

rigid censorship: human freedom mattered more than party interest:

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness . . . Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read . . . Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

#### IDEAL BOARD

It was recently suggested that the ideal censorship board would comprise Socrates and Bertrand Russell, Lawrence for novels, Shelley for poetry Ibsen and Shaw for drama. Attractive though this "ideal" group is, it still maintains an outside body controlling and supervising individual freedom, and in any event, a panel so constituted can only be a dream. Most boards are made of lesser men with specific affiliations politically. For them, moral responsibility means scrupulous deference to those laws that delimit, so we can feel protected, insisting that their formulations alone chart the actual and may be taken as real. I deny their claim: it's a weird view of morality, and of human destiny generally,

that works by avoidance and default rather than by choice. In the end it raises to perennial dilemma of liberal tolerance versus doctrinal infallibility. The greater the variety, the greater the potentiality for change, richness, and growth "Expect poison from the standing water" for "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom". By removing certain things, censorship seeks to adjudicate over our growth. It claims to prevent evil, but perpetuates evil itself, since its notion or moral excellence is bogus and *parti pris*. Imagine a garden with certain essentials removed,—the receiving of contrasts of light and shade, little water, and so on, and imagine that every plant couldn't bear its flower. It's a crude analogy, but it illustrates the grotesque unfulfilled condition of the stunted growth of the mind.

#### IMAGINATION

For Milton, "books promiscuously read" give an insight into the reality of Good and Evil. But their value goes further; the imagination is not only the great creative faculty, but also a central force in society: Shelley perhaps expressed it most powerfully:

"The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or persons not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination . . ."

Authoritarian, politically motivated censorship is no instrument of moral defence, but an attack on the central principles or morality itself. Abdicate your right to think and choose, and you abdicate your humanity.

The choice, fittingly enough, is yours. □

---

# ASSECA

## — A MIGHTY ADVENTURE

A REPORT ON THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ADVANCEMENT OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA.

by M.T. Moerane (President)

"ASSECA is the biggest thing happening in South Africa, my greatest disappointment would be if it should fail".

This is an evaluation by a Director of one of the most powerful efforts for race relations in this country.

Mr. J.W. Nxumalo, Executive Officer for Education in the Kwazulu Government in a Graduation oration at Ngoye in May spoke about the disparity in funds for Black and White education.

While the Government spends R248 per white child only R17 at best is spent on the black child. As a result in a complex like Soweto about 500 extra classrooms are needed to cope with the number eager to get education. The classrooms that are available need equipment, in some cases even basic furniture such as benches and desks. By and large they are overcrowded as many as 70 students forming one class even at matriculation level.

## DOUBLE – SESSION SYSTEM

Over 3 million African pupils attend our schools today. Accommodation for the majority of these, who are in the lower primary levels, is achieved by the "double-session" system. The teacher takes charge of a hundred or more pupils divided into the morning and afternoon sessions. Thus the same teacher and the same classroom accounts for twice the usual number of pupils.

The teachers' salaries are low and their standard of qualification is on the average low.

The failure rate, especially in matriculation as well as the drop-out rate after Standard 11, is high.

What do you do to meet these crying needs, especially in a country where the Central Government disclaims responsibility for the full and free education of the African Children?

## LAUNCHING

Four years ago the African people launched ASSECA dedicated to the objectives of:

- a) Getting every African child to school.
- b) Getting them to receive the best education by improving the school facilities, conditions and qualifications of the teachers.
- c) Mobilising the participation of the African people in the task of taking responsibility for African Education.
- d) Promoting the social development of the African people.

ASSECA'S purpose has been to release a force in this country which would cope with these crying needs. How far we are succeeding can be seen in the fact that whereas we started with one branch in Johannesburg four years ago, to-day we have nineteen in three provinces. Three more in Clermont, Durban and Pietermaritzburg are to be established in the fourth province of Natal.

For the first time in recent years, in 1971 we were able to accommodate all the students who needed admission to secondary education in Soweto. We were able to get the Education Department to give grants to enable secondary schools to be run in temporary premises.

## T.E.A.C.H.

The "Star" newspaper, responding to our campaign, has launched the magnificent TEACH EVERY AFRICAN CHILD programme. They challenged employers of African labour to contribute R10 per employee to a fund to build schools in Soweto. To date the fund has reached the R150 000 mark and three big schools have been erected in

Soweto in the last few months. One other newspaper is taking on a similar programme in another province.

At our first Annual General Meeting in 1970 we said that the people of South Africa and men of goodwill round the world would not sit unconcerned while our children needed education. Our faith has been vindicated. The Polaroid Corporation and the Pepsi Cola Company of America have launched a Scholarship Trust. The American South African Study and Educational Trust (ASSET) with an annual contribution of R74 000 enables about 1 000 students annually to attend Post Secondary and University Colleges. South African Breweries contributes R15 000 annually for the educational needs of pupils in the Eastern Cape region. More and more companies are contributing assistance to our cause.

Our branches themselves tackle educational and cultural problems locally and assist more and more students to further their education and build up community effort.

One big national project we are undertaking, with the assistance of Teachers Associations and other groups, is the raising of a R1 million Fund from our 15 million people.

This year we were able to bring to this country Mr. Ray Wilkins the Black Civil Rights leader of the NAACP from the United States. We plan to bring another such figure to our National Annual Education Conference early in 1973. The visits provide an invaluable link with the outside world.

We have mentioned only some of the activities of ASSECA by way of example. But the whole of African education and all that is pertinent thereto is our field of education. Indeed eventually we aim to take over Bantu Education.

Culturally we mean to establish the people's Community Centres in the main centres of our country. These shall form the hub of the life of our communities, radiating culture and creative activities in self-help efforts.

We are building a new proud, self reliant, dynamic and purposeful society.

Our Five Year Plan provides for:

- a) Achievement of placing every African child in school.
- b) Youth and leadership training.
- c) Research endowments for research training scholarships in the fields of Pedagogy, History, Commerce Social Development, Administration, Co-operatives, Cultural disciplines, Communication.

We must raise the leadership to build the new society. We must mobilise men of goodwill to help us help ourselves. It is a mighty adventure. □