

What are these students to do? Earlier this year the Principal of Natal's White university offered to take in Black students who couldn't get into Ngoye this year because of lack of accommodation. Whether he would have been prepared to take these students who have been refused readmission we don't know. In any case the question is academic because his offer was turned down by the Department of Bantu Administration on the grounds that "such a deviation would be contrary to government policy".

Some of the expelled Ngoye students have apparently succeeded in getting into the other Black universities at Turfloop and Fort Hare, but a large number (said to be 264) are said to have been refused admission there too. So where do they turn now? To the University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa's only correspondence university? But UNISA has a regulation which lays down that it may not accept any past student from another university who

does not bring with him a "good conduct" certificate from that university. If past experience is any guide this is something the 264 Ngoye students are not likely to get.

Does this mean that the university authorities at Ngoye, supported by the Government, have put an effective end to the university careers of over two hundred students for offences which do not warrant their being charged in court, which are unspecified, which may be based on gossip, or false information, and of which the students have had no opportunity to prove themselves innocent?

That is how it looks.

If this is so one can imagine no act more calculated to turn these young people into even more bitter and intransigent opponents of the present regime than they were before. Anti-Whiteism will have been given an understandable boost and the prospects for peaceful change yet another blow. •

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOLS ON THE MOVE

By Jonathan Paton

I was very fortunate indeed in being able to spend four months of my sabbatical leave in the United States (September to December 1976). Most of the four months was spent in Massachusetts. I was also fortunate in being appointed an Associate of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University (HGSE). At the latter I spoke to several educationists who were researching into ways of solving school integration problems in the United States, and particularly in the Boston area, I shall be discussing their views on these problems later in this article. I also visited many schools, both private and public, and was a teacher and observer for fairly extended periods in two of these schools.

Greater Boston- Boston, Cambridge, Waltham, Brookline, Somerville, Milton — must surely contain the highest percentage of brainpower in the United States, perhaps in the world. In Greater Boston are situated Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston University, University of Massachusetts and Brandeis University, to mention only a few of the universities. In addition Greater Boston also contains many colleges, teaching hospitals and several outstanding schools, both private and public.

Ironically, it is also Boston that has provided educationists with one of America's most serious educational headaches — how to integrate successfully schools in poorer areas like South Boston and Roxbury.

I shall deal first with my favourable impressions of school education in Massachusetts. Two points in particular impressed me. The first was the degree of freedom that exists in many of the leading schools in the state. The second was the emphasis on administration by *local* authorities in the public schools rather than by some narrow-minded bureaucrats in some distant, verkrampste state capital. After the South African experience one is astonished after spending only a few minutes in many of these schools. Pupils are free to dress as they wish and no one is concerned about the length of boys' hair. American teachers were astonished when I told them that at several South African schools pupils were punished if their hair was longer than the length stipulated by the school authorities. The teachers were also shocked when I told them that corporal punishment was administered at a high percentage of South African schools. In the classes I visited there was, on the

whole, an atmosphere of trust and respect. Pupils were not afraid to voice their opinions and to express disagreement with the opinions of their teachers. Of course, sometimes pupils expressed foolish opinions and in most cases teachers tactfully pointed out the foolishness. Yet not once did I hear comments like "Rubbish, you idiot" or "Sit down, you intellectual spastic", comments which I have heard teachers make in South African classrooms.

Some South Africans may gain the impression from the description I have just given that at the schools I visited the academic standard was low and that discipline was non-existent. On the contrary, the academic standards were high, the pupils and teachers were hard-working and the atmosphere was relaxed. I must admit, however, that I have been talking about private schools and wealthy public schools, schools in which the teachers were highly paid and well qualified, in which the facilities were superb and in which a wide variety of courses was offered. The schools were also co-educational (there are very few single-sex schools left in the United States) and were situated in affluent white suburbia. An increasing number of black pupils are attending the private schools but they are still heavily outnumbered by whites. A small percentage of black pupils attend the wealthier public schools. A handful of these live in the area while a larger number from the poorer areas of Boston attend under the auspices of METCO, an organisation which I shall discuss later. There is no official busing of pupils to the outlying suburban schools.

