

Educational reform in New Zealand; What is going on?

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ABSTRACT

It is not at all easy to 'get to the bottom' of the dramatic changes taking place in New Zealand education. Before attempting to get beneath the surface, the following observations need to be made: (1) the economic, social and educational reforms are by no means unique to New Zealand; (2) there is a consistency between the government's economic policy from 1984 to 1987 and its educational policy since 1987; and (3) there are, nevertheless, forces at work which are local not world-wide and educationally based not simply reflections of economic concerns. Current developments have to be understood in terms of subtle interactions between these three factors.

Introduction

It is not at all easy to 'get to the bottom' of the dramatic changes taking place in New Zealand education. One glimpses aspects of social philosophy, ideology and sectional interests and then they go out of focus and one is no longer at all sure of one's analysis. The 'person in the street' (and even some learned commentators) tends to ascribe the confusions to personality differences such as (on the economy) between Roger Douglas and his critics and (in education) between Russell Marshall and David Lange. Without doubting that there are these personality conflicts, I do not believe that they really account for, or help us understand, the profound changes in our education system which have marked the past few years, or the seeming inconsistencies in them.

Before attempting to get beneath the surface, the following observations need to be made:

1. The economic, social and educational reforms are by no means unique to New Zealand. In general outline they are similar to changes taking place in Australia, Britain and Canada. Any review must take account of this fact.
2. There is a consistency between the government's economic policy from 1984 to 1987 and its educational policy since 1987. As John Codd puts it: in 1987 'Rogernomics caught up with the education system'.
3. There are, nevertheless, forces at work which are local not world-wide and educationally based not simply reflections of economic concerns.

Current developments have to be understood in terms of subtle interactions between these three factors.

Ideological foundations

I believe that during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s intellectuals spent time and energy constructing a coherent and politically persuasive account of what social life is, or should be, like. I am not naive enough to believe that ideas conquer the world, winning people by their logic and cogency. I am rather more drawn to the Marxist notion that 'the ruling ideas of every age are the ideas of its ruling classes' but this does not eliminate the power of these pervasive notions.

It is as if the ideas waited in the wings until social and economic conditions were right - as they were (and are) in the 1980's. They then function as ideologies giving shape and substance to the 'ruling ideas'.

Loosely called the New Right, the movement is a brand of libertarianism whose philosophical origins are in John Locke and its economic origins in Adam Smith. Hayek, Friedman, Ayn Rand are well-known 'parents' but S.L. Newman (*Liberalism at Wits End*) argues that the real founder of the movement was Murray Rothbard, a messianic leader, who formed a political party to contest the American presidency (and gained over a million votes!). But, argues Newman, Robert Nozick provided the intellectual respectability. This judgment is consoling because, as I have tried to come to terms with developments in New Zealand, I have found that Nozick provides the best intellectual 'map' of the territory - it is extreme, extensive, closely argued. No government has in fact gone as far as he would like but he provides both the rationale and, in a way, the logical terminus of much that is happening.

Three features of his social philosophy are of central importance:

1. His account of rights. His book begins with the uncompromising claim: 'Individuals have rights and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)' (p.ix). On this foundation (never in fact argued for) he builds his elaborate scheme. These rights are restricted to non-intervention rights. One person may not interfere with what rightly belongs to another or with her free use of it. There are no welfare rights, no rights of recipience e.g. to food, medicine or decent social conditions.

Here lie of course the seeds of an ideology in which those who lack property, money, jobs, power are deprived of any strategy for arguing themselves into a better social position. The logical ground (usually invested in our normal talk of rights) has been cut from under their feet.

2. His account of the minimal state. The state emerges from 'anarchy' to protect the rights which Individuals cannot protect for themselves- it is the Dominant Protection Association. The minimal state, then, has two functions
 - a. a monopoly on the use of force, and
 - b. the protection of all in its territory.

