

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY AND POLICY-MAKING IN EDUCATION

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims at developing a theory about the relationship that exists between commissions of inquiry into the education for Blacks, and the policies adopted by the Government at various stages in the development of this system of education. There seems to have been a strong relationship between the various commissions of inquiry as well as their recommendations as measured against fundamental points of view e.g.:

- (a) their belief concerning the racial nature of the system of education in the country;
- (b) what they hold to be the aims of education for Blacks in this country;
- (c) the era in which that commission made its recommendations, and
- (d) the socio-economico-political needs of the country.

For most crises experienced in the education system for Blacks, the Government responded by appointing commissions of inquiry to investigate the causes of the crises and make recommendations that would hopefully lead to a solution to the problem. It was unavoidable that the members who constituted a commission of inquiry brought with them their own opinions and perceptions of reality. This would have an effect on how they would judge the situation, as well as the types of recommendations that they would make.

According to Van der Walt (1991:24-26) a person's worldview "... not only (descriptively) tells you what the world is (what you can see), but also (prescriptively) tells how the

world should be (what you should see)".

An individual's life and world view would also influence how he perceives the world and events that take place in it. According to Griessel, Fourie, Visser, Sönge and Stone (1983:101-104), embedded in an individual's philosophy of life are his values and norms, his aims and convictions. These would have an influence on how he perceives and reacts to different situations and events.

These authors also link the goal of education to the individual's philosophy of life. For example, Communists have a different educational goal to that of Capitalists; and also different to that of Christians. They all emphasise different aspects of humanity. These differences, then, would obviously colour their views on education and the types of recommendations they would make when an opportunity presents itself. Their views could well reflect their political, religious and personal convictions. This might prevent them from addressing the issues at stake effectively.

Seloane (1992:3) concurs with the above statements centered around the individual's philosophy of life by stating that: "All social problems have an ideological dimension. Your ideological orientation conditions you to see the world in a particular way. Your ideology provides a medium through which you see and interpret the world."

Education for Blacks is one field that has had a number of commissions of inquiry over the years, yet there is still a lot of dissatisfaction and controversy about this system of education (Education Update, December, 1992:1-6). It is ironic that all these commissions of inquiry have not achieved peace, stability and meaningful development

in the education system for Blacks as have been done with other racial groups. Could it be, then, that some of the commissions lent themselves to the criticism that commissions are frequently a government's way of obfuscating the truth. In some instances, there have been commissions intended (by Government) to pass the buck, to delay, to obfuscate and to mislead.

To overcome the problem of individuals in the commission imposing their personal views in their recommendations, leading to a general suspicion of commissions among some members of the community, it is suggested that there should first be consensus among the interested parties on the membership of a commission of inquiry and the terms of reference. If a wide variety of people is involved in the decision-making process, then many problems could be averted.

2.2 POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AS MEASURED AGAINST FUNDAMENTAL POINTS OF VIEW

2.2.1 General

Before discussing the various commissions of inquiry, it is necessary to examine the possible relationships between their recommendations and various aspects pertaining to education, with particular reference to the Christian nature of education.

Therefore the recommendations of different commissions of inquiry will be discussed and measured against certain Christian principles in order to evaluate them. This exercise enables the researcher to assess if the recommendations made by these commissions of inquiry adhered to Christian norms and values or not.

2.2.2 The relationship between commissions of inquiry and various fundamental points of view

2.2.2.1 The relationship between commissions of inquiry and their belief concerning the racial nature of education in the country

The problem of racial segregation as opposed to integration has been one of the dominant themes regulating the social, economic, political and educational lives of South Africa's multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.

Fowler (1987:13), in discussing the contours of a Christian education states that: "Education includes all that enables the human person to achieve fulness of humanity, expressed in fruitful relationships with God, neighbour, and the environment ... It (Christian education) will give as much importance to such things as emotional expression, aesthetic development, adequate moral norms, enriching inter-personal relationships, the experience of personal faith, care and concern for the environment, as to intellectual development".

The argument here comes down to that if Christian principles of education demand that the education system should promote fruitful relationships between the people and God, as well as their neighbours, then did the policy of segregating schools up to 1990 achieve this Christian ideal? If Christian education is about "enriching inter-personal relationships", can the system of segregating schools be regarded as adhering to this Christian norm?

