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NECC

PEOPLES EDUCATION: LEARNING AND TEACHING UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY

the twentieth
Richard Feetham
Memorial Lecture
Delivered in the Great Hall,
University of Witwatersrand
on October 22nd 1986

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by

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and

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FIRST ADDRESS

Eric Molobi

Thank you Master of Ceremonies, dignitaries, compatriots, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the National Educational Crisis Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the SRC Academic Freedom Committee for inviting the NECC. Initially, when the invitation came through, we were faced with a difficult choice of accepting or declining. This was not because we thought the occasion an insignificant one, but simply because we are under tremendous pressure of work. Without doubt our communities and organizations are facing greater pressures due to the escalating crisis in education and other facets of social life. On second thought we deemed it imperative to come and express our views amidst this worsening crisis, a crisis which has evoked desperate repressive measures on a scale hitherto unseen in this country. We believe that this might well be one of the few forums that still remains open for the expression of opinions in present day South Africa - and even here one must be careful.

We are told that the occasion is in honour of Richard Feetham who was a champion of academic freedom. One may presume that the ideal of academic freedom is cherished by most or all of the people present in this hall tonight. Is it not ironic that this noble ideal of academic freedom should be a rallying point at a time when not only academic freedom, but basic physical freedoms lie writhing and crucified on the cross of apartheid and racial bigotry. Is it not ironic indeed to theorize about freedom when the very basics of democratic rights and human dignity are being daily trampled upon in the suicidal defense of a backward political system?

Even before we look into the unfolding of peoples education under a State of Emergency, is it not perhaps time to investigate first the traditional role of this lecture? We need to probe its past gains, and losses, in order to contrast them with present

challenges, hopes and plans for the future. This forces us to confront conditions in our country today. Let me give you but three examples.

First, a few days ago, an indoor, peaceful meeting called by students of this university was banned. Because of the fact that South Africans in general have had an overdose of bannings, not much reaction was provoked by that reprehensible act of encroachment - nay desperate flouting - of academic freedom.

Second, a mere few months ago, a second State of Emergency was declared. In the process, tens of thousands of people, trade unionists, workers, students, lawyers, academics and even children have been hauled into the dungeons and backyards of apartheid without any hope for a fair trial in court. Today, as weeks pass into months, only a few organizations and individuals remain vociferous against this evil infringement on and destruction of personal freedom.

Third, a few days ago, by a mere stroke of a pen, scores of schools were closed. Consequently, thousands of black school children are robbed of their right to knowledge and education. A whole generation of children, most of them from extremely poor homes, are now condemned to roam the streets in the townships at the mercy of armed soldiers in menacing caspers. Initially, the response to these unprecedented acts of repression, which threaten to throw a huge section of our communities into the stone age, was commendable. Yet at this moment only a few major organizations are still challenging these reactionary acts. At this point in the story of human civilization and development, when trips into the stratosphere are a common phenomenon, it is unpardonable for any form of authority to take it upon itself to consciously close all channels to formal knowledge. There can be no moral justification for this callous act. The doors of learning and culture MUST be opened to all.

Such actions as I have mentioned — and they are but a few of the vast number of similar events — have a common root cause. Even in this modern age, when human civilization should become a common denominator that united all living beings, we have in South Africa sections of our population who still cling to official policies that seek to invigorate dead tribalist policies and racial domination. Those who have access to state power in this country try ever so much to portray themselves as part of the modern world, a civilized people strategically placed to defend so-

called "civilised western democratic values". In reality, they are political dinosaurs, spilling blood to protect archaic racist policies. It is therefore impossible to think that genuine reform will germinate in the minds of people who cherish such an ideology. It is from this premise, backed by empirical data of detentions, States of Emergency, SADF raids, imprisonment, and so forth, that we in the NECC are convinced of the correctness of the axiom that:

Apartheid can never be reformed, apartheid must be abolished.