If a state goes beyond this minimal role it becomes unjust. And, of course, in recent decades in New Zealand and else where the state has gone far beyond this level, involving itself in welfare, social security, ownership of utilities, medical care and, of course education. In New Zealand, indeed, we had come to think of this situation as normal so that successive governments whether of Left or Right refused to tamper with the power of the state. Indeed for nine years Sir Robert Muldoon (heading a supposedly Tory government) increased the power of the state and in many ways used it to help his friend 'the ordinary bloke'. Following Nozick lines, this thinking has now been reversed and almost weekly the state withdraws from yet another area of national life. Even the regulation of the economy which Muldoon tried to handle personally, has been given over to the Reserve Bank and its Director, Don Brash warns unions against seeking higher wages and threatens to 'tighten monetary policy' if food prices continue to rise.

3. His notion of justice. His conception of justice is unusual. We tend to think of justice as referring to a pattern of distribution as in 'it is unjust that women get less pay than men' or 'it is unjust that pakeha get more from the education system than Maori'. Nozick has a different view: 'whatever arises from a just situation by just steps is itself just' (p.151). He is therefore opposed to all end-state principles (such as the aim to equalise power and pay for women and men) and to all 'time-slice' principles (as in welfare economics where one tries to right existing inequalities). There is no just pattern, no criteria for a just situation (such as work, merit or desert) only the stark 'whatever arises from a just situation by just steps is itself just'. Thus he says enigmatically 'From each as they choose, to each as they are chosen' suggesting a blind process and a blind destiny against which no one may legitimately protest. There is, then, no distributive justice though there can be compensation for past violations of rights. On practical matters such as taxation and medical care he is uncompromising: all taxation is unjust for it appropriates the legitimate property of the possessor and medical care (etc.) cannot be justly provided at the expense of others. In contemporary terms the 'user' must pay and users are seen as atomic individuals never as communities. Nozick's justice is austere individualistic and humans meet as traders, never as members of a humane community. As we shall see this aspect of New Right thinking has had a harder row to hoe in New Zealand but Nevertheless the government (and the community I suspect) has become much less concerned about distributive justice. A flatter tax rate has been introduced and there has been a steady move from direct to indirect taxation. Poverty no longer calls forth the tears (even the crocodile tears) which it used to do and there is strong evidence of a much wider income gap than was previously the case.

There is much that I would criticise in Nozick. Indeed I believe his major notions are all faulty. In particular his principle of justice can tell us nothing at all about the existing situation in, say, Australia or New Zealand, for we cannot determine whether the original situation was just or whether just steps have been taken to get where we are. But I am not here centrally concerned about the truth of his ideas as about their influence and though his views seem extreme they are, I believe, not too far from those which motivate our 'ruling classes' even if they would not state them as clearly or as uncompromisingly as Nozick.

The New Right has taken up many of his philosophical ideas. Davidson (p. 65 in Sawyer) sums up the New Right position:

Economic growth is promoted by liberating free enterprise, reducing social expenditure and re-structuring taxes to shift the burden from those who save (the rich) to those who consume (the poor).

As to education itself, Nozick has little to say but the New Right philosophy leads to the privatisation of education too. In modern societies (and certainly in New Zealand) the state is involved in education in three ways: 1) provision 2) subsidy 3) regulation. The New right do not oppose regulation though they believe little will really be necessary. They focus on 'subsidy' believing some version of the 'voucher system' would be a better way (a 'freemarketway') to subsidise schooling. Friedman, however, is frank in seeing vouchers as an intermediate step on the way to 'a gradual move towards greater direct parental financing' (*Free to Choose* p.162). He would get rid of all direct provision and have instead a 'negative tax' so that all could spend their income as they wish. Education would be a private business along with supermarkets and hotels.

It is interesting to note that the first hint New Zealanders had of the thinking to come was the advocacy by Ruth Richardson (Opposition speaker on education) of the voucher system prior to the 1987 election. More will be said about this later in the paper.

The New Zealand theoretical scene

As the New Right philosophy gained the ascendancy in New Zealand (see Lauder 1987) it became clear that its severity might be mitigated by several deep-seated features of New Zealand life.

