

‘These Difficult Days’:  
Mission Church Reactions to Bantu Education in South  
Africa 1949-56

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### Abstract

Mission education in South Africa became increasingly untenable in the 1940s because mission churches lacked the finances to be able to maintain a national system of educational provision and because Africans were questioning mission education which they increasingly considered institutionally racist. This crisis led the Nationalist Government to appoint an education commission to make recommendations leading to the reform of 'native education'. This commission argued that mission education was incompatible with the ordering of society envisaged by the government. It suggested that the state should wrestle control of 'native education' from missionaries, enabling it to fashion a policy more in sympathy with apartheid.

In 1953 the Bantu Education Act was passed which withdrew state aid from mission schools and made their continued registration dependent on the approval of the Minister for Native Affairs. The Catholic Church, able to raise the necessary finance, decided to continue running all their schools privately. This decision was based purely on religious doctrine and meant that the Church taught Bantu Education in all of its schools. Of the remaining denominations only the American Board had the resources to maintain a single privately funded school.

Aside from a few politicised figures in the Church of the Province of South Africa who refused to lease their schools, claiming that to do so was to compromise with apartheid, church leaders leased their schools to the government. This decision was made because Church leaders considered that Bantu Education, despite their abhorrence to its ultimate aims, provided better opportunities to children than an 'education' picked up on the streets.

This decision was made with little, if any, consultation with Africans (parents, teachers or students) because church governing structures were undemocratic and racially exclusive, denying Africans any meaningful representation. Ironically, the decision to lease was in accord with the wishes of most Africans who reluctantly accepted the fact that Bantu Education, in the absence of any realistic alternative, was better than no education.

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## Contents

Abbreviations	i
1. Introduction	1-10
2. 'Idealism like Patriotism, is not Enough': The Churches Face Apartheid	11-31
3. 'Mealie Pap and Hope': Mission Schools Before Bantu Education	32-63
4. Raising Schools to 'Mighty Instruments': The Commission on Native Education in the Union (Eiselen Report) and Apartheid	64-95
5. 'The Emphasis is Clearly on "Bantu" and Not on Education': Mission Church Reactions to the Eiselen Report	96-118
6. 'Liberation from the Burden of Maintaining Schools': The Church of Scotland and the Bantu Education Act	119-146
7. Wearing 'African Spectacles': The Anglican Church and the Bantu Education Act	147-176
8. 'There is no Place in Bantu Education for any Institution which does not bow its knee to the Apartheid Idol': The American Board Mission and the Bantu Education Act	177-208
9. 'Only History Will Tell Us How Tragic This Has Been': The Catholic Church and the Bantu Education Act	209-235
10. 'Awakening to the issues at stake': African Responses to Bantu Education	236-260
11. Conclusion	261-268
Appendix 1	269-270
Appendix 2A	271-277
Appendix 2B	278-295
Appendix 3	296-302
Bibliography	303-326

## Abbreviations

AAC	All African Convention
ABM	American Board Mission
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
BCC	British Council of Churches
BPC	Bantu Presbyterian Church
CAPA	Cape African Parents' Association
CATA	Cape African Teachers' Association
CATF	Catholic African Teachers' Federation
CATU	Cape African Teachers' Union
CCSA	Christian Council of South Africa
CPSA	Church of the Province of South Africa
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
FMC	Foreign Mission Committee (Church of Scotland)
IAMF	Interdenominational African Ministers' Federation
LMS	London Missionary Society
MC	Mission Council (Church of Scotland)
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NRC	Native Representative Council
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
OFSATA	Orange Free State African Teachers' Association
PBM	Provincial Board of Missions (Church of the Province)
SACBC	South African Catholic Bishops' Conference
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
TATA	Transvaal African Teachers' Association
TATU	Transvaal African Teachers' Union
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa

## Introduction

The dramatic student uprising in Soweto in 1976, which stimulated all facets of the liberation movement and refocused world attention on South Africa, was an expression of the anger which Africans felt for the Bantu Education system.<sup>1</sup> This explosion of resentment which 'altered the history of the country irrevocably'<sup>2</sup> demonstrated the centrality of the Bantu Education policy to the wider plans of the government. According to the Anglican priest, Father Huddleston, of all the legislation passed in the early 1950s, the Bantu Education Act was 'by far the most important and by far the most deadly.'<sup>3</sup> This Act guaranteed that missionaries would no longer be directly in control of African schools, ensuring that the education of Africans would be, for the first time, under the direct control of the apartheid architects.

Given its importance to apartheid it is unsurprising that historians and educationalists have been much exercised by the policy. As Bram Fleisch has shown, early work suggested that 'Bantu Education' was the creation of a particular Afrikaner mentality which was 'the outgrowth of some misunderstood anthropological concepts, German racial theory (attributed to Eiselen), and a peculiar insular Afrikaner "ethnic identity".'<sup>4</sup> For such authors the Bantu Education Act was the injurious action of a government intent, for ideological reasons, on denying Africans the chance to 'assimilate' themselves into European society. They argued that a benevolent mission education system was destroyed because it offered an education equal to that offered to whites, threatening white supremacy through the creation of an increasingly articulate African elite.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the course of this thesis I will describe black South Africans as Africans. This is because the terminology 'black' also refers to 'coloureds' and 'Asians'. As a consequence of this white South Africans will not be termed Africans, but simply whites.

<sup>2</sup> B. Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a Revolution?, (London, 1979), foreword p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T. Huddleston, Naught for Your Comfort, (London, 1956), p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> B. Fleisch, 'American Education and the Eiselen Commission Report', paper presented to the History of South African Education Conference, Salt Rock, Kwa-Zulu Natal, 26-28 Oct. 1999.

<sup>5</sup> In particular see E. Brookes, A South African Pilgrimage, (Johannesburg, 1977).

This analysis is problematic on at least two levels. Firstly, as will be seen, mission education was not the vehicle of racial harmony and equal opportunity that liberal interpretation assumed. Secondly, it is over descriptive and lacks analysis. It views educational change in isolation, divorced from wider political and economic factors which shape policy, seeing the Act simply as the product of an irrational and insular form of Afrikaner nationalism.

In 1984, Kallaway's collection, Apartheid and Education<sup>6</sup>, endeavoured to move away from this dominant 'liberal tradition' by demonstrating how the tools of Marxist political economy could provide fuller explanations of educational change. The book's contributors argued that changes in education policy could only be explained with reference to the needs of the political and productive system in South Africa, and as the product of conflict between political, economic and social forces in general. The articles by Pam Christie and Colin Collins, and Frank Molteno in particular, quickly established a new paradigm in the study of educational change.<sup>7</sup> They asserted that the interaction between the emerging industrial economy and education was of crucial importance. Changes in twentieth century educational policy were thus conceived to provide Africans with the skills required by capital, to mould them into the new social relations of production brought about by changes in the economy. For the capitalist state to survive, they argue, it had to produce suitable workers, in both number and quality. In this interpretation Bantu Education was intended to increase the number of Africans passing through lower levels of education, in response to the need for ever-increasing numbers of semi-skilled workers with basic numeracy and literacy.

