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**MEMORANDUM ON BANTU EDUCATION
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
DECISION OF THE 42ND ANNUAL
CONFERENCE OF THE A. N. C.**

The declared goal of political struggle and endeavour by the non-European peoples of this country is the right to live as full and free citizens of South Africa - the right to participate in its government on the basis of full equality as between man and man, the right to decide the role of South Africa in the international sphere of human relations. For so long as they have and enjoy the freedom to adjust themselves to existing conditions and to strive to gain supremacy of them, and for so long as their individual and collective abilities are given full and free scope for growth and development, the non-Europeans cannot in the long run fail to reach their appointed goal. Their surest guarantee for ultimate victory in their struggle, and the greatest threat and danger to white exploitation and domination is the political consciousness of the masses of the oppressed people, their contact with current world events and trends in international relationships, their acquaintance with and knowledge of the history of liberatory movements in other parts of the world, their unity of purpose with all democrats in this country and abroad - a unity which transcends racial or ethnic differences and strikes at the very foundation of the South African social, economic and political structure. The forces and influences that have operated to build the power of the oppressed people are essentially and fundamentally educational in nature, and there can be no effective counteraction to this power except by educational methods.

Realising the grave danger to which white basskarpism and the capitalish structure of the country was exposed, the Nationalists directed their attention and energies on education as a matter of first priority immediately after they took control of the country's affairs in 1948. As early as the 19th January, 1949, a Commission of Enquiry was appointed to formulate -

"the principles and aims of education for natives as an independent race in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitudes and their needs under ever-changing social conditions are taken into account",

and to ascertain

"the extent to which the existing primary, secondary and vocational educational system for natives and the training of native teachers should be modified in respect of the content and form of the syllabuses in order to conform to the proposed principles and aims, and to prepare natives more effectively for their future occupations."

The commission published its report in 1951, after three years of intensive research, and in 1954 Dr. Verwoerd produced the Bantu Education Act, and announced its aims in clear and unequivocal terms, assuring that the application of the Bantu Education Act, South Africa would be safe for white domination. He made this assurance on the authority of facts and plans which had been the subject of intensive study and scrutiny. It seems clear that the Nationalists have learnt to appreciate the decisive importance of the young in the building of a social order. They recognise that the problem of national reconstruction is in the main a problem of national education. They recognise that the future welfare of the nation depends on its schools. Like the Nazis of Hitlerite Germany, they have decided to make every aspect of education a training ground in Nationalist principles. They are putting into practice the old saying that "he who has control of the elementary schools for five years is established in power for ever

This explains the Nationalists haste to separate English-speaking from Afrikaans-speaking children and to confine them to water-tight compartments for the more effective indoctrination of the Afrikaans

children. It explains their decision to feed the African children on Bantu Education in an atmosphere specially prepared to ensure that the product will be a person who accepts in full the Nationalist policy of apartheid, of white domination, of the master-servant relationship as between white and black; a person who will be inferior to the white man and to other races both in fact and in deed; a stranger to world ideas, world standards and world movements; a man whose highest aspiration will be to assert the superiority of his tribe over other tribes or to sit as a high official of a Bantu authority (administrate) administering some ancient curtains; a creature whose mind will have been thoroughly regimented into unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. To such a man the claims of the Congresses will appear extravagant, Utopian, irresponsible and stupid.

There are a number of factors which constitute some guarantee for the success of this dangerous Nationalist educational scheme. The following may be mentioned:-

- (a) The indisputably high organisational efficiency of the Nationalists;
- (b) The ruthless determination and thoroughness with which they prosecute any scheme;
- (c) The fact that the children will be taught in the main by people whose sole qualification for teaching is their submissiveness and complete political blindness;
- (d) The fact that the educational machinery will be placed under the control and supervision of a political department infested with tried and trusted nationalists and armed with a vast army of spies and informers.
- (d) The fact that education, by its very nature, takes effect insidiously and its results only become known when the mischief has been done. Only those who control and are part of the machinery can influence the nature and character of the resultant product.
- (f) In a country in which every phase of life, every department or sphere of government is being re-organised and re-shuffled so as to bring it into harmony with the essential, fundamental, overmastering aim of keeping the non-whites in perpetual subservience to the whites - in such a country the educational agencies which could operate to neutralise the effects of Bantu Education are few and far between.

