

# It's not inside, it's on top!

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One of the best known television adverts in South Africa is for a brand of coffee creamer. It is early morning. A befuddled white male South African is trying to make himself a cup of coffee in a half-dark kitchen and opens the refrigerator looking for the milk substitute. "It's not inside!" he bellows to his wife. "It's not inside, it's on top." she sweetly replies. Still befuddled he echoes her words, "It's not inside, it's on **top!!**" as he reaches upwards for the product. It is a parable about false assumptions, false expectations, and even naivety and stupidity at not seeing the obvious.

This paper borrows the image because it is also about false assumptions and expectations and about naivety in the new South African democratic dawn. And it is about looking in the wrong place for something and not seeing the obvious.

Now, ten years after its first democratic elections, the country becomes a fascinating case study<sup>1</sup> of the degree to which the many adults excluded in the past from access to education and training can be de-marginalised through bureaucratically driven educational policy and implementation initiatives within the context of a country that has opened its doors to economic globalisation with its prescriptions for the societies it overwhelms.

## The discarded people

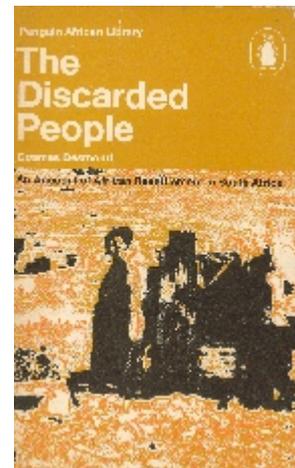
South Africa is, of course the country made notorious by its institutionalisation of racial discrimination and segregation. South Africa honed to a fine art the classification of people on the basis of their supposed "race", structured their society to create and take political and economic advantage of a hierarchical ordering of these "races", "ethnically cleansed" vast swathes of geographical territory for similar and more psychotic reasons, and generally made it difficult for people lower down the racial pyramid to have full access to many of the benefits of a modern society. Education was seen as a particularly chief benefit of modernisation, particularly as it

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<sup>1</sup> Because of South Africa's racially divided past and its current affirmative action or so-called "equity" policies which has led to the retention of racial categorisation, it is paradise for researchers intent on examining the interactions of educational variables with those of "race" and ethnicity.

(in principle at least) enabled escape from the handicaps and hindrances of birth and social position. So, in a country that deliberately marginalised the majority of the population, one of the strongest motifs of its struggle for freedom was to open the doors of learning to all.

Apartheid era South Africa was also one of the great innovators in the ultimate form of marginalisation – discarding. It discovered that it could discard “surplus” people. One of the classic books that exposed the horror of apartheid practice was Cosmas Desmond’s *The discarded people* that described how several million Africans were removed from their homes in land that had been declared “white” They were categorised as ‘superfluous’ and ‘unproductive’. They were not needed in white cities, towns and farming areas. Declared aliens in the land of their birth they were dumped in remote rural slums, areas for which the government took no responsibility. Whoever was not seen as useful to the ‘European labour market’ – the aged, the unfit, widows, women with dependent children and families, and even professionals such as doctors, attorneys, agents, traders, industrialists, and so on who were “not essential for serving their compatriots in the European areas” – or who were in areas seen as “badly situated” were discarded. A circular from this time is summarised by Desmond (p. 39):



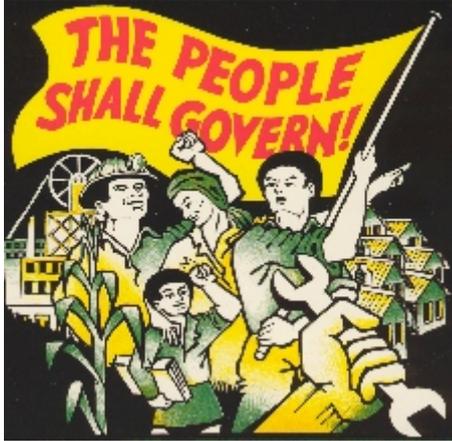
The circular deals also with the procedures for removing people. The ‘superfluous’ Africans from White urban areas will be sent normally to townships referred to under (b) or the ‘denser residential areas’ under (c). They will continue to draw any pension which they may be eligible for. Supplementary rations may be provided. In the case of widows and women with dependent children who are still ‘fit for employment but have no income, opportunities of employment must either be created or they must be provided with rations. The latter is an undesirable principle and must be avoided as far as possible. Consequently work must be provided for these persons, no matter of how inferior a nature, such as cleaning streets, laying out and weeding sidewalks, planting and watering trees alongside the streets and cleaning cemeteries.... The cash wages of the breadwinner must preferably be the same throughout and it should not exceed R5 per month’ (about £3).