1. A long-standing commitment to equality. No-one would pretend that New Zealand is a classless society or that gender or racial equality has ever been achieved. But visitors from abroad (particularly from Britain) comment on a kind of social equality that is widely believed and often acted out. It would be difficult to 'market' a new philosophy without dressing it up to look like an attempt at equality.
2. A tradition of a strong central state (and indeed a welfare state) not restrained (as in Canada, the USA or Australia) by state or provincial governments or (as in England) by powerful local authorities. In particular, the state's role in education had been firmly established and basically unchallenged, since 1877. It would be more difficult in New Zealand than elsewhere to challenge the state's right to control and provide education. And it might prove difficult to overthrow the centralism which has been a feature of NZ society since the early years.
3. The co-existence of the Maori (tangata whenua) and the Pakeha (manuhiri) and the deep seated belief in 'one people' living in harmonious relations. Of course, it has never been like this really but there was a Treaty, there has been (by and large) equality before the law and - most significantly - the existence of concrete inequities aroused guilt, required explanation and demanded redress. The New Right ideology would need to be applied to a different ethnic scene from that elsewhere. (This is not, of course, to deny the existence of racial or ethnic problems elsewhere but simply to suggest that the situation in New Zealand is unique).
4. New Zealand's particular version of church/state relations in education and the 'solution' in 1975 of the Integration Act. Other societies particularly those with pluralist philosophies and situations have also had to face these sort of problems and to come to terms with them, usually by supporting (in the end) a dual system. Although the situation in New Zealand is more formal than actual, our solution was to integrate the two systems and hence, to make them one (yet preserve what is called the 'special character' of the church schools). At one level this favours a solution in which the central state retains control - the schools are not 'private' and hence privatisation is not so readily achieved. At a different level, there is within the system a strong model for a certain degree of autonomy and difference. It is interesting how politically useful the concept of 'special character' has been. Even prior to recent reforms, it was used to argue for separate (but fully state-funded) schools for Maori. Though difficult to prove, I would argue that the 1975 solution (conceived by an earlier Labour government in a very different climate) has been an influential force in reinforcing and modifying recent reforms.

My task in the remainder of this paper is to trace the developments and to attempt to analyse them in the light of the dialectic between universal New Right theory and local beliefs, values and institutions.

The developments in New Zealand (1984- 1989)

In New Zealand, the new thinking about education first became obvious in 1987. Between 1984 and 1987, the new Labour Government instituted dramatic economic reforms along the lines of the monetarism dominant elsewhere. Education, however, was put in the hands of Mr. Russell Marshall. He had long been preparing himself for the portfolio. Through many years in opposition he had taken every opportunity to learn more about education and to listen sympathetically to teachers. His educational philosophy was a liberal progressivist one with an emphasis on individual needs

and a modern pupil-centred curriculum. His first major acts were to remove University Entrance from the Sixth Form, broaden the range of subjects acceptable for the internally assessed Sixth Form Certificate and eliminate the rigid pass/fail system in School Certificate. He then turned his attention to the school curriculum more directly and set up his own Curriculum Review which, predictably, produced the sort of vaguely progressivist document typical of Labour administrations. As a result of this, the Department eventually produced in 1987 a draft National Curriculum Statement for New Zealand schools.

In educational terms, Marshall was successful and he was certainly in favour with the teachers' unions and the state department of education. On earlier models, Marshall was doing quite well and education could expect to continue to go in roughly the direction it had for over one hundred years.

In the light, however, of Labour's restructuring of the economy between 1984 and 1987, Russell Marshall's educational programme seemed a nostalgic re-run of earlier Labour reforms of education. This was high-lighted by the fact that during the 1987 election campaign, the Opposition speaker on education (Ruth Richardson) stirred up the electorate by arguing that schools must join the market economy - she advocated local control (not just involvement) teacher accountability, decentralised financing, and national standards of attainment. Her preferred mechanism for achieving all this was the voucher system. As a result of her demands the electorate showed more interest in education than it ever had before. She also appealed to teachers (particularly principals) by promising freedom in the use of resources without restriction by state bureaucracy.

When Labour was re-elected, the Prime Minister (Mr Lange) removed Marshall as Minister of Education and assumed the position himself. He faced an electorate aroused (to some extent) by Richardson (who, ironically, was also relieved of her 'portfolio'). Treasury had controlled the financial policy of the government since 1984 (Muldoon had spurned its advice). It now confidently saw itself as the expert not only on the economy but on everything else as well. It produced two Briefs for the government: one on the social system in general, one devoted solely to education. This 300 page book is an amazing document, probably unique in the modern world. In its own way, it is a thorough, researched, and cogent a position on education as any produced by educationists. Roy Nash, one of New Zealand's most influential sociologists of education (and hardly a right-wing supporter), wrote thus:

The brief provides the most penetrating critical analysis in some respects an extraordinarily radical analysis of the New Zealand education system published for some time.