In South Africa the problem of racial segregation as opposed to integration dates as far back as 1652 with the arrival of the Whites in the country (Behr, 1988:9). Behr believes that racial segregation and integration were two opposing forces. These could either keep the races apart or bring them together. To illustrate that in this country race has always been an issue it can be recalled that when the Dutch East India Company established the first school in the Cape Colony, it was racially segregated (Loram, 1917:46). In 1685 a special school for slaves was established when Adriaan van Rheede appointed a Cape commission of inquiry to look into the feasibility of establishing a slave school (Cape Commission, 1685). But later, because of a very low enrolment, Major General Bourke, Acting Governor of the Cape then, transformed that school into a hospital. In 1834 all slaves were freed (Behr & Macmillan, 1971:375).

The idea of having racially segregated schools came up again when the Cape Education Act (13/1865) was passed and made provision for the following types of schools: mission and private schools that were integrated racially and schools for Natives that were racially segregated. Later the Government passed Proclamation 388/1893 that empowered it to subsidise the racially segregated mission schools in order to encourage keeping the racial groups separate. Ultimately, the Cape School Board Act (35/1905) was passed and it officially segregated schools in the Cape Colony (Cape School Board, Act 35/1905).

In Natal, when the Legislative Council passed the law known as Ordinance (2/1856), the schools were already racially segregated. In the Transvaal schools were officially segregated with the passing of ZAR Education Act (25/1907). In the Orange Free State the Government passed the Education Ordinance (27/1903) of the Orange River

Colony that provided for the establishment of racially segregated schools (Loram, 1917:46-65). From an analysis of literature it is therefore apparent that, when the Union of South Africa was formed, it inherited a system of racially segregated education systems. Attempts towards integration of schools were made when the Union of South Africa Act (1/1910) was passed, placing all education systems under state control. The schools were already racially segregated by then. Also, according to the Act, tertiary education was placed under state control.

It is in the light of these developments that the two ideologies about education came to divide the people of South Africa into those who believed in racial integration and those who fancied racial segregation. These ideologies were also partly responsible for the political division that prevailed between the United Party and the Nationalist Party, though most Blacks looked at them as differing only in terms of the degree of racial integration they allowed (Eisenberg, 1957:43).

From this historical background, Eisenberg (1957:42) concludes that one could easily identify two schools of thought concerning the education for Natives. Firstly, those who believed in racial integration: supporters of this first view, mainly English - speaking, believed that: "... while recognising the insuperable obstacles to full African development imposed by the social environment, they nevertheless felt education 'should not merely follow the social order blindly' but by paying respect to basic educational principles and being just a little ahead of the present day needs and possibilities ...(should)... bring about that fruitful tension which is conducive to progress without breeding discontent and raising false hopes."

Eisenberg (1957:42-43) further explains that adherents of this view believed in a racially integrated system of education in the country. They looked at education from both a political and pedagogical perspective. For example, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Education League and the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans seemed to argue that the atomisation of education was an unnecessary exercise. The education of all South Africans, Black or White, was essentially a unified national concern (Education League, 1949:1). In its introduction, the Education League stated that: "We offer our evidence, then, as educationists whose main concern is with integration - the integration of the various parts of the education machine with each other, and the integration of the total system with the general life of the South African community" (Education League, 1949:1).

Therefore when this group of adherents was asked to give evidence before a commission of inquiry, i.e. The Eiselen Commission on Native Education (1949-1951), they almost inevitably suggested a unitary system of education in the country.

The second school of thought was the one that believed in racial segregation. The adherents of this view held that: "...while acknowledging the need of adhering to sound principles as far as possible, felt the overriding concern should be the direction of African education in absolute conformity with general Native policy" (Eisenberg, 1957:42).

Commissioners supporting this view looked at education primarily from a party political standpoint. They thus subjected education not to sound pedagogic principles, but to party political beliefs which embraced racial segregation.

The placing of such party political objectives above sound pedagogic principles was regrettable. Education should transcend party political divisions in any country because the political arena is volatile and subject to changes. Education should be stable but dynamic. It is impossible, though, to divorce education from politics because the higher the political tensions run in a country, the more politicised education becomes and the fewer political tensions in a country, the less politicised education becomes.