Little did we know that 35 years later the global economy that we had rejoined with such alacrity would be discarding surplus people on a universal scale that rendered our own attempts at inhumanity pitifully amateurish by comparison.

## Opening the doors

At the time of “the struggle”, democrats in South Africa wanted to batter down the doors of exclusion and let everybody inside to enjoy the resources. The best expression of this intention and dream was *The Freedom Charter* adopted in 1955 at the Congress of the People at Kliptown, near South Africa’s largest city, Johannesburg. The Freedom Charter became the programmatic statement for the

alliance of political and trade union movements that now govern South Africa's new democracy. In its nine sections the following propositions were announced:



The people shall govern!  
All national groups shall have equal rights!  
The people shall share in the country's wealth!  
The land shall be shared among those who work it!  
All shall be equal before the law!  
All shall enjoy human rights!  
There shall be work and security!  
The doors of learning and culture shall be opened!  
There shall be houses, security and comfort!  
There shall be peace and friendship!

Whilst this document is obviously dated by its age, its politics, economics and sentiments as well as seeming (from the comfortable position of hindsight) both naive and imbued with a fair degree of *hubris*, it remains something of an icon to South African democrats. In particular, its section on opening the door of learning is worthy of closer attention:

#### **The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!**

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

Reflecting the time of its genesis, the statement echoes the programmes of many political parties, whether socialist and or welfare state orientated, that saw the need for the state to provide free education for all (and where it was a scarce resource at higher level, provide access to it on the basis of merit not wealth). Knowledge is unambiguously seen as a social good that should be free and education is seen in relation to culture and a caring society rather than depicted as an instrument for

training workers. There is also the idea of the mass literacy campaign which was soon to be seen implemented in many newly independent nations, from Cuba to Tanzania.

From our privileged position of hindsight we may see some of the oddities in the language about opening the doors, suggestive as it is that there is indeed a bankfull of knowledge or culture **inside** the structures of the existing order that the marginalised are excluded from entering. Post-Freire we are contemptuous of “banking education” (whether it valorises knowledge stored up in human heads or in books and artefacts (the quaint “treasures” mentioned in the Freedom Charter) stored in all too physical buildings and vaults). We are contemptuous of the mechanical transmission of knowledge and any idea that knowledge is not contaminated by its ideological containers and carriers. Our postmodernism (psychological if not philosophical) has dissolved all the walls – or so we might imagine.

But our own contemporary reality has its oddities too. They too bear investigation. With the massive commodification of knowledge in recent times, the walls and entrance doors may be less physically visible (indeed they may now be virtual) but like an open prison it is simply that the virtual walls now enclose our entire environment. There is literally no escape and we are all now irreversibly “inside”. And we new entrants discover that we have as little power over the “inside” as when we were “outside”.

There are ironies in the fact that for the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century much of our South African struggle was precisely with the intention of getting inside. We were career doorbangers.

## Door banging

The traditional way for the disenfranchised to get through the doors of learning was to bang on them until someone opened them (one thinks of the slow progress over the last couple of centuries of entrance to the university, firstly by the religiously nonconformist, then by women and then finally by the working classes) or to knock them down (the outcomes of which have generally not been terribly edifying because the new occupants have generally erected new doors pretty sharply). South Africa’s attempts to break down the doors of the separate entrances for the different “races” was partly a matter of a slow and grudging opening (in the period from the mid-1970s until the democratic transition in 1994) and partly a demolition job.

