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SECONDARY SCHOOL STRIKES: THE ART
OF BLAMING THE VICTIM

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DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 243

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November 1976

Views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Institute for Development Studies or of the University of Nairobi.

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the causes are discussed of the secondary school strikes which took place throughout Kenya in 1974.

First, the interpretations are presented which were given to the strikes by the Ministry of Education and the leading newspapers. An attempt is made to show some of the weaknesses of these interpretations by probing into the real causes of student grievances. Four case studies are presented as a basis for discussion of the nature of secondary school strikes. As a conclusion, some changes are recommended in the educational system which should foster a better climate for learning in Kenyan schools.

SECONDARY SCHOOL STRIKES: THE ART OF BLAMING THE VICTIM*

Recently, there have been various reports of strikes throughout the country, in secondary schools and higher institutes of learning. Scrutinizing the reports and comments from authorities or other people not necessarily in authority, one sadly learns that the blame has always been on the students. Time has come and a ripe time for that matter, when we ask ourselves one simple and candid question... Why? Why is it that students are the only blamed?

A letter to the editor, Sunday Nation (Nairobi) 30 June 1974

INTRODUCTION

In 1974 the Kenya educational system experienced an unprecedented number of student strikes. In the period between March and September, there were seventy secondary school strikes, two technical school strikes, two university strikes, one teacher training college strike and a Roman Catholic seminary strike. The number of secondary schools affected by strike action may have been even greater than this because of the unwillingness of headmasters to report cases of student outbreaks unless the situation was clearly out of control. In August, a presidential decree was issued banning strikes by students and workers. Our investigations show that two schools went on strike in defiance of this presidential decree, but otherwise the third term of secondary school was relatively calm. The fact that this was a period of end-of-the-year and external exams, may also explain the decline in the number of strikes.

The purpose of this paper is first to discuss the attitudes and the interpretations given to the secondary school strikes by government officials, particularly those of the Ministry of Education. The views and the interpretations of the two foreign-owned Kenyan English-language daily newspapers, the Daily Nation and The Standard, are also crucial to this discussion. Secondly, the major grievances which led students in various schools to go on strike will be discussed. An analysis of student grievances is important in arriving at a correct interpretation of the strikes. Thirdly, the paper will suggest some changes that are necessary in Kenyan secondary schools if these institutions are to provide a healthy learning atmosphere and if improved teacher-student relations are to be fostered.

BACKGROUND DATA ON STRIKING SCHOOLS

The newspapers and the statements by the Ministry of Education have

* I wish to thank O.N. Gakuru and Gitau Wa Waruiru for sharing with me the problems of student strikes. My thanks also go to the headmasters, teachers and pupils who educated me on the causes and nature of secondary school strikes.

given the impression that more secondary school strikes occurred in Western Province than in any other province in the country. This impression was created because strikes in Western Kenya received more publicity than those elsewhere.¹ The case of Sigalame Secondary School, which was seized upon by the press and the Ministry of Education to demonstrate student hooliganism and irresponsibility, contributed to the adverse publicity given to Western Kenya with regard to secondary school strikes. A geographic breakdown of the schools which had strikes in 1974 shows this was a country-wide phenomenon and not restricted to a particular region.

Table 1. Secondary school strikes by province, 1974.

Province	Government Maintained Schools	As a Proportion of Maintained Schools in the Province, 1974	Unaided Schools	Total Number of Schools	As a Proportion of all Schools in the Province, 1974
		%			%
Central	9	9.6	-	9	3.3
Coast	5	17.9	2	7	12.5
Eastern	16	23.2	4	20	12.3
Nairobi	1	3.2	0	1	1.2
North-Eastern	0	0	0	0	0
Nyanza	12	17.9	1	13	7.0
Rift Valley	7	12.5	2	9	6.7
Western	10	18.5	1	11	8.1
Total	60	14.9 (403)	10	70	6.8(1031)

Sources: Ministry of Education and field investigations.

The schools which had strikes represent about seven per cent of the total number of secondary schools in 1974. The publicity given to these few schools, however, gave the impression that the situation in Kenyan secondary schools was out of control. The Ministry of Education was partly responsible for creating this impression by being oversensitive to any action that disrupts the smooth running of the educational system. The fact that the Ministry suggested amending the Education Act of 1968 to deal specifically with the strikes points out clearly their sensitivity to anything that disturbs the apparent peace of educational institutions.

1. A more balanced picture is however given in the Ministry of Education's Annual Report 1974, p.22.

Kenya secondary schools can be divided into three categories according to how they are financially maintained. The largest category of schools is maintained by the central government. The second category of schools is maintained by local communities on a self-help basis. These are popularly known as harambee secondary schools. The third category consists of schools which are run as private enterprises by individuals or groups of individuals. Harambee schools are started and maintained by communities to provide extra educational opportunities to primary school leavers who cannot gain admission into government maintained secondary schools. Communities administer and maintain these schools until they are taken over by the central government, thereby becoming government maintained schools. Most of the existing government schools were started in this way. When a harambee school is taken over by the government, attempts are made to improve the quality of education by provision of qualified teachers and better facilities. So the schools which have been maintained by the government for a long period tend to offer a higher quality education than the schools taken over recently, or those which are still harambee schools.

Out of the 60 government maintained secondary schools which were affected by student strikes, 36 began to receive government support in the period between 1968 and 1974 and 24 were already government maintained in 1967. In other words, a majority of the secondary schools which had strikes became aided schools between 1968 and 1974. This fact is important in evaluating the kind of grievances which caused the students in these institutions to go on strike. We also need to note that ten of the maintained secondary schools had harambee streams, financed by local contributions and student fees, which ran parallel to the government supported classes. These streams tend to create tension between the aided and unaided students in addition to that generated by teaching and administration. It needs also to be noted that out of the 24 schools which were government aided in 1967, 16 had higher school certificate classes having more senior students, which is again relevant to our discussion on causes of student strikes.

Table 2. Sex of the student bodies of schools which had strikes.

	Proportion of Striking Schools %	All Schools in Kenya %
Boys	54.3	33.5
Girls	5.7	17.4
Mixed	28.5	44.1
Not Known	11.4	5.0
Total	99.9 (70)	100.0(1031)

Sources: Ministry of Education and field investigations.

Table 2 shows that out of 70 secondary schools which had a strike in 1974, we were able to get information on 62. Thirty-eight (54 per cent) of these were boys' schools, 4 (6 per cent) were girls' schools and 20 (29 per cent) were co-educational. This supports an observation made by J.W. Anderson in Uganda and R.L. Saddimbah in Kenya that strikers are predominantly boys. (1 and 17) Thirty-nine of the 62 striking schools on which we had information were boarding schools, 11 were day and 12 were combined day and boarding schools. About half of the boarding facilities in these schools were provided on a self-help basis. The high cost of these self-help boarding facilities is a clear source of student frustration.

Anderson's observation that Uganda strikers are mainly boarders is equally true of Kenyan school strikers. These Kenyan boarding schools are, however, mainly medium quality, low status schools. The fact that most of them became government aided schools in the last seven years attests to this point. Admittedly, these boarding schools have better facilities than most day schools, but these facilities are in no way comparable to those offered by most of the well-established elite secondary schools.

The school strikes did not affect all classes in these schools. In some schools, only one or two classes were affected, although in others the whole school population was involved. We found, however, that where a school was affected by a strike, irrespective of whether one class or the whole school was involved, the legitimacy of teachers' authority and particularly that of the head of the school was seriously undermined. One major feature of these strikes was that the head teachers were primary targets of student attacks and confrontation. Where violence erupted, the headmaster's or headmistress's house, office or car was the first target of the students' attack. The students' grievances were in most cases vented on the headmaster or headmistress even when he or she was not in control of the actual cause of conflict.

