Professional Neutrality: In the Service of the Clients and/or the Professionals

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"Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it would simply not be an ideological process" (Engels, 1893).

Intellectuals are an important component in establishing and maintaining a ruling class, as well as being key elements in contesting and overthrowing the dominant order (Gramsci, 1957). It can thus be expected that as the conflict in South Africa deepens, the struggle over the role and position of intellectuals will intensify. The broadening of the economic sanctions campaign to a cultural boycott that includes intellectuals is but one example of this struggle which has brought into focus the issue of the neutrality of intellectuals and the professions. In the words of a senior United Democratic Front official "as part and parcel of the white minority power structure", the "university and intellectuals is not, and cannot be, a neutral observer of the struggle unfolding in our country" (George, 1986). On the other hand, in Western capitalist countries intellectuals and professional associations often claim that knowledge, and its modern day corallary, science, is value free and in the service of mankind e.g. the practise of psychology, law and medicine transcends class, race and creed (Silva and Slaughter, 1980).

Thus far in South Africa, the debates have been conducted mainly from theoretical position usually following the lead of theorists such as Gramsci (1971), Althusser (1971), Sarte (1985), Habermas (1974) and Gouldner (1979). Although it is only through a theoretical analysis that comprehension beyond the observable can be obtained, it is necessary to

combine theory with specificity for a greater understanding of a phenomenon in its particular context. This is what seems to be absent in South Africa, especially in the social service areas (Louw, 1986; Louw, in progress).

To do such a micro analysis, we used a university based professional association called the Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa (SSCSA). The investigation looks at how their material interests are advanced, the papers presented at their conferences, the composition of the executive, tensions that surfaced during conferences and political alignments.

This paper focuses on a category of labour that can be called professional because the entrance requirement is a post graduate education and the majority of the members are registered psychologists. By being located mainly within universities, the student counsellors are also not completely seperated from academia because many have teaching commitments.

Although there are certain differences between this group and professionals practising outside the university, most of the implications regarding the issue of neutrality apply to both groups. The same goes for academics or the professional intelligensia, whose discipline based associations are also grappling with problems of neutrality and autonomy. Although this analysis emphasizes neutrality, autonomy is never absent because they are two somewhat different sides to a coin that has been, and still is, crucial to the practices of professionals and to the process of advancing their self-interests.

A more precise description of professionalization can be found in the article by Louw (1987) in this same issue. Since he also addresses the issue of neutrality, but from a somewhat different perspective, it is suggested that these two papers be read in conjunction.

Unproductive labour requires patronage

After four informal meetings, which started in 1972, the SSCSA was established at a meeting of delegates from 15 universities in November 1978. According to the constitution, the objectives for establishing such an association were to enhance co-operation among student counselling services, promote professional services to students, and to establish an organised group of student counsellors. The above aims, with an emphasis on client services, are fairly standard for a professional association.

The first two objectives put the focus on client services, which foster the ideas of altruism and objectivity. While these qualities have become almost synonymous with the service professions (at least in the minds of the professionals) it should be remembered that they are also residual categories of the growth of the entrepreneurial professions in the liberal or competitive phase of capitalism (Ozga & Lawn, 1981). This can be illustrated by a brief consideration of the historical development of the professions in capitalist societies.

During feudal times the small group of intellectuals who were not landowners depended on patronage. The process of secularization and the breakdown of feudalism and the old regime corresponded with the growth of a market for intellectual wares (Gouldner, 1979). The price for liberation from feudal patronage was dependence on the market (Conrad & Szelenyi, 1979). To trade with knowledge means that it has to become a commodity. Knowledge acquires exchange value on the basis of real or purported contributions to the social production of goods and services. The kinds of knowledge accumulated through a lengthy and costly education "assume the form of capital in the sense that their accounted application routinely and legitimately produces incomes" (Disco, 1982; p 815). The 'cultural capital' of the intellectuals is thus a commodity that is exchanged to the highest bidder on the 'free market' (Conrad & Szelenyi, 1979).

