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Title: State Policy and Youth Unemployment in South Africa, 1976-1992.

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In common with many developing countries, youth unemployment in South Africa is reaching critical proportions. While the dimensions of the problem are not precisely known, studies of the 1976 youth revolt, as well as analyses of youth resistance in the 1980s, identified school-leavers with little or no prospect of employment as a central component in the form and scale of opposition to apartheid and apartheid education (Kane-Berman: 1978; Brookes and Brickhill: 1980; Swilling: 1986; Hyslop: 1988/89; Bundy: 1987). Faced with this situation, the South African state introduced various schemes and projects to soak up the unemployed, amongst whom youth featured prominently. The continuing rapidly escalating levels of unemployment amongst school-leavers are testimony to the failure of these schemes. In a context where the need to intervene and reshape the economic, social and political configuration of youth is perceived as an urgent priority by social and political actors across the board, these need to be examined, and alternatives posed.

The Dimensions of Youth Unemployment, 1976-1992

Youth unemployment in South Africa has been both a structural and a social occurrence. One of the most significant studies of youth unemployment between 1976 and 1989 is that by Hyslop (1988/89), who has shown quite convincingly that employment opportunities for black people have stagnated at the same time as the numbers of black youth passing through the school system have soared. The black school-going population has roughly doubled in the last decade, with the numbers in secondary school almost quadrupling. State expansion of secondary and technical education has not kept pace with the demographic explosion of black youth, although it has effectively masked and kept at bay the full magnitude of the problem (Donaldson: 1992). Racial inequalities in schooling coupled with the inefficiency of the Department of Education and Training (DET) school system has further exacerbated the problem by poorly equipping students exiting the system at all levels.

Youth unemployment is clearly a function of the decline in the overall level of employment in the economy. Unemployment in South Africa has both a structural and cyclical dimension. The former is related to restructuring of the job market in favour of the semi-skilled and skilled and against the unskilled. The latter is linked to cyclical booms and slumps in the business cycle. The labour absorption capacity of the economy has decreased from an average of 97,0% in the 1960s to an average of only 7,0% during the period 1985 to 1990. In the 10

years from 1980 to 1990 job opportunities increased by approximately 503,000. During the same period the economically active population increased by 3,3m which means that at least 2,8m people have been added to the pool of the unemployed since 1980. (These figures include the TBVC states.) Only 7 new job opportunities, according to the National Manpower Commission, are at present created in the formal sectors of the economy for every 100 new entrants to the labour market (RP 46/1992: 27). It is widely recognised that unemployment is concentrated in regions such as the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage metropolitan areas and amongst African females and the young. (RP 46/1992, 28; DBSA: 1991, 5). The unemployment rate for females and the young is almost twice as large as the rate for males and older workers. There is also a negative correlation between education and unemployment irrespective of age and gender (DBSA: 1991, 5). Approximately 70,0% of the unemployed are under 35 years of age, while about 60,0% have an educational level not higher than standard five.

More recently, faced with the necessity of establishing priorities and devising policy tools, strategies and projects specifically for youth, there have been attempts to disaggregate unemployment amongst youth even further. In a study conducted in 1990 for the Urban Foundation, Hartshorne divided youth into three main groups. The largest group consists of those with no schooling at all or who dropped out of school before standard four, and who can therefore be regarded as illiterate and innumerate. Each year, one third of a million youngsters in this category are being added to the conservatively-estimated 5 - 6 m non-literate South Africans. The second group comprises those who completed primary schooling and left the education system and those who dropped out in secondary school. The third group consists of those who passed Senior Certificate, but failed to gain matric exemption and those who failed to gain any certificate in the final secondary school leaving examination. Hartshorne provides information showing that in the 10 years from 1980 to 1989, 521,370 pupils completed secondary schooling with a matric or senior certificate, but about 515,000 had to leave standard ten without any formal certificate, having failed (Hartshorne: 1990, 11).

Each category should become the target, he argues, of distinctively educational solutions. The private sector and private agencies need to prioritise those who have completed secondary education with or without a certificate. Their needs should be addressed by provision of

further education and training through on-the-job training and expansion of technikons, technical colleges, commercial and community colleges. Schools, religious organisations and national political organisations should conversely take the responsibility for concentrating resources and effort on youthful illiterates. Special attention should be given to primary school-leavers and secondary school drop-outs in brigades and youth movements.

Work by Donaldson and Roux (1991) and Bennell with Monyokolo (1992) for 1984/85 has, by contrast, suggested that primary school-leavers or secondary school drop-outs need to be prioritised. Donaldson and Roux (1991) found that unemployment rates are higher for those with some schooling, but without a standard ten certificate. In a pilot tracer survey of over 1,500 standard ten school-leavers from 8 schools in the PWV region in 1984 and 1988, Bennell and Monyokolo (1992), have argued that the crisis of employment amongst standard ten school-leavers may not be as severe as amongst those leaving school at lower levels. Their findings show that over half the 1984 school leavers were in wage employment while the incidence of wage employment among the 1988 school-leavers, after the same periods in the labour market searching for jobs, was only slightly lower than that among the 1984 group (Bennell and Monyokolo: 1992, 10). Sizeable gender differences exist in the incidence of wage employment. They point out that even among standard ten school-leavers, there is a growing unemployment crisis, that at least one period of unemployment is increasingly the norm for standard ten school-leavers, and that further education and training are of growing importance to this category of school-leaver.

