

6. Changes in Social Circumstances now taking placeCommittee on Native Education 1935.

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To gain control over his environment "is for the Native in South Africa a particularly difficult task because the environment itself is changing so rapidly. Traditions & customs which were effective means of control under a previous régime are gradually discovered to be ineffective. This induces a feeling of helplessness & vulnerability which many Natives strive to overcome. Here is one of the reasons why they so eagerly stretch out to grasp the white man's way of doing things in the hope that by means of these new "tools" they will regain that lost control. This continual process of action & reaction involved in the cultural readjustment in Native life places heavy demands on the rising generation of the Native people -."

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6. (i) Disintegration of the Tribal System.
- (ii) The spread of Christian influence.
- (iii) The emergence of national consciousness in the place of tribal loyalties.
- (iv) Superstition is gradually becoming supplanted by the acceptance of European medicine.
- (v) Rectangular houses in the place of rondavels.
- (vi) The adoption of Western clothing.
- (vii) The burning enthusiasm for education & learning, etc etc

6. Changes in social conditions now taking place.

Authority of parents being lost.

many NE parents new from Reserves. Unable to help children adjust to town environment. Thus drift into crime. Ill. health. Schools essential.

Report of Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education
1935-36.

464. "Native life is undergoing a tremendously rapid change as a result of the contacts between the white & black cultures. All such rapid transitions are difficult, painful, & sometimes fraught with danger. One of the tasks of education is to help the Native to make this transition as painlessly & safely as possible....

465. "The Native is becoming Europeanised by mere contact whether we wish it or not. One cannot stop the process any more than one can stop the Native from breathing the surrounding air ---

The problem is, therefore, to devise a type of education which will tide the black man over the period during which his tribal sanctions are weakening, & before he feels the force of the sanctions of European civilisation" ---

The Week In Parliament

"Christian National Education" Debate Forced Government On Defensive :: Dr. Stals Was Adamant About Native School Feeding

By DR. BERNARD FRIEDMAN, M.P.

THE debate on "Christian National Education" was probably the liveliest of the session. The Government were immediately forced on the defensive. Dr. Stals disavowed any intention of forcing the plan of the Instituut vir Christelike Nasionale Onderwys on our educational institutions and asserted that it was in conflict with the principles of the Nationalist Party. He went on to say, however, that the notorious brochure signed, amongst others, by Dr. Donges and Dr. Jansen, merely intended to give a general lead on the subject of educational policy.



The Minister's explanation is much too naive. The brochure represents the aspirations of a powerful and ambitious pressure group. Their aim is to establish an authoritarian system of education. Their plan bears an obvious and striking resemblance to the system of indoctrination practised in Nazi Germany.

Rewrote History

The theoreticians of National Socialism sought to provide a philosophical justification for the spirit of Nazi aggression and invest it with the sanctions of religion and morality. Culture was not an end in itself; it was used as an instrument of national aggrandisement. Whatever was universal and moral in their great poets and thinkers like Goethe and Schiller they rejected; whatever was tribal and immoral they selected and glorified. They even rewrote the history of Germany to make it appear that from the earliest days of the Nibelungen legends the Germans have been a superior people destined to the attainment of power and mas-

tery. They succeeded in indoctrinating the German youth with a mystical tribalism which exalted the conception of the herrenvolk.

The exponents of "Christian National Education" have the same end in view. Their plan is a system of indoctrination. They also select and glorify what they conceive to be the distinctive features of their culture. Their system is designed to ensure Afrikaner exclusiveness and domination. In short, the aim of their educational policy is to produce an Afrikaner herrenvolk. As in the case of Germany such a system of indoctrination must have disastrous consequences. In our multiracial society especially, it must give rise to internecine conflicts and lead to ultimate disaster. This debate has undoubtedly served a useful purpose. But the progressive forces must not relax their vigilance; they must maintain a close watch on all developments in the educational field.

Minister's Responsibility

When the Native education vote came under consideration the Opposition concentrated chiefly on the Government's decision to limit and ultimately

to abolish the provision for the feeding of Native schoolchildren. Dr. Stals, however, was adamant. He took full responsibility for a decision which one suspects had been forced upon him by the reactionary elements in his own party and would not yield to argument, persuasion or invective. Government spokesmen argued with singular unanimity that a misguided benevolence was making the Natives far too dependent on the White people. This, of course, is a preposterous argument.

