

in the main the new Bantu Education is being administered by the same humane, experienced, and trusted officials who handled education under the Provinces. It is largely the purpose of this article to suggest that this is false comfort.

Under any State, officials are or ought to be without politics. Their duty is, honestly and faithfully, to put into practice the policy of the existing Government, or to resign. It is true that, in regard to details and procedures, the officials of the Bantu Education Department may and often will soften asperities, and apply Governmental policy with all possible tact and consideration. In matters of policy, however, they are the servants of the Government and have no authority in regard to almost any of the changes referred to in this article.

Nationalist South Africa which, in the Transvaal, ignored its obligations to Bantu education until forced to assume them by an alien power, which again tried in 1922, without success, to evade its obligations and throw the full financial onus on the people themselves, has returned to the attack. It can no longer evade all responsibility, nor can it make the Bantu assume total financial responsibility, but it appears to hope, with no great confidence and no very clearly defined goal, if not to sweep back, then at least to channel and to direct into more placid backwaters this great tidal wave which, for over a century has gradually but surely been gathering momentum.

It is a measure of the advance made by Bantu education that fifty years ago, the Nationalists and their forerunners regarded the educated African as an impossibility. Twenty years ago, with a ponderous apparatus of so-called intelligence tests which proved his general ineducability, they looked upon him as a freak. To-day they honour his ability by seeing in him a menace. Perhaps, in the next generation they will try to make him a partner and a friend—if it is not too late.

BANTU EDUCATION AND THE AFRICAN TEACHER

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IN dealing with a subject of this nature there is always present the temptation to enunciate a number of theories on education and,

in the light of these, to evaluate Bantu Education. It will serve our purpose better though, if mention is made of just one uncontroversial function of all education and then see how Bantu Education measures up to this generally accepted criterion. The educational system of any one country should aim at imbuing its products with a respect for, and a love of, the values and way of life held dear by its rulers. So far as the Union of South Africa is concerned, this way of life is the Western system of democracy or Christian capitalist civilisation. The type of education the State provides for all the children in the country should therefore be such that they are all equipped not only to appreciate this civilisation and thus play their part in stabilising it, but also to advance that social system. This shall be our point of departure for a discussion of Bantu Education.

Prior to the introduction of Bantu education there existed for the African section of the population what was then known as "Native" education. This "Native" education was characterised by the niggardliness with which the successive governments of the Union financed it, but it did not seek to inculcate in the African children a different set of values and outlook on life *vis-à-vis* children of European origin. It is true that African children were generally retarded by two grades or standards at the primary school stage, and that this inequality was continued up to the teacher training stage where there existed the "Native" Primary Lower and the "Native" Primary Higher Teachers' Certificates. In spite of this, however, education for Africans did not differ in content from that given the children of the other sections of the population, much less was it used as an undisguised instrument to instil in African children ideas of separateness or of their being an independent "race" with special qualities, abilities and aptitudes as distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of the country. Indeed in the field of general education, at the Secondary School and University levels, all education was the same. African students learnt much the same things as boys and girls in London or New York with, of course, minor local variations. But, according to Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs, who piloted the Bantu Education Bill through Parliament, this type of education was unsuitable for the African because it misled him by opening his eyes to "the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze", and fostered in the educated African "unhealthy white-collar ideals". For these reasons therefore, "Native" education had to be transformed into "Bantu"

education. It was to create a pseudo-scientific basis for the differentiation between education for Whites and that provided for the Blacks that the Commission on Native Education (popularly known as the Eiselen Commission) was appointed in 1949.

The Commission had for chairman none other than Dr. W. W. M. Eiselen, Secretary for Native Affairs, and one of the Nationalist Party's chief theoreticians on apartheid. At this stage we can do no better than reproduce the Commission's terms of reference together with part of the questionnaire it drew up and sent to individuals and organisations. The following were the terms of reference:

- (1) The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitudes, and their needs under the ever-changing social conditions are taken into consideration.
- (2) The extent to which the existing primary, secondary and vocational educational system for Natives and the training of Native teachers should be modified in respect of the contents and form of syllabuses, in order to conform to the proposed principles and aims and to prepare Natives more effectively for their future occupations.
- (3) The organisation and administration of the various branches of Native education.
- (4) The basis on which such education should be financed."

From the questionnaire we shall choose the following questions:

1. What do you consider should be the guiding principles of Native education?
3. What do you understand by the "racial characteristics" of the Native?
4. What are the special qualities and aptitudes of the Native?
5. In what way has the social heritage of the Native been determined by the characteristics referred to above?

