

EDUCATION FOR SERVITUDE.

(An Address delivered to the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans at Grahamstown on Wednesday, 19th. October. 1949.)

I am sure that many of us here tonight are familiar with that provocative little book by Oliver Walker entitled "Kaffirs are Lively", dedicated, as it is, to "Kafferboeties, Liberals and other Christian gentlemen of Africa". Chapter XII of that book is headed by the question, "Education for what?". In that Chapter the author discusses "Native Education" and in effect arrives at the conclusion which forms the subject of my address to-night. In view of the fact that yet another Commission is at present going round searching for an ideological and pseudo-scientific justification for perfecting the technique of White domination euphemistically called "Native Education", I thought this subject might be of general interest.

First of all some facts about "Native Education" are worth noting :-

1. 80% of African adults cannot read or write.
2. Practically all existing African schools are private schools owned and run by missionaries.
3. Over 70% of African children of school going age are not in school.
4. Less than 2% of those who go to school go beyond Std. VI.
5. The State pays ^{annually} about £30 per European child and only about £3 per African child attending school.
6. A shockingly high percentage of teachers in African schools are not qualified to teach.
7. "Native Education", has been described as "a doleful tale of shortages" - shortages of classrooms, equipment, books, teachers salaries etc.

We delude ourselves if we imagine that these deficiencies in "Native Education" are due to ignorance of the real state of affairs on the part of those who control the destinies of state, or even to lack of funds. The denial of education to Non-European, especially African, children is deliberate and calculated and is part and parcel of the policy of White Supremacy. "Native Education", or the lack of it, is a technique of White domination. It is much more helpful to recognise this fact and to face up frankly and honestly to its implications than to point to little improvements, little concessions, here and there and to pretend that the will is there but the means are lacking.

A few years back I came across an ~~amp~~ article entitled "Crisis in Native Education" in a well known liberal magazine. It gave a well thought out analysis of the desperate plight of African education and advocated a ten-year plan to put all African children of school-going age in school - "if the necessary funds are made available!" But that condition is the very crux of the matter. Will the necessary funds ever be made available? The answer is a categorical "No", so long as the Herrenvolk ideology persists in this country. No amount of ten-year plans or even 100-year plans for that matter will alter the situation one whit as long as, according to General Smuts, all in South Africa are agreed upon the mission of the Europeans to rule over the non-Europeans in perpetuity, all - except those who are "mad, quite mad". There will have to be a lot of madness before a genuine intention to educate the Africans on the part of the rulers can manifest itself.

But I am anticipating. I have laid down a hypothesis, namely that "Native Education" is education for servitude. Let me amplify it by stating that "Native Education" in its practice, its administration and control and in its philosophy is calculated to ensure and perpetuate White domination over Black. I shall deal separately with each of these three aspects.

The Practice of "Native Education". I have already referred to the illiteracy of 80% of the adult African population. It remains to state/.

state that what little there is of education for the African children is completely segregated from that of the other racial groups. There are separate schools, separate teachers, separate syllabuses, separate control, separate training facilities and salaries for teachers.. Needless to say segregation in education is part and parcel of the general policy of segregation and there is no field in which it is more complete. Pseudo-scientific excuses have been given to explain this differentiation. We are told for instance that the Africans must be segregated for their own good because they are an "independent race" with their "own culture", and "racial soul", their own inferior intelligence and standard of civilization, their own "special aptitudes" etc. etc ad nauseam. But such views have no scientific basis in fact. I am aware of the pseudo-scientific findings of Messrs. Fick, Van Rensburg & Co. but it has been shown that these findings are quite unscientific. In fact they are little different from the type of propaganda calculated to transform a bag of potatoes into a national hero. This tendency in South Africa to prostitute science and scientific method for party political purposes deserves passing comment. The depth to which science can sink when it is made to bolster up theories of imaginary racial superiority is well demonstrated by the following quotation from the findings of a true-blue Nazi "Nordic" scientist:- He writes,

