

## Tertiary education reforms in Tanzania and New Zealand: The fallacy of vocationalisation

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### ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the contemporary market driven reforms to tertiary education in New Zealand and Tanzania will result in the relegation and deemphasis of educational ideals in favour of a vocationally oriented education. The history of tertiary education in Tanzania and New Zealand is outlined. The impact of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on economic policy development in both countries is discussed. The conflict between notions of academic freedom and the market model of tertiary education is clarified. The paper concludes by discussing the potential impact of market oriented reforms on tertiary institutions and education in general.

### Introduction

Even though it is not the intent in this paper to dwell on the nature, content and merit of vocational education vis-a-vis general and other forms of education, it is worthwhile noting that throughout time there has been a variety of opinion and language used to describe the kind of education related to the preparation for employment as well as for retraining for employment. Terms like 'career education', 'manual training', 'technical education' have been used to indicate that education is directed towards the development of skills. 'It should also be noted that some prefer not to use the word education but the word training to indicate the narrower focus of such education' (Elias, 1995: 165).

While Plato and Aristotle, convinced of the superiority of the mind over the body, debased and denigrated manual work, Rousseau advanced the importance of the pursuit of 'industrial arts', arguing that everyone in society is bound to work, 'rich or poor, weak or strong, every idler is a thief.' The Germany educator, Friedrich Froebel, advocated 'manual arts' education for children in kindergartens. John Dewey, although a proponent of vocational education, argued for a broader view of vocational education, opposing narrow forms of skills training. In his view, industrial education should emphasise acquisition of specialised skill based on science and a knowledge of social problems and conditions and not the acquisition of specialised skill in the management of machines. He advocated that motor and manual skills be developed in an active, constructive, inventive and creative manner with the goal not so much of producing skilled workers, but persons with industrial intelligence, a knowledge of the conditions and processes of manufacturing, transportation, and commerce. He contended that such a view of industrial intelligence would 'prize freedom more than docility; initiative more than automatic skill; insight and understanding more than capacity to recite lessons or to execute tasks under the direction of others' (Elias, 1995: 177).

In the same vein, William Dubois, an African American educator and activist, argued that industrial schools must be aware of placing undue emphasis on the practical character of their work, for all true learning of the head or hand is practical in the sense of being applicable to life. 'But the best learning is more than merely practical since it seeks to apply itself not simply to present modes of living but to a larger, broader life which lives today, perhaps, in theory only, but may come to realisation tomorrow by the help of educated and good men' (ibid.). He argued further that the ideals of education, whether people are taught to teach or to plow, to weave or to write, must not be allowed to sink to sordid utilitarianism. Education must keep broad ideals before it, and never forget that it is dealing with souls and not dollars.

It is the intention of this paper to argue that the contemporary market driven reforms in higher education evidenced in NZ and Tanzania, can only lead to narrow and circumscribed vocational offerings which privilege business and industrial needs over and away from broad educational aspirations which higher education in general, and universities in particular stand for. While, down-sizing and other corporate strategies are becoming the norm in the educational industry which is bent on efficiency, the pursuit of educational ideals is either relegated, de-emphasised or even discarded.

In seeking to understand the basis for these reforms, one has to understand the shift whereby a political ideology that legitimises a conception of education which emphasises the development of a whole person is replaced by a political ideology sustaining a conception of education that emphasises its economic role in training an efficient work-force, thereby creating a culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise, and fostering a positive view of industry and wealth creation (Carr & Hartnet 1996: 21). Simply put, the contemporary educational reforms in higher education in these countries are a manifestation of ideologies at war.

## Tertiary education trends in Tanzania and New Zealand

While there are many institutions in Tanzania and New Zealand that can be grouped under tertiary education, this paper focuses on universities and university education in the two countries. Although the discussion of the nature, content and structure of university education may bear relevance to other tertiary institutions, particularly polytechnics and colleges of education, issues of the practical-theory balance ratios, institutional goals and missions, as well as issues of governance and legislation, render it unrealistic for them to be lumped together in a discussion on vocationalisation.

### *Tertiary education in Tanzania*

The history of tertiary education in Tanzania is short, but not without highlights and interesting moments. Under the Germany and British colonial system, Tanzania did not have much tertiary educational activity. Most of the people who went past a few years of primary schooling went into clerical positions or served as primary school teachers, catechists and missionary assistants. The positions that required higher educational qualifications were comfortably filled by colonial expatriates. Thus after independence, with the drive to Africanise, i.e. to have Africans take-over the posts which had hitherto been occupied by the colonial civil servants, a need for an increased enrolment for higher education was found imperative. The University of East Africa (UEA)<sup>1</sup> became the rallying point for the development of the needed high level manpower in the country until 1970 when the first national university- the University of Dares Salaam, was established.

The students, though predominantly national, were also predominantly middle class in values and disposition. There were many points of disagreements between them and the government. This led to a head-on collision in 1966, after the establishment of the compulsory national service scheme, whereby university graduates were to enlist for paramilitary service for 6 months. This

culminated in the first of many closures of the university when students have found themselves confronted with the coercive instruments of the state.