While further research is needed both to establish regional variations, and patterns amongst primary school-leavers and drop-outs, it is clear from the studies cited that primary school leavers and secondary school drop-outs may be carrying the brunt of unemployment amongst youth. In addition, further education and training is used both as a means of staving off unemployment (see also Chisholm: 1992) and of providing skills to enhance employability. Hartshorne suggests targeting secondary school-leavers for further education and training, and primary school-leavers for specifically skills training, whereas the other two studies have not made firm recommendations. The merit of the three studies, taken together, is that they suggest that the broad category of unemployed youth needs to be disaggregated, understood,

and that different approaches should be adopted towards different categories of unemployed youth.

Youth are not a homogeneous category in more ways than those described above. Analysing youth as a social and political phenomenon, numerous writers have distinguished between organised youth movements, unorganised youth and urban youth gangs. The latter are largely apolitical and criminal, preying not on the state but on the communities in which they live. (Bundy: 1987; Glaser: 1987; Johnson: 1988). The emergence in the 1980s of the 'comtsotsi', 'youth engaged in anti-social behaviour and who attempt to justify their behaviour as legitimate political activity' (Marks: 1992, 24), points to a blurring of the lines between organised youth movements and gangs. The character of township youth has variously been constructed as alienated, brutalised and marginalised (Everatt and Sisulu: 1992, *passim*). A tempting consequence of the tendency to examine youth in these terms is that the solution to the problems of youth as a social phenomenon riven by conflicts, is seen as not primarily educational but political:

A key concern, therefore, for youth organisation and those concerned with the interests of youth should be to encourage and ensure that mature, working and trained youth play a central role in youth organisation....These organisations remain the organs in the township that through their perceived legitimacy are able to mobilise youth and assert some form of moral authority. These organisations have very strong 'codes of conduct'...which are generally adhered to by the majority of members of youth organisation, who are not a part of the 'comtsotsi' phenomenon (*Ibid*, 25.)

In some respects, these proposals echo those of Hartshorne who argues that primary school completers and secondary school drop-outs carry 'a very high social priority. It is the major group to which the state will have to give attention immediately if there is not to be an even greater alienation than already exists.' (Hartshorne: 1990, 18).

Proposals to deal with youth unemployment through the development of national youth movements, youth brigades, young pioneers or national youth services are not unique to South Africa. They have been one of the common responses in post-colonial, developing countries to disbanded, unemployed nationalist youth and to primary school leavers unable to find jobs (Graaff: 1979). While these strategies do carry some advantages, including that

of harnessing youth to national developmental goals, they also have certain drawbacks. Youth movements have not been particularly successful in reintegrating youth into structures of work and education in the society, and have tended to be militaristic in character. They can clearly target only a small proportion of the youthful population as a whole and, if focused on ANC Youth League alone, become an elitist phenomenon. National youth movements, however conceived, can at their very best be only a temporary and partial solution to youth unemployment. Strategies addressed to the structural roots of unemployment need to be sought.

State Policy and Youth Unemployment, 1976-1992

The state has not been slow to respond to the social dimensions of youth unemployment. Throughout the 1980s, outright repression was the most decisive form of state intervention to deal with youth unemployment. Alongside these strong-arm tactics, however, secondary schooling and technical education was expanded, training of the unemployed in regional training centres extended and a special employment creation programme (SECP) begun in 1985, into which training through regional and other training centres was integrated. The informal sector also increasingly began to function as a 'metaphor for a policy that has accepted the idea of permanently consigning a large proportion of the population to the outer periphery of the economy.' (Lewis in Gelb: 1991, 250). SECPs were not specifically targeted at youth, although youth formed a significant component of training and job schemes.

Approaches by the state need to be contextualised in terms not only of the growth and nature of unemployment amongst youth, but also in terms of the perceived social dimensions of youth unemployment which may be seen as governing state and private sector responses to the issue. Consideration of the role played by secondary schools and technical colleges, regional training centres and SECPs will follow a brief outline of the social and political assumptions appearing to command interventions by the state.

Various strategies and approaches were prepared by the state in the wake of the national insurrection of 1984-6 in which youth played such a dominant part. These neo-conservative strategies guided by a neo-classical economic philosophy can be seen as framing the backdrop to wider intervention in the nation-wide revolutionary climate that was seen to exist at the

time. One of the most significant of these was a President's Council report on youth. On 6 February 1986, the President's Council resolved to advise the state President on:

ways in which the South African youth can be equipped and positively motivated for responsible citizenship and active participation and involvement in community service and national development projects, against the background of the harmful effect of the incidence of social deviations (PC 2/1987, 1).

The report was presented on the 22nd May 1987 by the Chairman, NF Treurnicht. The recommendations made rest on an assumption which is worth quoting in full:

The liberation which is talked about and for which young Black people in particular have such a yearning should therefore not be sought in revolution, but rather in a liberation from false perceptions, misconceptions and ignorance (*Ibid*, 87)....A large measure of ignorance and lack of insight exist... particularly amongst young people in connection with the basic concepts and requirements of the free market system (*Ibid*, 86).

Liberation from these false perceptions were to be induced through building on and emphasising the values of the family, religion and discipline. The family, education and training and the church were seen to play a pivotal role in acting against revolutionary youth. Believing that constitutional reform and 'political accommodation especially amongst young people' (*Ibid*, 102), was essential, it also argued for the establishment of:

- * youth organisations 'with balanced objectives';
- * training and rehabilitation centres 'for intimidators and politically motivated juvenile delinquents';
- * programmes by the private sector 'to inform young people of opportunities';
- * more career-oriented school-based education and job-training schemes;
- * the fostering of discipline through military service;
- * 'special guidance to combat alcohol and drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, suicide, prostitution, homosexuality, etc.';
- * media publicity for 'positive youth programmes' and
- * the development of a comprehensive youth strategy to be developed under the direction of the Department of National Education.

