred to the Department, Sowetans believed that the Council had lost interest in keeping the youth off the streets and away from streetgangs (juveniles or *tsotsis*).<sup>116</sup>

112 C F J Muller, 500 Jaar, pp 463-468.

113 C Hyslop, Social conflicts, pp 447-463.

114 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 18-20.

115 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 21-23.

116 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 21-23.

The Centre was originally established for the purpose of combating crime by keeping the youth off the streets, but Sowetan parents began sending school dropouts to study at the Centre. This contributed to the increase in crime at the Centre, which Tabor had almost brought under control. Although matriculants also enrolled for N3 courses, fewer applications were received.<sup>117</sup>

Many matriculants preferred to enrol at private colleges. Male matriculants competed with females. They did not want to degrade themselves by attending trade schools. Generally African male matriculants preferred clerical work as opposed to "blue collar" work. They were not attracted to the Centre by the inducement of being able to continue their studies at technikons to qualify as engineering assistants. The whole idea was to learn the basics at the Centre and thereafter continue studying at technikons, but intelligent boys in possession of their Technical Matriculation Certificates preferred enrolling at technikons immediately.<sup>118</sup> They ignored the practical training offered at the Centre and technical colleges and technikons grew in popularity in the townships in the 1970s due to the reasonable registration fees and better qualifications.

The Department of Bantu Education therefore decided that George Tabor Vocational Training Centre should become a Technical College. They hoped this would improve the image of the Centre. As Africans were only permitted to have colleges in the homelands, the Centre would have been the first African college in an urban area.<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately the Centre's status could not be upgraded to college level immediately and therefore few matriculants enrolled. 98% of the applicants were school dropouts, which led to the lowering of the admission requirements. Students with Standard Seven Certificates (often without mathematics and science) were admitted. The standard of the acceptance test was also lowered to attract enough applicants to keep the Centre running.<sup>120</sup>

- 117 George Tabor Technical College, Annual Report 1979, Department of Education and Training, pp 19-21.
- 118 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 14-19.
- 119 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999: 1994, pp 18-19.
- 120 Ibid., 1994-1999: 1995, pp 9-11.

### Conclusion

It is reasonable to conclude that the Centre did not serve its original purpose to keep the township youths occupied and in so doing help prevent juvenile delinquency. Eventually the parents had to pay fees to cover the costs incurred by the courses and the hostel was closed because of the severe financial burden which the Centre was unable to meet. The Council's subsidy was limited and from 1955 onwards the government refused to support the Centre.

The intake remained small and the City Council failed to expand the Centre, which was necessary if more students were to be enrolled. The Centre could not survive on limited handouts alone and the students could not produce enough furniture to raise the necessary funds. It was desperately in need of support which the government and industry were not prepared to provide before 1972.



CHAPTER THREE

JOB-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
IN SOWETO AFTER 1976

The effect of the 1976 riots on George Tabor Vocational Training Centre

As previously mentioned, the Centre was unaffected by the riots of 1976. Elias Kekana and Differ Mbele, the student representatives at the Centre, came to the conclusion that it would be wise to allow the students to make their own decisions about whether to support the cause by joining the rioters, thereby missing classes, or to ignore the cause and continue their training uninterrupted.<sup>1</sup> Although it became difficult to attend classes in June, July and August 1976 almost 40% of the Centre students were in attendance.

The Centre obtained a government vehicle which transported the lecturers to work daily. The bus travelled along the old Potchefstroom highway to the Centre as police regularly patrolled that section of road and it was considered fairly safe. In the absence of police presence, riots erupted unexpectedly but by the time the police arrived the activists had usually dispersed and disappeared into Soweto.

According to my late father, the activists organised themselves into small groups of between 3 and 8 members. These groups intimidated pupils into joining the riots and police found it difficult to catch the ringleaders.<sup>2</sup> As most students did not belong to SASO or the Black Power Movement they could not easily be identified. Activists could avoid the police by hiding in Soweto and occasionally even fleeing to neighbouring countries to avoid arrest.

Although active at George Tabor Vocational Training Centre, the activists knew that it would be futile to riot on the outskirts of Soweto as the Centre was far too isolated and activists at the Centre did not welcome any unrest caused by outsiders. The activists at the Centre were older than the others and eager to obtain their trades, and therefore often preferred to reason with their younger compatriots who in turn did not appreciate the way the situation was being handled.

1 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1996, pp 2-3.

2 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 7-8.

Most lecturers lived on the West Rand in Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Randfontein and were conscious of the tense situation in Soweto. They did not take unnecessary risks by driving into Soweto alone. In 1976 special permission, which was difficult to obtain, was required for entry into Soweto. Applicants were required to supply proof of employment in Soweto to the police or authorities (WRAB).<sup>3</sup> It was impossible for the over-stretched police force, equipped with 800 vehicles, to control an unsafe township with an estimated population exceeding 1 000 000 inhabitants. Jabulani Technical High School was closed for ten weeks and the white teachers were instructed to take paid leave. As a result no white teachers were killed during the riots, but unfortunately innocent bystanders such as a Jewish MD and a British nun were not as fortunate.<sup>4</sup>

George Tabor Vocational Training Centre was relatively unscathed in 1976 due to its unique location and for providing the necessary basic hand skills training to Sowetans. A few kilometres from the Centre activists looted an unprotected WRAB beer hall and the staff and students at the Centre witnessed the hall going up in flames. The beer hall is in ruins to this day, a chilling reminder of what transpired 24 years ago.

Demonstrations were held in Roodepoort Road (where the old beer hall was situated) and activists could be heard as far as the Centre, shouting: "Down with Afrikaans" and "Down with Bantu Education". Emotions ran high at the Centre and students constantly discussed the current turmoil. Some lecturers preferred to ignore these student discussions, not wanting to add fuel to the fire while others did not attend work regularly and were constantly taking sick leave. Most were armed and did not conceal their weapons in their briefcases. According to my late father, their nervousness was discernible in their faces and their conversations with one another. They often asked why the situation had got out of hand, some holding the communists responsible for causing the riots while others blamed the government, saying that Prime Minister J B Vorster was far too complacent with the urban Africans.<sup>5</sup>

3 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1996, pp 4-5.

4 The South African Police, Annual Police Reports (Orlando, SAP, 1976), pp 57-62, 96-99, 114-115.

5 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, p 18.

Needless to say this led to arguments among the lecturers, forcing the principal to prohibit any further political discussions. He was far more concerned about the increase in theft at the Centre which had increased dramatically during the riots. The staff were vigilant at all times but the thieves usually remained elusive, breaking into the workshops under cover of darkness. The Centre could not afford to replace the stolen equipment and fell victim to *tsotsis* due to a lack of police protection.

Security forces were asked to station an armoured vehicle at the entrance to the Centre for protection. The presence of this vehicle discouraged *tsotsis* from entering the premises and although the situation in Soweto returned to normal in September 1976, the Centre's administration was loathe to see the vehicle leave. Once again burglaries increased at the Centre, the security guard being unable to offer enough protection singlehandedly. The Centre was in desperate need of an upgraded security system which the Department was unable to afford at the time.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Centre is situated next to a police station, which helped to guarantee the safety of the lecturers, the *tsotsis* were shrewd and secretive and used the riots to increase their misdemeanours making the premises a "soft" target. The riots came to an end but tools are still being stolen from the Centre to this day. With the exception of a security guard, no staff member risks being at the Centre after sundown.

The riots changed the Centre forever. Before 1976 a small number of white staff members lived in Power Park near the Centre, but soon after the riots they relocated to the West Rand, leaving the Centre completely isolated after dark. The police station next to the Centre offers little protection as it is understaffed and the officials are overworked. A solitary security guard cannot stop a gang of armed and potentially dangerous *tsotsis*.<sup>7</sup>

6 Interviews with E Kakana, 1994-1999; 1996, pp 11-12.

7 Ibid., pp 9-10.

George Tabor Vocational Training Centre, from 1976 to 1979

Although there was still sporadic rioting in Soweto in the late 1970s, the situation gradually settled and it became reasonably safe for whites to work there once again. Student attendance at the Centre increased from 40% to 60% and the lecturers began to return to work more regularly. Thankfully the situation at the Centre remained calm.

The Department began to implement some of the proposed changes at the Centre, one of which was to upgrade the Centre to a Technical College. The courses were reduced from three years to one year during which time a student spent one trimester in a workshop and the remaining two trimesters in a classroom for the N1 and N2 certificates. Thereafter students were able to obtain N3 certificates, enabling them to enrol at a technikon. Skills training was gradually phased out, enabling students to improve their academic qualifications. Girls were encouraged to enrol at the Centre, stabilising the annual intake of students at one thousand.<sup>8</sup>

Fees were gradually increased to R300 per term or trimester in the 1980s and private industries such as Gencor and SA Breweries assisted the Centre once again in obtaining the necessary equipment at reasonable prices from suppliers and manufacturers. A new panelbeating course was implemented and the lecturing staff increased to 32 members in 1979.<sup>9</sup>

The improvements at the Centre made such a good impression on the authorities that when the Director General of the newly established Department of Education and Training (the old Department of Bantu Education) visited the Centre in 1979 he announced that it would henceforth be classified as a Technical College. This entitled the Centre to increased financial assistance from the Department and equipment could be purchased as necessary instead of having to rely on the generosity of outside companies.

8 George Tabor Technical College, Annual Report 1979 (Pretoria, Department of Education and Training, 1979), pp 11-12, 17-18.

9 *Ibid.*, pp 9, 19.

Meanwhile the area around the Centre began to change. Dube township expanded as far as the new College and the remaining gravel roads in Soweto were tarred. Street lights were installed and the Five Roses Tea Company built a sports stadium near the College. Due to the implementation of "sandwich courses" students at the College lost interest in playing soccer at the Centre and preferred to participate in the sporting activities being offered by the "new" Soweto.<sup>10</sup>

Crime remained an issue and some lecturers, preferring to drive into Soweto with their own vehicles, were often stoned by *tsotsis* or activists. Occasionally the bus which transported most of the lecturers was also stoned by unidentified culprits who managed to disappear before the police arrived on the scene. Life in Soweto as it had been prior to the 1976 riots, had changed permanently.

As most lecturers resided on the West Rand, they were forced to travel to work via the Roodepoort Road. The *tsotsis* and remaining activists somehow discovered the route taken by white lecturers and despite regular police patrols on the road, their vehicles were constantly being stoned. When the situation became tense again in 1979 the Department instructed these lecturers to take paid leave.

In the same year Prime Minister P W Botha toured Soweto and travelled past the College without actually entering the buildings. His visit brought some calm to Soweto when he promised government assistance in an address to moderate Africans (town councillors, officials, hawkers and professionals). P W Botha created unfulfilled expectations such as employment of urban African workers, African participation in national politics and encouraged education to secure urban African upliftment.<sup>11</sup>

This should have given George Tabor Technical College the boost it needed. Because the new College was the only higher educational institution in Soweto at the time, it became a pioneer in further education. It was on the threshold of a new exciting era, promising the upgrading of the College and lecturing staff. The high expectations for the future of the College were unfortunately never realised.

10 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1996, pp 19-20.

11 W Beinart, Twentieth-century South Africa (Cape Town, OUP, 1994), pp 59-74.

Regardless of the fact that there was very little parent involvement at the College, the Department continued to hold parent's days. The College lacked spirit because of the Department's tyranny in its implementation of rules. Parents were merely informed of changes and could not reason with A Steinberg, the new principal.<sup>12</sup> The principal was forced to implement the rules as set by the Department without question, leaving the parents out in the cold. At the same time parents had to work and arrived home late leaving very little time for serving on governing councils or attending regular meetings. Their only spare time was on Saturdays and this time was spent with relatives or friends, meaning that parent's days were not well patronised after the College became government property.

#### The In-Service Training Act of 1979 and Manpower Training Act of 1981

In 1979 the numerous Training Acts were replaced by the so-called In - Service Training Act, which did not discriminate against trainees of different colour, race, gender or creed. Although Africans were still barred from learning certain trades, they could freely compete with whites when applying for certain skilled jobs. Africans therefore also had to be trained in the various skills in order to obtain the necessary specialised knowledge for the job concerned.

Employers were forced to send their employees on approved courses which were registered by the Department of Manpower. These courses allowed for certain tax exemptions. Courses were recognised by both private sector and the Department of Manpower and the newly established Department of Education and Training helped with the promotion of technical education and training in townships. The shortage of qualified tradesmen, technicians and engineers had to be addressed.<sup>13</sup>

12 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 15-18.

13 The Institute of Personnel Management, The Manpower Training Act of 1981 (Johannesburg, IPM, 1982), pp 5-6, 12-18.

Employers representing various industries joined training and industrial councils which represented their interests in meetings with the Department of Manpower. The industries relied on the training supplied by the College and thus they regarded any donations to the College as a good investment. George Tabor Technical College was at the centre of Sowetan aspirations. Surrounded by one million inhabitants the College was the answer to training Africans so that they could be productive in light and heavy industries.

Of even greater importance was the implementation of the Manpower Training Act in 1981, established on the recommendations made by the De Lange Commission. After the riots the government realised that the grievances of the Africans had to be properly addressed. The Cillie Committee tabled a report stating that riots were unnecessary. The government was asked to be more lenient by accepting urban Africans for further education and training during 1979 and 1980.<sup>14</sup> The outcome was the formation of the De Lange Commission, which was established in 1980. Under the umbrella of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the commission investigated the tense situation in the townships.<sup>15</sup>

Being involved in further education, J De Lange, the rector of Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) was seen as the right person for the job. Thanks to his recommendations the Manpower Training Act was tabled in parliament late in 1981, permitting Africans to be trained as artisans. One of his tasks was to investigate the possible avenues available to address the shortcomings in African education and training. The implementation of his proposals led to the eventual acceptance of the training at George Tabor Technical College after almost forty years of existence. Although there was some opposition, the Manpower Training Act was implemented late in 1981.

The conclusion was that Africans should be given equal opportunities and their efforts should be appropriately rewarded. The private sector was encouraged to become involved in the promotion of black advancement. The Manpower Training Act therefore gave the Department of Education and Training the necessary direction required to expand George Tabor Technical College in Soweto. This was an inspiration to qualified tradesmen to join the Department of Education and Training after 1984.

14 K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp 161-171.

15 Ibid., pp 149-153.



Staff members now felt that they could make a difference in training Africans to become qualified artisans and were prepared to make sacrifices in the hope of making a career at George Tabor Technical College. They were eager to prove their abilities as lecturers in Soweto.