A second major feature was that the students interpreted their grievances as having their root within the school. Hence the attacks on head teachers and school property, even where it should have been clear that these heads of schools had no control over the events that were the source of grievances. In the case, for example, of a school with a shortage of teachers, the headmaster has no control over the way teachers are distributed in the country, and therefore it is unreasonable to attack him on this point.

The fact that students tended to express their grievances violently seems to indicate deep-seated frustration. Anderson, citing the Uganda Report

of the Schools Discipline Committee, has pointed out "that strikes are essentially symptoms of deepseated, long-term student disaffection far less tangible than suggested by the immediate, apparent cause of disturbances". (1) Our argument here is that this deep-rooted frustration is a result of an accumulation of grievances which goes unresolved until it is triggered off by some incident. In one school where students resorted to violent acts to express their grievances, we found that attempts were made by students and prefects well before the strike to resolve their problems through dialogue with the headmaster. Unfortunately, the headmaster refused to listen to the students' grievances and frustrated them all the more. Lack of communication between the headmaster and the students was in the case of this school a major source of frustration which tended to aggravate existing problems. It is not surprising therefore that when these students reacted, they did so violently. The accumulation of frustrations and actual grievances over a period of time before an outburst may help to explain why most of the secondary school strikes occur towards the end of first or second term. As suggested earlier, the third term is not an appropriate period for students to stage strikes because of examinations.

SOME INTERPRETATIONS OF STUDENT STRIKES

We now need to ask ourselves what the fundamental causes of student strikes in our secondary schools are. To begin with, we shall examine what the Ministry of Education sees as the causes of school strikes, and what interpretation it gives to the whole phenomenon of student protests within educational institutions. This is important because, firstly, the Ministry of Education is directly involved in the administration of the institutions affected, and is therefore assumed to be better informed about what is happening at the school level. Secondly the Ministry has the ultimate authority to determine how school discipline is to be maintained and enforced. This authority is usually delegated to the headmaster or headmistress and the school's board of governors, but in the final analysis all matters concerning student indiscipline rest with the Director of Education.² Thus, the Ministry's attitude to and interpretation of school strikes tend to influence the way headmasters and headmistresses, and indeed the members of boards of governors, deal with this problem at the school level. The Ministry of Education not only influences those within the educational system who have to deal with student strikes, but it also attempts to influence the general public. The statements of the

2. See The Education (School Discipline) Regulations, 1972. (9) This Legal Notice is given as Appendix Three of this paper.

Ministry and its officials are in many ways, therefore, calculated to win public support for the Ministry's views and interpretations of these events.

The Ministry of Education's attitude to school strikes was spelt out clearly in a public statement issued on 29 August 1974. The specific situation which seemsto have promoted this public statement was the one which had arisen at Sigalame Secondary School in Busia District.³ When the Ministry's spokesman commented on this particular strike, he stated about strikes in general:-

... the Government views with serious concern the recent wave of riotous acts of violence and indiscipline in this country's educational institutions, particularly in secondary schools and the University of Nairobi. Very severe disciplinary measures will in future be taken in cases of indiscipline of any nature throughout the country, and indeed the Government will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the normal learning atmosphere is not marred by a few irresponsible youths bent on disrupting the smooth learning process.

Worse still a new feature of recent demonstrations has been the wanton destruction of school property. In future this behaviour will not be tolerated.

The Ministry's statement went on to indicate that steps were being taken to introduce strong measures to deal with school strikes. These measures "may entail the amendment of the Education Act of 1968 and its subsidiary legislation so as to confer greater powers to the school authorities to deal more effectively and promptly with cases of irresponsible behaviour by students". The statement continued by warning teachers, parents and the public at large "to be on look out for any disruptive elements within or without the school system which may be bent on obstructing the marked qualitative improvement and quantitative expansion of education which has been a credit to this nation in the first decade of Uhuru..."⁴

Two points need to be noted about the Ministry's attitude towards student strikes. First, the focus of the Ministry is mainly on the style of student protests. It does not attempt to give an explanation of why the strikes took place in the first instance, or why they took the form they did. The emphasis is therefore on the role of "a few irresponsible youths bent on disrupting the smooth learning process". This approach is similar to the

3. The events leading to this strike are described later on in this paper as case study number four.

4. It is becoming common practice in Kenya for those in authority to appeal to nationalistic sentiments as this statement attempts to do, to get support for their hardline action or views. See also Daily Nation editorial, July 15, 1974, which comments on student strikes in the following words: "We are, in effect, producing a potentially rebellious, semi-educated youth of Kenya who can even betray the country's hard-won independence in the distant future unless we rescue them Now."

attitude which authorities in the U.S.A. took towards student protests of the 1960s. Conservative commentators in the U.S.A. attributed campus protest to a "hard core" of students, and the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence declared in 1969, "a small but determined minority, ... aims not at reform but at the destruction of existing institutions." (see 15) The similarities between the Ministry of Education's statement and the American establishment's interpretation of student protests in the 1960s is striking.

The second aspect of the Ministry's statement that needs careful attention is the emphasis placed on what has been termed "wanton destruction of school property". The then Minister of Education, when winding up a parliamentary debate on the education vote well before the statement quoted above was issued, set the tone that was reiterated later on. He commented on one school strike in the following terms:-

The destruction of the building meant that the school cannot be reopened for some time. This is intolerable. My ministry cannot allow students to destroy property in this manner. (Daily Nation, 17 July 1974)

The fact that secondary school strikes have been violent and that destruction of property has been involved is something that has been exploited by the government and Ministry of Education officials to underline student irresponsibility, and what has been termed "juvenile hooliganism"⁵. By focussing on the negative consequences of student strikes, the Ministry has attempted to shift the debate on student protests from a consideration of the causes of student grievances to student violence. In this way, the students are deprived of the public sympathy which would be crucial to the success of their protests.

By destroying school property, the students not only made a serious tactical error which was bound to boomerang, but they also frequently displayed a grave lack of understanding of the real source of their grievances. Some of the attacks on head teachers, as discussed above, clearly displayed this ignorance, which helped to obscure the real issues and to alienate the student population from the public.

Our attention now turns to the attitudes the local newspapers have taken towards secondary school strikes and their interpretations of the

5. See Mr. Charles Rubia's (Assistant Minister of Education) answer to a question on the Mangu High School strike, The Standard, 11 July 1973; Mr. G.R. M'Mwirichia's (Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education) statement at Sironga Girls School in Kisii District, The Standard, 30 July 1974; and Mr. P.K. Boit's (Provincial Commissioner, Western Province) statement at Amukura Girls' Harambee School, Daily Nation, 12 July 1974.

phenomenon, as revealed in editorials and news commentaries of the Daily Nation and The Standard (formerly East African Standard), rather than in the news reports themselves or the letters to the editor.

The Daily Nation has been in the forefront in commenting on student strikes at both the University and secondary school level. In 1974 the Daily Nation carried six editorials on the subject of university strikes and three editorials on indiscipline in secondary schools.⁶ The Sunday Nation had two editorials on University strikes and one news commentary by Joe Kadhi in his "Why" column; two other commentaries by Joe Kadhi concerned secondary schools strikes.⁷

The E.A. Standard carried five editorials and one news commentary on the University crisis⁸ and two editorials concerning secondary schools strikes.⁹

While these editorials and news commentaries called for measures to deal with student indiscipline, they also emphasised three points which are more or less similar to the stand taken by the Ministry of Education. First, they stressed the violent nature of student strikes which resulted in the destruction of property. The Daily Nation editorial of July 15 underlined this point when it said that "it has become a surprisingly 'new fashion' for riotous students to beat up teachers, smash furniture, desecrate the walls with 'revolutionary' markings, burn, loot and destroy."¹⁰

Secondly, the newspapers attempted to identify influences behind student strikes. While parent laxity was mentioned in some quarters, the

6. See Daily Nation, editorials of 26 February, 2 March, 13 March, 18 March, 26 June and 17 December 1974. See also editorials of 1 February, 15 July and 7 September 1974 on secondary school strikes.