The university none-the-less managed to strive on as a centre for intellectual foment in the country with the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary elements struggling for ideas and ideological maturity amongst the students and faculty. The University of Dar es Salaam became involved in exploring issues of the nature of the state, the post-colonial state formation, underdevelopment, de-colonisation and national development.

The growth of what came to be known as the Dar es Salaam school of thought ornamented by scholars such as Walter Rodney, Issa Shivji, Yash Tandon, Cliff Illife, John Saul, (Ranger, 1982) and a host of other academic personae, came out of the exchange which signified the foment of thought at the time. Scholars were prepared to challenge and critique the government on a number of issues in its implementation of socialist principles<sup>2</sup>. A revolutionary and visionary thought was developed amongst the intellectuals and scholars from the university, coupled with exceptional high quality teaching, research, writing and debate. However, these were steadily reversed and undermined by the erosion of support by donors and the state especially in the 1980s.

With the erosion of the economic base in the country and the end of the cold war, the strong leftist scholarship was increasingly replaced by the 'New Right' drift, heralded by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund strategists who, in tandem, argued that given the limited resources and unlimited demand, Tanzania's public funding priority should go to basic, rather than higher education.

A 'steady decline of real wages, severe shortage of books, journals, paper, laboratory equipment, research facilities, and support for high level overseas training as well as domestic post-graduate programmes' (Mbilinyi, 1990: 17) have all contributed to the manifest erosion of scholarship and intellectual production. Mbilinyi (1990: 17) further notes that 'in 1988, Tanzanian university teachers could only feed their families for about three days on the monthly wages, meaning that their labour during the other working days of the month was not supported by wages at all, but by "out of classroom" activities.'

Commenting on the same issue, Birgit (1993: 59) says: 'What strikes me as surprising is the fact that one still finds enthusiastic and committed teachers ... This can only be understood on the background of the dedication of the teachers to their nation, to the freedom and independence of their people. It impressed me that my colleagues<sup>3</sup> at the University of Dar es Salaam, who received salaries way too small to live on, still carried on a high quality staff seminar each week, with well prepared papers and excellent and critical discussion.' Here it must be noted however, that the dismal state of affairs, has also contributed to various pathologies related to the brain-drain syndrome (Alphonce, 1996) amongst the Tanzanian academics, particularly the category referred as the 'the brain in the drain.'<sup>4</sup>

With time, the dominant discourse within the university intellectual circles has changed into that of monetarism and economic rationalism with the World Bank credo sung in every nook and corner. Political economy and Marxist epistemological approaches became taboo to most, (thankfully not all), academics, and reference to capitalism and neo-colonialism were muted or non-existent. As an illustration of the signs of the time, one erstwhile professor of Political Science, amidst a round of applause as if he had anything to do with it, and as if it was a fact, recently proudly proclaimed that 'imperialism is dead!'

Recently, in Tanzania there is a move towards establishing new universities to compete with the existing state supported universities. While some providers are preparing to start private universities, a number are indicating the desire to elevate the status of existing middle level colleges into universities. Most of these institutions have not been fully equipped to run as universities but they have found a void to be filled and they are taking full advantage of it. The transformation of middle level institutions into universities, by itself, does not indicate that these institutions will

perform better than before, nor does it ensure the public that the educational outcome or skills bequeathed to learners will be markedly different. Further, the erosion of middle level training institutions may be an issue of concern to the economy with regard to the country's labour-mix ratio in future.

In order to firmly grasp what is behind the sudden interest in higher education in Tanzania, one has to bear the following facts in mind. First, the manpower requirement approach (MRA) towards the development of higher education, created a very lean structure of higher education in the country with only less than 1 % of the population having attended education above the secondary school level. This was the outcome of a deliberate effort on the part of the government to educate as many people as there were jobs available to be filled in the wake of Tanzanianisation of the public service in general and the civil service in particular. With a population of nearly thirty million people, Tanzania has less than 40,000 university graduates! Thus the World Bank argument about the over-production of university graduates in Africa certainly cannot be applied to Tanzania. If anything, Tanzania needs to step up the numbers of its citizens who are acquiring higher education, even if these graduates may not find ready jobs in the market.

Secondly, the policy of liberalisation of trade and business from the mid-eighties, ushered-in the end of the era of nationalisations which were undertaken when the Tanzanian government declared the intention of building an egalitarian socialist society in 1967. The nationalisation and denationalisation of most private schools which followed the Arusha Declaration, curtailed and discouraged initiatives by the private sector to contribute towards educational development in the country at all levels of schooling.

The third fact which also has a bearing to the sudden upsurge of opening tertiary institutions in Tanzania is that education has now become an arena where business can be conducted and profits made. This spans not only the opening of educational institutions like schools, especially the English medium schools, but also educational support organisations like publishing houses, book shops and bookstalls, as well as outlets for educational materials, laboratory equipment and chemicals. As a potentially profitable venture, tertiary education is therefore also up for grabs for those with the ability and capacity to put up the necessary infrastructure and to hire requisite personnel.