Nash in *NZJES* 23: 1, 1988, 35-43

As indicated, this 'brief' is long and sophisticated in its arguments. For this paper, three points stand out:

1. The Treasury took seriously all the 'leftish', 'radical', 'socialist', 'sociological' critiques of education, all of which (as we know only too well) show that in terms of fostering equality, the education system in advanced countries has failed. It then turned the argument on its head, to argue that a 'radically' new solution was required, not (as liberals think) a tinkering with the existing system.
2. The Treasury, however, went on to argue that education has been a poor investment. Expenditure of more than three billion dollars annually has not fostered equity, participation, or achievement. Nor is there any evidence that it has improved economic output. Most importantly, however, education in New Zealand is marked by 'middle-class capture' - money is transferred from the poor to the rich. This is, of course, a very non-monetarist argument. A good monetarist would argue that this is indeed the way it should be. It is, I submit, a blatant attempt to capitalise on New Zealander's concern for and guilt about equity. Anyway, argues the Treasury, 'inputs' (money) are not producing 'outputs' (successful education). A new approach is needed, not further injections of state money.

3. Therefore, the Brief argues, state intervention in education should turn away from provision to ensuring that parents are provided with choice and the information to make it (shades of Nozick) and the setting of targets to be achieved not endless resources for indeterminate purposes. The primary school should stress 'core skills', the secondary schools the 'world of work' and the tertiary sector should turn from 'private returns' to 'public returns' (and incidentally from public cost to private cost - in the form of higher fees etc.)

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to assess the influence of this Treasury brief but, doubtless, many in the government were impressed and, more practically, a Treasury official was involved in all the subsequent reviews of education. As in so many other areas of national life, the Treasury set its agenda and thereafter any other agenda had to justify itself against the unequal logic of monetarism. (As Marxists learned to argue like Marx, monetarists argue like Nozick).

The reviews and government policy

Between 1987 and 1989, there have been three reviews and four policy documents. The reviews are 1) *Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education* (a general review focusing mainly on schools). This is usually termed the Picot Report; 2) *Education to be More* devoted to early childhood education (the Meade Report) and 3) *Report of the Working Party on Post Compulsory Education and Training* targeting the tertiary sector (the Hawke Report). The four policy documents are *Tomorrow's Schools* (primary and secondary education), *Before Five* (early childhood education), *Learning for Life* (tertiary education) and *Learning for Life II* (tertiary education in the light of representations made by interested groups).

For the purpose of theoretical analysis, I shall focus on the school area and hence on the Picot Report and *Tomorrow's Schools*.

The Picot Report

Before the 1987 election (while Marshall was still Minister of Education) Mr Lange had set up a task force chaired by business man Brian Picot. Among the terms of reference was one to examine the various local authorities (college councils, secondary school boards and school committees) 'with a view to increasing their powers and responsibilities' (p.ix).

Among other things, the Picot Report argued (or rather asserted for it contains no evidence and little real argument) that

1. The system is over-centralised, management practices are ineffectual and choice is prevented by the lack of adequate information.
2. There is need for simple structures and co-ordinated goals.
3. 'Individual learning institutions will be the basic unit' of administration. There will be a 'partnership' between teachers and parents, institutionalised with a Board of Trustees for every institute.
4. The 'lynchpin' between community and school and between school and state will be a charter.
5. A Review and Audit Agency will ensure that schools are accountable for adhering to their charter and achieving their goals.
6. Education Boards will be abolished and their advisory services be available on a 'user pay' basis to schools. [Since 1877 Education Boards had stood between Department and primary schools. In the light of recent developments it is interesting to note that in the 1877 Act it

was envisaged that local school committees would have most power, the central department least. Within a few years, the situation was reversed.]

