

Marx and Engels was such an eloquent protest, ought not to be permitted in African society. On any rational view this is the policy best calculated to prevent the tensions, the iniquities and the injustices that accompanied industrialisation in Western Europe. Moreover a policy like this would have a lot to recommend it from the point of view of consideration for humanity, a consideration that should be dear to the heart of every African for Africans have most to gain from it. But this is anathema to the Marxist, for to him one cannot, in the words of Joyce Cary, "argue with the Dialectic."

We must allow stratification in African society; we must produce a bourgeois to be butchered at the Revolution; we must produce a landless and property-less proletariat to smash up the state, which is to be set up in the Marxism sense, and usher in the millennium of the classless society; for all these are the injunction of the Dialectic and they all have to be carried out if true humanity is to be realised.

SINCE THE DIALECTIC IS INFALLIBLE it has also to determine the attitude of Marxists to African nationalists and nationalist movements. We have seen that on the theory of historical materialism, the period of dis-imperialism is the period of the decay of capitalism and therefore the time during which the working-class step into inheritance. When the Marxist therefore comes face to face with a nationalist movement in Africa which is not a working-class movement or not led by working-class people or avowed Marxists he is apt to look upon the movement and the leaders with suspicion if not with outright contempt: he takes them simply to be the stooges of imperialism.

In 1954, for example, Dr. Potekhin maintained that Nkrumah and the C.P.P. were facades behind which the Imperialists continued to rule the Gold Coast.

They were, in other words, not true nationalists who really wanted freedom for their country. At the moment there is a split among the Marxists in their attitude towards non-working class nationalists, who, it must be admitted, are clearly in a majority. The Chinese are not in a mood to water down the purity of Marxist doctrine. They rigidly stick to the doctrine, following the Engels, Lenin and Stalin, that it is only when the working classes have taken over political power that colonial territories will be liberated. From this the Chinese conclude that there is no reason to tolerate the bourgeois nationalists for a day. The Chinese Marxists are therefore in a state of permanent antagonism towards the present non-working class nationalists alike in Africa and in Asia. The Russian Marxists, however, have changed their tactics. They are prepared to countenance bourgeois or non-working class nationalists. This change came over the Russians with the Bandung Conference when it became quite clear that the non-working class nationalists can also be sincere anti-imperialists. But it must be stressed that the Russians merely tolerate these nationalists only so long as there is no effective working-class leadership or Marxist leadership. They have not abandoned for a moment their belief in the ultimate communist or Marxist victory which will usher in the reign of the working-class, and ultimately the universal millennium of a classless society. ●

My First Five Years

Encounters with a School Principal

J. AMIE

WHEN ONE LEAVES University to take up a teaching post in a high school one enters a new and exciting world. Firstly, one has to adapt oneself to routine schoollife which differs markedly from the carefree life of campus. One feels a sense of exhilaration in contemplating the receipt of one's first official cheque, although this feeling is sadly tempered by the realisation that the particular amount to be received will be exactly R60 per month less than that to be received by one's former fellow-students who had written the very same examinations as oneself, but who happened to have a fairer pigmentation of skin. Then there is the serious matter of appearing regularly before an audience of students and trying to convey facts, ideas and concepts to them. Not to mention the prospects of working together professionally and extra-murally with fellow-teachers and a principal. How would things turn out? I did not have long to wait . . .

On the very first day of school towards the end of January, 1959, a staff meeting was held where the principal welcomed new staff and generally spoke about the school and its administration. At this meeting the teachers received timetables on which appeared the subjects and classes to which they had been allotted. To my surprise, I noticed that I had one class for religious instruction.

Now, I am a scientific humanist and can never agree to teaching religious instruction.

That evening I delivered a letter to the principal in which I requested to be exempt from any religious duties on the grounds of conscientious objections, for which the Ordinance makes provision. While reading my letter the principal was visibly shaken and told me bluntly that if he had known that I had "atheistic" ideas he would never have appointed me. My educational qualifications seemed to be of no importance.

He would have to raise the matter with his circuit inspector and would let me know the outcome. But what, he asked, would happen if they could not accommodate me? I knew that an adjustment to the timetable was possible, so refused to reply, leaving the problem entirely to him.