But the new barriers are already up: barriers that affront every principle of the Freedom Charter – education is **not** free and equal for all children, Higher education and technical training is **not** opened to all (government edict now caps enrolments to universities and the financing of a university education is increasingly difficult), and, the understandable desire to socially engineer redress for past discrimination on a group not individual basis means that entrance is **not** based on merit alone. Even for

those who get past the portals, what they find inside may lead to echoes of our early morning coffee drinker – “It’s not inside!” Somehow the place has been looted, what is there is not what we expected, and the question arises – where has the really useful knowledge stuff gone?

Door banging was not, of course, the only strategy for getting inside. Doors are often the most heavily guarded components of a building, where the curators are the most vigilant, the most officious. Adult education in the Anglophone world has its history of university extra mural studies where traitor academics would creep outside the university’s walls and share knowledge with the excluded – women, workers, political dissidents. Other strategies involve varieties of tunnelling and back door entrance activities (my own university became quite adept at getting round apartheid restriction on who could study at particular institutions). Other initiatives looked at alternative approaches to education.

For much of the 1980s there was a curious alliance between the doorbangers (the excluded) and the tunnellers and back door openers (the, to dignify them with the Freirian phrase, the class-suicides). And their co-operation raises issues related to marginalisation and de-marginalisation as well as the nature of participation of the marginalised.

## The alternatives

The advocates and practitioners of “alternative education” have a proud history in South Africa and, together with allies in related fields and in the churches, can be credited with creating South Africa’s current “civil society” (itself of course a not unproblematic concept). By “alternative” one means firstly, alternative to apartheid. Such initiatives strove to ensure that all could benefit from education and to fight against the educational exclusion of people because of their skin colour. They modelled a form of education that suggested that there could be another educational reality to the segregated one enforced by the apartheid state, by “the system”. Alternative education was precisely outside “the system”. Secondly, “alternative” often meant an overt or covert political message opposed to apartheid but camouflaged in educational language to avoid direct repression. Thirdly, and in a more commonly understood sense, “alternative” meant educationally or pedagogically different. It is in this area that adult educators came into their own because whether influenced by Knowles, Illich, or Freire, what they did was different, more interesting, more participatory, more effective than what was being done in conventional education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> At this time, in conventional education, there were a few pockets of resistance that adhered to a more liberal British public school and university tradition but most formal education was under the domination of a bizarre and reactionary educational philosophy called fundamental pedagogics. Fundamental pedagogics was decidedly antithetical to all participation and over familiarity between learner and pedagogue. The blessing of democratisation is that fundamental pedagogics has more or less disappeared from this earth.

Effectively what the ‘alternatives’ were engaged in was to redirect resources from “inside” (some of which of course was their own internalised educational capital) to “outside” use for the excluded and marginalised. It was hoped that these resources would also help to make for more effective door bangers and door demolishers. Indeed many alternative educators saw it as their self-appointed task to recruit and train new generations of door bangers.

The alternatives were active in many fields – distance education, human relations and group dynamics training, literacy, trade union education, early childhood education, rural development, human rights work and so on. One of the first organisations active in the field was the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED) which offered distance education tuition to dissident black students expelled from state universities.<sup>3</sup> Some churches imported group dynamics (T-group) training and its associated techniques from the United States of America in attempt to enable people of different “races” to interact together at a more human level. Finally, a range of literacy organisations started that ranged in ideological orientation from gentle conservative liberal to hard line ultra leftist. But what was in common with all these alternative organisations was the role of determined white middle class women in their leadership and their providing employment for a whole generation of black middle level leadership. It is the impact of the alternatives on this cadre of leaders that is most interesting and perplexing and raises important questions about marginalisation and exclusion.<sup>4</sup>

In South Africa, until relatively recently, education was genuinely perceived to be the, if not only, but certainly the most effective, enabler of mobility in society for