7. There would be a Ministry in place of the Department. It would have no part in the provision of services but would serve a policy function giving 'policy advice to the Minister, through an Education Policy Council'.
8. There would be an Education Policy Council, with membership balanced between four ministry people and four 'outside' appointees.
9. There would also be a Parent Advocacy Council to represent the consumers against the providers who 'are likely to remain better funded and organised than consumers'. (p.xii)

The Picot Report seemed very acceptable to the community which had few reservations. The teachers and academic educationists were much more critical. The latter pointed to the lack of educational goals and any concern for curriculum. There was a belief that the system needed a 'buffer' (such as district councils) between ministry and schools. Educationists also argued that the Review and Audit Agency was too much an 'outside' body imposing on schools aims and procedures little related to learning. Finally, there was a strong feeling that the proposals down-graded the professional contribution of teachers (see e.g. the collection of articles in *Access*, 7, 1988, and the report by Rae Munro for the PPTA).

"Tomorrow's Schools" and the aftermath

In August 1988 the government released its policy document *Tomorrow's Schools*. It took little account of the concerns expressed by teachers and educationists (in terms of the philosophy these were, presumably, 'better funded and organised' and hence their arguments could be disregarded). The document endorsed the main thrust of Picot and often used the same words. It stressed, however, that principals would be professional leaders and schools would be funded directly by bulk grants.

Some changes were made, however:

1. There was to be no Policy Advice Council;
2. There were to be clear national guidelines on many matters;
3. Where Picot had recommended that the special education services should be funded 60% by state, 40% by 'user pay' *Tomorrow's Schools* stated that the proportion be 80: 20 (subsequently the Minister announced that the services would be 100% state funded- the result of the best organised lobby group to oppose Picot policies). The new system was to be fully operative by 1 October, 1989 and several 'implementation units' were set up to work out the details of the policy announced in *Tomorrow's Schools*.

As to the aftermath, much is still unclear (particularly in the tertiary area) but certain things are emerging:

1. The system, 'sold' to the electorate as a decentralising measure is becoming more centralised and bureaucratic than before. The universities are feeling particularly vulnerable. Their 'buffer' (the University Grants Committee) has been abolished and it looks as if all degree programmes will have to be approved by a national qualification body (NEQUA). This body will approve all school and postschool awards. Universities believe that their autonomy has been seriously eroded, although the government has promised to enshrine academic freedom in legislation.
2. The charters, seen originally as giving freedom, are now clearly sources of further control. They are written at the centre; the local board has only to fill in some details. Boards of

Trustees are finding it hard to take the exercise seriously as they seem organised to control schools not grant them autonomy.

3. The Education Department has re-emerged Phoenix-like to become the Ministry, not with less powers but with enhanced powers. The top jobs and indeed most jobs have gone to departmental officials and the Ministry has gained control over universities as well as other educational organisations. The major change seems one of 'style'. Salaried Departmental Officers working by discussion and consensus have turned into smooth 'executives' (with salary 'packages') issuing directives.
4. The Review and Audit Agency has been 're-claimed' for the profession. An educator has been put in charge, the job specifications changed to allow only former inspectors to apply and the Agency's name changed to 'Education Review Office' to signify the move from an outsiders 'audit' to an 'insiders' appraisal.
5. It is gradually dawning on all that whatever the grand theory, those who control the finance control the enterprise. All are feeling the financial impact: principals claim that their schools are underfunded and the funding formula is difficult to track down (if indeed it exists). Tertiary students are asked to pay more fees, and universities (in particular) are being given a financial lashing. As I write, tertiary fees have been increased ten-fold (to \$1250) and the assets of the University Grants Committee (\$26m.) have been appropriated by the government for the consolidated fund in defiance of its advisory committee which recommended it be used to support the Vice-Chancellors' Committee and equity proposals. This comes on top of: no financial recompense for the 5,000 extra enrolments in 1989 (estimates: \$60m. short), no reimbursement for increased salaries, promotions or G.S.T. Other tertiary institutions will be reimbursed.

The situation is ripe for either a) total privatisation (a future government could authorise Board of Trustees to sell to the highest bidder), or b) increased state control. (A different sort of government could 'tighten the screws' on all sectors from pre-school to tertiary and, in particular, assume total control over teacher education which, in defiance of Picot, has been left free-standing, autonomous, and very vulnerable. The Minister has released figures to show that per student the Teachers colleges are the most expensive part of the Tertiary enterprise, even though universities are supposedly funded for research.)