The people who believed in a racially segregated system of education in the country have summarised their beliefs about this in the **Beleid** of 1948. This was a policy manifesto of the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK), a group of Afrikaans speaking cultural organisations which set out to design an education system for the country in the 1940s. Article 14 of this document stated that: "We believe that the welfare and happiness of the coloured man rests upon his realising that he belongs to a separate racial group, that he will be proud of it, and that he will be educated on Christian and National lines in accordance with this conception."

The manifesto further stated that the education for Natives should not be placed on equal footing with the education for Whites and should not be financed at the cost of the education for White children. It emphasised that education should be racially segregated.

This division resulted in some universities (mainly English speaking) being regarded as 'open' universities as they admitted all racial groups; and others (mainly Afrikaans speaking) being closed to other races. It was only from 1959 onwards that other Black universities, with the exception of Fort Hare, were built in order to effect racial

segregation at tertiary level.

Since the late seventies the government has been committed to reforming its policies. But even given this it still asserted that: "... each population group should have its own schools, it is essential that each population group should have its own education authority/department. The need for co-ordination is recognised but this policy will have to be duly taken into account in any proposals relating to structures for central co-ordination and co-operation between the educational structures for the various population groups ..." (Government White Paper, S.A.(R) 1983:d).

Recently, the government has left the decision of having racially integrated schools to the parents of children in schools for Whites by offering schools four options, viz: "Remain as full 'status quo' state schools; choose to become private schools (Model A); remain state schools with the right to say who can attend (Model B); or become state-aided schools (Model C)" (The National Education Policy Investigation Report, 1992:11). Later, in August 1992 the government declared all schools for Whites Model C schools unless the majority of the parents were against it.

There seems, therefore, to be a link between the recommendations made by a commission of inquiry and its views on the racial segregation/integration debate. For example, the Eiselen (1949-51) and Holloway (1953-54) commissions believed in racial segregation of education facilities, while the HSRC/De Lange (1981) one believed in a single Ministry of Education. The impact made by a particular commission of inquiry on policy would also depend on whether the government of the day believed in racial segregation or not. These beliefs in racial integration or segregation corresponded to

the major political divisions in the country both among Blacks and among Whites.

Ashley (1989:5) supports the idea of there being ideological divisions in terms of education in South Africa, although he adds a third dimension to the problem. He believes that ideologies could be divided into ethnic nationalism, liberalism and liberation socialism.

The chief proponents of the first ideology were the Afrikaner Nationalists and their policy was contained in the 1948 **Beleid** on Christian National Education. They believed in racial segregation. The second group was referred to as liberals. These were mainly based in English-speaking institutions, according to Ashley. He suggested that they believed in schools being there to promote social harmony and they thus felt that racially segregated schools would exacerbate the social divisions prevalent in the country (Ashley, 1989:33). The last group of people were what Ashley referred to as the believers in liberation socialism. This embraced all the major opposition organisations that were more to the left of the political spectrum. Some of these people believed in the **Freedom Charter** of the African National Congress of 1955. They held a more socialist view of education. They believed that education should be non-racial and non-ethnic (Ashley, 1989:59).

Christie (1991:24-25), in discussing the ideological divisions in the country, also asserts that there were three main groups although she used a different nomenclature. She refers to the adherents of policy of the segregation as conservatives. What Ashley calls the liberals, she refers to as the moderates. Lastly, the opposition groups are called the radicals.

It has been stated earlier in this section that a system of education that espouses Christian ideals should seek to foster fruitful relationships between people. This can ideally be achieved in an integrated system of education in the country. According to Eisenberg (1957:42) it has also been admitted by the proponents of a segregated system of education that, that policy was not based on sound educational principles, but it was adopted because it served a party political need. Therefore a commission of inquiry that embraces Christian principles should seek to promote harmonious relationships between people and between races. Its recommendations would then align themselves with those schools of thought that believed in the integration of schools. It should be emphasised that an education policy should not serve a party political course to the detriment of its recipients and the country in general. The less the politicians interfere in an education system, the better for the citizens of the country. Therefore in designing an education system, sound pedagogic principles should override all other considerations so that a country does not end up with a system of education that has been manipulated to suit the objectives of a particular group of people.