7. See Sunday Nation, editorials of 11 August and 27 October 1974. See also Joe Kadhi, "Give Way to Hooligans...", Sunday Nation, 4 August 1974; "Riots We Can Do Without", Sunday Nation, 14 July 1974; and "Majority Must not Suffer", Sunday Nation, 8 September 1974.

8. See East African Standard, 27 February, 1, 4 and 27 March, and 27 June 1974. See Pius George Okoth, "Controversy... Over New Scheme for University Financing", The Standard, 1 July 1974.

9. See The Standard editorials of 10 July 1974 and 6 September 1974.

10. See The Standard editorial of 10 July 1974 on the theme of student violence.

newspapers tended to put the blame elsewhere.¹¹ Apart from the explanation which attributed student strikes to the work of a few irresponsible youths, there were suggestions of foreign influence at work among Kenyan students:¹² for instance, the Daily Nation editorial quoted above argued, inter alia:-

There is no question of a mock 'Student Power' having tried to assert itself in Kenya. What is actually happening is that, intoxicated with foreign propaganda and influenced by all the pornographic literature and crime films, more and more of our youths have emulated the very worst. (15 July 1974)

A later editorial in the same newspaper put forward the theory of a "hard core" group of students manipulating the majority to take part in a strike. As the editorial put it, "often only one or two students start things underground, eventually plunging the institution concerned into chaos". (Daily Nation, 7 September 1974)

The attempt to attribute student protests to foreign influence is tantamount to saying that Kenyan students are not capable of thinking for themselves and interpreting their own social situation. This attitude seriously underestimates the students' capability for independent thought and action. In this context, it should also be pointed out that the schools which had strikes were predominantly (95 per cent) rural schools, far removed from the foreign influence prevalent in urban areas. If the argument of foreign influence were true, we would then expect the affected schools to be mainly in urban areas. The students attending schools in urban centres are more likely to be exposed to the foreign influence referred to above than those in rural schools.

One should also realise that by attributing the causes of student protests to instigation by a few student leaders, the existence of grievances which motivate the mass of students to join the protests is ruled out and it becomes difficult for the public to understand what forces move a majority of student to join these strikes. Are they then to assume that most Kenyan students are a bunch of fools easily susceptible to manipulation by a few?

11. See the statement made by Mr. A.A. Adongo, the Secretary-General of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), in which he blamed school indiscipline on "parental interference with the administration of discipline", and in particular interference by those he termed as the "big bosses". (Daily Nation, 30 July 1974) For another variation on the same theme see the statement made in the same paper by Dr. A.W. Rogan-Kamper, a Nairobi consultant psychologist who sees school indiscipline as a result of youth challenging the older and less confident generation of teachers and parents.

12. See A.W. Rogan-Kamper's response to a journalist about student strikes. He said one cause of these strikes was "imitation of foreign behaviour patterns in the wake of modern mass-media depicting cinematic violence and youth rebellion in other parts of the world which has been a major complementary reason to student indiscipline". Daily Nation, 30 July 1974.

The third point made in the editorials and news commentaries of the two newspapers is in regard to the payment of damages caused by student violence. The two suggestions made in this respect are that the parents and guardians should pay or that the students should be involved in self-help projects which would provide money to meet the costs of the damages, and would also teach them to be more responsible. The Daily Nation suggested that the school "misfits" should be "rehabilitated" in the National Youth Service and that "modern methods of 'taming' the youth must be found and implemented".¹³ In line with this kind of philosophy, The Standard suggested:-

Would it be impossible to adopt the idea /of involving students in self-help projects/ so that delinquent students in Kenya guilty of irresponsibility, violence, rioting and disrupting the educational machine, might find themselves obliged to help in some harambee projects? Some of the money they thus earn could be used to pay for any damage they may have done.

They might quickly realise that slogging on a farm is much less fun than breaking up desks and windows. (The Standard, 6 September 1974)

Given this kind of outlook, it is not surprising to see these newspapers welcome the contemplated amendment to the Education Act of 1968 which proposes to strengthen the power of school authorities. The Daily Nation was more than enthusiastic in its appraisal of the contemplated changes when it said:-

Laws to be introduced in Kenya to enable the authorities to deal more firmly with student riots and indiscipline are a welcome development in the light of recent violence and chaos in our educational institutions....

These new measures are long overdue. The public has for too long been treated to situations where the education process is in danger of falling apart all of a sudden due to inadequate control by those in charge. (Daily Nation, 7 September 1974)

It would be wrong for us to give the impression that the newspapers have been completely hostile to student protests. A casual reading of the editorials on the University crises will reveal that they have on several occasions adopted a critical attitude towards those in administration. Therefore, while the above-quoted editorials welcomed a hardline approach to student protests, the dailies have nevertheless admitted that there have been times when student grievances are genuine and school authorities wrong. The Daily Nation argued, inter alia, that the proposed measures should not make the administrators indifferent to student views. More important the

13. Daily Nation, 15 July 1974. This kind of thinking may be behind the proposal to establish a University students' National Service Scheme. See The Standard, 23 December 1974, and the Daily Nation of the same date.

paper went on to argue that the students "should be allowed to have say in some matters regarding the running of their institutions". It continued by arguing that these students will in future "be required to run schools, or manage other institutions, and it is important that, in part, their education should fit them for these responsibilities".

In this section, we have observed how in the main the Ministry of Education and our newspapers capitalise on student violence in their interpretation of secondary school protests. In this way, the underlying causes of these protests are obscured and forgotten. The essence of this approach is therefore to blame the students who are victims of the prevailing situation in our schools.

SOME STUDENT GRIEVANCES: FOUR CASE STUDIES

Up to now, we have mainly dealt with the interpretations given to secondary school strikes rather than the causes of these protests. The four case studies given below are therefore intended to provide an insight into the kind of grievances that led students to stage strikes. These case studies are by no means representative of the whole range of student grievances, but we hope these will form a basis for further discussion. They have been selected from a number of schools visited in Central, Nyanza and Western Provinces. In most of the schools, we were able to interview headmaster, teachers and students. Unfortunately, in some schools we were unable to interview both teachers and students because the visit coincided with third term examinations.

First Case Study

This is a government maintained boys boarding school which was established in 1964 under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1971 it became a senior school, having been granted sixth form classes. It has three streams from Form I to IV and is supposed to have two science streams for Forms V and VI, although in the last two years these have not been filled. The present school population is 541, of whom 61 are in the sixth form; about one half of the student body is day students.

The strike in this school was staged by Form IV students who started to voice their grievances on Friday 19 July 1974. The boycott of lessons by the 120 pupils of this form did not, however, start until Monday July 22. On this day, they gathered in the dining hall from 8.30 to 10.00 a.m. and requested the headmaster to address them. The headmaster refused; instead he contacted the Provincial Education Office who in turn contacted the District

Education Office and requested the staffing officer to visit the school. The staffing officer told the students either to return to their classes or to go home.