It is in light of these present realities that we approach our topic of academic freedom. We must begin to ask the question: Academic freedom for whom? Should we not examine the present criteria upon which knowledge and education are controlled and distributed in this country? Let us stretch our imaginations to the limit and suppose that we could achieve the much desired ideal of pure, unadulterated academic freedom. Given the social relations of South Africa, who would actually benefit in having access to the fruits of academic freedom? Would the mother who leaves her home at 5.30 am every morning to travel to work benefit? Would the unemployed father, whose humiliation has been made complete, see any advantage in it? Would it perhaps benefit the teenager, whose academic life was destroyed even before it had the chance to blossom? Would it perhaps benefit the category of intellectuals, lawyers and academics, and would they enjoy it without a touch of a guilty conscience?

Academic freedom has to relate to wider social freedom. The latter must form the basis for the former. To state the necessity of linking the two creates a situation of great shock for traditional academic liberals, whose conception of academic freedom is a nebulous, vague, and undefined freedom — one that starts and ends within the protected walls of their lecture rooms. This conception of academic freedom is questionable because it fails to see itself as an integral part of social life. It is questionable because it has the potential of drawing the universities further and further away from the communities that need them the most. Carried along in this fashion, universities will turn into irrelevant white elephants.

An additional problem with this vague conception of academic freedom is that it fails to understand that freedom is for other

communities a **tangible concept**, something highly desired and felt close at hand. It is a social stage derived from societal development that moves human relations from a lower to a higher stage. Depending on which side of the social ladder one is, academic freedom can either remain a concept whose sole purpose is to quench the intellectual thirst of well-fed middle class academics, or it can become an integral part of meaningful events that seek to bring about qualitative change in the relations that order our society. Here lies the reasons that have given prominence to recent events at UCT and Wits. It is from this premise that we in the NECC understand the role of universities and academics in community issues. Needless to say, it is from this premise that we approach such issues as the cultural and academic boycott.

In a broader sense what we are really looking at is the fundamental question of whether any other meaningful change can occur in other spheres of social life if change does not occur in the very foundations of society. To bring the point home, is it reasonable to expect that universities such as Wits can experience total change when the very society they serve remains steadfast in the reactionary policies of racial domination? In short, the arrangements of power within these institutions invariably reflect the broader arrangements predominant in South Africa. The distribution and institutionalization of power, and the participation of academics, students, and workers, will not manifestly be different from those of the broader society. This equally applies to the content of education that will be taught in them - albeit with a touch of sophistication. The vast resources that have been built up in these institutions over the years are not accessible to the impoverished sections of the communities, they are not made available to workers and trade union organizations, they are not accessible to community organizations and their daily needs. Indeed, if we reverse the coin, we find that the influence of commerce and industry in these institutions is overwhelming. This is evident, for example, in the number of research projects commissioned by big industry and the state. It is not therefore surprising to realize that only big names can serve in the councils of power, the Senates, the Chancellorships, and so forth. It will be a historic moment when ordinary trade unionists and ordinary people who are involved in community issues become part and





sense that we understand Bantu education was formulated as a system to perpetuate racial domination. Peoples education stands in diametrical contradiction to Bantu education. Where Bantu education has attempted to instill an acceptance of oppression, Peoples education attempts to develop a critical awareness of the world. It is an education of the future and therefore becomes a part of the struggle for a new society. We are therefore not shy to stand up and say that, with regard to change in this country, we are subjectively on the side of the democratic forces that work for a new order. People's education is therefore education for democratic people's power.

