

Tmo/031/0146/25

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Report of the Dar es Salaam ANC Education Committee on
Various Syllabus Proposals for the ANC School

I) HISTORY

The following documents were considered: a) A Basic Periodisation from London, supplemented with an elaboration of Section 4 from Dar (hereafter, the London/Dar proposal; b) Comments from Headquarters in a Progress Report dd 21/11/78; c) criticisms of the London/Dar proposal in a letter from the Coordinator dd 29/12/78; d) Draft entitled "A People's History of South Africa".

1. The London/Dar proposal should not be seen as a detailed syllabus. Rather it aims to develop a general outline or framework to guide the teaching of History. The Dar committee is in broad agreement with the structure of this framework, and feels that if it is acceptable, it now becomes the task of the History group to elaborate this general outline into a detailed syllabus.

2) We disagree strongly with the criticism made in the letter from the coordinator of 29/12/78 that the London/Dar proposal separates "history from the economy and politics of South Africa". It seems that this proposals aims to avoid precisely such a separation.

3) Regarding the draft "People's History of South Africa" it was felt:

a) that this fails to locate ~~the~~ South African history within the broader contexts of the development of both African history and world history. Our students should come to understand not only the history of our own country, but equally how this forms an integral part of, and cannot be separated from, the development of the history of Africa and the world;

b) The draft concentrates predominantly on "political" themes and does not provide an integrated analysis of the development of the social formation as a whole;

c) Sections 9 - 16a of this draft appear almost identical to the proposed syllabus entitled "The Liberation Movement in South Africa". We need to sort out the different ways in which these subjects will be taught in the respective classes.

However the London/Dar proposal and the "Peoples History" draft are not necessarily antagonistic and the task should not be seen as one of choosing between them. Rather, we should agree first on the broad outlines of our approach to the teaching of history in the school, and then elaborate specific themes and topics.

II) The Liberation MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The draft syllabus of this title strongly overlaps with that in "the Peoples' History". As it stands it is too much a chapter of events. Much greater emphasis should be placed on the unfolding strategies of liberation struggle. This requires much stronger emphasis on the changing character and phases of imperialism; ~~and~~ the specific forms it has taken in South Africa (and in Africa - stressing ~~the~~ neo colonialism), and the changing character of popular anti-imperialist struggles. The present outline does not link our struggle closely enough to other anti-imperialist struggles, and particularly those in Africa.

The committee is unsure of the place of this "short course" in the broader curriculum. It feels this should be an ongoing, compulsory course for all students at the school. It should focus on the liberation struggle as a process, rather than on the liberation movement as an organisation, and should not be

confused with a history course. Its main purpose would be teaching skills of political analysis, not only through history, but through the constant assessment of new issues and events.

III) LITERATURE

The following were considered: a) "First Draft of Literature Syllabus for Mazimbu"; and b) Comments in the Progress Report from Headquarters dd 21/11/78.

With regard to the five points made in the progress report:

- i) It is felt that "Black" literature should be included as a separate item given the social content of such literature and its significance at a particular stage of struggle against racism. It was ~~agreed~~ agreed that this course would have to be very carefully taught but that it also offers an excellent opportunity to develop a critique of narrow approaches to the liberation struggle.
- ii) Our literature expert advised that in his experience the introduction of oral literature at an early stage is usually unsuccessful with students from an urban background. It has been found much easier to develop an appreciation of oral literature once students have already received a grounding, and the general themes have been established;
- iii) A special section ~~on~~ on what the Progress Report terms "understanding" South African writers is included ~~in~~ in the last section of the draft. The aim of this section is to develop an understanding of the various and conflicting ways in which the oppressive system has ~~been~~ been depicted in various types of South African ~~in~~ literature.

IV) MATHEMATICS

The committee has no expertise to judge this syllabus, but commends and endorses the political tone of the proposal.

E) ENGLISH

This seems to have achieved the correct emphasis.

VI) LITERACY

The committee was highly impressed with this proposal and its stress on ~~political~~ developing political consciousness whilst developing literacy. It was felt however that the translation of such a professional syllabus into practice would require highly skilled teachers and that some priority should be given to this.

VII) ADVANCED FARMERS' COURSE

Again we lack the expertise to comment on the technical aspects of this. However the total lack of any political content in its broad aims indicates a perhaps unpolitical approach to the question of agriculture. This is a course in which the political implications of technical training should receive very strong emphasis. Eg what are the advantages of different agricultural techniques for the type of liberation struggle being waged in South Africa? What place ~~will~~ will agriculture have in a liberated South Africa? etc. etc. This is a very good example of how supposedly "Technical" courses should be linked to an ongoing course on the liberation struggle. Students should constantly be required to examine the political implications of what they are learning.