J. AMIE is a nom-de-plume.

AFTER ABOUT TEN DAYS I was summoned into the principal's office. He looked very sour-faced, had his usual authoritative air about him and asked me to sit down. He said he and the inspector had gone into my request, which in his long experience of teaching was foreign and extraordinary. He never expected such things from a new and young teacher.

Then followed a long sermon on the evils of writing letters as forms of protest, request or redress. A letter like mine was a dangerous thing, since it could later be used against me. He himself preferred the tried-and-tested method of verbal presentation. If I had presented my case verbally to him, he would have interrupted time and again, as he was wont to do. The written request was the best way of getting him to hear my case fully.

Then on to my request. The circuit inspector had also been very surprised at such a request, and he, too, was a man of many years of experience. They might have to raise the issue in the local school board, with probably dire consequences for me.

The school board, I knew, consisted almost entirely of Dutch Reformed Church predikants who were all Christian National Education exponents. I preferred not to consider what their attitude to me would be . . . I could discern a pattern in what the principal was saying. He was obviously trying to intimidate me by quoting the dismay and ire of a hierarchy of authorities from himself upwards.

Continued the principal: My request was technically speaking a form of insubordination, for I was voluntarily opposing the wishes of the principal. If every teacher was to raise objections against instructions for this or that reason, what would happen to school authority, school discipline, school organisation? Was I aware that I was treading on very, very thin ice, and that for any teacher,

but especially the new and young such a course was fraught with the greatest of dangers? He was obviously warming to his self-appointed double role of prosecutor and judge.

As he had said before, he continued, my case was one of insubordination and as such warranted a departmental inquiry. A panel of investigators could come to the school to hear the case or a meeting could be arranged at the departmental offices. (He paused here so that his words should have the effect he had envisaged. However, I was undeterred by this display of authoritative-ness.) Then looking me sternly into the face like a grand old uncle, he continued: But, in view of my youth, they had thought fit to show some kindness and leniency and would not proceed with my case. I, however, had to remember that the principal had the highest authority at a school and that insubordination was a very serious matter. I would not have to give R.I. or take part in any S.C.A. work. But I had to see that the pupils said the "Our Father" regularly at the start and at the end of every day. That, after all, was the rule of the school. I could go . . .

BEFORE STARTING TO TEACH I had an idealised conception of principals, their principles and relationship with their assistants. For one, I naively thought that a staff meeting was a meeting where members of the staff could freely discuss and deliberate matters concerning the welfare of the school. I innocently thought that decisions would only be arrived at after a careful consideration of all the issues concerned by the whole staff. However, as with so many other matters, I was very soon to be sadly disillusioned. Staff meetings were generally meetings where one man was the principal speaker. Discussion became taboo, opposition

A F R I C A N A

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● "Complaints about the bus service are legion and not confined to any one part of the city," he said . . . "A shortage of drivers is the main cause of this." . . . "Does it not seem absurd that it cannot be rectified because job reservation regulations demand that only 16% of the drivers be non-white?" Europeans did not want this sort of job, probably because of the working in shifts, on weekends and on public holidays. "If this is so why cannot the proportion

of non-whites to whites be increased to 33 1/3%?" Mr. Peters asked. — The Mayor of Cape Town, Mr. W. J. Peters, *Cape Argus*.

● Dr. Verwoerd was accompanied by his driver and his personal body-guard, both of whom willingly busied themselves with tasks on board. They, too, enjoyed themselves and were described as "good chaps".

In fishermen's language that means that they were good company and that they fitted in well. — *Cape Times* [P.F.]

● BEHAVIOUR AND SPIRIT OF RESIDENTS. Except for crime in general, over which the Board's administration has no control, an attitude of respect

and obedience is evinced towards the Board's administration — *Native Resettlement Board Annual Report 1961-2*, on Meadowlands (published 1964). [R.L.]

● Mrs. S. Heller, Burg Street, Cape Town: My husband was attacked recently in a Cape Town street by a group of non-whites. The attackers were not hooligans, but were prepared and waiting for a White victim.

Not one of the hundreds of people milling around aided my husband who, ironically, is a friend of the Coloureds.