Seloane (1992:6) concurs with the above mentioned statement in saying: "For maximum impact we need to transcend all organisational (and political) boundaries in confronting the educational problem.... It means that we have to recognise the fact that the future of our country is bigger than our individual organisations."

2.2.2.2 The relationship between commissions of inquiry and what they hold to be the aims of education of Blacks in South Africa

According to Christian principles as discussed by Fowler (1987), Oppewal, De Boer and Hendricks (1980) and Samuelson and Markowitz (1987), when considering the aims of education one should look at the child in its totality. The education system should aim at developing the whole child. If one accepts this principle of educating the child as a whole, one may contend: "... teachers will progressively guide young persons through intellectual understanding and insight to 'know', through moral awareness and commitment to 'choose', and through creative self-acceptance and freedom to 'participate' in the life appropriate to a Christian human being" (Oppewal, De Boer and Hendricks, 1980:9)

The central argument here is: did apartheid education enable the Blacks to not only 'know', but also grant them the freedom to 'choose' and 'participate' in, for example, the political process in the country? It would seem that mission education was unintentionally providing a base of confidence for people to make political demands, which were unacceptable to the Nationalist Government.

The crucial question then becomes: is it wrong if an education system makes its recipients confident and politically aware of their rights? What should the aims of education be?

The views held by members of a commission of inquiry are reflected also in their opinion on what the aims of education for Blacks should be. From the survey of literature it would seem that there are three ways of looking at these aims. Firstly the education for Blacks can be viewed as a system designed to protect White hegemony and privilege. One way of achieving this would be through 'limiting' the educational

opportunities of the other racial groups. This assertion seems to carry water because the Government had a history of unequal per capita expenditure in education for the different racial groups. The reasons it supplied for doing this were quite unconvincing. This left the education system for Blacks in the country fraught with so many problems that it was almost impossible for it to really take off the ground.

Secondly, the education for Blacks could be seen as serving a capitalist need for labour production. This need resulted in a class structured society where Blacks were relegated to the lower echelons of that structure. Alexander (1990:3-4) comments on the class structured society by stating that the division consisted of the ruling capitalist class, all of whom were White, and the working class. The latter consisted of White privileged workers who were highly paid and doing skilled and semi-skilled jobs; and Black workers who were unskilled and were consequently highly exploited.

The education for Blacks is seen to have been geared toward the production of sufficient labourers to satisfy the needs of capital. The restriction of education for the Bantu community and the Bantu child should be viewed against Robinson's (1981:22) theory concerning the levels of education. He asserts that: "In the sociology of education there is a macro level, within which education is discussed as it relates to the economy and opportunity structure, as well as the attainment of political ideals like equality of opportunity. There is at the same time a micro level where the form is on the context of a specific school."

The above view looks at education from a mixed socio-economico-political view. It is obvious, then, that education can be used to limit the development of a people in these

areas. Here, government seems to have found a need to differentiate between the education systems of the different races, at the macro-level and the micro-level through encouraging a segregated education system. This begged the question: Can separate ever be equal? "The debate about equality is fundamentally a discussion about values and secondly about means... though we may never agree as to what equality is, we can at least reach consensus as to how inequality is created, sustained and reproduced, whether or not it is necessary for the working of society and, more particularly, how schools affect the dynamics of equality" (Robinson, 1981:154).

Freire's (1985:170) argument supports this view: "...if a society structures its education to benefit those in power (it) invariably has within it the fundamental elements for its self-preservation."

It therefore became a vicious cycle in which education, instead of liberating the mind, served to preserve the classes that society had created. In accordance with this view, Horrell (1982:84-105) asserts that, to ensure White supremacy in industry, the Government passed the Mines and Works Act (12/1911), the Industrial Conciliation Act (28/1956), the Factories, Machinery and Building Work Act (22/1941), and the Bantu Building Workers Act (27/1951). These Acts were later repealed or amended through the recommendations of certain commissions of inquiry (Horrell, 1982:84-105).