The struggle to democratize education in South Africa is ever present in the practical realities of transforming our educational institutions. Today, for example, the DET chooses a few obscure intellectuals and bureaucrats who sit down to design and impose their plans about education. Our position rejects this: planning and decision making must be opened up to all. This is an anathema for bureaucrats, individualists, and elitists who have known no other form of work than their own. They thus posit ridiculous arguments like: "you can't expect an illiterate worker to decide on the content and quality of an educational system". This is but a mask that hides their fear of losing power and control over others. These poor gentlemen can't stretch their minds beyond the present, beyond dominating, undemocratic and elitist practices. Such attitudes thrive in the mystified air that surrounds so much of what passes for education in this country. People's education therefore wishes to bring in the ordinary worker, the student, the parent, the trade unionist, the teacher to sit together with academics in deciding on the content and quality of our common education. In our People's Education Commission you find priests, students, activists and parents working with intellectuals to construct the content of a new history book and the level at which it must be introduced.

People's education hopes to remove the distinction between working and learning. Every child should take part in knowing what production is all about. Equally, every adult must seize every chance to learn whether at work or any other place. The beginnings of this process can only start by involving a democratic mix in the structures that plan, decide and implement education. We in the NECC believe that through such processes

we might be able to approximate that desirable situation where the division between manual and mental labour is overcome.

People's education realizes that there is a need to achieve a high level of education for everybody. When this is done it will only then be easy to specialize, that is, when every person possesses sufficient basic knowledge and is capable of developing further. At every level this can only be successful if we can replace the rote learning methodology of Bantu education with a methodology that promotes an inquiring and critical mind, which demands active participation by students in the very process of education. What comes to mind here are the principles and intentions of the Education Charter Campaign.

People's education is a programme that negates the divisive policies of apartheid education. A truly South African nation does not yet exist. The fundamental underpinning of the apartheid system is to categorize people into unrelated ethnic entities. Apartheid divides people who should otherwise live together. People's education is an education for people in transition. It attempts to explain through theory and practice that mixing pupils in sport when their education remains different, when their living conditions are separate and different, is an exercise in futility. With due respect to some of the intentions of such dubious programmes, viewed against the backdrop of crisis ridden South Africa, they are a shot in the dark, indicative of the ad hoc nature of official policies of the day.

It is clear that People's education is a bitter struggle and a necessary one. At this very moment, members of the NECC, students, teachers and parents are languishing in detention. Parent-Teacher-Student Associations are being hounded down. A great majority of our people have learnt the lesson of a semi-existence underground. SADF caspirs are occupying our schools, children are detained, many have been injured and killed. This is not an accident. It is the logical response from forces of repression. Two contending forces are manifest: freedom versus oppression. People's education becomes for South Africa an avenue to create a new educational system based on the will of the people and serving the people. The outcome will be determined by the concrete conditions that make up the social fabric of South Africa.

We in the NECC are not hoping to find a perfect prefabricated model of People's Education anywhere, although it has been

started in other countries. We believe that it can only advance through a baptism by fire, the scourging furnace of the South African democratic struggle, its temporary failures and permanent advances. Its ultimate and inevitable success will give birth to a truly democratic people's education. What we are involved in now is the formation of building blocks upon which the future will develop. It is in this light that we are able to say to academics and institutions of higher learning: the writing is on the wall for the declining old order. We are under no illusion that change is around the corner. Yet we can say with absolute confidence that apartheid has no future, Bantu education is a disarray. The future lies in all our contributions. We are therefore calling upon the academic community to join hands with the masses in shaping the future. There is a need for intellectuals to bridge the gap between theory and practice. As Marx has said:

"Social life is essentially practical, all mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice."

Let it be made abundantly clear that the choice to opt for People's Education is not an abstract exercise seeking the fulfilment of intellectual or sectarian interests. The choice emerges from the flow and ebb of social contradictions. The people are faced with an untenable situation of:

- *a mounting crisis that destroys young lives.
- *sustained vigilante attacks
- *an escalating undermining of human rights
- *the frustration of just demands that are unmet, and
- *a co-ordinated programme of resistance and organization.

