

MEMORANDUM ON NATIVE EDUCATION, drawn up by  
the BLOEMFONTEIN JOINT COUNCIL OF EUROPEANS,  
AFRICANS AND COLOUREDS for submission to the  
1949 COMMISSION ON NATIVE EDUCATION.

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1. What do you consider should be the guiding principles and aims of Native education?

It should be explained that the policy of the Joint Council with regard to the Native and Coloured races of the Union is to work for their ultimate integration in the South African nation, and hence our views on Native education are based upon this ideal.

This will involve in time the removal of the colour bar and means that Natives will have the right to join Trade Unions.

Hence in answering Question 1 we maintain that the guiding principles and aims of Native education should be to fit the Native for integration in the South African nation, and to enable him to make the fullest possible contribution to the wealth and culture of South Africa.

2. Is it correct to regard the Native as a separate and independent race?

We maintain that, owing to his history and the necessary backwardness of his culture, the Native must for many purposes be regarded as a separate (but not independent) group in the human race. Our aim is to make available to him his heritage of world culture, and educate him so that he can become a full and complete citizen of South Africa.

3. & 4.

What do you understand by the "racial characteristics" of the Native?

What are the special qualities and aptitudes of the Native?

Any special qualities and aptitudes the Native may have are the product of environment and circumstance.

It is not difficult to find out what the majority of Europeans consider to be the racial characteristics of the Native. For example, investigations carried out by Prof. I.D. MacCrone (see "Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa" O.U.P., p. 700) indicate that a common belief amongst English-speaking South Africans is that the Native is "superstitious, good-natured, noisy, imitative, fond of gambling, excitable, dirty, has a keen sense of humour, is hospitable, unreliable, and very fond of sport"; whereas amongst Afrikaans-speaking South Africans it is commonly believed that the Native is "superstitious, noisy, dirty, unreliable, imitative, quarrelsome, brutal, dishonest, stupid, treacherous, and fond of gambling." (Qualities mentioned in the order dictated by the prevalence of the belief as found by the investigation). Whatever validity may be conceded to these opinions as reflecting certain traits of certain Natives in the present phase of our changing society (and many reasons may be adduced for questioning such validity), the contention that they represent permanent, inherent attributes of Natives as a racial group does not bear investigation, and should not be taken seriously.

5. In what way has the social heritage of the Native been determined by the characteristics referred to above?

We believe that the so-called characteristics of the Native have been mainly determined by his social heritage in our White society, viz., that of an inferior human being with few of the rights and privileges of the White South African. Thus we maintain that the question has been wrongly stated, for the characteristics are chiefly due to his social heritage, and not vice-versa.

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

Powerful economic forces are leading to the disappearance of tribal organization with a corresponding increase in urbanization. Educational authorities must face this issue, and seek to make the transition less painful than the parallel process was in nineteenth century England. Any attempt to put the clock back would exacerbate suffering.

7. In terms of your answers to questions 1-6, please give, seriatim, your views on the manner in which these factors should determine the principles and objectives of Native education.

The implication of the answers to questions 1 to 6 are obvious. The Native must have an education similar to that of the European, in order to fit him for South African citizenship. We approve of the scheme outlined by the Chairman of the Commission in his lecture on "The Meaning of Apartheid" (given to a meeting of the Institute of Race Relations, and printed in Vol. XV, Number 3 of the journal "Race Relations"). Inter alia, he recommended: "A system of extensive education controlled entirely by the Government, giving a primary grounding in the essential subjects to all, giving industrial and agricultural training of an advanced nature to many, and a high school and university education of an advanced nature to the specially gifted. This would have to be supplemented by the simultaneous training of adults in various directions to make them useful members of society."

On the other hand we totally disagree with Dr. Eiselen's assumption that it will be possible to create a Native society operating in a sort of water-tight compartment. This appears to us to be impracticable and in any case most undesirable. We also disagree with the common recommendation that the Natives themselves should find the money to be spent on their education. As most Natives to-day are paid wages below the minimum necessary to feed, clothe and house them, the suggestion is impracticable, inequitable and retrogressive.

8. Referring to item 2 of the terms of reference, what do you understand by the "future careers" of the Native in South Africa?

If our premisses above are granted, all careers should be open to the Native in South Africa. Both moral and economic considerations prompt the answer that his future careers should be similar to those of the European, and co-extensive with the activities of a free, civilized and progressive community.

9. (1) What do you consider the chief defects of the present system of -

- (a) primary schools;
- (b) secondary schools;
- (c) industrial schools;
- (d) teacher training colleges; and
- (e) university training.

(a) Primary Schools.

The admission age (7 years) is too high. It should be 6 years. The standard of attainment in the O.F.S. is low. Classes are far too large, and there is a lack of teachers, equipment and accommodation.

