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The Kangwane Project

The concept paper of the Kangwane Work and Study Centre (KNEE), envisaged that students would be engaged for half their time in academic study and the other half in well-managed productive activities meant to enhance them, for appropriate learning purposes, to both technical and managerial operations and the related theory teaching. The HNSC would comprise differently located sub-centres, each serving local economic development as well as learning, the two projects being mutually supportive.

The linking of theory and practice in the combination of work and study was seen, in this concept, as a better means of general learning for everyone, than conventional academic education. It was also seen as offering a broader and more relevant education, and more beneficial, socially and individually, to all learners. Work and study better mediate the assimilation of the wider and more appropriate, better integrated, body of knowledge in the Centre's overall curriculum. In this concept it translates the narrow technical notion of vocational education.

The project design anticipated a management structure rooted in representative participation of the communities, of parents, teachers, learners and production/training personnel. It also anticipated that there would be close linkage of all kinds, between the Centre and their communities, developing out of the Centre's mutual, combined educational, productive and development capacities.

From the concept was the education with production (ewp) curriculum which FEP was developing with help from official experts in their fields from nine neighbouring countries (and several African educators). FEP had also engaged consultants to write textbooks and other teaching and learning materials for the curriculum. The Fundation had interested the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) in examining the ewp subjects, both in neighbouring countries, and in South Africa in conjunction with the Independent Examination Board (IEB). And FEP was also planning a set of courses to introduce teachers from SADC countries, and elected teachers from South Africa, to the ewp curriculum. FEP had had contact with the QNC Department of Education in Lusaka over many years and was more recently looking for the opportunity to introduce education with production to South Africa. The Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the founding of SDAFUCU, was the occasion for a Conference on Peoples' Education for Peoples' Future, which accepted in 1989 - that the time was now ripe for popular organisations to initiate projects, not just to alleviate the educational crisis, but more importantly to develop appropriate and practical models defining Peoples' Education.

This occasion brought the Chairperson of CDBATU'S NEDCDH and the FEP Director together, and was followed by more meetings between them, but attended 3130 by representatives at other interested organisations, both inside South Africa and in exile, including the ANC, in Gaborone, Harare and Lusaka. Out Of these meetings came a request to PEP to draft a concept paper for a proposed model Of People's Education, based on education with production. The concept paper so drafted was based on both FEP's and the writer's own experience, and on investigation of similar projects in a range of different countries, including SOMAFCD as originally designed. It was adapted from a model developed for Farm Line State conditions, and was sent to NEDCDH to distribute.

The writer was in exile until late 1990, and FEP had no presence Of its own in South Africa. NEDCDH's Chairperson assumed responsibility for all the groundwork inside the country preparatory to project implementation. This included consultation on the concept paper, identifying host to the project and locating it, negotiating with local authorities for land and support of other kind, handling work with likely participating personnel, especially teachers, setting up of a local planning committee, and investigation of a legal framework for the project and the incorporation Of its management structure " as the Youth Education Trust (YET). Two representatives Of the local planning committee visited Botswana for weeklong discussion with the writer to produce detailed implementation documentation on the project, based on information about local conditions. This was used in further local work and negotiations; it also formed the basis of applications to donors, which were followed up by a fundraising tour abroad organised by FEP. During the tour, NEDCDH's Chairman told donors that the KWSC would admit a large number of returning exiles. On the writer's return from exile after the tour, he was immediately plunged into a series Of constant travel, meetings, interviews, communication, negotiations, engagement of physical planners and of consultants for feasibility studies required by donors, planning, executive, organisational and administrative work, and informal training, all undertaken without any Secretarial or other assistance. No one else, it seemed, had ever been involved in a project quite Of this scope and character in South Africa. It was clear that even before it began, the project aims Of the school were in danger Of being overwhelmed on an overloaded prospectus with interwoven conflicts Of interest and inherent contradictions. In May 1991 it was decided, rightly or wrongly, to begin the project, despite contradictions between the concept and its execution, the absence Of its own properly qualified and experienced leaders, insufficient long-term funding, the lack of textbooks in several subjects in the curriculum, and the shortage of quarters for teachers and senior production/instructional personnel. What