When the students refused to do either, the police were called in and they ordered the students to leave the school compound. This Form IV class was suspended from the school, although the rest of the school continued with its normal routine.

The grievances which led students to boycott classes were:-

(a) The headmaster had cancelled the 'traditional' Form IV trip. It had been the tradition of the school to send Form IV classes each year on an educational trip around the country; that year's trip was cancelled on account of shortage of funds. The students could not understand why, as each had contributed twenty shillings per annum from Forms I to IV which was supposed to go into their entertainment fund. They argued this was their contribution to the cost of the 'traditional' trip. When the headmaster cancelled this trip, the pupils felt that they were being denied something to which they were entitled.

We learnt that the school had financial problems which had been made more serious by rising prices, and by the fact that in 1974 the school bursar had stolen some school funds. The headmaster was therefore forced to economise on some items so that the school could continue functioning.

(b) There were no books in the school library.

(c) The Form IV classes did not like their history teacher, whom they said was old and taught history in an old-fashioned manner. They wanted a recent history graduate as a teacher.

The Form IV students had tried to involve Form III students who had had no maths teacher for a month and the Form V students who had no physics teacher, but these attempts were unsuccessful because the major grievance affected only Form IV.

The suspended students were required to resume their classes on 16 September, a week after the rest of the school had started their third term. The teachers, meanwhile, attempted to identify the ringleaders of the strike, mainly by selecting students who had bad records in the past. On the basis of this, eight students were expelled, but one was later readmitted.

The parents were called to the school and told the position which the board of governors had taken regarding this strike, which they were required to endorse.

Second Case Study

This is a single stream boys secondary school which started in 1970 on a self-help basis. The local people built the existing buildings, namely, the four classrooms, the headmaster's office, staff houses, the student hostels and the kitchen. The school began receiving government assistance as soon as it was started. No additional buildings have been added to the school since 1970, although capital grants for carrying out a school building programme were promised as soon as the school began to be assisted.

We visited the school early in November to find that there was no laboratory, library or dining facilities. Meals for the 170 students were served in classrooms - an inconvenience for both the cooks and the students. The teaching of science subjects - biology, chemistry and general science - suffered a great deal from the lack of a laboratory and of vital science equipment. This we were told was a serious stumbling block to those students who wanted to continue with science subjects at higher school certificate level. One student summed up the situation when he told us that "my only chance of holding a test tube occurs when I am doing a science examination, and the test tubes we use are borrowed from other schools for our examination purposes".

All the students in the school went on strike on 18 February 1974 and the school remained closed until the middle of March. On the night of the strike, the students woke up at about 3.00 a.m. and started shouting and throwing stones. The main target of student attack was the headmaster's house and the student hostels. The pastor's house was also attacked and this was followed later by an attack on the cooks. The headmaster called the administration police who helped to keep the situation calm in the morning.

The school was closed for two weeks, in the third week the students were called for interviews with the headmaster and the members of the board of governors. They were required to disclose who were leaders of the strike, who were the most active students and who harassed the cooks and stoned the pastor's house.

After this investigation, the board of governors decided to expel ten students from the school. The other students were required to pay a fine to cover the cost of repairing the damaged windows and roofs. Form I students each paid a fine of fifteen shillings while Form II, III and IV students were each required to pay forty shillings.

The main cause of this strike was shortage of teaching staff. For the whole of 1974 the school did not have a physics teacher. Forms III and IV did not have an English teacher. The school also lacked a history teacher and students claimed that the chemistry teacher was not teaching properly.

In 1973 the school had its full teaching establishment of six; the situation began to deteriorate when the history and literature teacher was transferred to a neighbouring secondary school. The contract of the English teacher expired in the third term of 1973. The husband of the English teacher, who taught physics in the school, left at the same time as his wife. In effect, the school lost three teachers, although only two were to be replaced by the Teachers Service Commission. By the middle of 1974 only one teacher had been replaced; the staffing shortage was not only felt by the pupils, but also by the depleted staff who had to share the extra teaching burden.

The second source of conflict was the self-help boarding facilities which the school organised: the students felt that the school fees and boarding costs were too high. They were paying Shs 200/- for tuition and 620/- for boarding and uniforms. The students therefore demanded the lowering of school fees from Shs 200/- to Shs 100/- (which seems to have arisen from their misunderstanding of the Presidential ruling on secondary school fees towards the end of 1973).

In view of the high boarding fees they were paying, the students expected to receive two sets of school uniforms, bed sheets and blankets. One set of school uniforms was issued to the students, but the second was not forthcoming. The explanation given to them was the rising cost of food.

In general, the students said they were frustrated by lack of a laboratory, science equipment and a library. They compared their lot with those who had gone to well equipped schools, and felt their chances of passing the East African Certificate of Education (at the end of Form IV) were minimal.

The students also expressed serious disappointment at the way the board of governors had handled the strike. Board members were unwilling to hear student grievances or allow them to express their feelings about the school. The headmaster's version of events was listened to and most likely believed. This was not a surprise to the students, since well before the strike they had formed a student council to deal with their problems, only to have it banned after three weeks of existence.

Third Case Study

This is a co-educational boarding school which became government maintained in 1965. The school has, however, combined two maintained streams with one unaided stream. The government maintained section of the school caters for 153 boys and 76 girls, while the unaided stream has 100 boys and 45 girls. In 1973, a higher school certificate science class was started. At the time we visited the school, however, Forms V and VI classes only comprised 26 students. While boarding facilities are provided for most of the students, some are maintained on a self-help basis.

The strike occurred at the beginning of March and led to the closure of the school from 6 to 21 March 1974. Student grievances were summarised in posters which were hung in the school compound. The headings of the most conspicuous posters read, "unless these grievances are fulfilled we won't go to classes neither are we going to eat".

Form VI Grievances:

1. We must have books, both library and class texts.
2. Our laboratory is only partially equipped and must be well equipped if we are to succeed. Why miss essential things like distilled water. We have not performed any practicals in physics.
3. We must have recreation - like dancing, films particularly on Saturday and Sunday.
4. We should be going out on educational trips.
5. Partition of our dormitory should be completed.
6. Why should you /headmaster/ impound our uniforms?

Form I - Form IV Grievances:

1. Why do we miss books, trained teachers and why do teachers not attend their lessons regularly - for example the Headmaster?
2. Junior laboratories must be well equipped with modern chemicals.
3. Is it hygenic (sic) to be given boarding facilities that have been used by girls, for example pillows and mattresses (sic).
4. We want proper sanitation for boys.
5. We must have properly patronised clubs such that we will be inviting schools and we will be moving out.
6. We want to be built a washing stone.
7. We are using very filthy water which should be treated.
8. We want well balanced diet.

Grievances Common to All:

1. Special attention should be paid to water.
2. The diet is not suitable; why not improve it?
3. Discipline in the school is not up to date.
4. All school paths should be paved for they are causing unnecessary mud in our dormitories and classes.

Fourth Case Study: Sigalame Secondary School

Sigalame Secondary School is in Samia Location of Busia District, Western Province. It became a government maintained boys boarding school in 1965. At the moment it has four streams from Forms I to III and three streams in Form IV. The school population is 687 boys and a teaching staff of 19. More than a half of the students are aged eighteen and over.

