

RAMI.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR CULTURE . (thinking aloud)Background :

1. For over a hundred years the Africans have been exposed to the culture of the West in all its various forms . Probably the two most potent agencies making for the modern African have been
- (a) The intergration of Africa in the economy of Western capitalism.
 - (b) Formal Education .

The development of both these factors in South Africa remains up to now imperfect and unfulfilled but there can be no turning back . In other words the destiny of the African people lies in our travelling faster and more resolutely along the path of winning greater control of productive forces and developing more powerful ones , and also (which follows from that) becoming a modern culturally advanced people .

In the struggle for education which was largely initiated and led by the Christian missionaries , the Africans played a very notable part . They were not merely at the receiving end of a pump from which water was perpetually dripping . Through their gifts of land and their generally fair-minded attitude towards the missionaries the African tribes in these early days laid the foundations for their education in a western sense. From then on it was a struggle in which the African congregations by means of contributions , services and also their determination to learn made it possible to record great achievements despite a social system designed to maintain them in an inferior position . By sheer force of their fight for enlightenment the Africans forced the state to take an interest in their education . But one has only to study the figures given in statistics dealing with African education to realise that the state did not have any desire to see the Africans play their full part in the world of culture and science .

This attitude of maintaining the distance between the State and African Education has now become too dangerous to the ruling class . The State owing to the world situation and the growing

strength and self-confidence of the National Liberation of the South African people's must become fascist i.e. totalitarian if it is to maintain itself. Fascism cannot tolerate any aspect of life that is not completely under its control - it cannot tolerate anything that makes for progress. The present Nationalist government which is terribly fearful of progress is attempting to dam the flood in both the intergration of the African into a modern industrial society and the education that is the corollary of such a society. Looked at from this point of view we see the fight against the Bantu Education Act as the sharpest point of friction between the forces of freedom and fascism, between the forces of science and darkness, between the forces of economic development and those of economic chaos and disaster.

WHAT CONCRETELY IS OUR TASK ?

1. We have to find organised occupation for the African children for 3 - 4 hours a day.
2. We have to find a manner of doing that (a) when the law does not allow us to set up unregistered schools (b) when we know that they are not likely to register any school run by us.
3. We have to find places in which or at which we can instruct the children. We will not be able to use government school buildings. The churches or rather most of them will not allow us to use their buildings, especially when we consider the threats against the churches by the Nationalist government and the cowardly attitude evinced by most of the Church leadership in the face of intimidation by Caesar.
4. We have to consider the fact that the present set-up has taken years to build and has become established, safe and organised it costs millions to run and we do not possess millions at present. It will be a difficult thing to replace because we will also be fighting habit among the people --- the habit whereby we accept that which appears permanent and immutable.

5. We have to recognize the fact that we are face to face with a government gangster clique that is absolutely without scruples and which is not prepared to give any quarter .
6. We have to ensure that the links built up uniting the Africans with with the cultural and scientific progress of mankind are preserved . This has up to now been secured by means of a World language , namely English with its tremendous literature .

THAT IS THE CHALLENGE WE HAVE TO TAKE UP .

WHAT WE NEED .

1. We require a system of organisation of the children that can provide regular systematic training in character and knowledge .
2. We require teams of people throughout the country who will be able to carry out whatever scheme is found suitable . The team , to start with will have to be on a volunteer basis . But this cannot and must not be permanent . The team itself must be a graded group .
3. We must as an absolute minimum be able to provide means to each person or child in the PEOPLE'S ACADEMY to read and write his own mother tongue . Beyond that our aim must be to produce a modern , cultured , freedom-loving African Man . We must have the definite purpose of producing African Cadres for the New Africa of the future , that is people with initiative , self-respect knowledge and with a passion to serve Africa and enable it to take its place among the most progressive peaceful and freedom-loving peoples of the world . We will not be able to sustain the fight against the Bantu Education Act unless it is based on the struggle - it must be linked consciously with the plan for a free Africa .
4. We need a system that is cheap and based on small groups of not more than twenty children or persons (for obvious reasons) . Some means will have to be found of uniting the children in certain where possible .
5. There must be sought and obtained the broadest possible support for our cultural struggle - from all sections of the people

and from all over the world . New methods and techniques must be learnt from ~~insurgents~~ other people's who had to fight for enlightenment in the face of oppressor governments . The difficult tasks before us require the most complete contact between the people and the advanced workers in the freedom Movement in South Africa . In order to obtain this support we must draw up plans that draw in the people actively into the struggle for culture . Culture must be made by and for the people . They must be enabled to make their own suggestions , participate in the fight and must themselves receive education . In short our struggle for culture must be revolutionary in content and method . Our success in a fight of that kind will depend on our faith in the vast creative potential that at present lies untapped among the masses of our people . With faith in the creative capacity and sense of the people and their willingness to sacrifice no difficulty will defeat us .

WHAT MUST WE DO .