The possessors of cultural capital want to control their own rates of exchange and their share of the surplus product and want incomes

independent of the productivity of their capital (Gouldner, 1979). The
cultural bourgeoisie protects their capital and advances its market claims
through credentialling, qualifying associations and professionalization
(Disco, 1979). The market, however, also allowed intellectuals to
participate in the broader process of socialization (or collectivisation)
of unproductive labour that occurred in Europe and the USA during the 18th
and 19th centuries (Abercrombie & Urry, 1983). While manual or
productive labour usually organize or unionizes around material interests
(working conditions, salaries, etc), the professional associations do not
organize directly around 'bread and butter' issues. That does not mean
that it is not an important issue, but because of the location of the
professions as a stratum in the dominant class (Wright, 1978), they do not
need to contest material interests in such an adverserial way as manual
labour. Rather, material interests are catered for in a complex alignment
that is beneficial to both the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals (Disco,
1979). The SSCSA's objectives must be understood in the context of this
historical schema.

At the formation meeting of the SSCSA the two main issues were the
role and place of a counselling service within the univeristy context and
in securing and advancing the service conditions of its' members. This was
reflected in the resolution passed at the end of the conference which
stated that the new executive committee must inform, in writing, the
Committee of University Principals that student counsellors should be
regarded as academic personnel. No resolution was taken on how to improve
student services. Promoting the interests of the profession was however,
apart from the founders meeting, never an important theme of discussion
(Cloete, Pillay & Swart, 1986). The only contestation really was whether
counsellors should be regarded as academic or administrative staff. With
near parity in salaries between these two groups, the only benefit to be
gained was academic holidays. The last resolution regarding this matter
was taken in 1980.

If the counsellors did not openly promote their profession, who or which factors did? There are in our view, three main factors that have contributed to the advancement of student counselling during the previous two decades.

The first was the tide of humanism emerging from American universities in the late- and post- Vietnam period. Its' focus was on the 'humanization' of college environments with an emphasis on the self development and self-actualization of 'whole' individuals. This trend was fairly generally accepted by university administrators, which is illustrated by the fact that by 1978, 15 universities in South Africa already had student psychological services. It was much more this zeitgeist than a scientific demonstration of efficacy that established counselling services at universities. The issue of empirical evidence demonstrating efficacy is, and remains, controversial in the araes of therapy or counselling (Eysenck, 1966; Kiesler, 1973), study skills (Cloete & Shochet, 1986) and career guidance (Bluen, 1981). A contradiction is that while the objectivity of science or positivism forms the basis for the ideology of neutrality, counselling can produce little scientific evidence that its practise meets the demands of positivisim.

The second factor that contributed to the expansion of counselling was that the Committee of University Principals conference of 1978 and the two commissions determining funding formulas for universities (Van Wyk de Vries, 1984 and South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE), 1985) accorded psychological services a valuable role in optimising talent by reducing failure and making career and curriculum choice more effective. The role of counselling in optimizing efficiency in the new era of technocratic education has been fully endorsed by the state-supported De Lange (1981) commission into education and is embodied in the SAPSE funding formula.

The third factor that secured the professional interests of counsellors was Act 56 of 1974 that legitimized clinical and

counselling psychology as fully fledged professions.

From the above it can be concluded that advancing and securing the guild interests of student counsellors did not, in contrast to the interests of less skilled workers, require contestation and struggle. These were being looked after by university administrators who had accepted the potential importance of counselling services, and by the state itself. The state did this directly by legitimizing the profession and indirectly through its funding formulas for the universities.

Professionalization can be seen as having brought real advances in the development of knowledge and services to the public. At the same time it has resulted in a certain degree of autonomy for educated labour. To intellectuals, autonomy appears to be a pre-requisite for effective mental labour, just like say health and safety are necessary for productive labour. However, professional autonomy, which is a workplace gain, is also used by mental labour to advance their interests and as a smokescreen for concealing their ties to the ruling class. From the open dependency on the monarch or the church, mental labour has developed a much more complex and intangible connection to the rulers of modern society. Neutrality and autonomy have become key elements for the obscurification of patronage.

The state and the university administrators are two important patrons for student counsellors, which means that they can advance their own interests best by serving, or at least not antagonising, these two constituencies. In the following section we will explore this aspect of the relationship between the SSCSA, the university administrations and the state.

