

SPORT

- AS PART OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRUGGLE

extract from a paper by Vusi Mavuso, organiser for CWIU

The type of education presently in force in South Africa hinges on racism, perpetual servitude and total subjugation. The type of workers that it has to date produced know the cardinal rule of the oppressor; the regimental rule of doing and dying without questioning. Let me not be misconstrued to give the impression that we want 'white education'. Certainly not. We have reasons to believe that white education is oppressive. It is education that teaches that 'White is might and might is right!'

The type of education that we are possibly looking forward to, in a united and truly non-racial South Africa, should be integrated with culture because education and culture can play a decisive role in the social transformation of a given society by a struggling people like ourselves.

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION

The Education we are talking about must, amongst other things... be able to provide for

physical education. 'This would aim at producing healthy strong individuals. This would produce vigorous minds and bodies fully prepared in their twin struggle with nature and other men. This would include everything from the simplest gymnastics to military training. A people must be able to defend the gains of their history. The

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whole people should be in a state of military preparedness to defend their revolution.' (Ngugi Wa Thiongo)

A producer, a thinker and a fighter...

To sum it up, the main content of an Education for Liberation must be to produce a producer, a thinker and a fighter all integrated in the same individual to be able to defend, consolidate and advance the gains, aspirations and needs of a given society.

Notwithstanding the fact that Education is of paramount significance to any given society, it must be embedded in a very solid foundation; a healthy, fit, strong but supple body.

THE HISTORY OF SPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The historical background of sport in South Africa is very short and political in the sense that it has its roots deeply embedded in colonialism and racism. This is beyond doubt because sporting codes like rugby, soccer, boxing, tennis, cricket etc. have their origins in Europe. Their transportation to South Africa became possible because of the so-called 'Voyages of Discovery' and the overwhelming influx of Europeans to the so-called 'Dark Continent' which is Africa.

What is interesting is that such sporting codes were preserves of the ruling class. During the discoveries of gold and diamonds in the 19th century, a number of white miners introduced soccer and cricket to

their black counterparts. Consequently at the turn of the 20th century, Chinese miners were always seen together kicking and punching in what is termed Chuang-Fu art of self-defence.

These rather strange cultures proved to be popular with the Black miners. In essence it did not take them long to understand and play these sports simply because they were physically fit and strong due to excessive demands of forced labour and of course the natural strength developed through years of constant practice in stick fighting and traditional dancing. It was relatively easy to display adroitness and agility in these foreign sports. This was proved by the legendary Blossom Pooe in tennis, Humphrey, Khosi and Benoni Malaka in athletics and Jake Tuli, who was the first black to win a British Commonwealth boxing title, just to name a few.

SPORT AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT

The concerted efforts which have been initiated by the entire democratic movement of rendering the apartheid state inoperable by closing almost every vestige of international sport participation of South Africa and campaigning for the total isolation of South Africa from the international sporting arena, must be viewed against the background of the policy of this regime of not judging sportsmen by their merits and capa-

bilities but by their skin colour.

Certainly this is an unpardonable crime against humanity. Surely this is a political statement on its own. It therefore goes without saying that sport can be and is a political instrument no matter on which side of the table one sits.

It should be noted however, that the apartheid regime is always trying fancy political shuffles to circumvent the sports boycott. A few years back hotels went up in flames, aircrafts made kamikazi-type manoeuvres and riots were sparked when the so-called 'Springboks' forced matters in trying to play rugby in New Zealand.

This type of reception bears testimony to the revulsion and utmost rejection of 'imported apartheid sport'. It is rather hard to believe that the apartheid regime is still undaunted by these blood-chilling incidents.

Not long ago the Volkswagen workers in the Eastern Cape guarded Kombis which were supposed to be used by the touring All-Blacks. It is common knowledge that the apartheid state's whimsical tactics were reduced to nil by 'workers control' over the kombis. They were never used!

Political poverty

It should be noted, however, that certain individuals in the sporting fraternity plead political poverty and allow themselves to be used by the regime saying that they are mere sportsmen and women

and not politicians. Consequently when they manage to sneak and play overseas, they hoist the Orange, White and Blue flag skyhigh in recognition of the Botha-Malan Junta. That is political.

There is absolutely no Berlin Wall between sport and politics. There can most emphatically be no normal sport in an abnormal society. Sport is presently used by politicians for their careers, ambitions and selfish personal interests. They covertly use sportsmen and women as pawns in the political chess game.