The situation, then, is unclear but I shall in the next section attempt an analysis of the interplay of arguments which has got us to where we are towards the end of 1989.

Analysis

It is clear that New Zealand has been caught up in the discourse and practice of the New Right. Some of its themes are quite obvious:

1. The education system is to be part of the market where 'choice' determines quality. A committee (called ABLE - assessment for better learning) has reported on ways of assessing pupils, teachers, schools and the whole system. Part of the rationale is that parents must be provided with information to enable choice - the free-market principle.
2. Accountability or responsibility is located at the local or 'face to face' level. While continuing to control and monitor, the state is washing its hands of responsibility for outcomes. In future, if social equality is not achieved, the Board of Trustees will be blamed; if pupils cannot read, responsibility will be sheeted home to the schools.
3. Education is a privilege not a right. Education benefits the individual and therefore should be paid for, at least in part, by the individual. So far, the burden here has fallen on the tertiary level where students are to pay increased fees and the institutions are encouraged not just

to produce revenue but to generate profit. But more subtly it is also operative at other levels where, it is clear, schools will have to find their own finance to supplement the state's meagre grants. To this extent all schools will be (a little) private and, as Nozick wanted, those who have will be privileged over those who have not.

4. Schools must be accountable for learning. Schools (and universities) will be scrutinised as never before on their results. The much vaunted autonomy is illusory since it is, basically, 'the freedom to do as one ought'. Control and responsibility are to be more cogent than freedom and self-evaluation.

So far I have stressed the ways in which New Right thinking is having an impact on our schools. This is one pole of the debate. The other pole is provided by features of the New Zealand ethos which I acknowledged earlier. These involve:

1. Recognition of the claims of equity. From the outset, Treasury made this a central feature of their case against schools. Today, their strongest argument against 'liberals' is that the 'old view' failed to promote equity. Many seem to find this argument impossible to answer not noticing that inequity results from the social and economic system, not from schooling. This was, of course, the original motivation of the radical critics. Illich had made the identical case against schooling even to the extent of demonstrating 'middle-class capture'. His solution was the complete de-institutionalising of schooling. At the time, radicals argued that Illich had seen a problem (to a degree) but because of his Rousseauian assumptions about institutions had been unable to get a correct analysis. This seems to me to be correct. Liberals, however, have talked as if there is a failure of schools and still talk as if money and goodwill could solve the problem. Clearly, Treasury has called our bluff and we should call theirs. Schools on the old model did not and could not solve equity issues and the new model will not solve them either - it will in fact exacerbate them as many critics have pointed out.

A free market economic system as advocated by the Treasury cannot deliver equity: at every step of the way it operates against equity. The invocation of the term 'equity' is a blatant appeal to local concerns and is in no way a genuine feature of the reforms. To be cynical, 'equity' is the dogma used to 'sell' freemarket policies to New Zealanders.

2. Those who sincerely believed that Picot was ushering in a new and vital decentralised system (and some must have been sincere - I doubt all were) should have recognised the dominance of the central government in New Zealand. Liberals had always been confused on this score. They tended to focus on the bureaucratic structures rather than the human outcomes (just as they had decried Muldoon's style while failing to notice his 'message'). Anyone with a knowledge of New Zealand history or sociology should have realised that the net result of removing intermediate 'checks and balances' would be to strengthen the role of central government.

As the details of *Tomorrow's Schools* and *Learning for Life* emerge we note the consistent movement of control to the centre. This is particularly true of universities and is, I think, a result of the 'equality' theory discussed above. Ironically, the university system in which 'excellence' and 'autonomy' have been most imbedded is the major casualty of a movement which allegedly is to promote excellence and autonomy. The weapon is, of course, equity. Even more than other educational institutions universities have failed to achieve equality of outcome. More than most institutions they have suffered 'middle class capture'. Consequently, they most of all must be brought into line, made accountable and forced to pay for their existence.