The government had come a long way from job reservation and non-recognition of Black trade unions toward the Labour Relations Regulations Act (83/1988). There was nevertheless concerted action among the trade unions to have this Act amended, since it was regarded as a curtailment of the powers of the unions (South African Institute of

Race Relations Survey, 1989). With the election of a new government in 1994 there is an even more urgent need to revamp and overhaul the present labour law system.

Lastly, the education for Blacks could be regarded as a programme of mass education that all once-colonised territories had in common. This programme laid emphasis on more Black children receiving at least primary education. The education machinery was designed in such a way that it attracted a huge number of pupils at the lower levels of the structure. This is consistent with the Native Affairs Commission of 1903 - 1905's recommendations in which one of the Commissioners, Loram, stated that the main aim of the education of the Natives should be to make elementary education accessible to all African children (Report of the Native Affairs Commission of 1903-1905).

The introduction of the platoon and double session systems in the education for Blacks in the early 1950s as a result of the recommendations of Eiselen, almost doubled the enrolment of pupils at primary school level. This was however a self-defeating exercise, as the school lacked the holding power to keep these children at school longer. Only a negligible percentage managed to reach standard 10 while even fewer passed the matriculation examination.

Eiselen (1960:460) describes a three-point programme for the functioning of the national educational system thus:

- (1) only the state possessed the necessary authority to assume the task of linking African education with the traditional roles of the Africans.

- (2) Constructive educational work could only be properly carried out in African areas, where the ceiling on achievement and development created by the European competition did not exist.
- (3) The full development of the African cultural capacity called for the creation of urban economy and of industries in the African areas where ample manpower was available.

This was the line of thinking that guided the education for Blacks until the mid-1970s when there was an outbreak of riots in 1976. In the early 1980s more emphasis was laid on the need for equal quality of education among the different races, because the Bantu education system had produced an unskilled and unemployable Black labour force (Chisholm, 1988:387). There was a shortage of skilled manpower in the country. This signalled a need for reforming the education system despite the ideological beliefs and political inclination of the government of the day.

Buckland (1988:374) explains the shift thus: "This study of technicism in the De Lange Report also requires an examination of the ideological shifts of the ruling party in this country to accommodate changes in the social structure, such that the rationality of the technocrat gained acceptance in a political context formerly dominated by nationalist ideologies whose original stance was resistance to modernisation."

Put simply then, the products of the Bantu education system no longer provided the labour force that was desired by capital. If the needs of capital were to be addressed effectively, the education system had to be revised. Since technology was becoming

increasingly advanced, capital needed a technically trained Black labourer to be able to cope with the greater level of technological sophistication. Therefore any commission of inquiry into the education for Blacks had to recognise these changes as well as these economic needs.

There seems, therefore, to be a link between the views held by a commission of inquiry on the aims of the education for Blacks and the type of recommendations which they make. There were those commissions which emphasised mass education especially at primary school level for Blacks; for example, the Commission on the Education for Natives of 1949-1951. Such commissions insisted that Blacks should be educated to take up their leadership positions in the specially-created "homelands"; and others who believed that they should be included in the mainstream of the economy, for example, the HSRC/De Lange Report of 1981.

Commenting on the aims of the education of Blacks the Adult Education Commission (U.G.35/1945) states that: "The aims of all education are to teach the individual to read and write, to work effectively and earn a living, to ensure intellectual development, to promote culture and an appreciation of humanity's intellectual heritage, to be fit in body and mind, to enjoy recreation and to promote aesthetic enjoyment, to make social contacts and to extend circles of friends, to understand civic duties and privileges, to enrich the emotional life and to appreciate spiritual and moral values."

It was stated earlier in this section that according to Christian norms and values a child should be educated in its totality. It was also asserted that he or she should be taught to 'know', 'choose' and 'participate' in the "life appropriate to a Christian human being"

(Oppewal, De Boer & Hendricks, 1980:9). In the light of these statements it could be concluded that an education system should seek to liberate its recipients by developing a consciousness among them that would enable them to evaluate their lifestyle in order that they should know and understand what 'a life appropriate to a Christian human being' actually means. An education system should develop its recipients in such a manner that it would make it possible for them to choose how they would prefer to live their lives. It should enable them to develop the skills to participate in the processes that affect the quality of their lives. Saunders (1987:1) believes that: "In its purest form freedom implies that an individual is not subject to the arbitrary will of others and is able to make choices and to act on them".