1. The first thing is that we must as a people resolutely and irrevocably turn our back on the present system in South Africa . The rejection of the oppressors system if education will be the most significant method of indicating our disgust and opposition to the present set-up . By getting out of Verwoerd's schools we will be setting ourselves on the hard, difficult and narrow path of struggle towards a People's Democracy . The boycott which begins on April 1st (but does not end ~~there~~ on that day) will be the first step in this phase of our struggle . Nobody expects that on that first day we will attain complete success . But the very fact that a section of the African people is prepared to make such a tremendous sacrifice will show up the sham that the Bantu Education Act is . Just as the participation of just under 10,000 volunteers in the B.C out of ~~more~~ as many millions was sufficient to smash the bogey of apartheid and expose it for the sham that it is . Yes on April the 1st we will be starting and our problems will really start to shoulder

the responsibility of educating African Youth . By our rejection of the state system of education we are forced to take up its job before we are in power . But provided we are determined and unhesitating in our assumption of responsibility and provided we can give the people a genuine article even if it carries no certificates and plums in this society we will swing the people to our side .

In connection with the boycott it must be remembered that Verwoerd has promised that no child who keeps away from school on April 1st will be taken back , and there is no reason to doubt his word so far . There is therefore no turning back .

2. We must discover and organise the resources at our disposal.

(a) Volunteer teachers . The present educational system is maintained with an army of 20,000 teachers to say nothing of inspectors administrative staff etc. Admittedly the whole set-up is top heavy but we have to find eventually a big group to run whatever system we plan for . By volunteer teachers we must mean these professional men who have decided to get out of Verwoerd's system and serve their people . In each area we must find these .

(b) We must also discover women who are qualified teachers but for various reasons are not practising their profession .

(c) Persons who are not necessarily teachers but who can teach or persons who can quickly be taught to give such instruction as is required especially at lower levels. With regard to all these people it is essential that we find them out and persuade them to be part of our militant army . We must immediately draw up lists of such persons in every area . We must also discover persons who though they might not be useful as teachers or instructors are invaluable as writers and inventors of new techniques .

(d) We have to find out the literature suitable for all levels and find out what we have at our disposal . This is particularly so in the African languages to start with .

e. g. Works by Rubusana , Mqhayi , Jolobe, Dube , Dhlomo, Ntombenzi etc. These would be for higher levels probably . For the lower levels we require ~~now~~ something like the small beginners books they use from the Sub-standards to the standards 2 - 3 etc. We can even use some of the stuff presently used as long as it is edited. We cannot tolerate a lot of the nonsense with which we were fed. In all our search for literature we must look for that which is effective and inexpensive and , of course ~~find~~ fairly easily accessible .

(ii) We must also search for workable translations of various works from world renowned fairy tales and folk stories to scientific works . e. g. the excellent translations of Shakespeare by Plantje (first Secretary-General of the A.N.C.) in Sechamma . We must secure the assistance of the outside world particularly in ~~this~~ this matter of literature and its printing .

(iii) We must investigate the possibilities of drama in the mass education of the people - on their problems etc. in the manner the Chinese movement utilised folk songs and plays to create a new generation .

(iv) What part can the bible play in our cultural struggle . Here we are conscious of our strong view on ~~missionary~~ religion "the opium of the people" . But that view is not shared and will not be shared by many . In any case our historical position and our practical concrete situation might enable the bible to be not the vehicle of mysticism and obscurantism (only) but an effective instrument against fascism (properly used) . Just as in certain concrete situation parliamentary democracy is a facade behind which ~~bourgeois~~ capitalist dictatorship operates and yet in times of fascism becomes something which the progressive movement is bound to fight for and protect . In the various African Languages the bible as literature is unsurpassed . And it is also a good ~~model~~ model for the system we will introduce . It would be interesting for instance to compel the government to ban the bible or to ban "religious instruction" . It would considerably strengthen the

democratic movement. Through it also we can get powerful support from certain powerful but ~~many~~ vacillating groups. The mass we are dealing with is very religious and expends a great deal of energy in religious activities. We could perhaps harness some of this wasted enthusiasm to the service of the Movement.

(v) The Leubach Method with its revolutionary possibilities must be our key instrument in wiping up illiteracy among the African people in S.A.

Unfortunately from a political point of view, the Institute of Race Relations was the agency through which Leubach ~~was~~ introduced his method to South Africa. Perhaps that is why the method had not had the impact on the masses of this country that it can have. The harm has been done however. We must ~~now~~ get the kernel of the system which is contained at the moment in booklets prepared by the Institute of Race Relations. With a little edition by us we should be able to bring the Leubach method to the masses. It would be an incalculable victory if because of Verwoerd we should bring literacy within the reach of every person in S.A. The Leubach method is used to teach a person to read and write in an incredibly short time ~~know~~ a language that he or she can already speak. This means in most cases we will be able to make persons literate in their own mother-tongue. We can also make a person literate who can speak English but cannot read and write it. These will not be so many. We must find out how we can teach basic English to the higher level pupils in the easiest and shortest method possible. For the Leubach method we do not require trained teachers. It can be carried on en masse, under the slogan Each one teach One. As our languages are not yet an effective vehicle of world thought and literature we must turn our attention to the English language question.

(vi) We must establish the organisation to run all this. That is an organisation devoted to our cultural struggle particularly. This PEOPLE'S ACADEMY must be to render uniform the system we will put into effect throughout the country with due regard for local conditions. g/.

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