It seems, therefore, that given the African children, Bantu Education cannot fail to achieve the purposes announced by the Minister of Native Affairs. It was, no doubt, to save such an eventuality that the 42nd Annual Conference of the A.N.C. decided on the withdrawal of children from schools as from the 1st April, 1955, and for an indefinite period.

Implementation of the decision.

In preparing the plans for the implementation of the decision the question arose as to what meaning should be attached to "withdrawal for an indefinite period" in regard to April 1st, 1955. Should the withdrawal be:-

- (a) A withdrawal, as a protest, for a limited period (1 week). The protest would be the first step in the campaign, which would ultimately culminate in a complete and permanent withdrawal of the children and other forms of struggle.

It is common cause to the two views that the African people and all democratic forces must struggle to render Bantu Education unworkable, by withdrawing their children from school. The question

whether or not the 1st April should be the beginning of a permanent withdrawal, arises from a consideration of the following issues.

- (a) What form of action, on the 1st April, is in the best interest of the organisation and the people concerning the concrete conditions, and the preparedness of the organisation.
- (b) What is the most effective way of launching the campaign to ensure success of the campaign not only on April 1st but during the whole struggle against Bantu Education.
- (c) What are the tasks of the organisations?
 - (i) Before and after the protest,
 - (ii) Before and after the date of permanent withdrawal.

Is the organisation in its present condition capable of fulfilling these tasks?

Arising from (c) is a third view, which is to the effect that, considering the actual work done, and the time at the disposal of the organisation, it would probably be in the interests of the organisation and the campaign to postpone activity, irrespective of whether it is a protest or permanent withdrawal. As this does not give an answer to the two basic questions above and as it would involve an amendment of a conference decision it will be analysed later.

"LIMITED PERIOD" (WEEK) PROTEST AS FIRST STEP.

What are the arguments in support of this view.

1. African parents are used to their children being in school, they have in most instances made stupendous sacrifices to send or keep children at school, and it may take a considerable amount of persuasion to induce them to withdraw their children for an indefinite period of time, many of the parents who would not support a permanent withdrawal would support a week's withdrawal. Therefore by calling upon the people to withdraw their children from school for a week, the organisation will be insuring that the largest possible number of parents and children will participate in the protest, and this popular protest would be a firm and encouraging beginning for the campaign.
2. Some influential church bodies have decided to support Bantu Education. The attempted withdrawal of the children permanently may set these churches and African parents supporting them against the A.N.C. and thus initiate strife amongst the people at a time when the campaign has not yet firmly taken roots.
3. To keep children out of school and offer them no alternative occupation or education would leave them idling and exposed to mischievous influences, and this might have the effect of disillusioning and discouraging those parents who participated in the withdrawal, with the consequence that they might send their children back to school, and this would be a victory for the Nationalists and a defeat for the campaign.
4. The permanent or indefinite withdrawal of the children may result in the services of the teachers being terminated. Fearing this result the teachers might initiate ~~the~~ a counter-campaign amongst the parents and children and in that way undermine the weight and authority of the A.N.C. amongst the African people.

✓ 5. A decision

5. A decision to withdraw the children permanently would oblige the A.N.C. members to keep their children out of school, and the sacrifice of these few children would not affect the overall situation and would certainly not prevent the continuation of Bantu Education on a scale dangerous to our future.

The crux of the arguments of a "limited period protest" is that permanent withdrawal requires:-

- (a) Far more intense organisation than is evident now.
- (b) Elaborate plans and the establishment of a machinery which would handle the immense tasks and problems which would face the organisation as a result of the permanent withdrawal of the children from 1st April. Judging from the campaign even the machinery to organise the people is very weak, it is difficult to see how the organisation would be able in such a short time to re-organise itself to perform these complex tasks.
- (c) It would be unwise to expose the organisation to further damage by embarking on an action for which there is no proper preparations and in which the conditions for its success have not been provided.

The alternative to a permanent or indefinite withdrawal would be to stage a protest and withdrawal of the children for a stated period, for a week.

This would avoid the grave danger of exposing the organisation and campaign to damage, and it would be a test to the organisation to reveal the response of the people and the campaign and indicate the amount of work which still had to be done for a permanent withdrawal. It would also give the organisation an opportunity to intensify agitation for a permanent withdrawal and allow it to plan and create a machinery to cope with the tasks and ~~problems~~ problems which would be involved in the permanent withdrawal.

