

# **Education is a right not a privilege!**

Workers' Solidarity Federation

1996

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Last year students from universities and technicon protested against racism on campus, fee hikes and financial and academic exclusions. But if the government goes ahead with its plans to cut funds for higher education, students will be facing even worse problem in 1997

## **NO MONEY? OR NO COMMITMENT TO CHANGE?**

The government says it has very little money for education in general. The government says that if they give any more funds to higher education the government will have to take money away from the other levels of education (primary and secondary education)

The argument that there is no money for education is a lie!

We know that this country does have wealth. Every year we see the bosses make record profits. Telkom made R6 billion profit in 1996.

The reason why the government does not give more money to education is not because it does is broke. It is because the government does not want to spend money on education and health. This is part of governments' ifree marketî economic strategy- "GEAR".

In fact, the South African government is ranked amongst the five countries in the world who contribute the least to higher education.

## **REDISTRIBUTION OR A KICK IN THE TEETH?**

The government says the budget cuts are intended to address the inequalities in higher education caused by Apartheid by shifting funds to historically Black Universities. These campuses are severely underfunded, lack resources, are overcrowded, and have massive debts to the State.

But this claim that budget cuts are for îredistributionî falls apart when we realise that

1. The cut backs also affect the Historically Black Universities. For example, the University of the Western Cape faces a 27 million subsidy cut. Such cut backs will only worsen conditions and place them under severe financial pressure. They need more money not funding cuts!
2. The cutbacks halt transformation at Historically White Universities like Wits.

Students will have to pay higher fees for their courses and residences. Bursaries will be slashed. This will exclude historically disadvantaged students from Black working class backgrounds on financial grounds.

Many courses and academic support programs will be discontinued due to the funding cuts. Many students will not be able to cope with their work and will face academic exclusions.

Workers and academic staff may face retrenchment and lay offs. Working conditions and teaching and support services will be undermined.

## **FORWARD TO FREE, EQUAL AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION!!**

It is clear that cutting back university and technicon funds will not benefit historically black universities, students, staff and workers. It is also clear that the government has the money and does not have to cut funds. Therefore, we must resist the higher education budget cuts!

All progressive student bodies should unite with staff and workers to resist the fund cuts on a national level. We Demand:

- An end to any tertiary education subsidy cuts!
- Increase the education budget (for all levels of education)

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