The containment of critical energy

Conference papers are public indicators of some of the issues that associations concern themselves with as well as of the different theoretical and/or political stances of the membership. The dominant themes of the 44 papers delivered at six SSCSA conferences from 1978 to

1985 were career development and choice (29,5%), study methods (22,8%),
adaptation to university (20,1%), role of counsellors (18%) and
psychotherapy (9%). For a more detailed breakdown of these figures, see
Cloete, Pillay and Swart (1986; p 30). We would like to analyse some of
the papers and themes with regard to acceptance/rejection of the status quo
and also to look at whether there were other important issues during the
period 1978 to 1985 that were not addressed. Intellectuals do not only
serve their own interests and those of the order to which they aligned by
providing services and legitimacy, but also through silence or a
"containment of critical energy" (Disco, 1979; p168).

The only paper that referred to the role of the university was
repesented by the principal of the University of Port Elizabeth at the 1978
conference. Considering the conservative politics of this personal friend
of the late John Vorster, it is no surprise that he did not oppose the
status quo or foresee a role for the university beyond producing as many
graduates as possible to supply more high level white person power. The
role of the university as a propagator of liberal values and freedom of
thought and association was an has never, been discussed.

In papers dealing with the role of the counsellor the overriding
concern is moderate reform of the university structure The state, within
which the university is located, has not been mentioned. The main themes
emerging from these papers are attempts to increase the contribution of the
counsellor in the development of the student as a whole person, and to
assist university policy-makers in planning for the development of the
whole student. Essentially the attemts are to increase the role of the
counsellor in a university environment that will be more conducive to
student development. This reform initiative is illustrated by the position
of Couperthwaite (1983).

He argues for getting the university to become more student centred
through "campus ecology management" and for developing the student as a
whole person, i.e. not only intellectually but also morally and ethically.

Another role propagated for counsellors by Couperthwaite (1984) is to "influence the planning and policy makers in the university...towards the development ethos" (p 41). He also says that as we become "more aware of our campus environment, we can foster a better "fit" between students and institution" (p 41).

A fairly obvious critique is that there is little if any direct criticism of university administrators. The often commented about impersonal, non-student centred, modern degree factories are not really challenged. Either the students must be helped to adapt better to an inhumane, alienating environment or the policy makers must be assisted in adopting a more developmental ethos. A very contentious issue that has received no attention is the discrepancy between the lip-service that many university administrations pay to student services and their practise of fund and resource allocation. Despite the profession's proclaimed acceptance of a client or student centred approach as a basis for services, very apparent is the absence of even hot air directed towards administrators who are often patently "un-student" centred.

The most often discussed theme among the papers was career development and choice, but not a single reference could be found to the fact that in South Africa there was no real freedom of vocational choice for the majority of the population. A state based on the explicit policy of securing a continued supply of cheap black labour (O'Meara, 1983) drafted legislation that barred blacks from numerous higher level jobs. The student counsellors did not express a single objection to this violation of freedom of choice - one of the most basic premises of their discipline. Consistent with their belief in non-involvement, they also did not express support or encouragement to the state when it started relaxing job reservation policies in the late seventies and early eighties.

Discrimination in the labour market is only one important facet of the whole issue of racism, which is the dominant feature of South African society. Racism, which pervades all areas of peoples' existence, was a

prominent theme in the international counselling literature of the last
decade. Despite its importance, not one SSCSA paper or discussion session
dealt with the effects of racism and discrimination on aspects such as
self-actualization, study at university, admission to university, or even
the problems associated with a white counsellor seeing black clients.

One of the most apparent consequences of discrimination in South
Africa from 1976 to 1985 was the increasing crisis and collapse of black
education. Not a single reference in a paper or the minutes of the
association could be found to indicate that students counsellors were aware
of this occurrence. While the black universities were frequently closed
and students and staff were being ruthlessly and systematically detained
and suspended, delegates from these universities were listening to and
participating in discussions about student and career development,
self-actualization and the acquisition of relativistic moral stances.

In South Africa where oppression and exploitation are so apparent, it
is very difficult to argue that counsellors were not aware of social
conditions. A much more plausible explanation is that the ideology of
professional neutrality led them to believe that it was not their task or
role to address these contradictions. Such an ideology is not just a
belief system, but stems from a particular location in society (Larrain,
1979). Thus the belief in neutrality is derived from being part of a group
or class who has certain interests to defend. One of the functions of a
false consciousness is to obscure to the adherents the relations of
production on which their privileges are based.