the project had an the epmt, were enthueiastic, hardwmmrking and 1 cmmmitted young organisere ready to learn, teachere paid and ee-1 mended by the Hangwane Administration, wha had been introduced to i the exp curriculum; buildings, Some derilict, which cmuld be used % fer teaching, for pruductimn and for limited accomodatimn, given E (and leaeed) by the Authorities, and which a Buildere Brigade had 2 been eat up to renmvate: eome prmduction etaff, and funde enmugh ' to equip the project modeetly, and run it until 1992.

It wee felt dmhmre would Feepond better to appeals for a living project than they wmuld for one still being planned. FEP favoured proceeding, predictable probleme notwithstanding, believing that ewp would be mere forcefully placed an the agenda in Smuth Africa thereby, and hmping to ensure through patient negotiation that accmmmodatimn Of ethere' interests did not compromiee ite Own.

In early March 1 92, there were 14 teachere, 27B etudente, 30 Brigade trainees, 11 productimn managers and 40 prnduction team leadere and aeietante, at the project's two eubwcentree. The ewp curriculum hae proved a very pmpular alternative to that Of Bantu Eduuation, ammg teachers and etudente, and gene"ally eatiefactbw FY learning hae been recerded in reenect of meet, but by no meane all, etudente. Prwductionien unite engaged etudehte in agriculture, carpentrt, catering, cunetructimn, electrical inetallationh, motor mechanics and metal fabrication. Acceptable work and training hae taken place in meet, and uni:e have undertekkeh txtehmive physical equipping and furhiehing it, as S

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gale. The value mf this prwductionien, which ie hf acmeptable qualiw ty, over some Seven monthe, ie prabably armund H500 00Q.

By early April however, lees than a year after etartinq, deepite fair pregrehe in difficult circumetancee, and having survived \$ew veral ?RFIth mihiwcreee, the Eentre wee fer ed by mere 5 rimus ale 3 w whether temperarilly Or hot is yet t0 be SEEN"

The immediate Gauge mf th; CW. "a wee the mucubatimh Of mne eubm centre on 14 March by LUU yeung men and wmmen frmm Bmwetn, all claiming te he FLtUFnng exilee in danger Of their livee, end t0 have been admitted t0 the HWSC by YET'e farmer Directmr (the EM" NEDCGN Chairman!), whm had vacated mffice at the end at February. iefmre quitting, the Director had eet up a cmmmittee Of rente, which now s their paw

aw iteelf me an mfficial mrgah Of the prmject.

The YET Bmard, ii elf appminted by NEDCUM'E eHwChairmah, had net apprmved the yeuthe' edmieeion, nor Pecmghieed the "Parente' CDm\_ mittee", about which the Directmr never cmneulted it. The ymuthe held five Buard Membere hostage at the Centre for s'H heure an 20 March, after they had met parente " same a secund time n to call, uneucceeeefully, for withdrawal of their daughters and some. On 20 April, the SUB"CQhtFE wee still occupiedntparents wrote t0 Board Membere making wild allegatimne Of mismanagement and ether imprew

per conduct against the Beard and demanding its dissolution. Some of the contradictions underlying and underlying this crisis have arisen not of the establishment, composition and membership, by the Director acting alone and quite contrary to the terms of the concept paper, of a Board of Trustees, largely comprising higher ranking politicians and trade unionists based in Johannesburg, with little direct educational experience, no knowledge of education, with organizational loyalties that intruded into Trust affairs. There was, perhaps inevitably, jockeying for control of decision making, funds and patronage " and for credit! Let us as an afterthought, a large meeting representing Eastern Transvaal regional Structures, was called by the Director, to set up a Regional Management Committee (RMC), although its powers had not been considered and were not defined at the time. The local planning committee was dissolved, and with it went its convenor, who had been Project Coordinator. The next few months were dominated by a tug-of-war over control, between the HMO and the YET Board, and by attempts to insert some local day-to-day management structure at the Centre and to give it some authority. By the time its powers were defined, the frustrated RMC had faded away. Just before the "equipping student" crisis, the Board, strengthened with the appointment of a representative of QNC Education, was moving on to the stage of the earlier feasibility study required by the Director " to appoint a Project Director and support staff at the HQ and to downgrade the post of YET Director in Johannesburg. This circuitously caused the Director to quit his post, and the occupation of the HSC followed. At the time of writing, legal actions were pending.

