

EDUCATION BEYOND APARTHEID

by Edgar H. Brookes

This intriguing title indicates the Report of the Education Commission of Spro-Cas. It and Percy Itzler's fascinating cover design are alone worth the cost of the book. But there is much more than that to it. This is the first complete Commission Report of Spro-cas, the previous publications, however good, being only "working papers" expressing the view of those who wrote them and not necessarily those of Spro-cas as a whole.

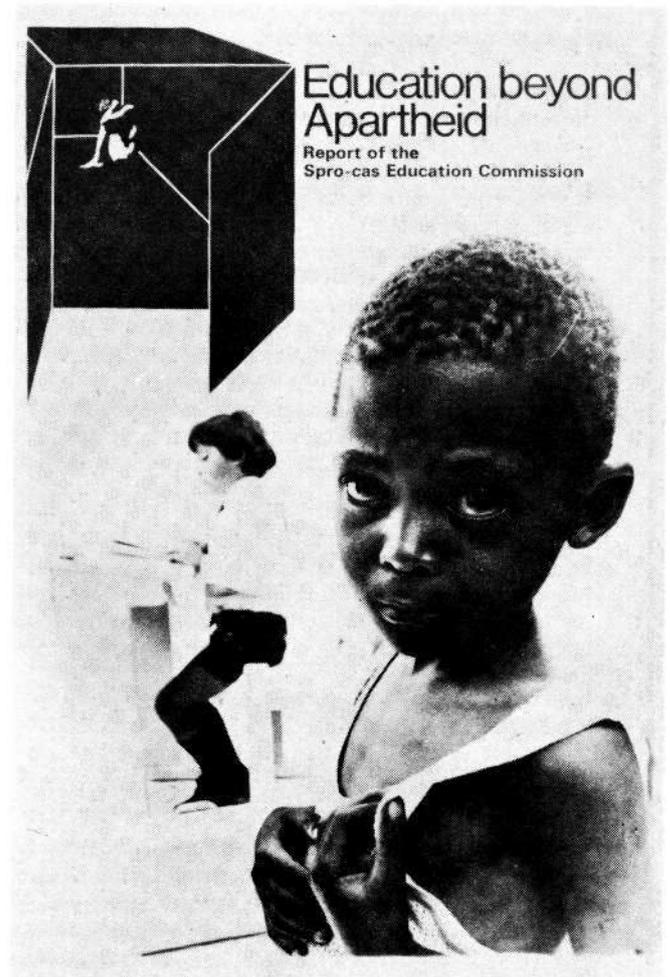
It is all the more interesting therefore to observe the arrangement by which Christian idealism is reconciled with practical politics. The far-off ideal is indicated, in Paragraph 8.10 (iv) as "the final stage at which all State institutions would cater for all people". This is explicit enough, but some Liberals may regret that it is not stressed more fully and that it is given only in outline. At the same time all of us will be grateful for the wisdom shown by the Commission in enumerating a list of reforms which could take place even within the ideology of apartheid.

This list, given in Paragraph 8.6, is worthy of careful study. It embodies nearly all the practical changes asked for by the Africans themselves or their friends, and it is not an unrealistic programme; all the expenditure demanded by it would only increase educational expenditure to a little over 5 per cent of the national income, as compared with 6.8 per cent in the United Kingdom, 6.4 per cent in the United States, 9.6 per cent in Canada, 5.6 per cent in Kenya and 7.8 per cent in Zambia. It means diverting only a small proportion of our excessive defence and internal security expenditure to more positive ends. The Commission recommends the phased introduction of six years of universal compulsory education, the expansion of secondary education especially near the students' homes, the increased financing of African education from general revenue, the reduction (how sorely needed!) of the pupil-staff ratio in African Schools, and the eventual elimination of double sessions and the "platoon" system in all schools. Somewhat surprisingly the re-introduction of School feeding does not figure in this list.

VERY HEAVY ONUS

Not one of these recommendations necessitates a departure from the system of educational apartheid, yet what a wonderful difference their adoption would make! A very heavy onus rests on supporters of apartheid to accept them: to refuse would be really indefensible.

In Chapter IV of the Report a full study is made of educational principles and practices unacceptable to the enlightened Christian conscience. It is a formidable list. Among the principles thus condemned are the denial of access to any existing state educational institution on the grounds of race, religion, culture or language alone, the idea that an economically disadvantaged group would provide its own educational facilities largely from its own resources, and the deliberate use of the educational system to indoctrinate children with the belief that apartheid is the only acceptable policy for South Africa. They say



(Para 4.14) "No Church School, or other private school which claims to have a Christian basis, may deny admission to any child on the grounds of his racial classification alone" Governing bodies of Church Schools, please note.

The Report is concluded by a lengthy and most valuable analysis of Christian National Education.□