Although this paradigm created a welcome new perspective on Bantu Education, it was economically reductionist, representing education in an overtly functionalist fashion, and the state too monolithically. Schools and the state are both areas of contestation where struggles occur both between and within them amongst a multitude of actors with divergent attitudes and opinions. Education clearly has a crucial role to play in ensuring the reproduction of the

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<sup>6</sup> P. Kallaway (ed.) Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans (Johannesburg, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> P. Christie, & C. Collins, 'Bantu Education: Apartheid Ideology and Labour Reproduction' and F. Molteno, 'The Historical Foundations of the Schooling of Black South Africans', in Kallaway, (ed.), Apartheid and Education.

labour force, but schools are only one element in a capitalist society and many other political, cultural and social forces help, or hinder, the creation and development of appropriate capitalist relations of production. Moreover, if schools were successfully reproducing, in such a functionalist fashion, the 'ideal' African worker, explaining how these very schools became the centre of social conflict from the 1970s becomes difficult.

More recent scholarship on the Bantu Education Act has accepted the basic premise of the early revisionist interpretation, that the needs of the economy shaped legislation. However, it has done so in a less reductionist fashion by indicating other influences that also informed policy in 1953. In a thesis and several articles Jonathan Hyslop, in particular, has shown that the Bantu Education Act was, in its urban context, designed to act as a form of social control.<sup>8</sup> He argues that 'the conditions which prevailed in education in the 1940s constituted a major obstacle to social stability.'<sup>9</sup> He suggests that there were too few mission schools, and those that existed were woefully underfunded and overstretched, so that the majority of African youths were uneducated and unskilled, posing a political as well as economic danger. Sue Krige, Cynthia Cross and Bram Fleisch have extended the debate, and an examination of their contributions can be found in chapter three.

There is no secondary literature dealing specifically with the reaction of the mission schools and their communities to Bantu Education. The material that exists can be found within general church and mission histories, which are generally poor and lacking in analysis; the Act is dealt with briefly, if at all, with little consideration of its effect on church/state relations or mission churches' relations with the wider community. In his major work on the church and apartheid John de Gruchy, for example, notes that, 'The first major crunch in church-state relations came in 1957 with the proclamation of Clause 29 (C) of the Native

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<sup>8</sup> J. Hyslop, 'Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976', PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990, 'The Concepts of Reproduction and Resistance in the Sociology of Education: The Case of the Transition From 'Missionary' to 'Bantu' Education, 1940-1955', Perspectives in Education, Vol. 9, No. 2, Sept. 1987. "'A Destruction Coming In": Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis', in P. Bonner (et al) Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962, (Johannesburg, 1993). 'State Education Policy and the Social Reproduction of the Urban Working-Class: The Case of the Southern Transvaal, 1955-1976', Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Hyslop, 'A Destruction...', p. 394.

Laws Amendment Act.<sup>10</sup> While the proclamation of 1957 certainly had serious implications for church-state relations,<sup>11</sup> this statement clearly demonstrates the absence of analysis of the Bantu Education Act's impact on the mission churches in South Africa.

To find any substantial account of mission responses to the Act it is necessary to examine mission church histories denominationally.<sup>12</sup> While these texts do consider the Act, they too suffer from weaknesses. Firstly, and obviously, they only appraise the Act on a denominational basis. Consequently there is no comparative analysis of how decisions were reached, whether they were made collectively or in isolation, or how the decisions of one mission church affected those of another. In general, these works are written by academics connected to organised religion in some way, either through links with religious studies departments, or through their present or previous employment.<sup>13</sup> They are often, perhaps understandably, more concerned with providing a better guide to Christian action in the future, than to gaining a better understanding of the past. Mostly they have not made any significant use of primary sources, undermining their accuracy and analysis. While they are concerned with the decisions of Bishops and other church leaders, they rarely examine the basis of those decisions. None seek to scrutinize, for example, the opinions and aspirations of those who ran the schools at local levels, or those who taught and studied in them.

This lacuna is unfortunate, for the Bantu Education Act presented the English-speaking churches with the ideal opportunity to unite in the face of apartheid legislators, as they all confronted a serious challenge to their hegemony in the educational sphere. By examining the churches' reactions, both individually and collectively, I hope to address a number of

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<sup>10</sup> J. de Gruchy, The Church Struggle in South Africa, (Cape Town, 1979), p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> It made it very difficult for Africans to attend church services in 'white' areas.

<sup>12</sup> G. Abraham, The Catholic Church and Apartheid: The Response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the First Decade of National Party Rule, 1948-57, (Johannesburg, 1989). F. England & T. Paterson, Bounty in Bondage: The Anglican Church in Southern Africa, (Johannesburg, 1989). A. Prior, Catholics in Apartheid Society, (Cape Town, 1982). C. Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English-Speaking Churches, (Cape Town, 1988). M. Worship, Between Two Fires: The Anglican Church and Apartheid, 1948-1957, (Pietermaritzburg, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> See N. Etherington, 'Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa', Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1996.

important issues, such as the nature of ecumenical relations; the priorities of the churches; the nature of church and state relations; the ideology of mission education, and the importance of public opinion within South Africa and abroad.

It is my intention to move beyond an examination of the origins and long-term policy objectives of Bantu Education and examine the immediate effects of the Act on mission education. Little research has occurred exploring the impact of the Act on schools and institutions, and upon those intimately involved in mission education; the teachers, pupils and parents. An important part of this thesis will thus be its emphasis on case studies of particular 'flagship' mission institutions. This will entail a comprehensive evaluation of the attitudes and priorities of those most active in African education - local administrators, teachers and students. Although there has been limited work on African teachers' organisations, none has looked specifically at Bantu Education.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the 1940s the relationship between organisations representing African teachers and the provincial education departments had been steadily deteriorating due to the failure of provincial authorities to address and remedy teacher grievances. The Bantu Education Act promised the expansion of African education, the 'Africanisation' of all levels of teaching and the lower reaches of the schools inspectorate, and the complete professionalisation of African teachers who would finally be recognised as civil servants. Given these proposed developments it is not safe to assume - as has most of the existing literature - that African teachers instantly rejected Bantu Education; some may have welcomed the break with missionary paternalism and the promised opportunities.