From all this it is clear that the initial privileged status that the founding universities, particularly the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), enjoyed in Tanzania has been challenged. As a result, the UDSM has embarked on an exercise to re-focus its mission as well as to review its viability in order to 'clarify its path, to build a new corporate identity, with its own distinctive characteristics, to acquire and maintain a leading position in terms of relevance, quality and reputation' (UDSM, 1994: 6). Amongst other things the UDSM, proposes to critically analyse its contribution to the socio-economic development process as the primary focus. As part of its overall national role, the UDSM envisages in its corporate plan to provide intellectual and professional leadership in university education, research and development. UDSM further pledges co-operation with the government and other public bodies in the orderly development of education and research, as well as, catering for the national high-level manpower needs and national research and resource assessment.

In order to do this the UDSM suggests that it would need to have internal autonomy to operate efficiently and effectively. Further it ominously envisages financial planning and budgeting on the basis of a corporate costing system reflecting the full economic costs of its outputs and marketing its services at full economic fees. The document further asserts that 'since individual students benefit from the education they receive, there is need of putting into place suitable modes of gradually introduced cost sharing.'

The strategic plan for the University of Dar es Salaam involves the 'share holder' concept against equivalent capital investment with interested third parties, in particular organisations/bodies which may have an interest in establishing a private university otherwise. 'For example the university shall, among other things enter into consultation with the Christian Secondary schools Council (CSSC) and

the Secondary School Tanzania Muslim Council (BAKWATA) and seek negotiations with their respective parent organisations' (UDSM, 1994: 16). Further the plan indicates that the share holder concept will bar external bodies (i.e. non-Tanzanians) from acquiring shares of the University of Dar es Salaam.

Several problematic issues are immediately apparent. To start with, the issue of values upon which institutions are established and developed seems to have been totally overlooked. A public university has certain tenets which must be upheld which may not be necessarily compatible with those of sectoral or religious organisations. Thus what will be negotiated is not only how many shares the bodies are willing to pay for, but also how many of the stated public values are likely to be bought or compromised in the process of the sale of stock.

The process of the sale of stock further entails that universities would soon find themselves on the share market where the highest bidder gets the goods with profits being part and parcel of running public universities.

Another issue which the sale of the stock argument does not take into account is that, whereas religious organisations have national affinities most of them also have international ties and are invariably and inevitably financed by foreign agencies, individuals and governments. Thus, not only will public institutions find themselves entangled in the web of dealing with multi-thronged value bases but also indirect accountability to external funding agencies will have to be taken into account. Quotas of student admission, based on the interests or size of corporate shares of the university owned, may have to be set aside in order to satisfy the patrons of the shareholder.

From this observation it is possible to suggest that this form of partnership in education could easily lead to forms of control increasingly making it difficult for the public to exercise much say in how university education is run. Rather, it will give a free hand to the private bodies not only to dictate the content but also the basis of access to higher education in the country.

As a telling case, it was reported that the first university in Zanzibar is expected to open in February next year (1998) according to government sources. The private university, to be run by one of the institutions based in Saudi Arabia, will conduct its courses in Arabic and students will undergo an intensive six-month language course before progressing with their studies. The sources said that admissions would be open to all qualified Tanzanians and foreigners. It has to be noted that Tanzania with a well developed national language \_ Kiswahili has debated and hesitated for many years as to whether higher education can be conducted in a language other than English. But almost overnight, a private foreign-based organisation opens a university in the country and dictates the language of instruction and by implication matters of content and access.

Given the level of economic development and the ability of the majority of the people in Tanzania, it is not difficult to see that in future very few people will have the ability to pay their way through tertiary education and that most tertiary oriented activities will be the confine of only a few elites or foreign expatriates and the majority of the population will have to settle for low level qualifications which would enable them to supply the needed artisan and possibly technician labour, while the policy makers and high level management will remain in the hands of foreigners and a few local elites.

This is reminiscent of a Platonic system of social relationship which legitimised the perpetuation of an aristocratic society in which it was assumed that people were by nature unequal and that the relationship between the educated high class and the uneducated lower orders required that the lives of the latter should be regulated for them, not by them. 'They should not be allowed or encouraged to think for themselves ... it is the duty of the higher classes to think for them and to take responsibility for their lot' (Carr & Hartnet, 1996: 32).