The latter should entail particularly the establishment of a Youth Council and Youth Trust. The aims of the former would be to formulate a youth strategy, coordinate and extend youth organisations which endorsed the programmes of the Council, promote 'positive' programmes and projects and carry out continuous research affecting youth in cooperation with the HSRC and other research bodies such as universities. They would also be to train youth leaders and make available leisure facilities. The Youth Council would have to be legitimate, with government playing 'a largely initiating and supporting role', but leaving the implementation of the youth strategy to the Youth Council.

Some of these themes were reiterated by the National Manpower Commission, four years later, in 1991, after one of the above recommendations for constitutional reform had begun to be met. A negative economic growth rate of -0,5% was registered in this year when an annual growth rate of at least 5,0% was considered necessary to accommodate the annual new entrants to the labour market, and a much higher growth rate of 8 - 10% was seen as essential to lower the present level of unemployment. The NMC regarded unemployment as 'one of the most serious, if not the most serious problem in South African society' largely because of its negative influence on the successful transition to a new democratic system and the fact that 'it also reinforces the perception that the market economy cannot address the unemployment problem or that it is actually responsible for this problem.' (RP 46/1992, 29 & 27).

The overall political thrust of the President's Council Report underlies many of the initiatives currently being undertaken in the sphere of youth unemployment. In what follows below, however, it will become evident that the state is not a monolithic instrument in carrying these out. There are conflicts and differences between different arms of the state dealing with youth unemployment over how the issue should be tackled. There is considerable unanimity, however, about the need to do so, and to do so primarily through stimulating economic growth.

Expansion of school system and technical education

Although black schooling is still chronically under-resourced, demographic changes in the population and ongoing demands for schooling have led to the continual expansion of the system since at least the 1960s. A year after the 1976 Soweto uprising, in 1977, African enrolments comprised 3 899 000 of the total of 5 724 000 school-goers. By 1987, after ten years of sustained student protest over schooling, this figure had climbed to 6 890 000 out of 8 600 000 (DET *Annual Reports*). In 1990 the annual growth rate of enrolments was 4,90% for African pupils in Department of Education and Training schools and 6,60% in the rest of South Africa compared with growth rates of 0,55%, 1,80% and 1,25% respectively for white, Indian and 'coloured' students (DNE: 1991, 11/2). This growth appears to reflect both the state's response to economic, political and social pressures on education during the 1970s and 1980s and the increasingly pyramidal age distribution within the African population in which more than half the African population is under twenty (Hyslop: 1988/89, 64). Although sixty-five percent of African students are in primary school, the expansion of the school system has been particularly marked in the secondary sector. In the late 1980s growth in African secondary education was estimated to be more than three times the growth rate of primary education.

The age-profile of students in secondary schools as well as the intensity of struggles around age-limits and exclusions would suggest that, despite the failure of the system to retain the majority of pupils who enter at primary level, secondary schools hold a large number of students who may otherwise be unemployed. The numbers of black students in technical colleges, post std 7 institutions originally intended for training artisans, are far too low to make similar assessments. Black students enrolled for vocational courses at technical colleges comprised about one quarter of black senior secondary pupils. Even here, though, limited expansion was noticeable in both the number of technical colleges for African students and the rise of enrolments from 5% in 1980 to 15% in 1988. Both in urban and rural areas, interviews have suggested that while training in technical colleges is not a popular alternative, it does provide a temporary route out of unemployment where secondary schools are not available for enrolment (Chisholm: 1992).

In terms of section 30a of the Manpower Training Act, artisan training can be provided for the unemployed at technical colleges and trade centres. By 1988 the Department of Manpower was experiencing problems in placing trainees who had completed their training. The numbers were thus reduced. By 1990/1, the Department of Manpower was training negligible numbers at technical colleges. In 1991 a total of 349 unemployed people, amongst whom were numbers of 'youth', were trained at the Westlake, Bellville, Sastri, Vereeniging and George Tabor (Soweto) institutions (RP 51/1991 and RP 70/1992).

Regional Training Centres, 1976-1992

Unlike technical colleges, regional training centres do not require any educational qualifications for their courses. Regional training centres date from 1975/6 and were originally either established by an association of employers or by the government. This history partly accounts for the great variation between regional training centres, as far as infrastructure, capacity, orientation and ethos is concerned. Both the employer and government-established centres, once registered in terms of the Manpower Training Act (1981), are constituted with independent governing bodies. By July 1992 there were 10 regional training centres with 52 satellites. By far the largest is Boskop at Potchefstroom, the agricultural training centre, followed by Chamdor on the West Rand at Krugersdorp, Apex on the East Rand in Benoni and Sentraal in Bloemfontein. Instructors numbered 783. Regional training centres serve employed and unemployed workers, usually sponsored by either employers, the Department of Manpower or other donors. They train for both the formal and informal sectors; for both employment and unemployment.

The aim of regional training centres is to provide skills-training to workers and the unemployed. They operate in the non-formal education sector and provide job-specific training with no theoretical training. Employers who use such training centres pay only 25% of the prescribed course fees while the remaining 75% is reimbursed to the centres as a rebate by the state in lieu of tax concessions (RP 67/1989). Training of the unemployed under the auspices of the Department of Manpower provides further subsidies to the centres.