George Tabor Technical College during the changes of 1979 and 1981

Materialism began to change the Sowetan way of life. Due to the changes implemented by Vorster, Sowetans were able to buy their houses if they so desired. The late 1970s saw a boom in the South African economy and Sowetans began purchasing household goods such as television sets. Some Sowetans managed to afford to buy their own vehicles and started their own transport businesses.<sup>16</sup>

After the monopoly of the WRAB had been destroyed, small African entrepreneurs such as hawkers, shopkeepers, garage owners, supermarket traders, shebeen (pub) owners, plumbers, building contractors, lawyers and medical doctors established themselves in Soweto. Sowetans such as E Tshabalala, a prominent businessman, became very wealthy with the assistance of so-called concerned white business-people, who invested in his business concerns such as Black Chain and Dobsonville Shopping Centre.<sup>17</sup> A Black Business Forum (NAFCOC) was established and Soweto took the lead in the development of urban black business promotion.

Sowetans were given the opportunity to control local government with the advent of local elections, which were held in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Unfortunately only a quarter of the adults in Soweto took part in these elections as most local town councillors were considered as corrupt. They were accused of taking bribes to promote their own interests instead of promoting the concerns of Sowetans. The boom therefore only enriched a few and the majority of Sowetans still lived in poverty and suffering.<sup>18</sup>

16 Interview with H Kelm, 1/9/1991, pp 18-21.

17 Interview with E Mashile, June 1998, pp 1-2.

18 Ibid., pp 4-5.

In townships such as Diepkloof Extension, members of the black business community lived in mansions, while the majority of Sowetans still live in small matchbox-type houses on stands no larger than 400 square metres. Affluent business people sent their children to "white" universities such as Witwatersrand, but the majority of Sowetans were forced to send their children to places such as George Tabor Technical College in Dube. Former "white" colleges such as Johannesburg, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Randfontein were unaffordable to the African population when they first opened their doors to all South Africans.

George Tabor Training Centre had potential after being upgraded to a Technical College. The Department planned to introduce courses up to N6 diploma level. Commercial courses were also introduced to accommodate girls and it was hoped that the College would eventually become a technikon but this did not materialise. Unfortunately the Department was short of lecturing staff prepared to work in Soweto. Plans were therefore initiated to train African teachers from local high schools for the task.<sup>19</sup> The process of training these teachers was however, still in the planning stages. Although there was a genuine interest among the local school teachers in the project, not many high school teachers could be found with the necessary technical background. With the exception of Jabulani Technical High School, most schools in Soweto are academic, rather than technical.

In conjunction with the existing Soweto Teachers Training College, high school teachers were trained for a year and thereafter stationed at the College. Teachers were taught mathematics, science, engineering drawing, electronics, plumbing theory and building studies, which gave them the basics. These courses were popular with female teachers such as Pat Langa, Edith Mashile and Ruth Maiketso who eventually earned recognition at the College.

19 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 6-7.

Other colleges also benefited from the project, as the teachers were stationed all over the country. Colleges were also established in other townships such as Mamelodi (Pretoria) and Daveyton (Benoni) where these teachers found work. The training lasted from 1979 to 1984, during which time the Soweto Teachers' Training College made use of the newly established Malapo Vocational Training Centre. Here these teachers received practical training in bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, electrical work (light current) and welding (sheetmetal work).<sup>20</sup>

School leavers studied for a Technical Teacher's Diploma at Malapo for three years. The diploma course was made up as follows: First year N1 (theory, drawing, maths or science), some Training Environment, Research Methodology and Curriculum Development, and practical training in the workshop. Second year students continued with N2 and third year students with N3 along with English, Adult Education, Teaching Practice, Classroom Management, Communication (English) and Practical Workshop Technology. In the second and third years of study the students specialised in a chosen trade.

Faan Louw, the former principal of Malapo, somehow convinced his male graduates that their training was superior, thereby making them believe that they were more qualified than the experienced tradesmen. Former high school teachers continued with their education and obtained degrees through UNISA, while on the other hand the diploma graduates refused to improve their qualifications. Many female teachers also obtained N4 and N5 certificates while the male diploma graduates appeared to have difficulty with mathematics and science.<sup>21</sup> Because of this, African male lecturers were unable to replace the white tradesmen who were employed at the College as lecturers. The African lecturers were placed in classrooms and were told by the principal to first obtain their trade certificates before being permitted to train students in the workshops. Trade certificates were difficult to obtain without any proper practical experience and at the official testing centre at Olifantsfontein (near Midrand) the administration demanded a minimum of five year's practical experience, which most diploma graduates did not have.

20 A L Behr, New perspectives in South African education (Pretoria, Butterworths, 1984), pp 127-139.

21 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 19-21.

Most white lecturers considered the College merely a stepping stone in their careers and seldom stayed longer than five years. They had to be replaced constantly by Africans, resulting in a lecturing staff of 18 whites and 14 Africans (half of whom were women) in 1984/5. Because of a shortage of qualified lecturing staff, Africans were eventually placed in training positions in workshops. This created problems as they were not qualified artisans and the industry did not recognise their training.

Students graduating from the College could therefore not be employed as apprentices as their certificates were not approved by the industry. Instead of improving their qualifications, most of these lecturers blamed the system for their lack of qualifications. Some were not even in possession of Matric certificates and were only tolerated by the Department because of the shortage of qualified lecturers.<sup>22</sup>

The industry was aware that some of these lecturers only held Standard 8 certificates without mathematics and science before enrolling at the Teacher's Training College in Soweto. They were therefore forced to pass English as well as an African language in order to obtain their full Matric certificates. They were given an ultimatum to obtain their Matric certificates before 1990, giving them ample study time, but for some reason they were not at any stage asked to produce these certificates and therefore certain under-qualified lecturers never bothered to obtain any appropriate qualifications.

Most of the diploma graduates belonged to the generation most affected by the riots during their schooling and still carried a grudge. Some sincerely believed that whites still discriminated against Africans in 1981, despite the relaxation in the laws. It was therefore difficult to reason with their prejudice as they were intolerant and tried to force their beliefs on others.

Although most of the African women initially only had certificates, they were by this time already in possession of diplomas and by making use of the changes, they constantly improved their qualifications in their spare time. They also had reason to be critical, but instead of constantly complaining they acted positively by improving the situation at the College. This was highly appreciated and they were rewarded by promotion to senior lecturers and departmental heads.<sup>23</sup>

22 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1997, pp 4-5.

23 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 2-3.

Jealous male diploma graduates labelled them as "sell outs" because they failed to intimidate the women with their biased ideas. They became aggressive and one of the black women was physically assaulted by a jealous male colleague. When approached by the principal about the incident he replied "African culture does not permit women to boss men around". He later admitted that it had nothing to do with his culture, but rather the grudge he held against the women that had sparked the attack.<sup>24</sup>

With the exception of E Mashile, P Langa and R Maiketso, most women staff members left the College after the incident. They could not understand why the Department tolerated such injustice by ignoring such incidents.<sup>25</sup> I discovered that people (including the former principal), were unwilling to discuss the incident. The Department upheld the policy of non-interference with incidents such as these and therefore no action was taken against the perpetrator. This was a sure sign of impending disaster for the College. The staff were forbidden to discuss these incidents outside the College and the principal took care of the press. Regular seminars were held at venues such as Broederstroom to improve the cooperation amongst the staff members, but the efforts were futile.<sup>26</sup>

After 1985 the economic boom came to an end and the situation in Soweto became tense once again. White lecturing staff were still driven into Soweto by bus and African unemployment increased noticeably. Under these circumstances the people began to lose interest in training and the intake at the College gradually declined. Another reason for the decline was the competition from Malapo and Manu, two newly established colleges which were opened in Soweto in 1981.

Gencor was the only company to show an interest in the College and signed a four year contract with the Department in 1984. This was thought to be enough time to improve the situation at the College along with the assistance of donations and sponsorships. Ulbe De Ronde became principal and was confident that with Gencor's help the situation at the College could be greatly improved.<sup>27</sup>

24 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 1-2.

25 Ibid., pp 4-5.

26 Ibid., pp 2-3.

27 Ibid., pp 6-7.

The development of further education in Soweto between 1981 and 1985

Meanwhile the situation changed dramatically for George Tabor Technical College when the Department decided that the College could not provide all the technical and job-related education in Soweto. As a result Malapo Vocational Training Centre was upgraded to a college and lecturers from George Tabor Technical College under the principalship of H Smit were stationed at an old school in Soweto. These premises were also upgraded to college status and in 1981 became known as Manu.<sup>28</sup>

Manu operated from these premises in Soweto for years before being relocated to the new premises in Dobsonville on the outskirts of Soweto. In addition to technical subjects, commercial subjects were introduced and courses gradually upgraded to N6 level. The institution therefore became very popular in Soweto and experienced a larger intake of students than George Tabor Technical College. Half of the students were girls.

Malapo continued to offer practical workshop training to students and in addition gradually implemented classroom education up to N6 level. As at Manu, most of the lecturers were white and many were women. Most of the lecturers had higher qualifications than their colleagues at George Tabor Technical College.<sup>29</sup> Both new colleges flourished and the private sector gladly awarded school leavers with generous bursaries to study at these colleges. A sudden change of attitude came about with the shortage of skilled labour. It was believed that Africans were less demanding workers than the whites and thus Africans had to be trained so that they were capable of filling job vacancies.

As long as the boom lasted, the courses at the newly established colleges in Soweto were in great demand. Applicants from outside Soweto were permitted to enrol and corporal punishment was abolished. Religious instruction continued but no tests or examinations were written. Proper canteens were built and run by private individuals (local Sowetans) selling food to students at breaktime.<sup>30</sup>

28 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 16-17.

29 Ibid., pp 13-14.

30 Ibid., pp 17-18.

Although similar colleges had been established in Port Elizabeth (Iqhayiya), Gugulethu (Sivuyile), Sebokeng (Lekoa), Pretoria (Soshanguve), Welkom (Tosa), Pieteritzburg (Plessislaer), Bloemfontein (Xhozutswaso), Durban (Umlazi), Tembisa (Lazarus Nhlapo), Katlehong (Usizo), Kimberley (Moremogolo), Witbank (Mpondozankomo), Springs (Tlamoha), Klerksdorp (Jouberton) and Uitenhage (Kwa-Nobuhle), the colleges in Soweto still had the largest intake of students.<sup>31</sup>

Proper colleges were also established in the homelands and operated according to the same rules and regulations as the rest of South Africa, thus ensuring that their qualifications were also recognised in the Republic.<sup>32</sup> These colleges were situated at Odi, Mobeni (Bophuthatswana), Edendale, Nongoma, Umlazi (Kwa-Zulu), Butterworth, Umtata (Transkei), Bisho (Ciskei), Sibasa (Venda), Giyani (Gazankulu), Maake, Barlow, Sir Val Duncan (Lebowa), Mlumati (Kangwane), Prince Mahlangu (Kwa-Ndebele) and Itemoheleng (Qwa Qwa).

The University of the North (Turfloop) established a branch in Soweto, which later became Vista University. Courses in art, law, medicine, economics and education were offered. Mainly African lecturers were employed and part-time classes were gradually introduced along with a degree course in science. Although Vista only had three thousand students in the 1980s, the university was able to accommodate six thousand in the 1990s.<sup>33</sup>

Vista gave Sowetan high school teachers the opportunity of improving their academic qualifications and most female lecturers from George Tabor Technical College studied further education at Vista. Sowetan teachers preferred Vista University to Witwatersrand (Wits), as the fees at the Sowetan university were far more affordable than those of other South African universities. The pass rate at Vista apparently improved dramatically in the late 1980s. At universities such as Wits (Johannesburg), African students were still struggling to adapt to the new environment, but these difficulties were also settled in the early 1990s.

31 The Department of Education and Training, Technical Colleges (Pretoria, DET, 1985), pp 3-8.

32 Ibid., pp 4-5.

33 Interview with P Langa, November 1993. pp 5-6.

It was expensive to study in Johannesburg and although mini bus taxis were introduced, the long distance to commute to Johannesburg daily meant that many Sowetans became reluctant to study in Johannesburg (at Wits). Although employers preferred to grant Sowetans bursaries to study science at Wits University, other degrees were usually obtained at Vista. Some Sowetans chose to rent cheap accommodation in Johannesburg while studying at Wits. The bus journey from Soweto to Johannesburg can take as long as sixty minutes, depending on the route taken. Putco buses have been operating in Soweto for many years and used to be government subsidised, but mini bus taxis are not subsidised and forced to compete with Putco. This explains part of the so-called "taxi war" between several taxi drivers and Putco, making it unsafe to travel by taxi or bus in the late 1980s.<sup>34</sup>

The train trip from Soweto to Park Station in Johannesburg is also time consuming as well as dangerous. Sowetans therefore are forced to travel by mini bus taxis which are reasonably cheap and much faster. This contributed to an influx of African students to former "white" colleges such as Randfontein, Krugersdorp, Roodepoort or Highveld, which are located near Soweto. Other students enrolled at Manu and Malapo in Soweto.<sup>35</sup> It was therefore not surprising that George Tabor Technical College lost its popularity amongst the rank and file of Sowetan students.

The establishment of Manu and Malapo proved to be too much competition for the old institution. Secondly, no provision was made to teach N4, N5 and N6 or commercial subjects. Thirdly, the College depended on workshop training which was also being offered at Chamdor Vocational Training Centre on the outskirts of Soweto. Lastly the College had no lecturers who were qualified to teach N4, N5 or N6 courses. The College had lecturers, who were not qualified. This was known in Soweto, a reason for parents not to let their intelligent children study at the College. Sacrifices had to be made to study elsewhere.

34 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 7-9.

35 Ibid.. pp 11-12.



The private sector became involved in projects such as the Nancefield Vocational Training College, which is situated near George Tabor Technical College. Although this institution eventually functioned under the auspices of the Department of Education and Training, more competition was created for George Tabor Technical College. School pupils could obtain N1, N2 and N3 certificates at these new colleges and Nancefield also offered practical workshop training in the various building skills.