### *Tertiary education in New Zealand*

New Zealand prides itself on a long tradition of a highly developed tertiary education sector comparable in many senses to most of its OECD counterparts. The establishment of the New Zealand university system was rooted in the need to circulate the British national culture based on the British university. The University of Otago was established in 1869 following the Scottish Model, in contrast to Canterbury which was established in 1873 on the Oxford model. The University of New Zealand, a non-teaching university established under an 1870 Act, resembling the University of London, was a degree granting and examining body, with teaching conducted by colleges. The University of Auckland was established in 1883, and unlike its predecessors i.e. Otago and Canterbury, it was almost entirely dependent on state funds, it had no endowments, and it was secular and democratic. Victoria University of Wellington was established as a College affiliated to the University of New Zealand in 1899. The other universities in New Zealand, Massey, Waikato and Lincoln were established much later. The University of New Zealand was abolished under the Universities Act 1961, with the four constituent colleges, empowered as free and independent universities with commensurate status, privileges, powers, duties and responsibilities (Peters, 1997: 20). The Act also established a new central authority in the form of the University Grants Committee with statutory financial and academic jurisdiction.

Starting with the late 1980s, the prevailing national system saw reforms under which universities became statutory corporations 'and the techno-bureaucratic notion of excellence became firmly established as the guiding ethos and mission of higher education in New Zealand' (ibid.). The reforms to tertiary education, which started with the Hawke report in 1988, were part of the broader restructuring of the New Zealand society and economy.

The State Owned Enterprise Act of 1986, which promulgated the concept of running departments as successful businesses, their operation in a competitive neutral environment, and the modelling of state enterprises in the private sector, was applied to universities and other tertiary institutions in New Zealand.

In August 1993, a Ministerial Committee whose terms of reference were to advise the government on the appropriate proportion of public and private contributions to tertiary education, was established. In practical terms the committee (referred as the Todd Committee) was to focus on the level of student fees in tertiary institutions rather than some wider agenda (Easton, 1997).

While the Committee was unanimous on the matter of the rise of student fees, they were split on the appropriate levels of such a rise. While some members supported an option which would have lifted the average student fee to 25 percent of average tertiary costs per student (compared to 20 percent at the given time), others advocated an option which would have raised the ratio to 50 percent, but offered support for low income-people as an offset. Yet other members rejected both options, favouring the status quo or even lower fees (Easton, 1996: 217).

Advocacy for increased fee payment in higher education can be understood from a human capital theory perspective which regards expenditure on education as an investment with more private, rather than social returns. The theory states that, logically, people make private investment decisions on the basis of the return the investment makes or will make in the long run. In order for people to make decisions themselves, there should not be public subsidies which would interfere and eventually distort their judgement.

This line of argument seems to suggest that if investors found the return on education to be low, then they should be free to spend their time and money on other things which would be a better allocation of resources from which they, and ultimately the economy would be better off.

During 1995-96 the Minister of Education promoted changes to university governance along state owned enterprise lines, while reports commissioned by several university councils and the Vice Chancellors' Committee urged the universities to withdraw voluntarily from state ownership and become private charitable trusts (Kelsey, 1997: 85). These models are designed to promote an

internationally open, competitive education market serviced by public and private providers as primarily commercial enterprises, driven by economic efficiency.

One important aspect of educational privatisation and commodification has been the desire to sell a package that is attractive and acceptable to buyers, especially those offshore to whom New Zealand is increasingly turning for trade, investment, and other social and economic relations. This has resulted in traditional values being replaced by those based on the ethos of the market and saleability of the product. Thus middle level institutions, polytechnics and colleges of education have found that, in order to survive, they have either to become universities or start offering university degrees.

Several Colleges of Education in New Zealand are either already offering university degrees, e.g. Auckland College of Education (ACE), or are associated with national or even international universities from which degrees are offered. Other colleges and polytechnics have opted to merge with universities in order to offer university level courses and to attract more national and international clientele.

The concern to stay competitive among different tertiary institutions at the same or different levels of programme offerings is a serious issue. The market is a magic wand that dictates which courses survive and which fall by the wayside. A recent report from Otago University indicated that some programmes in the humanities, would be scrapped in favour of those applied programmes which prove to be economically viable.

This process, which may be referred as the *uni-poly syndrome*, cannot but make one wonder whether the ideals of university education would not be jeopardised by the drive to teach only those courses that have immediate application to production or employment. Universities may soon find themselves providing the vocational requirements, which were the preserve of polytechnics and other middle level institutions. They will have to be accountable to the employers for their 'uni-poly' graduates who may not be as practical and skilled as polytechnic graduates are supposed to be and with less academic inclination than expected of university graduates.

## Reforms and the Bretton Wood triumvirate (WB, IMF, GATT/GATS)

In order to come to grips with the changes in higher education, it is instructive to revisit the nature and structures of the global fiscal and economic policy development institutions. These institutions - The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) were created out of the Bretton Wood conference in 1944, as part of the Marshall Plan to oversee the reconstruction of the European economy as the aftermath of the World War II. Currently they have become very much involved in the world economy- both developed and developing.

While the World Bank and IMF have a much more obvious and pronounced involvement in the economic policy development of developing nations, The GATT and its trade in services wing, The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), bring pressure to bear on the more developed nations in the process of 'achieving greater coherence in global economic policy-making' (Kelsey, 1997: 67).