Although regional training centres are to all intents and purposes privatised and decentralised training institutions providing a contractual service to industry, the Department of Manpower does play an important role in providing for training of the unemployed at regional training centres. This role is consistent with its view that training should remain the preserve of the private sector, with the state providing support where necessary. The functions of the Department in terms of training, as specified in the Manpower Training Act (1981) are not only to create a legal and administrative framework for training, and to establish and accredit industry training boards, but also to provide support for training efforts in the private sector through, for example, financial assistance. Private sector training initiatives through the regional training centres are supplemented by the Department, which established an advisory committee for the regional training centres to advise the Registrar of Manpower Training regarding training at these centres and a fund for the training of unemployed persons (RP 70/1992, 91).

Training trends in the 1980s waxed and waned with the perceived 'revolutionary onslaught' referred to earlier. Under the SECP to train the unemployed initiated by the Department of Manpower in 1985, there was a dramatic increase in training at regional training centres. Table 1 illustrates that training of unemployed people was at its height between 1985 and 1988, coinciding with and resulting from the introduction of the government's SECP. The high numbers receiving training during this period tailed off significantly in the 1990s, but were still much higher than in the early 1980s (see Table 1). Regional training centres trained a significant number of these (see Table 2).

Between 1987 and 1991 the bulk of people trained at the 10 regional training centres in existence were trained in motor vehicle related work, labour relations and agriculture, suggesting that larger numbers of employed than unemployed people were trained in this period. Substantial numbers were also trained in building operations and in security work. Far smaller numbers were trained in 'supervision' and 'leadership,' domestic work, salesmanship, catering and first aid (See Tables 3 & 4). Courses are short, ranging from five days to three weeks and nine weeks, leading to criticisms of the quality and value of these training schemes. It is alleged that most unemployed trainees do not find work after completion of their courses (NEPI HRD Final Report: 1992; see also later). More research

is needed on both the nature and quality of training schemes, as well as the reasons for their apparent failure.

One of the challenges currently facing regional training centres is to gain industrial accreditation for their courses. Amendments to the 1990 Manpower Training Act provided for the comprehensive devolution of training to Industry Training Boards (ITBs). By March 1992, 23 out of a total of 28 formally constituted ITBs had been or were about to be accredited by the Department of Manpower to administer artisan training schemes for their respective industries. The provision of competency-based modular training is now a legal requirement and ITBs have also been given new statutory powers to introduce levies payable by all employers in industry (Bennell: 1992, 2). If Industrial Training Boards were expanded and developed for every sector, then regional training centres could begin to teach to those standards. At present, there are no uniform standards, and regional training centre courses do not carry much weight in the market place.

In 1991 the HSRC/NTB's *National Training Strategy* drew regional training centres into a national framework for training workers for industry, as well as the unemployed. Particular attention was drawn to the availability of regional training centres to industry, their capacity to research training needs, develop training courses and provide accredited training to meet industry's needs. They were also seen as having a continuing role to play in providing training to the unemployed: 'As far as the "lost generation" is concerned, it is recommended that they be given full-time training which is financed by state and is designed in concert with the private sector, to be provided to such persons in a way that is acceptable to them and to the private sector.' (HSRC/NTB: 1991, 32). The report recommends that the Private Sector Education Council be approached to assist in the design of such a programme taking cognisance of schemes in other parts of the world such as the Youth Training programmes in the UK, the Australian traineeship System, the English National Vocational Qualification and any other appropriate system. Funding should be provided by the state and courses 'would ideally be offered by the regional training centres and the technical colleges acting in concert or individually.' Details of such a programme were specified to include facets such as literacy training, numeracy, communication, social and personal skills, technology, the

working environment and working ethics, problem-solving and general job-related skills. Moral and religious values are also to be inculcated.

More recently, under the impetus of the Independent Development Trust (IDT), the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), NCCR and the European Community through Kagiso Trust, regional training centres have started taking some responsibility for beginning to address the training and employment of unemployed youth. Pressures from these quarters for speedy and quality training service appear to have the potential for making a significant impact on both the nature of courses being offered, as well as the practices and values of instructors. Chamdor regional training centre at Krugersdorp, for example, has taken a number of returning exiles for training. One consequence of this amenability has been that instructors at Chamdor 'have all undergone a steep learning curve,' being forced to take greater account of the 'person as a whole' and not just his or her capacity for skills training. Such initiatives encourage regional training centres to train and re-train their own instructors not only in job-specific skills, but also in values appropriate to a non-racial and anti-racist South Africa.

More significantly, a proposal has been floated in line with the recommendations of the *National Training Strategy*, and which also begins to address some of the concerns of the IDT, DBSA, Kagiso Trust and other donor bodies for a new curriculum that goes beyond training in job-specific skills. The programme involves training first in literacy, then in job-specific skills, followed by courses in the principles and practices of entrepreneurship in a free enterprise economic system. In addition, this proposal for 'Training the Lost Generation' envisages the establishment in the regional training centre(s) which follow this route of an 'After-Care' section whose specific purpose would be the placement and follow-up of trainees in jobs. Skills training is thus to be supported by courses aimed at instilling values and attitudes appropriate to a market-driven economy.

In conclusion, regional training centres currently seem to be the principal vehicle for training the unemployed. Given the role of unemployed youth in the 1980s, however, they are also contested terrains for a variety of different political and ideological interests. This is most evident in course proposals which reflect the interest both of COSATU (for literacy and skills

training) and the state and private sector (for training in the value of the free enterprise system). It is also manifest in the pressures for training of different categories of (employed and unemployed) workers, and the changing political orientation of such institutions. As institutions of the market, they mediate the conflicting interests of different social forces at play in it.