<sup>3</sup> In 1958, the Government imposed strict segregation on the universities (which had by custom if not by law in most cases been *de facto* segregated) and took direct control of the one black university, the University of Fort Hare, and from it expelled staff and students considered to be politically suspect. A year later a committee was set up to enable the expelled students to study by correspondence for United Kingdom O- and A-level examinations and then to take University of London external degrees. Thus the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED), an alternative non-governmental education organisation, was initiated to serve the needs of black students affected by the closing of the older universities to black students and by the takeover of the University of Fort Hare by the government. In 1965, David Adler, who had been the Director of Welfare for the National Union of South African Students (a non-racial anti-*apartheid* body) and later its Vice-President for International relations, became one of the leaders of SACHED. Over the next twelve years he was to transform it into what was probably the largest and most effective educational NGOs that South Africa has ever seen. The early experiment with the University of London external degrees was short lived and SACHED started to support students studying through South Africa’s own correspondence university, the University of South Africa (a large, powerful and interesting, if at the time racist, institution in its own right) and by running a secondary education correspondence college which produced superb course materials. SACHED, particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s is important because of its espousal of alternative education that was different from, and indeed consciously in opposition to, that run by the state.

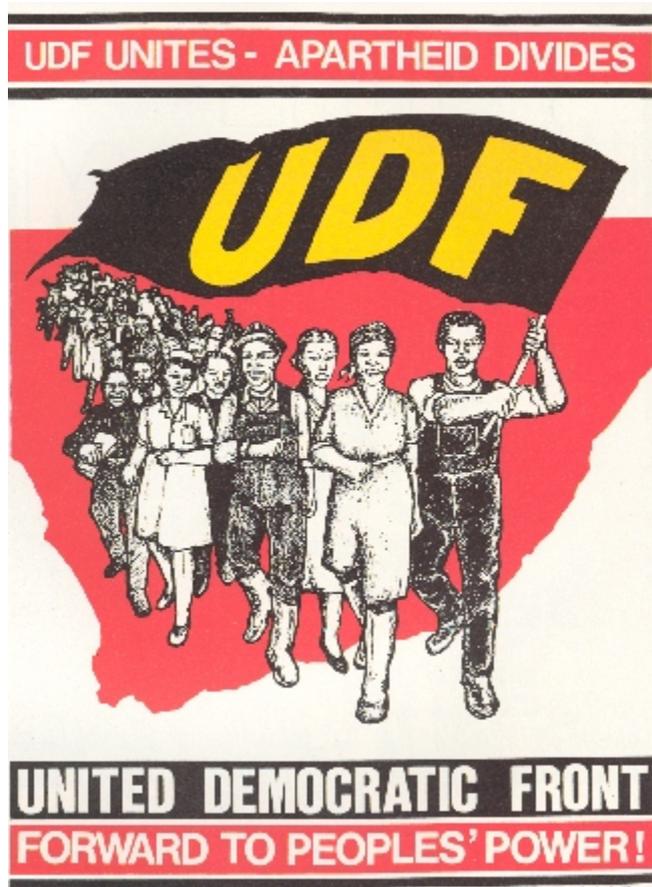
<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed history of this period see Aitchison, J.J.W. 2003. *Struggle and compromise: a history of South African adult education from 1960 to 2001*. *Journal of Education*. No. 29. pp. 123-178