What we are facing in South Africa today demands of all those who are imbued with the spirit of freedom to go back to the drawing board. How do we respond to a situation where all powers of the courts to deal with matters concerned with fundamental rights have been taken away and placed with officials or tribunals. How do we respond to a situation where the freedom of newspapers to publish is eroded? To a situation where the use of violence has continued unabated under the prestigious cloak of "law and order"? Where lies the thin line which divides the so-called legitimate violence and outright state terrorism? How far does the line of legitimacy stretch, especially if the vast majority of the people are without representation or consultation? Where do we go from here?

It is customary at gatherings such as these to mourn the death of freedom. It is normal that the government becomes the only blameworthy target. Conveniently, people forget that every human being is endowed with a spirit to value and strive for freedom. Should we let that spirit wane under the blows of dictatorship and repression? If we ignore our part in the struggle for freedom we have no business to be surprised by the tragic death of freedom. As Albert Camus would say:

"If freedom is humiliated or in chains today, this is not because her enemies had recourse to treachery. It is simply because she has lost her natural protector. Yet freedom is widowed, but it must be added because it is true: she is widowed of all of us.."

There lies the tragedy of the South African situation. So was it with the rise of fascism in Nazi Germany. How soon the bitter lessons or history are forgotten!

Finally, the time has arrived for all freedom loving, democratic and progressive organizations, academics and students to initiate a national campaign of establishing people's schools. While demanding the reopening of schools, we must go out there to use every church building, every garage, every empty room and available open space to establish People's schools to counter this traumatic, backward and reactionary policy of closing schools when education should become the natural right of every living human being.

A last message to the young stalwarts who daily face death in our townships: In the scars of your experience there seems to be an obvious message which continues to escape the oppressor, namely that only people who have no dignity can be intimidated. You who seem to say in the words of a Spanish poet:

*And if I fall,
what is life?*

*I already gave it for lost
when*

fearlessly

*I tore off the yoke
of the slave.*

Thank you all.

SECOND ADDRESS

"THE UNIVERSITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE"

MLULEKI GEORGE

I am greatly honoured by your invitation to address you this evening.

In the last few weeks the liberal universities, as we have come to call them, have felt the reverberations of the gigantic struggles that are rolling through our land. In these last few weeks particularly the University of Cape Town, and this university, have once again occupied front and centre page of the newspapers. I do not have to remind you that the focus of all this attention has been the question of academic boycott, and more especially the abrupt termination of Dr Connor Cruise O'Brien's boycott breaking lecture tour of South Africa.

There has been a great deal of anger, even hysterics in certain quarters. Some newspapers have treated us to phrases like 'Intellectual Terrorism', and 'Khmer Rouge kids take over universities'. Now, for us living in the ghettos of this country, this self righteous anger would have been much more convincing if the same concern was voiced for 'academic freedom' when South African academics, students and institutions were treated to a great deal worse coercion than anything Connor Cruise O'Brien encountered.

As I speak this evening, at least one senior Wits academic, and a comrade of mine, Raymond Suttner is about to complete his 5th month in detention in John Vorster Square. He, like thousands of other South Africans, is in detention under the emergency regulations. The newspapers, and supposedly liberal individuals who have worked up so much indignation around the O'Brien question, have been remarkably muted about Raymond Suttner's situation. Their self-righteous concern for academic freedoms has not embraced very much concern for the thousands of teachers and students still in detention. The forcible closing of over 30 schools, the ongoing military occupation of schools and at least 2 campuses, all of these matters are passed over in relative silence.

I am sorry to begin on a contentious note, but I believe that it is important to use this evening to speak out openly and honestly.

I speak to you this evening as president of the United Democratic Front in the Border Region, and also as a member of the UDF's National Executive Committee. The UDF has just celebrated, under emergency conditions, its third anniversary. It is hard for us to believe that we have been around for just three years. Looking back at our achievements we are proud, and frankly somewhat surprised by the sheer pace of events. So great has been the popular, mass based desire for freedom and democratic participation, that UDF affiliates have sprung up in the four corners of South Africa, in rural villages, in virtually every single township. All of this has happened often with very indirect contact from the centre.