Most lecturers at Nancefield were Africans who had previously taught at academic schools. In order to qualify as lecturers they had to obtain a Technical Teachers Certificate, which is the same qualification as held by the female staff at George Tabor Technical College. Nancefield's lecturers were generally content and many schools encouraged their pupils to study at Nancefield instead of George Tabor Technical College.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Mezodoo Vocational Training Centre was established in Dobsonville. Pupils from schools in Soweto were regularly sent to Mezodoo to attend practical workshop training in the different building skills. Experienced white tradesmen supplied the training and it gave the pupils an insight which could later be expanded upon at Dobsonville College. Mezodoo functioned under the Department and is situated alongside Dobsonville College on the main road. George Tabor Technical College, as previously mentioned, is situated on the outskirts of Soweto, although Dube township borders on the College.<sup>37</sup> Mezodoo and Dobsonville are ten kilometres away from George Tabor, which is quite a distance for Sowetans considering that most of them depend on public transport.

Poor areas such as Orlando, Jabavu and White City began to spring up around George Tabor. Parents from these areas could hardly afford the R300 per trimester for their school leavers. Although dropouts were accepted the fees were still payable. Slums also began to appear in the vicinity of the College in the mid-1980s which contributed to the rising level of poverty in the area.

African lecturers who lived in the vicinity of the College belonged to the group of a few under-qualified lecturers, who could not perform. Friction was inevitable as the qualified lecturers were expected to carry the work load, resulting in feelings of resentment at George Tabor.

36 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 11-12.

37 Ibid., pp 8-9.

Compared to Manu and Malapo, George Tabor lost initiative. With a few exceptions, most of the lecturing staff was dysfunctional, promoting self-interest and doing only the bare necessities as far as administrative duties were concerned. Extra administrative staff had to be employed while certain lecturers occupied themselves by playing soccer with their students.<sup>38</sup>

Apparently some lecturers seemed to enjoy spending their free time at the College, regularly hosting social functions after soccer matches. Representatives from the community often complained to the principal about the noise in the neighbourhood. Under the influence of alcohol, many lecturers behaved unprofessionally and despite being reprimanded, the situation remained unchanged. White Zimbabweans who were highly qualified and experienced lecturers were employed at Manu and Malapo. George Tabor could not be compared with either of these colleges and became an embarrassment to the Department.<sup>39</sup>

The Department tried to remedy the situation at the College by employing former artisans, like myself, who were in possession of post-matriculation qualifications. A former white Deputy Director informed me about the Department's intention to improve the situation at Sowetan colleges by making more funds available for technical education in the townships. Further education for African lecturers was to be stepped up and most importantly, sufficient equipment for the colleges was to be made available. He was convinced that George Tabor could be upgraded but was cautious regarding the Department's commitment.

The Department had reservations following the recession in 1985 and was also very careful with the involvement of the private sector in Sowetan colleges - an exception being Gencor's involvement in George Tabor. Sowetan colleges were regarded by the Department as being experimental as they had no autonomy and the Department appeared to favour academic education over job-related training.<sup>40</sup>

38 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 15-16.

39 Ibid., pp 18-19.

40 Ibid., p 21.

In 1983 a government White Paper accepted that Africans should be entitled to the same standard of education and training as white people. Although white government primary and high schools still did not accept enrolments from blacks, they were permitted to enrol at former white colleges, technikons and universities.<sup>41</sup> In 1983 private schools opened their doors to all races and institutions such as Jabulani Technical High School received increased financial assistance. White female lecturers in possession of university degrees were employed at Jabulani on condition that they could teach mathematics or science. Most teachers at Jabulani were white.

The Department of Education and Training was serious about addressing the shortage of qualifications in mathematics and science in the African community. Technical education was promoted and government officials visited schools in Soweto and promoted technical training which was also beneficial to George Tabor Technical College. Bus trips were organised by schools to visit the colleges where pupils could see what courses were on offer and hopefully be encouraged to enrol at one of the colleges after qualifying.<sup>42</sup>

The colleges also advertised in *The Sowetan*, the local newspaper, to help encourage awareness in the community about technical training available to school leavers in Soweto. In addition to this, advertisements were televised on TV2 and TV3 and large amounts of money were made available for the purchasing of equipment for training purposes at Sowetan colleges. Departmental officials regularly visited the colleges and inspected classes and workshops. Lecturers were judged according to their performance levels and they received salary increases in recognition of their good work. George Tabor Technical College boasted a 60% pass rate. The colleges kept records on the students marks and attendance records.<sup>43</sup> This motivated them to do well.

41 K Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge*, pp 179-183.

42 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 18-19.

43 Ibid., pp 21-23.

The college lecturers were regularly addressed by their principals in the staff rooms prior to the day's classes. Some lecturers were reminded that they should maintain self-discipline and obey the rules and regulations in the Code of Conduct. Field trips to interesting sites were organised for lecturers and students to help broaden their knowledge. Lecturers also regularly attended seminars at places such as Broederstroom where they were addressed by labour consultants and other professionals.

Private industries were appreciative of the improvements in job-related training in Soweto. Concerns such as the Building Industrial Federation of South Africa (BIFSA) became involved by providing colleges with the necessary recognition. Qualified tradesmen were permitted to train apprentices in workshops and BIFSA and the Department of Manpower awarded the necessary certificates.<sup>44</sup>

Places such as George Tabor Technical College purchased modular training programme courses from BIFSA and learners were trained according to the programmes. They were required to work on a project such as fitting a frame into a doorway until they were capable of completing the task properly. Thereafter they would continue with the next project and for each completed project they were awarded credits which went into their personal files. At George Tabor learners had to finish between twelve and twenty such projects to the satisfaction of their lecturers and thereafter they were placed with companies.<sup>45</sup> There they had to finish the remaining projects before being permitted to take their trade tests at Olifantsfontein. Courses were offered in bricklaying, carpentry and wiring (construction electrician).

The funds were provided by the Department of Manpower and courses lasted twelve months including part-time classes in N1 and N2. Learners had to pass N2 in order to obtain trade certificates and could therefore complete their training in any given time. At the same time it was the responsibility of the lecturer to expel learners who did not behave according to the set rules and regulations.

44 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 21-22.

45 Ibid., pp 18-19.

It was still necessary to complete a certain amount of work daily, as employers representing BIFSA expected results (production). It was therefore BIFSA's privilege to train lecturers at the BIFSA Training Centre in Springs where they obtained the necessary specialised knowledge which in turn helped them to train learners according to the set regulations. The Department was undoubtedly required to pay for this training, as only BIFSA was permitted to offer this specialised training.

George Tabor Technical College depended on the levy it received from the Department of Manpower after the completion of a course. The College was paid per learner who completed a course in the given time and in the late 1980s the College practically survived on this small income. One should keep in mind that only 50 or 60 students were trained at the College annually which meant that the levy was exceptionally small.<sup>46</sup>

Gencor's involvement at the College was another positive development as the company purchased a decent school bus for the College. African lecturers were sponsored to help improve their qualifications and building material was purchased and used to renovate the premises. A workshop for painters was introduced but the painting course did not materialise and was eventually scrapped due to the lack of interest in the community.

Gencor's liaison officer continued to make proposals and recommendations to the principal, such as the implementation of industrial safety measures. Lecturers attended Criterion Referenced Instruction (CRI) courses or student based learning at Witbank Technical College which was operated by Gencor and the SA Chamber of Mines.<sup>47</sup> Gencor also financed field trips for lecturers to Durban, visiting local colleges. Unfortunately these trips were treated as cheap holidays by some individuals and therefore the liaison officer accompanied these tours to assure Gencor that their donations were being well spent. Gencor encouraged lecturers to visit places of interest instead of night clubs or shebeens.

46 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 19-21.

47 The Chamber of Mines, Mining Survey, "Gencor assists school's help programme" (Johannesburg, CM, 3/1986), pp 53-57.

Due to Gencor's involvement, other private companies also awarded bursaries to outstanding students and donated equipment such as electrical handtools, small machinery and workshop materials. These sponsorships helped to improve the College's financial position allowing for funds to be made available for upgrading the buildings and the paving of pathways.<sup>48</sup>

As the College had to contribute a certain percentage of its fee income to the Department, it was dependent on the Department's assistance. In 1985 the private sector was prepared to assist in making the College financially independent but it was not accepted by rigid officials in the Department of Education and Training. Apparently they disliked the "interference". It is possible that this is why the contract with Gencor was not renewed, causing the private sector to lose interest in the College. The Department continued to dictate rules and regulations to the colleges. Colleges such as Pretoria and Johannesburg were financially stronger than the African colleges, thus earning their right to autonomy from the Department of Education and Culture. Meanwhile the African colleges remained under the control of the Department of Education and Training, which was the official government policy.<sup>49</sup>

Although English was used as the language of instruction at the African colleges, some students were dissatisfied with certain regulations, one being compulsory morning prayers. They made their antagonism towards religious instruction known by boycotting these classes and many students simply avoided the religious period by arriving late. Because of the Department's determination to continue with religious instruction at these colleges, the situation began to deteriorate. Attendance at George Tabor had already declined prior to the 1985 riots and some dedicated students warned their lecturers to be cautious about possible rioting in the townships.<sup>50</sup> The Department was aware that something had to be done and police were stationed at the entrances to some of the colleges, which apparently helped keep the activists outside. The 1985 riots led to the decline of the already tense situation at most Sowetan colleges.

48 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 16-18.

49 Ibid., pp 21-22.

50 Ibid., pp 18-19.

George Tabor, Manu and Malapo Technical Colleges during the 1985 riots

In 1985 South Africa was rocked by yet another recession. Due to the rising unemployment in Soweto the stage was set for further riots. Most Sowetans struggled to survive and could not afford their monthly repayments on goods bought on hire purchase such as mini buses and TV sets. Some livelihoods depended on the mini bus-taxis. Other Sowetans roamed the streets unable to find any form of employment.

Compared to 1976, most activists in 1985 were respected community leaders and had learned from the shortcomings of the 1976 riots. Most of them were taken seriously by the majority of Sowetans and were involved in community activities. They represented Sowetans at newly-established civic associations, business forums and other citizen initiatives. These leaders had some experience and received funds from abroad as well as donations from local business people and wallowed mainly in the empathy of the English South African press.<sup>51</sup>

P W Botha failed in the implementation of his reforms in accommodating black expectations, thereby frustrating most urban Africans. This made it easy for activists to influence many disillusioned Sowetans into making their grievances public, marking the beginning of further demonstrations which lasted for many years. Activists were better organised during the 1985 unrests than they had been during the 1976 riots.<sup>52</sup> Some activists infiltrated the colleges and worked from within the system. Schools and colleges were brought to a standstill and all training was stopped. In 1976 George Tabor Centre battled with constant stayaways but in 1985 the activists disrupted classes directly. The colleges tried to function as normally as possible, but as activists were *toy-toying* inside as well as outside the premises, all teaching came to a standstill and examinations were written by dedicated students at places situated just outside Soweto. The police merely stood by as they did not have the manpower to control all the colleges.

51 Interview with H Kelm, September 1991, pp 27-29.

52 A W Marx, Lessons of the struggle: South Africa's internal opposition (Cape Town, OUP, 1992), pp 92-104.

In 1985 activists were well aware that the colleges were operated by the Department of Education and Training. They knew that along with vocational training (workshop education) classroom education was also offered to students which was to the disadvantage of technical education in Soweto. African colleges therefore also became victims all over Southern Africa and many of them were temporarily closed.

In Soweto activists enrolled at colleges as students and operated as student representatives, demanding the establishment of Student Representative Councils on the premises. As most Sowetan schools and colleges had no proper teacher or parent representative councils to take decisions, the Department was reluctant to capitulate. The result was that activists disturbed ongoing education, making it difficult for colleges to function normally.<sup>53</sup> Manu and Malapo were constantly affected, as both were in the centre of the townships. At Malapo, government registered vehicles were stoned while transporting the few remaining dedicated lecturers to work. Other lecturers applied for long leave, requested transfers or resigned, leaving a skeleton lecturing staff to carry out the necessary duties while the rest preferred to stay at home.

Activists at Manu influenced students into not writing their examinations. They were accommodated at places outside Soweto such as Chamdor Vocational Training Centre but unfortunately a few activists found out about the arrangements and caught some of the students in Soweto. These students had their suitcases confiscated and sometimes destroyed and they were often beaten up. Not many of them managed to write their examinations and many frequently arrived at Chamdor without their books.<sup>54</sup> Activists entered the premises at George Tabor without permission and ignored the lecturers. They instructed students to leave and most obeyed. Those students who did not comply were beaten up by activists outside the premises when they left to go home. Eventually George Tabor had no students, but some dedicated lecturers continued to drive to work daily. Others preferred to stay at home.

53 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1999, pp 25-26.

54 Ibid., pp 22-23.



Many African lecturers were also intimidated by activists. African lecturers had their car tyres slit and the female lecturers became soft targets and were sometimes assaulted on their way home from work. They were more dedicated than their male colleagues and preferred not to mix politics with work. Many under-qualified male lecturers ignored the college's rules and continued to discuss politics during their breaks. Most African lecturers empathised with the activists and preferred not to antagonise them.<sup>55</sup> Although most African lecturers were not yet unionised, they were also disillusioned with Botha and supported the aims and goals of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Many of them admitted to attending mass rallies at the Orlando Stadium alongside the Soweto highway.

Although not all the white lecturers in Soweto supported the Conservative Party, it can safely be said that most lecturers were politically conservative. A few white staff members were diehard liberals and arguments between the two groups were common, as they failed to see eye-to-eye. To avoid any further tension and misunderstanding, all political discussions between white lecturers in the presence of African lecturers were forbidden by the principal.<sup>56</sup>

As most of the white lecturers were Afrikaners, Afrikaans was the main language of communication between them. During breaks lecturers were encouraged to play darts or snooker in the staff rooms to help eliminate possible tension. The principals respected their lecturers and expected them to behave professionally. Despite this, the white lecturers invariably resorted to discussing the situation in Soweto. Generally the so-called "suicidal" reforms (meaning the accommodation of black expectations) of P W Botha were blamed for causing the 1985 riots and both conservatives and liberals blamed the ruling National Party for the crisis. Sometimes these friendly "chats" ended in heated debates and the principal had to intervene before they erupted into fist fights.<sup>57</sup>

55 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 10-11.

56 Ibid., pp 13-15.

57 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1999, pp 26-28.

