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EDUCATION UNDER APARTHEID COMPARED TO THAT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (SA)

A. Apartheid Education

Education is generally accepted as a two-way process of transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the learner. Invariably, education is so structured as to serve the interests of the dominant group and as such it reflects and entrenches social values. Throughout the history of mankind, the upper strata of society, few as they are in number, have managed to monopolise the greatest share of the national material wealth. This group has direct influence on the government which, of necessity, relies on their strong economic position. Education, viewed from this perspective, does not fully utilise gainfully the potential of the lower and major strata of society except by regarding them as necessary appendages to cushion their privileged social position. Such a situation inevitably engenders conflict of interest between the two social groups.

The fragmented South African education system, run along the racial lines is in conformity with the policy of divide and rule as espoused under the abhorrent apartheid system formulated by the ruling white minority regime to ensure that the majority, blacks, are hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whites. Apartheid, declared by the United Nations Assembly as a crime against humanity, uses the colour of a man's skin as a determining factor in fragmenting the social groups, the whites being regarded as superior.

The social, political and economic upheavals presently raging through South Africa are the snapping point of social degradation of the blacks. The following extract is the anchor of the revolutionary spirit and indomitable resistance to the series of dehumanising apartheid laws:

"There is no place for him (the black) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community (Bantustans) all doors are open.... until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of the European society in which he was not allowed to graze."

This Bantu Education Act of 1953 passed by the Whites only parliament resulted in the cumulative frustrations which give rise to the present countrywide boycott and burning of schools by black students.

This extract shows stark racism bringing to the minds of progressive mankind the horrors of the Nazi Second World War. The rationale for apartheid lies in the capitalist social system pursued in South Africa. The present countrywide uprisings by all sectors of the black people of South Africa is, therefore, a legitimate struggle for national liberation. The Security Council, after the massacre of Soweto students in June 1976 recognised the "legitimacy of the struggle of the South African people for the elimination of apartheid and racial discrimination."

The following statistics highlight the glaring disparity in the share of the collective wealth of South Africa:-

1. Estimated per capita spending by the state on pupils of different racial groups 1981/82

<u>Race</u>	<u>Including capital expenditure (R)</u>	<u>Excluding capital expenditure (R)</u>
White	1221	1048
Indian	798	670
Coloured	419	365
African	165	118

2. The pupil-teacher ratios for the groups for 1983

<u>Race</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
White	18,2 to 1
Indian	23,6 to 1
Coloured	26,7 to 1
African	42,7 to 1

B. ANC Education Policy

The African National Congress in its blueprint the Freedom Charter, which was adopted in 1955 by the most representative gathering ever held in South Africa, declares that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people." The Freedom Charter states that the aim of education shall be to discover, develop and encourage national talent for the improvement of the social standard of living of all of its people.

The South African economic crises that she finds herself in stems basically from the fact that latent black potential is not utilised. Rather, South Africa depends largely on foreign artisan groups which can not meet all the development demands. If the black potential were to be trained and offered to all the development opportunities, South Africa today would be a giant economically. The fruits thereof must be equitably distributed among the workers - the anchors of industrial development. This would of necessity ensure tremendous social growth in the living standard of the South African people as a whole. The dominant class, by force of military muscle, is the whites. The disproportionate official population estimates for South Africa for 1983 are:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>% of total population</u>
White	4 748 000	15
Coloureds	2 765 000	9
Indians	870 000	3
African	<u>22 729 000</u>	<u>73</u>
Total	31 112 000	100

The figures quoted above clearly show that the South African regime stubbornly refuses to logically utilise the maximum national human potential as a whole for the general development of its country and thereby uplift the standard of living of its people as a cohesive whole.

The African National Congress perceives education as a socially determined process of acquiring the dynamic human knowledge for general development of society. It must be geared towards achieving academic productive and socially useful set goals. Therefore, to redress the injustices of the apartheid system, the general aims of the education of the ANC are as follows:-

- (a) To prepare the youth to be revolutionary - politically conscious student, worker or professional - to serve the national liberation struggle of the people of South Africa in the present phase of struggle for seizure of political power and post-liberation period.
- (b) To produce such cadres as will be able to serve society in all fields broadly outlined in the Freedom Charter.