black people. Whilst some of this was the result of the propaganda of educators – educators do really tend to believe that education is a supremely important good – education was one of the few places in which individual effort could surmount the disadvantage of birth. This was most clearly seen in the professions and para-professions where black doctors, lawyers, teachers and nurses could receive an education, albeit segregated, that was at least comparable to what whites received. Black people in these professions were the objects of enormous respect. There was no such development amongst black technicians and artisans because for much of the apartheid period such work was prohibited to blacks because they were perceived as directly threatening the white working class. The alternative education NGOs attracted forceful black men and women who, for various reasons had not got into the institutions that produced the black professionals (either because they did not have the right level of schooling or because they had been ejected from teaching or other posts because of their political activities). Here then was a symbiotic relationship. Radicals could connect with the political struggle and the masses through these mediators. The mediators and middlemen in turn received a living (which provided a secure base for their own political activities too) in exchange for their ability to translate, interpret and do fieldwork and perhaps most importantly, symbolise the excluded masses. It is important not to caricature this relationship. For most of the participants at the time it was intensely meaningful and, above all, made a real difference in the struggle. But, it is also a common enough situation to be found in any north world research, aid or development intervention into the south world. What was interesting in South Africa was the scale of this symbiosis, most of it funded by the do-gooder funders of the north, all intent on South Africa's liberation. Whilst one must not overemphasise the importance of this alternative education sector in South Africa's political struggle – the independent black trade union movement, later consolidated in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the black school-going youth in the United Democratic Front and the anti-apartheid groups in the North who swung business sentiment towards financial sanctions were the important agents – it was precisely this group of black mediators, middlemen and women, who moved rapidly and almost en masse into government (at national, provincial and local level) after 1994.

In retrospect, many of these prototype non-governmental and community-based organisations (NGOs and CBOs) were not exactly as participatory in their practices as they claimed and their connections with the genuinely marginalised and the really poor somewhat remote.<sup>5</sup> But, compared to what came to pass with the rapid formalisation of all education and training, they certainly were more participatory and more directed at the poorest in society.

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In the province I come from, KwaZulu-Natal, the period 1987 to 1994 saw a civil war between the supporters of the United Democratic Front/African National Congress/Congress of South African Trade Unions alliance and the revanchist Inkatha Cultural Liberation Movement (later Inkatha Freedom Party), the latter being secretly supported and armed by the apartheid regime. The alternative NGO sector generally tended to work only with UDF and COSATU aligned communities and people. The irony was the Inkatha's supporters were the really marginalised – illiterate, rural and poor.



## The gate opens in a Pyrrhic victory

After the installation of a democratic government in 1994, there was a massive exodus of staff from the alternative civil society organisations into the government bureaucracy. Indeed the whole NGO sector could be seen as the incubators of the new bureaucracy, a bureaucracy that would itself, the beneficiary of a de-marginalisation process, once inside and in charge of the institutions of governance and learning, throw open the doors so that all could come in. Well, ..., not really. That is not how it happened.

Some of the explanations for this are complex. The internal political opposition to apartheid was flexible, participatory, and fluid in its ability to wield an amazing assortment of organisations and movements into a compelling political force that at the same time could not be easily quashed by the state (as centralised political organisations could). The external political exiles had been, for obvious reasons, highly centralised and overly conscious of their relationships with the great world powers. It was with the exiles rather than with the internal opposition that the South Africa government had made the settlement deal. At the same time the world had changed with the collapse of the Soviet block and the apparent triumph of the market economies. The new government's international minders ensured that no

revolutionary socialist adventures would take place in the new South Africa – and after all there had been a series of trial runs in democratisation in the recent past as seen in the ending of the military dictatorships in Latin America and the ending of the Marcos regime in the Philippines, all of which, while restoring a semblance of democracy, had not threatened the new global world order in the slightest.

Foreign aid advisors poured in, all counselling realism and the use of the “logical framework”, ZOPP, and other tools for managing “development”. Slowly the whole apparatus of outputs and outcomes and indicators began to insinuate themselves into the progressive vocabulary.<sup>6</sup> Dismayed radical educators who had not succumbed to this invasion of the vocabulary snatchers, freshly liberated to travel outside the country were further dismayed to discover that adult educators in higher education elsewhere were under threat and increasingly re-marginalised in a world where higher education and its minor adult education offshoot was being transformed into an instrument to serve the needs of the workplace and being managed by the instruments originally designed to make lower level factor workers more obediently productive. It was the sort of language and practice that a few years earlier progressive South African had treated with contempt and derision. And so we ended up with the amazingly rapid demise of radical adult education over the space of a few years and its replacement by the South African replicant of the competency-based standards driven model of so-called lifelong learning that had taken over other countries and which signally failed to address marginalisation and can be argued to have significantly enhanced it at all levels (affecting both rural illiterates and urban youth excluded from higher education) as the doors of learning became robotised courtesy of the marketplace and Microsoft.