The response of students and parents is also unclear. Lodge, Hyslop and Feit have argued that the failure of the ANC's boycott campaign indicates that African parents were, at best, ambivalent towards Bantu Education. But, as they admitted, the failure of the ANC's campaign had as much to do with mismanagement as anything else.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the evidence

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<sup>14</sup> R. Peteni, Towards Tomorrow: The Story of the African Teachers' Associations of South Africa, (Michigan, 1979). Hyslop, 'Teacher Resistance in African Education from the 1940s to the 1980s', in M. Nkomo (ed.), Pedagogy of Domination, (Trenton, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> T. Lodge, 'The Parents' Schools Boycott: Eastern Cape and East Rand Townships, 1955', in Kallaway (ed.), Apartheid and Education. Hyslop, "'Let Us Cry for our Children": Lessons of the 1955-6

from the Schools' Boycott does not indicate any consensus amongst African parents and pupils. Like teachers, African parents could gain status through School Committees established by the Act, which also promised more schooling than provided by the missions, so that once again it is incorrect to assume that Africans rejected Bantu Education in the 1950s as they did in the 1970s. An examination of the reactions of the African communities around the larger missionary institutions also highlights how a particular part of the apartheid programme affected the daily lives of Africans, and will explore the means by which they contested or accepted the policies forced upon them.

I also hope the thesis sheds more light on the churches' attitudes towards apartheid and increases our understanding of missions and churches, the meaning of 'mission education' and the concerns of those being 'educated' in twentieth century South Africa.

Thus, this thesis attempts to examine a moment in the bringing of modernity to Africa. The arrival of western education in Africa (with all its manifest limitations and contradictions) is a key period in the history of Africa and the rest of the world. Throughout the continent missionaries attempted to bring Africans into 'the family of civil nations' via the adoption of European patterns of behaviour, thus as the Comaroff's argue, colonialism 'was as much a cultural as a political encounter.'<sup>16</sup> Missionary education must be seen as one of a number of modernising forces, such as capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation, which transformed African societies. In South Africa, as in other parts of Africa where there has been a long history of missionary activity, educational endeavours were part of a wider process to 'revolutionize African being-in-the-world.'<sup>17</sup> By the mid-twentieth century hundreds of mission schools existed throughout South Africa, all of which were driven by a faith in the universal human capacity for improvement; as the Comaroff's declare 'the

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School Boycotts', Transformations, No. 4, 1987. E. Feit, African Opposition in South Africa: The Failure of Passive Resistance. (Stanford, 1967).

<sup>16</sup> John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier Vol. 2, (Chicago, 1997), p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> ibid. p. 17.



civilising mission was above all a pedagogic crusade.<sup>18</sup> As a mission statement from the American Board declared: education was to create 'responsible citizens' who would adopt the 'accepted standards of European civilization.'<sup>19</sup> Missionaries saw education as a means by which to 'modernise' the 'pre-modern'; to impart to them the 'benefits' of white civilisation. Such a task was, however, riven with ambiguities and ironies and this thesis illustrates the contradictions inherent in missionary endeavour, and how Africans responded to these contradictions.

### Sources

I made extensive use of mission archives both in Great Britain and South Africa. Such archival material was generally well housed and easy available<sup>20</sup> and the archival research proved very fruitful and stimulating, and led to a number of possible generalisations. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, the 'home' churches (such as the Church of England) had very little influence over decisions taken by the resident churches (such as the Church of the Province of South Africa). This indicates the somewhat contradictory nature of the relationship between home and resident churches. Home churches certainly encouraged resident churches to establish themselves as independently as possible, but were then reluctant to give free rein to resident churches when faced with Bantu Education. The records also indicate the lack of ecumenical contacts between the churches, as there seems to have been little correspondence between them. On the other hand the amount of contact that the churches maintained with government officials is somewhat surprising and suggests that the churches believed they could influence policy by persuasion. The archives also reveal the very deliberate attempts by the churches to foster a public image of consensus. The numerous criticisms of Reeves for 'breaking rank' clearly illustrate the Anglicans'

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<sup>18</sup> John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution, p. 412. They argue that 'Modernity is to be understood as an ideological *constellation*, one which gave rise to material practices and to concrete institutions erected in its name', in J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff, 'Revelations Upon Revelation: After Shocks, Afterthoughts', Interventions, Vo. 3, No. 1, 2001, p. 112 (original emphasis).

<sup>19</sup> William Cullen Library (henceforth WCL) AC623 Christian Council of South Africa 'American Board Mission: Policy and Aims for the Education of Africans', Jan. 1954, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> See bibliography.

determination to present a united front, a determination shared by the other denominations. Given the sensitivity of Bantu Education in a racially charged South Africa it appears that the white church leadership wished to foster accord to justify their actions to all church members.

I completed fourteen oral interviews which I found stimulating, providing as they did a valuable break from the daily study of documents. Not only did I meet some wonderfully interesting people but I found they provided the context for my archival research, and made it easier for me to understand and evaluate the fears and hopes of those involved in mission and Bantu education. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that the majority of teachers knew little of the passage of the Act in the 1950s and only associated the 'evils' of Bantu Education with the 1970s.

During the course of my research I had a major car accident in which I broke my back. This injury precipitated my return to England and two six month periods of suspension from my studies. Inevitably the accident somewhat hindered the development of this Ph.D. As far as my research was concerned I feel that I would have managed to complete more oral interviews in South Africa if had not been for my accident. I had arranged a number of interviews in Grahamstown and Durban which had to be cancelled. However, I did return to South Africa and managed to interview some of those whom I had previously contacted. A return trip to Gauteng to undertake further interviews and research in the state archives in Pretoria had to be cancelled due to both time and financial constraints. Financial difficulties also meant that I was unable to consult the American Board archives in Boston.

While I found the archives easily accessible I did encounter a few problems. Primarily, I was disappointed at the small quantity of Methodist material available. I had hoped to offer a more complete examination of Methodist responses to Bantu Education, including a case study of Healdtown school. Although I did find material at the Cory Library relating to the Methodists and Bantu Education it was rather limited and, although a small quantity was surveyed in the SOAS library, it remains the case that a more thorough examination of local and provincial archives in South Africa (for which I neither had the time or the resources)

would be necessary to assess the Methodist reaction to Bantu Education more fully. Despite being unable to complete a chapter on Methodist responses, I have referred, <sup>h</sup>where appropriate, to their experience of Bantu Education within the chapter which deals with the Anglican Church's reaction, because of the similarities in their responses to the legislation. There is a thesis by Margaret Rundle<sup>21</sup> which looks purely at Methodist reactions to the Eiselen Report and Bantu Education which can compliment this work to offer a better explanation of Methodist policy. However, as Rundle herself remarks, 'few reports survived of the discussions on the future of mission education.'<sup>22</sup>

Also disappointing was the sparse material at the University of South Africa. I had come to understand that there was a large amount of archival material relating to teaching organisations at UNISA. Whilst this was true, there was very little for the period which I looked at. I was also unable, despite repeated investigation, to track down archival material that related to St. Peter's Anglican school in Johannesburg which I had hoped to examine in detail. I was surprised at the lack of material relating to Father Huddleston and other members of the Community of the Resurrection. The Community itself in Mirfield indicated to me that they had no archives relating to their mission in South Africa. Huddleston's papers, which are currently being catalogued at Oxford, may prove more rewarding to future researchers. In general school year books and church monthlies also proved unsatisfactory, with very little, if any, mention of Bantu Education.