Travelling through the remotest parts of South Africa, as I sometime do, you become aware that, at a mass level, things have changed dramatically. The little word 'com', short for comrade, 'hello com', 'yes com', has become national currency, a small badge of commitment and recognition.

It is just a sign on the surface of a more deepseated reality. Over the last two years, perhaps for the first time in this century, the white minority regime has lost the political strategic initiative. I am not saying that the regime does not continue to have great physical power, or that it is about to collapse. What I am saying is that the regime is devoid of political strategies, it has no workable paths into the middle term future, and even its closest allies are beginning to realise this.

Of course, the developments of the last two years should not be seen in isolation. In the last decade we have been living in a period of deepening crisis for the apartheid regime. This crisis was ushered in from a place that is both, physically speaking, close, and socially speaking many light years distant from this campus. I am thinking of the classrooms of Soweto, in the month of June, in the year 1976.

Physical closeness and social distance - that captures in its very essence the root of the contradictions in our country. It is a country in which there is systematic national oppression, systematic racial exclusion, but within the frontiers and framework of a single country and a relatively advanced economy.

All the flashpoints in our country occur along the axes of this simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of the great majority of South Africans. The inclusion-exclusion, this push-pull is found everywhere in our lives in education, housing, transport, citizenship and, crucially, on the factory floor. Consider the daily life of the black person in our country. It is life in which we are -

- included as students acquiring basic literacy and numeracy, to fill up the vast labour pool of the semi-skilled;
- included as consumers, to widen the home market;
- included as permanent, but so-called temporary sojourners in hostels and compounds;
- included on the factory floor as millions upon millions of labourers;

But at the very same time we are being excluded all down the line.

We are locked away in inferior and mostly irrelevant education;

We are excluded from the suburbs;

We are excluded from the central organs of government;

We are excluded from citizenship;

We are excluded from control over the wealth that we sweat to produce.

If you accept this general description of our country, then you will also understand better the strategies and tactics that have been deployed in the last period, both from the side of the apartheid regime, and from the side of the oppressed majority. Since the late 1970s the ruling bloc in our country has generally been aware of the need to 'reform'. Their own academics and social engineers have been sending them warning signals. 'South Africa', in the words of professor Sadie, the sociologist, "has too many people of the wrong sort."

What Professor Sadie means by the 'wrong sort' is, as he goes on to explain, "too many people from the third world, and too few people from the first." (These are the subtleties of neo-racism, they used to have blunter words for us in the old days!) What is more, as Professor Sadie, the Riekert Commission and all the other social engineering studies will tell you, 'the wrong sort of people' are, proportionately speaking, getting to be more and more as the years tick by.

Well, it was sociological subtleties of this kind, provoked by the huge wave of struggle from 1976 onward, that informed the

ruling regime that it had to address the question of 'reform'. Which is to say, the basic pattern of inclusion-exclusion had to be adjusted so as to perpetuate minority rule, rule by the 'right sort of people'.

Some of the resulting tinkering have backfired because progressive forces have been able to exploit openings. The attempt to accommodate and depoliticise the emergent trade unions is a case in point. In other cases, the social engineering has failed because of massive, popular rejection - in particular, the rejection of the tricameral parliament and the collapse of black local authorities.

Needless to say, the regime and its friends continue to tinker with our simultaneous exclusion-inclusion. They are endlessly pursuing confections that will maintain them in power, but take some of the popular (and international) pressure off them. The various federal and confederal blueprints, local options of all kinds, the national statutory council, all of these are so many confections hoping to stave off the inevitable, majority rule, in an undivided, united South Africa.

But it is not just the regime's strategies that are informed by the dynamic of exclusion and simultaneous inclusion. The range of tactics and strategies in the people's camp as they have evolved in the last period, in the townships and out in the rural platteland, have also been rooted in the self same realities.

