

# Social Control and Teachers

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Readers of WIP 2 will recall an article on the proposed legislation dealing with 'welfare' work, and the controls that this legislation will allow State appointees to exercise over professional 'welfare' workers, community programmes, fundraising, etc. if enacted. It was suggested in that article that the principle of those bills showed a trend towards an increasing centralisation and control in South Africa, which went hand in hand with the development of a 'total control' programme of a society in crisis.

A similar development has now taken place in another profession, that of teaching, and in many ways mirrors the trends discernable, which imply increased State control of the ideological apparatuses of society. (The overall direction of the Wieham Commission, currently investigating 'labour relation', i.e. ways of non-violently controlling the conflict between labour and capital, is another parallel development).

Now, legislation which passed through Parliament in 1976, has been made operative, and the South African Teacher's Council for Whites (SATC) has been set up. This Council will implement a number of mechanisms of direct and indirect control over those few white teachers who still see education as a creative, broadening process. There has been some criticism of the SATC in the moderate-conservative opposition press (Rand Daily Mail, Star, etc.), but this has largely focussed around the racially exclusive nature of the SATC - it is, as its name makes clear, for white teachers only.

Editorials in the Star, (7/2/78), Progressive Federal Party statements by M.P. Kowie Marais and M.P.C. Peter Nixon, and the Transvaal Teacher's Association have criticised the nature of the Council on the basis of its whites only label. This also seems to be the central concern of Black Teacher's associations like the S.A. Indian Teacher's Association. The secretary of that body, Dhama Mair, complained that the establishment of an all-white council constituted 'serious discrimination against qualified non-white (sic) teachers which would cause incalculable harm to the teaching profession as a whole.'

It may be that racial exclusiveness is not, however, the most important aspect of this new Council. Even if black teachers could be part of it, it would still be a highly undesirable development. After all, if you were a black teacher committed to a creative education process relevant to the building of an alternative social system, would you find it valuable to interact with the average white CNE- and discipline-oriented teacher?

There are other, more serious aspects to the Council which will further restrict the limited parameters of those few white teachers who are not committed to rugby, youth preparedness, Sybrand van Niekerk and the cane. These do not incorporate the rather quaint colonial-type view that it is the balance of 'English-Afrikaans forces' in the Council which is its prime undesirable aspect. (Some commentators have seen the SATC as being unfairly weighed in favour of Afrikaans teachers. The Star (9/2/78) writes that 'Educationalists in Johannesburg are concerned because the English-speaking teachers are represented by 7 members against 17 Afrikaans-speaking members.'

In reality, the cleavages between English and Afrikaans educational approaches are minimal when compared to the issues which unite them in one overall educational strategy, which serves to reproduce the fundamental relationships of inequality in South Africa).

One must rather realise that the Council has the weapons of absolute control over teachers. Registration is compulsory for any teacher who wants a permanent post in a state, or state-subsidised educational institution. This is legally enforced through the Act of Parliament setting up the SATC.

Membership of the Council (effectively compulsory for those wanting to teach in anything other than a temporary capacity) demands adherence to a Code of Conduct. Despite the fact that the Council has already registered at least 10,000 of the country's 46,000 white teachers (SATC claims 40,000 applications have been received), the Code of Conduct has still not been made available to teachers who are now bound by it. Although the provisions of the code are not known, one might speculate that they enshrine the principles of CNE, and loyalty to the dominant ideology/morality in South Africa. A draft code was published some months back, which, inter alia, bound teachers to

- +promote a Christian outlook;
- +show a love for his/her country which is beyond question;
- +refrain from criticising educational authorities 'unreasonably' in public or the press; contravention of this section is made a punishable offence.

Some educationalists have pointed out that all decisions of the Council, including ratification of the thusfar secret code of conduct binding teachers, have to be approved by the Committee of Education Heads. This committee includes all the State-appointed provincial directors of education. Naturally, it has been concluded by many that the Council will not even be run by teachers, but by the various government education departments.

According to a Mr. J.D.V. Terblanche, rector of the Pretoria Teachers Training College, and chairman of SATC, conduct of teachers will be controlled by a disciplinary committee of the Council, and this committee will have the power to strike a teacher off the register. This would effectively stop that teacher from being employed by anything other than a totally private educational institution; this is clearly a very strong mechanism of controlling the actions of teachers both in and outside of the classroom.