It is quite instructive to note how universities have been singled out for financial stringencies (the new fees, for example, do not apply to some fifty percent of polytechnic students)- and this by a government whose Cabinet is the most highly 'educated' in our

history- the Prime Minister was formerly a professor, his deputy a university lecturer. They are, however, now politicians and populists and they know that in New Zealand the 'Ordinary Bloke' resents the privilege and elitism of universities. It may be that the current attacks on universities is the revenge of the 'Ordinary Bloke' who for so long has resented the (apparent and sometimes real) arrogance of university people. The sad thing is that universities have kept alive the ideal of equity and produced the research which shows how far short of the ideal we fall. They are also the institutions which will be most negatively affected (in terms of equity) by high fees, student loans and new systems of finance. And it is students who will suffer the most.

If those who promoted the new theories genuinely wanted decentralisation, they have failed. If they did not, they have cynically deceived most New Zealanders. In either case they should declare their current position. In default of that, it seems to be the case that control has reverted to the centre, responsibility to the periphery, thus giving support to the view expressed by Codd and others, that the basic problem is one of state legitimation.

3. The new scheme (as initiated by Treasury) pays tribute both to the importance of Maori culture and to the sorry record of Maori achievement. In his inaugural address at Victoria University, Gerald Grace showed how the commodity view of education is profoundly at odds with the view of the Maori. He also shows that the Treasury realised this. He comments:

What I cannot understand is how the Treasury writers can resolve the major contradiction between their crude commodification thesis of Ch. 2 and their sensitive appreciation of Maori community values in Ch. 8.

(1988 p.21)

What emerges is a fatal (and perhaps cynically induced) conflict between equity and efficiency, and between choice and equity. Efficiency is an organisational virtue while equity is a moral value. It is unlikely that they will both be achieved by the same mechanism and there is certainly no evidence to suggest they will. Similarly, choice is an individualist value which by and large, operates against equity. It would be flying in the face of experience to suggest that both can be achieved by the same reforms.

The Treasury has enjoyed berating liberals on the matter of Maori under achievement. To oppose the suggested reforms is, it is said, to support the existing system which (as our 'own people' have shown) is grossly discriminatory towards the Maori. As I argued earlier, the situation is quite complex and 'liberals' should refuse to be impaled on the horns of this dilemma.

What must be said and said clearly is that under present proposals we see a sleight of hand which is meant to fool people and may fool those who have most to lose. One of the reasons for the successful 'sale' of *Tomorrow's Schools* is that it allows and even encourages the development of special schools for Maori and many liberals support this idea. As implemented by *Tomorrow's Schools*, however, it also allows special schools for fundamentalists, fascists and entrepreneurs. Time will tell whether social gains balance social losses. I'd have serious doubts.

4. We must not underestimate the position of integrated schools. The philosophy of *Tomorrow's Schools* appealed to them because while accentuating the individual school it removed other 'systems' elements. There is no controlling Board, for example. The integrated school on the contrary is not an isolated entity: it is part of a tight system administered (largely) by the Roman Catholic Church. They had nothing to lose from the 'devolution' and everything to gain. Small wonder a principal of an integrated school could proclaim that '*Tomorrow's Schools* restores what we lost under integration' [i.e. total control of hiring and firing]. For the second time in fifteen years the Catholic school system has turn

ed its back on the rest of New Zealand's citizens. At a time when some Catholic leaders are courageously opposing current economic policies, it is sad to see them agreeing with educational policies which have similar results- though of course, they benefit the Catholic Church and its schools.

Conclusion

I doubt that I have really got to the bottom of what is happening in New Zealand education. Much more needs to be said about the social conditions which have led to the present situation, and I have not fully teased out the various strands of current reforms. There is, perhaps, too much logical appraisal, too little analysis of interest groups and power relations.

I hope, nevertheless, to have indicated some of the conceptual and ideological strands in the reforms and to have suggested ways in which we might understand them better. I have not given practical advice to those who would turn the present ambiguities into positive outcomes. I can only hope that my account will help them to see their way through the confusion, give some hope for individual effort, and provide general guidance for combating the current ideology and forging a better one. To my mind it is a major tragedy of the 1970's that while the Left convinced us that ideas are powerless, the Right was getting ready to prove how powerful ideas could be.

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