WHAT WOULD THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF A PROTEST BE?

As this is only the first step in the campaign it would be a preparation for a more hard and bitter struggle against Bantu Education which may take many forms. The parents or many of them would have been prepared by raising their political consciousness and unity during the protest. The children would have been inculcated with the attitude of rejecting Bantu Education, and they would return to school knowing that Bantu Education is objectionable and would be ready to withdraw from the schools when they are called upon to do so.

The children who return to school will be in a position to influence others and to organise activities in school which would sabotage Bantu Education and prepare the other children for permanent withdrawal.

What are the Arguments for a Permanent Withdrawal of the Children as from the 1st April?

(a) THE CONDITIONS CREATED BY BANTU EDUCATION.

- (1) Bantu Education and its ancillaries the Youth Camps etc have been introduced by the Nationalist not merely to stem and suppress the growth of resistance and opposition to their fascist regime, but to uproot and destroy the legitimate aspirations of the peoples at their source the mind.
- (11) The Nationalists wanted to destroy the growth of political consciousness of the people, which is a direct result of their intensified oppression of the people, in order that

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they may entrench their fascist and further intensify their exploitation and oppression of the people.

(iii) to carry out their schemes, the nationalists no longer rely only on indirect forms of propaganda and Education, like their bulletins, radio and redistribution. But they will, as from the 1st April embark on direct forms of education in schools and Youth Camps and later in all places where there are youth.

The Nationalists are prepared to wait for 10 to 20 years for the success of their plans. If they succeed in destroying the sensitivity of the youth to their conditions and succeed in uprooting and destroying the aspirations of the people, then they will succeed in destroying the liberatory movements gradually.

Looked at from this point of view, the fight against Bantu Education and the ancilla ries is the sharpest point of conflict between the forces of freedom and democracy and the forces of fascist fascism; between the forces of science and the forces of darkness, between the forces of progress and the upliftment of the people and those of economic chaos which would result in the most miserable impoverishment of the people.

The introduction of Bantu Education ushers in a new era in South Africa; the period of the rise or fall of fascism; the period of the growth or destruction of political consciousness; the period of the strengthening or weakening of the liberatory movement. The struggle against Bantu Education therefore is not merely a struggle for better or improved education but it is a struggle for the preservation and improvement of the conditions for liberation. It is the struggle for the preservation and growth of the very life of the liberatory movements. The form and effectiveness of the resistance to Bantu Education will therefore determine the form and the effectiveness of the resistance to every other assault by the Nationalists.

The democratic progressive and liberatory movements in South Africa can in no way be party either actively or passively either for a short time or a long one to a scheme which is so clearly designed to destroy and uproot the legitimate aspirations of the people and to destroy the hope of achieving freedom.

WHAT THEN ARE THE TASKS OF THE ORGANISATION?

(a) Bantu Education can only be defeated by an unflinching stand taken at its very inception and not after it has become established. The organisation must therefore call upon the people to turn their backs resolutely and irrevocably on the present system of South Africa. Their immediate unwavering and complete rejection of the Nationalist system of education will be the most significant method of demonstrating the peoples' disgust and opposition to the present set-up.

By getting out of Verwoerd's schools the people will be setting themselves on the hard, difficult and narrow path towards liberation, and the people must be clearly informed of the difficulties which lie ahead of them should they decide to withdraw their children.

(b) April 1st must be the beginning of the withdrawal because it is the beginning of Dr. Verwoerd's Bantu Education System. It is not expected that there will be complete success on the first day or even within the first month or year. The Nationalists have introduced a process from which they hope to reap dividends in the form of the paralysis of the resistance of the people after 10 to 20 years. The people must be prepared to wait a long time before they are able to declare that they have smashed the schemes of the Nationalists. However, each parent and each child ~~who~~ who turns his back on Bantu Education from the 1st April represents a victory for the liberatory movement and a defeat for the Nationalists. They will join the force which will ultimately defeat the Nationalists

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The withdrawal of children from schools is not merely an attempt to save the children from the destructive effects of Bantu Education, but it is a denial and frustration of Verwoerd's fascist control over the lives of the African children and an assertion by the parents of their rights to control their children. In the course of this struggle the political situation in the country would be discussed and handled at child level. Political consciousness would commence at the age of 6 or 7. The child would not merely be a bone of contention but would be placed in conditions in which it would develop the very qualities which the Nationalists want to destroy.