"In non-Nordics the teeth, corresponding to the snout-like narrowness of the upper jaw, stand at a more oblique angle than in animals. The grinding motion of chewing in Nordics allows mastication to take place with the mouth closed, whereas men of other races are inclined to make the same smacking noise as animals....The Nordic mouth has further superiorities. Just as the colour red has a stirring effect, the bright red mouth of Nordics attracts and provokes kisses and courtship. The Nordic mouth is kiss-capable. On the other hand the non-Nordic's broad, thick-lipped mouth together with his wide dilated nostrils displays sensual eagerness, a false and malicious sneering expression and a dipping movement indicative of voluptuous self-indulgence. Talking with the aid of hands and feet is characteristic of Non-Nordics, whereas the Nordic man stands calmly, often enough with his hands in his pockets. Generally speaking the Nordic race alone can emit sounds of untroubled clearness, whereas among non-Nordics the pronunciation is impure, the individual sounds are more confused and like the noises made by animals such as barking, sniffing, snoring, squeaking. If non-Nordics are more closely allied to monkeys and apes than to Nordics, why is it possible for them to mate with Nordics and not with apes? The answer is this: it has not been proved that non-Nordics cannot mate with apes." We may laugh at this arrant nonsense masquerading under the name of science and wonder how a Professor at a University could be capable of it, but how is it different from these statements made recently by a South African Professor. "Inter-breeding might cause detrimental physiological tendencies in the human race such as the deterioration of the respiratory system....Many scientists think that miscegenation causes a tendency towards tuberculosis and other lung diseases. It has been ascertained that the intelligence quotient of the Native is below that of the European."

The point I am trying to emphasise is that there is no scientific justification for segregation. The real reason for apartheid is to perpetuate our colour-caste society with the Whites at the top of the Pyramid and the Blacks at the bottom. "Native Education" is just a facet in the general pattern. In fact there are two systems of education, one for the master and the other for the slave. "The education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society", the Inter-Departmental Committee on Native Education correctly comments. Is it therefore surprising that in actual practice educational segregation has amounted to inferior accommodation and equipment for African schools, inferior training and inferior salaries for African teachers, illiteracy for the great mass of the African people?

Control and Administration. I go on now to consider the control and administration of "Native Education" in so far as it has a bearing on the subject under consideration. The history of the control and administration/....

administration of Native Education reveals its function as a technique of domination. Briefly stated this history consists of persistent attempts to segregate and centralise control in order to bring "Native Education" in line with general Native Policy.

The Act of Union among other things,

- (a) vested all political power exclusively in the Europeans,
- (b) created a Native Affairs Department to carry out its Native policy,
- (c) vested control of Education other than Higher in the Provinces.

The Native policy makers soon realised that education was an important agency in the propagation of policies and desired the Central Government to take over its control. The Native Affairs Commission recommended accordingly in 1921. The Provinces were not prepared to let go and they promptly set about to prove that they were just as capable of introducing segregation in education as the Native Affairs Department. In 1922 the Cape Administration drew up a differentiated syllabus for African primary and training schools. Up till then the Africans wrote the same academic and professional examinations as the Europeans without serious mishaps. In fact in some cases they attended the same schools. A stop was now put to this practice.] In recognition of this first instalment of apartheid the Government, in 1925, decided to leave the control of ~~the~~ Native Education with the Provinces, but to undertake financial responsibility therefor.

The Native policy makers were not entirely pleased with this arrangement. Although the Government now paid the Piper, it felt that it could not very well call the tune so long as control remained with the Provinces. In 1932 the Native Economic Commission recommended central control but nothing came of it at the time. In 1935, however, the Government appointed a Commission on Native Education and one of its main terms of reference was "to consider and make recommendations as to whether, in view of the extent to which the Union Government has assumed financial responsibility for Native Education, it should take over the administration from the Provinces, and if so, in what way Native Education should be administered." In due course the Commission recommended central control under the Education Department but Provincial Administration.

In 1939 Mr. Fagan, the then Minister of Native Affairs, made a determined bid to bring Native Education under his Department and were it not for the outbreak of the war and its sequel it is almost certain that the education of African children would now be mis-managed by the Native Affairs Department.