## Dissonant rhetorics

At least outside South Africa, in the era ushered in by Thatcher's and Reagan's economics, there was less self-delusion. In South Africa a very dissonant set of vocabularies continued to be used parallel to each other. The one vocabulary was about the triumph of globalisation, the omnipotent market, privatisation and the construction of a rational system for education in which all outputs would be precisely measured against pre-set standards, criteria and parameters. The other vocabulary was about the triumph of the radical liberatory socialist forces and how the people were being empowered and their previous marginalisation and exclusion ended.

This dissonance of rhetorics is seen most visibly in the new South African government's policy White papers on education, particularly when they talk of

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed analysis of these changes in the period and their causes and why there was so little resistance to them see Aitchison, J.J.W. 2003. *Brak! – vision, mirage and reality in the post apartheid globalisation of South African adult education and training. Journal of Education*. No 31. pp. 47-74

lifelong learning.<sup>7</sup> In these documents there are two discourses. The one, education for lifelong self-fulfilment as enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens is largely and self consciously rhetorical. The other, about meeting the needs of the labour market, is in fact the dominant discourse and the one which is valorised and actually to be implemented.

## Robotising the doors

South Africa's progressive educational leadership swung from cherishing the alternative to erecting a massively formal system based on standards and outcomes in which literally ever type of education and training would be assessed and certificated. It was the "diploma disease" become a pandemic. Although there were mordant criticisms from a number of academics who pointed out that the sheer weight of bureaucracy and surveillance and new jargon learning required would eventually collapse the whole structure, the system building went forward. As a system, impressive gains have been made, and extolled as providing articulation and equivalence and recognition of prior learning and sundry such desirable attributes which supposedly allow the previously disadvantaged into the system. It was such promises that indeed lured many educators (including adult educators) into giving this approach the benefit of the doubt.

What it meant in practice is that the resources went into the system building and the recruitment of a vast army of assessors and evaluators and assessors of assessors. The surveillance system was erected but little by way of resources went into lively and useful provision. A classic example of this is the system of adult basic education and training built on the ruins of a largely Freirian literacy movement. Within ten years most of the life had been squeezed out of literacy and basic education and the promises and plans for educating literally millions of the un- and undereducated reduced to sending a few hundred thousand back to school.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, recently the new Minister of Education had to concede, after the publication of a damning critique of

<sup>7</sup> See Aitchison, J.J.W. 2004. *Lifelong learning in South Africa: dreams and delusions*. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Volume 23, Number 6, pp. 1-28.

<sup>8</sup> To concretize what this means: South Africa has about 4.7 million adults (aged 15 and over) who have never been to school, some 16% of adults. Another 9.6 million have not completed primary school (grade 9), some 31% of adults. The culmination of the Adult Basic and Education system is the achievement of a grade 9 equivalent qualification. By the end of 2004 a mere 3,146 adults had achieved this, a mere 0.02% of the target.

Another interesting though probably unreliable statistic from the 2001 census is that for people aged between 5 and 24 only 26,480 were attending adult education classes (Statistics South Africa, 2003, p. 49). Given that adult education centre attendance is normally highest amongst young adults (who are trying to finish their incomplete high school qualifications), this suggests again that actual participation is minuscule compared to the number of the undereducated.

the government's mendacious literacy statistics<sup>9</sup> that the formal ABET system had not succeeded or reached its targets and had become "utilitarian and narrow" and "sought to make adults like children" – "we are teaching schooling!"<sup>10</sup>

Effectively, new robotic doors guard entrance into the hallowed halls of learning. Untouched by human hands, so to speak, new systems of exclusion enshrined in standards and qualifications and accreditation criteria for licensing providers, bar the doors, placing the blame for the failure to gain entrance on the learners themselves – who have not met the pre-ordained and clearly stated standards, standards which are essentially about meeting the universal demands of the global economy and which have no interest or concern for the life worlds and contexts and history and background of the poor, the marginalised and the discarded.