Special Employment Creation Programmes, 1985-1992

Many of the changes effected in the training programmes of regional training centres were occasioned by the special employment creation programme initiated and run by the government between 1985 and 1992 to combat cyclical unemployment and poverty arising from structural unemployment.

In 1985 an amount of R600m was made available by the government to alleviate unemployment. Job-creation projects followed the classic forms of Special Employment Projects (SEPs) that have been undertaken in both developed and developing countries alike (Freedman: 1990). The primary objective was not to show an 'economic return' but to create employment 'that served the public or community interest in some way.' The most important special employment projects were labour intensive projects by the public and private sectors, projects to support the small business sector and the training of unemployed persons. Various conditions were set for the programmes. Regarding labour-intensive projects for instance, a relatively small allowance was paid to the unemployed person in order to accommodate as many persons as possible and to ensure that workers were not diverted from other employment possibilities. At least 50% of the total funds allocated had to be for the wages of unemployed persons. Financing of projects had to be temporary to avoid a permanent or long-term financial burden; no permanent personnel could be employed to supervise or administer the projects; only unemployed persons not receiving unemployment insurance benefits could be accommodated; an 'allowance' rather than a wage had to be paid and projects had to be undertaken on a decentralised basis (Barker: 1986). The nature of job-creation projects varied from nature conservation, construction of dams, combating soil erosion and eradicating invader and toxic plants in rural areas, sewerage works, parks and

the beautification of urban areas, to the provision of power and water, the building of clinics, schools, roads and low-cost housing in both urban and rural areas (RP 51/1988, 28).

In 1985, a total of R60m was earmarked for the training of unemployed persons. By the 1991/2 financial year, an amount of R515m had been allocated for the training of unemployed persons (RP 46/1992, 31). For this purpose, contracts were entered into between the Department and registered training centres. A fixed course fee of R22,00 per person was payable to contractors, and allowances of R2,40 p.d and R1,80 p.d. were paid to unemployed persons over and below the ages of 18 respectively. Courses were specified to be no less than one week or longer than three weeks. (RP 67/1989, 67/8). Training provided under the scheme was divided into the following categories:

- * training for admission to the formal sector
- * development of the informal sector
- * training for the disabled
- * training of entry-grade computer programmers for the SADF
- * training for entrepreneurs

From the inception of the scheme in 1985 up to 31 October 1991 approximately 1,4m unemployed people were trained.

But as early as 1986 criticisms were being made of the scheme, both from inside and outside the Department of Manpower. In 1986, F.S. Barker suggested that problems were being experienced. In urban areas the implementation of labour-intensive projects was 'hindered', presumably by conditions of mass revolt existing at the time. Projects in urban areas thus assumed the form of 'cleaning away refuse which became backlogged as a result of the disturbances, painting and upgrading hostels, levelling sports fields and planting grass'. (Barker: 1986). Training under the SECP was a continuation and extension of a pilot scheme introduced in terms of Section 36 of the Manpower Training Act (1981) in 1982. Stress amongst the unemployed was suggested by the 'countless reports...being received of unemployed persons going to great lengths to be included in the programme or to avoid missing being part of the training'(Ibid, 175).

As the economic climate worsened, training did not necessarily lead to jobs, however. While nearly 60 percent of all unemployed people in 1983 who had started training under the pilot scheme were placed in employment, the NMC admitted that the minimum placement percentage for the period April 1988 to September 1988 came to only 28% (Barker: 1986, 176; RP 51/1989, 39). Two years later the figure had dropped even further. Of the 68, 945 unemployed persons trained during 1991 for the formal sector, a total of 10,223, or 15% found employment in the labour market. Of the 72, 919 people trained for the informal sector in the same period, slightly more people, 21%, were able to earn a livelihood. Training in building-related skills was most successful, since the majority of trainees were accommodated after training on work creation projects (RP 70/1992, 97/8). These figures are slightly unreliable, since there had been no proper tracer survey of people exiting training courses. They do, however, suggest a broad trend.

In 1987, a parastatal, the Development Bank of South Africa conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the programme. It showed that in its planning, design and implementation there were severe deficiencies but that, if the programme was evaluated in terms of its overall objective which involved 'socio-psychological-political' rather than economic considerations, then there was a measure of success. It argues that the 1985/6 programme was conceived as an emergency, temporary expenditure programme which had the provision of temporary relief to the unemployed as a primary objective. To the extent that 'the unrest situation was, at least temporarily eased,' it was effective. In only very rare circumstances was the SECP itself 'made a target of unruly activities' and, in some instances, 'certain political activist organisations actually cooperated with the SECP.' (DBSA: 1987, 93/5/7). The intensity of the unemployment crisis amongst the young was evident in the fact that the majority of unemployed persons who participated in the training programme were younger than 30 years old. The DBSA evaluation suggested that those who found jobs after undergoing the training programme helped to ease the dependency burden on the economically active population, and was most effective in those areas where future employers came forward to offer employment to quotas of successful trainees (*Ibid*, 99).

On almost all the economic criteria by which the success of SEPs are usually measured, however, the programme failed. As regards planning, design and coordination, there was

confusion with respect to the objectives, institutional responsibilities and in the interpretation of the guidelines for the programme. The ability to generate project proposals took precedence over prioritised needs assessments in the allocation of funds. The programme did not lead to the creation of jobs: 'the design of the programme was such that it created rising expectations in respect of its permanency, which stood to be frustrated'. Most of the organisations involved were also not geared to initiating labour-intensive projects at short notice (*Ibid*, 106-110). In the implementation of the projects, there was a lack of forward planning, poor supervision and administration leading to low productivity, incidences of job displacement of permanent workers, inappropriate wage rates, lack of clarity about interpretation of the guidelines and inadequate use of funds resulting in cash flow problems (*Ibid*, 115).