We have quoted extensively from the Commission's terms of reference and questionnaire because these formed the basis of the system of Bantu education.

Among the bodies and organisations that gave both written and oral evidence before the Commission was the Cape African Teachers' Association (C.A.T.A.), the editor of whose publications the writer of this article is. In its memorandum C.A.T.A. completely rejected the idea of different educational systems for

the different ethnic groups as implied in the first question of the Commission's questionnaire. As against it, it posited what it considered should be the aims of all education. These it summed up as follows:

- (a) A sound education aims at the development of a whole and complete personality, i.e. it aims to develop the individual to his fullest capacity, mentally and physically.
- (b) It should enable him to take his place in the life of the community, i.e. fit him to earn his livelihood.
- (c) By basing his education on his interests and capacities, it should enable him to enjoy his leisure in the best possible way, i.e. it should develop his artistic capabilities.
- (d) It should make him capable of assuming the responsibilities of citizenship."

Continuing, the C.A.T.A. memorandum reached the very heart of the difference between itself and the apologists of the country's policy of apartheid or segregation when it said: "It is obvious from this that in any given State the aims of education must be the same for all its citizens, since there cannot be two or more kinds of citizenship within a State. Any such term, therefore, as 'Native Education' is untenable, because it immediately violates the very principles of education". This clear statement of C.A.T.A.'s stand on education later resulted not only in the dismissal of its members from teaching, but also led to their being victimised even after they had left government employ. Most of them have been virtually banned from entering industrial centres and seeking employment there. But we are anticipating events.

In 1951 the Commission completed its task. In 1952 the report was released. In the absence of all evidence that the African has qualities peculiar to himself as distinct from the rest of humanity, and despite the fact that he has been flung into the vortex of industrialism, the Commission recommended a different and inferior type of education for him, that the school should be an instrument for developing in him a tribal outlook. Further the commissioners felt that the control of African education should be transferred to a political department of State, so that it should be made to conform to the country's policy of apartheid. The local government of education was to be placed in the hands of illiterate chiefs and headmen who are, in fact, minor officers of the Native Affairs Department. A further principle recommended by the Commission was that the government vote on African education should progressively decrease in proportion to total expenditure, while

the parents of children at school, and in fact the whole community, were to be made to pay an ever increasing amount of money for the education of their children.

Meanwhile the government was going ahead with legislation to create machinery for carrying out the Commission's recommendations. So it was that in the same year the Bantu Authorities Act was passed. These "Authorities" are tribal organisations created by the government to act as its agencies in controlling and regimenting the social, political and intellectual lives of the Africans. As is to be expected, the central figure in each is the chief or headman who, as has already been said, is a petty officer of the Native Affairs Department. Whenever, then, Dr. Verwoerd claims that he has the support of the overwhelming majority of African leaders in the prosecution of his designs on African education, he refers to these illiterate chiefs who are in the pay of his Department.

At this stage readers are entitled to expect to be given a description of the working of the Bantu Education Act. Indeed, this article shall not have achieved its purpose if it does not show how vicious is this Act in its practical application. Nevertheless it is my opinion that a portrayal of the theoretical basis of the struggle between the protagonists of Bantu education, the head and officials of the N.A.D., on the one hand, and its chief opponents, the C.A.T.A. on the other, is necessary to a clearer understanding of the government's brutal actions. A further reason for this is that a number of church representatives who are opposed to the Bantu Education Act but not to Bantu education have confused the issue. They are concerned about their loss of control over the schools. To them the schools had been centres of proselytization. We are, however, not interested in the struggle of the Calvinists who have government backing versus the rest. To clear the mists therefore and place the incidents soon to be described in proper perspective, it will be necessary to quote some utterances by government spokesmen as well as give excerpts from resolutions passed by the C.A.T.A. at its conferences.

At its conference in Cape Town in 1952, C.A.T.A. passed a resolution on the Eiselen Commission Report that contained the following:

"Whereas it is the considered view of the C.A.T.A.:—

- (b) That the African has no 'special' qualities and aptitudes peculiar to himself and different from other human beings,
- (c) That the economic forces in S.A. have completely broken down the whole basis of the tribal system and that it is

not only fraudulent and reactionary, but also unrealistic and futile to attempt to revive tribalism through the agency of the schools or in any other manner,

Now, therefore this conference of C.A.T.A. :—

- (1) Rejects entirely the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission on 'Native' education.
- (2) Calls upon all Non-European teachers to organise the people and explain to them the recommendations of the report and the disastrous consequences of their application; particularly the proposed control of education by tribal authorities, the registration of schools along tribal lines, and the imposition of special 'Native' syllabuses and vernacular media of instruction, which are designed to limit the scope of African education in order to produce intellectually under-developed beings, with no hope of ever aspiring to, and claiming, opportunities and rights equal to those enjoyed by Europeans.
- (3) Warns the African people against the danger of accepting portions of the report which appear to be progressive, as all the recommendations are inseparably bound up with the fundamental aim of educating the African child for a subordinate position in Society."