Through the GATS, major US and OECD powerful trans-national corporations (TNCs), sought globalized 'free market' and 'free trade', through a comprehensive liberalisation of trade in services (including education) overnight by the application of all GATT principles. While these advances were partially thwarted in the last round of Uruguay talks, it is arguable that unless the ascendancy of finance capital is confronted by nations, it may be just a matter of time before the international services sector is fully *GATTanised*.

The concept of trade in services was set out to develop and legitimate defensible policy options by a closed network of academics, officials and the private sector. Potential critics were shut out of

the debate. It has been argued that secrecy and strict control of the flow of information about international negotiations serve to create a receptive environment and a constituency of beneficiaries who work to neutralise and discredit their opponents (Kelsey, 1997). Major powers like the US and EU face intense pressure from well resourced lobby groups placing a high priority on complying with constitutional process and maintaining domestic political legitimacy, which constraints, are often used as leverage in international forums. Kelsey (1997: 69) observes, however, that:

In small countries with highly exposed economies, countries where there are few effective constitutional constraints on state actors and no substantive ratification processes, where lobby groups have little power, and where economic policy-making bodies enjoy considerable autonomy, debate tends to be highly controlled or suppressed.

New Zealand, like Tanzania, treats international trade agreements as acts of the state which do not require a formal mandate or ratification by Parliament before they can be signed. Also, the Official Information Act provides an exemption for information where disclosure may 'damage seriously the economy of New Zealand by disclosing prematurely decisions to change or continue government economic or financial policies in relation to the entering into overseas trade agreement' (Op. cit.: 77). All these serve to curtail debate over issues such as the government's offer to the Uruguay round of talks on the trade of services.

To be sure, New Zealand State education institutions remain exempt from the GATTs, provided they remain fully state-funded and administered, non-commercial and non-competitive. Thus, a competitive education market supplied by public and private providers would certainly fall within the definition and coverage of the GATTs, as would full fee-paying courses provided by state institutions and partial cost-recovery through student fees. Thus as Kelsey (1997) argues, 'the extension of GATT to include services, intellectual property and investment measures has serious implications for the economic, social, cultural and political well-being of ... society and for the degree of control which present and future generations can exercise over their lives' (p. 66).

It is worth pointing out that for these global actors and institutions to perform, they have local national counterparts who advocate and legitimate their activities and ideologies. Some of these are the powerful and influential business and industrial forums. In Britain there is the CBI, whose credo is: 'To compete and prosper'; France the Patronat; Germany the BDI; Italy the Confindustria; Japan the Keidanren and New Zealand, the Business Roundtable. These bodies, with no direct political affiliation, are powerful and accountable to no one except their own national and international associations i.e. capital owners. They exert immense influence on government decisions and other areas of public life relating to the development of public policy conducive to economic restructuring in line with the needs and interests of international finance capital.

Roger Kerr, the Executive Director of New Zealand Business Round Table, points at state welfarism as one of the seven deadly economic sins of the Twentieth Century because, he argues, it encourages dependency, wastes money, destroys families and wastes lives (Kerr, 1997: 11). He therefore advocates a gradual replacement of state welfare provision by 'private and voluntary approaches in all the major areas: income support, health care, accident insurance and pensions.'

### *SAPs and Higher Education*

Education reforms in post-colonial countries in general, and Tanzania in particular, have been heralded by and large by The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as conditions for securing multilateral and/or bilateral financial aid, through the infamous Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs). The World Bank emphasises adjustment policies based on austerity measure at higher levels of education, arguing that presently there is an overproduction of university graduates who are allegedly 'of dubious quality and ... too little new knowledge and direct development support' (Mbilinyi, 1990: 15).



With a citadel of intellectual and financial resources, the World Bank has given rise to an unassailable fortress and legitimacy of discourse that bars alternative conceptualisation of solutions to the crisis of higher education in Africa (Mbilinyi, 1992; Birgit, 1993; Omari, 1991). Sarnoff (in Omari, 1991), argues that its research capacity, the potential to provide large-scale funding, and effective organisational muscle combine to enable the World Bank to globalise most of its preferred agenda. Sarnoff (Omari, 1991: 43) contends further that:

Within that fortress, the World Bank becomes the arbiter not only of contending loan applications and competing project proposals but also of the quality of research. The very specification of what is (and by exclusion, what is not) valid knowledge thus entrench a particular understanding of education and its roles and privileges, a particular set of priorities.

The World Bank has taken it upon itself to advise African governments to stop financing higher education and let individual beneficiaries pay. Again premised on the assumption that higher education benefits the individual more than society, the Bank argues that it is more economical for the state to invest in primary education rather than higher education. It is also assumed that higher education is consumed by the more wealthy families, rather than the poor ones. On these accounts, it is proposed that fees should be charged to reduce higher education costs and to recover investment into education, and as a consequence share the burden with those who would benefit from it.

In the more economically developed nations, the assumption that the share of nongovernment contributions can be raised is based on the existence of a large middle and upper class that values higher education and is able to pay for it; a large private sector willing and seeing the benefit of investment in higher education; and large philanthropic and financial foundations keen to fund university education and research.