The HWBC experience raises questions about the wisdom of FEP's Director (the writer), in pursuing the project in the face of predictable problems, and indeed tying the fortunes of education to a single project; and how the HWSC might successfully be brought back on track, as well as how to proceed if it is. These questions are to some extent tied up with the larger question of how education should be introduced into South Africa, if at all. Some general comment on the rationale of education with production, and a related critique of conventional schooling, might be appropriate here, more especially because one finds strong support for the emancipation of formal schooling - more of the same - in the evolution to the education crisis, and often quite superficial criticism " even from the Left of education, amongst educators here. There are of course standard critiques of conventional education. Some on the Left call it "Bourgeois", noting that among its main aims and functions is reproduction of the dominant socio-economic

system. This 'arguably impose certain characteristics, like em"  
 ceive theorisation, abstraction and verbalisation - mental  
 function germane to the role of the "Bourgeoisie" in societies  
 based on the division of mental and manual labour " as well as  
 suitable examination mechanism at fixed cut-off points, all  
 within the framework of appropriate socialisation (with m where  
 near sary - the addition of custodial care), the whole system at  
 best elitist for a few, and at worst repulsive for most.  
 While some view this in the context of a perceived interaction  
 between society and education, arguing that bourgeois education  
 often undermines itself by developing thinking capacity and by  
 transmitting potentially subversive knowledge, they may not al-  
 ways have taken sufficient account of the factors that mediate  
 assimilation of knowledge and influence behaviour. For example,  
 is it being that determines consciousness or consciousness that  
 determines being? Is rhetoric ever a reliable guide to practice?  
 In the debate about academic versus vocational education, NIEBM  
 with their focus on academic learning " are cited as an example for  
 South Africa on technical grounds; but disregarding social issues  
 such as were addressed by the Comprehensive School in Britain for  
 example, this does beg some aspects of the relationship between  
 education and Society, especially the potential of education to  
 promote job creation, in what conditions and on what conditions.  
 Education with production is -inclusive neither to socialism nor  
 capitalism, although its practice has been more widespread in the  
 former than the latter, and more so in less than in more devel-  
 oped countries, and is to be found everywhere in both formal and  
 non-formal modes. The minimum criteria for its recognition as an  
 identifiably beneficial educational practice are a mix of econom-  
 ic, social and pedagogical values in some meaningful balance.  
 One has been surprised to discover how few people who call them-  
 selves Communists in South Africa are aware that education with  
 production is an essential ingredient of Marxist educational doc-  
 trine and practice. It is well known that Marx wrote little about  
 "education", which was not then quite the apparently autonomous  
 school system it is now; but he made clear throughout his works  
 that he saw the shaping of consciousness and the acquisition of  
 skills and knowledge as a total and lifelong social process.  
 For him, the "education of the future" was one that would in the  
 case of every child above a given age "combine productive labour  
 with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods  
 of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method  
 of producing fully developed human beings". He rejected demands  
 of the Programme of (Botha for) abolition of child labour, arguing  
 that with proper safeguards for age and sex, "the early combina-  
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tion of education with productive work is one of the most potent (

means of social transformation". His reasoning was surely that it

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education at workers as workers was the key to their liberation. EWP has values in terms of pedagogical and technicalities of skill acquisition no 198\$ important than the revolutionary potential Marx assigned it. These relate to learning in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. In respect of the cognitive, the linking of study and work is most effective when curriculum reflects the real world. 'not only for the worker's sake but of work: the total development of the individual' --