Certain white lecturers felt strongly about their beliefs and secretly distributed conservative literature at the colleges amongst other interested whites. Despite being forbidden by the Department it was difficult to stop these activities as radical African lecturers also passed on information and some principals were also politically active (some supporting the National Party and others the Conservative Party).<sup>58</sup>

As the Department promoted government policies, lecturers were asked not to publicly promote party - politics. Departmental directors addressed lecturers at the colleges trying to convince them that the State President P W Botha was on the "right track". When certain lecturers objected on the grounds that these speeches were party politically motivated they were asked to leave the venue.

A small group of lecturers were not party politically involved and were called "moderates" because they tried to mediate. When they did not succeed they preferred to remain neutral. Compared to the "average" lecturers the members of this group were highly qualified and experienced. They chose to separate themselves from the other members of staff by not communicating with them.<sup>59</sup> Most white female lecturers at Manu belonged to this group. They kept to themselves and political discussions with other lecturers were rare as they invariably ended in an argument. These women had strong views and were not afraid to argue when antagonised. The lecturing staff at Manu preferred not to discuss politics and the tense situation stabilised.<sup>60</sup>

Most white lecturers tried to communicate normally with both students as well as other lecturers. Many students respected the white lecturers and they escaped any serious physical harm during the 1985 riots. Students were aware that these lecturers were highly qualified and realised that they could benefit from their tuition.

58 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 27-28.

59 Ibid., pp 24-25.

60 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 13-15.

The activists also tried to avoid any clashes with white lecturers while *toyi-toying* at colleges. When a few of the white lecturers at George Tabor tried to forcefully disperse the activists they scattered and left quickly, thereafter avoiding the College. Most of the students also stayed away from classes. Leading activists reasoned with the principal at the entrance in order to avoid any further ill-feeling.<sup>61</sup>

I believe that some activists understood and appreciated the dedication of certain white lecturers. However, leading activists were unable to control their eager followers, who stoned white-driven vehicles. Although it was frustrating to work in Soweto whites were seldom attacked at the colleges. The journey to work was dangerous as they were under threat of being hijacked by *tsotsis*, but once they were at work they were reasonably safe.

Dedicated African lecturers were constantly in danger as many activists viewed them as traitors for refusing to join "the struggle". They could not afford to be seen in the company of whites during the riots and most of them spent the time hiding in their classes. Along with the whites, they had to sign a register when reporting for work. The principal inspected the register regularly, hoping that it would give the Department some control over the lecturers.<sup>62</sup> Occasionally they had to leave the colleges accompanied by the police as activists outside the gates threatened to assault African female lecturers. Police vehicles (armoured cars) were temporarily stationed at the entrance of George Tabor and were manned by six policemen, each armed with a shotgun.

Although the situation was tense, the activists did not damage any property and the buildings and equipment were not vandalised. Some activists were more concerned with forcing the students to join the stayaway than with the destruction of any public facilities. Compared to the 1976 riots, the 1985 riots were more disciplined and although people were injured and others lost their lives, most lecturers escaped unharmed.

61 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 16-18.

62 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 13-14.

The lecturers who suffered the most were the few under-qualified African male lecturers. African female lecturers became easy victims due to their gender and although their cars were sometimes damaged, activists tried to avoid any physical assaults. Although it was not always possible, some of the leading activists preferred to concentrate on punishing the few African male lecturers whom they apparently accused of abusing their authority. Many of these lecturers were attacked while driving home from work and were sometimes beaten so badly that they had to be taken to hospital.<sup>63</sup> On inquiring why these lecturers were beaten the reasons given were that some of them had consumed alcohol during working hours in full view of their students. As a result they were incapable of teaching and occasionally even slept while their students attempted to teach themselves.

Another explanation was that these lecturers apparently sexually abused female students while others were accused of beating up male students. The Department allegedly ignored the students' complaints and so the activists decided to punish the culprits themselves. Not many guilty lecturers were hurt as many of them had either taken long leave, applied for transfers or resigned.<sup>64</sup> On the advice of the local African school inspectors, the Department transferred a few unpopular lecturers (both African and white), to other schools and colleges. This helped to regulate the situation and thereafter the activists appeared to lose interest in the colleges.

By late 1985 the students were once again able to write their examinations at the colleges but the pass rate fell substantially. The intake stabilised but most school leavers preferred to enrol at the previous whites-only colleges such as Johannesburg, regardless of the fact that their courses were more expensive. Despite the Sowetan colleges being more affordable, their popularity had dwindled miserably due to the disturbances caused after the implementation of certain negative aspects of bantu education. This included the few under-qualified African male lecturers, who exploited the system to help promote their indolence. Apparently it was already common practice in the Sowetan academic schools to accommodate these under-qualified lecturers instead of forcing them to improve their insufficient qualifications.

63 Congress of South African Students, Information sheet of the shortcomings in education (Johannesburg, COSAS, Vol 2/1985), p 1.

64 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 21-22.

Because of the riots, many wealthier Sowetans preferred to enrol their children at "white" private schools such as Lasalle College in Florida or Saint Ursula's Convent in Krugersdorp. Others sent their children to schools in the homelands such as Bophuthatswana, where the pass mark was still high. Wealthy Sowetan business people sent their children abroad as they had little faith in the political, financial and social future of South Africa.<sup>65</sup> Parents were not interested in serving on the PTAs (Parent Teachers Associations), which emerged in the 1980s in Soweto. The colleges encouraged parents to serve on the governing councils representing the interests of the industry in Soweto, but these councils promoted business interest at the colleges instead of promoting the colleges in the industry.<sup>66</sup>

The colleges received very few donations, bursaries or sponsorships with the help of these governing council members. They were placed there by the companies in order to be present at general meetings but showed very little initiative. They worked for the companies and promoted the companies' image in Soweto. The Department appointed African circuit inspectors who were responsible for operating the governing councils and for making decisions on behalf of the Sowetan colleges.<sup>67</sup> There was no flexibility as the African inspectors represented the Department's interests and not that of the colleges. Job-related education was not given any special treatment by the Department and this frustrated the vocational lecturers as they felt that the Department was neglecting the needs of job-related education in the country.<sup>68</sup>

Although a few of the educational directors responsible for the colleges had begun their careers as artisans, most had improved their qualifications and many had earned degrees by the time they retired. They represented the Department and lecturers found that they were not available when problems arose. Lecturers were forced to go through the ranks starting with the principal and circuit inspectors, which complicated matters when, for example, a lecturer needed to apply for study leave.

65 Interview with E Mashile, June 1998, pp 3-8.

66 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 23-28.

67 Ibid., pp 25-26.

68 Ibid., pp 21-22.

Principals and circuit inspectors had the authority from head office to reject such leave as they represented the Department at the colleges, although the final decisions lay in the hands of the directorate. The directorate administered the rules and regulations which were in turn implemented by the colleges' principals. Head office also approved budgets and collected a percentage of the student fees from the African colleges.<sup>69</sup>

The African colleges were regularly inspected by officials and as previously mentioned these African colleges did not enjoy autonomy. Sowetan colleges were neglected and 1985 was crucial for them as the Department was more reluctant than ever to grant them independence. Apparently George Tabor Technical College was not self-sufficient but the students disapproved and believed that many colleges could become self-sufficient if they were run in the same manner as George Tabor College had been under Tabor.

Activists believed that they could manage the colleges although they were aware of their dependence on white lecturers. They realised that Sowetan colleges would have to work together to ensure their independence from the white economy. They believed that Soweto had enough potential students to fill all the Sowetan colleges and if they could be persuaded to study at these colleges their money would remain in Soweto where it was desperately needed.

The activists maintained that African students would receive the same education at the African colleges as that being offered at white colleges and thus they did not ignore the colleges as they had done in 1976. Activists began to enrol at the colleges with the sole purpose of helping to oust the rigid Department from Soweto.<sup>70</sup> African colleges became targets because they were described as being run by fascists. In 1985 activists disrupted schools as they had done in 1976. As their hold on schools increased, so did the Department tighten its control. The inclusion of the departmental colleges in the riots came as no surprise to the Department as they were expecting problems. Despite the fact that the colleges were prepared for the riots they did not go by almost unnoticed as was the case in 1976.

69 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 18-19.

70 George Tabor Technical College Students Representative Council Meeting, Notes (Dube, SRC, 1/1986), p 1.

The development of further education and training in Soweto from 1985 to 1990

Although there was still spontaneous rioting in Soweto, the colleges continued to function normally. Pass marks and attendance levels dropped at George Tabor and Malapo but increased at Manu along with an improved annual intake. At Manu technical education continued as usual. Manu was relocated to Dobsonville where they made good use of the modern facilities and the college prospered.<sup>71</sup> At the new premises Manu offered technical and commercial courses, as well as music, art and childcare. The Pelmama (Pelindaba Museum of African and Modern Art) Academy of Art and Music was incorporated into Manu. Although Manu only had 400 students in 1987, the number gradually grew to more than 1 000 in 1990. Four hundred enrolled for technical studies, 500 for commercial studies, 60 for Art, 60 for music and 30 for childcare making Manu the most popular college in Soweto among school leavers. The Dobsonville area where Manu is located is inhabited by middle class Sowetans such as teachers, civil servants, small business people and professionals. They can afford to send their children there for a good education and the many high schools nearby help to attract school leavers into attending courses there.

Although the fees at Manu were increased to almost R1 000 per term for technical education, students nevertheless preferred Manu to Malapo or George Tabor. The N4, N5 and N6 courses are attended by outstanding school leavers with matric and a good knowledge of mathematics and science. Practical workshop training in panelbeating, motor mechanics and electrical skills were also introduced there. The intention was to provide skills training as well, but most skills training was moved to George Tabor and Manu became an academic institution.<sup>72</sup>

71 Dobsonville College, Brochure "To be educated is to be liberated" (Dobsonville, DC, 1997), pp 2-4.

72 Interview with N Aucamp, August 1999, pp 1-2.

A commercial "sandwich" course takes six months and is suitable for matriculants. Secretarial and managerial courses are popular with the girls. Commerce is an expensive course but as with music and art, the pass mark and attendance levels in these subjects are high at Manu. Thirty students obtain their N6 technical diplomas here each year which led the former principal R Rabie to believe that the future of job-related education in Soweto was enshrined at Manu. His successor (Nic Aucamp) claims that Manu has one of the highest pass marks in South Africa due to the efficient lecturing staff of forty white and black members.<sup>73</sup>

Although most of Manu's lecturers are white there are also a few African lecturers who are highly qualified and hold N6 diplomas. Manu experiences virtually no friction among the lecturers and they behave according to a "Code of Conduct", which places education above any personal quarrel or misunderstanding. The same can unfortunately not be said for Malapo or George Tabor.

K Naude became the principal of Malapo in the late 1980s. He actively promoted improvements such as the introduction of business skills for female students but although the student intake improved, the pass marks and attendance levels did not. Some of the lecturers were transferred to Highveld and Manu or were replaced by other lecturers who were not as highly qualified.<sup>74</sup> As Malapo is located in an old high school building in the centre of Soweto, it became also a target for criminals. Malapo suffered under the onslaught of constant burglaries as well as the theft of small handtools from the workshops, which made the college unpopular among the white lecturers. Most white lecturers did not remain at Malapo for very long.

73 Dobsonville College, Internal information sheet; National examination tables 1987-1997 (Dobsonville, DC, 1997), pp 2-6.

74 Interview with K Naude, March 1997, pp 1-2.



Lecturers were also constantly attacked by hijackers or activists on route to work. The white lecturers thus felt threatened and used any excuse to stay away from work.<sup>75</sup> Many members of staff took sick leave, applied for long leave or arrived at work late. Others soon applied for transfers to Manu. Students felt that their education was suffering and frequently demonstrated against the deteriorating situation at Malapo. They locked the gates and held some of the staff hostage until members of the departmental regional office in Johannesburg put in an appearance. The students' grievances were addressed but not satisfied. They demonstrated outside the premises and were joined by school pupils from high schools in the area. Most of these demonstrations were ignored by the media who paid more attention to the various political demonstrations of the UDF and MDM (Mass Democratic Movement). The demonstrations therefore failed to achieve results and the internal situation at Malapo did not improve.

Although Malapo had outstanding workshops for bricklayers, carpenters and electricians, it had to compete against George Tabor. Malapo's students did not receive any recognised accreditation which they could have received at George Tabor and therefore students preferred to attend practical courses at George Tabor. This forced Malapo to implement N4, N5 and N6 academic courses which helped to increase the student intake. For this reason Malapo had more students than George Tabor and a lecturing staff of thirty members. The fees were also higher than those of George Tabor, but not as high as Manu. Naude knew that Malapo would eventually have to improve the training and therefore promoted computer literacy at Malapo. Enrichment courses and evening classes were also introduced for interested Sowetans and were administered by the African staff members.<sup>76</sup>

75 Interview with K Naude, March 1997, pp 4-5.

76 Ibid., pp 1-2.

As it was only African lecturers who were prepared to stay in Soweto after hours, Malapo became more africanised than Manu and George Tabor. The whites who retired or resigned were replaced by Africans and although Malapo was not the first college where most staff members were Africans, its location ensured its africanisation.

George Tabor was unique in that it was the intention of the Department to change the institution into a so-called Manpower College for Africans in the same way as Westlake catered for coloureds, Vanderbijlpark College for whites and Pinetown for the Indians. These colleges were only permitted to train accredited learners who could be placed with companies in order to become qualified artisans.<sup>77</sup> The principal (U De Ronde) was convinced that George Tabor would prosper and therefore ignored the introduction of commercial courses at the institution. He truly believed that the Department of Manpower would continue to sponsor job-related education and therefore side-stepped all recommendations to implement at least one managerial course at George Tabor.

A certain D Winkelmann, an MA graduate who worked at George Tabor as a lecturer, compiled his own lecturing books for a "Cadet Foreman" course which he was interested in introducing in Soweto. The course included subjects such as supervision, site administration, communication and industrial affairs and had a duration of one year.<sup>78</sup> Winkelmann approached lecturers to assist him in implementing the project and also went to the principal for help. The principal referred him to the Department which in turn ignored his proposal. A similar course had been offered to whites in the late 1970s but they preferred to continue improving their qualifications after qualifying as foremen.

77 Department of Education and Training, Regulations regarding Technical Colleges (Pretoria, DET, 1985), pp 2-7.

78 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 27-29.