Perhaps the greatest frustration with this research was its narrow focus on elite institutions. The vast majority of those involved in mission education, teachers and pupils, were at primary schools. However, records simply do not exist for these schools. This in itself is interesting and, as this thesis will show, was the product of missionary indifference towards primary schools. All recent studies of African education policy in South Africa, including

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<sup>21</sup> M. Rundle, 'Accommodation or Confrontation? Some Responses to the Eiselen Commission and Bantu Education with Special Reference to the Methodist Church of South Africa', unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> M. Rundle, 'Compliance or Confrontation? Contrasting Responses to the Bantu Education Act 1953', paper presented to the History of South African Education Conference, Salt Rock, Kwa-Zulu Natal, 26-28 Oct. 1999, p. 9.

Hyslop's important work, have been limited by this; while they have discussed missionary education in a general sense, they have been based upon the archival records of only a small number of elite missionary institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, despite these difficulties I consulted a wide range of archival material which has proven richly rewarding for this thesis and has suggested a number of other avenues for future research. An examination of the initial years of state control would be fruitful, to see how students and teachers reacted to the changes induced by Bantu Education. There is evidence to suggest that many students, particularly those in the larger secondary schools, reacted with hostility to the new dispensation, continuing the long tradition of disturbances and 'riots' in schools. An examination of private Catholic schools from the transition to the 1970s, when it began to give up its schools due to a lack of resources, could perhaps illustrate that the purpose of Bantu Education could be successfully subverted through imaginative teaching techniques. Additionally, this thesis has revealed that an examination of the responses of churches in Britain to Bantu Education could be broadened out to encompass a study of British churches' attitude to apartheid in general.

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<sup>23</sup> The concerted use of oral history would be of great benefit here.

'Idealism like Patriotism, is not Enough'<sup>1</sup> The Churches Face Apartheid

In 1963 Peter Walshe wrote

For the first sixty years of the twentieth century, the white-controlled churches of South Africa were very largely absorbed into the country's economic, cultural and legal patterns of racial discrimination...the churches drifted with the economic and political currents of South African history.<sup>2</sup>

According to Anthony Giddens, Marxist analysis of religion as a form of ideology argues that it is '[T]he transmuted representation of values which are in fact created by man in society' from which the church acts to provide 'principled support for an existing social and political order.'<sup>3</sup> There are limitations to this Marxist view, especially its failure to ascribe any agency to individuals within any given religion.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in South Africa it is clear that before 1948 the English-speaking churches, in general, frequently echoed the ideology of the dominant white class, and reflected the views of the state. The English-speaking churches can in many respects be seen as a microcosm of English-speaking white society in the inter-war period. Although they raised dissenting voices against aspects of segregation they were themselves too entrenched within the apparatus of white domination to imagine a reorganisation of society, let alone lead a crusade for its implementation.

British rule at the Cape and the influx of English-speaking settlers was accompanied by the establishment of Anglican, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian churches to serve their needs, and to establish missionary enterprises amongst the African population of the colony. By the end of the nineteenth century they had substantial numbers of white and African members.

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<sup>1</sup> Huddleston, Naught for Your Comfort (Collins, London, 1956), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> P. Walshe, Church Versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute (London, 1983), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> A. Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber (Cambridge, 1971), p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Opposition from church members such as Trevor Huddleston proved that the dominant view of the churches could be challenged by individual agency.

Denomination	Nominal Membership	African
Methodist	203,067	179,878
Anglican	89,650	41,739
Cong./LMS	41,409	38,539
Presbyterian	30,679	13,526 <sup>5</sup>

Greg Cuthbertson has remarked that these Protestant denominations 'hardly protested' against the South African War, but rather welcomed it because they believed that civilisation accompanied British rule, and the spread of Empire meant the spread of Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Thus, a British victory would allow them to increase their missionary endeavour and undermine the power of the Dutch Reformed Churches. Such faith in the intentions of the British Empire stemmed from the churches' location within the colonising structure. For example, most Anglican church leaders were drawn from the upper echelons of British society and shared a similar world view with those in government, such as governor generals, - they were liberals who believed in imperial trusteeship and the civilising mission of the churches in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

This position led to extensive contact between religious and political leaders from the end of the South African War to the victory of the Nationalists in 1948, especially during the dominance of the South African Party (1910s and 1920s) when English-speaking South Africa was at its zenith. Up to 1948 the majority of English-speaking South Africans with access to political power belonged to the Church of the Province of South Africa

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<sup>5</sup> Figure from 1898 see R. Davenport, 'Settlement, Conquest, and Theological Controversy: The Churches of Nineteenth-century European Immigrants' in R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History (Oxford, 1997), p. 55. The category African probably included so called 'coloured' people.

<sup>6</sup> G. Cuthbertson, 'Pricking the "Nonconformist Conscience": Religion Against the South African War', in D. Lowry (ed.) The South African War Reappraised (Manchester, 2000), p. 179.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Porter has identified a 'shift in outlook' among British missionaries in the late-nineteenth century who increasingly looked to governments for assistance. He argues this was due to a number of factors: '[the] increased respectability and middle-class nature of the missionary movement, the willingness of officials (especially private) to endorse missionary goals either because of a common evangelical faith or growing mutual familiarity, and the increased political weight in Britain itself of evangelical and non-conformist opinion.' This growing relationship did not mean, however, that there was not 'frequent tension and conflict' between mission societies and governments throughout this period. Porter, 'Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 1780-1914', Inaugural lecture, King's College, 20 Nov. 1991, p. 14 & 18.