We as part of the working class, must urge all sportsmen and women to share the trenches of struggle with the toiling masses because the solution to the re-entry of South Africa into the international sports arena lies in South Africa amongst the millions of the voiceless, voteless and deprived South Africans. The ever-swelling ranks of the sports army must be inculcated with the spirit of peace, democracy and freedom and base their struggle and objectives on a truly non-racial and democratic foundation.

It is with shame and dismay we realise that some of the most hopeless and unknown individuals of Errol Tobias' calibre were co-opted into the so-called 'Springbok' rugby team to give that much needed flavour and savour to the apartheid regime's lost credibility. This devious play has been undertaken by other sporting codes like karate, boxing, cricket etc.

Sport is and must always be an integral part of Education and Culture and conversely Edu-

cation and Culture are political in intent and content. What ought to be impressed here is that these must not magnify the philosophy and aspirations of the minority and of oppression. These must not encourage personal aggrandizement and glory. These must not be commercialised to the benefit of the few but they must have a truly national outlook and content.

THE ROLE OF CAPITALISM IN APARTHEID SPORT

Culture must be inextricably linked with the struggle for political rights and liberation from all oppressive laws. Stinking laws like the Group Areas Act, Separate Amenities Act, Influx Control etc, are great impediments and stumbling blocks towards the creation of a truly non-racial and democratic sport in South Africa. The role of the so-called 'Free Enterprise System' has always been that of supporting state recognised sporting bodies. This is abundantly clear if one looks at how the State controlled South African Boxing Board, the National Amateur Karate Associ-

ation and Martial Arts and the South African Rugby Board are being pumped with millions of rands just to give it a multinational image which the people are not interested in.

'no normal sport in an abnormal society'

To make matters worse, one of the only truly non-discriminatory and non-racial sports bodies, SACOS, has been denied much needed sponsorship for supporting and endorsing the exclusion of South Africa from the Olympics. This bold political stand has caused SACOS immeasurable grief. But it should be impressed here that it is a fact of life that "There can be no normal sport in an abnormal society". SACOS' sacrifice is the ultimate price to pay towards a future South Africa.

Comrades, we may be deemed political criminals if we may deliberately play blind to the rather questionable existence and operation of the National Soccer League. We have noted some fancy political

shuffles in the utterings of its super publicist, Abdul 'The Bumbling Blubber' Bhamjee. At one stage it was alleged that the NSL was supportive of the Democratic Liberation Movement. This was evident during the 75th Anniversary of the African National Congress of South Africa.

Quite frankly, that was a highly commendable step and words of encouragement and praise were showered on the 'Super League'. This was taken in the background of the termination of the contract of sponsorship with the bloodied "Panasonic" enterprise. Later on we were shocked to learn that the NSL was in fact APOLITICAL. Surely that was confusing. Just when we thought it was safe to talk about the NSL, the First National Bank, which financed the rebel Fiji Rugby Tour, sponsored together with Botha's propaganda box the SABC TV, the so-called South African XI and the Foreign-born XI. Now where is the principle of not accepting blood money? Money which supports rebel tours?

It must be borne in mind that the tendency of internalising and assimilating Western values can be very dangerous, counter-productive and misleading to our national democratic struggle.



Chiefs vs Pirates

An American Bantu!

One of our country's finest athletes, Sydney Maree, was 'awarded' the so-called Springbok colours for having the sub-four minute mile in record time. As if this were not enough, he decided to renounce his very roots and proud history and opted to speak with an American drawl and took up USA citizenship! He became a Bantu American overnight!

Zola Budd, Mark Plaatjies, Johan Fourie, Johan Kriek etc. are dying to perform at inter-

national level by hoisting flags of convenience just for personal glory. That is a pitfall of internalising and envying Western values. They teach you to hate yourself, your family, friends and country! They teach you to be selfish, ambitious and to quest for personal glory.

Frantz Fanon, in his book 'The Wretched of the Earth' puts it rather better and says that one becomes transformed into '...a petit bourgeoisie which refuses to negate its roots in Western Education and Culture, develops into a greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividends that the for-

mer colonial power hands out to it. The get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe but its caricature'.

Because of our belief that sport is part and parcel of culture, and that only a true people's culture under the control of the progressive working class has an important role to play in our noble and just struggle for national liberation and social emancipation, COSATU must assume its rightful place by charting the way forward to a PEOPLE'S CULTURE.