Gouldner (1962) regards value - freedom as an occupational ideology
which has utility for advancing professional privileges. The belief that
it is not the business of the psychologist or sociologist to make value
judgements "is useful to those young, or not so young men, who live off
sociology rather than for it, and who think of sociology as a way of
getting ahead in the world by providing them with neutral techniques that
may be sold on the open market to any buyer" (p 12). This does not mean

that intellectuals will necessarily sell their knowledge only to the highest bidder; their limited autonomy and interest in truth is a counterweight to becoming just "a venal elite that prostitutes its skills for gain" (Gouldner, 1979; p 21). Rather, there is an ambivalence between self-interest and an interest in universal truth and service to the public (Disco, 1979). But it is never only the latter, as many intellectuals would like society to believe.

Free agents in an unfree society

Most professions operate within a dominant paradigm. A paradigm does not become hegemonic only because of its superior truth value or its greater utility to the client population, but also because it serves the interests of its practitioners. A good example is the ascendence of positivism in the social sciences (Conrad & Szelenyi, 1979; Silva & Slaughter, 1980). This type of knowledge has utility and appears to be value free, which enables intellectuals to provide a service without entering into a contestation about the values of a particular society (Conrand & Szelenyi, 1979).

According to Silva and Slaughter (1980), the literature suggests that professionalization is a key determinant in deciding the outcome of the struggle between paradigms. Professionalization encourages the development of "an occupational subculture and an ideology guiding conduct and thought along common lines" (p 783). It is when this happens that the knowledge of the intellectuals also reflect their own interests, and when they become an organized profession their knowledge is subordinated to those interests (Conrad & Szelenyi, 1979).

The dominant pradigm in the counselling profession in South Africa is liberal humanism. In psychology, humanism is understood to denote a particular concern and value for the individual subject. Although humanism has certain political implications, it contains no explicit·political programme. To give it political substance, it is often aligned with

liberalism, which shares most of its basic tenets.

The values inherent in liberal humanism are that all persons share a common humanity, are naturally good, capable and responsible for shaping their destinies. To allow men or women to become self-actualizing, self-directed agents in control of their lives, freedom of thought, expression, movement and opportunity is required. The individual is of supreme importance and his or her legitimate interests should not be subordinated to those of the community. The role of the state is to nurture and protect individualism. Individual freedom and development should be linked to the emancipation of disadvantaged groups in a process of evolutionary change (Leat, Kneifel & Nurenburger, 1986).

In humanist psychology the emphasis on the individual has resulted in a separation of the subjective from the objective or the individual from the society in which s/he lives (Jacoby, 1975). In this process the individual becomes disconnected from the process of production and the social relations arising from the mode of production. By fetishizing human subjectivity while ignoring objective social reality, liberal humanism allows the social service professionals to humanize individuals in an alienating, repressive social system. These self-actualizing individuals then become atypical 'normals' in an abnormal society. In the words of Rogers "the encounter group movement will be a growing counterforce to the dehumanization of our culture" (Jacoby, 1975; p 66). The aim is not the dissolution of dehumanization, but to humanize those who can afford to attend encounter groups. The fundamental question about why the objective social condition is a dehumanized culture is seldom asked or addressed. Thus "both the causes and cures of contemporary society are reduced to the realm of the individual" (Jacoby, 1975; p 68). However adverse the material or social conditions of a woman, she must take it, transcend the situation and fully realize her potential.

By being concerned only with the problems of the subject and not with the conflicts and problems of groups, it is not too difficult for

counsellors to believe that the service is in the interest of all individuals. Under the "name of humanism the true condition of the workers and peasants and the class struggle is concealed from them" (Sarte, 1985; p241).

The status quo is maintained both by the absence of a challenge to it from the professionals and through encouraging clients to seek individualistic solutions. The professional thus provide a service to certain individuals in the society, usually those more directly connected to the power structures and also ensure that discontent is not translated into a collective challenge to the existing order. For Althusser (1971), this is how the professions, forming part of the ideological state apparatusses, actively participate in reproducing the existing relations of domination and exploitation in society.

White afrikaner males in control of a neutral association

The organization of the SSCSA's annual conference is controlled entirely by the executive committee, which decides on a theme, selects papers, draws up the programme and appoints chair-persons for all the sessions. Obtaining control of the executive is thus crucial for determining the position and direction the association will take.

