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**BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT OF AZANIA**

**The Education Debate – Our View**

The theory of scientific socialism consistently teaches us that, when we look at any phenomenon, whether big or small, we must always see and appreciate the difference between the thing itself in its entirety and the parts that make it up; it teaches us to carefully study the inner composition and workings of the thing itself and its relationship with other things outside of it. In short, our approach towards things, be they animate or inanimate, must be broad, objective and all-sided as opposed to a narrow, biased and one-sided approach. This is the scientific method of approach to and solution of problems. Using this method, we shall now proceed to look at the question of the so called national educational crisis.

Is there a "national educational crisis" prevailing in the country today?

In our view, a national educational crisis can be said to obtain when the following basic conditions prevail:

1. When the preponderant majority (if not all) of the student and pupil population rejects Bantu Education to the extent that they refuse to go to school unless and until the present hated system of education has been scrapped and replaced by another;

2. When the vast majority of the teachers refuse to continue in the employ of the present authorities not only because they support the students but mainly because they themselves are convinced that the system must go and are therefore committed to the struggle for its complete and thorough destruction;
3. When the overwhelming majority of the suffering masses understand the nature of the problem of education and link it with the other social problems facing them and therefore actively and consciously support and encourage the students in their struggles;
4. When the oppressors have completely lost the initiative in the matter and it has become abundantly clear to them that there is very little, if anything at all, they can do about the matter.

In a word, we can only talk about a national educational crisis when the system has been rendered unworkable. Since these main conditions have not yet been fulfilled, we therefore categorically and correctly aver that there is no national educational crisis prevailing in the country today. Before we part our lips to solemnly proclaim a "national educational crisis", before we hastily establish a National Education Crisis Committee and self-righteously declare it the sole and authentic representative of the grievances of the students, we must first

seriously strive for the fulfilment of these conditions. And more, viewed from the standpoint of the country as a whole, it is as clear as noonday, even unto a simpleton, that the school boycotts are sporadic and not concerted throughout the country. Such is the case in each of the four provinces: in the OFS as a whole there are no sustained boycotts; in the Cape Province, such concerted boycotts are only limited to Port Elizabeth and the surrounding small towns, even there, this does not apply to all the schools; in Natal the boycotts were mainly confined to Umlazi and Pietermaritzburg; in the Transvaal one cannot speak about any sustained and concerted school boycotts except for a few schools in Soweto and Mamelodi. This bird's-eye-view of the country clearly shows that there exist no grounds at all for any sane person to talk about a "national educational crisis" in the country let alone the establishment of the committee of the same name. It is when we look at this issue from this angle that we clearly see how some people mistake a part for the whole - what is happening in Soweto is happening in the whole country!

By requesting ("demanding" if you like) that the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING be handed over to them, and promising that only then will the "national educational crisis" be resolved, the NECC has completely revealed its whole hindquarters for all to see and betrayed its ignorance of the actual problem in education - it

fails miserably to comprehend how the education question links up with the other social problems in the struggle for self-determination and national liberation, for, the education question cannot find any final solution for as long as settler-colonialism persists. So therefore, the final solution of the education problem can only be ushered in by the total national social emancipation and not by the handing over of the DET by the NP and its acceptance by the NECC. This request of the NECC exposes their naked quest and yearning for inclusion in the NP government. What else?

The question of education must be seen and treated in its own right, it is true; but it must also be seen and linked up with all the other aspects of our oppression. For a national education crisis to obtain, both the subjective considerations and objective conditions must be ripe. That is to say, the people must be consciously determined to wreck the system and also, the material conditions must just no longer be able to carry the system forward - they must just be at the point of tottering. The political, economic, social and cultural forces of the masses must reinforce the students struggles. In other words, mass organisations and mass actions must be coordinated. Student organisations, parents' and teachers' associations must act together - but not necessarily all focusing at one question, the education question. However, it is clear that the students, teachers and parents

must cooperate and coordinate their actions on this question. So therefore, it is wrong for the students to harass and intimidate the teachers; it is wrong for them to try and bully the parents. The students must correctly understand their role in the struggle. They should not confuse student politics with the politics for national liberation, hence the ill-fated and disreputed slogan: } Liberation now, Education later! And from there all they do is mostly loot and burn, and indiscriminately destroy the properties of the masses. } As youth, the students must understand that:

"In our struggle for liberation, which is a struggle to establish a socialist Azania, black youth enter the struggle as cadres, militants and catalysts and not as leaders of the revolutionary process, for, in the struggle to establish a socialist Azania the leadership of the struggle is a monopoly of the working class.

"Although they may physically appear to be the leaders of the struggle, the fact of the matter is that they cannot objectively become the vanguard of the revolutionary process, for the long term content and direction of the revolutionary struggle is primarily influenced and determined by the historical base in the black working class and not by the youth."

The reactionary sentiment that schools must be boycotted until liberation day does not enjoy the popular support of the students, teachers and the broad masses of our people now, therefore it must be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. It is only those parents whose children attend posh private white schools and who sit in the

NECC who encourage this misdirected notion, who enjoy the embarrassment of being told by a racist judge that their children enjoy the comfort and safety of white schools.

In order to bring about a real crisis in this field, we must engage ourselves in patient politicisation, relentless organisation and fullscale mobilisation of the three main and relevant sections of our people: the students, teachers and parents. We should never bully the people, we must patiently explain everything we do to the masses.

That is the correct way to go about revolutionary work among the people, otherwise the dictum "liberation is the act of the people themselves" becomes traversed. In order to politicise the masses we need an advanced political movement espousing a revolutionary theory and ideology and not a liberal reformist movement; and in order to organise and mobilise the masses we need militant and revolutionary cadres and not arrant left-wing extremists.

It is imperative therefore that in addition to the student organisations which already exist that teachers' and parents' associations be formed as a matter of urgency and, they must be imbued with a revolutionary theory. These three sections of the community, to a great extent can ably, adequately and satisfactorily handle all questions relating to the education problem to the best of their interests. We therefore call upon the revolutionary student movement to oppose all methods and style of



work which only help to retard the struggle by antagonising and alienating the masses from the revolutionary process. The students must completely divest themselves of the mistaken notion that they know all; they must accept that they have a lot to learn from the masses.

Let us conclude by casting a quick glance at the boycott action and the grievances advanced by the students in the affected areas in the past two years. First, the boycott action: a boycott action is a form of struggle, it is a weapon, an instrument if you like. And we struggle in order to advance our cause and we use our weapons to hit at the enemy. If, however, a method of struggle does not help to advance but on the contrary retards the progress of our cause, then we must change that method or simply throw it overboard; if the weapons we use hurt us rather than the enemy, we must certainly cast them away. Some of the demands which have been raised by the students have been acceded to, others not. Then what must be done? Continue with the boycott? Certainly not. That would be like hitting our heads against the wall. We must stop to evaluate the progress. Yes we must. And we must realise that the revolution in Azania does not revolve around the question of education and school boycotts and therefore if the school boycotts are discontinued the revolution will not be lost. No, not at all. The real issue around which the revolution revolves is the land question in the first place, and the equitable redistribution of the wealth and resources of our country

In the second place. There are surely other methods of tackling educational problems, boycott is not the one and only way out. Those who advocate and agitate for the indefinite class boycotts are the same authors of the ill-fated slogan: Liberation now, Education later! The slogan itself tells us much about the grey matter of its authors. The indefinite boycott of classes and examinations is totally counter productive and unacceptable and must therefore be opposed and combatted at all costs.

So, BACK TO SCHOOL!!

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