

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

In his article on "Bantu Education and the African Teacher" Mr. Sihlali states the dilemma of the African teaching profession ably but, in my opinion, with a sense of exclusiveness which even the title does not warrant. In particular the statement that: "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 . . . have been among the few to adopt a firm and principled stand against Bantu Education" (my emphasis), gives the unknowing reader a completely false impression of the exact nature and extent of the protest with which Bantu Education was met.

True, Mr. Sihlali is concerned with the African teacher, but is it not possible, in fact desirable, to conceive of his role as being but one in a process involving the whole community? In African education in particular, I believe that no objective assessment of the real meaning and effect of Bantu Education can be arrived at unless something is said, even in passing, of the attacks on and stands taken by the African National Congress, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Liberal Party and last, but by no means least, those "creators" of African education, the Christian missions.

The stand of the Roman Catholics to retain full control of all their schools (some 800) at all costs; of the American Board Mission not to hand over Adams High and Industrial School, though Ministerial discretion has now deemed it fit to order closure, (after more than 100 years devoted service to the African community); of the Community of the Resurrection to close St. Peter's, the "Eton" of African education; of the Diocese of Johannesburg to close twenty-three schools rather than lease them to the Government are surely all "firm and principled" stands?

What of the boycott of many thousands of school children organized by the African National Congress in Benoni, Brakpan, Germiston and Western Areas? Seven thousand of these children did not return to school despite the Minister's severe warning and their future education is in a state of balance awaiting the Minister's power to forgive! What of the calling of a very large representative conference by the Institute of Race Relations to protest against the Bantu Education Commission Report of 1952 on which the Act is based? What of the strong protests of the Joint African Advisory Boards and the Liberal Party? Can it be honestly claimed that these are not all "principled" stands?

Whilst in full agreement with Mr. Sihlali's condemnation of the new

system and its effect on African teachers, the really sinister aspect of this whole vicious scheme cannot be truly understood unless one knows that it involves not simply the victimization of individual teachers, but of whole groups, educational institutions and the African community itself. Education from now on must become a tool in the implementation of our "broad national policy". This policy is based on the assumption that there is no multi-racial society in South Africa, but a series of well-defined and separate societies each to have its own particular brand of education. For the African, education is to become no more than a Bantu Vocational Training Scheme!

Violaine Junod,

DURBAN.

Sir,

Re Fenner Brockway's assertion that the multiple vote is dangerous—tripe! Surely he realizes that an unqualified universal franchise would spell the death of democracy in Central and East Africa as much as it did in Germany, Russia and nearly did in Italy. The fact that in the U.K. so many people vote Conservative and Labour without any reasons other than class or emotional ones is sufficient to show that in a so-called politically mature country even, the population is scarcely capable of exercising the vote responsibly.

Even more so in Central and East Africa—the crucial thing is that there should be no race discrimination in opportunities for attaining the heights, socially, politically, economically and morally.

Disputes, friction, class—these are endemic to human society. The evil lies in basing things upon a false distinction like race or colour. This applies to the multiple vote, as does the necessity for preserving the stability essential to the growth of democracy. The least that can be said about education, income, property, occupational attainment, etc., is that they do provide some sort of guide to a man's capabilities, character, intelligence or whatever—colour does not.

But to say that the populations of Central and East Africa are ready for universal franchise is sheer silliness.

We have enough trouble with stupid strikes—designed, by the look of them, to convince the Central African European that the African is incapable of behaving responsibly—without people like Fenner Brockway needling and then flitting off back to England to the security of squabbles between two trade unions over who should bore holes in ships!

B. J. H. Blancharde,

BULAWAYO.