The struggle in South Africa is one that, in some ways resembles national liberation struggles elsewhere - Vietnam, Nicaragua, Angola, Zimbabwe, Algeria. However, our struggle has its own specifics. The terrain in those other struggles over which battles were fought was mostly remote desert, rice paddies, jungles, swamp land and mountains. Our battle zones are much more within the fabric of civil society itself - the factory floor, the township street, the classroom even the church synod.

Our strategies and tactics are diverse, but a great number have inserted themselves into the inclusion-exclusion axis itself. It is here that the working masses of our country have exerted their own variety of exclusion, of withdrawal. The academic historians in the audience will please correct me, but I doubt whether historically any other liberation struggle has seen such wide-spread, creative use on so many fronts simultaneously of the boycott weapon. Consider the range of boycotts we have seen in the last two years: the election boycott, the school





All of this is not happening uncontested, of course. 20 000 have been detained in the current emergency, thousands have died. But none of this will stop the march to a democratic future.

I hope that you will agree that all that I have said so far is not irrelevant to the university. The university is not, and cannot be a neutral observer of the struggle that has been unfolding in our country. The liberal, English language, largely white campuses are, even if in a milder form, part and parcel of the white minority power structures in our country. When these universities have proclaimed their commitment to academic freedom it has too often been just that - I mean, 'academic', in the bad sense of the term.

The boat is one thing. We also need to ask about the water in which it floats. Too often the liberal universities have seen academic freedom as freedom from 'outside interference', without asking what sea, (or is it a stagnant pool?) they are floating in.

We can no longer be content with this attitude. Academic freedom must be seen within the context of the wider march to freedom. The universities must transform themselves from ivory towers into people's universities.

But what does that mean? Is it just another slogan? Or is it some dim and distant demand with little pertinence to the present? I would like to conclude by offering some concrete thoughts on this issue, if you will excuse some 'outside interference'.

The development of people's universities is not something we can postpone until after liberation, until after the new flag goes up, (as it certainly will) over the Union Buildings. Unless we begin now to discuss, and even to implement aspects of people's education, then the liberation that we win will be less secure, less significant.

What are some of the areas that need immediate consideration?

The first issue, it seems to me, is the question of the ruling bodies of the university: the senate and council. What is the composition of these bodies at present? There are people here who are better able to answer that question in detail than I am. But I am sure that I am not wildly mistaken in believing that on these bodies you will find government appointees, judges, captains of industry in fair numbers. In short, you will find the representatives of the rich, the powerful and, overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, of the white minority. The UDF has over 700 affiliates with a non-racial membership of over 3 million. COSATU has more than half a million paid up worker members.

Yet neither of these organisations are represented in any way on the ruling bodies of the major universities of our country.

How can there be talk of defending the academic freedom of these universities, when their governing bodies are themselves so thoroughly unrepresentative?

It is not just in regard to the ruling structures that the university needs to thoroughly transform itself. It is also in the more specifically academic areas of who is taught, what is taught and who teaches.

In regard to what is taught, the university needs to direct its students towards the future South Africa. It cannot remain, or pretend to remain, neutral on this score. Knowledge, even the most apparently technical, is never isolated from questions of power and control. Every aspect of the university's academic direction must be assessed, ~~in~~ and simply take its cue from the status quo.

To take one example. I believe that 97% of medical resources in our country are directed towards curative care, and only 3% to preventive care. The university in its medical courses cannot just dispense technical knowledge, while taking for granted this situation.

In speaking of changes in the content, in the curriculum of the university, the realities of time and place must also be more greatly understood. We are living in Africa, the majority of our people are African. As long as West European and North American institutions, like Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge, are the role models of our universities here, we will be severely disorientated.

Universities like Wits must Africanise themselves. I do not mean that in a one-sided way. There are many diverse cultures in our country. Each has its own contribution to make. But there is also an emergent, unifying, non-racial majority culture in our country. The universities must foster it, not stand in the way.

