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"EDUCATION For INTEGRATION"

By M. A. STERN

IT is a truism to say that education fits for life or it is fit for nothing. But lives are more than jobs in society, and learning to live means more than vocational training and indoctrination. Liberals may be partly politicians but liberalism is more than a political creed; it is in my view a precondition of intellectual growth, without which there is no education. An integrated man is a whole man and segregated society is by definition incomplete.

If this sounds dogmatic, it is worth examining the converse—the *forcible* imposition of set ideas (religious, political or social)—a process that we can legitimately call illiberal, because it precludes free choice, the power to accept or reject. In point of fact it often defeats its own ends, because young people have a healthy resistance to all forms of indoctrination, a sort of built-in defensive mechanism against politicians and pedagogues. But that implies a fairly healthy critical atmosphere in the family or among friends. If a whole nation is to be deprived of its right to criticise (as in Nazi Germany) or if national emotions cloud the issues (as in South Africa), then freedom of thought can indeed become a casualty. It is this freedom that is a defence against tyranny and that is how I regard liberalism in education.

Naturally a degree of vocational training and a clearly-defined form of indoctrination may be necessary if we are not to fling young people totally unprepared and unprotected into a hostile and competitive world. But protected from what and prepared for what? There must be agreement on positives and a constant check on the controls.

Any theory of education implies a set of moral values—the worthwhileness of life after school. Even Nazi educationists must have believed in Nazism. But indoctrination is not education, because life admits no parochial definitions, and the truly educated man loves truth and beauty more than dogma.

Ideals must be felt as well as thought: otherwise there is no charity, and for this reason they cannot be imposed. Indoctrination, whether Christian Nationalist or National Socialist or Catholic or Communist cannot in the long run produce Christians or Communists or Nationalists, only robots, subject to autocratic discipline. That is why liberal education is

Mr. M. A. Stern was the Headmaster of St. Martin's School, Rosettenville, an institution which was established when St. Peter's—an African School controlled by the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg—closed in 1956 *as a result of the Bishop's decision not to permit its continuation in the new Bantu Education framework. With buildings and grounds available as a result, the Diocesan authorities felt that a less expensive brother school to St. John's College might supply a need, and Mr. Stern was chosen as its first Headmaster. At the end of* 1962 *Mr. Stern leaves for Mbabane, Swaziland, where he will take over the direction of the newly founded* Waterford School, *the first multi-racial school in this part of Southern Africa. A newsletter from the group which Michael Stern heads announced that in May,* 1962, *Form II (for* 1963 *opening) already consisted of* 6 *Europeans,* 5 *Africans,* 2 *Asiatics and* 2 *Coloureds. The aim of the school, as stated in its brochure, is:*

". . . to provide a first-class education, on a Christian foundation, for boys of all races and creeds and faiths, from the primary level to University entry."

In many ways this is an inevitable development in Michael Stern's career, for prior to the demise of St. Peter's School, he presided over its destinies too. A Cambridge graduate, he is rapidly becoming one of the most vital personalities in the South African educational scene. Many will disagree with his views—and they have every right to do so, if they wish, just as in our opinion Mr. Stern has every right to express his views—but none will doubt his sincerity nor his ability.

both weaker and stronger than authoritarian—weaker because it can be easily (if only temporarily and locally) destroyed by tyranny, stronger because it allows the natural and free growth of all men's visionary ideals.

The true liberal's approach to education is essentially positive, because he is concerned with the fullest possible development of a child's potential. It does not actually create; it only develops those natural and instinctive faculties which already exist in all children. For the end of education is surely to teach men how to learn for themselves and how to go on learning. (Confucius said of Knowledge: "It is to know both what one knows and what one does not know").

George Sampson, an English educationist, put this very clearly nearly half a century ago

> "Once more I beg the reader not to confuse education with the acquisition of knowledge, of which a man may have much and still be uneducated. A boy goes to school, not to get a final stock of information, but to learn how he may go on learning, and to learn that going on is worth while. A humane education has no material end in view. It aims at making men, not machines; it aims at giving *every human creature* the fullest development possible to it. Its cardinal doctrine is 'the right of every human soul to enter, unhindered except by the limitation of its own powers and desires, into the full spiritual heritage of the race'. It aims at giving 'the philosophic temper, the gentle judgement, the interest in knowledge and beauty for their own sake' that mark the harmoniously developed man. Humanism is a matter of life, not of living. We pretend to believe this, but our practice betrays us. . . ."

By "race" he means "the human race", for I doubt if he conceived that men would ever dare to classify education in terms of colour.

There is of course an apparently negative side as well. It is as necessary to educate against the wrong type of environment as for the right; but this involves not the imposition of fixed ideas, but the careful growth of critical faculties, that will query as well as appreciate.

At the turn of the century in England the orthodox public school system was strong. Yet society was full of evils, social injustices, group selfishness, aggressive and expansionist complexes, and a remarkable lack of charity towards things un-British (a form of imperial nationalism). The schools seemed to be doing little to cure the one or curb the other: in fact at best they were preparing boys for an age that was passing. Radicals and reformers could be excused for wanting to change this system, and we can at least sympathise with one such educationist who in 1900 founded a "progressive" school (it is still flourishing) with the object of producing social "misfits". It was not that he wanted children to be miserable for the rest of their lives, simply that he hoped to prepare them a little better for the future, in a garden that was a little less lovely and a world that was a good deal less secure than Pax Britannica and the pedagogues and politicians would have them believe.

Is there not a parallel in South Africa? Here we have a firmly entrenched way of life (daily strengthened by legislation) that is accepted uncritically by the majority of the white population, doubted by a few, condemned by most of the rest of the world, and hated by the bulk of our own non-Europeans. How can preparation for that, in school or home, be preparation for real life? Realism lies in breaking through the barriers, not hiding behind them.

To justify segregated schools it is not enough to point to South African society and argue that the one is preparation for the other. We have to be satisfied that we *all* want this way of life, that it is morally defensible, and that we have a reasonable chance of making it permanent. Even if we can pacify our consciences on the first two, the winds of change and the growth of black nationalism are going to shatter all hopes of securing the third. Are we not then morally bound to work for change? Otherwise we shall condemn our children to an indefinite period of maladjustment in the real world of tomorrow.

What we need now is not conformists but rebels—not saboteurs or ducktails, but intelligent critics (from all groups and at all levels) who refuse to accept the existing social order as divinely ordained and who want instead to work towards something more egalitarian and more charitable. It is in the schools that critics are born.

If this criticism is to be constructive it must face up firmly and courageously to the need for, and consequences of, integration. There is no escape from it, for there can be no moral justification for *compulsory* segregation, and separate facilities are always unequal.

Whether we like it or not, society includes Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile, African and Asian, English and Afrikaner, rich and poor, black brown, yellow and white. To allow children of these different groups to mix in schools is not idealistic but realistic. It is the *racists* who live in cloud cuckoo land. I prefer the approach of the Psalmist:—

> "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."