I return to the point I made earlier about the local administration of public schools. As far as I could ascertain there are no syllabi laid down by central authorities, no restrictions on textbooks, no public examinations in Massachusetts. Teachers salaries are negotiable and are to some extent dependent on sums voted by local taxpayers. Though there are no official inspections of the kind carried out in South African government schools, many public schools request an evaluation every ten years from panels of experts. These evaluations are extremely thorough and schools spend months and years in bringing about improvements based on the recommendations of the evaluation committees.

I have dealt so far with the credit side of secondary education in Massachusetts. On the debit side, the City of Boston faces many serious problems, particularly in regard to the provision of quality education in the poorer areas. I am not concerned here with the failure of the City of Boston to desegregate many of its public schools for twenty years after the **Brown versus Board of Education** decision of the Supreme Court in 1954. Nor am I primarily concerned here with the racial unrest that has occurred at some Boston schools in recent years, particularly at South Boston High School. My chief concern here is with the decision of the Federal District Court in June, 1974 in which Judge Arthur Garrity ordered the Boston schools "to begin forthwith the formulation and implementation of plans which shall eliminate every form of racial segregation in the public schools of Boston." The court ordered implementation of the Racial Imbalance Act passed by the Massachusetts legislature in 1965 in which a school was to be declared racially imbalanced if it contained more than 50% black students. But as Ron Edmonds, Director of the Centre for Urban Studies at HGSE, has pointed out, racial balance is the worst possible form of desegregation "since it makes demography more

critical to decision-making than probable educational consequences." Edmonds has also stressed that in order to eliminate school segregation there should be "improved schooling first and desegregation second." This view has enjoyed considerable support from many black educators, including several Harvard professors.

Before I discuss the issue of quality education more fully, let me outline the existing situation both in the City of Boston and in suburban schools. The City of Boston's school population is composed as follows: 51% white, 36% black and 13% other minorities. Under the rulings set down by Judge Garrity 25% of the city's pupils were bused to 137 schools in Phase I of the programme to achieve racial balance. Phase II involving another 200 schools came into operation in September, 1976. Two areas have been of particular concern to the authorities. One of these has been South Boston, a predominantly Irish area. There have been several violent incidents at South Boston High School where white students have reacted with hostility to the black students who have been bused there. The other area has been Roxbury where the population is predominantly black. Many white parents have refused to bus their children to Roxbury High School. The school remains overwhelmingly black and has an attendance rate of not much above 60% .

In the affluent outer "suburbs" (i.e. in the Kloofs, Bryans-stons and Constantias of Boston) integration problems have not arisen. (The schools discussed earlier are situated in these areas). The public schools in these areas were not affected by Judge Garrity's ruling and have remained predominantly white. However, a small percentage of black students from Boston are now attending some of these suburban schools under the auspices of an organisation called METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity). METCO was founded in 1966 and is at present busing 2,400 black students from Boston to suburban schools on a voluntary basis. However, in no suburban school do the METCO children constitute more than 10% of the total school population. I spoke to the METCO organisers at the Lincoln-Sudbury High School, a public high school attended by about 2,000 students, including my two sons. The organisers were enthusiastic about the programme and claimed that the METCO pupils received a good education at the school in spite of the many hours spent on the school bus each week. But the superintendent (principal) of the school had a different view. He told me that the black students found it difficult to form friendships with the affluent white students and that the black students were in too much of a minority to compete seriously with the white students. In an article entitled "Racial Balance or Quality Education" Professor Charles Willie of HGSE states: "My own studies of community organisation suggest that minority participation of less than one-fifth in a democratic and free organisation tends to have little effect upon institutional decision making. A school desegregation plan should attempt to have a racial majority (Blacks, browns or whites) in each school of not more than two-thirds of all students. "Another reservation about the METCO programme has been stated in a report drawn up by a committee of Boston's black community: "For as long as the Boston schools remain pathological, it will be impossible to tell whether black parents participate in METCO to avoid Boston or because they like suburbs."