pects of modern life in which is just what PEP aims to make it do. Management production processes, and other activities nowadays, involve (or should do) application of science and mathematics in areas of resource, health and technology, and in daily behaviour. Social, legal, cultural, economic and political factors all bear on production, facilitating or impeding it, as it bears on them. Organisation! management and entrepreneurship are essential to production. Development impacts on environment and raises questions of sustainability and quality of life. When these issues are incorporated in the curriculum then theory and what goes on in class are more potentially better linked to practice in what is on in productive work and real life. CDUs offer opportunities to support learning can be found in the activities of production units. The new curriculum which adds this subject matter to the basic of conventional curricula, includes Communication, Cultural Studies, Development Studies, Environmental and Social Studies, Fundamentals of Production, Mathematics and Science, emphasising application, and Technical/Production Studies, identifying linkages between each productive activity and education in the curriculum. Formal schooling assumes that many personal qualities, characteristic attitudes and behavioural traits are inherited, and that such learning as is possible in the affective domain takes place in classrooms in theoretical and simulated settings. Surely qualities like commitment, responsibility and perseverance, integrity and empathy, diligence and sociability, creativity, discipline and leadership are the product of nature and nurture, and are best inculcated and developed through mixing theory and practice in the conditions which production and the world outside create. The same is true of the psychomotor domain, and of skills development, of acquiring manual dexterity and nimble finger movements for machine operations and other production exercises. It also applies to learning quality performance while working fast, and learning to use materials economically and to care for tools. These pedagogical values will be more effectively realised if the productive component of work is diverse, well-organised and economically rewarding, either in terms of creation of infrastructure, like building schools and other public buildings or making equipment; or producing goods and services either to meet the institution's needs or to generate income by selling them to the public;

or indeed, engaging capably in socially useful activities. We know education cannot by itself alone create jobs. This needs appropriate policies at a broader socioeconomic level, with for example, mixed economies, parastatals, joint ventures, community projects and co-operatives. But schools can take part effectively and profitably in production and development and in giving students the fitting experience to students in all operations, management included, thereby passing on the knowledge and promoting the positive attitudes and confidence required to meet the challenge of making parastatals, community projects and co-operatives work. Pemples' insights, perceptions, understanding and aspirations derive from experiential learning and material conditions as much as from schooling. Stagnant rural settings, urban slums and slums and slums after little experience of the modern world and its technological complexity. By adopting production, schools create supportive learning environments otherwise absent locally. The need is to promote head-on a culture of learning a culture of production, and to make education part of the world of work (of the productive force), so that all learners come to understand facts and processes of production at the earliest possible age. Education with Production in South Africa

On the face of it there seems enormous need and potential for the introduction of ewp in South Africa, given the massive underdevelopment and unemployment that co-exists everywhere alongside the modern, "formal sector" of the economy. The entire education system, including that for Whites, seems in need of a thoroughgoing qualitative and quantitative overhaul and renewal if it is to begin to serve the necessary basic restructuring. The economic, racial and pedagogical benefits of ewp seem sorely needed, and can give impetus to People's Education for People's Power, mobilising the latent strength and talent of a vast body of youth daily growing rapidly more numerous as in time it grows younger. All the modes of education with production, and production with education, would seem to have a place here in a phased programme to introduce ewp, aimed at education for work for all, comprising the 30% study and 70% work/training scheme of Brigades (following the Botswana model), the historical half work half study model, and different proportions of the two, and distance education in the ewp curriculum for working people.

In different balance, ewp is relevant at all levels of all modes of education, from primary to tertiary education, in which all could be centres of development as well as of learning. Some of the ground for introducing ewp has already been broken, more especially the pioneering of the ewp curriculum and elaboration of models. The huge task yet to be tackled is identification of the

versified productive activities and technologies which different institutions can adopt and adapt, and selection, training and preparation of managerial and instructional personnel for production components of ewp at various institutions.