The ANC fully realises that for society to realise man's full creative, intellectual and cultural talents, EDUCATION IS THE CORNERSTONE, and this basic right must be available to all of its people. The President of the ANC, Comrade O R Tambo, declared that racial education must be eliminated:

"Bantu Education, Coloured Education and Indian Education must be fought by every parent and child, by everyone with a sense of human dignity and self-respect, and fought with every means at our disposal."

The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in its tender stage of development is conscious of a need for thorough planning for a programme to meet the manpower requirements for a liberated South Africa. Its educational programme focuses on a comprehensive high school education. There are of course setbacks in the process stemming from funding constraints. The school is preparing a unitary educational system for a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The ANC sees its pilot educational policy at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College as a broadbased take off point programme in a future democratic South Africa. The general long-term objectives of the programme are aimed at the improvement of the general living standards of the people of South Africa as a whole and are as follows:-

1. Revolutionary

"The ANC education policy is geared towards producing a new type of South African dedicated to serve the interests and needs of the South African people as a whole."

Too often today the world is characterised by individualistic outlook. Humanity has been depleted of its values. Education is being regarded as a means to personal gains or advancement in life. The international tension that has pushed the world to brink of nuclear holocaust stems from selfish national outlook. The ANC sees education as sharing with fellow human beings one's natural talents for the advance of society as a whole.

2. Mass Accessibility

"The ANC educational programme, as an on-going process, shall cater for both young and old irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed."

The dismal drop-outs of black pupils from schools in South Africa and the present educational upsurge results from the fact that black pupils have to contend with a series of apartheid obstacles, for example, the age limit to both primary and secondary schools. The dropouts are, of course, inexhaustible source of cheap labour for the thriving industry.

The ANC's perspective is that education is a right for both the young and the old. For the older, it will ensure greater national productivity and thus improve on the social standard.

3. Science and Culture

"The ANC education programme shall draw on the most advanced scientific knowledge and progressive cultural traditions of the peoples of South Africa and the world."

Because apartheid as practiced in South Africa has been declared by the General Assembly as a "crime against humanity," South Africa has been ostracised from international forums. Hence the free flow of man's strides in the scientific and cultural and sporting fields are not being enjoyed by the South African regime.

The ANC education policy advocates the community of man by exchange of man's advancement in general.

4. Integrated Education

"Education shall bridge the division between mental and manual training and the artificial separation of arts and sciences."

Throughout the world today, the intellectually gifted are at the top of the social strata and the less gifted are perpetually fuelling the furnaces of economic advancement for the few. The ANC strives at merging the mental and manual attributes of man for national development

and doing away with the stratified social tension. The aesthetic potential and scientific aptitudes must be harmonised for fuller development of man.

5. Democratic Attitudes

"While observing the priority to impart basic knowledge at each given level in each field, the programme shall promote full creative and democratic participation of students, teachers and community in all educational activities."

The underlying meaning of this clause is that the different social strata will freely relate to one another to ensure transference of knowledge for national cultural development of the people of a free South Africa.

6. Dynamism

"The educational programme shall develop in keeping with the demands of the situation in a changing world."

South Africa today spends her financial resources at reforming apartheid to ensure perpetual domination of the whites over the blacks. In terms of international general advancement, South Africa is pathetically lagging behind. The ANC education is breaking this intellectual stultification and ensures that South Africa is part and parcel of the worldwide development of mankind.

The African National Congress firmly believes that "PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP AMONGST ALL OUR PEOPLE SHALL BE SECURED BY UPHOLDING THE EQUAL RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND STATUS OF ALL." Education is the beacon to the realisation of this noble ideal. Education can only advance in times of peace and this is what the African National Congress firmly stands for.