In the 1980s BIFSA still favoured whites in managerial positions and therefore Winkelmann's effort was ignored. My effort to promote Winkelmann's course by approaching at least a dozen big companies in the building industry for help brought no response. The administration at George Tabor did not have the funds to advertise the course in the local press and therefore the proposal was quietly dropped. After Winkelmann's retirement a Foreman course was introduced in the building industry.<sup>79</sup> At Johannesburg Technical College a one year course was presented to students for five consecutive years. Most of the students attending the course were either white, coloured or Indian. Very few Africans became foremen in the 1980s.

Although corporal punishment was quietly dropped, religious instruction was maintained at Sowetan colleges. George Tabor took the lead after the principal (De Ronde) obtained his MA in Biblical Studies at Potchefstroom University. As a practising Christian, De Ronde intended to spread the gospel in Soweto, much to the dismay of most of the lecturing staff and students. The students again had to attend daily religious services, which created ill-feeling at the institution. Students began to arrive late to avoid these prayer sessions. Certain lecturers tried to reason with the principal, as it was the general feeling that these services should only be held once a week, but De Ronde was adamant that the daily services should be retained.<sup>80</sup>

Although De Ronde was an authoritarian, he did promote the African female lecturers to senior positions. He encouraged staff development and allowed lecturers to apply for study leave. With a few exceptions, myself included, it was mainly the African female lecturers who used these opportunities to improve their academic qualifications.

79 South African Society for Training and Development, Training and Development Forum. "Training - where is it?" (Johannesburg, SASTD, November 1982), pp 4-9.

80 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 11-13.

Two or three under-qualified black lecturers attempted to force their academic shortcomings on the rest of the lecturing staff by hijacking meetings and complaining about what they referred to as "insufficiently qualified female lecturers". Although these lecturers had no trade qualifications themselves, they saw fit to complain about the women having little practical or professional experience and this caused tension.<sup>81</sup> It became extremely difficult for the principal to control these lecturers. They disliked him because of his beliefs and although the Department was asked to transfer the gentlemen in question to other colleges and to replace them with lecturers from Malapo or Manu, nothing was done to solve the problem. The Department chose to send the staff to Broederstroom on seminars which they hoped would help alleviate the problems and prejudices plaguing the college.

These seminars did not have any substantial effect as they were treated as bush holidays and the complaints and grievances took a back seat. The Department failed to address the issue and problems were merely generalised and even ignored. The complainants preferred not to air their grievances in detail at these seminars as many of these meetings were presided over by senior white female staff members from the Department's head office.<sup>82</sup> The dissatisfied lecturers were afraid to criticise their female colleagues in front of female superiors. The scheming continued at George Tabor and the principal had no authority to expel the culprits. The weaknesses at George Tabor were discussed by individual lecturing staff members and many dissident students were manipulated by these lecturers into rioting. They felt that the Department preferred to promote African females instead of male lecturers.

The circumstances at George Tabor were much worse than those experienced at Malapo. To antagonise the principal, many African male staff members presented their lectures in an African languages instead of English. This led to the lowering of standards as the students were unfamiliar with the English technical terms and examinations had to be written in English instead of indigenous languages.<sup>83</sup>

81 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 29-30.

82 Ibid., pp 32-33.

83 Ibid., pp 27-28.

George Tabor also had to compete against Funda Centre, which was built nearby during the 1980s by the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Centre accommodated Sowetans who were interested in enriching their knowledge. "Sandwich" courses were introduced and qualified Sowetans were encouraged by the Chamber to establish training agencies at Funda to deal with basic skills.<sup>84</sup> A few of these courses were sponsored by the Chamber and the German Embassy, enabling Sowetans to attend these courses free of charge. Instead of enrolling at the Sowetan colleges many school leavers chose to attend these courses as they believed that this type of training addressed the rising unemployment in Soweto during the 1985 recession.

The Department could not increase the college fees in the late 1980s because of the growing unemployment.<sup>85</sup> At the same time the subsidies which the colleges received were being reduced. Some colleges approached the private sector for donations but these were not freely available during the 1985 recession. Unemployment led to illegal attendance of classes at the college. Some lecturers empathised with these "students" and tolerated them in their classes without the Department's knowledge. Other students enrolled for only two or three subjects instead of four which put financial strain on the colleges.

Text book prices were also increasing and certain books became unavailable. Many had to be updated and rewritten as new knowledge and developments in technology had to be updated in new text books. Drawing equipment (partly imported from abroad) and also locally manufactured stationery such as pencils, rubbers and rulers became expensive. Once again this put financial strain on Sowetans, who had to finance their own studies.<sup>86</sup>

84 Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit, South African - German Development and Co-Operation (Pretoria, GTZ, 1998), pp 14-15, 18-19.

85 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 21-22.

86 Ibid., pp 25-26.

As a result many poor African college students did not have text books, drawing equipment or even the basic stationery. Students were forced to look for alternatives such as purchasing photocopied or secondhand text books from fellow students or lecturers, borrowing or sometimes even stealing text books. The situation deteriorated as lecturers were not permitted to expel these students from their classes which in turn led to a breakdown in discipline. Furthermore, these students could not be prohibited from writing examinations despite failing hopelessly in their class tests.<sup>87</sup>

Workshop students came and went as they pleased. Not much work was done and most projects were not completed in time. Many students preferred to do private jobs and then sell their products in Soweto. As handtools were still frequently being stolen the Department refused to sponsor the purchase of new tools at these colleges.

Departmental funds to Sowetan colleges were thus greatly reduced and as the Department of Manpower also sponsored industrial training, the colleges received even less financial assistance than before. Due to the recession there was not enough work for all the African artisans and job-related training was regarded as a luxury which reduced the interest in education and training.<sup>88</sup> The industries too, were not interested in investing in these colleges during the recession. Gencor did not renew its contract with George Tabor Technical College and BIFSA had its own vocational training centre in Springs to worry about. The political future of South Africa became uncertain when Botha's reforms failed to materialise and job-related training was accordingly of little or no importance to the private sector in the late 1980s.<sup>89</sup>

The 1985 political unrest in the country was the main concern of business people in the private sector at this time. On approaching private institutions for financial assistance for the college, my requests were turned down time and again, the reason being that the situation in Soweto was volatile and thus too great a financial risk. Similarly, business people were not prepared to listen to suggestions that job-related education in Soweto be sponsored.

87 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 13-14.

88 Ibid., pp 18-19.

89 K Hartshorne, Crisis and Challenge, pp 320-328.

Jabulani Technical High School, Nancefield Vocational Training College and Mezodoo Vocational Training Centre were also unable to find sponsors. As potential sponsors declined to help, African school leavers preferred to study at institutions in Johannesburg. These institutions advertised in *The Sowetan*, the local newspaper, leading Sowetans to believe in the superiority of so-called "whites only" education, training and development.<sup>90</sup> This was despite the fact that the examinations written at the Sowetan colleges were the same as the other national colleges. Matriculants at Jabulani Technical High School and Nancefield Training College wrote the same national examinations and pupils at Mezodoo Training Centre had exactly the same syllabus as that of the other centres.

Due to the many incompetent lecturers, students often failed their higher technical examinations. As previously mentioned, most school leavers had no faith in their African male lecturers. According to the students many of these African male lecturers were inefficient and were more interested in themselves than in their students, and took no pride in their professional work.<sup>91</sup> I was led to believe that in an urban African society such as Soweto, most male lecturers were not respected members of the community due to their abuse of female students. The women lecturers confirmed this but were concerned that their names should not be mentioned as they were constantly being intimidated by the culprits.

There are of course exceptions such as Elias Kekana who obtained his trade certificate, technical teacher's diploma and N5 certificate. He proved to be an intelligent, well-mannered and professional lecturer. Despite working at George Tabor since 1982, he claims he is ignored when merits are due. Kekana was understandably dissatisfied when the women lecturers received all the credit for their contributions at George Tabor. This action even drove moderates into the arms of the radicals when SADTU (the South African Democratic Teachers Union) was founded in Soweto. The union promised to address unfair practices which encouraged many African male lecturers to join SADTU.<sup>92</sup>

90 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 21-22.

91 Ibid., pp 25-26.

92 Interview with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1998, pp 1-2.

The lecturers who joined the Association of Supportive Educators were mainly the African women, the whites and a few African men. This association is presently known as the South African Association for Vocational and Specialised Education (SAAVSE), which in turn is affiliated to NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa). The organisation promotes professionalism and regularly keeps its members updated with relevant information about the issues discussed at branch meetings at Manu.<sup>93</sup>

George Tabor and Malapo were dominated by SADTU and NAPTOSA members were forced to join meetings at Manu. As SADTU was affiliated to political organisations, it was obvious that political affairs took prevalence over educational matters at their meetings. SADTU members became intolerant towards NAPTOSA and this is one of the reasons why NAPTOSA members preferred not to discuss politics at work with known SADTU members.

Most NAPTOSA members were qualified and experienced while SADTU members were mainly under-qualified lecturers. Many SADTU members felt suppressed and blamed the system for their grievances, complaints and academic limitations. NAPTOSA members on the other hand were more content and therefore merely protected their fringe benefits such as transport allowances, study leave, housing subsidies and other employment benefits.<sup>94</sup>

The two opposing factions which were active in Sowetan colleges were destined to clash. In my view this animosity had little to do with race or gender, but was because of a lack of professionalism. A few Sowetan male lecturers were incapable of exercising self-discipline due to envy, jealousy, the preservation of self-interest, internal manipulation and other external influences. They did not hesitate to air their personal fears, biased grievances and academic limitations when challenged at staff meetings. Although the Department was aware of the friction, it nevertheless preferred not to expel the instigators and chose to mediate instead.

93 Interview with N Aucamp, August 1999, pp 16-18.

94 Ibid., pp 20-21.



It is also possible that the Department lost interest as colleges such as George Tabor, Malapo and even the Mezodoo Vocational Training Centre became regular dumping grounds for unprofessional lecturers. Manu and Jabulani were privileged in that most of their lecturers were highly - professional. The private sector was still involved at Nancefield, but the Sowetan infrastructure had begun to change dramatically.

From 1985 onwards the Department began to africanise and Africans were appointed as circuit inspectors in the townships. The whites employed by the Department had no choice but to adapt to the new trend or seek employment elsewhere. The colleges were placed under the supervision of Sowetans, but this did not help pacify the few under-qualified lecturers.<sup>95</sup>

Complaints from white principals were ignored and the arrogance of the unprofessional lecturers was overlooked by the Department. It was claimed that these lecturers just needed time to adapt to a new situation at the colleges and thus their failings were tolerated. Bridging courses held at the Broederstroom seminars would smooth the way towards a more acceptable situation at the Sowetan colleges.

The Department appeared to be planning ahead while many of the white principals were accused of "still dwelling in the past." It was alleged that they failed to mediate between opposing lecturing staff members. According to the Department "privileged" lecturers had to accept the cancellation of their transport allowances and study leave in order to give the under privileged staff members a chance to improve their positions at the colleges.<sup>96</sup> The Department then placed all lecturers in the same salary category. Only by earning extra merits could a lecturer increase his salary. Lecturers had to perform according to departmental expectations, one of which was to improve students' pass marks. Under-qualified lecturers believed that the Department had accepted them and were interested to uphold this situation at the colleges.

95 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 22-23.

96 Ibid., pp 25-26.

This situation at the college led to new problems as these lecturers were not adequately qualified to generate higher pass marks. As they were not interested in improving their N-qualifications, they were incapable of teaching students mathematics or science and despite the fact that they were not qualified artisans they insisted on being accommodated in the workshops. They preferred to lecture students in workshop skills because they thought this was simple supervision. They told their students which tasks to do for the day and then many of them disappeared without trace for the rest of the day. Naturally the training suffered and students had to be graded according to assumption.

Most of these learners were then frankly incapable of performing on site. On site, apprentice's are judged according to their production and their training is only concluded once these expectations are met.<sup>97</sup> The training at Sowetan colleges failed to produce learners who were productive enough to complete a certain amount of work in a given period of time.

Instructors should always be present in workshops and should never leave learners without proper supervision. They should furthermore always be available to answer questions which the learners might have. Learners should be judged according to performance and this is only possible with the instructor being present at all times. An instructor has to constantly observe his learners' performances in order to be able to assess their work honestly. It is a principle known to every instructor. Instructors should be experienced artisans who can judge whether trainees are ready to take their trade tests. Most instructors have a minimum of ten years' practical work experience as artisans before being employed by places such as BIFSA (Building Industries).<sup>98</sup>

97 Interview with H Breedts. September 1999, pp 24-25.

98 Building Industrial Federation of South Africa, Internal information sheet on expected experience and qualifications of training instructors (Johannesburg, BIFSA, Vol 1/1985), pp 1-2.

This basic ground rule was ignored by the under-qualified lecturers. Some of these instructors eventually obtained their trade qualifications, but even then they did not have the necessary practical work experience. Proper job-related experience and knowledge is essential and this takes years to acquire. Their insecurities became the core of the problem at Sowetan colleges. They were aware of their shortcomings and hid behind excuses such as race, gender and discrimination. They claimed that the system discriminated against them as examinations were designed to make them fail their N-courses.

Some of these lecturers still claim that they have earned their N-certificates simply because of their long service with the Department. They consider examinations to be a discriminating practice, a legacy of apartheid. They believe that trade certificates should be awarded after five years' practical work experience without taking any trade tests at Olifantsfontein.<sup>99</sup> Although Olifantsfontein has been functioning as a testing centre since the late 1940s, many African lecturers would like to see this Centre closed or changed to a vocational training centre. The Westlake Test Centre in the Cape was apparently changed to a vocational training college and this sparked the idea to make changes at Olifantsfontein. Their reasoning is also strongly influenced by countries such as New Zealand and Australia that have recently dropped the official trade test in favour of practical work experience and automatic qualification after five years' of practice.<sup>100</sup>

Some lecturers also believe that they should receive trade certificates after being in the workshops for five years because they repeatedly fail their trade tests at Olifantsfontein. They are not prepared to make more effort to study and claim that they deserve to receive these qualifications because they are under-privileged. They hide their academic shortcomings behind vague excuses and blame apartheid for their inadequate qualifications.