In 1944, largely through the influence of the late J.H. Hofmeyr Native Education was placed under a special wing of the Department of Education but its administration remained with the Provinces. There the somewhat deflated political football now rests, but I shall not be surprised if, in the near future, Prof. Eiselen in his new capacity, gains possession. Not that the passing of the football from one Department to another will make any appreciable difference to its essential nature.

The Aim of Native Education. I have attempted to show that Native Education is designed to bolster up White Supremacy in its practice and in its control and administration. I now proceed to show that its philosophy, its avowed aims and objects, also points in this direction. I have no desire to be involved in a philosophical discussion on the aims of education. To do so would be presumptuous on my part, and in any event it is not necessary for my argument.

I think it will generally be agreed that there are 3 cardinal aims of education in a democratic state, viz.:

1. To equip the boy or girl to play his part as a citizen of a democracy - i.e. education for citizenship.
2. To equip him to earn his living - i.e. vocational education.
3. To enable him to develop all his latent powers and faculties and so to enjoy a good life - i.e. Liberal Education.

It must be conceded that, judged by these standards, Native Education is a dismal failure. Indeed an official attempt has been made to give a philosophical justification for this failure by the formulation of specious aims of "Native Education". In this connection Chapter VI of the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education/.....

Education, which was published in 1936, is very revealing. I think this Report still remains the most important official document concerning Native Education - a distinction which, by the looks of things, it will not continue to enjoy ~~for very long~~ much longer now -. For that reason its formulation of the aim of Native Education is worth considering.

The Committee starts off by saying Native Education is "as much a political and economic problem as it is a cultural problem..!" It is "inextricably bound up with questions of land, agriculture, and industrial policy, not to mention political policy...Just as elementary education for the masses in England was strenuously opposed by the ruling classes even as late as the 19th. Century", for political reasons, so also is the education of the Africans opposed by the White ruling class in South Africa for political reasons.

It is necessary to state here that this opposition is nothing new. It does not represent the conquest of the traditionally liberal Cape by the neurotic reactionaries of the North. On the contrary it was the official policy of the Cape Administration as early as 1891. In that year, in his official report, the S.G.E. discouraged the introduction of elementary education on a wide scale amongst the "masses of heathen" because it might cause "social inconvenience" and might even be "dangerous".

The Committee states that the popular opposition to Native Education, as it is today, on the part of most Whites is based on the belief that it "spoils the Native" i.e. makes him "cheeky", lazy, and "less docile as a servant", and makes him despise "his own culture". Consciously or unconsciously the average European believes that Native Education should aim at "keeping the Native in his place". As the Committee points out, the Natives place is vaguely thought of in the geographic sense i.e. the reserves or from the point of view of status i.e. an inferior being fit to do the menial tasks.

The Committee justifies this attitude and elaborates on it and in the process arrives at its notorious aim of Native Education already quoted. "The Education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society!"

In support of its standpoint the Committee states that "South African society as a whole consisting of Europeans and Natives is not a democratic society" and since education should follow not lead the the social order in a country "a full liberal philosophy is not at present applicable to Native Education".

The Committee then recommends Jowitt's aim of Native Education, namely, "the effective organisation of the Natives experiences so that his tendencies and powers may develop in a manner satisfactory to himself and to the community in which he lives by the growth of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills!" In order to allay any fears that real education ~~was~~ is at last going to be given to the African, the Committee hastens to explain that what is "socially desirable" and what will prove "satisfactory to the community" will be determined not by the tastes and needs of the African himself but by the tastes and needs of the ruling class. In other words the African must be taught to accept the status quo whereby the White man is master and the African his slave. To add insult to injury the Committee recommends a syllabus for African schools in which Religion, Health and Sanitation, Tool Subjects, Manual Work, Industrial Training, Agriculture, play a predominant part. Thus in the last analysis Native Education turns out to be nothing more than a system of retardation, indoctrination and preparation for menial tasks, in short the very antithesis of a liberal education.