Plans to achieve racial balance alone are clearly not going

to solve the educational problems of the City of Boston. It is not only the fear of being a minority that keeps white pupils away from schools in black areas. Another important reason is that the standard of education in many of the poorer areas of Boston—with certain notable exceptions—has been poor. The exceptions are schools in black areas with outstanding educational programmes. These schools have been attended by whites from all over the city. The problem now, as many Boston educationists see it, is how to provide quality education in a larger percentage of the inner Boston schools. Charles Willie was one of a panel of four "masters" appointed by Judge Garrity to make recommendations to the court for improvements to education in the City of Boston. In the article referred to earlier Willie states that the panel began by pointing out that busing was "a phony issue". The concern of the panel was to "refocus attention from transportation to education."

One of the recommendations of the panel was to "magnetise" some of the schools which offered poor educational programmes. One "magnet" school would be paired with one of Boston's leading colleges or universities. This college or university would then be responsible for implementing an "extraordinary educational programme" in that school. Magnet schools would be open to all pupils in Boston as long as their composition conformed more or less to the composition of Boston's school population as a whole. Students who did not wish to go to the magnet schools could go to a school in their community district. The ratio of black to white pupils in the community schools would be similar to the ratio in the local community. As Willie puts it: "The choice would be between a magnet

school with extraordinary educational offerings at a considerable distance from home and a less illustrious school relatively close by." Some of the recommendations of the panel are now being put into practice.

I have no doubt that in a culturally pluralistic society there can never be both separate **and** equal education. If we wish to provide equal educational opportunity in South Africa then we will have to begin to integrate our schools. But quality education must accompany that process of integration. Willie quotes a **New York Times** editorial: "Integration must be made synonymous with better education." In the first section of this article I described education in suburban private and public schools. There is no doubt that these schools provide quality education for the white students and certainly for some, though not all, of the black students. I am convinced, however, that the percentage of black students attending these schools will increase in the next few years and that the problems I referred to earlier will increasingly disappear.

Obviously educational reform in South Africa is going to be a much tougher undertaking than in Massachusetts. And there is not much hope of radical reform under the present verkrampte regime (in spite of Dr. Koornhof.) Nevertheless educationists should be prepared for the great day of change. Let them begin devising educational systems in which there will be far more freedom for teachers and pupils alike, and far less bureaucracy. And let me quickly dispel that pessimistic note which I sounded a moment ago. Perhaps the great day *has* dawned . . . Strength to the courageous Catholic schools. •

MOFOLO-PLOMER PRIZE 1977

1. The Mofolo-Plomer Prize (named after two distinguished South African writers) will be awarded again in 1977—8 for an unpublished novel or collection of short stories by a writer resident in Southern Africa, or a Southern African writer living abroad. Entries must be in English.
2. Two type-written copies of each entry must be submitted to the Mofolo-Plomer Prize Committee, c/o Raven Press, P.O. Box 31134, Braamfontein, Transvaal, 2017, by 31st May 1977.
3. There is no age or other limitation for the 1977 prize, although the intention is to encourage writers who are not yet established in terms of published books.
4. The prize will be R500, donated by Nadine Gordimer, the founder of the award, and three Johannesburg publishers, Ad. Donker, Bateleur Press and Raven Press.
5. The names of the three judges will be announced later.

6. The organisers regret that they cannot undertake to return entries, although authors may collect their manuscripts after the competition is over. Nor can the organisers offer detailed criticisms of manuscripts received.

The Mofolo-Plomer Prize was first awarded to work submitted in 1976. The joint winners were Mbulelo Mzamane of Gaborone and Peter Wilhelm of Johannesburg for a collection of short stories, "My Cousin Comes to Jo'burg" and a novel, 'An Island Full of Grass,' respectively. The judges on that occasion were Mr Alan Paton and Mr Adam Small.

The Mofolo-Plomer Prize Committee
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P.O. Box 31134
Braamfontein
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