Even now he pays rent for a couple who otherwise would be ejected. He has given cups for Coloured competitions, and has helped Coloured business men to avoid bankruptcy. He takes no part in politics.

Can anyone be surprised that a government that keeps law and order gets the votes when elections come?

Sunday Times [H.H.]

was unheard of, the rational discussion of principles and issued involved appeared to be regarded as a deadly sin. The principal would normally issue instructions, preach, and say that he had decided. He had so many years of experience as a teacher and principal that he knew best. If anyone dared to question him or query something, he would either rave about disloyalty and impertinence, or tell us that there were other schools for those who did not like conditions at *his* school. At other times he would threaten that he had only to lift the telephone receiver and he would be in direct contact with higher authority. And this was no idle boast, either. As quite a few victimised teachers can testify . . .

AT THIS PARTICULAR SCHOOL, weekly assembly was held every Thursday morning. After the normal religious ceremony, the principal would address the assembled pupils and staff. At times he would rave and shout at the children as though they were dogs. Apparently he had first hand evidence that many of them never washed regularly, some never told the truth, and that others just stayed away from school as their fancies dictated. He could not understand them, could not fathom their curious behaviour. They were unlike "White" children, whom he idealised.

The manner in which the principal addressed his fellow-teachers in front of the students could only be described as uncouth and downright boorish. It sometimes seemed as though teachers were *his* teachers to be ordered and bullied about as his principalship pleased. He had the despicable habit of divulging staff secrets or misdemeanours to the pupils. For example, if some unfortunate teacher had come a few minutes late one morning, he would broach the subject at assembly as follows. He would start off by reprimanding the pupils who had come late that particular week. And just for good measure he would acquit himself of the following gem as well:

"And don't think that I only deprecate late-coming amongst you pupils. Oh, no! If you think that, you are completely mistaken. Yes, my teachers must also be punctual. Oh, I detest unpunctuality in a teacher. What example can be set in that manner? And don't think I am just

speaking generally. Oh, no! Only yesterday morning I had to haul Mr. Y over the coals for arriving a few minutes late. Yes, I am strict with everybody, including and especially my teachers."

By this time about 700 heads would have turned in the direction of Mr. Y whose gaze could only be directed downwards. If Mr. Y was brave enough to walk off to a classroom, the question of impertinence and disrespect towards the principal would have been the main issue at a forthcoming staff meeting. And if Mr. Y or any other teacher got up at such a meeting to express his disgust at the principal's behaviour, he would receive the answer that once he, the principal, had spoken he considered the matter closed, or, as was the case more than once, he would announce abruptly that the meeting was over and storm out towards the shelter and comfort of his office.

PERHAPS THE STRANGEST ASPECT of conditions at this school was the principal's habit of encouraging spying by pupils on teachers. At assemblies at the beginning of the year the principal would stress the fact that he was the head of the school, that he was in command, that ultimately he had to take responsibility for whatever happened at the school. And because he was the head, he had to know everything that went on at school, whether in the classroom or outside. Then he would continue in the following vein:

"Children, you must listen very carefully in the classroom. If the teacher says anything you consider to be unbecoming

Requiem for Aunt Lizzie

"CANDIDUS"

AUNTIE LIZZIE SITS on a hard chair in her small, crowded front parlour. The door is open—it is always open—and from it she watches the children splashing in the slime which trickles down the street, the taxis which race along with a bump and a splash, the men and women who pass unceasingly.

Auntie Lizzie is fat and jolly. Her thighs bulge over the sides of the chair, and when she shares a joke with a passing friend (and she has many friends), the mountainous flesh wobbles.

A simple woman, this Lizzie, you might say: Just a fat "coloured" woman living in one of those festering slums which persist here and there where they haven't yet got around to moving the people to the new ethnic areas.

Do not be misled by appearances: Auntie Lizzie is a

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or irregular, please report to me. If the teacher tries to influence you in any way, come and see me promptly. If the matter is very serious, you may leave the classroom without permission." So much for distilling into pupils a respect for their teachers or discipline. Luckily, many students rejected such advice with the contempt it deserved.

