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## Welcome to New Teachers

*In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act – George Orwell*

**Greetings to all new teachers! Many of you would have completed your final examinations at universities with interrupted education for one or other student demands. In essence, this is a reflection of the massive levels of poverty and inequality in our country and indeed, you will be entering a school system where this is also starkly manifested.**

Most of you will be looking forward to your first experiences as a teacher and to how you will be able to put into practice all that you have learnt – and a lot that you were not taught. You would have thought about what type of teacher you want to be and in arriving at a decision, you would have thought of some of those who, during your years at school, were your teachers. You respected some because they were good teachers. They were keen, well-prepared, stimulating who helped you to think clearly, who were as much concerned about you as with what they taught, who had principles and values that showed in everything they said and did. Then there were others whom you would rather forget, who betrayed a lack of interest, ideals and principles that was obvious in everything they did or did not do.

What sort of teacher would you want to be?

You have an enormous responsibility to the children to help them to develop their full potential. To give them such skills and understanding as will enable them to make sense of the world around them. To provide them with the tools with which to solve problems and to

help them to use those tools most effectively. You will have to assist children to ask questions and to find answers, to be critical and at the same time to begin to build up a set of values that will help them to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, real and illusory.

As a young teacher, starting on your career, you will be faced with a choice. You can use your teaching skills to serve the purpose of the masters of the education system; that is, you can indoctrinate your students to accept the place in society allegedly ordained for them. Alternatively, you can use those self-same skills and your knowledge to achieve the aims of democratic education. Then your skills and the application of your knowledge would have to grow and unite with a conscious, honest direction and purpose in teaching.

Education must always be one of the fundamental objectives in the struggle for a truly free and equal society. Do not be the teacher who says frankly, *“my job is to teach and not be concerned with changing either my school or society.”* Be a reflective teacher. Constantly examine and question your practice and the learning styles of your students. Reflect upon your delivery and effectiveness for accompanying and supporting your students.

It is one of the oldest clichés in education that, in the final analysis, every teacher teaches people and not this or that subject. What is important is that the education element, the guidance and opening and cultivation of the minds and attitudes of the students must never be ignored.

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*The schools in which these acts of violence have been reported are all situated in sub-economic, underprivileged communities*

The schools of the poor are beset with many problems, most of which are caused by factors beyond their control. Government policies have for decades played havoc with the country's education, and therefore with the lives of the majority of South Africa's children. They are the victims of poor resources, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, the effects of low teacher morale. All these undermine the vital role that education has to play in any society.

Many schools have become sites of strife, conflict and physical danger for both students and teachers. The schools at which these acts of violence have been reported are all situated in sub-economic, underprivileged communities where many social disabilities – unemployment, crime, gangsterism, drug dealing and abuse – are a way of life. Children grow up in an environment where the moral fibre of society has been broken to a level where there is no self-respect, no respect for others and no regard for human life. Because of large-scale unemployment and therefore poverty, parents are not in a position to provide a home that is educationally uplifting, stimulating and inspiring.

Teaching is not easy. It is demanding and requires enthusiasm, resilience, energy, idealism, dedication. However, it has its rewards. The rewards are to be found in the role you play as an educator, the influence you exert upon children and the contribution you make to change. But if you are to deal with the day-to-day problems of our whole social system you have to gain as clear an understanding as you can of the social, political and economic roots of our society. As a teacher, you must continue to be a student to have an arsenal of ideas from which you can draw.

Inculcate in your students the norms and values that are not tainted by concepts of race. Instil in them a powerful acceptance of the truth that they share a common humanity with all people both in this country and throughout the world. Make them aware of the social, economic and political disabilities suffered by a whole people here and in other parts of the world.

You have the responsibility thrust upon you to defend your student's education, to deploy all your

skills and knowledge to make a success of your students stay at school and to prepare each student for further studies. You will need to stand together with your colleagues against the enemies of education – especially those bureaucrats in the Education Departments who would debase education. Do not be surprised if you detect multiple attempts in the flawed curricula and lowered standards to indoctrinate students and to promote mediocrity. To be a teacher, to be concerned primarily and immediately with the youth, to be a disseminator of ideas, a creator of ideals and a builder of character is challenging, exciting and eminently worthwhile. The challenge is to equip yourself for the task. The excitement lies in the feeling that you are contributing to the breakdown of the old and the building of the new. Besides, worthwhileness lies in the purpose and direction of your work inside the classroom as well as in the knowledge that you are helping to telescope fundamental social change.