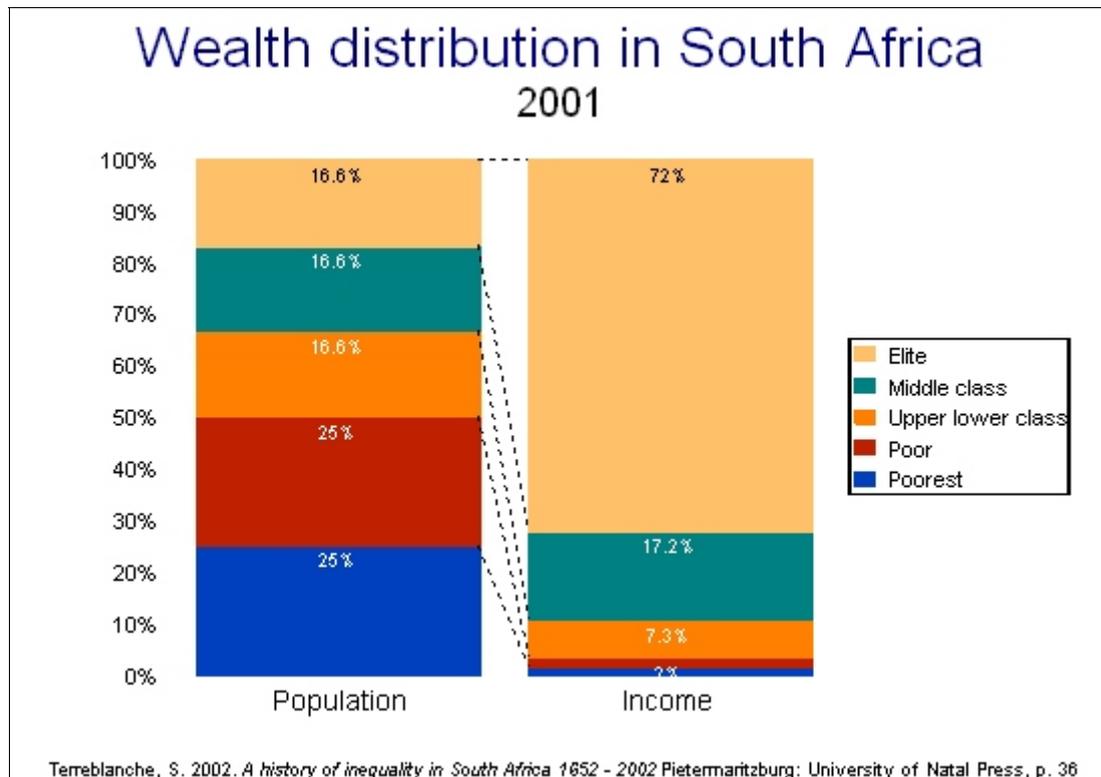
The harsh reality is that most of the poor cannot get in. The data available in South Africa on actual participation by the poor and marginalised is almost non-existent – largely because very few are actually interested in finding out and no resources are put into finding out. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Adult Education<sup>11</sup> is virtually the only body that has looked at the demographics and statistics of adult participation in literacy and an adult basic education activities.

And the world they are excluded from is the world that is dominated by the elite who have garnered to themselves the wealth of our country as exhibited in the graphic below.

<sup>9</sup> Aitchison, J.J.W. and Harley, A. 2004. *South African illiteracy statistics and the case of the magically growing number of literacy and ABET learners*. Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/cae/caepubs/JJWAAH04.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Aitchison, J.J.W. 2005. Report on the Roundtable on literacy and ABET called by the Minister of Education at Midrand on 29 April 2005. Unpublished report.