The DBSA found substantial regional and gender differences in the implementation. A great deal depended on local initiative and enthusiasm of local authorities. Natal, for example, responded better than the Transvaal. Whereas the smaller authorities in rural areas were readily able to attract workers at R3,00 p.d., the larger local authorities in urban areas had some difficulty in finding workers who would work for R4,00 p.d. Where unemployment was most pronounced, such as in the eastern Cape and sections of the Orange Free State, there was frequently an oversupply of applicants; there was an insufficient number of projects for the number of workseekers. In many of the bantustans, such as KwaZulu, Lebowa and the Transkei, it is significant that women made up to 90% of the workers' corps (*Ibid*, 129-133)

The only advantage of the training programmes appeared to lie in the 'tremendous amount of goodwill among the unemployed persons', their increased employability and the fact that, 'for the first time in their lives,' trainees were 'exposed to the work ethic and discipline and were therefore better equipped to enter the labour market' (*Ibid*, 125-7).

The DBSA evaluation concluded that the SECP had served its purpose only as a special, auxiliary, temporary emergency programme established to address a 'cataclysmic upheaval' that required a programme with its 'own appropriate measures.' As a job creation programme it had failed. The DBSA correctly identified South Africa's unemployment problem as a structural problem, and recommended that similar future programmes should be in harmony

with the underlying structural problem and should, therefore, to a much greater extent, also observe economic efficiency considerations (*Ibid*, 142).

The Department of Manpower responded positively to the evaluation and in subsequent years attempted to remedy some of the deficiencies identified. In 1992 the job creation aspect of the programme was ceased, while new guidelines were being prepared. More attention was paid to training, and especially to training people in skills and programmes linked to a government programme for low-cost housing. Changes were also made to the content of training programmes for entry into the formal and informal sectors. As far as training for the formal sector was concerned, courses were developed for those sectors of industry where the absolute numbers of women have been increasing, namely services and textiles. Training courses included office administration, secretarial work, computer operating and industrial sewing machine operating. Courses developed for the informal sector included population development, budgeting, motor mechanics, work ethics, interpersonal relations, advanced needlework and advanced curtain-making. In line with the movement towards accreditation of courses through management-based Industry Training Boards, the Department also began to negotiate accreditation of training for the unemployed with training boards and authorised accreditation bodies (RP 70/1992, 97, 99 & 101).

Both the DBSA and HSRC, two separate arms of the state, are critical of the SECP on the grounds that it does not address the problem of structural unemployment generated, in part, by the fact that the formal economy is shedding unskilled labour, even in periods of economic growth (Abedian and Standish: HSRC: 1989). The amounts allocated to the SECP, both as a policy measure and in quantitative terms, are considered 'totally inadequate when compared with the magnitude of current poverty and unemployment' (DBSA: 1991, 13). Both agree that economic growth is fundamental but that by itself it is not going to be sufficient, and that positive pro-active policy measures as part of a comprehensive package which will lead to employment-generation and development are necessary (HSRC: 1989; DBSA: 1991). The DBSA counterposes a reorientation and restructuring of public expenditure programmes in favour of the unemployed and the poor over an expansion of the public sector expenditure, as was the case in the SECP of 1985-1992.

Both the DBSA and HSRC (in the shape of Abedian and Standish) advocate a nationally coordinated, government-run public works programme, which is both a skills-learning and infrastructure-creating exercise to help solve the problem. While the Department of Manpower's SECP involved unemployed people largely under the age 30, both argue in addition for the targeting of beneficiaries, a distinction between adult and youth programmes which would include vocational training and guidance, long-term and decentralised planning linked to an overall development policy as opposed to ad hoc measures, the use of appropriate technology, involvement of local human and physical resources, proper remuneration and adequate post-project maintenance. Whereas the HSRC has provided a detailed planning proposal for how such a public works programme might work, the DBSA has already begun to initiate projects which evince a marked improvement in at least the planning, design and monitoring of projects. The HSRC's only reservation was the need for a legitimate authority to carry out the programme.

It is clear from the above that the state and its parastatals have taken the question of unemployment very seriously indeed. In the context of the national insurrection of 1984-6, it launched a Special Employment Creation Programme with a training component to address revolutionary conditions engendered by massive unemployment and finding expression particularly in militant youth movements. It was thus pre-eminently a social and political, rather than an economic response to the problem of unemployment. As an economic response, it was addressed to the epiphenomenal rather than to the underlying structural causes of unemployment in South Africa. In the late 1980s this programme tailed off, but was not ended until a new strategy had been devised which would be more consistent with the requirements for an effective job-creation programme.

Alternatives

It has clearly not been possible for groups outside the state to develop anything on the scale that the state has been able to mount. A significant contribution has been made, however, by COSATU in the realm of conceptualisation. In contrast to the state's neo-laissez faire approach, the COSATU proposals are underpinned by the view that dealing with the problem of unemployment requires a redirection of the South African economy managed by a tripartite

alliance of the state, capital and labour. It takes its lead from the concept of the social state in Germany and the social contract in Japan and newly-industrialising countries in which the state plays a major role in coordinating but not controlling a regeneration of the economy. The key to a high wage, low unemployment economy is considered to be effective investments in factories and machinery, agriculture and mines, but this needs to be supplemented by a nationally coordinated Public Works Scheme which should include a Special Youth Programme (COSATU: 1991 and 1992; Keet: 1991). Endorsing the principles of any effective Public Works Programme, it specifically also proposes the representation of the trade union movement on the structures that govern public works schemes and its involvement at a central level in negotiating wage levels on public works schemes and in ensuring that fair working conditions apply. Funding for the projects should come partly from the state and partly from a special tax on businesses. This tax may be higher for companies that produce luxury goods or which do not use labour intensive methods where this is possible.