To assert that eight million Bantu are dependent on two million Whites is like asserting that the base of a pyramid is suspended from its apex. White economy is built on the basis of Native labour. But figures relating to the spread of disease, especially malnutrition and tuberculosis, show very clearly that our prosperity rests on a crumbling foundation. The report of the Committee on Native School Feeding states that the scheme serves to build up resistance against disease. A prudent Government would therefore not abolish the scheme but extend it. For money spent on promoting health and efficiency would not be wasteful expenditure. It would be an investment in the most precious of all the factors of production, namely the workers themselves.

The Real Reason

During the course of this debate Government backbenchers who expressed themselves rather more freely on the subject of Native education than their Minister, gave the House a very clear insight into their attitude to Native progress in general.

According to these exponents of Apartheid, the previous Government, influenced by the liberal elements in the United Party, had imposed an artificial education on the Natives. This "liberal" education was corrupting the Native, estranging him from his tribal origins and turning him into an "imitation Westerner". The Natives, they insist, must

remain tribal, primitive and separate.

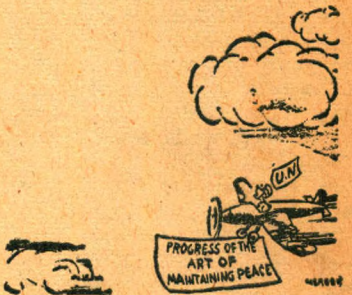
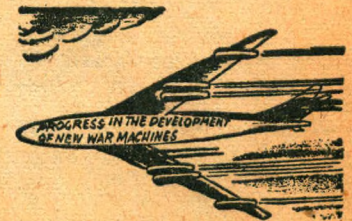
These obscurantists forget that it is we Europeans who do not allow the Natives to remain tribal, primitive and separate. We brought them into our midst to serve our needs. We are transforming them from a primitive peasantry into an urban proletariat. What is the use of preaching the virtues of the simple tribal life to an urban proletariat? Contact with Western civilisation acts on them. It awakens aspirations for a fuller, freer life. They regard education as the key to a better way of life.

Our Obligation

If there is any validity in the conception of trusteeship, then it is an inescapable obligation to satisfy these aspirations which have developed in circumstances which we have created. What emerges from this debate is that the whole Native policy of the Government is based on a fundamental contradiction.

On the one hand there is the fear that Native progress is a threat to White supremacy; on the other hand there is the irresistible desire to exploit the Native for their own advantage. Fear of Native progress deprives the White man of the full and efficient co-operation of the Native whilst exploitation is constantly breaking down the barriers of segregation.

Only an enlightened Native policy which recognises that Native progress is fundamental to the progress and prosperity of the community as a whole can resolve this crippling contradiction.



"Study in Contrasts."
—The Atlanta Journal

Institute Sub-Committee

6. What do you consider the most important changes at present taking place in the Social Conditions of the Native?

The most important changes are all associated with the impact of Western civilization, as represented by the Europeans in South Africa, upon the indigenous culture of the Native.

Among the most important changes are the following:

- (i) increasing de-tribalization of the Native, and increasing urbanization of the Native, leading to the growth of a native proletariat;
- (ii) loss of cultural sanctions, e.g., tribal and parental authority;
- (iii) growth of an African consciousness or nationalism.

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1. Inst. proletarian = industrial working class
2. awareness of other Non. E. people.
3. greater literacy
elaborate
4. urban living conditions
5. improvement.
- 6.

What are these "ever-changing social conditions"? In the towns, we have many Natives who have become permanently urbanised. With urbanisation comes the disintegration of the tribal system & the loss of ~~the~~ tribal sanctions. The conventions of the old life are incompatible with the new, and the Native has yet not sufficiently grasped the ^{sanctions} ~~conventions~~ of ^{the} Western way of life. Hence we have unrest, irresponsibility, crime & juvenile delinquency. It is urgently necessary that, through compulsory primary education, ~~some~~ a positive moral code should be substituted for the old tribal sanctions.

This applies in the rural areas too, where tribal bonds are weakening although the process is not so far advanced, and in the Reserves, where the system of migratory labour draws away the male members of the family for considerable periods, & hence the authority of the father is being undermined & the traditional respect for elders corrupted.

Native life is undergoing a rapid change as result of contacts between the white and black cultures. All such rapid ^{transitions} ~~changes~~ are difficult & sometimes fraught with danger. Through education, however, we can help the Native to make the transition ~~so~~ smoothly and safely.

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