

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION IS A DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

In many reactionary and extreme rightwing circles a negative attitude towards people's education is being entertained. Because most of the reactionary forces had been wrongly "educated", it is very difficult for the totalitarian mind to understand that People's education is simply an education which meets the demands required by all the citizens of the State irrespective of colour or creed.

Nobody can or has denied the crucial fact that education is essential for human development of a country. Because education has to do with the human mind the argument of colour becomes irrelevant unless it is not true and sincere education as understood in civilized circles. To educate a person is to develop his faculty of thinking to the best of his ability. The faculty of thinking is none other than the mind of a person. What then is the mind if it's not thoughts and feeling. By damaging the thoughts and feelings of a person you damage his mind. It means that if the faculty of thinking is wrongly fed it would not develop to required civilized standards and thus the "so-called educated but low mentalized person" emerges, so that human minds reveal inhuman reactions to the realities of the day. After all it is the developed mind that understands, mends and moulds and the animal type of mind that divides, breaks and folds.

What then is the purpose of a people's education? It has never meant to replace democracy with totalitarianism but to serve as a yardstick in order to guide South Africa towards a goal where discrimination, prejudice and exploitation would be something of the past. People's education could be defined as the type of education agreed upon by all sections of the community for the whole community at large. The syllabus would suit the demands set by the time to build one unified nation. It would be an education to produce only free South Africans irrespective of colour. It won't make masters of the minority and servants or slaves of the majority. The noble function is that neither would it make masters of the majority but it will serve one nation in one South Africa. If White teachers can teach in Black schools, why can't Black and White attend the same school?

People's education would make it normal for the pupils of Epping and Goodwood to attend Elsie's River High School or Valhalla High. It would also be quite normal for pupils of Ravensmead and Uitsig to attend J.J. Du Preez if they so wished because the syllabus would be the same. The primary aim of a People's Education is not to build a strong upper class or middle class but to equip the young to meet the realities and demands of one non-racial democratic South Africa so that Hippo's and Caspiers could take long leave from school grounds. White hatred and Black fear would be something of the past. Of course it won't come overnight. Every South African must work very hard to make it a reality.

Please don't get me wrong for there will be obstacles, obstructions and anti-democratic forces who would try to stifle the achieving of a People's Education goal. There

would be peace, prosperity and human compassion as soon as there is an awakening realization that People's Education includes all the people and not only a section of the population. We need an education which will enrich our assessment of human values. Degrees, diplomas and certificates must not only be obtained in order to get more financial access to material wealth and then build high vibracrete walls in order to ignore the working class neighbour in a diplomatic way. Education should not shut us off from the working class but it must include the latter in our development programme. The worker's child should foresee no problems in pursuing the highest ideals in the different fields namely science, fine art, medicine, law and commerce or whatever direction he or she wishes to attempt.

Ironically, "Bantu" means People, but every sane person is well aware what the purpose of Bantu Education is. It is an indoctrination labelled education to make Blacks subserving to Whites. It is an "education" forced on the majority of Blacks by Whites in order to ensure eternal unchallenged privileges for the latter. It is interesting and yet unbelievable to note that the educated or shall we say the "certificated" totalitarian mind of the oppressor never anticipated any resistance from the Black Students. They were so sure of their dose of indoctrination that when Black Resistance against Black education reached its peak in 1976, communists who up till today were never identified were blamed for kindly telling the pupils that they were getting an inferior education.

Our educational standard will never improve unless all sections of the South African population reach consensus on what must be taught. The neo-colonialist attitude towards education has forced a great section of the population to believe that a good standard of education is reserved only for a certain people, namely the idle rich. No more does the majority today believe that through fate they have to accept an inferior education.

Not so long ago a minister of Bantu education forced the teaching of a language onto an unsatisfied section of the population. That very minister is partly to be blamed for the political upheavals which took place in Black schools. Since then the country's educational policy in Black schools has never functioned normally. Education must not be forced on anybody. The minister of Bantu education at that time exposed the motives of Bantu education by claiming "Ons bepaal want ons betaal". Every South African who loves his country is concerned about the true and sincere implementation of a People's educational system. It won't be so easy as adding "three houses" to "another house", but the dividends would in the long run be more beneficial to South Africa as a whole. What is more is that People's education would enable "Oom Piet" to enjoy his "koffie and Boerbeskuit" without his "poisonous wapens" or without worrying whether Boetie is still alive on the border. It's only a people's education which would teach us how to share the culture and wealth of the country together in freedom and peace. □