Let us live for our children.

We in the New Unity Movement wish you a challenging and fulfilling career in this noblest of professions.

### **The World's 2,153 Billionaires Are Richer Than 4.6 Billion People, Says Oxfam**

**The world's richest 1% have more than twice the wealth of the rest of humanity combined, according to Oxfam, which called on governments to adopt "inequality-busting policies".**

## THE FRAUD OF RADICAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The concept of Radical Economic Transformation, bandied about during the last few years, after ANC cadres were forced by the EFF's rhetoric to publicly put this on the agenda of the ANC's January 8, 2017 statement, has different meanings to different people. The concept has dominated public discourse since then.

What does all this mean?

Radical Economic Transformation as espoused by the ANC and the EFF is more rhetoric than anything else. On the eve of the 1994 elections Phyllis Ntantala wrote, *"If revolution is defined as the violent overthrow of one class by another, the African National Congress has never been a revolutionary organization."*

What does this mean?

That no revolution had occurred in SA and therefore the economy of the country had remained in the hands of the capitalist class, those who had dominated it before the elections. In order to satisfy the voting public the "fraud of economic transformation" was conjured.

In 1994 Mandela had said, *"We are determined to move forward as speedily as possible to establish the political and social climate which is necessary to ensure business confidence and create the possibility for all investors to make long-term commitments to help develop the SA economy"*. **How wrong could he have been?**

After the RDP, GEAR, the NDP and a host of plans by various actors — it has all come to naught.

SA has been enveloped into a world capitalist economy. This development depended on the

inflow of capital from outside, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Several investment conferences have been held, this is merely to stave-off an investment crisis that may lead to regime change as it did in 1990.

Tito Mboweni is off to Davos to lead the SA delegation to the annual talk shop at the World Economic Forum (WEF). However, he may be embarrassed as he cannot with any certainty promise that his government can deliver on basic service delivery such as electricity and sanitation. Nor can he comment on Ramaphosa's promises of two years ago when he assumed office.

Unfortunately, Mboweni has not as yet found the R2-billion to fund SAA that has had to cancel flights to try and keep 'head above water'. Mboweni is in any case over-eager to sell off the family jewels, unbundle and sell-off the state-owned enterprises.

Investors will not be enticed into capitalising large sums of money into projects such as ESKOM, SAA or DENEL at this stage. It must be remembered that investors must get super-profits from these investments - and throwing money at these companies cannot be profitable. The threat that the Reserve Bank can possibly be "nationalised" will also act as a bugbear to Mboweni's efforts.



## **Parliament: "Whose Interests does it serve?"**

Parliament should be an instrument of the people. It is a powerful institution created by the people of a country to ensure that they live decent, fulfilling lives. But there is nothing decent about the loss of dignity and self-respect when you cannot find employment to provide for your family and those dependent on you for their daily needs. There is nothing fulfilling about going to bed without a meal. Not having a decent structure to call home with no proper municipal services like running water and flushing toilets. These demeaning and undignified conditions have been the lot of millions of our citizens since time immemorial. 1994 Has done nothing to change this.

Much of the economic hardship suffered by the poor in this country is the result of the decisions taken by those sitting in parliament. Yet it is the very poor suffering masses who vote for the political parties that sit in parliament, taking decisions that cannot free the poor from their dire economic circumstances. And they repeatedly send these political parties to parliament every five years without getting a decent life.

Some commentators have called it "A free pass to an easy life". (Daily News 8 Feb 2019) These politicians get much more than an easy life while their compatriots outside parliament suffer. Five hundred political parties wanted to register to take part in the 2019 elections. Once seated in parliament, MPs get a salary way above that of ordinary citizens, get

housing and car subsidies, look forward to a more than a handsome pension, fly for free and get other perks as well.