As previously indicated the Committee has a very plausible defence for its philosophy of education for servitude. It argues that such aims of education as the "securing for everyone the conditions under which individuality is most completely developed" are good enough for education in the European Society which is "homogeneous and democratic". But South African society as a whole consisting of Europeans and Natives is not a democratic society! It is a colour-caste society. This contention is correct as long as you believe that the status quo is/....

is just and should be continued unto eternity. But an educational system which merely seeks to perpetuate the past is narrow and circumscribed. Society is not static, and real education should use the past ~~as~~ only as a springboard to train citizens not only for the present conditions of society but for a changing society. If White South Africa today ~~is~~ accepts segregation and discrimination it has no right to tie future generations to that acceptance.

The fact remains, however, that there can be no real education for both Black and White in this country as long as the policy of White supremacy prevails. Because, as was the case in Nazi Germany, the schools tend to become agencies for the propagation of the ~~Hex~~ Herrenvolk ideology. There is even now a significant cultural sterility in South Africa primarily due to lack of social intercourse between the racial groups to stimulate and enlarge the imagination, but also due to the fact that some of our best brains are pre-occupied with research calculated to give a semblance of justice to the fraud of White superiority and ~~the~~ non-White inferiority. This tremendous task, this squaring of the circle, has now become a favourite occupation with University Professors.

The danger here from our point of view comes not so much from the avowed apologists of White Supremacy like Professors Cilliers, Uys, Eiselen because in any event whatever gift they bring us is immediately suspect. We can always say of them, like the once-beaten-twice-shy Trojan, "quidquid id est timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!" The danger comes from those liberal intellectuals who profess to reject White superiority but who immediately whittle down democracy so that in the words of Prof. Thompson, of the University of Capetown, it "will not mean the collapse of White supremacy!"

I think I owe it to this audience to amplify this statement a little. A few years back I was not a little shocked when reading Prof. Hoernle's otherwise good book on "South African *Native Policy* and the Liberal Spirit". I came across a passage to the effect that the democratic ideal ^{of liberty} was conceived in homogeneous societies and has to be rethought in multi-racial societies. I thought this was a very significant retreat on the Liberal front. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge and the orderly retreat is threatening to become a rout. This feeling was inspired among other things by a pamphlet published by the Institute of Race Relations entitled "Democracy in multi-racial Societies", and written by Mr. L.M. Thompson, Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Capetown. In brief Mr. Thompson asserts that the democratic constitutional system was developed in a uni-racial milieu, and that is, among "Western Europeans who constitute a large uni-racial society". This last assertion ~~is~~ suits Mr. Thomson's argument but it is very debatable. Hitler for one would never have accepted it. Mr. Thompson himself distinguishes the Alpine, Nordic and Mediterranean races, and correctly condemns the idea of race as being an unscientific concept. Still that does not deter him from developing his argument.- needs must. He alleges that the application of democracy in multi-racial Societies is made difficult by the "reconciliation of the claims of contrasted ethno-cultural groups". These groups, according to him, are "dissimilars" because of differences in "cultural forms", "cultural levels", "religious faiths" and even "political capacity". (May I say in passing that the social sciences are doing a great ~~deal~~ ~~of~~ disservice to humanity in so far as they tend to over-emphasise the differences between ethnic groups and to minimise the most significant thing, their similarity and common humanity). Mr. Thompson then "attempts to reconcile democracy with the realities of multi-racial societies", and in the process of reconciliation democracy is turned into so many queer shapes that in the end it loses its form and substance completely. After this conjuring trick the learned Professor arrives at this re-assuring conclusion: "Indeed for a long time to come the majority of the registered voters ... would be Europeans: and national leadership would remain in European hands for an indefinite period, because the whites start with the inestimable advantage of higher average culture, greater material power, and long experience of democratic institutions. Democracy will not therefore mean the collapse of 'white supremacy'." On the contrary it is the only basis of political organisation which will enable Euro-

peans' leadership to be continuously exerted in South Africa! In other words our liberal "friends" are saying to the Apostles of Apartheid, "Don't be so stupid. Come let us deal wisely with them. Your bovine methods will not do. Don't you realise that we are becoming more and more unpopular in the eyes of the world all because of your bungling. Don't you see that U.N.O. has given us a loophole if only we have the sense to see it. U.N.O. justifies the withholding of democratic rights from a subject people as long as they are culturally backward. All you need to do is to proclaim democracy for all and then set up the Junior Certificate as the minimum educational ~~work~~ qualification for citizenship and thereafter make sure that as few Natives as possible attain this standard. 'Such a system would be democratic in that all educated ~~citizens~~ adult citizens, irrespective of race, would possess full franchise rights. The franchise would be withheld from the uneducated and the partly educated on the reasonable grounds that moderate educational attainments are a necessary requirement for the exercise of political responsibility!'