Instruction through the medium of the two official languages (necessary for secondary work) comes too late.

Primary education should be free and compulsory up to Standard IV. Later, this principle should be extended to Standard V, and Standard VI.

Nursery school facilities should be aimed at, for, with the mother out working, the child needs a stabilizing factor in its life which only the nursery school can provide. As things are, the primary schools have to deal with damaged human material - - damaged through malnutrition and neglect. (We have already in another memorandum, presented to the Native School Feeding Commission, stressed the need for the continuance and extension of the Native School Feeding Scheme.)

(b) Secondary Schools.

Secondary education should be controlled by the Union Education Department. There should be a generous system of bursaries instituted to permit Natives of high intelligence to continue their education in secondary schools.

(c) Industrial Schools.

"Industrial" is an unfortunate term here, being associated with delinquency. There should be Technical, Commercial, and Agricultural Schools functioning under the same authorities as the secondary school, and here, too, bursaries should be awarded.

10. What, in your opinion, should be the place and nature of religious education in the curriculum?

It should be strictly non-doctrinal, and taught on a syllabus agreed to by the chief religious denominations.

11. What, in your opinion, should be the place and nature of manual training in Native Schools, especially with regard to -

- (1) the use the Native, after leaving school, makes of his manual training : and
- (2) the transfer of skills acquired in school to the Native community?

While we are in favour of manual training as an educational subject in the primary school, we strongly recommend that manual training to fit Natives for trades should be taught in trade or technical schools after the primary education has been completed. This technical training should fit them for work at their trades in their own community.

15. What are your views as to the basis on which Native education should be financed, having regard to the share which the Administration, (Union and Provincial), the churches or missionary societies, and the Native himself should have therein?

Until the standard of living is raised and the Native is paid wages more commensurate with the cost of living, it cannot be expected that Native taxation alone should meet the cost of educating him. The whole scheme of Native education should be controlled by the Union Government, but administered by the Province. The funds should be provided by grants from the Union Government to each of the Provinces. In the course of time (perhaps 25 to 50 years) the receipts from Natives might be

sufficient to meet the cost of Native education.

16. What are your views concerning the following points which may have been dealt with incidentally under previous headings, but which seem to merit specific attention:-

(1) Adult education?

We recommend the continuance of the present scheme drawn up by the Union Adult Education Director. (The local committees are empowered to make grants to societies or missions undertaking adult education in locations.)

(2) The desirability of differentiating between the education given in different areas (Native reserves, rural areas and urban areas)?

Primary education should be uniform throughout the Union. In the secondary schools there should be some differentiation to fit the Native to live in his environment.

(3) The education and preparation of chiefs and leaders?

Gifted Natives should be granted bursaries to attend secondary schools, and universities, where they could take courses in economics, sociology, history and administration, to fit them to be leaders. Chiefs' sons could follow similar courses at the universities.

(4) Continuation study facilities for teachers, including libraries?

The training of Native librarians is a vital necessity to-day. Travelling organizers of libraries should be appointed, and a scheme introduced corresponding to the present rural scheme for Europeans.

(5) The desirability of Government, community, tribal and church schools in regard to subsidies?

We favour the present system, whereby grants are made to mission schools, farm schools, etc., where results are satisfactory.

(6) Compulsory education in general or specific areas?

Compulsory education should be general, although it would be difficult to enforce it in isolated areas.

(7) The training of Natives to occupy responsible positions in their own communities?

See 16 (3) above.

(8) The co-ordination of work of an educational nature carried out by State departments e.g. Health, Native Affairs, Social Welfare, Justice?

There should be co-ordination between the State departments - perhaps by appointment of an ordinating Director or by exchange of personnel.

(9) The education of leaders and the task of the university in this respect?

See 16 (3) above.

(10) The use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction?

(10) The mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in kindergarten and grades. English and Afrikaans should be taught as languages in Standards I, II and III. In Standards IV upwards, and by even progression, the official languages should be the medium of instruction.

(11) The future role of Native languages in education and in the community?

The Native should be encouraged to use and study his own language.

(12) The possible grouping or amalgamation of Native languages?

There should be no attempt to interfere with the process of natural evolution.

(13) The place of the official languages in the Native school curriculum?

See 16 (10) above.

(14) The relapse into illiteracy -- its incidence and prevention.

If education is made compulsory to Standard IV, there will be little danger of a relapse. Adult education classes and a good library system should also help.

#### IN GENERAL.

We realize that the cost of the scheme outlined above is very high, and we realize that it must take a long time before several of the suggestions can be put into force. But the aims outlined above must be pursued with determination if South Africa is to take her place in the forefront of the nations of the world, and they should therefore be the basis of all future work.