<sup>11</sup> The Centre for Adult Education of the School of Adult and Higher Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. (<http://www.ukzn.ac.za/cae/>)



## The invasion of the global memes

There is an odd diversion from evolutionary and genetic theorising that argues that ideas behave in a way analogous to those of Richard Dawkins's "selfish" genes – that they are like viruses (live or electronic) and they seek to reproduce themselves by infecting human minds and altering the behaviour of their hosts so that the ideas are re-propagated (sometimes in a newly mutated and better adapted form). Though undoubtedly a conceit<sup>12</sup> rather than a serious philosophical or scientific idea, it provides a dismally entertaining take on the rapidity with which the newly dominant global discourses took over the mind of South Africa's new rulers and elites and bureaucrats and university executives. It was like a massive infection, a plague that struck down nearly all and there was no immunity and no defences.

How did these new ideas propagate themselves so effectively? Why did we have no immunity to them? What was this virus, that turned our struggle for freedom upside down, that told us that the state could absolve itself of responsibility for the marginalised and discarded? What symptoms are these that could persuade people who for years had struggled against a harsh and oppressive "system" (in South Africa the actual name we gave in particular to the state's apparatus of repression – the political police, the army, etc.) to say that we were in the global system and there was

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In the sense of a fanciful, ingenious or witty notion.

absolutely nothing we could do about it. What infection could make socialists and proponents of people's education claim that retrenchment was simply "liberating workers into the economy".<sup>13</sup>

The meme theorists argue that there are some things that can protect one from infection (assuming of course that one does not want to be infected – some memes might commend themselves to potential hosts) and that these are faith, loyalty, and a critical sceptical mind, clearly virtues in short supply.

## It is not inside any more

Ivan Illich once said that "knowledge acquisition represents the finest, the most valuable, the most durable, the least expropriable form of capital ownership." In South Africa, as in the rest of the underside of the world, we are faced with the bitter irony that after all the struggle, all the suffering to blast open the doors of learning we enter to find the venue both looted and robotised. We can only enter the halls of learning if we have the secret passwords which require assent to the standards determined by our global masters. In the halls robots and trustees control us prisoners in the global classroom where we are taught what we need to know and only that.

We find, after all that, that real knowledge has been expropriated and is literally on top – licensed, franchised, patented, and above all, already owned. It is no longer inside, as our universities become factories for academic serfs who have to be "managed" and supervised and suspected. The barbarians have already looted the once pleasant kingdom of learning. And they are on top.

## Liberation of the discarded

The sorry state of adult education participation in South Africa as well as the sorry state of the collection of data on participation is, given the *modus operandi* of our current education systems, never likely to grow into anything meaningful unless it returns to a commitment to a different kind of society. Southern African adult educators and civil society organisations will need to redirect and renew their engagement with the people who are not active participants in adult education and civil society, refine their research so that it actually connects with the marginalised rather than already co-opted mediators and gatekeepers, and connect both of these with the unfinished agenda of South Africa's struggle for liberation.

<sup>13</sup> One of the luminaries of the educational struggle in South Africa was Ihron Rensburg who was a leader of the National Education Crisis Committee, After 1994 he became the Deputy Director General of the national Department of Education. A few year ago I heard him justifying at a public meeting, without the slightest trace of irony or self-consciousness, the proposed retrenchment from the state owned but semi-privatised state transport system of 15,000 workers as "liberating them into the economy".

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## Appendix

# The Freedom Charter

*Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955*

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**We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:**

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;

that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together equals, countrymen and brothers adopt this Freedom Charter;

And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

### **The People Shall Govern!**

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government .

### **All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights!**

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

### **The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!**

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

### **The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!**

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

### **All Shall be Equal Before the Law!**

No-one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial; No-one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official;

The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

### **All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!**

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;

Pass Laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

### **There Shall be Work and Security!**

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

### **The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!**

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

### **There Shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!**

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space to be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no-one shall go hungry;

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children;

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres;

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all:

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished, and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

**There Shall be Peace and Friendship!**

South Africa shall be a fully independent state which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;

The people of the protectorates Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;

The right of all peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all people who love their people and their country now say, as we say here:

**These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty.**

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