The truth of the matter is that the basic principles of the democratic system are clear and universal, and are in no need of reconciliation or adaptation to any society. Simply stated they are popular representation, majority rule, adult suffrage. What stands in need of reconciliation and adaptation is not democracy. Mr. Thompson comes nearer the truth when he says, "It is ~~not the juxtaposition of the races~~ ~~democracy~~ the juxtaposition of the races, not the democratic system that creates the major difficulty." Even here he is not stating the problem correctly unless by "juxtaposition of the races" he means the racial arrogance of a minority group in South Africa ~~that~~ is obsessed with its divine mission to rule the majority group which is ~~assigned~~ ^{degraded} to labour eternally under the stigma of inferiority.

I do not believe in the "mutual incompatibility" of the "contracted ethno-cultural groups" in South Africa. I believe that it is possible for all the different peoples of this land to live together in harmony under a democratic system of Government. It is significant, by the way, that whereas in the past it was customary to treat Europeans in South Africa as one solid ethnic group and the non-whites as Coloureds, Indians and Africans, there are now, according to Prof. Cilliers and others of his persuasion, no less than six "mutually incompatible" racial groups - Afrikaners, British, Jews, Coloureds, Indians and Africans. It is also significant that while in the past it was customary to speak of European Education as against Native, Coloured and Indian Education there is now talk of Christian National Education and of rewriting South African History. These are straws in the wind. Exclusiveness and hatred, like love, grows by what it feeds on. This ought to be a lesson to the other racial groups in the European section. They ought to see that the struggle for democracy for the non-whites is their first line of defence against the growing menace of fascism.

I fear that I may be accused of "dragging "politics" into a discussion on education. Let me remind you that it is the considered opinion of a Government Commission including all the Chief Inspectors of the Provincial Departments that Native Education "is as much a political and economic problem as it is a cultural problem". It would have been ~~more~~ preferable to some of us, I know, to have steered clear of any contentious matters likely to wound tender susceptibilities. But that would have been the type of dishonesty of which I am not capable. If I have expressed my views strongly it is not because of any sadistic desire to hurt anyone, but because the times demand no equivocation or beating about the bush. Our times demand fundamental thinking and heart searchings. I am fully aware of the practical dangers that beset such a course. I know that in this country whether you are Black or White as soon as you express yourself freely on these matters and try to live up to your convictions you are immediately dubbed a "Communist", "agitator", "racialist" or "Kafferboetie" and outcast; ~~and~~ detectives dog your footsteps and soon enough you will land in gaol. Yes, the way to freedom and righteousness in our country is the way of the cross-the via dolorosa. But it is the only way for those who do not rate self/..

self-preservation as the highest principle of life.

In conclusion let me read you a Declaration of Faith. It is the preamble to a memorandum on the education of Africans submitted by the Teachers' League of South Africa in May 1949 to the Commission on Native Education. It runs,

"First, we stand for complete democracy in education; by this we mean the unconditional rejection of any form of segregation, apartheid, separation, parallel development or "development along your own lines" and the eradication of the Colour Bar in the present school system with its segregated schools for children alleged to be of a particular race or skin colour.

Second, we regard the division of the school system on a so-called racial or skin-colour basis as not merely arbitrary, discriminatory, and insulting but as one of the most nefarious means whereby the groups designated "Non-whites" are deliberately kept in a state of ignorance and servitude, while the off-spring of the so-called "white" section of the population are trained to occupy a dominant position in South African Society.

Third, it is our conviction that there will always be friction and active strife in this country so long as a segregated or "aparte" school system is maintained."