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Suggested Memorandum to be submitted by the Pretoria Joint  
Council of Europeans and Non-Europeans  
to  
The Native Education Commission.

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1 Introduction:-

The Pretoria Joint Council of Europeans and Non-Europeans is a body which stands in the community for determined effort to better relationships between the different racial groups. Our membership of some 125 people is made up of Europeans, Coloureds, Indians and Natives. The Council is affiliated to the Institute of Race Relations, and, in fact, our aim is to do on a small scale what the Institute is doing on a larger scale.

We feel that we can give evidence before this commission because of our long experience in dealing with the various problems of the Natives which are constantly brought to our attention. It has long been our endeavour to make available to the Government, Municipality, etc. facts which are relevant to their work, where it affects Natives and which have been brought to our attention by the Natives themselves. We feel that our chief work has been to serve as a mouthpiece for the Natives in this community, on the other hand assisting them to understand various measures affecting their welfare.

In presenting this memorandum, we wish first to make quite clear the basic principles which govern our attitude towards the Native in the Community, as it is on these basic principles that our evidence for this commission has been determined, as they are, indeed, the determining factor in the whole work of our organisation. We quote from our recent statement on the report of the Fagan Commission:-

1. The fundamental principle that the Native is a citizen of this country, and that he is intended to carry an increasing share of the rights and privileges as well as the responsibilities of that citizenship. We should "give all in this country according to their ability and regardless of their race, equal opportunities of acquiring the skill and knowledge they are capable of acquiring, and of undertaking the work that needs to be done."
2. As far as the national economy is concerned, we follow the line laid down by the Social and Economic Planning Council - that of integration. The Native is not to be a mere tool or instrument but is to be given his rightful place in the economy of the country by means of improved and more extensive vocational training, encouragement and guidance of trade unions, widening the basis of education, etc.
3. Natives must be regarded as an integral and permanent part of any urban community. They are no longer temporary dwellers - they have come to stay.

11 Answers to Questionnaire on Native Education:-

1. This Council considers that the guiding principles and aims of Native Education should be the same as for the education of all other sections of the community, namely
  - (a) to prepare the Native peoples to become good citizens;
  - (b) to train them to earn their livelihood;
  - (c) to educate them to use their leisure time wisely, and
  - (d) to develop the personality of the child into a character of balanced maturity, - in short to develop the entire man.

The end of all education, whether it be of the European or the Non-European, is the same.

2. This Council is of the opinion that the Native cannot be regarded as a separate and independent race. In S. Africa, whether we like it or not, we are all one, and in the shrinking world

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of which the Union is a part, the welfare of all racial groups is closely connected one with another. This is especially so in the economic sphere, where European and Non-Europeans have become increasingly interdependent. It is, however, true that the Native people cherish the same broad spiritual and cultural aspirations and are drawn together by their languages that are closely related, by a common past and by the fact that they all experience the same political, social and economic handicaps. All these factors, especially the latter, tend to strengthen the racial solidarity of the Native peoples.

3. We believe that one can only speak of the "racial characteristics" of the Native when he is living under primitive tribal conditions and then only in a very limited sense. A characteristic of the tribal Native appears to be his blind obedience to men put over him by the accident of birth - his father and more remote ancestors, his chief, and to lesser extent all men older than himself. This attitude results in a lack of self-reliance and of a sense of personal responsibility, two qualities which are necessary for an adjusted life under the conditions found in countries that have adopted Western European civilization.
4. We doubt whether any peoples may be said to have special qualities and aptitudes. Certainly the spread of education and of civilization is a great leveller.
5. Refer to Question 3.
6. We consider the most important changes at present taking place in the social conditions of the Native to be
  - (a) the gradual break-up of the old tribal system;
  - (b) the increasing urbanisation of the Native population; and
  - (c) the adoption of Western ideas in religion, housing, ways of living, etc.We hold that, though it may be possible to delay these changes, they cannot be prevented. In fact we believe that all action should be avoided that might either strengthen or re-build the tribal set-up.
7. It follows from our answers to questions 1 to 6 that in essence Native Education should not be different from that given to the European, Asiatic or Coloured sections of the population.
8. This Council considers that all careers in S. Africa should be open to talented Natives, so that S. Africa as a whole, but more particularly their own people, may benefit.
9. This Council does not consider itself qualified to express an opinion on the details of the present system of Native Education as enumerated in questions 9, 12 and 13 and believes that those actively engaged in Native Education, particularly the African Teachers Associations, are much better qualified to do so.
10. As in educational institutions for Europeans and Coloured people a truly Christian atmosphere should permeate the life and work of similar institutions for Natives. In schools controlled by one or other of the Churches or Missionary Societies, religious education might have a doctrinal basis, but in State schools the place and nature of religious education in the curriculum should be identical to that in government schools that cater for European and other sections of the community.
11. We consider that manual training should form a considerable part of the education given to Native children and that both gardening and up-to-date carpentry should receive due recognition as being useful to the Native people in their work. We would stress the importance of up-to-date carpentry. In most Native schools at the present time much time is devoted to the making of articles, e.g. carved figures, wooden spoons, etc. which have long fallen into disuse and should find their proper place in museums.