99 Interview with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1998, pp 8-9.

100 Training and Further Education, Directory 1995 (Melbourne, TAFE, 1995), pp 4-9.

The attitude of these lecturers contributed to the deteriorating situation at Sowetan colleges in the 1990s. The Department was prepared to sacrifice skilled lecturers and the others were led to believe that they could force their rigid views on the college without the authorities taking any action. The Department lost respect because of its leniency which was interpreted as a weakness.<sup>101</sup> It was more concerned about being under investigation for corruption than it was about the problem of internal grievances. A government commission was appointed to investigate the disappearance of public funds. In 1989 an investigation team including judges Leonora van Heever, W G Meyer Van Zyl and F G Barrie, presented their findings to State President F W De Klerk, stating that public funds were secretly being used to boost informative publications such as *Focus on Education* in Soweto.<sup>102</sup>

Members of the Departmental executive responsible for African township colleges were involved in funding the distribution of Christian and anti-communist literature at schools in Soweto. Sham publishing companies were used to print and distribute such information in townships, which made it impossible to control public funds.<sup>103</sup> Documentation proving that money was paid to these sham companies was forged. After a thorough investigation the commission discovered that at least a R1 000 000 was missing and as a result senior officials retired or resigned after being threatened with disciplinary action. Although most of the missing money was recovered, no further action was taken.

101 Interview with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1998, pp 14-19.

102 Department of Education and Training, Verslag van die Kommissie van Onderzoek rakende na aangeleenthede van die Departement van Onderwys en Opleiding (Pretoria, DET, 1989), pp 1-5, 14-22.

103 Ibid., pp 131-156.

The effect of Nelson Mandela's release on Sowetan colleges

The investigation into corruption in the Department of Education and Training surprisingly came to nothing. This was presumably due to the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and all the subsequent attention surrounding his release. Nelson Mandela was released from Pollsmoor prison on Sunday 11 February 1990. Monday 12 February was to be a normal working day for the lecturers at Sowetan colleges and colleges such as Malapo and George Tabor began the day with the usual morning prayers for the students in the halls.

Thereafter many students refused to go to their classes or workshops. Activists had illegally entered the college premises and instructed students to attend a general meeting at Orlando Stadium. Along with most schools in Soweto all the colleges came to a standstill as thousands of students flocked to the meeting at Orlando Stadium. It was calculated that close to 80 000 Sowetans attended this historic meeting which was addressed by leading activists. Most of those present were school pupils and students, as most adults were at work in Johannesburg.<sup>104</sup>

After the meeting these youths flocked into the streets carrying placards celebrating the release of Mandela and bringing traffic to a standstill. Others were more cautious in their celebrations as they did not want to destroy property on this joyous occasion. The ensuing excitement and celebrations meant that Soweto played host to a nonstop party and lecturers could not return to work for many days.

104 *The Citizen*, 13/2/1990, pp 2-3.

When students returned, the situation was extremely tense as discipline had deteriorated and students came and went as they pleased. When they had problems with mathematics or science they made a political issue out of it by demanding that mathematics and science be adapted to the new South Africa. These demands were considered by both black and white lecturers to be an excuse for not studying.<sup>105</sup>

Students frequently attended political meetings at the Five Roses Stadium in Dube where they were addressed by officials of COSAS (Congress of South African Students). Representation on the college governing councils was demanded and grievances were aired by demonstrating in front of the colleges. Vehicles in the college parking areas were often damaged by rioting students. The rules and regulations were ignored in an attempt to test the endurance of the "system". They hoped that these actions would force the colleges to change their training and education policies to suit their own demands.

The situation eventually erupted at Malapo when students closed the gates and demanded that K J Naude (the principal) and his white lecturing staff leave the premises. The African lecturers felt they could deal with the situation but Naude nevertheless contacted the police. By the time they arrived on the scene the students had left and it was decided to close the college before the students could return.

The few under-qualified African male lecturers accused Naude of being a right wing "Boer". Naude denied this, but did admit to being strict. According to moderate African female lecturers such an accusation was enough for the students to expel him. At the time every possible excuse was used to get rid of dedicated white and black staff members, the favourite excuse being that they were prejudiced. Malapo was taken over by students time and again and staff members were denied entry to the premises. The police were summoned each time to clear the students off the premises and eventually the Department was called in to intervene.<sup>106</sup>

105 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 26-27.

106 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 33-34.

The Department's reluctance to intervene motivated white staff members, under the leadership of Naude, into holding a demonstration outside Soweto to bring attention to the deteriorating situation at the college. The demonstration was televised and Naude was subsequently transferred and demoted to deputy principal at Manu. Many of the white lecturers who had demonstrated were also transferred to various colleges which left Malapo in the hands of the African lecturers. Ms Shirley Scott was appointed acting principal and was accepted by both the lecturers and students alike. Despite applying for the position of principal she was overlooked and later replaced by an African.<sup>107</sup>

The reduction in state subsidies for the colleges saw the deterioration of the buildings at Malapo. The college administration struggled to pay electricity bills and many computers were stolen during burglaries. Because of a serious shortage of tools many workshops had to be permanently closed, resulting in the laying off of lecturers. This left the staff at Malapo insecure about the future of the college. Students' average marks fell to an all time low and the college was viciously criticised by the new Department of Education. The new principal failed to restore discipline and many students still came and went as they pleased. Some students had no text books or stationery and only attended classes because they were forced to do so by their parents.<sup>108</sup>

Along with the ANC (African National Congress) government takeover from the National Party in 1994, came permission for students to elect their own SRC (Student Representative Council). The SRC elected a member to represent them on the governing council and therefore the students eventually had a say in the daily running of the college. This appeared to pacify them and demonstrations ceased.

I am also of the opinion that most internal problems at Sowetan colleges were not politically motivated and were used by a few individuals to force their stubborn views on colleges instead of reasoning with dedicated staff members. They admitted to being more concerned about securing their own interests as opposed to the promotion of education. This partial attitude was ignored by the now defunct Department of Education and Training, leading a few aggressive lecturers to believe that they could continue forcing their inflexibility on the colleges.

107 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 27-28.

108 Ibid., pp 30-31.

Due to the new attitude which appeared at the colleges, the domestic workers were reluctant to clean the classrooms regularly. The premises became run-down. Classroom windows were broken, doors were damaged and locks removed. At George Tabor the few under-qualified male lecturers held illegal meetings after hours with certain female student representatives. Here it was decided that the principal should be replaced as he did not accept students' demands, which included the tolerance of late arrivals as well as absenteeism of both students and staff members. It appears that some under-qualified lecturers and the few female student representatives also arranged parties at the college after hours, where they coerced other students into supporting their demands.<sup>109</sup>

Although most of the students did not support these demands, they were intimidated to do so. Many students were forced to join demonstrations and missed their examinations. The principal's car was regularly damaged by unknown culprits and he was also physically threatened by both under-qualified lecturers and student representatives for failing to give in to their demands. When local representatives of the Civic Associations were approached by the remaining dedicated lecturers and students and asked to intervene, they bluntly refused to be associated with "criminal elements" and although the few aggressive instigators were isolated, they continued to make unreasonable demands.

The governing council was approached by both the principal and other dissatisfied parties and asked to mediate.<sup>110</sup> This resulted in the establishment of a more democratic council, including representatives of the parents and students. The principal was obliged to comply with the new regulations as laid down by a new governing council. Despite this, some of these instigators were still not satisfied and informed the reluctant students that most of the lecturers were making unrealistic demands on them. It was expected from management to tolerate the indolence of a few individuals in question. This led to assaults on dedicated lecturers by intolerant students and education in the classrooms came to a halt as these lecturers took long leave once again to escape these brutal attacks.

109 Interview with E Mashile, June 1998, pp 18-21.

110 Interview with U De Ronde, September 1993, pp 33-34.



The Department chose not to take any action against the deteriorating situation in the Sowetan colleges. It simply announced its intention to grant autonomy to African colleges. The principal tried to have the few dissident lecturers transferred to Malapo or Manu but the Department would not approve the transfers. These lecturers returned to the college and openly celebrated their victory over the principal during breaks, partying and publicly consuming liquor.

With the exception of the workshops, not much teaching was done at the college. Marks dropped to a new low as students lost all interest in studying. Some lecturers failed to attend to their classes and allegedly intimidated other lecturers to follow suit. The dedicated African women lecturers were targeted by the trouble-makers as their students often achieved better results. They were physically threatened and chose to stay away from work.<sup>111</sup>

The principal saw no other option than to pressurise the Department into taking a stand by staying away from work with his dedicated staff. Manu was chosen as the venue for a meeting between the principal and his staff members and an inspector from the Department. Instead of mediating the Department threatened the lecturers with dismissal if they did not return to work. The principal was transferred to Mamelodi.

R F Bezuidenhout, the new principal, was no match for the instigators, despite his attempts to accommodate their demands. He eventually retired and announced that the Department had failed because of its reluctance to take any action against the few under-qualified lecturers by simply expelling them. He could not cope with the insults, absenteeism and total disregard for time.<sup>112</sup> Bezuidenhout's successor was Edith Mashile, one of the female lecturers at the college. Her appointment was not accepted by the dissidents who refused to accept her authority, claiming that she was unqualified for the position. She attempted to run the college according to the official code of conduct but was physically threatened into resigning. Although most of the lecturers disagreed with her decision to step down, she did so "to keep the peace" at the college.

111 Interview with P Langa, September 1993, pp 24-25.

112 Interview with E Mashile, June 1998, pp 11-12.

Her successor (Hennie Breedt) the present incumbent, maintains the status quo at the college. He does not want to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors. The college is in a poor state of repair. The buildings are deteriorating, the classrooms are not clean and the lawns on the college grounds are uncut. Many toilets in the ablution block are blocked and students are often caught smoking dagga. Discipline at the college is non-existent.<sup>113</sup> Of the original 18 white and 14 African lecturers, only four white and twelve African lecturers remain. Some workshops have been permanently closed. The college is avoided by departmental heads and they no longer bother to inspect the premises. Businesses are not interested in sponsoring the college as they prefer to put their money in colleges outside Soweto where education is not constantly disrupted.

The unstable circumstances in Soweto appear to be the reason why the local colleges are no longer sponsored by the mines and industries. The American Embassy has declared that under no circumstances will it support any creation of the former apartheid regime. It maintains that it sponsors schools on the outskirts of Soweto.

The German Development Corporation sent a delegation to George Tabor to do a thorough investigation. Eventually the college was informed that the Germans were prepared to help, provided that the college had fully qualified staff to train students. It was a condition which the college could not meet and therefore the Germans chose to sponsor Germiston College instead.<sup>114</sup> George Tabor had similar experiences with both the New Zealanders and Austrians, who laid down conditions which could not be met by the college. The embassies wanted proof that their donations were to be spent on training equipment and materials and not merely squandered. The college had to provide a prospective donor with a written and detailed motivation for its request for donations.

113 Interview with H Breedt, September 1999, pp 22-23.

114 Ibid., pp 27-28.

It was suggested that the embassies purchase the necessary equipment for the college, as the old machinery was outdated and had to be replaced with modern equipment to meet the demands of the industries. The motivation by the college was rejected as the embassies required evidence that the new equipment would still be in use after ten years. This guarantee could not be provided and the deal fell through.

The French embassy established its own vocational training centre (Thupelo) in Soweto, which lasted for five years. Frikkie Kroukamp who had previously been involved with BIFSA and had served on the governing council at George Tabor, ran the centre. Unfortunately when the French withdrew their sponsorship Kroukamp retired and the centre administration subsequently collapsed.<sup>115</sup>

At about the same time Funda Centre lost the support of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry resulting in uncertainty about its future. Many Sowetan companies involved in the centre also withdrew their support and training at Funda Centre came to a standstill.<sup>116</sup> The centre now serves as a venue for meetings and social gatherings.

Many Sowetan business people seem to prefer to relocate their business outlets to Johannesburg or outside Soweto because of the high crime rate in Soweto. Another factor facing African businesses in Soweto is the non-existence of basic services such as water and electricity due to constant municipal strikes. These strikes also result in refuse being left in the streets for weeks and sometimes even months.

In 1990 the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry decided to sponsor the Building Training Centre under the leadership of M Mogale, a former George Tabor student. The German Development Corporation was also asked to assist, but both the Chamber and Corporation plan to withdraw their help in 2001 as the Centre is now running well enough to be able to apply for financial assistance from the Department of Labour (formerly Manpower).<sup>117</sup>

115 Interview with F Kroukamp, March 1999, p 1.

116 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1999, pp 1-2.

117 GTZ, SA-German Co-Operation, pp 22-23.

Nancefield Vocational Training College was transferred to the Department of Education in 1990 and is being run by a skeleton staff, but it is facing closure. Low pass rates resulted in a drop in the intake and lecturers presently work under pressure, being constantly reminded by the Department that they could face dismissal. Surplus teaching staff have already been transferred to other institutions in other parts of the country.<sup>118</sup>

Mezodoo was to have been incorporated into Manu, but the Mezodoo governing council rejected the Department's proposal. Because of a shortage of trade schools in Soweto, the parents argued that school leavers needed some kind of pre-job-related education to provide them with enough knowledge to be able to enrol at a college. This argument was accepted by the Department.<sup>119</sup>

White women were formerly employed as lecturers at Jabulani Technical High School and as they gradually retired or resigned they were replaced by African lecturers. Although the pass mark dropped the school still has a better image than other Sowetan institutions and school leavers still prefer Jabulani to any other Sowetan school because of the job-related education it offers.<sup>120</sup>

Education, training and development continued as usual at Manu and the disturbances experienced at the other colleges after the release of Mandela scarcely affected the college. Class attendance and the pass rate reached 80% which is outstanding even for a big college such as Johannesburg. The African students enrolling at Manu appeared to have the same ambitions and values as those enrolling at Johannesburg and took their studies seriously. Unlike other Sowetan colleges, Manu has a dedicated staff of highly qualified and experienced African male lecturers. All the lecturers are qualified and there is little rivalry among them. They also consider their positions as permanent whereas most lecturers at Malapo and George Tabor are insecure.<sup>121</sup> At Manu lecturers are not constantly reminded of the deteriorating conditions in Soweto and can concentrate on their teaching duties.

118 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 13-14.