Principles that should govern a Special Youth Programme have also been spelt out:

- * the youth unemployment programme should not be military. A system of 'voluntary call-up' could be devised
- * there must be an age restriction
- * the programme must not draw anyone away from school (but some jobs at schools could be done by scholars who are paid under the programme - this payment could assist scholars in staying at school)
- * the programme should be based on community service, including environmental protection
- * there must be a training element
- * to encourage participation, 'graduates' from the youth programme could be given preference by employers (including the state) when they leave to find proper jobs

The basic pillars of the COSATU strategy towards Public Works Programmes are thus that these should be national, should involve the trade union movement, and should be geared towards creating infrastructure, jobs and improved living conditions for the poor as part of

a strategy for redistribution. Given that South Africa is not yet democratically constituted, and that public works schemes have often failed where there has been inadequate planning, COSATU proposes that the priority for the present is planning and research if the public works schemes are to be implemented speedily and effectively in the future.

In this period of planning and research, there is much to learn from the experience of other countries. The widely-diverging experiences of Youth Training Schemes in the UK and rural training centres in Zimbabwe suggest a number of caveats to be borne in mind while thinking about and planning special programmes for youth. In the UK, amongst the most serious criticisms advanced of the Youth Training Schemes introduced in 1987 are that they did not provide real jobs; have been a substitute rather than a preparation for employment; have used unemployed youth as cheap labour; and have failed to provide training in skills which are in demand. The educational element of the core skills programme, Social and Life Skills, has been seen as preparing young people for the world of unemployment rather than employment. All in all, the schemes are viewed as a low status, inferior training scheme for the working class and the educationally disadvantaged (Kruss: 1992). Training, in short, has to be linked to work and employment-creation if it is to be effective. All the elements of the programme - education, training and work, need to be part of an imaginatively conceived, properly planned and coordinated programme enjoying high recognition and status. In South Africa, for example, the Youth Section of a Public Works Programme should train by involving youth in all aspects of its realisation. A high debt is owed to youth for its role in bringing about the transition to a democratic society, no matter how flawed the process. Their centrality to that process must be recognised in the priority that is given to reconstructing the society in such a way that it is not only to their long-term benefit, but that they also actively participate in it.

Work conducted in Zimbabwe of the extent to which post-school, pre-employment training initiatives in Zimbabwe have achieved their central objective of promoting rural self-employment confirms many of these general points, albeit for an entirely different context. The poor performance of rural training institutions in Zimbabwe during the 1980s highlights the inadequacy of training on its own in generating self-employment. The vocationalisation of post-school training is unlikely to be any more successful in promoting self-employment

in the rural areas than other forms of training (Bennell with Nyakonda: 1992). For South Africa, whether training be directed at the formal or informal sector, as part of a national public works programme or smaller project, it needs to be recognised that 'training for self-employment'

is usually only successful when it is provided as part of well designed projects where market opportunities for specific goods and services have been carefully identified and where an integrated package of high quality and timely support services are made available. Training is invariably one of the most critical of these services but, unless post-training support in key areas such as expert advice on production and marketing and the assistance in the provision of key inputs (i.e. land, tools, working capital and other forms of credit) are made available, then the skills imparted during the training process are unlikely to be properly utilised (Ibid, 24).

These issues are pertinent to South Africa insofar as there is a need to integrate projects into a nationally conceived, regionally managed and locally executed public works programme, address conditions in rural as well as urban areas, and take account of already-existing state-driven training programmes for self-employment in the informal sector.

A final question does have to be raised, however, about COSATU's proposals for a special youth section of a public works programme, or the advisability of targeting youth above adult unemployed. While the severity of the problem amongst youth suggests special targeting, there are other issues that need to be borne in mind. In the first place, evidence from the United Kingdom has shown that the last thing youth, who have already left school want, is to return there. In South Africa, this is compounded by a return to an essentially non-learning environment. Education or training for unemployed youth should not be school-based. Equally, as shown above, education and training without a work-creation component for the unemployed is meaningless. Job-creation programmes, whether for youth or adults in South Africa, need to integrate work and training for the work experience to be usable in the future. In the second place, adults on employment-creation schemes in South Africa may be as much in need of literacy and other training as unemployed youth. Either eliminating the literacy and/or educational dimension of public works programmes for adults, or making special provision for youth, would seem to constitute unjustifiable discrimination. Lesser considerations are the bureaucratic nightmare that targeting and monitoring special youth

programmes in addition to adult programmes might entail. In South Africa, public works programmes in the past decade have also not specifically targeted youth, and have yet drawn a majority of youth to its works. This suggests that need will answer to provision; if greatest need is experienced among youth, they are the ones who will respond to programmes. They do not need to be singled out.

The only argument for a special youth section would relate to the content of a particular works programme. What this might mean is that, involved in conceptualising projects, youth might be encouraged to focus on cultural and educational rather than infrastructural facilities such as roads. The youth corps of the American New Deal programmes, for example, made the reconstruction of parks, museums and libraries a central concern. Similarly, in South Africa, programmes for beautifying as well as building cultural and educational assets and resources may be as lasting a contribution as building roads, dams and other infrastructural projects.

