

Schooling

“An Education that is Universal”

SY MOYA

AFRICANS WHO LIVE in urban areas are nearly completely westernised, and about half of those who live in the rural areas still cling to their old tribal traditions and customs. Thus there is a need of modern and scientific education. But by advocating a modern type of education one may be regarded a “saboteur” by the Government.

We all know that the aim of education depends on the conditions of society. The ideals of education, therefore, have been changing, so that education should prepare a student for the needs of society. During the 4th Century B.C. the aim of education in Greece was to produce full-fledged citizens so that they could be able to run the affairs of the state well. During the beginning of the Renaissance in Italy the aim of education, according to Vittorino, one of the most important educationists of his time, was a harmonious, simultaneous development of mind, body and morals. But mostly he emphasised the practical and social side of individuals.

Looking at the aims of Bantu Education one is forced to conclude that the school has become a microcosm of old and tribal society. Instead of being taught about the “Space Age”, an African child is being driven back to the “Jungle Age”. Handwork and manual labour enjoy more hours than any other subject in the “Bantu” schools. Bantu Education, in fact, retards rather than accelerates our progress towards a modern society.

Let our education prepare us for life.

Rather than kill the ambition of an African child towards learning, the educational system of the future should encourage him by preparing the individual student for successful participation in the industrial and social activities of his fellow-men.

From the rich heritage of past civilisations, the pilots of our education will learn truths as old as the earth itself, which will guide them to choose for us an education that is universal—not an educational system

*The pleasures of the night are gone:
Jou liggaam was my liefdesbron.
Saad van plesier is wyd gesaai:
The arduous hours went gently by.*

*Jou speeksel was my blyheidsous:
Completeness flowed from limbs held close.
Each permutation fresh to tell
Die gloei van jou gevelede vel.*

*Vreugde sal altyd moet verdwyn:
Lovers must separate again.
Resignedly I contemplate
My tydelike eensaamheid.*

ROBIN FARQUHARSON

of indoctrination or education based on political expediency or individual ambition.

Education is mainly a process of selection—an acceptance of the true and a rejection of the false and the wrong. God, the greatest of teachers, offered to the first school of man and woman in Paradise a good lesson. He brought to their minds the type of behaviour that would lead them to eternal life. The alternative being destruction. Then He left them to make their own choice.

To be allowed to use this right of choice is liberal, but to be denied it, is indoctrination and brain-washing.

THE AFRICAN YOUTH OF TODAY in South Africa is allowed no such alternative. From the haphazard information they collect from newspapers and books they find themselves in the ruthless cross-roads of two main schools of ideas—the teachings of the East and the West. But, alas, what makes everything worse, the exponents of these philosophies of life have not found it enough to use the strong weapons of powerful radio transmitters and glossy magazines. It has not been enough to buy the allegiance of the rest of the world with economic and military aid. Some of them have recently had to resort to a fifty-megaton bomb in order to scare the rest of us into a submissive acceptance of their way of life. Such tactics fail. They are too wild. God Himself avoided the folly of coercing Adam and Eve into choosing the way of life He would have them choose.

In order to determine the international balance of power it appears our continent will have to swing either to the West or to Communism. It is very regrettable that at this critical moment, educationally and economically, we are not at all well-equipped. Socially, we have not developed a philosophy that enjoys respect among the other nations of the world. This, I think, is through the “intellectually and spiritually harassing contradictions between deed and dogma” indulged in daily by some of those whose faith we have come to embrace.

We learn that the White man’s prisons are filled to capacity with the Black masses that have differed with him in opinion. Yet no man has the right to think for others, and a man who gives up his right to think for himself is damnable and scorned by the rest of the world.

As education is a “continuous process of growth”, and whatever hardships that may come our way, we can never panic. Most individuals in a sense welcome these crises. By the threats they constitute, they stimulate us intellectually and spiritually. We and our children must aim at sharing the pain of constructive struggle and the resultant comfort. We must be ready to live and let live, but neither in compulsory uniformity or artificial diversity.

What we, as Africans, will one day gladly accept is a type of education that will equip us fully in heart and mind to play important roles in the shaping of the fate, not only of the African people, but of mankind as a whole. ●

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