The school was closed on 8 July 1974, as a result of a strike which occurred on the night of 7 July. It remained closed for the rest of second and third terms. This student protest received a great deal of publicity in the press and was a subject of comment by the Ministry of Education in its statement of 28 August.¹⁴

As a result, twelve students were charged in a magistrate's court with masterminding the strike. Four students were found guilty, and the rest were discharged. One of the four was imprisoned for nine months and the other three were each fined one thousand shillings or in default six months imprisonment. These four faced another charge of malicious damage to school property. All other students were each required by the board of governors to pay Shs 400/- towards the cost of repairs and any other damage which the school sustained because of the strike. As a part of the punishment, the school remained closed in the third term. The Form IV students were, however, allowed to sit for their EACE examination provided they paid the Shs 400/- fine and made their own arrangements for accommodation and meals during the duration of the examination. Teachers who were teaching in the school during the second term were transferred to other schools.

When we visited Sigalame, we intended to interview the headmaster, teachers and students so that we could get a full picture of the protest. Unfortunately, because of factors beyond our control we could not interview the headmaster. We did, however, manage to interview one teacher and a number of Form IV students. It is on the basis of these interviews that we constructed the outline of the grievances given below.

The major complaints which led students to stage a violent protest were:-

- (a) The sewerage system had broken down, making it difficult for student to stay or sleep in the biggest hostel (Nyerere Hostel).

14. See The Standard, 7 July 1974; Joe Kadhi, "Riots We Can Do Without", Sunday Nation, 14 July 1974; The Standard, 6 August 1974; and Daily Nation, 6 August 1974.

- (b) The school generator had broken down several time since the beginning of 1974. This meant that the school had no reliable source of power and students had to use paraffin lamps for their evening studies. The fact that most of the school compound was not lighted tended to encourage students to behave irresponsibly - for instance, just before this strike, the students had attempted to beat up the school technician. For some time before the strike the generator was not in working order.
- (c) In 1974 the students were required to pay Shs 700/- as school fees, an increase of Shs 40/- over the previous year. At the same time the school started to cut down on some of the things it used to provide to students. For instance, in 1974 they received one bar of washing soap and one tablet of toilet soap per term, as compared with the previous year when they received two bars of washing and three tablets of toilet soap per term. The four o'clock tea which was provided in 1973 was withdrawn in 1974.

The school uniform which was supposed to be issued in the first term was delayed, and some students remained without uniform until the second term. At the same time, the school required the students to be in uniform while going out of the school compound and during their free time. This had not been enforced in 1973.

- (d) At the beginning of 1974 the school was given a new headmaster, the previous headmaster having been transferred to a senior school. The new headmaster came from a smaller secondary school which he had ably guided from harambee status to that of a government maintained school.

When the new headmaster came to this school he found his predecessor had established a tradition of speaking with students at the morning assembly. Here, the former headmaster used to give the students the information and explanation they needed concerning school affairs. He also met regularly with the prefects. But the leadership style of the new headmaster was entirely different from his predecessor's. The new head did not attend morning assembly and school parade; he cancelled the Sunday services which were conducted for

students. There was also less contact between him and the school prefects. In short, he was not accessible to students while the previous headmaster had been. This was something that frustrated the prefects as well as the other students.

Some prefects said that when they informed him of students' grievances he would say, "I will come to talk to the students to explain the situation." He would then fail to turn up. When prefects asked him for a meeting to discuss issues related to school discipline, he is said to have ignored them. They complained that he was not co-operative and showed little respect for them. Because of the attitude of the headmaster towards the prefects and the students in general, we were told, the standard of school discipline declined considerably and the morale of the students became equally low.

- (e) The shortage of teachers and books was another source of frustration among students. The Form IV classes had no religious knowledge or mathematics teachers in the second term. The students also alleged that some teachers neglected their lessons, while others were incompetent to teach the subjects allocated to them.

The students further complained that there were no books in their school library and those available were American or too old. The most seriously felt shortage was that of set books in literature which were required for EACE: it was reported that three set books for Form IV pupils only arrived towards the middle of second term.

The students attempted to stage a strike for the first time on the night of Wednesday, 3 July, but the prefects foiled the attempt. In the morning the deputy headmaster was briefed by the head prefect on the situation prevailing in the school. On the basis of this information, he was able to warn all those students who were involved, threatening to expel all those who were planning the strike. However, the harsh warning did not deter the students from going ahead.

Saturday free time provided an ideal opportunity for the students to plan their strike. However, when they returned to school on Saturday evening they did not act on these plans as they were told the headmaster would talk to them. The headmaster had returned to the school the same evening, and was expected to address the students on the problems the school faced, but on Sunday morning he left the school without having done so. This infuriated the students all the more.

When the students went out for their Sunday walk, another opportunity occurred for them to finalise their plan of action; they decided to start destroying school property at 7.00 p.m. The headmaster and his deputy were not in school when the attack started. The prefects instead tried to handle the situation. The head prefect went to Funyula to call the police; he arrived at the police station at 9.00 p.m. but the police did not arrive at the school until after midnight. By this time, the students had destroyed most of the school property and were dancing in the compound.

A former school captain who had been demoted at the beginning of the year for having been found with a girl in the school compound played a leading role in the strike as he was very popular with students. The students felt that he had been treated unjustly, and therefore tended to sympathise with him. This student had a personal grudge against the headmaster for his demotion and the grievances existing within the school gave him an ideal opportunity to assert his leadership role and at the same time revenge himself on the headmaster. The violent nature of this protest may thus represent a personal vindication.

The damage done to the school was estimated by the Ministry of Works at Shs 750,000/-, which included the cost of repairing the electric generator and the sewerage system.

ORIGINS OF STUDENT STRIKES

The causes of student protests in Kenyan secondary schools are many and varied. The above case studies illustrate only a few of the problems which have resulted in conflicts. For the discussion which follows, the causes of student protests are divided into two broad categories. First, there are grievances which have their source in the wider society and the way the educational system is organised and managed. These relate to the quality and quantity of food and uniforms given to students; the shortage and quality of teaching staff, especially in science subjects; and the shortage and quality of library and text books provided.

Another factor which reflects on the whole educational system, and which featured prominently in student strikes, relates to the structure of authority and the machinery for solving grievances within educational institutions. Kenya has inherited a tradition of strict discipline within

these institutions. In the early colonial period, this was argued to be a necessary aspect of the training of Africans.¹⁵ The emphasis in most schools on blind obedience to authority rested in prefects, teachers and the headmaster or headmistress is therefore a continuation of this colonial tradition which creates a one-directional flow of orders and communication and provides no corresponding channels for the students to communicate with their teachers and headmaster or headmistress.

The second category of causes for student protests originates from specific situations within each school. These causes are related to the leadership style, commitment and ability of the head, the communication and interaction between the teaching staff and the students, and the level of maturity shown by the students.

To return to the first category, the quality and quantity of food provided in secondary schools featured as a major cause of student protests. The high rate of inflation experienced in the country in the last four years has affected school food budgets. Up to 1973, secondary schools were allocated £20 per pupil per school year (about 40 weeks) for boarding, equipment and stores. This vote is supposed to cover food, bedding and utensils, among other things. In 1974 this allocation was increased by fifty per cent to £30 per pupil, apparently to offset the rise in prices which had occurred since the £20 per pupil was fixed.¹⁶ Taking into consideration the increases in food prices which occurred between December 1973 and August 1974 (the period when most of the strikes occurred), it will be realised that the improvement, if any, in the purchasing power of schools in 1974 was minimal. Table 3 shows retail price indices of a few food items in relationship to the purchasing power of schools and is intended to illustrate what effect inflation had on the Ministry of Education's allocation for boarding, equipment and stores.

The financial crisis facing the education system is not only due to inflation. The Ministry of Education as a whole is faced with a general crisis

15. See the Education Department's 1926 Annual Report. (5, p.16) Section 7 on Discipline says:-

To the African in his primitive state, military or semi-military discipline makes a strong appeal. No better example can be found than the discipline of the military and police forces of the Colony, which has been adapted in the government schools... At Machakos Government School a semi-military discipline is combined with a large measure of self-government by the prefects of the school with whom authority in all minor matters is now completely vested, subject merely to the general superintendence of the staff.