Involving institutions at all levels, make possible a supportive network: for comparative research, planning and evaluation; development of methodologies, approaches and materials for teaching ewp; for education and training of managerial, organisational, teaching and instructional staff for projects and programmes (including i.a. FEP's ewp tertiary level course); for developing appropriate technologies and management systems and training therein; and drawing up appropriate systems of testing and examinations. Besides involving technicians, links are needed with sympathetic elements in organised commerce, agriculture and industry, far as the existence in spreading well-organised and diversified production. A start has been made in this direction in December 1976 FEP is having with some universities and teacher training colleges agreements including subjects in the ewp curriculum as courses in B.Ed and Dip.Ed studies, as well as the FEP tertiary two-year ewp course. FEP is however a very small organisation with only two full-time executive staff, relying otherwise on part-time consultants, operating throughout the region and stretched as fully as it can be. For the moment the writer represents the full extent of FEP's capacity in South Africa.

It is clear that what is needed is a National Foundation for South Africa which will develop a specific programme for this country perhaps with the advice and help of FEW and the other Foundations and regimens present in the ewp regional network. Such a body should arise out of a meeting of interested and knowledgeable educators from all levels of all modes, and supportive and interested representatives of commerce, industry and agriculture. One would hope that a FEWSA would insist on participatory, democratic management of ewp projects which would rule out the kind of Board arbitrarily imposed in Hangwane.

Maybe FEP's best course at this stage in relating to the Hangwane project is to define the conditions on which it thinks ewp might have a chance of success there and to withdraw all its support if it thinks that these cannot be met. This will include having an appropriate management structure at the EMS).

Conclusion

We will no doubt hear a lot about the problems and failures of ewp, with which FEP incidentally is not unfamiliar. TD quote from Fred von Borel's Ph.D thesis, reproduced in extracts in the FEP Journal Education with Production, Vol 7 No 2, ewp, which by the way, is age-old "flourishes in times of idealism, reform and favourable conditions, and withers in times of social stability and economic



complacency". It is unpopular and "unpalatable" because it "appears to go against the grain of what in many cases have become man's conception of education. It opposes class structure; it emphasises physical work; intellectuals do not like it because it asks them to put down their books for a while and pick up a tool. Middle class parents do not like it because it eats all children to engage in manual activities commonly associated with the lower classes. Poor parents do not like it because to them education is a means for their children to join the ranks of government mainmained people".

This reflects much of the writer's own experience described at turgid length in Looking Forward from Serowe, published by FEP in Botswana. But FEP has evaluated problematical programmes such as Education for Self-Reliance (EQR), in Tanzania, Education Reform in Zambia, and the direction it has taken in Zimbabwe's ZIMFEP programme. The roots of the problems were overnight declarations by heads of state without any prior planning or organisation, and the failure to orientate all involved, and to provide full support on a realistic basis. SHAPE was set up in Lesotho to address difficulties there, and ZIMFEP is re-evaluating its own programme. In Lesotho, most programmes show satisfactory progress, and in Botswana despite problems the writer has described, Brigades are 27 years old and have done remarkably well. (The founder of Brigades is their most rigorous critic, mainly because they could not sustain achievements that were miraculous anyway)! It is often misperceived by self-styled rhetorical leftists with little real understanding of the theoretical underpinnings in the ideology they claim as theirs. In the survey of the writer's work in Serowe, cited above, some of these battles are described and the development of a theory of positive action and development and struggle are formulated. FEP's support for these positions is set out between pages 85 and 95 of the same booklet. FEP's work on curriculum is followed with particular interest in Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe and gives to education with particular vigour its most effective means of linking theory and practice, actually making it a more dynamic incarnation of Lunacharsky's Unified Labour School, invoking a totally different concept and practice than the revivalism of vocational education! As important is the proposal to give it a greater status in the academic world by introducing studies in it at university level, which may help in raising its status.

Whatever path of development and ideological stance this country chooses, it will succeed only if an increasing proportion of its people have real knowledge and understanding of the processes and complexities of development and production and are able to initiate, finance, manage and control them.