

STATEMENT ON UNIVERSITY EDUCATION  
FOR NON-EUROPEANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

As the representative of past students on the Governing COUNCIL of the University College of Fort Hare, I feel it is my duty to add my voice to the wide chorus of protest which has been aroused by the Extension of University Education Bill 1958. I need not repeat here the convincing arguments against apartheid in University education from many well informed quarters, nor the demonstrable fallacies in the case of those who uphold this vicious doctrine. But we have to realise that the ruling section of the Herrenvolk is fanatically dedicated to this doctrine, and is therefore not only impervious to reason, but positively hostile to those who advocate common university education for all irrespective of race. It is characteristic of the Nationalist Government and its supporters that they substitute rationalisation for thought, sophistry for argument and propaganda for enlightenment. This fact is amply illustrated in the Report of the Commission on Separate University Education Bill.

For instance the Commission refused to accept evidence on the desirability or otherwise of compulsory separate university education for Europeans and Non-Europeans on the ground that the principle had already been accepted by Parliament before the appointment of the Commission. Yet the Commission devotes a whole section of its report to an elaborate defence of this principle which amounts to nothing but propagandist rationalisation of Herrenvolk prejudices against non-Europeans. Then again, in support of the principle of separation, the Commission argues that common university education will bring about racial hatred, despite the fact that there is ample evidence both in this country and abroad to show that normal contacts among different racial groups tend to promote social harmony rather than the reverse.

In dealing with fanaticism, it is not enough merely to protest, for a protest to be effective presupposes the existence of goodwill and an open mind. We have, in addition, to create a force which will be capable of holding in check the overwhelming tide of unreason. Such a force, though latent for the time being, does exist fortunately and it consists of the majority section of the population, and the Non-European oppressed constitute its greatest single element. We must address ourselves to this force and explain that the purpose of separate university education is not to provide university education as commonly accepted, but to indoctrinate the non-Europeans into acceptance of the position of permanent inferiority, and to use the products of these institutions as instruments of this policy. In other words separate university education is an elaboration of the technique of domination and the Extension of University Education Act will be a complement of the Bantu Education Act, the Bantu Authorities Act and other Acts of this type.

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The aims of the Extension of University Education Bill cannot be fully appreciated without reference to the policy speech of the Minister of Native Affairs, now also Prime Minister, in the Senate on 7th June, 1954 on the occasion of the passing of the Bantu Education Act. The Minister made it quite clear then that African education had to be brought into line with the Government's policy of segregation or apartheid. He strongly criticised the curriculum and the practice of African education at the time for "ignoring the segregation or "apartheid" policy", and added: "By blindly producing pupils trained on a European model, the vain hope was created among Natives that they could occupy posts within the European community despite the country's policy of apartheid. This is what is meant by the creation of unhealthy "white-collar ideals" and the causation of widespread frustration among the so-called educated Natives." The Minister further made it clear that his Department must itself control the whole field of African Education including "institutions for higher education and especially for the training of teachers." His financial policy was equally clear namely that "the Bantu themselves will contribute in an increasing measure towards the cost of expanding their educational services." The function of education, according to the Minister, is to "equip him (African) to meet the demands which the economic life of South Africa will impose upon him." In other words education must train the African for servitude in the so-called "European areas." Previously African Education, the Minister alleged, had "served to create a class of educated and semi-educated persons without the corresponding socio-economic development which should accompany it. This is the class which has learnt to believe that it is above its own people and feels that its spiritual, economic and political home is among the civilised community of South Africa &c. Europeans, and feels frustrated because its wishes have not been realised." This persistent accusation that educated Africans are not serving their community is incorrect, since in fact all educated Africans can, and do only find employment among their own kith and kin whether in town or country. The Minister, no doubt, feels it is his divine mission to exterminate the "so-called educated Natives" by denying them university education. "The Bantu must be guided," the Minister continues, "to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in European community above the level of certain forms of labour...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 European Society in which he was not allowed to graze." For a leadership which draws its inspiration from the farming community, paddocking certainly has profound philosophical lessons which can be suitably applied in solving the problems of human relationships.

I have quoted extensively from the Minister's statement in order to show that the views propounded by the Commission on University apartheid are not original but that they are an extension of principles of apartheid to the university level. In the circumstances talk of extending university education to non-Europeans is farcical. The Extension of University Bill could more appropriately be called "The Extermination of University Education Bill".

What we have to understand is that we are faced here not with an educational law but with a political measure designed to facilitate control and regimentation of the non-Europeans. In the last analysis a political measure must be fought by political and not by educational means. To criticise the Extension of University Education Bill because it provides for a superior executive council and senate of Europeans only, and inferior and advisory counterparts of these bodies consisting of non-Europeans is not to condemn the Bill, for it is precisely this master and servant relationship which it seeks to entrench and perpetuate. To say that in terms of the Bill the Minister will have strict control of <sup>the</sup> political thinking and activities of students and staff, particularly the non-European staff, is merely to underline what the Bill intends to achieve. Such control and regimentation is necessary for the carrying out of the policy of apartheid not only in the educational field but also in society as a whole. We have already seen the nature of this political screening in the case of those African teachers who were outlawed from the teaching profession on account of their relentless opposition to Bantu Education. Hence while piloting the Bantu Education Bill through Parliament Dr. Verwoerd declared that "people who believe in equality are not the desirable teachers of Natives."

Dr. T.B. Davie asserts that "A University in any community is a real and full university only to the extent that within its walls it welcomes and encourages as wide an admixture of students as possible in order that by their very differences of race and creed, of background and future prospects, of culture and primitiveness, they contribute to all there gathered that multi-sided consideration of all human problems which alone can form the basis of real knowledge and understanding." This should be the goal of all those who would like to strive for the realisation of true university education for all in South Africa. Needless to say, even the academic non-segregation at present obtaining in the "open" universities in South Africa, falls far short of this goal.

University students, past and present, could assist in working for this goal by forming an all-embracing students' organisation, whose function will be not only to uphold the standards of true university education..../

in face of the threat of their debasement by the present Bill, but also to fight unconditionally for the opening of universities to all irrespective of so-called race and for complete equality on the university campus. A national students' body which based itself on these principles would be extremely unpopular with the Government and its supporters. But ~~it~~ would have the support of the majority of the population and could be the spearhead of an effective counter to the application of the policy of apartheid in education and other spheres.

Finally, it is necessary to issue a warning that what is being done to the African population to day may be the fate of other sections of the population tomorrow.