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Editorial

Gardiner, Michael

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Johannesburg College of Education
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This issue of SYMPOSIUM takes a tentative and partial look at some of the issues which are of concern in South African education today and in the near future. The tentative nature of the discussion is evident from the articles printed: the probes into the future are cautious, even uncertain as really unfamiliar ground begins to be explored. For example, it is recognised in a number of articles in this edition that educational thinking for the future in South Africa should be on national rather than racial grounds. While calls for a national education policy have been made by individuals and groups for well over two decades, the need felt now by educationists to begin to plan for such a future is being cautiously articulated. Such thinking will, we believe, gather momentum. The stand made by black pupils in 1976 has made its mark.

It is also evident that the writers of articles in this edition recognise the political implications of education. The admirably modest aspirations of the black schoolchildren — educational parity with white children — have been clearly perceived as having profound political implications. Educational matters are ceasing to be the prerogative of Administrators, Directors and Ministers only. What takes place in the classroom and how it affects those who most directly experience it has begun to be a lively issue in the minds of all peoples of South Africa.

The aim in drawing attention to the nature of the discussion in this edition is to indicate both how pervasive and how new the reorientation of educational thinking is becoming. It is only when the really new is encountered that familiar fluency and habitual ease are checked. If the suppositions in this editorial are correct, then the way is opening for thought about education for our entire country for the first time in its history.