The composition of the executive between 1978 - 1985 is illustrated in Table One. The figures show that at the founders' meeting in 1978, which had the same executive as in 1980, the proportional representation of afrikaans, english and black universities seems fairly equal. However, if one considers that the black universities were 'represented' by a white afrikaner male, then the afrikaans (60% in executive and 40% of membership) and english (40% executive and 33% membership) fractions have a somewhat disproportional representation. Members from the afrikaans universities obtained virtual total control of the executive in the period between 1982 to 1985 while representing only approximately 40% of the membership. In contrast, representation from the english universities dwindled from 20% to

0% during the same period. The proportional representation of the black universities in the executive remained constant (20%) from 1978 to 1985, but it was only in 1984 that a black person was elected to the executive. He left the association during the same year to become a cabinet minister in a homeland. Afrikaner male domination was also reflected in the chair-person and vice chair-person positions, which were without exception filled by them from 1978 until the 1985 coup.

COMPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO
ACTUAL REPRESENTATION WITHIN ASSOCIATION

Year	No. Institutions Present[6]	Afrikaans Universities		Members in Executive			English Universities		Members in Executive		Black Universities		Members in Executive		
		No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1978	15	6[*1]	40	2	40	(60)	5	33	2	40	4	26	1[*2]	20	(0)
1980	18	7	39	2	40	(60)	6	33	2	40	5	28	1	20	(0)
1982[*3]	15	6	40	3	60	(80)	4	26	1	20	5	33	1	20	(0)
1983	19	7	37	3	60	(80)	5	26	1	20	7	37	1	20	(0)
1984	16	7	44	4	80		4	25	0	0	5	31	1[*4]	20	
1985	17	6	35	0	0		4	23	4	80	7	41	1[*5]	20	

[*1] : UPE and UNISA classified as Afrikaans

[*2] : From Black univeristy, but representative in white afrikaner male

[*3] : Zimbabwe and Durban Westville stopped attending

[*4] : Frist black on Executive

[*5] : First Woman

[*6] : Affiliation is by Institution, not Individual

The question arises as to whether the afrikaner male hegemony can be explained in any other way than a deliberate, politically motivated mobilization to ensure majority representation. From a meritocratic position, fundamental to professional excellence, it could be argued that they had participated the most actively and had thus been elected on merit. A review of the papers presented between 1978 and 1985 shows that there were 19 (43%) presented in English and 25 (57%) in Afrikaans. A 14% difference hardly supports a meritocracy argument. It is thus very difficult not to conclude that deliberate caucusing had been taking place

at conferences with the intention of securing afrikaner control over the
direction and deliberations of the association.

During the early phase of the 1985 conference, with 100% control over
the proceedings, the insensitivity of the 'ruling elite' drove the
simmering antagonism of the english and black members to a head. The main
bone of contention was the language issue. The associations constitution
states that the "language medium of the society will be the two official
languages of the Republic of South Africa". In 1980 the language issue had
reared its ethnic head when the author of a paper that had been accepted
for presentation was requested to translate it into Afrikaans. When he
refused, the executive committee withdrew the paper from the programme
(Conradie, 1980). Language was in this instance regarded as more important
than academic merit. This incident was one of the first concrete
indications that certain political values would be more important than
professional standards.

With complete afrikaner control of the executive, the first part of
the 1985 general meeting was conducted entirely in Afrikaans. When
dominance leads to arrogance it often precipitates a counter reaction that
contests that domination. A woman member of the association, who did not
understand Afrikaans, asked that certain important points be translated.
When the request was ignored without even comment from the chair, a small
group of black and white women walked out. This was the first time that
women had really made their presence felt in the association. It is worth
speculating whether this was simply a reaction to the insensitivity of the
chairman, or whether it was part of a broader realization in South Africa
that afrikaner men may not be preordained to rule forever.

At this conference, during the good english tradition of sundowners,
certain participants from english and black universities caucused to
overthrow the dominant minority. It should be noted that quite a few
people expressed reservations about this tactic, because it was a
professional association and not a political organisation. After

considerable conscientization (and a few more rounds) a strategy was formulated. The resultant action was that for the first time in the history of the organisation an english and black dominated executive was elected (Table One). Equally important, the first ever english chairperson was elected and a black woman became vice chairperson. At the end of the meeting most members were aware that some of the political tensions in the country were also present in the association.