Terblanche also noted that the Council would deal with complaints against teachers forwarded by parents. One can already see little Jonny telling Mommy (who may live in Houghton or Triomf) that teacher said that maybe the Security Police maltreat detainees, and detention in solitary confinement was not very good for the detainee; or that sending people to jail for 5 years for possessing a minute amount of dagga seemed odd when farmers who assault labourers get suspended sentences or fines. Mommy complains to Council, teacher loses job. (Politics, drugs, sex and other controversial subjects are explicitly banned from the classroom by a Transvaal Education Department regulation. One presumes that means that discussions of certain types of politics, and certain approaches to controversial subjects are banned, and the Council will exist to enforce this selective embargo on discussions of reality).

However, let the reader not be fooled by the horrifying provisions of SATC. The number of teachers it will affect is pitifully small. Yet, despite the overall approach of South African education, a few men and women of calibre have survived in the nooks and crannies of the system. Many people can remember the History or English teacher who stimulated us enough to follow through a few issues sufficiently to question dominant ideology. No system, no matter how sophisticated, can perfect social control and suppress ideological struggle totally. If this was possible, change would never be a likelihood in the consciousness of classes (although, of course, changing individual or class consciousness is linked to the material conditions in which it is rooted, as well as ideological and other forms of struggle).

But the SATC, together with other measures being enacted in South Africa - not just legislation, but the narrowing of University parameters, censorship on an ever-widening scale, the complicity of newspapers in reproducing dominant misconceptions and misinformation - suggest that the mechanisms of control are becoming greater, affecting not just the actions but the very consciousness of those who live in South Africa.

The intervention of the State into ever-widening aspects of total social existence - perhaps a defining characteristic of a society in severe economic, political and ideological crisis - continues. Control of white education on a more thorough-going and systematic basis is now being implemented. This should be considered by those groups who call for Bantu Education to be scrapped, and total 'equality' implemented between black and white education. Perhaps white education in its present form is not a desirable alternative to Bantu Education, and that radical educational alternatives, linked to a programme of social reconstruction, have to be worked out by those educationalists who wish to be 'relevant'. At this stage, media has been effectively controlled (with a considerable degree of complicity on the part of so-called opposition media); labour, and welfare workers are now under consideration. The advent of the SATC extends the new forms of control into white education. Soon one must logically see new mechanisms to control Lawyers and University lecturers, as well as certain other social groups which may, by nature of their ideological instability, be receptive to certain ideas and approaches which run counter to dominant ideology in South Africa.

For interest, we publish below the composition of the SATC as at 15/11/77, together with the teacher's associations appointing members. It is reproduced from the official booklet put out to teachers by the SATC.

Representation on the SATC is on the basis of associations depending on the number of members registered with each teachers' association. On 15 November 1977 the Council consisted of:

Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging (5): Messrs J.D.V. Terblanche, J.J. Katzke, J. Steyn and Professors P. van Zyl and H.C. Maree; Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (2): Messrs M.J.L. Olivier and H.C. Botha; South African Association for Technical and Vocational Education (2): Dr I. Steyl and Mr C.D. Theron; Natalse Onderwysersunie (1): Mr E.C. Bester; Natal Teachers' Society (2): Mr G.A.H. Dale and Dr B.A. Dobie; Orange Free State Teachers' Association (2): Professors N.T. van Loggerenberg and A.J.C. Jooste; South African Teachers' Association (2): Messrs N.M. Paterson and J.L. Stonier; Transvaal Teachers' Association (2): Messrs E.M. Armstrong and F.H. Salmon; Suidwes-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (1): Mr I.G. du Preez; Saamwerkenskolevereniging (1): Dr J.C. Carstens; Association of White Teachers in Bantu Education (1): Mr D. van der Spuy.

The six nominated members are Mr M.L. Visagie (nominated by the Minister of National Education) and the five nominated by the various Administrators are, Prof. G.J. du Toit (Transvaal); Messrs J.A. Meiring (OFS); A.H. Gous (Cape); A.N. Montgomery (Natal); and S.T. Potgieter (SWA).

The Chairman of the SATC is Mr J.D.V. Terblanche and the Vice-chairman is Prof. N.T. van Loggerenberg. The Registrar is Mr J.L. Lemmer.