16. I could not find the date when the £20 per pupil expenditure was established, but my guess is that it was fixed before 1968.

Table 3. Retail price indices of some food items, 1971 to August 1974.(1971=100)

	Dec. 1973	Aug. 1974	Jan. 1975
Maize Meal	155	227	255
Fats	143	176	176
Bread	123	175	195
Sugar	112	145	212
<u>Average^a</u>			
Index of prices	133	181	186
Index of cost	100	150	150
'Real' costs	75	83	81

^a The price index given here is a crude average (without weighting) of the above food items, and is substantially higher than the price index given by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Source: Prices for 1973 to 1975 have been obtained from newspaper reports. For 1971 prices I am indebted to Mike Cowen.

of how to arrest ever-rising educational expenditure. The rapid expansion of schools and enrolment in the last ten years has led the teaching force to increase by more than a hundred per cent. The consequence of this has been a tremendous increase in recurrent educational expenditure which now represents about 32 per cent of the total recurrent expenditure of the national government. Most of this expenditure is going into payment of teachers' salaries, which are also rising rapidly. The accelerated increase in the number of government maintained secondary schools (186 in 1967 to 403 in 1974) has thus meant an increased level of competition for the funds available for recurrent and development expenditure.

Schools therefore increasingly find themselves constrained by an externally fixed budget, with its purchasing power reduced by increasing prices, and at the same time faced by mounting pressure from students to improve the diet. As one headmaster who had to cope with a strike over the question of food put it, "We could not maintain the high standard the school had been used to." In some schools, uniforms and bedding are no longer issued to students. The money saved in this way can therefore be used to maintain the same standard of diet provided in the past. Some other schools now require their students to contribute a certain amount of money to supplement the funds allocated for food. Attempts have also been made in some schools to provide cheaper meals by cutting out some items, such as tea, from the menu. Changes of this kind have encountered a great deal

of resistance from students. While some schools managed to contain this resistance, in others it resulted in student strikes.

Problems of this kind are taxing the ingenuity of the heads and it is a tribute to them that most schools are coping with these serious financial problems. One would hope that students and indeed parents would realise the financial constraints under which many headmasters and headmistresses are working.

An equally important problem facing the education system in the first category is the shortage of qualified staff, especially in science subjects. (see 13, chapter 8) Consequently, some schools have to do without teachers for long periods. This creates frustration among students, as well as the teaching staff who have to shoulder the extra burden created by such shortages. Admittedly, there are some schools which are privileged in the allocation of science teachers or teachers in general; but even if the available number of teachers were equitably distributed, the problem would still exist. The rapid expansion of educational institutions in the last ten years has meant a serious shortage of teaching staff. The science subjects are the hardest hit and the situation is not likely to improve in the near future. The consequences of this shortage to society are enormous.

Another related cause of student strikes has been the lack of laboratories, science equipment and books. The distribution of these facilities is very unequal. Schools which became maintained in the period between 1968 and 1974 are among the most affected: in some of the schools we visited the need for laboratories, science equipment and library books was clearly evident. The shortage of staff also tends to be more acute, so that the staff and students of these institutions compare themselves with those in the well established and better equipped government maintained schools. The fact that the poorly staffed and equipped schools provide lower quality education than the better maintained schools is something that does not escape the attention of students,¹⁷ who know that they sit for the same EACE examination and have to compete for the same opportunities in higher education, training and employment. The sense of relative deprivation leads some students to fight for equal opportunities to those provided in other schools. Hence, some of the student strikes of 1974. (see 17)

17. For a more detailed discussion on the distribution of educational resources and opportunities, see Kinyanjui, 14.

The stratification of Kenyan secondary schools on the basis of quality is part and parcel of the way the educational system is planned and managed. The head teacher who is faced with a student strike because of unfairness in the allocation of teachers, science laboratories and equipment, and books finds himself unable to resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of his students as he has no control over the national distribution of these resources. These problems must be tackled at the national level: the headmaster or headmistress cannot solve this kind of problem, and like his students will find himself constantly frustrated.

The education system in this country operates on the assumption that the best way to educate young people is to reduce them to the level of docility. The authoritarian structure of the school inculcates fear in students and rewards blind obedience to authority. Consequently, any attempts by students to have a say in the running of schools is viewed with great disapproval and in some cases punished. The heads and boards of governors are vested with arbitrary powers to suspend and expel students without the students being given an opportunity to be heard. (see Appendix Three) In a situation such as this the students are not likely to question the teachers' authority unless very hard-pressed, as their criticism might mean in the final analysis loss of their opportunity for a secondary education. As opportunities for secondary education are limited, few parents will encourage their children to defy or question school authority. There are times, however, when students feel they cannot tolerate the humiliation and oppressive nature of the school authority any longer. When this point is reached, the students revolt regardless of the consequences of their action. The violent reactions of students in these situations may be due to the authoritarian conditions they have to deal with.

As delineated earlier, the second category of causes of student strikes stems from the way schools are organised and managed, and the relationship that exists between staff and students. The approach of the headmaster or headmistress in each school is therefore a crucial factor in determining the nature of potential sources of conflict originating from the organisation and the staff-pupil interactions within the school.

In the last ten years of independence, Kenya has had to recruit most secondary school heads from within the country. This has not been an easy task, as some of the ablest teachers have left the teaching profession for better opportunities elsewhere, while many who remained in education were promoted to administrative posts within the Ministry. In spite of these

constraints, the Ministry has managed to recruit some able head teachers who are doing a remarkable job. However, there are cases where the appointed headmasters or headmistresses have been found incompetent. (see Daily Nation, 27 August 1974) Lack of training in school management is an obvious problem, but more serious is the way teachers are involved in outside-school activities which make them less effective in their posts. A correspondent commenting on this problem in a local newspaper said, "Go to the rural areas and come back and tell me who are the best farmers, traders and businessmen...." (Daily Nation, 22 July 1974) Another writer in the same newspaper blamed headmasters for school unrest and observed that in the last ten years "The headmasters have been increasingly engaged in the grabbing race for trade opportunities." (Sunday Nation, 29 September 1974) Our visits to schools which had strikes in 1974 revealed two cases of headmasters with business interests which seemed to interfere with their educational duties. While we deplore the consequences of this indulgence on the part of headmasters or headmistresses, we at the same time realise that this is an accepted practice of public servants in Kenya. (see 8, pp. 13-15) In other words, the headmasters or headmistresses are just doing what other senior civil servants are doing. It is therefore difficult to condemn them without at the same time condemning those employed in other public services.

The relationship between the staff and students is one area of management in which a head teacher is crucial. The style of leadership of the headmaster or headmistress determines whether the students and the staff have respect and confidence in their head. In the absence of this respect, the legitimacy of the head's power and authority is undermined. This in turn affects the morale of staff and the discipline of students. The ability of the head teacher to listen to students' grievances and points of view, and at the same time his willingness to communicate his views and the reasons for the decisions taken by the school, can go a long way to solve most student grievances. Unfortunately, these qualities are lacking among some heads. The consequences are low morale and poor discipline among staff as well as students. In some schools which had strikes, we found that lack of communication between the headmaster and the students was an obstacle to the resolution of conflicts which encouraged students to resort to strike action.

