

as South Africa is concerned, here again we have our peculiar conditions. Peaceful co-existence between whom? Between the Soviet people and a minority of the people of South Africa who rule the country and who solely enjoy all the rights to culture, education, etc? What would be more beneficial politically? An artiste troupe coming to South Africa from the Soviet Union and leaving behind wonderful impressions among a tiny fraction who partake of the country's cultural life? Or the Soviet troupe refusing to come to this country and thereby winning the admiration and gratitude of the overwhelming majority of the peoples?

One cannot just pick on a popular demand of the time and apply it mechanically to any country and to any situation. Of course, everyone would love to see Madame Ulanova or the Janacek Quartet, Yehudi Menuhin and the other great artists of the world. But the times demand a sacrifice in favour of the greater long-term benefit to the cause of the people's struggle. The continued performances by international cultural figures in South Africa will leave behind fine memories for a comparatively few people. The greater majority of the people will remain indifferent. But, let the artists and actors of the world boycott South Africa and thus help further the cause of progress and freedom.

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# BANTU EDUCATION

## A COMMUNICATION

**SIR,**—The Government of the day has repeatedly told us that Bantu Education is not inferior in standard to that of the European child in this country, and that this was merely different because a "Bantu child" was "a child trained and conditioned in Bantu culture, endowed with a knowledge of a Bantu language and imbued with values, interests and behaviour patterns learnt at the knee of a Bantu mother." The fallacy of this contention will at once dawn on the mind of the reader for it is axiomatic that education, like the breath we breathe and the sunshine that warms us alike irrespective of race, country or colour, is one and indivisible.

The type of education which is intended to "function only in South Africa because it exists and can function only in and for a particular social setting" is clearly a hideous thing, a hydra-headed gorgon aimed at destroying the child's instinct for self-respect and to leave it a submissive, cringing, fear-ridden creature. What in effect is the social setting Bantu Education is intended to serve? Let us see what the "Bantu Education Journal" March 1956 has to say on this question:

**"... but it must be recognised that in areas which are the scene of the conflicting interests of different racial groups the opportunity for the Bantu for unfettered development is severely restricted."** Hence the

African's abject poverty and inferior position in industry due to being denied administrative jobs by successive Union governments. Prohibitive measures are increasingly piling up on the shoulders of the African to "restrict him severely" from responsible and lucrative posts in factories and industrial concerns. Bantu Education prepares the African child for menial and manual labour. Further, as to areas in which the interests of racial groups clash, not only the Proclaimed Urban or European areas but also the entire surface of the Union of South Africa constitutes a terrain of constant contradictions. Ever since our forefathers met the White man on the banks of the Fish River the struggle for land ownership has been waged ceaselessly, and with the Africans' loss of land ownership has gone hand in hand also the loss to him of his Freedom.

From the time of Union, and even before the four member Provinces were incorporated to form the Union of South Africa, signs have not been wanting of a tendency on the part of the powers that be to formulate an inferior, freak type of education for some time known as Native Education but which with further deterioration under the present Government became Bantu Education.

This is what the "South African Native Affairs Commission" 1903, Para. 343 has to recommend for the education of the African: "... it is urged that industrial training and instruction in manual work are of particular advantage to the Native **in fitting him for his position in life.**" How very like the utterances of some Ministers and officials of the present Government. But to quote the "South African Native Affairs Commission" further: "Nor must it be forgotten that the great demand of South Africa at present is **for the unskilled or partially skilled Native labour.**" (My emphasis.) In Para. 342 we find "The Commission is of opinion that regular moral and religious instruction should be given in all Native schools." What are the results of 50 years educational work carried on along the lines recommended by the Lagden Commission? That many Africans who are products of the Native Education Policy of 1903 lack that virile sense of patriotism which is a primary prerequisite in the struggle for the amelioration of the lot of their fellow Africans. They have become struggle-shy, literary snobs and warriors of the fountain pen. Their attitude to the liberation struggle connotes a mixture of conceit and fatuous timidity which must eventually bring them into disrepute with their less enlightened fellowmen.

We are in the grip of something many Africans don't understand; namely a clash of interests, a set of contradictions unavoidably destined to bring about continued friction between oppressor and oppressed, between the ruler and the ruled. In this struggle there can be no neutral midway camp. It's either you are with the Liberation Movement or against it. And how can man serve better than "facing fearful odds, for the ashes of his fathers, the temples of his gods," and the discovery of his true self through service for his own people.

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