The 1986 opening address, by a well respected moderate from the Rand Afrikaans University, stressed that it would be naive to politicise a professional association because it would be a waste of energy. He concluded with a strong plea for unity in our 'harmonious small family'. The very next paper on the programme entitled; "The Pro-active Counsellor : Is Neutrality Possible", was a deliberate attempt to dispel the myths of neutrality and consensus (Cloete, Pillay & Swart, 1986).

The first aspect discussed by Swart asked whether counsellors wanted to remain embedded in institutional world-views that help to maintain authoritarian social systems or will "pro-active counsellors try to lift ourselves up by our bootstraps and risk facilitating the development of 'inter-individual' type democratic systems amongst the people of this land" (p 12). In the second part of the paper Cloete and Pillay addressed the ideologies of professional neutrality and liberal humanism. They concluded that neutrality was a false consciousness and that counsellors had not only been serving their clients, but also their self-interest and those of university administrations and the state. Regarding the dominant paradigm of liberal humanism, the conclusion was that it is more conducive to the interests of the profession and capitalism than to the welfare of the clients.

In the discussion that followed the muted applause, the first objection was that the paper had not dealt with bread and butter issues such as study skills, which was the purpose of the conference. Secondly, the question was raised as to whether it was relevant to review the history

of ones own association. Thirdly, the dominance of afrikaner men in the executive.was said not to be a conspiracy but the result of a lack of volunteers to serve on the executive. Fourthly, the paper was critised as un-scientific, which disturbed the delegates from Potchefstroom who had come for a scientific discussion about student services.

All four arguments bear in somewhat different ways on the issue of neutrality. For example, the assertion that a conference should not look at political issues or the history of the organization assumes that only aspects dealing with clients should be examined, because the counsellors are objective and neutral administrators of services. This is a classic example of how intellectuals attempt to obscure their own role and interests (Gouldner, 1979).

The crux of the neutrality argument however, is in the demand for science, which was clearly equated with positivism. This demand had nothing to do with the paper, which actually used the categorization of conference papers and the composition of the executive as empirical data. Rather, it had to do with the way in which 'science' has become a knee-jerk reaction by intellectuals who want to obscure their political interests. In any case, to require science for a discipline that is not scientific in the positivistic sense shows the absurdity of the argument. According to Habermas (1981), making a fetish of science is an attempt to justify a particular class's interest in domination.

Some of the positive comments included support for the contention that counselling did not occur in a vacuum and that the paper was 'profoundly important' because it challenged counsellors both on ethical and theoretical grounds. Also, that papers such as these were necessary to counter the dominant technological 'nuts and bolts' approach. Despite the numerous charges of irrelevance, the controversy was serious enough to warrant a special afternoon session.

At this meeting the need for more scientific papers was reiterated, the executive was criticized for wasting the short conference time on

irrelevant papers and the University of Cape Town delegate, who wanted something practical from the conference, threatened to vote with his feet and disaffiliate. It was also rumoured that some universities were contemplating withdrawing from the association and Stellenbosch and Medunsa disaffiliated after the conference.

Apart from the criticism of the paper, the other most notable feature of this session was the call that 'mature adults' should be able to accept individual differences and that the 'association was bigger than individuals'. The call for unity resulted in the re-election of the existing executive with an English-speaking male as chairperson and a black woman as vice-chairperson. They were nominated by Afrikaans speaking delegates.

With regard to political differences it had been postulated before the conference started, that the Cloete, Pillay and Swart paper would cause a "verkrampte - verligte" split that transcended the predominantly ethnic and racial divisions that had been the basis of the tensions in the association. Such an ideological division would be fairly similar to what was happening in the broader society. Contrary to this expectation, the 'radical' challenge to their neutrality and the paradigm on which the association is based forged a unity that transcended ethnic and racial barriers. The response was much more along the lines of the intentions of the state's reform policy, namely middle - class unity.

It became clear that 'boer-brit' and 'black-white' differences could be pasted over quite quickly, at least by the 'moderate majority', when faced with a threat to expose professional bias, a challenge to the paradigm on which the profession is based and a demand to rethink political alignment. This is quite a dramatic demonstration of how class and guild interests can predominate over ethnic and racial divisions.

In the next section we briefly want to explore the ambivalent relationship between a puportedly neutral association and the SADF.

Alignment and silence in exchange for workplace autonomy

Despite its claims to neutrality, in 1982 the SSCSA undertook, as part of the conference, an SADF sponsored visit to the 'boys on the border'. This was justified as becoming more aware of the problems of a certain client constituency. However, the 1983 conference minutes expressed disappointment that another visit could not be arranged and R300.00 was donated to the SADF fund.