119 Ibid., pp 21-22.

120 Ibid., pp 18-19.

121 Ibid., pp 28-29.

The buildings at Manu are also properly maintained and the lawns regularly cut. The ablution block is always clean and in working order and classes and workshops are swept daily by trusty college labourers. The security at the automatically controlled gate is tight, making it difficult for unwelcome guests to enter the premises. The college therefore makes a good impression on visitors and often receives assistance from interested people involved in the industry and charity organisations. These donations are wisely invested in the purchase of materials and equipment.<sup>122</sup>

Manu was recently renamed Dobsonville College and is considered to be the pride and joy of the Department of Education in Soweto. According to N Aucamp, the principal, the college has an annual intake of 1500 students and extensions are being planned. With the introduction of computer courses at the college, he has secured the future of Dobsonville College. Students who have been rejected by Dobsonville are accepted at Malapo and George Tabor. Because Dobsonville only accepts students with a minimum of Std 8 with a pass in science and mathematics, its students are dedicated.<sup>123</sup>

Student fees at Dobsonville are higher than those at Malapo and George Tabor and therefore its income is high enough for it to operate independently. The Department granted Dobsonville full autonomy and it is run without the Department's interference. The demand to study at Dobsonville is increasing and applicants have to be turned away to keep the annual intake at 1500. The college does not have the facilities to accommodate more students at this time. Although Dobsonville College also experiences thefts, the lecturers are not troubled by frequent disturbances. Students prefer to study in a peaceful environment instead of being disrupted by dissatisfied lecturers or students. They are keen to obtain their qualifications in order to ensure their future in the industry.<sup>124</sup>

122 Interview with N Aucamp, August 1999, pp 16-17.

123 Ibid., pp 19-20.

124 Ibid., pp 23-24.

### Conclusion

Although it was originally the intention of the Department of Education and Training that job-related education and training be established for the purpose of combating juvenile delinquency in Soweto, this goal was not attained. Because the departmental officials operated according to demand, satisfying only the needs of the economy, job-related education did not expand.

The Department of Labour scrapped the artisan training courses at George Tabor and the college workshops had to reapply to obtain accreditation for it. Thereafter, students had to pay for this training and it became very expensive. The groups of learners are kept small as the college does not have enough staff to provide skills training for all interested students.

Most students trained at George Tabor and Malapo cannot find employment as their certificates are not recognised by the industry. As there are no official funds made available to assist former college students to establish their own small businesses such as plumbers, wiremen, mechanics or building contractors, the students roam the streets unemployed.<sup>125</sup>

Big companies recruit only the top students from Dobsonville as quantity surveyors, managerial assistants and chartered secretaries and the rest of the students seem to be ignored. Most of the students from Dobsonville struggle to find proper employment and are often forced to work as labourers despite having an N6 diploma.

As these colleges failed to provide proper practical workshop training, students are forced to enrol at training centres such as Chamdor, which are not located in Soweto. Chamdor was recently bought by Privest, an Australian company which operates the centre as a successful business enterprise. The centre also conducts trade tests, which is very practical for school leavers.

125 Interviews with E Kekana, 1994-1999; 1999, pp 2-3.

Mini-bus taxi services from Soweto simplified commuting for Sowetans and therefore colleges such as Johannesburg, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Randfontein came within reach of Sowetan school leavers. These colleges were gradually flooded by Sowetans who considered the standard of education there to be of a higher calibre than that offered at their local colleges. It was thus not surprising that Sowetan colleges lost students to the former "white" colleges. The introduction of the Manpower Training Act in 1981 should have compelled the Department to upgrade Sowetan colleges, but with the exception of Manu not enough was done to address the demands facing them.

In the 1980s the government encouraged the private sector to support African aspirations in a developing society, and although Malapo and Manu were established, job-related education and training in Soweto was supported mostly by private companies such as the PCI (Portland Cement Institute), SAB (South African Breweries), BIFSA and Gencor. The government permitted Gencor to assist George Tabor as it benefited both the government and Gencor.

After the 1985 riots the private sector lost interest in assisting these projects in Soweto, forcing other government departments to assist them. The colleges were plagued by chronic financial problems as well as a Department of Education and Training which was under investigation for corruption. This left the colleges out in the cold with no constructive assistance, financial or otherwise, from the Department in the late 1980s.

Circumstances provided the opportunity for a small group of dissident, under-qualified and rigid African male lecturers to establish themselves as a force to be reckoned with at the colleges. The Department chose to ignore them, resulting in regular disturbances in the 1990s which led to an uncertain future for George Tabor and Malapo. No private company is prepared to provide financial assistance to George Tabor or Malapo, while Manu (Dobsonville) enjoys the benefit of being peacefully located in Dobsonville.

The colleges also have to compete against Vista University which is well-established in Soweto. Speculation is rife among members of the governing council, staff members and students at Dobsonville that the college could be proclaimed as a technikon. This will mean competition for Vista, and Malapo and George Tabor will struggle even more to survive.

Malapo and George Tabor are in the same financial position as Mezodoo and Nancefield. Sowetans are aware of the deteriorating conditions at these colleges and prefer to enrol their children at Jabulani or Dobsonville if they are financially unable to afford enrolment at a former "white" college.

A recent telephone conversation with the Johannesburg municipality confirmed that the estimated population of Soweto is 4,5 million. Other independent estimates differ dramatically from this figure.<sup>126</sup> Soweto should therefore be able to provide enough students for three colleges, a technical high school and various other vocational training centres, provided these job-related institutions meet the set standards of similar institutions in other parts of the country. They need dedicated lecturers who are accountable for the success of the college. Dobsonville College has proved to the Department of Education that job-related education and training in Soweto can work. It is therefore the intention of the new Department to upgrade the standard of the lecturing staff at Malapo and George Tabor to equal that of other colleges such as Dobsonville.

The executives responsible for job-related education and training in Gauteng, Bill Temple and A P Du Toit, believe, however, that lecturers at Malapo and George Tabor need more than mere training. They are in close contact with the private sector and advised James Maseko, who was responsible for education in Gauteng and Minister M Metcalfe, that the private sector expects results from Sowetan colleges. These colleges face an uncertain future because the Department is indecisive in its policy to meet the challenges it faces.<sup>127</sup>

126 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 18-19.

127 Ibid., pp 24-26.



CHAPTER FOUR

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR JOB-RELATED  
EDUCATION IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

Job-related education and training in the new South Africa

It took the new regional Department of Education eighteen months to establish itself in Gauteng after the ANC takeover, causing uncertainty regarding the future of Sowetan colleges. Lecturers at these colleges still received their salary cheques from the central government but received no substantial increase for many years. Merit rewards and study bursaries were scrapped due to a shortage of public funds and the building of low cost housing in Soweto took precedence over other obligations.

Staff at township colleges felt neglected and staff meetings were dominated by discussions on the closure of these colleges. These rumours were finally put to rest when Messrs Temple and Du Toit from the Department visited the colleges and introduced the new policies, promising dedicated lecturers that their positions were secure. They also announced the introduction of a National Qualification Accreditation Board, which is being set up to assess the qualifications of township colleges in comparison to other Further Education and Tertiary Institutions. Colleges had to be upgraded to meet the standards of the technikons and universities and thus an appeal was directed to all lecturers to improve their qualifications to ensure their positions. Others were offered voluntary severance packages.

Thereafter the situation returned to normal and lecturers concentrated on improving their tuition. This the Department considered a priority as the average pass rates at some Sowetan schools had dropped to an all-time low of 7% in 1995. The limitations in black education and the excitement surrounding the ANC takeover in 1994 was believed by the Department to be the reason for the low marks. Pupils were encouraged to study and were warned that they were not to expect preferential treatment in the new South Africa and that to obtain results they had to study diligently.<sup>1</sup>

1 The Department of Education, Education White Paper "A programme for the transformation of further education, training and development" (Johannesburg, November 1995), pp 1-3, 5-10, 12-16.

Some students were disappointed as they had hoped for the cancellation of all examinations and the introduction of a certificate of attendance, thereby obtaining a qualification by merely attending classes. At Sowetan colleges some of the students openly complained that they were still being discriminated against and it took much persuasion on the part of COSAS (Congress of South African Students) to convince everyone that examinations were necessary.

College students are still tested by the National Examination Board. College lecturers may voluntarily assist in the marking of exam. papers but eventually the remuneration for doing so was scrapped and lecturers were instructed to mark exam. papers without any payment. This resulted in resentment among many lecturers as they also had to invigilate examinations.

Government vehicles were sent to the depots and travelling allowances were cancelled. The lecturers could not claim overtime as funds were no longer available. The Department claimed that all privileges had been done away with despite the fact that some directors were still using company vehicles. In effect all government contributions to medical aids, pension funds and housing subsidies were reduced.<sup>2</sup>

Disappointed lecturers felt that their unions, SADTU and NAPTOSA had to be more aggressive when fighting for their rights and privileges, but at the same time the staff at the Sowetan colleges were more concerned about their future with the Department. With the possible exception of Dobsonville College, student intake at Sowetan colleges had declined due to low pass rates and the departmental expectations could not be met. The total breakdown in discipline among both students and lecturers was a direct result of the lack of motivation at Sowetan colleges.<sup>3</sup> With the exception of Dobsonville, Sowetan colleges became marginalised. They were an embarrassment to the Department and were avoided by visiting officials.

2 The Department of Education, Information sheet on changes concerning the official welfare policies of the Civil Service (Johannesburg, November 1997), pp 1-2.

3 Interview with H Breedts, September 1998, pp 2-3.

It was obvious that drastic steps had to be taken to save these Sowetan colleges. Departmental subsidies are reduced annually and colleges are thus forced to become self-sufficient. Dobsonville College introduced practical courses for school leavers such as computer technology which guaranteed its future, whereas George Tabor and Malapo did not adapt to the new demands. According to the Dobsonville principal (Nic Aucamp) there was an increase in students from 1200 in 1994 to 1500 in 1999.<sup>4</sup> The college was promoted in the community by an ad-hoc marketing committee run from the college, which advertised the college in local newspapers as well as on billboards placed along the Dobsonville highway. A governing council made surplus funds available for advertising and stalls were rented at the Rand Easter Show in Johannesburg and manned by college volunteers. This promotion was, in Aucamp's words, "a very fruitful experience".

By comparison the intake at George Tabor dropped from 1000 in 1994 to 700 in 1999. Statistics for Malapo are not available, but the staff maintains that the intake dropped by 30%. Malapo and George Tabor did not attract students because of their poorly qualified lecturers, ill-equipped training facilities, and lack of accredited practical skills and qualifications. Taking all this into account, prospective students preferred to enrol at Dobsonville College or at colleges outside Soweto as it had become easier for Sowetans to commute to Johannesburg with the introduction of mini-bus taxis.

Dobsonville is housed in new buildings, while Malapo and George Tabor have run-down facilities. Security at Dobsonville is tight and safe parking is guaranteed. The canteen is clean and well run. All these positive points are enough reason for school leavers to prefer enrolling at Dobsonville. The visible difference between Dobsonville and Malapo and George Tabor has led Sowetans to expect the present government to improve facilities at Malapo and George Tabor so that there will not be the need to enrol at colleges outside Soweto (such as Johannesburg).

4 Interview with N Aucamp, August 1999, pp 1-2.

The role of the National Business Initiative in solving the educational crisis in Sowetan colleges

A generous donation from the Danish government was presented to Prof S Bhengu of the Department by representatives of the Danish Embassy in 1997. The local Gauteng Department which was then under the leadership of Minister Mary Metcalfe, benefited from this and made a proposal to research the problems facing the future of Sowetan colleges. Mary Metcalfe felt that the shortage of Sowetan colleges had to be addressed and handled as a part of national education. She declared herself open to suggestions and invited the private sector to contribute by attending workshops and seminars. These meetings were arranged by representatives of the government and of industries and were attended by both parties. The result was that government was made aware of the expectations of the private sector that colleges should produce qualified people who could be constructively employed in the industry.<sup>5</sup>

The private sector expected township colleges to address the economic demands of the time and not simply to accommodate the expectations of the community. So-called black upliftment could only be addressed in a broader economic sense as opposed to the demands of the Sowetan community. The colleges had to be given a means of survival instead of being administered by disinterested local officials.

Metcalfe had been employed as a lecturer at the Johannesburg College of Education (JCE) before being nominated as an ANC minister. She was fortunate to have the support of a competent staff who advised her to seek assistance from non-departmental sources. A decision was taken to involve private enterprises to enable the colleges to fulfil the expectations of the industry. The National Business Initiative (NBI) was approached for assistance to enable Metcalfe to operate Sowetan colleges in a post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>6</sup>

5 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 13-18.

6 National News Distributors, Enterprise, The National Business Initiative (Johannesburg, July 1999), pp 3-18.

The NBI is run by a prestigious group of business people most of whom were at one stage executives with the Anglo American Corporation (AAC), and was therefore proficient enough to make a difference at the colleges. As the Department expected drastic changes the new initiative was to involve the private sector which could give Sowetan colleges the credibility they need.

A pre-condition was to manage the various colleges equally before the NBI commenced its duties. Colleges must be integrated according to regions in conjunction with the local structures of the new South Africa and the colleges should be more representative of all South Africans. Research to this effect was conducted in Gauteng and the Western Cape before the NBI was able to present its findings.<sup>7</sup>

The motivation of the NBI is to assist in transforming education in South Africa in a new dispensation which also includes addressing black expectations. The NBI offers advice to both the government and the private sector on how to manage these changes according to international standards. The Department chose the services of the NBI instead of agencies from abroad as the retired AAC executives were aware of the local expectations in the economy and could not be politically manipulated.

By employing the NBI the government captured the attention of foreign aid agencies such as the German Development Corporation (GTZ), which helped restore overseas faith in the future of job-related education in South Africa. George Tabor was introduced to the GTZ and I overheard German officials discussing the positive involvement of the NBI with the Department. The involvement of the NBI with the Department was of great assistance to the colleges in receiving substantial donations from abroad.

Suddenly George Tabor received donations from Germany such as handtools, which the GTZ had been reluctant to provide before the involvement of the NBI with the Department. The Germans also plan to provide funds for the training of the unemployed once the new NBI recommendations have been implemented. The Swedes, Austrians and New Zealanders are now also interested in helping township education as they believe that education deserves top priority in this country.<sup>8</sup>

7 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 5-8.

8 Ibid., pp 10-11.

The NBI established a small working committee headed by M Ross. Members of the committee inspected the various colleges in the Gauteng Region. Lecturers were interviewed at George Tabor and they answered questions on the general working conditions, grievances and what the lecturers believed could be done to improve the general conditions at the college. Ross made extensive notes of our replies and inspected the college thoroughly before promising to inform us about her decision. Her final report was received by the college, and in it she explained that she had inspected twenty colleges in the Gauteng Region before making her recommendations.

This NBI report stressed the importance of job-related education (further education and training) and accepted the fact that technical colleges have an important role to play. Unfortunately there are only 152 technical colleges compared to 6460 high schools in South Africa, which places job-related education at a disadvantage. Furthermore, this training is generally outdated and contact with the private sector is poor. This means that employers are critical towards the colleges and makes it difficult for holders of certificates to find appropriate employment.

