



LIBERATING THEATRE

On Saturday, 3 November 1990, the Speech and Drama Society of TASA, hosted an important workshop on 'People's Education'. The Std.8 Speech and Drama pupils of New West Secondary School, in Newlands West, Durban, presented their workshopped production on 'Race and Racism', which was followed by a pro-active critique in buzz-groups comprising teachers, pupils and parents. The programme culminated with the presentation of an abridged version of Essop Khan's 'Jamal Syndrome'. As part of the preparation children had to research the topic both theoretically and experientially by way of interviews. The interviews provided the basis for a series of scenarios, whilst the theoretical framework enabled the children to criticise their observations.

The organisers believe that the participatory and experiential approach to drama has its importance in laying the basis for democratic cultural practices. It is therefore a means of promoting social, political and economic development. As one of the organisers, Farouk Hoosain pointed out, the play-building exercise was an instrument of conscientisation - it developed awareness among pupils and encouraged parents to focus on the issue of the 'Group Areas Act'. The concept of praxis was taken a step further when pupils were assigned the task of petitioning the community of Castle Hill in Newlands West to protest against the Group Areas Act.

Another objective of the project was to cultivate among pupils and parents the valuable skills of analysing, evaluating and criticising. An attempt was also made to move away from traditional approaches to Speech and Drama, which focussed on the Four 'Rs', namely Recreation (pleasure), Recognition (confirming the world view), Revelation (learning something new) and Redemption (making better people). This was done by adding the important elements of Resistance and Revolution.

The organisers felt that Drama and English teachers, in particular, needed to resist the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes and the trivialisation of the oppressed people's history and social experiences.

Note: Video-copies of the programme may be obtained through the TASA Offices.



OUR POLICY...

... is to stamp out racism and to encourage anti-racist attitudes. New West Secondary School is a multi-racial community. We know that there is racism in our society and we are against it. Racism is harmful to education and causes unhappiness. We demand equal opportunities for everyone.

WHAT IS RACISM?

1. INSTITUTIONAL RACISM means that in work or school, race or colour can be used, by persons in power, to stop people achieving. This can be either intentional or unintentional.

Racism comes in many forms at school:-

2. Examples of OPEN RACISM include;

- * threats or assaults against people because of their colour or race.
- * openly refusing to associate with people because of their colour
- * racist comments, jokes, graffiti and name calling.
- * bringing into school racist material, such as racist literature or badges.
- * trying to recruit people into racist organisations.

3. Examples of UNINTENTIONAL RACISM include;

* unacceptable stereotyped views, like:

"all Blacks have natural rhythm..."
"Jews/Scots/Asians are all stingy..." and the well-meaning teacher who says: "I don't notice the colour of the children in my class - they are all children to me." which ignores racial identity.

- * what is sometimes chosen to be taught - and the materials used to teach it.
- * The way teachers, conscious or not of their racism, can influence the pupils they teach.
- * Different racial groups not being equally represented on the staff.

THE JOB OF FIGHTING RACISM IS VERY IMPORTANT AND EVERYONE IN NEW WEST MUST HELP IN WHATEVER WAY THEY CAN.