Therefore, a government that embraced these Christian principles would not have objected to mission education as it (missionary education) produced learned Blacks who were willing to challenge the status quo. This objection is in direct contrast to what Oppewal, De Boer and Hendricks (1980:9) say about the aims of a Christian education system. Its aim should be to liberate the individual and allow him to make certain choices pertaining to his life and situation. If this was not acceptable to the government of the day then what were the government's aims for education of Blacks in the country? It is obvious that whatever the aims were, they were in conflict with the Christian principles discussed so far.

Sebidi (1992:33) comments on the government's aims of education for Blacks in the country by stating that: "So the aims of education are bound to be cooked up in the hidden corridors of officialdom far away from the sight and hearing of the intended 'beneficiaries' of that system and all based on reasons extraneous to education."

A commission of inquiry into education is therefore faced with a choice of embracing either the Christian principles of freedom of choice, or the government's prescriptive policy on Blacks. The recommendations made by the members would reflect the aims of education that were supportive of or in opposition to the government. Therefore, there could be a link between the recommendations of a commission of inquiry and the aims of the education for Blacks in the country. There were those commissions that were fully behind the government, like the Commission on the Education for Natives of 1949-1951 and the Commission of Inquiry on Separate Training Facilities for Non-Europeans at Universities of 1953-1954. On the other hand, there were those commissions that disregarded government policy and based their recommendations on sound pedagogic principles like the HSRC/De Lange Commission of 1981. As a result, most of the recommendations that this latter Commission made were unacceptable to the government of that time.

2.2.2.3 The relationship between commissions of inquiry and the historic era in which the commission made its recommendations

There seems to be a relationship between the recommendations of a commission of inquiry and the historic era in which they are made. It is an undisputable fact that education is dynamic, but there are also certain aspects of it that remain constant. It has also been stated earlier that the education of a nation should transcend the party political divisions that obtain in a country. In discussing this dynamic nature of education, Fowler (1987:89) argues that: "God neither created a static world decreed to remain forever just as He first created it, nor did He create a world subject to change and turn it over to be shaped and developed at the will of the creature. He created a world that would develop and change but only according to the ordinance of the

Creator".

The main argument here is: should education be subjected to the political beliefs of the ruling party, which according to the arguments presented above were not based on Christian principles, or should there be a historico-cultural continuity in education that surpasses the racial divisions as well as any other pedagogically irrelevant divisions in the country? If an education system were tied to a particular policy adopted by a particular political party, and if a commission of inquiry served a particular political party's objectives, then there would be a link between the era in which the party ruled and the recommendations that would be made by the commission of inquiry in question.

The era which began with the Nationalist Party take-over of government in 1948 and terminated in the mid-1970s can be regarded as one where apartheid laws were vigorously enforced. In this period, there were segregation of races in schools, hospitals, residences, public amenities, industry and elsewhere. The government did not tolerate any opposition to its policies. Dissatisfaction about these policies caused strikes, boycotts, marches and violence (Horrell, 1971:21-25). From a survey of newspaper articles on the issue, it is clear that the pursuit of the policy of apartheid led to the isolation of South Africa by the international world through economic sanctions, sports and cultural boycotts. This brought unbearable pressure on government to pursue a programme of reform. The country was becoming ungovernable, as law and order were undermined in the pursuit of political goals by organisations such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), African National Congress (ANC) and others (Tshwete, June 1990). There was intolerable pressure on the government to reconsider its racist policies.

Buckland (1988:374-375) summarises the shift in policy that affected the system of education for Blacks by claiming the following: In 1948, when the Nationalist government came into power it sought to address the needs of the White section of the population above all others. In the 1960s the government pursued what Buckland calls the 'policies of security' as it sought to establish itself and its policies. The 1970s saw the emergence of 'international economic turmoil and insecurity', instability in labour relations, a deterioration of standards in social security, industrial strikes and much social unrest. These presented the government with a dilemma in terms of the pursuit of its policies. There had to be a choice, as Buckland sees it, between modernisation and nationalism. Any shift in the policy of the government would also affect the education system of the country.