(henceforth CPSA) and the synods of all Protestant churches sent annual messages of loyalty to the Governor-General. This interaction gave the churches the impression that they could influence opinion and policy-making in the Union. While it is impossible to evaluate the number and effect of private meetings between church and political leaders, the number of deputations, letters, and statements sent to the Government<sup>8</sup> are testament to this belief.<sup>9</sup> As Richard Elphick has argued, 'the mission Christians relied on the goodwill of those whites in administration, politics and business who interpreted administration of Africans as trusteeship'.<sup>10</sup>

The shared appreciation between church and government leaders that trusteeship was the most suitable means for successful colonisation and the development of African peoples was premised on the assumption that white culture was vastly superior to that of Africans. This belief lay at the heart of the churches' paternalistic view that only through the gradual assimilation of European religious and cultural practises could 'Africans' become 'fit' for entry into European civilization. This unhurried development was a constituent part of their propagation of British values, which were, in turn, grounded in the liberal belief in 'progress'. In this period, Protestant Churches extolled the participation of the educated in progressive government, the rule of law and the conviction that ideas, rather than political action, brought about change in society. They believed in the gradualism of change and the power of the moral will to effect change in the individual and in society, 'to let God transfigure society through the slow gestation of Christ's kingdom in its midst.'<sup>11</sup> The importance of this creed in shaping church history in this period cannot be overestimated.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> From 1912 until the formation of the Christian Council of South Africa in 1936 every General Missionary Conference issued resolutions to the government on social issues affecting Africans.

<sup>9</sup> Of particular importance to the churches in this period was J. H. Hofmeyr, a committed Christian who was twice a cabinet minister between 1933 and 1948.

<sup>10</sup> R. Elphick, 'Mission Christianity and Interwar Liberalism', in J. Butler, R. Elphick & D. Welsh (eds.), Democratic Liberalism in South Africa: It's History and Prospect (Cape Town, 1987), p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> de Gruchy, 'Grappling...', p. 368.

<sup>12</sup> The gradualist approach to the assimilation of Africans into European society was also encouraged because the churches felt the need to protect them from the subversive evils of western civilisation, such as gambling, prostitution and alcohol.

Given their belief in the inferiority of Africans it is unsurprising that by 1900 all Protestant churches, congregations and dioceses were segregated. Such segregation was justified on the grounds of cultural incongruity (Africans were not yet 'civilized'), linguistic difficulties and natural patterns of racial separation.<sup>13</sup> In addition to this, the church was part of a civil society which was itself inherently racist, which assumed the superiority of whites and which relegated Africans to the most menial roles in society. The Protestant Churches' adoption of this segregationist position greatly affected its relationship with all parts of South African civil society and the state.

The relationship between the Protestant Churches and the state in this period was premised on the idea that they operated in separate spheres and that it was the churches' duty to 'render unto Caesar that which was Caesar's.' Both the churches and the state were part of the 'civilizing mission', and it was the state's duty to be part of the structure of authority over all citizens. Its role was to provide justice, order and security for its citizens so that they could fulfil their destiny as God's children. The churches' duty was to teach and proclaim principles by which people should live according to God. These spheres of authority were, however, separate, and it was not the churches' duty to enter the secular political world to pressure governments and individuals. According to Geoffrey Clayton, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, it was the churches' duty to 'state clearly the moral problem and leave men to form their own personal decisions.'<sup>14</sup> Thus, while the churches could, and did, enter into the political sphere, in that they commented on legislation, they tended not to do so as corporate bodies as it was not for them to undermine 'legitimately elected' governments.<sup>15</sup>

It is not self-evident, therefore, that the Protestant Churches should engage in secular political debates or actions. It also cannot be assumed that church leaders considered

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<sup>13</sup> Davenport, 'Settlement, Conquest...', p. 65. He remarks 'in the nineteenth century relationships developed which would later provoke a world-wide denunciation of religious apartheid', p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in M. Worsnip, Between Two Fires: The Anglican Church and Apartheid 1948-57 (Pietermaritzburg, 1991), p. 32. For a more detailed examination of Clayton's position see chapter 8.

<sup>15</sup> For instance they may criticise a piece of legislation, such as the 1913 Natives Land Act, but would never encourage citizens to disobey its requirements.



apartheid immoral. At this time many church leaders would not have recognised apartheid as the great evil it was later acknowledged to be. As we will see, this position is what frustrated a number of radical churchmen in the Anglican Church. These factors did not mean, however, that Protestant churches did not condemn government policy; they recognised that they had a duty to speak out against policies which they felt subverted the creation of God's kingdom on earth. When Protestant Churches engaged in criticism of government policy, however, it was always in terms of their continued belief in the validity of 'trusteeship'. This can be seen in their approach towards the 1913 Natives Land Act which limited African title to land to a mere 13 per cent of South Africa.<sup>16</sup> In general, the churches condemned the Act, claiming that it thwarted the economic aspirations of Africans. Nevertheless, they focussed their criticism on its intention to exclude Africans from land and agricultural resources rather than on the overall place of the legislation in the national system of exploitation and control.<sup>17</sup> What the churches failed to do was contextualise the Act within the white supremacist framework of the state in South Africa. This was because

the nature of the conflict was essentially related to the way in which the government imposed and executed its policy, which persons were included within the privileged class, and which persons were fit to discharge the responsibility of citizenship<sup>18</sup>

The Protestant missionary enterprise was essentially concerned with the transformation of the individual, rather than with society as a whole (individuals would change society themselves, from within). The churches' concern with the Natives Land Act, and much subsequent legislation, was not how it impinged upon the rights of Africans in society generally, but how it operated to hinder individual Africans from becoming 'civilised'.

The Protestant Churches' continued belief in trusteeship greatly affected their relationship with Africans in this period. Despite the fact that between 1884 and 1911 the number of

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<sup>16</sup> A figure gradually reached after the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act.

<sup>17</sup> J. R. Cochrane, Servants of Power: The Role of the English-speaking Churches in South Africa 1903-1930 (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 105.

<sup>18</sup> Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, p. 78.

African Christian communicants rose from 60,154 to 322,673<sup>19</sup>, their representation within the Protestant churches' governing structures remained inadequate until well into the apartheid era. Protestant churches were reluctant to ordain Africans, and it was only after the dramatic Ethiopian secessions in the 1880s and 1890s, that pressure from home churches in Britain saw their ordination. Attempting to prevent further fractures the churches adopted various strategies during the inter-war period to satisfy African opinion. In 1923 the Presbyterian Church established the Bantu Presbyterian Church, whilst the American Board created the Bantu Congregational Church. Both were created to offer African leadership, but maintain close ties with governing missions.<sup>20</sup> The CPSA attempted integration within the diocesan structure giving Africans a say, albeit limited, in the Provincial Missionary Council.<sup>21</sup> However, Christopher Gell, writing in 1957, demonstrated how the CPSA rigged its synodical voting system so that it could never come under African control.<sup>22</sup> The fear of African control meant that by the 1950s

in none of these forums...had African Christians gained the level of autonomy or participation necessary to project a strong African role...the leadership was still overwhelmingly in the hands of whites, and church actions and statements reflected, for the most part, the concerns of Africans as perceived by liberal Whites.<sup>23</sup>

Despite inadequate leadership opportunities within the Protestant Churches some Africans saw advantage in their programme which offered education and social mobility into professions such as teaching, the ministry and nursing for a small elite. For these Africans

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<sup>19</sup> Elphick, 'The Benevolent Empire and the Social Gospel: Missionaries and South African Christians in the Age of Segregation', in Elphick & Davenport (eds.), Christianity in South Africa p. 347.