WHEN THE PRO-GOVERNMENT *Die Banier* came out a few years ago, the progressive teachers on the staff decided to boycott this Coloured Affairs Department newspaper. However, one such teacher was also library assistant and had amongst other things to see to the filing of back copies of this paper. But he had decided that he would not soil his hands in this way. After a while the inevitable "staff" meeting was held. Said the principal:

"*Mnr. X, ek moet seker eers jou stert lek, voordat jy Die Banier wil regpak.*" And that vile and vulgar expression was quite a favourite of his . . .

I SUPPOSE THAT in a modern high school with about thirty classrooms an intercommunication system is quite a convenient device. But at this school I soon came to regard it as a positive curse.

One would have thought that announcements that could be heard in most of the rooms would be restricted to a minimum. One would have thought that any statement over the inter-com. would be preceded by a polite apology.

But not so here. Announcements, requests, the lot, would come barging in on the lessons at any time.

Perhaps the most distasteful feature of the abuse of the intercom. was the off-handed manner in which teachers were addressed over it. If one was in the staff room one could not hear announcements over the intercom. If something important had been announced in the meantime, one was obviously in the dark about it. But this would not prevent the principal from barking at one perhaps later in the day.

Sometimes a list of special duties was put up in the staff room. If you had a free period, you would most probably have to go and supervise somewhere in the absence of the regular teacher who was perhaps away temporarily or ill. More often than not there would be no prior announcement about such a list. And you might be free but decide not to go to the staff room. After a few minutes the whole school would vibrate with an indignant:

"Mr. Z, the Std. — class is waiting. Where are you hiding yourself?" or

"Mr. Z, see that you go to Std. — immediately," or just the blunt

"Mr. Z. where on earth are you then?"

The whole school would have been hearing this and the pupils could not do otherwise but smile. You, of course, would be red with embarrassment and rage.

(To be continued)

very remarkable woman. She is remarkable for several things, and I would put them in this order of importance:

First, a heart of the purest gold. She has an all-embracing humanity which takes no cognisance of race, colour or creed, wealth or poverty. Secondly, she is a militant opponent of all forms of injustice (and this means apartheid in all its manifestations).

Lizzie is a fighter, one who is known as a champion of every "dangerous" cause, a protester of protesters, a demonstrator to outshine all demonstrators.

She is a formidable person when roused and the Government of South Africa knows it. Not for nothing was Lizzie among the first to be locked up in the 1960 Emergency. (She was inside for four months). And inevitably Lizzie is now banned, confined to the small town where she lives, forbidden to enter a factory (and therefore unable to work) and forbidden to attend social gatherings.

FORBIDDEN TO ATTEND social gatherings: This is a farce where Lizzie is concerned. There are 14 people living in the small home she rents. She has a large brood of children, but there are others in the house, uncles, cousins, orphans, hangers-on whom I have never been able to sort out. And all these people have friends who pass in and out in a never-ending stream. There are more often than not three or four draped around the stoep, and children playing in the few square yards of garden. And Aunt Lizzie, banned from social gatherings, sits and watches it all from her chair in the sittingroom and enjoys it all

hugely, and wobbles energetically into the kitchen to make tea for a visitor. If Auntie Lizzie were to keep to the letter of her banning order, she would have to spend her days and nights sitting in the "*kleinhuisie*" in the backyard. And so the Special Branch, who are human beings (Auntie Liz says some of them are) turn a judicious blind eye. In any case, a judge failed to decide the other day what a social gathering is and said the law is vague and embarrassing.

WHAT REALLY DOES IRK LIZZIE is the clause which says banned people may not talk to other banned people. This is the bitterest blow, because through it she has been cut off from her dearest friends and comrades in the struggle. She sometimes waves to them in the streets and when she does there is a half smile on her lips and tears in her eyes.

She who would leave her children to travel 20 or 30 miles by train or bus to attend a meeting or a political trial is restricted for five years to a small town.

In the old militant days before restrictions, Auntie Lizzie was the first person everybody turned to for practical help and comfort in very kind of trouble or sadness. An old blind African was not getting his pension; Auntie Liz would worry and nag the authorities until he got it. An Indian was sacked from his job because he was suspected of being an "agitator"; Auntie would collect money to feed his family while he was jobless. She settled quarrels between man and wife, helped a girl with an illegitimate