The relationship between a shift in state policy and education in a country is summarised by the Education Group of the Centre for Contemporary Studies (1981:31-32) as follows: "... the needs of a capitalist industry exercise a major influence on the structure of the education system. This influence operates in a number of ways: through the commitment of the government to secure national economic goals in capitalist business, through political pressures exercised by representatives of capitalist business, through the structural over-representation of dominant interest in the apparatuses of the state."

Therefore, because of these changes in policy and the economic pressure on the government, the Bantu Education Act(47/1953) had to be and was replaced by the Education and Training Act (90/1979). This was the beginning of a new era in South Africa - an era of pragmatism where the untenable discriminatory policies of the

government were recognised (Kane-Berman, 1989). The government acknowledged that the apartheid system was doomed to failure. It also acknowledged that the Blacks were a permanent feature of the urban areas and could not be forced to live in the 'homelands'. It acknowledged therefore that there was a need for the education of Blacks to be reformed so that it could prepare its recipients to take up meaningful positions in the mainstream of the economy.

Schlemmer (1992:26) describes the education system for Blacks in the country in this way: "Since the traumatic protests in the mid 1970s, education has been one of South Africa's political battlegrounds. Fifteen years of acrimonious exchange, protests by pupils and teachers, boycotts and playground terror have produced a range of consequences. The state education authorities have been pushed into defensive reforms and increased spending on education."

It therefore becomes necessary to differentiate between commissions of inquiry that were appointed during the former historic era where the apartheid laws were enforceable e.g. Eiselen (1949-51) and Holloway (1953-54). Such commissions tended to support the policy that the government adhered to then. They aligned their recommendations to the general policy of the country on Blacks and their development, mainly in the 'homelands'. On the other hand, those that were appointed during the era of reform showed an enlightened approach to the problem of the education for Blacks. They were more pragmatic than their predecessors.

There seems therefore to be a relationship between the historic era in which a commission of inquiry was appointed and the type of recommendations it made.

2.2.2.4 The relationship between commissions of inquiry and the socio-economico-political needs of the country

The issue of education serving the needs of the country is very closely articulated with the aims of education. The aims of Christian education should also be to serve the needs of the country.

Oppewal, De Boer and Hendricks (1980:15) are of the opinion that: "The degree to which all future members of a Christian community take their places knowledgeably, committedly and productively in their homes, in their vocations, in their professions, in their churches, and in ordinary human society depends in good measure on the Christian school's success ... much of that success depends on the school's choice of its learning goals".

The central argument here therefore becomes: in addressing the needs of the country, how can an education system also accommodate the needs of individuals in such a way that they can participate 'knowledgeably, committedly and productively' in those processes that affect their lives and situations? The government should strive to strike a healthy balance between accommodating the needs of the individual and those of the country. If the needs of the individual are neglected, then the country may end up with a dissatisfied mass of uneducated or socially displaced people. On the other hand, if the needs of the country are neglected then the government might end up with a huge unemployable labour force that does not suit the needs of capital. The match between the individual's and the country's needs has to be made carefully to avert the above-mentioned problems.

Historically, the match between the country's needs and those of the individual seems to have evolved as a result of certain historical events without much interference from the state. Education for Blacks started off with a slave school in the Cape Colony in 1685. The emancipation of the slaves in 1834 and the discovery of gold and diamonds in the country heralded the need for unskilled labour, according to the survey of related literature. Their lack of education forced many Blacks to go and work in the mines where they were most needed as unskilled labourers. There was a relatively balanced match between the country's and the individual's needs then because Blacks were unskilled and capital needed an unskilled labour force, while some Whites provided skilled labour. The economic forces shaped the system of education for Blacks. Presently (1995), there is a general skilled labour shortage in the country. It has led to the provision of more technically practical education for Blacks to address the needs of the country (Chisholm, 1988:387). Unfortunately, in pursuing its policy of apartheid, government had overlooked adjusting this match between the needs of the country and those of individuals, to such an extent that there is today on the one hand a huge unemployable Black labour force, on the other, a dire need for skilled manpower in the country (Chisholm, 1988:387).