<sup>20</sup> The creation of such churches highlights the acceptance of segregation within the missionary hierarchy. Africans would not be allowed positions of authority and influence within the missions themselves, so they were separated into their own institutions where they were given the space to express opinions contrary to those acceptable to Presbyterian and American Board leaders.

<sup>21</sup> Elphick, 'The Benevolent...', p. 350.

<sup>22</sup> C.W.M. Gell, 'Colour and South African Church', Africa South, Vol. 1, No. 2, January-March, 1957, p. 65. Gell also argues that a favoured tactic of the CPSA was to have its synod meetings in white areas. Africa South was a monthly journal, edited by Ronald Segal, expressing the views of white radicals who were closely aligned to the ANC.

<sup>23</sup> E. Regehr, Perceptions of Apartheid: The Churches and Political Change in South Africa (Scottsdale, 1979), pp. 178-9.

it was advantageous to remain within the Protestant churches.

The under-representation of Africans within the ruling structures of churches should also be understood within the context of the racism of white congregations. The significance for the churches of racism amongst their congregations was paramount as it limited their ability and willingness to fight against injustice. Archbishop Clayton graphically explained the difficulties church leaders faced:

The real weakness of the Church's position is that we do not carry our laity with us. Synods will pass liberal resolutions, but for instance in some of the country parishes in my Diocese the situation is very bad. In one parish a lady ... proposed at the Vestry meeting that as there was a certain service which only coloured people attended and as the white people paid for the flowers at the Altar, the flowers should be taken off the Altar at that service! And I myself have been told by a prominent laymen in one parish that if coloured people attended the service he would steal the key and lock the church ... the pronouncements of the English-speaking Churches are really the expressions of opinion of the leaders rather than the expressions of the mind of the Church people as a whole. This is a matter which we have to fight ourselves.<sup>24</sup>

Gell also remarked on the fear of the church for 'if it acts vigorously against the colour bar within and outside the Church, it will lose the allegiance of its white members.'<sup>25</sup> Such allegiance was a serious matter because white congregations inevitably contributed most to church finances.

### The Catholic Church in Inter-War South Africa

Although the history of Catholic worship in South Africa stretches back into the late eighteenth century, it was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century that the Catholic Church established itself as a major Christian denomination in the region. By 1898 it

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<sup>24</sup> Lambeth Palace Library (hereafter LPL), London, Corr. of G. Fisher (Archbishop of Canterbury) V. 109 f6 Clayton to Fisher 21 July 1952. Clayton continued 'Probably one of the most necessary qualities for them [the clergy] and for us is a sense of humour. Without that they would go mad or at least have a nervous breakdown.'

<sup>25</sup> Gell, 'Colour...', p. 64.

counted 17,508 members in the Cape Colony, of whom 14,965 were white.<sup>26</sup> Its mission among Africans was relatively undeveloped until the start of the twentieth century, for the Church found it difficult to ignore the claims of white Catholics. While a number of significant mission stations were established among Africans before the South African War, most notably in Natal, by 1903 the number of Africans baptized in Natal, Zululand and the Transkei, the areas of heaviest Catholic penetration, was only in the region of 10,000.<sup>27</sup> However, despite the internment of German priests during World War One Catholicism grew rapidly in the twentieth century, and in 1922 Pope Pius XI issued a decree establishing the Apostolic Delegate in South Africa.<sup>28</sup> This was followed by a strong missionary drive in the 1930s in response to an undertaking in the 1920s 'to encourage closer involvement of the Catholic laity in the Church's life'.<sup>29</sup>

Like its Protestant counterparts, the Catholic Church was segregated throughout the inter-war period, not so much by law as by custom. As Dennis Hurley, the Archbishop of Durban remarked, 'Segregation was the rule, and you know those of us born in this country just couldn't see any other way, we accepted it...we were very much part of the system.'<sup>30</sup> African and white congregations were separated racially and the church hierarchy remained under the control of white Bishops. Again, in common with other English-speaking churches the Catholic Church assumed the inferiority of Africans and adopted the idea of trusteeship.

According to Elphick, in the inter-war period the Catholic Church was 'a minority church in a country still marked by considerable anti-Catholicism.' Unable to gain access to influential figures within decision-making circles, it considered itself vulnerable and was

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<sup>26</sup> Davenport, 'Settlement...', p. 55. The first Roman Catholic Bishop was appointed in 1837.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 200.

<sup>28</sup> The Apostolic Delegate is appointed when the Church has reached a certain level of development. Apostolic Delegates represent the Pope and while they take precedence over all local church hierarchies, the office is almost entirely advisory. Abraham, The Catholic Church, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Brain, 'Moving ...', p. 202.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with the author, Durban 19 June 1998.

reluctant to confront the state.<sup>31</sup> Like the Protestant Churches, it also believed in the separate spheres of state and church responsibility but, unlike them, it refused to make any comment on society as a whole. It tended to adopt a passive role, accepting society as it was, and it was not until 1952 that the South African bishops made an official statement on race relations.

### Afrikaner and African Nationalism

de Gruchy has recently argued that the apparent inability of the English-speaking churches in South Africa to offer effective opposition to apartheid was because they were 'caught between Afrikaner and African nationalism'.<sup>32</sup> He suggests that the failure of the churches was because they were trying to be all things to all people; they were trying to reflect the concerns of African and white members, as well as trying to deal with an unsympathetic government whose religious creed contrasted sharply with their own.

The slender victory of the National Party in 1948 ended a period of some 150 years of relative stability for the English-speaking churches of South Africa. The victory of the Nationalists completely changed the landscape of church and state relations as the traditional bond between the Protestant churches, the CPSA in particular, and the state was severed and with it the churches' access to the corridors of power.<sup>33</sup>

This severing was due, at its most fundamental level, to a difference in theology. As has been shown, the English-speaking churches in South Africa believed in the gradual assimilation of all humans into an inclusive society. Such a society would not materialise overnight but would come through the nurturing of the Christian spirit among all citizens as individuals who would spread the message of the universalism of the Gospel. Thus as 'civilization' and Christianity spread hand in hand, so South Africa would develop in the

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<sup>31</sup> Elphick, 'The Benevolent...', p. 348.