Conclusion

In critically examining state policy and youth unemployment in the period 1976-1992, this article has explored a number of alternatives for addressing the question of youth unemployment in South Africa. It has argued that while youth unemployment is part of a structural problem, state strategies have been related to the social and political, rather than the structural and economic dimensions of youth unemployment. This arises largely from the revolutionary role played by youth in the 1980s. Educational and political solutions need to be complementary to structural, economic solutions which have as their aim the creation of a high wage, high employment economy. Youth need to be centrally involved in the development of a Public Works Programme which recognises its special interests and does not degenerate into a programme of training without jobs or cheap labour for a reconstituted national state. Training could take place through institutions whose relationship with the world of work is substantially restructured. While primary and secondary school drop-outs will probably not wish to return to school, their training should occur in environments that are not like schools but still provide both a degree of education and training. Both technical colleges, catering for post standard 7 youth, and regional training centres, which can provide training

to youth who have dropped out at earlier levels, can be integrated into a Public Works Programme. This paper has finally argued against a Special Youth Section of such a public works programme but for a content to such schemes which reflect some of the educational and cultural interests and concerns of youth over the past decade or more.

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TABLE 1: PERSONS TRAINED ACCORDING TO VARIOUS PROGRAMMES, 1984-1988

Type of training	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Apprentices in training	37 130	33 752	29 826	25 689	23 416	26 941	24 448	26 714
Trainees in training (section 30)	836	523	1 038	838	629	499	665	340
Group training centres (section 31)	12 700	15 750	12 599	23 038	39 661	54 674	31 650	24 160
Private training centres (section 32)	201 004	129 759	126 347	110 917	130 535	154 553	166 061	262 511
Training schemes (section 34)	256 141	155 562	132 968	140 201	129 270	165 196	85 033	*
Work-seekers (section 36)	9 250	12 748	10 311	*-	*	-	-	-
Training schemes (section 39)	17 266	14 197	7 149	5 679	13 680	22 552	19 686	13 475
Unemployed persons (section 36)	-	53 091	407 259	258 517	242 893	198 915	169 415	160 555
Training schemes (section 48 of Labour Relations Act)	13 749	9 040	9 570	9 982	4 879	8 518	17 640	9 185
Total	548 076	424 422	737 067	574 861	584 963	631 848	514 598	496 940

* Included under unemployed persons.

Source: Dept of Manpower Annual Reports for 1988 (RP 67-1989)

TABLE 2: PERSONS TRAINED BY THE DEPT OF MANPOWER IN REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES 1987-91

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
RTCs	23,038	39,661	54,674	31,650	24,160
Total Unemployed	258,517	242,893	198,915	169,415	160,555

TABLE 3: TRAINING BY REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES, 1984 - 1991

Courses in which training was provided	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Accounting	-	-	-	-	-	36	-	-
Agriculture	579	652	869	3 363	6 147	5 144	3 206	2 617
Building operations	2 977	2 753	1 058	968	1 695	10 733	1 067	679
Business administration	26	-	1	1 036	1 380	-	-	100
Business equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	1 059
Catering	88	202	588	169	1 475	2 058	838	948
Civil engineering work	121	190	33	71	137	23	404	346
Clerical work	18	47	2	61	194	159	21	45
Domestic work	90	324	519	2 008	691	1 495	629	231
Electrical operations	617	541	193	136	167	278	122	159
Engineering operations (excluding welding)	824	636	208	226	644	390	132	-
First aid	89	43	-	124	198	13	164	46
Instructional techniques	79	111	84	15	-	42	574	-
Labour relations	86	60	18	408	7 715	4 692	6 158	3 472
Mobile plant operators	1 144	1 142	1 698	2 501	2 095	3 776	3 156	2 199
Motor repair work and maintenance	848	1 007	302	241	568	763	1 224	889
Motor vehicle driving and related work	1 648	3 021	3 034	2 866	4 092	4 254	4 155	3 679
Other	116	11	1	943	3 503	8 168	3 101	3 408
Pump attendants	142	376	359	1 687	1 405	2 189	1 619	372
Safety	71	83	-	-	188	-	-	-
Salesmanship	1	34	-	981	160	468	61	5
Security work	969	1 751	551	1 317	2 566	4 132	2 413	2 073
Storekeeping	102	328	108	124	169	1 315	116	82
Supervision and leadership	636	616	943	1 440	1 663	1 550	758	1 151
Tractor repair work and maintenance	380	575	1 040	1 325	1 770	1 211	765	264
Welding	1 049	1 247	990	1 028	1 039	1 785	942	336
Totals	12 700	15 750	12 599	23 038	39 661	54 674	31 650	24 160

Source: Dept of Manpower Annual Reports for 1988 (RP 67-1989)

TABLE 4: PERSONS TRAINED BY REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES 1984-1991

	Total No.	Ranking
Accounting	36	26
Agriculture	22 577	3
Building operations	21 930	4
Business administration	2 543	16
Business equipment	1 084	21
Catering	6 366	12
Civil engineering work	1 325	20
Clerical work	547	24
Domestic work	5 987	13
Electrical operations	2 213	18
Engineering operations (excluding welding	3 060	15
First aid	677	23
Instructional techniques	905	22
Labour relations	22 609	2
Mobile plant operators	17 711	6
Motor repair work and maintenance	5 842	14
Motor vehicle driving and related work	26 749	1
Other	19 251	5
Pump attendants	8 149	10
Safety	342	25
Salesmanship	1 710	19
Security work	15 772	7
Storekeeping	2 344	17
Supervision and leadership	8 757	8
Tractor repair work and maintenance	7 330	11
Welding	8 416	9
Total	214 232	