Buckland (1988:383), in his critique of the HSRC/De Lange Report (1981), cautions that we should not rely on a technological mode of rationality and thus exclude all other modes of knowing. This would limit our perception of reality. He argues that: "... the technicist features of the Western mind-set which underline the technological revolution and the ethos of modernisation so serve the power interests of significant sectors of the dominant groups that they are accepted uncritically as 'rational' or logical".

Besides these economic forces, there were also political forces that helped shape the education system for Blacks in South Africa. These forces were characteristics of the battle by the White population to retain political control in the country to the exclusion of the Blacks. One way of doing this was through the control of Black development in the White-designated areas and the relegation of Blacks to the homelands where they could exercise self-determination.

Both the economic and political forces seemed to be making contradictory demands on the education system for Blacks.

Kallaway (1988:8) summarises this contradiction in this way: "There is a 'need' for schooling to produce a sufficiently docile, 'colonised' population to prevent the emergence of an outright political challenge to the status quo, yet at the same time, there is a demand for appropriate 'manpower' for ever-increasing mechanisation and technological sophistication, with demands of versatile competent Black employees capable of holding their own in the 'open' racial labour market."

In the early days of the development of the apartheid system (up to the 1980s), political forces overruled the economic demands. In the '90s the trend is to accommodate economic demands within the political structure and, if need be, to alter the political structure through introducing reforms. Therefore, the unbanning of organisations like the African National Congress, Pan Africanist Congress, South African Communist Party and others, and the release of Nelson Mandela and other long serving political prisoners in 1990 was a signal of the need to accommodate the political aspirations of the Black majority in the country. There seemed then to be a need to reconcile the

economic and political forces that shaped the society.

Phillips (1992:12) comments on the effects of the policy of the government: "The political manipulation of education in past decades led to a system which neglected, and often negated, the interests of the economy and of the wider community."

From the study of the recommendations made by the different commissions of inquiry, and from the dilemma that was brought about by the political and economic demands made on society, it would seem that there were those commissions of inquiry that emphasised the political needs over economic needs. Examples of these would be the Commission on the Education for Natives (1949-1951) and the Commission on Separate Training Facilities for Non-Europeans at Universities (1953-1954). On the other hand, there were those that regarded the economy of the country as being more important, like the HSRC/De Lange Commission (1981), Riekert (1979) and Wiehahn (1979).

There seems, therefore, to be a relationship between the recommendations of a commission of inquiry and what the commissioners regarded to be of paramount importance in terms of the hierarchy of the needs of the country. It is mentioned earlier on in this section that according to Christian principles the needs of an individual are as important as the needs of the country. Therefore a government should seek to balance these needs in designing an education system for the country. The individuals should participate 'knowledgeably, committedly and productively' in their homes, vocations, professions, churches and ordinary human society. They should not be oppressed. They should be given the opportunity to make their own choices and not

be channelled by the state to follow its policies. Therefore the suppression of the Black liberation movement was against Christian principles of freedom of choice and participation in the political process of the country.

From the arguments presented above it would seem that Johnson's (1982:215) observation of the evolution of education in South Africa is correct. He contended that: "... education in South Africa has developed hand in hand with the major political and economic forces that shaped the society's social structure".

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at exploring the fundamental as well as the historical relationships that should prevail (fundamentally speaking) and indeed prevailed (historically speaking) between commissions of inquiry into the education for Blacks and:

- (a) the racial integration/segregation dichotomy,
- (b) the aims of education for Blacks,
- (c) the historic era of the commission, and
- (d) the socio-economico-political needs of the country.

From both the fundamental exposition and the historical survey, it would appear that there were a host of factors that influenced the type of recommendations that a commission of inquiry made.

Firstly, the commissioners were influenced by their social class, philosophy of life and

the political opinions that they held. These were the intrinsic influences that coloured their perception and understanding of reality. Secondly, there were extrinsic forces that have been discussed above that also bore influence on the types of recommendations that they made.

Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate a commission of inquiry's recommendations by looking at its membership, especially of the chairperson, and the historico-cultural background against which they were appointed. This should be done in order to try and find traces of both the intrinsic and the extrinsic forces that were at play then. If the influence of these forces is found to be strong, then it would be easier to understand the impact that a particular commission of inquiry had on government policy and society in general.