All of these are paid out of the taxes that ordinary South Africans pay. When the poorest of the poor buy a loaf of bread, the VAT they pay on that bread helps to pay for the easy life of the parliamentarians.

When the working class and the poor send a person to parliament to represent their interests it should not mean that they have given away their power. It means that if their parliamentary representative does not act in their interest, that representative must be recalled. But the current system



does not allow that. Representatives can sit in parliament today enjoying their fat salaries while the workers and the poor suffer hardships. Only a parliament that reflects the will of the working class and the poor will be able to free them from their dire economic circumstances.

That is why the working class and the poor must unite, build people's power from the ground up and establish democratic forums that reflect the will of the people.

It is out of these democratic forums that the real representatives of the people will emerge - representatives that will put the interests of the people first.

The 2007–2020 South African energy crisis was a period when SA experienced widespread rolling blackouts as ESKOM leapt from crisis to crisis as the national grid became destabilised. There is no end in sight. At first unprecedented growth was blamed for the crisis, but this begged the question, why a government that has made growth its mantra failed to anticipate such growth and plan therefore.

It seems everyone is clueless when it comes to the power utility. Ramaphosa was appointed to head the turnaround strategy in 2014, he not only failed miserably but did not even visit Medupi plant until a few weeks ago. At the time a 5-point plan of action to resolve ESKOM's problems was devised in the "war room", headed by Ramaphosa. Let it be clearly stated, the plans either failed or were not implemented.

The experts at ESKOM cannot provide any light at the end of the tunnel for South Africans. The blundering experts stumble as the shambles continue – has Mabuza resigned because of incorrect information given to the president or, are they incapable of containing rolling blackouts? Is it the case of wet coal, the conveyor belt being broken, maintenance, sabotage and the latest, *"unplanned capacity losses and heavy rains in the coal producing areas"*? Is it as Eskom says the overnight power cuts that would help replenish the water levels at its pumped storage facilities, and diesel stocks at its open-cycle gas turbines? Is diesel the most cost-effective way of keeping the turbines in motion?

TELL US WHAT IS HAPPENING!!!

Then, of course, we had the news from the presidency; David Mabuza, Deputy President accusing the board of the power utility and Pravin Gordhan of misleading the president, with a rebuttal from the president's spokesperson Khusela Sangoni that the president had not been misled, and that the current blackout could not have been predicted at that time. Only for Tony Yengeni to state that for Sangoni to contradict Mabuza was a breach of protocol.

Jabu Mabuza was appointed to head the board of ESKOM in January 2018 after the previous board headed by Zethembe Khoza and Ben Ngubane were sacked after persistent blackouts and evidence of corruption at the utility. 'Load shedding' in all seriousness started in 2007. Since then André de Ruyter has become ESKOM's 14<sup>th</sup> CEO. This is symptomatic of major governance problems with a high turnover of management staff and board members.

The 1994 negotiated settlement was the start of many of our ills. In 1998 already, the ANC government aimed at breaking up ESKOM into Generation, Transmission and Distribution. Along comes Ramaphosa in 2017, re-hashes the ill-conceived, neoliberal policy and serves it up as if it's a new plan. The white paper of 1998 concluded that Eskom's generation capacity would only suffice until 2007. So the government was aware in 1998 already, that after 2007 we were destined to experience blackouts.

No new power stations were built between 1998 and 2007. Medupi and Kusile which were intended to increase the capacity and act as a buffer for ESKOM's ageing fleet of coal-producing, out-dated power stations, is also prone to severe outages as structural deficiencies abound. This results in only 40% reliability, according to an M & G report of 15 /02/19. Costs for the construction of the mega electricity-producing utilities have increased by more than R300-billion, in addition to a massive R441 billion debt

WHAT IS NEEDED

Energy generation through the use of fossil fuels and nuclear power must be phased out and replaced by renewable power sources, such as environmentally-acceptable technologies including the following: **Wind power, Desalination, Solar Energy, Geothermal energy, Tidal/Hydro-power and energy derived from waste disposal.**

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