The people are bound by the very nature of the situation to take control of the education of their children.

The intense desire of the people for an Education which will improve their position and their rejection of Bantu Education will be a very effective force in rallying the people to organise and provide their own education for freedom.

Under the present conditions the primary object of the Nationalists is to enslave the people. For them the aim, organisation and administration of African education must be for the enslavement of the African and the entrenchment of Nationalist fascism. For the people whose historic task at the moment is to free themselves education must be for freedom, for the strengthening of the liberatory movement and the advancement towards their goal. They must organise and participate in the planning of it. It will be conducted in crude surroundings and will not in any way resemble the education of the government either in purpose, form or organisation and result. There will not be the ordinary certificates but its products will not be docile slaves but courageous, selfless servants of the people. The people under the leadership of the liberatory movement are capable of organising education for freedom, just as they are capable of organising any organisation for freedom. They must learn to do this at the very beginning of their conflict with Verwoerd's Bantu Education.

What are the difficulties in a "limited period" protest?

(a) In the light of the unqualified condemnation of Bantu Education, a protest, coming at the very time when the Nationalists are implementing their plans on the children, which calls upon the parents to absent their children from school for a week and then return them voluntarily to inhale the "poison" seems untimely and contradictory. It seems even more contradictory for the A.N.C. to say in one and the same breath that the people should reject Bantu Education uncompromisingly but they should also send their children back to the Bantu Education Schools.

(b) The situation is aggravated by Dr. Verwoerd's threat that children who are withdrawn will not be readmitted. If Dr. Verwoerd carries out his threat on all or some of the children the A.N.C. branches will find themselves engaged by hundreds of parents whose children were turned back. The parents would want to know if the A.N.C. would assist them in getting their children back to school. The A.N.C. would either have to assist them, or refuse to assist them or organise relief occupation for the children. But this relief occupation will not have the deliberate political generation which it would have had if it was organised because of the permanent withdrawal of the children. The A.N.C. could not ~~claim~~ claim that children who were outside school represented a victory of the people over Verwoerd. This might have the serious effect of weakening the campaign against Bantu Education.

In view of the situation, therefore a protest would only be a means of avoiding the difficulties of providing alternative education if Dr. Verwoerd readmits the majority of the children, this appears to be a very thin hope on which to base a campaign.

(c) In order to be successful and effective a protest must roll:

7/large numbers

Large numbers of people throughout the country. This rally must be done within the week of protest. With the present weakness of the campaign it is not likely that sufficient children will be withdrawn to constitute an effective protest. But that same number of children may represent a resounding victory of a campaign for permanent withdrawal.

The number of children who will be withdrawn may also be affected by the intensification of threats and propaganda by the government and parents may be reluctant to withdraw their children when this would mean that they would have to seek admission for them the following week.

(d) the parents may be exposed to various methods of intimidation when they attempt to return their children to schools. This might have the effect of disillusioning them and demoralising them.

(e) Even if there were many people who would support a 7 day absence of children and who would refuse to support a permanent withdrawal it seems that calling upon the few who would definitely turned their backs on Bantu Education to send their children would be asking them to do so distasteful a task that it might have the effect of demoralising them.

(f) The people must and are capable of understanding that it is not the A.N.C. which is depriving them of education for their children but it is the government which has done so. It is not the A.N.C. which is asking them to sacrifice the welfare of their children but it is the government which is demanding that they should sacrifice their children and freedom. Just as the defiers realise that the cause of their suffering in prison was not the A.N.C. but the government so too will the people understand that the A.N.C. has not robbed them of anything.

The Anglican Church in Johann esburg Diocese has taken a resolute stand and it is closing down its schools from the 1st April. There will therefore be thousands of children out of school on that day. Is it correct for the A.N.C. to fall short of this uncompromising stand and if so what will the attitude of the A.N.C. be towards the thousands of children who will be outside. Will it embrace them in the protest and then urge them to find schooling accomodation elsewhere after the protest? What will the effect of this be on the heroic stand adopted by the Anglican Church.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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