The government has recognised the problem and the policies of the Departments of Labour and Education have therefore been adapted to raise the skill performances of learners. Learners are now compelled to complete a task (module) according to the set rules and regulations of the Accreditation Board before being allowed to continue with the next task. A set number of such modules must be mastered before a learner qualifies and receives a trade qualification.<sup>9</sup>

The Further Education and Training Act of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 assist private companies in sponsoring job-related education in a more responsible manner. A partnership between the government and the private sector is necessary and to accomplish this the NBI proposed a so-called *Colleges Collaboration Fund* which is financed equally by both parties.

<sup>9</sup> National News Distributors, Enterprise, National Business Initiative (Johannesburg, July 1999), pp 3-18.

In return, the private sector expects the government to allow colleges to operate independently and be linked to the industries through business people who will serve on the college governing councils. Lecturers still receive their salaries from the Department but the administration of the colleges will be financed by college fees. Colleges will be entitled to receive donations such as equipment, handtools and machinery from the private sector to help with the upgrading of training.

With the assistance of SAQA (South African Qualification Authority), on which representatives of both the industries and government will serve, colleges will be made aware of the expectations in the South African labour market. SAQA will revise the training programmes required for the training of apprentices regularly. Colleges will not be permitted to train apprentices unless they comply with this stipulation. Officials of SAQA will inspect the colleges involved in the training of apprentices at regular intervals.<sup>10</sup>

SAQA will be financed by levies, which according to the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 must be supplied by the private sector. SAQA will watch over the distribution of accreditations which will also affect technikons and universities. Certain official as well as public expectations must be addressed before accreditations are awarded, which will also make privately-operated schools dependent on SAQA.

As both the government and private sector will be involved in the initiative, the NBI believes that a public-private sector partnership can be accomplished. Such a partnership will guarantee the expansion of job-related education at colleges, which is actually the primary concern of the private sector which will in turn expect colleges to produce internationally recognised craftsmen. The second part of the report deals with the restructuring of the colleges. Some of the colleges (such as Brakpan) are far too small and not financially viable. Colleges should not compete unnecessarily against one other and should offer recognised courses which are in demand. Demand should be judged by market-related needs and outdated courses should not be offered to disadvantaged communities merely because they are affordable.

10 National News Distributors, Enterprise, National Business Initiative (Johannesburg, July 1999), pp 3-18.



Lecturers should be adequately qualified and hold recognised qualifications such as trade certificates, N3 certificates, Technical Teacher's Diplomas, N6 diplomas or BA and BEd degrees. To help ease the tension among competing staff members, further training programmes are recommended together with study leave and bursaries. Lecturers are advised to visit industrial sites regularly to help broaden their knowledge and make them competitive. Training programmes must be introduced to keep lecturers up to date in their ever-expanding field of expertise and the NBI recommends that such training be financed by the governing councils.

Governing councils comprising elected and nominated representatives of the industries, lecturing staff and students, should be made responsible for the administration of the colleges. The report further recommends that a college cannot survive on its own and needs to explore the possibility of merging or working in conjunction with other colleges. The NBI report does not however recommend that colleges in the same neighbourhood should be forced to act together. They should rather do so voluntarily. A viable unit of colleges is considered to include 6000 students and 200 lecturers.<sup>11</sup> The biggest college in the Gauteng Region is Germiston with 3500 students while the smallest is Katlehong with 200 students, meaning that many colleges will have to merge together to create a unit.

Such a unit can incorporate five or six smaller units which in turn could divide the workload. For example, one unit can cater for practical workshop technology while another offers commercial subjects and the next offers technical courses. This would guarantee interaction and reduce competition by encouraging the various colleges to help each other by delegating surplus applicants to other colleges within the same unit.<sup>12</sup>

11 The Department of Education, Education White Paper 5 (Johannesburg, August 1999), pp 13-16, 18-24, 29-34.

12 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 12-13.

Every campus would have a manager (formerly a principal), but an executive nominated by the governing council would be responsible for the operation of the whole unit. This person would preferably be a retired businessman who would work from an office outside the unit and hold the title of rector. He would represent the unit in public and be responsible for dealing with the local industries.<sup>13</sup>

Highveld College (formerly reserved for so-called people of mixed origin), has been advised by the Department to join forces with George Tabor, Malapo and Dobsonville. Highveld College has four outlets and has 1800 students. The main campus is situated at Langlaagte, next to Soweto, in a former white trade school, while its other campuses are located in Soweto next to the old Potchefstroom highway. Ben Botha, the principal at Highveld, was prepared to consider this option, but was also speculating on perhaps being appointed as the first executive of a planned "Greater Soweto College of Technology". With Highveld being the biggest college, Botha has every reason to believe that he might be successful should he apply for the executive post. Although he has indicated his intention to do so to his staff, he was cautious about mentioning this to his superiors.<sup>14</sup>

In the new dispensation the Department's role will be reduced to merely supervising the possible SAQA policy changes in the newly established "greater" colleges and paying salaries to permanent staff members. Bill Temple and A P Du Toit are still based at the Gauteng office to deal with the colleges in the region, but the autonomy of colleges will simplify the Department's involvement.<sup>15</sup>

The issue of when the transfer will be implemented and who will head the new "greater" colleges is causing delays and the circulation of rumours such as those surrounding Botha. Rumours have been circulating in Sowetan colleges since 1994 and therefore it is difficult to speculate about the future. The NBI report could end the rumours, but only if the report is correctly implemented by the Department. It is therefore up to the Department to clarify the future of the Sowetan colleges and their employees.

13 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, pp 14-16.

14 Ibid., pp 4-5.

15 Ibid., pp 8-9.

A decision has been taken and the Department has accepted the NBI proposals in principle, but the recommendations have yet to be implemented. It is still unclear how the regional Department intends implementing the recommendations, but the new Minister Ignatius Jacobs, has said that every effort must be made to implement this by 2004. It remains unclear as to whether the colleges will cluster voluntarily or whether they will be instructed by the Department to do so. What is clear is that executive posts will be advertised in the press and granted to those individuals who are approved by the various governing councils.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

The future of job-related education in Soweto has hung in the balance for many years and the year 2000 is no exception. Foreign aid workers prefer operating from outside Soweto rather in the city itself and outlets are still preferably erected on the outskirts as Soweto is still considered as being unsafe. Business people feel that a new South Africa should provide for Sowetans in Johannesburg, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Carltonville instead of merely assisting Sowetan colleges.

In principle, attitudes have not changed, although people no longer hide behind excuses of prejudice. Foreigners who come to the country to help Africans usually avoid travelling into Soweto if possible, but many still refer to Sowetan colleges as "creations of apartheid". They shy away from involvement in projects in the townships and admit that Soweto scares them. White South African business people have been known to use the same excuse when being invited to visit a township college.

Soweto is home to about 4,5 million people which makes it the biggest location in the country, but despite being a part of Johannesburg, Sowetans still feel marginalised from the rest of the country. Many are of the opinion that even in the new South Africa they are being denied the basic services available to most Johannesburg residents.<sup>17</sup>

16 Interview with H Breedts, April 2000, p 15.

17 Interview with R Maiketso, July 1999, p 4.

Government officials who hail from Soweto are aware of the mood of impatience in the townships and hope to address the indifference towards the residents by integrating Sowetan colleges with Highveld or Roodepoort. Many departmental officials are of the opinion that to avoid any further frustration, Soweto should not be treated any differently from Johannesburg or Roodepoort. The situation has to be addressed and the prevailing opinion is that Soweto should be included in Johannesburg.

Most Sowetans are employed by the private sector near the township, forcing them to believe that the City of Johannesburg cannot survive without their labour. The general feeling in Soweto is that Johannesburg should foot the bill to keep the streets clean, erect more houses for Sowetans and help Sowetans combat crime. Sowetan school leavers also demand that Johannesburg must contribute to the upliftment of local colleges. They maintain that it is unwise to treat Sowetan colleges differently to other colleges in the country as they offer the same courses at reasonable fees. As in 1976, Sowetans want to be taken seriously and it is a matter of pride that demands the upgrading of Sowetan colleges to match international standards. The Sowetan Ratepayer's Association demands the improvement of their colleges.

Unfortunately business people and foreign aid workers ignore the demands of Sowetans because the fulfilment of these demands is not to their advantage. For the ANC government it is a matter of pride to be successful where the NP government has failed. For the public-private partnership to succeed, the ignorance and resistance towards Soweto has to be overcome. The NBI report suggests that the entire country must integrate on an economic level before the recommendations are implemented.<sup>18</sup>

18 National News Distributors, Enterprise, National Business Initiative (Johannesburg, July 1999), pp 3-8.

The new South Africa cannot ignore Soweto with its population of 4,5 million people. The expectations of these people have been ignored for too long, which could be the reason why the George Tabor Vocational Training Centre was not that successful. Dobsonville College is proof that with proper administration, job-related education can succeed. Dobsonville residents support their college by enrolling their children there and taking an interest in their education.

Dobsonville differs from the rest of Soweto as it has the distinction of being incorporated in the municipality of Roodepoort. The decision to establish the new college in Dobsonville was a wise one because most of the residents in the area are small businessmen, professionals, civil servants and skilled labourers who believe in educating their children. The exact location of colleges within Soweto is important. Workshop technology certainly takes precedence over academic courses at George Tabor, a college which is located in a poor neighbourhood, where this kind of training is more affordable. Before the establishment of Malapo and Manu, all the courses at George Tabor were in great demand.

Malapo catered for students who were not interested in either higher education at Dobsonville or workshop technology at George Tabor. The NBI report identified duplication of courses at the various colleges as a problem and recommended that Sowetan colleges share the responsibility of education instead of competing against one another. It was suggested that George Tabor promote workshop technology, Malapo commercial courses and Dobsonville higher education which would promote job-related education and accommodate most Sowetans in their own colleges.<sup>19</sup>

Although the report does not mention distractions such as shebeens, night clubs and video arcades, it does recommend the supervision of students by keeping them occupied with tasks. Outcome Based Education (OBE) is only successful in a situation where lecturers are dedicated to do their work, and are not being distracted by such entertainment haunts which are frequented by their students.

19 Interview with H Breedts, September 1999, pp 6-8.

The present South African Department of Education is using Australia as an example of OBE, where colleges are consolidated in the metropolitan areas of Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart, Launceston, Darwin, Wollongong, Townsville, Newcastle and Canberra, but still operate in the outback as they did before the implementation of OBE. The Department has realised that there is no miracle solution for the prevailing situation at Sowetan colleges. Dedication and hard work lie ahead.

The implementation of OBE by the year 2004 has been quietly dropped and replaced by a drive to educate college lecturers in mastering OBE before its implementation. In job-related education OBE is of prime importance as students learn while working and are permitted to ask lecturers for help and advice. This form of OBE education allows students to develop according to their own potential but within a specified time limit. They pass only after completing the given tasks (modules) which means that some students will receive their trade qualifications within eighteen months while others could take five years, depending entirely on each individual's ability. Final examinations will eventually be scrapped and students will qualify once all the given tasks have been completed.<sup>20</sup>

As the system is used successfully in Australia, local educators believe that it can also work for South Africa. In Australia, as in South Africa, distances between settlements are large and the area served by the colleges is vast. Accredited practical courses were introduced at these colleges as the demand for these courses in the Australian outback is great. In Perth, West Australian colleges operate an information centre which promotes all the colleges in the vicinity of the city. Colleges advertise only in local newspapers which cover the areas where the colleges are situated. Training and Further Education (TAFE) is generally promoted in the national press by the various State Departments of Training.<sup>21</sup>

20 Interview with H Breedts, September 2000, pp 13-14.

21 Training and Further Education, Directory 1998 (Perth, Department of Training, 1998), pp 6-14.

Colleges in Perth only enrol students residing near a college. An exception is made for those students taking courses which are not available at their local colleges, and those from foreign countries. Most Australian colleges charge the same fees, as the fees are defined by the Department of Training. Colleges are self-sufficient and autonomous and except for implementing accredited courses, state control is limited. Most lecturers are recruited directly by the colleges and sign contracts guaranteeing their employment for two or three years. A few of the old lecturers are still paid by the state.

Australian colleges are operated as private companies and must make a profit in order to survive. Competition comes from private vocational training centres offering the same accredited training at a reduced rate. The colleges are therefore constantly obliged to improve their training facilities and upgrade their standards of job-related education. Competitive professionals are recruited from industries. This pressurises instructors to upgrade their job-related knowledge to ensure their continued employment.<sup>22</sup>

A similar situation already exists in South Africa at private vocational training centres such as Chamdor, which was purchased by an Australian educational concern (Privest). A great deal of stress was placed on Sowetan colleges with the privatisation of certain vocational training centres near Soweto. Because colleges could not handle the workload, it became necessary for private enterprise to become involved even before the implementation of the NBI recommendations. The example set by Australian colleges has made a deep impact on the Department. In 1985, former BIFSA executive Lou Davis had already recommended the Australian TAFE (Training and further Education) model as an example to South African colleges.<sup>23</sup>

22 Training and Further Education, Directory 1998 (Perth, Department of Training, 1998), pp 4-16.

23 Building Industrial Federation of South Africa, The South African Builder (Johannesburg, March 1985), pp 8-14.

FET (Further Education and Training) is not new, but it could be of importance in helping Sowetan colleges become more competitive. If properly implemented, the system could benefit Sowetan colleges in the integration with Highveld or Roodepoort and Sowetan colleges could address the local shortfall in labour and thereby ensure the future existence of a Soweto College of Technology.

Although ideas on the possible future for Sowetan colleges are based on speculation at this stage, it nevertheless makes sense that in order for Sowetan colleges to survive they should collaborate with either Highveld or Roodepoort (or both). After many years of struggling to survive, this cooperation could be the possible solution for the continued existence of the Sowetan colleges.

With outside help, Sowetan colleges could certainly play an important role on the Witwatersrand by acknowledging the frustration in Soweto and providing Sowetans with a sense of importance in the community. Just as Vista University and Dobsonville College have filled Sowetans with pride, so too could the merger of Sowetan colleges address the demand for job-related training, thereby installing a sense of self-confidence in their achievements. Older Sowetans are still nostalgic about Tabor and would treat a greater college with the utmost respect.



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