<sup>32</sup> de Gruchy, 'Grappling...', p. 157.

<sup>33</sup> In effect, the Dutch Reformed Church became the 'established' church in South Africa, allowing it to influence policy, rather than the Protestant churches.

future into a completely racially integrated society.<sup>34</sup> Such a vision was anathema to the leaders of the National Party and contrary to the teachings of their neo-Calvinist theology.

Afrikaner nationalists rejected the universalism of the English-speaking churches, as being opposed to the will of God. Biblical justification was used to demonstrate the false goal of integration. Afrikaner theologians and politicians argued that the story of the Tower of Babel, where God divided the nations and confused tongues, established the divine sanctity of nations and people. For the Afrikaners nationhood became a divine concept, with each nation having a unique mission and course under God's will; the nation became the central form of human existence, and the *volk* of each nation an expression of their organic unity.<sup>35</sup> Within each nation there were separate spheres of power (the church, state, culture, science) each autonomous and yet mutually dependent. Each was sovereign in its own sphere and yet they were all 'characterised by their universal interaction and their harmonious supplementation of each other'.<sup>36</sup> Within this the state (as part of the structure) was to promote and protect God's will, as opposed to the perceived confusion of church and state relations under liberalism. Within the Calvinist state, authority came only from God. By making the human individual the centre and measurement of all things, the nationalists argued, liberals and humanists undermined the authority of God.

Calvinism was theocentric in contrast to the absolutism of the rational individual in liberalism...[A]uthority unequivocally came from God, and could not be based upon individual rights.<sup>37</sup>

Thus in Afrikaner theology the individual's needs were subservient to the needs of the *volk*

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<sup>34</sup> In this section I will include the Catholic Church as its creed was in line with English-speaking churches, and was diametrically different to that of the Dutch Reformed Churches.

<sup>35</sup> C. Bloomberg, Christian Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond in South Africa, (London, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> A. Norval, Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse, (London, 1996), p. 71.

<sup>37</sup> ibid. p72. The liberal and humanist emphasis on the rights of the individual was clearly a democratising force. Such a force undermined the pre-ordained image of the ordering and hierarchy of society.

as God required with his emphasis on the group rather than the individual.<sup>38</sup> These ideas granted the Afrikaners a justification for apartheid where all nations could live out their divine destiny as separate entities, in direct opposition to the contemporary moves towards the integration of humanity. Nationhood was to be celebrated, with language playing a key role in national identity.<sup>39</sup> Such a theology did not, however, assume the inferiority of any one *volk*; rather nations were at different stages of development, and at the end of time all nations would be at the same stage. This notion obliged Afrikaners to assist others to reach their highest state of nationhood, thus Afrikaner Churches had, as a moral duty, to act as guardians over Africans.<sup>40</sup>

After 1948, English-speaking protestant churches could not look on the government of South Africa as a natural ally. It was now Afrikaans-speaking, no longer in sympathy with British aims, and intent on reducing the influence of English-speakers within the civil service. If anything, the English-speaking churches had now become 'foreign churches', their ability to influence the government greatly weakened.<sup>41</sup> This decline in the position of the English-speaking churches coincided with the growing politicization of Africans both within and outside of these churches.

From the early 1940s, and especially after the Second World War, African nationalism became more militant and attempted to engage the African public in ways that it had not done before. South Africa's entry into the war in 1939 against the forces of fascism generated new hope amongst Africans that change would take place domestically, and lead

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<sup>38</sup> The English-speaking churches rejection of Afrikaner theology was based upon the essential fact that it represented 'a shift from a universalist to an exclusivist Christian tradition.' T. Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion, (Berkeley, 1975), p. 271. In 1955 Archbishop Clayton argued, 'we must stand for the right of a man to be treated not as a member of a group but as a man.' Quoted from Worsnip, Between Two Fires, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> The promotion of Afrikaans further distanced the English-speaking churches from the Nationalists, not only psychologically but also practically.

<sup>40</sup> An example of this would be the NGK's creation, in 1951, of the Bantu Church of South Africa which had an all white moderature. See J. Kinghorn, 'Modernization and Apartheid: The Afrikaner Churches', in R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), Christianity in South Africa, p. 145.

<sup>41</sup> This is not to imply, however, that the churches had ever had any more than a nominal influence on the government.

to the eventual erosion of segregation. In 1942 Smuts<sup>42</sup> dramatically declared that 'segregation had fallen on evil days', and in 1945 promised 'larger freedoms'.<sup>43</sup> During the war years the African National Congress (ANC), under the leadership of Dr. A. B. Xuma, began to transform itself into a more centrally organised national body attempting to attract more members from the educated elite. The 1941 Atlantic Charter, that reaffirmed democratic ideals, was adopted by the ANC in its 1943 document, *African Claims*, which, for the first time, set out the aims of the ANC and committed it to the goal of unqualified universal suffrage in South Africa. A year after *African Claims* was produced Xuma welcomed the creation of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) which hoped to generate amongst the ANC and the African masses a sense of urgency, by espousing a new spirit of militant nationalism and self-reliance.

The 1940s also witnessed rapidly increasing African urbanisation. In 1936 some 1 million Africans were living in urban areas; by 1951 there were 2.3 million,<sup>44</sup> the increase being most obvious on the Rand. This growth had been fuelled by the collapse of the Reserves and the rapid expansion of secondary industry which saw many Africans leaving for the cities in the hope of finding work. Most came with very little money, and work and housing conditions for the majority were abysmal, with many Africans living in poverty and fear because of the high level of crime. Urban social policy was totally inadequate in dealing with these problems and by the 1940s South African cities, and Johannesburg in particular, were facing a multi-dimensional crisis. Mass discontent erupted around community and work issues. There were rent boycotts, extensive bus boycotts in Alexandra in 1943-4, and a partly successful Anti-Pass Campaign from 1944-6. African workers had shown a degree of militancy during the war, especially during 1942, and in 1946 70,000 African mineworkers went on strike. They were brutally suppressed by the police and army. The period also witnessed the demise of the Natives' Representative Council (NRC), which had been established in 1936 supposedly to offer Africans a political voice. The NRC effectively

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<sup>42</sup> Prime Minister, 1919-24 and 1939-48.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in T. Davenport *South Africa: A Modern History*, (London, 1991), p. 306.

<sup>44</sup> T. Karis & G. Carter (eds.), *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964*, Vol. 2 'Hope and Despair 1935-52' (Stanford, 1973), p. 79.



ceased to function from 1946 as its members realised that they were treated with disdain by the government, and could not hope to achieve any substantive change in South Africa.<sup>45</sup> Even its more conservative members had become hopelessly frustrated and were moving towards the idea of more militant action.<sup>46</sup>

The combined effects of these events led the ANC, and African nationalists more generally, into a more combative mood towards the end of the 1940s. The victory of the National Party with its apartheid platform in 1948 challenged all politically-minded Africans.

