

# FOCUS ON

Education can't be seen as separate from the wider society. In South Africa, education is part and parcel of a racist capitalist society. This is a society where a minority own the mines, the factories and the land. This minority, the capitalists (largely "white"), also own the labour power of the workers.

But where does education fit in? Schools are part of this unequal racist-capitalist system. Schools continue colour and class differences. In South Africa, people are forced to attend separate schools. The educational system prepares some people to become managers and owners, and others to become workers. So, in fact, schools help to keep society unequal.

## SCHOOLS

Education under capitalism creates and perpetuates inequalities. It is not by chance that people from working class families usually have less education, and poorer quality education. This education prepares people for the jobs they do once they have completed schooling.

In schools people learn writing, reading, maths and other subjects, but also beliefs about what is good and right, and what is wrong and bad (values), rules and ways of behaviour. People acquire not only the knowledge but also the attitudes that are necessary to fill their future places in society. Education has a different function

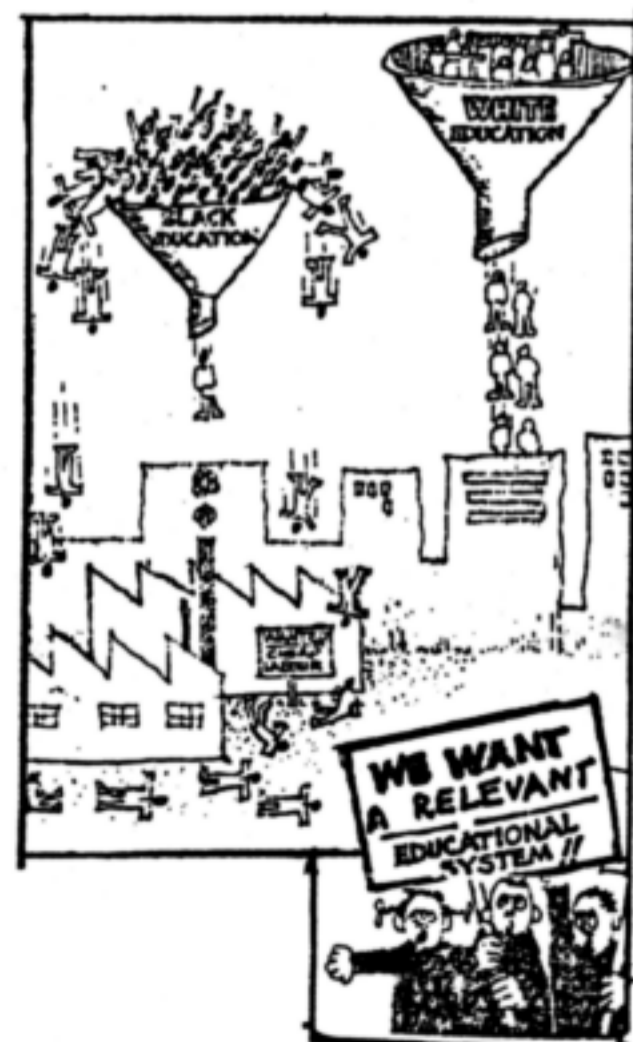


for different classes in society. For the wealthy, attending private schools, education is a training ground in leadership, an experience in exercising authority and making decisions. For most black students, the children of the working class, education is about the acceptance of the society, obedience, hard work, and an understanding of routine (doing the same boring thing over and over again - see article on alienation).

## JOBS

Students from working class families are expected to show correct attitudes and behaviour. They are expected to be obedient to authority and their place in the school hierarchy. They are made to be punctual and to wait until the end of the year before they get their rewards - that is, being promoted into the next standard. If students do not abide by the rules, they are punished. All these aspects of

schooling prepares or socialises students into accepting their position as workers after school, since workers too are expected to be polite, punctual, and expected to wait till payday for their rewards. Like students are punished, workers are fired



# EDUCATION

The highpoints in the heroic struggles of oppressed students (1976, 1980, and 1985), have shown the courage and determination of students in rejecting the present educational system.

## RESISTANCE

Important lessons, however, have been learnt. The first is that the class that is capable of effectively transforming society is the working class. Student struggle - must link up and support the leading role of workers. This can be and has been done in a number of ways. Students have taken up support work for unionised workers, they have also worked jointly with their parents on issues like high rents and high transport costs. Strong grassroots organisations, whether they are unions, civics, youth organisations, parents-teachers-student's associations (PTSAs), must be built and strengthened.

Secondly, many students have realised that resistance must be carefully planned. We must use our weapons wisely. The boycott, used indefinitely ("until liberation"), can become destructive.

Serious people in the liberation struggle have also realised that they should work democratically and not impose views and actions onto their fellow oppressed. We can't afford sectarianism and in-fighting.

Finally, students must grapple with political theory and use it as a guide to action. We must understand the nature of South African society and then we will know what to replace it with. This can be accomplished through study groups and alternative education.



## ALTERNATIVES

We realise that it is only in the long-term, in a post racial-capitalist South Africa, that we will have a genuine education. Yet in the short-term, we can attempt to turn the classrooms into centres of liberation. Schools are a site of struggle. We must not surrender this area to the enemy without a fight. If we

boycott indefinitely we'll be giving up the schools which belong to us, to the enemy. Together with progressive teachers we can challenge the authoritarian teaching methods and the content of the present educational system which is aimed at preparing our youth for the labour market.

*An example of alternative education during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe.*



**Nouns:**

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
comrade	comrades	gun	guns
enemy	enemies	colonialist	colonialists
people	people	home	homes
party	parties	jail	jails
soldier	soldiers	tax	taxes
war	wars	policeman	policemen
government	government	weapon	weapons
law	laws	leader	leaders

- Adverbs:**
- a) Sometimes the colonialists arrested the people.
  - b) We must always remember the heroes who died at Simons.
  - c) Everyday I think about the war of liberation.
  - d) Tomorrow I shall go home.
  - e) Last year we killed many enemy soldiers.
  - f) Yesterday we fought a fierce battle.
  - g) Now I am a good soldier.

**Adjectives:**

much	more	most
good	better	best
poor	poorer	poorest
happy	happier	happiest
cruel	more cruel	most cruel
brave	more brave	most brave
many	more	most