Arguably, these conditions do not exist in many African countries generally and particularly Tanzania. The current arguments for the introduction of user fees in higher education, posed in the context of improving social and economic efficiency in financing higher education, are in practice an affront to a progressive ideology that has upheld that free and equitable education was a sacrosanct communal responsibility of the state (Omari, 1991). The thrust is to push for the disengagement of the state from this responsibility, 'eschewing a radical capitalist ideology which blindly entrusts the crisis of higher education to the whims of the market forces' (ibid., p.37).

It has to be reiterated that higher education in post-colonial countries should be a basic obligation of the state and paid for through the general state revenues. The growth of private higher education should supplement rather than supplant state provision. It is through such state engagement that an equitable, quality and democratic higher education can be envisaged.

### *Some institutional implications*

Once acknowledged as carrying out commercial transactions, tertiary institutions will need to acknowledge legal obligations and liabilities enforceable through various legal instruments which, in New Zealand, would include: the General Law of Contract; The Fair Trading Act; Consumer Guarantees Act; and the Contractual Remedies Act. The Education Act, which gives educational institutions academic freedom subject to the demands of accountability, would - in tum - be legally interpreted that where accountability at law exists, academic freedom stops.

According to David Connor and Stephen Price (1997), possible misrepresentations could include: mis-information about a course being approved by the qualifications authority, enrolling students in excess of the declared maximum without a concomitant increase in resources, misrepresenting the quality and standard of equipment or facilities provided by the institute for a given course of study, overstating the skills which would be gained by a reasonably diligent student who fulfils all the course requirements, and misrepresenting a course curriculum.

Expensive, damaging and time consuming as they are, litigation in resolving the customer (student), provider (institution) grievances will increasingly be a norm in conducting tertiary education affairs. Alternatives to litigation would be negotiation through internal institutional structures or mediation through a third party, processes, however, which do not ignore the legal rights of any of the parties, since recourse to these rights would be the usual alternative for each party.

In New Zealand and Tanzania, there have been few cases involving students suing educational institutions. However with higher education increasingly viewed as a product, institutional leaders have to be mindful that safeguards will have to be built in the process of delivering this delicate product to the consumers in order to avoid a floodgate of litigation arising out of the 'dead on arrival' cases.

The foregoing observations have far reaching implications for the leadership of tertiary institutions. One such implication is the actual preparedness of the leadership to handle increasing instances of litigation. Commercial organisations are not only equipped or prepared for such eventualities but they have, over time, adapted and learned to live with them. It could be argued of course that education institutions would, in time, learn and adapt, just as their commercial counterparts have done. However the difference is that while the industrial product - a car or piece of yarn - is recoverable and even re-mouldable, the educational product is the nurturing of the human mind itself! It is therefore incorrect to think, in the limited monetarist view, that the recovery of school fees or some other forms of monetary compensation can, in any way, pay for faulty education delivery.

Further, this raises the issue of how much of this 'cautiousness' is going to be afforded at the expense of the educative process itself? It is my contention that under such a legal straightjacket, it is virtually inconceivable that higher education would go beyond the provision of a limited and vocationally oriented education. This straight-jacket is by itself a high order limitation not only of academic freedom but also of institutional autonomy.

Apart from the legal implications, another issue of practical concern for institutions of higher education should be planning for curriculum, as well as for plant, equipment and staff recruitment, retention and professional development under the market model. The form and nature of funding of higher education is worthy of consideration because, some long term planning for capital investment, developing courses and course materials, as well as hiring requisite personnel depend on it. A voucher system would only provide as much funding as there are students registered in a given course and this would not be adequate as a basis for long term institutional planning.

### **Vocationalisation and academic freedom**

The potential demise of a university education that encourages people to go beyond the mere exigencies of preparation for employment indicates a pact between business and government on behalf of the wealthy elite, to promote the role of the university to 'train' (rather than educate) middle managers - professionals, businessmen, administrators - who would become a useful buffer between the upper and lower classes. In return for complying and collaborating to maintain the social structure as it is, students are given jobs in the middle and upper levels of that structure, 'as engineers, doctors, lawyers, professors, businessmen, scientists, selling their skills to those who run the society for a price which gives comfort and security' (Zinn, 1982: 11).

In an effort to pursue private funds and establish closer links with business and industry, some universities have elected to approach corporations to endow chairs or courses; while in other countries, legislation have been passed that has made colleges and universities more closely resemble businesses in status and character. Yet in other instances there have been moves towards establishing entire institutions of higher education as divisions of major corporations, with the avowed intent of training, educating and conducting research for the corporations' direct benefit

and in accordance with their agenda(s). This trend is now remarkably widespread internationally. To name a few examples - the US. has Motorola University and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; in Britain, the British Gas John Dyde Training College; Germany has the Bundespost Fachhochschule Telekom Berlin; South Africa has the Unidata Corporate College (de Winter-Hebron, 1993).