Having accepted the report the Government, at the second session of the 1953 parliament, introduced the Bantu Education Bill. During the course of the debate the Minister of Native Affairs said: "When I have control of Native education I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them. . . . People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for Natives. . . . When my Department controls Native education it will know for what class of higher education a Native is fitted, and whether he will have a chance in life to use his knowledge." This was a declaration of war on C.A.T.A. The Bill became an Act. One of its clauses provided for the imprisonment of any teacher who broke any one of the regulations that would be drawn up in terms of the Act. In December of that same year the Executive of the C.A.T.A. convened a Union-wide conference of teachers to protest against the passing of the Bill. Dr. Eiselen, chief official of the N.A.D. and chairman of the notorious commission, in a statement to the press which was broadcast over the air, warned teachers not to attend the conference; accused the C.A.T.A. of being "against all order" and made very thinly veiled threats

against those who disregarded his warning. Except for a handful of militants from the Transvaal and Natal, the conference was attended mainly by C.A.T.A. members who, together with the Teachers' League of South Africa, a body of Coloured teachers, have been among the few to adopt a firm and principled stand against Bantu education.

Now the Bantu Education Act has been in operation for over a year. Among its first fruits was a set of regulations that deprive the teacher not only of his professional status, but even of the rights enjoyed by an unskilled dock worker. For one thing he cannot claim his annual increments as of right. These shall depend on the "willingness" of the Minister to make funds available. For another he is subject to all officers of the N.A.D., be they road overseers, agricultural officers, civil magistrates or inspectors of schools. The definition of "Officer" is given as "any one on the fixed establishment of the Department", i.e. any one permanently employed by the N.A.D. Further it is stipulated that "the whole of a teacher's time shall be at the disposal of the (School) Board".

During this year unbelievable things have happened. Before going on to mention some of these, however, I wish to state that my information is not second hand. I presided over the conferences that denounced what later came to be called "Eiselen Schooling". Subsequent to that I have been a senior member of the Executive of the C.A.T.A. It has therefore been my duty to keep informed on all developments in education in all possible parts of the country, though in this particular article I shall confine myself to the Cape Province.

The Bantu Education Act has been used in different ways in different situations, but always against the African people. For instance, in December, 1953, the Native Affairs Department closed down a school near East London, presumably because the inhabitants of that village had resisted the government's agricultural measures. This was the beginning of the reign of terror with the Act used as the guillotine. Whenever terror has to be struck in people there is always the inevitable witch-hunting and inquisition. This part was played by the Special (Political) Branch of the C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department). Soon after the promulgation of the Act, members of the Special Branch made it a point to attend all meetings of the branches of the C.A.T.A. Not only that, but they made the rounds visiting teachers at their schools, interrogating them about their political beliefs and affiliations and the teachers' organisation to which they belonged.

In August, 1954, armed police entered a number of schools and produced warrants to search the classrooms and the homes of teachers. I was one of those subjected to this outrageous treatment in the presence of my pupils. In one instance a certain teacher had his person searched in front of his class. The correspondence of leading members of the Association bore marks of having been tampered with, while letters took an inordinately long time to reach their destination. A number of C.A.T.A. publications were seized in passage. Still, in spite of Dr. W. W. M. Eiselen's insinuation that we were a body of anarchists, no grounds for prosecuting us have been found, nor were any of our members charged in terms of the very stringent school regulations.

Then followed the dismissal of five of the six office-bearers of the C.A.T.A. together with four other prominent members. *There was not even the semblance of a trial, nor were there any reasons advanced for their expulsion from teaching.* This was in September, 1955, and since then a batch of teachers is dismissed each school term. Among those dismissed have been leading members of the profession. The N.A.D. just declares them "unsuitable" and they are immediately dismissed. Among them are men who had reached pensionable age and who, did the government not carry on a personal vendetta against them, would have been retired on full pension, seeing that no charges had been preferred against them.

