

MOR 1016/0005/13

REPORT OF THE ANC(SA) DELEGATION TO THE VIIIth INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATIONAL COLLOQUY HELD IN BERLIN, THE CAPITAL OF THE  
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC FROM THE 19th - 26th APRIL, 1979  
(THE YEAR OF THE SPEAR)

INTRODUCTION:

1.1. Purpose:

The colloquy was to continue the exchange of experiences in the field of practice and theory of education as well as consolidate the friendly relations between the peoples struggling for freedom, socio-economic progress and international solidarity against colonialism and imperialism. (Annex 1)

1.2. Sponsors:

Ministry of Education and Commission for UNESCO of the German Democratic Republic.

1.3. Attendance:

There were 33 sovereign states, of whom 22 were represented by Ministers of Education and others by Junior Ministers plus four Liberation Movements and the UNESCO Secretariat. (Annex 2)

1.4. Programme:

It consisted of plenary sessions and visits to relevant places in the German Democratic Republic (Annex 1)

2. Presentations:

2.1. The opening speech was delivered by Her Excellency the Minister of Education and Culture of the GDR, Dr. Margot Honecker. She expressed the solidarity of the GDR with the liberation movements of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia under the ANC(SA), ZAPU and SWAPO and she also condemned the murder of our comrade Solomon Mahlangu.

2.2. Other Contributions:

Professor Günter Wilms read a paper on "Tasks of the School in the preparation of the young generation for life" and declared that the "The decisive aims and tasks of education arose from the demands of every stage in the development of socialism and the realisation of these aims played a major part in the constant perfecting of the socialist means of production and of the socialist way of life of the people". (Annex 3 p.11).



Elaborating on the structure of the education system in the GDR, he identified the following elements: pre-school; ten year general poly-technical school; vocational training centres and educational establishments leading to higher educational qualifications.

3. PIONEER CENTRE:

It is an extra class activity centre for all schools in the area. The activities include art, culture, sports etc. The objective is to provide the widest possible variety of activities and have teachers to answer pupils questions. The teachers are specialists in various hobbies and arts including volunteer workers. Pupils are free to attend or not to attend. They may join rallies and demonstrations as part of their political education. There were 75 different hobby groups, 50 teachers and 110 technical staff covering 1,200 pupils brought there after school and during the holidays. It was estimated that 750,000 to 100,000 pupils visit the centre per annum.

There are also in the Centre Clubs for Mathematics, languages etc. Pupils with special talents and interest are also placed under the special care of specialist teachers to help them develop these talents

4. THE DRESDEN COLLEGE:

This is a teacher training college (or university as we would call it) leading to a diploma (degree we would call it) after four years for secondary school teachers. The main features of the training are:-

1. Inclusion of ideology in all school work.
2. 54% of all curriculum time is taken by science teaching. 10% by Lenin-Marxism; 18,5% psychology and pedagogics; 6% preparation and writing of reports of various kinds including those of research projects which must be undertaken by each student teacher in the subject he/she will teach. 11,5% sports and language training.
3. Teachers particularly at primary level had to be politically committed. At higher levels they at least not to be against but must not lead.
4. Students have to spend at least 20hrs a week in self study in the library.



5. ART GALLERY:

Paintings of centuries are kept here and are used for political and national mobilisation of the young generation. Our school must also start similar collections.

5. HEALTH MUSEUM:

It showed the various aspects of health education and how problems of health have been tackled through history. It was very educative on health matters.

6. AGRICULTURAL CENTRE:

This is run by a cooperative and is one of many. This one we saw concentrated on vegetable production. Students joined in the activities here in small groups according to a timetable allowing each about 3-4 hours per week. We thus saw in operation here an intergration of theory and practical; study and production as well as school and society.

7. GDR EDUCATION SYSTEM:

Their education system commences as it were in the creche for ages from one to three years and kindergarten ages from 4 to 6 years. This is followed by grade 1-10 (General Education) and continues into Grades 11-12 for university entrance. University is four years after which they obtain a diploma (probably an equivalent to our Masters degrees). After the diploma they may then work and thereafter work for a Ph.D. through presentation of a thesis. Only those with a Ph.D are allowed to use the title Doctor. Thereafter medical doctors will normally be called physician and do not use the title doctor unless they have presented a thesis. Professors gain this title professor after generally having gained two Ph.D degrees and then appointed to professorship.