Of course, Africanising the content and orientation of the university's courses does not mean a quick cosmetic act. A few institutes or course options that feature on the front page of the glossy university brochures for overseas funders, but which merely mask the overwhelming prolongation of the old status quo.

If the what gets taught question is important, the who gets taught is even more significant. For how long will the student

body of a large, well funded institution like the university, be so racially one-sided, so unrepresentative? We know that there are government restrictions. But the fault is not only there. For too long the liberal academic community has been content to defend its abstract right to be open to all qualifiers, but it has done very little to ask questions about qualification itself.

With the massive social and economic inequalities of our society, qualification to enter the university is loaded. Every time a black working class child makes it to a university like Wits, it is a small miracle.

If the university is serious about academic freedom then it must increase considerably its involvement in the preparation of high school students in black schools. It must redesign upgrading programmes for high school teachers in these schools. In short, the boat must look to the water in which it is floating.

Finally, the university's responsibility is not just to its student body, actual and potential. The facilities, the libraries, the knowledge and information that are stored here must be much more widely available to the community. All of these resources are too often for the benefit of the powerful and wealthy alone. No crude signs Slegs Blanks/Whites Only need to be displayed, the sheer elitism of many university practices place it out of bounds.

The university needs to become much more available to the wider community. It must expand its programs of service, its research must be relevant and popularised so as to be useful to the wider community.

I have been rather prescriptive in my advice this evening. I have been critical of the liberal university in our society. Some may think too critical. I hope my lecture will be understood in the right spirit.

On my way up to Johannesburg to deliver this lecture, I happened to be sitting next to a young white person. He turned out to be a postgraduate student from another liberal university in South Africa. In the course of the flight we began talking. He told me he was busy completing the final chapters of his doctoral thesis, and that he was feeling completely dispirited. That was something I could not quite understand. He he was, after 12 years of schooling, after some 8 years of university education about to reach the summit of his studies, the completion of a doctorate - but my young travelling companion was deeply

depressed. He explained to me the reasons for his feelings, his sense of isolation and of the uselessness of the research on which he had spent so many years.

His thesis, he told me, the fruit of many years of difficult and lonely work, would only be read by 3 or 4 others. That seems to me a very sad state of affairs. An appalling waste of skills, talents and resources. But my young travelling companion assured me that his feelings were, in fact, quite typical.

It began to occur to me that my demand to the university to come down from the ivory tower and join the working masses of our country in their fight for liberation, is not a call for patronage from the university. It is a call to the university to wake up, to finally free itself.



The Richard Feetham Memorial Lecture

Richard Feetham was Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand from 1938 to 1947, and Chancellor from 1949 to 1961. In naming this lecture we, the student body, wish to honour him as a continual source of encouragement and inspiration in the struggle for the ideals of academic freedom.

This year the Richard Feetham lecture is dedicated to all those in detention without trial, especially : Chris Ngcobo, Bheki Mlangeni, Lawrence Boya, Nepo Kelana, Rose Grealy and Raymond Suttner, of this University.

On 16 April 1959, the General Assembly of the University affirmed their belief in and their dedication to the principle of academic freedom in the following dedication:

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO AFFIRM IN THE NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND THAT IT IS OUR DUTY TO UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLE THAT A UNIVERSITY IS A PLACE WHERE MEN AND WOMEN WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE AND COLOUR ARE WELCOME TO JOIN IN THE ACQUISITION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND TO CONTINUE FAITHFULLY TO DEFEND THIS IDEAL AGAINST ALL WHO HAVE SOUGHT BY LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENT TO CURTAIL THE AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITY.

NOW THEREFORE WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE MAINTAINANCE OF THIS IDEAL AND TO THE RESTORATION OF THE AUTONOMY OF OUR UNIVERSITY.