If it is the objective of our educational system to "prepare and equip the youth of this country to play an active and effective role in the affairs of the nation", then it is vital that they start learning to do so in the school they attend. (see 8, Chapter 16, p.146) One way that this can be fostered is through the establishment of a dialogue between those who

teach and those who are taught. A correspondent writing in the Sunday Nation summarised the essence of this type of communication, when he wrote:-

... the ruling body in any school whatsoever should encourage this spirit of dialogue whereby the students can have a chance of being listened to. Yes, everybody has problems. It is neither wrong nor detrimental for any group or society to express one's problems.

However, the students are unjustly denied this right. The old cult that the student (as young person) has no say anywhere should be removed. Any person no matter his status or age has a right to be listened to. (30 June 1974)

Another source of student indiscipline found in four senior secondary schools visited was the way senior students (Form IV to VI) are treated in comparison to junior students. Thus conflict revolved around the need for differential treatment of senior students. For instance, in one school the Form V students went on strike because they were required to clean the dining hall, work which they thought degrading and only fit to be carried out by junior students. In another, Form V students were suspended from school when they refused to sweep their study room. Senior students in another school expressed great disappointment at being given the same type of dormitory accommodation as their juniors. Students in senior classes are also quick to compare their lot with the students attending the old well-established schools. The expectations of the Form VI students is that they should be treated slightly better than the junior students, expectations which the existence of age and educational differences tend to reinforce. When these differences are not acknowledged within schools, problems of discipline arise. It is important therefore, that these differences and expectations be recognised in the organisation of schools and particularly in the establishment of school rules.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Our discussion on student strikes has highlighted a few of the problems facing schools and the educational system as a whole in Kenya. As our focus was on causes of student protests, the analysis has not covered many other problems facing educational institutions. The recommendations given below are therefore confined to ways and means of minimising and handling conflicts within the schools. We have pointed out how some causes of student protests are closely intertwined with problems prevailing in society as a whole. This is to say, the school system is an integral part of the society in which it functions, and in many instances it reflects the contradictions existing within that society. Consequently, the changes recommended can only be meaningful in the context of other changes within society. In the absence of changes embracing the wider society, far-reaching school reforms become

impossible. While we recognise this to be true on the Kenyan educational system, we nevertheless make the following recommendations.

1. Research Into What Goes on Inside the Schools

Up to now research and government resources have concentrated on the structure of the education system, curriculum change, selection, provision of teachers, quantitative expansion of education and unemployment of school leavers. (see 7, 10 and 2) Very little attention has been given to what goes on inside schools and classrooms. We therefore still have to learn what is taught in our schools and how it is taught. The way schools are organised and power is shared between the head teacher and other teachers is not clear, nor are the relationships which exist between the staff and the students. Research is needed to shed light on these issues. An understanding of what goes on inside schools and classrooms is a necessary step towards the resolution of student protests.

2. Student Participation in the Administration of Schools

Assuming that it is the objective of the educational system to produce informed and critical citizens who can participate fully and meaningfully in society, then it follows that students should be active participants in the institutions (schools) which socialise them and determine their future roles. For this objective to be accomplished, an overhaul of the power structure of secondary schools is needed. This may sound like a threat to teachers' authority in schools, but in reality it may establish a more healthy atmosphere for learning, and thereby enhance the effectiveness of teachers. Reforms of this kind would entail the establishment of lines of communication between teachers and pupils, and a shift from the situation in which students are passive recipients of knowledge to active participants in the process of learning. An acceptance of the fact that it is not a crime for students to organise themselves and have leaders who articulate their views and grievances is also a critical need in our educational institutions. The argument that secondary school students are not mature is not valid in view of the fact that about 40 per cent are eighteen (voting age) and above. A major constraint to the realisation of these reforms is not the age of the students but the attitudes of both students and teachers.

3. Natural Justice in Our Schools

The present regulations governing caning, suspension and expulsion from secondary school do not give students an opportunity to be heard or to appeal against unfair decisions. The whole question of punishment within our

schools is biased against students, contrary to all tenets of natural justice. (see Appendix Three) The attitude displayed by the Ministry of Education and the newspapers towards student strikes is a clear case of condemnation without being heard. A change of attitude among our administrators is clearly needed. An amendment to the school discipline regulations of 1972 is required: new regulations should be instituted which give students an opportunity to be heard before any punishment is meted out. Mechanisms should also be provided to give students a fair hearing and the right to appeal in case of injustice. At the moment headmasters are both prosecutors and judges in cases involving students.

4. Parents' Involvement In Schools

Whenever students went on strike and a decision was reached by the head teacher and board that they should be punished, the parents were called to the school to be informed of the punishment. In some cases they were required to guarantee the good conduct of their children or to pay a fine if damage were done to the school. Otherwise their participation in everyday school affairs is limited to contributions to harambee projects, and even this participation is usually withdrawn when a school becomes government maintained. This is an unfortunate situation and should be remedied. Parents should be educated to see that their role does not end with the provision of school buildings, but rather that this is only a starting point for their participation in the process of educating their children, a task which needs to be shared by both parents and teachers. We therefore recommend that a parents' association be formed in every secondary school in the country, to be followed later by the institution of a national parents' association. These associations should be concerned with the day-to-day affairs of schools as well as general educational policy. The national association should work hand in hand with the Kenya National Union of Teachers and the Ministry of Education to find solutions to educational problems.

The local parents' association should be represented on the board of governors of each school, as stipulated in section 11 (c) of The Education Act of 1968.

5. Inequalities Existing Within the Education System

The education system is faced with a problem of limited resources, but this should not be used as an excuse for the uneven distribution of these resources. In fact this problem should encourage the government to be conscientious about how these resources are utilised. In this regard it is important

that teachers, books, and library and science facilities be equitably distributed and that the pupils, the teachers and the community realise that they are equitably distributed. We cannot expect contentment within our schools when a few privileged schools co-exist with other poorly staffed and equipped schools.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to show some of the main causes of student protests in secondary schools. We have shown how the interpretations and attitudes adopted by the Ministry of Education and the newspapers are based on a misunderstanding of the underlying causes of student grievances. Because of this misunderstanding the Ministry of Education and the newspapers have mainly blamed students for the conflicts which have emerged. Our analysis of the causes of student strikes has, however, shown that students cannot shoulder all the blame. The way the educational system and schools are organised has contributed a great deal to student unrest.

In suggesting the kind of changes that need to be carried out, we have emphasised the need for research into what goes on inside our schools and classrooms. In this way we will be able to evaluate the relationships that exist between students and teachers and the ways in which authoritarian aspects of the secondary schools can be changed to give students more say in the learning process. We have also suggested changes in the regulations governing discipline in schools, the relationship between parents and schools and finally the need for equitable distribution of educational resources among schools throughout the country.

In making these suggestions, we do not intend to create the impression that these measures will completely eliminate school strikes. Schools are part and parcel of the society, and often the conflicts within the school system reflect the strains and stresses which exist in the wider society. What we are therefore appealing for - and this is the whole point of this paper - is a genuine attempt to understand the root causes of student unrest. This in turn should lead to a reassessment of fundamental attitudes towards the whole process of education embodied in our educational institutions. The paper therefore calls for a critical reappraisal not only of the educational philosophy which guides the organisation of our learning institutions, but also of the very social structure which fosters the contradictions within the educational system.