It has been suggested earlier that Bantu education is regarded by the rulers as a means of retribalising the Africans, with the express purpose of solving, even if temporarily, the problems that flow from the conflicts of capital and labour. It is in the light of this understanding that the persecution of the dismissed teachers makes sense. Three months after the expulsion from teaching of the first batch of C.A.T.A. members, one of them, who had the requisite qualifications, was offered employment as an accountant by an Insurance Company. In spite of representations by the managing director of the Company as well as by its legal advisor, the Labour Bureau of the East London City Council would not allow this man to enter the Municipal area. This was the first hint that the dismissed teachers were to be denied all means of livelihood. Events were soon to prove that there was a conspiracy to crush these already victimised men. Not long after this, the president of the C.A.T.A. was, on the intervention of the Magistrate of Willowvale, compelled to sell his property and leave the area where he had been principal of a school for thirteen years.

(In their relations with Africans, Magistrates are known as Native Commissioners and are officials of the Native Affairs Department.) Not only was this man forced out of hearth and home, but he was refused by the Native Affairs Department of the East London Municipal Council the right to reside in that city where the Company of which he is Director has its headquarters.

Information which had reached us at about this time was fully confirmed when the Port Elizabeth Municipal authorities refused two of the dismissed teachers who had been accepted by different firms of attorneys to serve articles under them, the right to reside in the city. At the time of writing, the case of one of them which has been taken on appeal to the Chief Native Commissioner for the Ciskei has not received favourable consideration. These are not the only cases. The writer also received similar treatment. In his case, no sooner did he enter the area under the jurisdiction of the East London Municipality than were members of the Special Branch of the C.I.D. busily inquiring how he had got there. Though he was in employment, the head of the East London Labour Bureau, accompanied by a constable of the N.A.D., came to his place of work to effect his arrest, but could not as he was lawfully employed. However, only a few days after members of the Special Branch had intimated that he would be sacked by his employers, he was in fact summarily dismissed. These facts need no comment. The connection between the persecution of Messrs. Mda, Honono, Mkentane, Maja and Sihlali (the men referred to), and their opposition to the Bantu Education Act, is far too obvious.

It is painful to an educator to see how even Inspectors of Schools live in fear of the Special Branch. One is reminded of a certain inspector who with fear peeping through his eyes and a trembling in his voice related how he had been questioned by the Special Branch as to why he had recommended for permanent appointment a teacher who had just returned from a C.A.T.A. conference last year. It is heartbreaking to see these educational authorities tied down to routine clerical work and unable to visit the schools under their supervision. (One would like to believe that they are glad of this because what they would be required to enforce there should in the natural run of things go against their consciences as educationists.) But it is still more painful to see the work of a lifetime disrupted in one fell stroke as happened at the beginning of this year, when all the old teachers in one school and some in many others in the Willowvale district in the Transkei, were transferred from their schools simply because it was suspected that

they were sympathetically inclined to C.A.T.A. One of them had been principal of his school for thirty years, during which period he had raised his school from Standard II to Standard VIII. But then this is the Bantu Education Act in practice.

Considerations of space do not permit us to make even a passing comment on the debasement of education as illustrated by the new syllabuses. We do not have the time to show how standards are being deliberately lowered through the employment of people who on educational and moral grounds ought never to have been allowed to set their feet in our classrooms; nor can we allow ourselves a discussion of the tragedy which is now and again enacted when hundreds and even thousands of children are drawn out of the schools and thrown on to the streets. We would like to tell the world of how determined attempts are made to change the nature and quality of such world-famed places of learning as Lovedale and Healdtown and how it is intended to obliterate even the memory of these shrines of African education. And now the octopus stretches out its tentacles to strangle even university education. But enough has surely been said to show the drift of things and the rest may safely be left to the imagination of the reader.

PASSES AND POLICE

DR. H. J. SIMONS

A POPULAR ragtime, sung with great gusto by concert troupes and received with never-failing enthusiasm by location audiences, is attributed to such well-known composers as Caluza and Sidiyo. It is more likely one of those folk songs that well out of a people's daily and bitter experience, and act as a catharsis. The song goes:

Nantso i-pick-up-van.

Manje sikwenze nto ni, Pick-up Van?

Ngapha nangapha yipick-up van.

Manje sikwenze nto ni, Pick-up Van?¹

and usually ends in a refrain shouted by the audience: "Waar's jou pas, jong?"

One hundred and fifty years of experience have built up in the

¹ There is the pick-up van.

Now, what have we done to you, Pick-up Van?

All around us are pick-up vans.

Now, what have we done to you, Pick-up Van?