Lt. General Holtzhausen's paper at the 1982 conference appealed to counsellors to advise school leavers to regard military training as their first commitment. He concluded his speech by saying that "we stand...shoulder to shoulder in the same survival struggle" (p11).

Apart from the objection by one counsellor, Holtzhausen's appeal was accepted with great applause. By supporting the survival struggle, the association and its leadership gave a clear political signal that they were ' shoulder to shoulder' with a component of the states' repressive apparatus that is not known for cherishing individual freedom and self-actualization.

The tension between neutrality and open alignment surfaced again at the 1986 conference. Certain counsellors raised fears about the states' violation of professional confidentiality. Examples given were that the medical files at a number of clinics and hospitals had been confiscated and that, at a black university, security force personnel had insisted on sitting in on counselling interviews. It was suggested that a motion be put forward that would condemn security force actions on the black campuses and the violation of professional confidentiality. During the ensuing discussion the most blatant example of how contradictorily the ideology of neutrality can operate was provided by an ex-chairperson of the association who asserted that politics had no place at a scientific conference. In the next breath he stated that radical students from the left and the right must take the consequences of their actions and should not receive counselling.

The rising tensions in the 'harmonious family' were dissipated by a proposal that the issue was not political, but one of professional ethics. It was only after this 'principle' had been accepted, that a motion was passed "respectfully" protesting to the Minister of Law and Order that:

"infringements of privacy and personal freedom are totally incompatible with the professional principles of confidentiality as espoused by psychologists and counselling psychologists and as laid down by the professional rules of conduct of the Medical and Dental Council of South Africa" (September, 1986).

The resolution is an example of how a professional association will circumvent political issues, not only in the society at large but even at the workplace. The violation of human rights and the disruption of the education process by the military on certain campuses and in the society is not contested; what is challenged, however meekly, is the invasion of privacy and professional autonomy. What this shows is the juxtaposition of autonomy and alignment. As a category of labour which can provide a real service, intellectuals can also bargain with the patron for certain workplace benefits and freedoms. A difference between mental and manual labour is that for the former, benefits are obtained through contestation but never by challenging the existing order. Manual labour on the other hand often has to contest with, and challenge the dominant class.

For intellectuals, alignment is part of the stuggle for autonomy. The question is thus not autonomy or alignment, as it has been presented so often in recent debates, but autonomy with alignment. Construed in this way, the issue then becomes: alignment to whom and what are the conditions or benefits?

In the short-term, for a middle-class association such as the SSCSA, who has a clientele located in the same class, the benefits of aligning with the state are fairly obvious. However, if one accepts Disco's (1979) claim that "traditional intellectuals are a self-conscious stratum with a foot in the past and an eye to the future" (p 164), then the interesting

question becomes when will the professional intellegensia on the sinking apartheid ship start inflating the life-rafts of neutrality and autonomy.

Conclusion

In the above sections we have shown that it is a false consciousness to believe that the SSCSA is a neutral professional association striving only to improve student services. The association has in the past promoted its own interests mainly by not confronting the powers that have directly and indirectly protected and promoted its interests. This has been done in a variety of ways such as remaining silent about those values and practices of their patrons that are often fundamentally contradictory to those of the profession. It has aligned itself fairly openly with the state through the political affiliation of its executive and by sending signals of support to the SADF. Lastly, the dominant paradigm within the association is one that also serves the interests of the profession while not presenting a challenge to the racial capitalist state. The associations alignment to the class in which it is located thus manifests itself through its pratices, through its silences and in open alignment.

Like all forms of labour, the SSCSA advances its professional and self-interests through a variety of strategies and alignments. In this sense it is no different from any other category of labour, because to go consciously against self-interest on moral grounds alone is something that occurs very seldom. It should thus not be dismissed as an idiosyncratic, afrikaner dominated association aligned to racial capital from whom other associations have nothing to learn.

Although it could be argued that the SSCSA often conducted their affairs in a rather overt and crude manner, many of their responses to a number of important issues are very similar to those of most of the professional and academic associations in South Africa, and indeed, all over the Western world. Afterall, the SSCSA did not create the ideology of neutrality, it has only been interpellated to it in social conditions that make it easy to expose the contradictions.

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