Polytechnical training begins as school gardening and manual training in Grade 1 and 2.

Grade 4,5, and 6 include basic practical work in woodwork and metal work INCLUDING TECHNICAL DRAWING.



Grades 7 and 8 (i.e. 13 and 14 year olds) include cabinet making and are given a chance to work for a few hours in industrial enterprises and other production centres. This could be 3 to 4 hours per week for each student probably for a term in one industry and then in another one and so on to gain a wide experience in various enterprises. This facilitates a future choice of career.

Grades 9 and 10 students are given a total wide picture and sample experience in the country's industrial complex. They are introduced to socialist production. Students are also given more opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder with adults and are incorporated in the work of the youth brigades. In pursuance of these objectives, classes in Grade 7,8,9 and 10 may either be attached to an agricultural or industrial centre. This closely familiarises them with production.

After Grade 10 (Junior Certificate) students may now choose full vocational or technical course. After Grade 12 university level courses follow.

#### 8. GENERAL:

The ANC delegation was accorded VIP treatment and was grouped with ministers of education who led some delegations. This was the case with other liberation movements. The GDR presented us with a hand cut glass vase and other smaller souvenirs. We wish to keep all these in our solidarity museum in our school at Mazimbu.

#### 8.1. AUDIENCE WITH THE MINISTER:

The ANC delegation was also given audience with Her Excellency, the GDR Minister of Education, Mrs Margot Honecker. We took the opportunity to present the problems of our students in the GDR (our office in the GDR had briefed us on these). The minister repeated an offer of 72 training scholarships in the GDR to the ANC(SA) students. The 72 are in technical and vocational training after Junior Certificate (Grade 10) and 6 for university level in technical and vocational training. She requested that she would be pleased to receive an early breakdown of our intentions on these awards. This must include names and details of the cadre (educational) and what he/she will do and when they may be expected in the GDR.



We presented her with the May 1979 issue of SECHABA in which pictures and the report of the meeting of our Comrade President O.R.Tambo and their President appear. Also in the same issue is a report on the presentation of a shield and spear by our GDR office to the Head of State there.

8.2. CONTACTS:

We noted a general high regard and support for the Liberation Movements especially the ANC. Our address was well applauded. The Minister of Education of Sri Lanka invited us to visit his country to place our cause to political leaders there. He did not seem well informed about our struggle. He also promised us university scholarships for our students. (The number was not specified). The Minister of Education of Ethiopia expressed an interest of further contacts with us. We presented these ministers with copies of SECHABA with an address by our Secretary General on the Africa/Arab problem. These were also presented to the PLO delegation.

8.3. FINAL DECLARATION:

The ANC delegation took the initiative to organise the four Liberation Movements in pushing a paragraph in the final colloquy declaration relating to the particular problem of our own children. It proved very difficult to have this paragraph as we wished it, because of the wide ideological spectrum of delegates. It was thus watered down many times to make it acceptable to many. Even in its final watered down version (Annex 2) the Ghana delegation could not accept the inclusion of such "a political statement in an educational matter". They walked out on this leaving the GDR before the colloquy was over. All other delegates however, accepted the inclusion of this very mild paragraph at least.



8.4. RECOMMENDATION BY THE ANC DELEGATION TO THE ANC:

A more intense briefing of delegates on what to expect in these international conferences is necessary. We however, kept very very close contact with our GDR office in this instance and this office was very helpful. We even had the representative read and make suggestion on our statement before reading it in plenary (Annex 4).

Contacts on education should be followed up with Ethiopia and Madagascar.

The scholarship offers of the GDR and Sri Lanka should be seriously given immediate consideration and followed up if necessary.

THE ANC DELEGATION  
M.W.NJOBE (LEADER)  
TIM MAHARAJ.