Bantu relics. This fact explains why the Native after leaving ~~the~~ school makes little use of his manual training and why there is little transfer of such training to the Native community. It is our opinion that useful manual training should receive prominence in Native schools, so that Natives could become skilled workers in a great variety of trades.

12. Refer to Question 9.

13. " " " 9.

14. Although we desire that there should be as little differential treatment as possible between European and Native Education, we consider that the latter should be controlled by the Union Government and not by the provincial authorities. We consider that it is desirable to have uniformity of syllabuses, of conditions of service of teachers and of school regulations generally and these conditions can be achieved better through the control of the Central Government rather than the Provincial Governments. If the funds for education continue to come from the Union Government (as at present) it seems only ~~the~~ logical that there should be uniformity in the matter of salaries, pensions, leave privileges, school equipment, etc. Although we favour the organisation of Native Education on a national basis, it will still be possible to make provision for the necessary differences in syllabus as between rural and urban areas and for special allowances for teachers in the cities where the cost of living is higher than in the country districts. The differences in the syllabuses should, as in European education, be based on the locality and not on the ethnic differences of the Native peoples.

We would advocate the creation of school boards or similar bodies on which Natives and others interested in Native education, such as representatives of the Christian Churches and Missionary Societies, would serve. Such bodies would provide an outlet for the expression of educated Native opinion and tend to counteract extremism.

15. The Native, as a direct and indirect taxpayer, supports both the Union and Provincial Administrations and thus is entitled in the same way as the European, Asiatic or Coloured person to receive education from public funds. It is a fallacy that 2,000,000 Whites are paying for the education of 9,000,000 Blacks. The Government does not derive the major portion of its revenue from taxes that are paid solely by Europeans, but from customs duties on imports to which Natives contribute and taxes on mining and other industries to the development of which Natives have made a vital contribution. In short Native labour has made an enormous contribution to the wealth of the country as a whole. This answers the question why the State should assume full financial responsibility for Native education.

At the present time the Native by means of his contribution to his Church or Missionary Society is paying directly for a considerable proportion of the school accommodation and other educational facilities provided for his children. All education in public institutions should be financed in the same way and certainly an education tax or any special levy on Natives only to provide for the education of their children would be strongly opposed by this Council.

16. (1) Adult education should be provided for in order to combat illiteracy and to encourage the right use of leisure time and thus prevent delinquency. Night classes, lectures, dramatic and debating societies, and gymnastic classes would all serve a useful purpose.

(2) This point is referred to elsewhere in our evidence (See 14)

(3) " " " " " " " " " (See 6)



facilities

16. (4) Continuation ~~study~~ are necessary for all teachers, but especially for Natives, who are often the least well qualified. Refresher Courses, the publication of a journal devoted to matters of education, and the extension of library facilities are all necessary to the improvement of Native education.
- (5) This question is not understood. However, we consider that as with European education there is room for private state-aided schools in addition to government schools, as they have a definite contribution to make to the cause of education as a whole.
- (6) Compulsory education should be enforced in urban and peri-urban areas and gradually be extended to rural areas.
- (7) This point is referred to elsewhere in our evidence (See 8)
- (8) This Council does not feel qualified to express an opinion on administrative details of this nature.
- (9) The education of leaders should go hand in hand with the education for literacy. There should be no separate University for Natives, as it would soon be dubbed, as in America, a 'Nigger University', and its staff, courses and degrees would be regarded as inferior to those of Universities attended by European students. A university restricted to students belonging to one race, colour or creed is in itself a contradiction in terms and is not a university in the true sense of the word.
- (10) - (13) While we are aware that instruction through the mother tongue is a sound educational principle, we cannot help but feel that one or other of the official languages in S. Africa, according to local circumstances, will continue to be the medium of instruction in Native schools at any rate above the sub-standards. This is advisable for several reasons - the need for the Natives to prepare themselves for the labour market, their desire to assimilate European civilisation and culture, curriculum difficulties, differences in the various Bantu languages. The adoption of a common orthography would introduce a measure of uniformity in these languages and thus simplify the process of education considerably.
- (14) This point is referred to elsewhere in our evidence .  
(See 16 (1) )

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