These cases may be seen as isolated or even extreme, but they may indicate a trend within the market model of higher education. What is clearly incontestable is that the cases do not present the possibility of creating conditions in which unfettered scholarship, with research topics or teaching materials and methods freely selected by the individual lecturer, can be pursued. The market model pushes educators aside and reduces them to mere producers of what learners and employers want on demand. This is both derogatory and demeaning. It is argued (Maharey, 1997) that the requisite and healthy relationship should be one of partnership, where 'the learner can have their say and the educator is respected for what they have to offer.'

### **Knowledge as a common good**

Whereas it is argued that academic freedom is essential to the pursuit of truth, it is my contention that there can be no academic or political rights without social rights. It has been noted (UDASA 1993: 14) that:

Today there is great interest among the world agencies to keep these spheres separate and believe that human rights can be made available even in countries where social rights - i.e. the rights to adequate food, health and education, are virtually non-existent.

Underlying this view is the assumption that the denied populations will accept their marginalisation and pauperisation without protest and will accept being turned into cultural illiterates from the international standards without objection. It further ignores the fact that the denial of education is a denial of human rights and therefore a denial of academic freedom.

Academic freedom, from the perspective which upholds knowledge to be a common good, asserts that, if knowledge as an object is a common product - a collective property essential to society's existence then any social or legal system that imposes restrictions to its access is illegitimate. In proclaiming Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics, the University of Dares Salaam Staff Assembly (UDASA) insisted on the right for all citizens to have access to a wholesome education by proposing that: 'The state should make available an adequate proportion of the national income to ensure in practice the full realisation of the right to education (UDASA, 1993: 27). The view of education as a common good not only rejects the commodity-exchange notion of knowledge but also holds education as an inalienable human right, the access to which should not be limited or determined by the income of the individual, the state, or whims of the market.

It is my contention that any organisation like the World Bank, the IMF and GATT/GATTS, that promotes, plans or organises enclosure of knowledge stands in direct violation of academic freedom conceived in this sense.

### **Academic freedom and social responsibility**

Academic freedom has to be seen, not as a passive process where the elite are left alone to do what they do best in the sanctuary of ivory towers, but directed against oppression, domination and injustice. The marketised form of academic freedom may, at best, maintain the elitist status quo but cannot be expected to contribute to the process of liberation. The marketisation model of academic freedom, can only be just that - academic.

This model of academic freedom is contradictory to the ideals of greater social democracy and freedom in that it works towards maintaining the structures and institutions in which scientists and

academics are allowed the 'freedom' to work for, reproduce and legitimise the structures which continue to dominate and to oppress the majority of the people in both developed and developing societies.

According to Hopkins and Wallerstein (1996), such structures have been getting steadily stronger for 500 hundred years. States and their governments have sought to control and monopolise the means of violence, control borders, command resources through taxation put gate keeping personnel (the inevitable bureaucracy) in place; and elicit compliance to their rule through services rendered such as security, infrastructure and expansion of welfare levels.

In all of this, states have not of course been 'neutral' arbiters. Far from it; rather they have acted as 'guarantors (along with the governments of other states) of long-term stability of the world-system and its overall capacity to ensure the endless accumulation of capital' (p.6). The elitist form of academic freedom works towards elaborating these structures and legitimising the system.

It is my contention too that science should aim at the betterment of all society and this cannot be done by the dominated acceding to the will of the dominant in return for a more efficient and modernised form of social assistance. The academic, in demanding freedom to teach and to research, has to be cognisant of the need for people's liberation. In his/her efforts to make what they do relevant, they have at the same time to give voice to the silent majority.

In advocating for a radical practice of academic freedom, Ranger ( 1981: 22) argues that: 'One cannot defend academic freedom by resting content with the classical liberal definition of it, by stating it as a right, by guarding it purely negatively against the infringements of the state.' He further argues that it is too easy for one to feel virtuous by stating the case for academic freedom against a barbarian regime without really asking oneself whether one is in fact exercising academic independence of the mind. He argues that academic freedom is quintessentially something to be exercised rather than something to be claimed. He states further that:

This exercise imposes upon us the heaviest possible demands. It demands the most rigorous searching of our own preconceptions, our own class, and national, and race, and professional interests, so as to free ourselves as far as possible for objectivity. It demands from us the courage to see clearly and the courage to pronounce. It demands from us the courage not only to stand out against the vicious expression of our opponent's reactionary tradition but also to scrutinise our own liberal tradition and its area of false consciousness and self interest. (ibid.)

Along the same lines, and perhaps carrying the argument further, Freire (1985: 146) argues that academics have to elect to 'struggle side-by-side with those silenced', so that they can effectively speak the word by revolutionarily transforming society that reduces them to silence. 'To say the word is not ... just to follow the prescriptions of the powerful who command and exploit.' Rather Freire (1985) argues, it is to make history which can be made and remade. The academic should be able to assist the dominated in furthering their historic struggles against the system that crushes and stifles them.