APPENDIX ONE: NAIROBI NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STRIKES IN 1974

1. "Students Ordered to Go Home", The Standard, 21 March 1974.
2. "Kamusinga School Closes After Strike", The Standard, 3 July 1974.
3. "School Closed after Riot", Sunday Nation, July 7 1974.
4. "Police Called to Riot School", The Standard, 9 July 1974.
5. "Teachers to Probe Wave of Student Unrest", Daily Nation, 11 July 1974.
6. "End Student Riots", Daily Nation, 12 July 1974.
7. "Students' Violence Steps Up", Daily Nation, 13 July 1974.
8. "Riot We Can Do Without", Sunday Nation, 14 July 1974.
9. "Teach Discipline to Curb Strikes", Daily Nation, 15 July 1974.
10. "Two More Schools on Strike", Daily Nation, 15 July 1974.
11. "P.C. Hits Out at Rioting by Pupils", The Standard, 16 July 1974.
12. "School Wreckers Warned; Keep Doing This and You Won't Come Back", Daily Nation, 17 July 1974.
13. "Parents to Pay Riot Cost", The Standard, 20 July 1974.
14. "Striking Students Go Home", Daily Nation, 24 July 1974.
15. "Teachers Who Encourage Strikes Get Pack Up and Leave Warning", Daily Nation, 24 July 1974.
16. "Sigalame Students in Court on Riot Charges", Daily Nation, 25 July 1974.
17. "Meeting to Discuss Fate of Students", Daily Nation, 25 July 1974.
18. "Student Riots Will Not Be Tolerated", The Standard, 30 July 1974.
19. "Students Should Use Right Channels in Airing Their Grievances", Daily Nation, 30 July 1974.
20. "Student Riots Must Now Be Stopped", Daily Nation, 30 July 1974.
21. "School Strike Was Led Like a Coup", Daily Nation, 6 August 1974.
22. "Riot Students to Pay", Daily Nation, 13 August 1974.
23. "N.C.C.K. Urges Probe into Students Strikes", Daily Nation, 14 August 1974.
24. "Give Us our Daily Bread, Say Student Strikers", Daily Nation, 16 August 1974.
25. "Good Leaders Only Can Run School", The Standard, 23 September 1974.
26. "Students Should Not Complain - Kariithi", Daily Nation, 30 September 1974.

APPENDIX TWO: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CONCERNING SCHOOL STRIKES IN NAIROBI
NEWSPAPERS, 1974

1. "Students Are to Blame", Sunday Nation, 12 May 1974.
2. "Government Ought to Take Over All These Schools", Sunday Nation, 26 May 1974.
3. "Students Are Not Always to Blame", Sunday Nation, 30 June 1974.
4. "It Would Be Wise to Find the Cause", Sunday Nation, 7 July 1974.
5. "Students' Unrest", Daily Nation, 17 July 1974.
6. "Students' Unrest", Daily Nation, 18 July 1974.
7. "Pupils Are Solely to Blame", Daily Nation, 22 July 1974.
8. "Strikes Won't Do", Daily Nation, 23 July 1974.
9. "Most Strikes by Students are Genuine", Daily Nation, 31 July 1974.
10. "Schools Strikes: Dialogue Should Be the Answer", Daily Nation, 31 July 1974.
11. "Make Them Pay for Everything", Daily Nation, 31 July 1974.
12. "Strike at School", The Standard, July 1974.
13. "Strikes in our Schools", Daily Nation, 4 August 1974.
14. "Student Strikers Have a Case, Mr. Minister", Daily Nation, 8 August 1974.
15. "Wrong to Say Students are Being Misled", Daily Nation, 15 September 1974.
16. "Problems of Students", Daily Nation, 21 September 1974.
17. "Why Radicals Reign", Sunday Nation, 29 September 1974.
18. "Deformed Viewpoint", Sunday Nation, 29 September 1974.
19. "Students Are Unhappy for Many Reasons", Daily Nation, 29 September 1974.
20. "Teachers Also Add to the Indiscipline", Daily Nation, 15 October 1975.
21. "Causes of Students' Indiscipline", Sunday Nation, 1 December 1974.

APPENDIX THREE: THE EDUCATION (SCHOOL DISCIPLINE) REGULATIONS, 1972

LEGAL NOTICE NO. 40

THE EDUCATION ACT
(No.5 of 1968)

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 19 of the Education Act, 1968, the Minister for Education hereby makes the following Regulations:-

THE EDUCATION (SCHOOL DISCIPLINE)
REGULATIONS, 1972

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Education (School Discipline) Regulations, 1972, and shall apply to all assisted and maintained schools.
2. A pupil may be suspended from attendance at a school by the Head Teacher of the school or a teacher acting in that capacity, if his language or behaviour is habitually or continually such as to endanger the maintenance of a proper standard of moral and social conduct in the school, or if any single act or series of acts subversive of discipline is committed.
 3. (1) A pupil who has been suspended by the Head Teacher or teacher acting in that capacity shall not be allowed to attend classes and will be required to be physically away from the school precincts until he is informed of the outcome of his case by the Head Teacher or teacher acting in that capacity.
 - (2) The fact of the suspension shall be conveyed direct to the parent or legal guardian of the pupil by means of a letter.
4. (1) The Head Teacher or teacher acting in that capacity shall, within fourteen days of the suspension, report the suspension to the Board of Governors of the school.
 - (2) The Board of Governors shall, after considering the report, recommend to the Director of Education through the Provincial Education Officer responsible for the area in which the school is situated, punishment which in the opinion of the Board is commensurate with the offence committed.
5. The Director of Education may, after considering the recommendations of the Board, and after holding such inquiry (if any) as he may deem necessary-
 - (a) confirm the suspension and order the expulsion of the pupil, in which case the pupil shall not be readmitted to a maintained or assisted school without the special sanction of the Director of Education; or
 - (b) confirm the suspension and determine the conditions on which the pupil may be readmitted to the same school or to any other school; or
 - (c) terminate the suspension.
6. In cases of mass indiscipline involving the whole or part of the student body, the Head Teacher or teacher acting in that capacity may declare the school closed and the students suspended.
7. (1) As soon as possible after closure of the school, the Head Teacher or teacher acting in that capacity shall report the matter to the Board of Governors who shall, within fourteen days after receipt of such report, consider the matter.

(2) The Board of Governors shall submit their report on the matter to the Director of Education through the Provincial Education Officer responsible for the area in which the school is situated.

8. The Director of Education may, after considering the report of the Board of Governors and after holding such inquiry (if any) as he may deem necessary-

- (a) confirm or terminate the suspension of all or any of the pupils; or
- (b) determine the conditions on which all or any of the pupils are to be readmitted to the same school or to any other school; or
- (c) order the expulsion of any pupil from the school.

9. A pupil may, on the order of the Director of Education be excluded from school if, after consideration of his age and progress, the Director of Education is of the opinion that it is not in the interest of such pupil to remain in school.

10. The Board of Governors of a school may make administrative rules appertaining to the discipline of pupils and may prescribe appropriate punishment for breach of, or non-adherence to, such rules.

11. Corporal punishment may be inflicted only in cases of continued or grave neglect of work, lying, bullying, gross insubordination, indecency, truancy or the like.

12. (1) Corporal punishment may be inflicted only by the Head Teacher of the school or by a teacher in the presence of the Head Teacher; or in the case of a boarding school, by a housemaster to whom authority for administration of corporal punishment has been delegated by the Head Teacher in respect of pupils resident in his house.

(2) Corporal punishment may be inflicted only after full inquiry, and not in the presence of the other pupils.

13. Corporal punishment must be inflicted on the buttocks with a cane or smooth light switch, or on the palm of the hand with a strap not less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth.

14. A record of every case of corporal punishment shall be kept by the Head Teacher, and shall contain the child's name and age, the offence, the number of strokes inflicted, the date and the name of the person by whom it was inflicted.

Made this 25th day of February, 1972.

T. Towett
Minister for Education

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