Indicating the need for radical academics to participate in the civic struggles of people against repression, Zinn (1982: 16) asks, 'how can one be neutral in a world which is already moving in a certain direction?' He further reiterates that the theorist of radical change who does not act in the real world of social combat is teaching by example the most sophisticated technique of safety. He ridicules the idea of some academics sticking to the last in their 'fields and specialities' and leaving politics - that is problems of war and peace, racial oppression, class exploitation, sexual equality - to someone else, as a 'neat formula for the continuation of things as they are. ' Academics of all specialities have to go beyond the false consciousness and self-imposed restraints that limit their potential for participating in reshaping the direction of society. He argues that:

If enough of us broke through our own restraints, no outside force could suffice to deny our freedom. Modern systems of control still depend on force, in emergencies, but for day-to-day discipline they depend on the compliance of the vast numbers of people. When that compliance is withdrawn, en mass, even force is inadequate to hold back the impulse for justice (p.18).

It is clear then, that the notion of academic freedom advocated here cannot be realised under the market forces formula for higher education. The choice would inevitably be whether the academics are going to utter the word or to keep silent and continue to demand academic freedom and protection to carry out services for and on behalf of capital accumulation and the preservation of a system which is becoming less and less accountable to the people.

## Observations and remarks

In this paper it has been shown that the market-oriented reforms in higher education in NZ and Tanzania, serve the business and industrial interest at the expense of educational goals and purposes and erode the possibility of universities and tertiary institutions working together in networks and co-operative exchange of ideas and cross-institutional knowledge fertilisation. Instead institutions will be competitive, secretive and even undermine each other in order to keep abreast with the competition for students in the market driven formula. Rather than strengthening and upscaling the quality of education provided by these institutions, market ploys and strategic public relations activities will be the norm of doing business. The shorter, more compact and relevant to employment the package, the more marketable it will be and the more vouchers it will attract.

It is argued however that if the role of universities were to become subservient to economic strategy, other roles would have to be equally diminished. Apart from direct economic benefits, universities produce what has been termed as 'merit goods' (Easton, 1997) which are essential in education because they set the shape of society. Such merit goods benefit from higher education, which human capital theorists conveniently choose to overlook, in their cost-benefit calculations include its contribution to democracy and enlightenment; initiative, originality and innovative capacity; as well as the articulation and improvement of social and cultural services resulting from an educated and active society. Easton (1997) suggests that community's pursuit of wealth and power should be accompanied by a moral refinement and an intellectual cultivation to enable them to enjoy the former and to put into proper use the latter. Thus Omari (1991: 45) argues that 'besides the progressive egalitarian ideology which supports a government sponsored general subsidy for higher education, and the fear that without public support private resources may distort the central purpose and mission of higher education, there are innumerable external benefits that the state reaps from heavy investment in human resources and, especially, higher education.'

The promotion of the idea that education is all about what individuals want for themselves which seems to be central to the market approach, threatens the possibility of social cohesion and does not encourage individuals to think about the wider society and their place in it. Under the market model of higher education, academic staff accountability is determined by the numbers of students enrolled in their programmes with commitment and dedication to the values of education replaced by the need to satisfy the customer and to attract new ones. Employment and career development hinges on the balance as to whether the lecturer can attract students to his/her course or not. In short under this model, academics become dispensable, disposable and possibly recyclable.

I have also observed that the market model of higher education does not only discriminate against poor children, but increasingly makes higher education the preserve of only the privileged few, especially in developing countries. Even in the more developed countries, best quality higher education will only be afforded by a few who will be enrolled at private and exclusive universities, with the rest merely acquiring unending employable skills requiring retraining, as and when they become obsolete.

Finally I submit that in standing out against the marketisation and privatisation of higher education, academics are not only defending the role of intellectuals in their respective societies, but are also waging a war against repression and violation of social and human rights.

## Notes

1. The University of East Africa was established in 1963 and comprised of Makerere College in Uganda, the Royal University College in Nairobi, Kenya and the Dar es Salaam University College in Tanzania. Making reference to a National University here is important because in those early years of independence, having a university, was almost synonymous with the national flag, national anthem and the national airline which may explain in part why the regional university arrangements did not hold. Each country had to have a national institution of higher education to call their own. This is a realm where it can be argued that higher education institutions served as symbols of political legitimisation for the post-colonial states.
2. In 1967, the Tanzanian government, through the Arusha Declaration, proclaimed the official ideology of Ujamaa, a form of socialism claiming origins from the traditional African community beliefs and values, and in some ways falling short of, and even opposed to, Scientific Socialism.
3. Birgit Brocke-Utne, from Norway taught at the University of Dares Salaam for five years and her 1993 Book, 'Education in Africa' amongst other things gives a clear overview and critique of the World Bank policies on education in Africa.
4. In recent years brain drain has been an issue of major concern in Africa as well educated nationals find their way to work outside their countries or their fields of training. The 'brain in the drain' category refers to the situation where academics and other professionals, in order to supplement their meagre wages, engage in activities like taxi driving, animal husbandry, beer selling and so on, instead of furthering their professional knowledge and skills. For further discussion on this see Alphonse 1996.

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