The promises that Smuts had made during the war, and his failure to honour them afterwards, led to a turning point in African political history. It is from this period that a concerted rejection not only of Afrikaner racism but also of white liberalism and trusteeship began. The failure of the government to create a new non-racial South Africa after the war, the brutal suppression of African mine workers, and the failure of the NRC, led many Africans to question the wisdom of aligning themselves with white liberals. Africans had seen no erosion of discrimination and began to express their impatience with all shades of white opinion. With the ANCYL pushing for a more aggressive and proactive role for the ANC, 1949 saw the organisation adopting a 'Programme of Action' which promised endeavours of a confrontational nature with the state and for the first time the ANC committed itself to a programme of strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience.<sup>47</sup>

Albert Luthuli, a leading churchman who served on the Adams College Council, represented the American Board Mission on its tour of America in 1948, and later became president of the ANC, expressed the views of many African Christians when he remarked:

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<sup>45</sup> Interestingly ZK Matthews blames the Government's refusal to appoint a commission to look into the causes of the disturbances in schools as one of the reasons why the NRC was suspended. See ZK Matthews, 'Reasons Why the Native Representative Council in the Union of South Africa Adjourned', Nov. 1946. In Karis & Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge Vol. 2, Document 31, pp. 224-233. The government did, however, appoint a committee in 1947 to examine the causes of the disturbances, see chapter two.

<sup>46</sup> ibid., p.72.

<sup>47</sup> For a detailed examination of this period see, T. Lodge, Black Politics In South Africa Since 1945 (London, 1983) and P. Rich, State Power and Black Politics in South Africa, 1912-51 (London, 1996).

White paternalistic Christianity - as though whites have invented the Christian faith - estranges my people from Christ ... have not many of the churches simply submitted to a secular state which opposes expressions of fellowship and our membership one of another?<sup>48</sup>

The disillusionment that many Africans felt did not yet mean the end of the deputation and formal letters of complaint, but now they fought for their rights on two different fronts.

### Protestant Churches 1948-1953

The English-speaking churches in South Africa entered the apartheid era with their belief in the gradual transformation of society by ideas rather than actions unaltered, as a pastoral letter from the Bishops of the CPSA to all their congregations in 1952 suggests:

It is not our purpose...to put before you a plan of political action or social change. Such changes are bound to come in this land as elsewhere...It is for us to show by example that men of different races can work together with mutual respect for the building in this land of a social order more in accordance with the mind of Christ<sup>49</sup>

Despite their opposition to Afrikaner ideology, the churches still viewed the state as fundamentally legitimate after 1948.<sup>50</sup> According to Charles Villa-Vicencio the English-speaking churches were still 'able to depend on the theological and cultural resources of their denominational links in Britain and elsewhere, [so that] their identity has never really been hammered out in relation to the 'hard realities' of the South African context.'<sup>51</sup> However, these churches were part of the 'hard reality' of South Africa. By 1948 a good many of their leaders were South-African born, their institutional ties with British Churches were more ceremonial than practical, and they had absorbed and replicated South African segregationist structures. Given their experiences in South Africa, their cordial relationship and respect for government and their institutional racism, as well as the racism of the vast

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<sup>48</sup> A. Luthuli, Let My People Go (London, 1962), p. 119.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted from Worsnip, Between Two Fires, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> ibid., p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> Villa-Vicencio, Trapped In Apartheid, p. 14.

majority of their white members, it seems unlikely that they could have offered a more active opposition to apartheid. Worsnip goes so far as to say that 'The CPSA entered the apartheid era severely hampered by the fact that it had within its practices and structures elements of the selfsame policy which the Nationalists wanted to enforce.'<sup>52</sup>

The unwillingness of the Protestant Churches to disapprove openly of government policy is illustrated by their reaction to the 1949 Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act. When this Act was passed there was little critical comment, the churches fearful perhaps of the withdrawal of marriage licenses. But as Ambrose Reeves<sup>53</sup> remarked in 1961:

Today, I believe that the crucial point for the Church in South Africa came with the passing of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act ... at that moment all the churches missed the opportunity of taking their stand on an issue of major theological and moral significance<sup>54</sup>

This lack of opposition to a fundamental piece of legislation as far as Christian witness was concerned showed not only their fear of the new government, but also the degree of complicity in their racial thinking.

In 1952, one year before the passing of the Bantu Education Act, the ANC, working with the South African Indian Congress, launched a programme of mass resistance in the form of the Defiance Campaign. This campaign against apartheid legislation was to be non-violent in nature and was intended to clog up prisons and courts as thousands of Africans and Indians deliberately courted arrest by disobeying minor regulations. Once again the English-speaking churches were found wanting. The Anglican Church, for example, officially refused to support the campaign, publically arguing against it, fearful of its destabilising effects. In 1955 Clayton remarked more generally about organised resistance to the government, 'For myself I do not think it is reasonable to complain that a government should attempt to put

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<sup>52</sup> Worsnip, Between Two Fires, p. 59. Racism within the churches also chronically undermined their anti-apartheid stand for it not only weakened African support, but gave the Nationalist Party ammunition to use against them.

<sup>53</sup> Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted Abraham, The Catholic Church, p. 29.

down a resistance campaign. Those who take part in it are breaking the law, and clearly if you do that you must expect to be punished.’<sup>55</sup>

The Churches were unable to deal with the ethical questions raised by the employment of illegal action as a means of protest, even when it was premised upon Gandhian principles of non-violence and non-confrontation.<sup>56</sup> The campaign saw the ANC's membership grow from some 5,000 to over 100,000, despite the churches' failure to support it.<sup>57</sup> The Defiance Campaign showed the churches' contradictory position. They recognised the unjust nature of apartheid laws, but failed to support the Campaign because of their own deeply held views that the church and state should be separate, and the fear and conservatism of white members.

### The Catholic Church 1948-53

As we have seen, the Catholic Church entered the apartheid era still perceiving itself as a vulnerable institution, existing as it did within a strongly Protestant state. Its sense of frailty was exacerbated by the words and actions of the Nationalist Government and the Dutch Reformed Churches after 1948. D.F. Malan<sup>58</sup> told parliament in 1949 that his government would not recognise the rights of people or organisations who ‘undermine the principles of apartheid, who preach equality and who propagate foreign ideologies.’<sup>59</sup>

One of the first acts of the new government was to terminate Smuts's immigration schemes and in 1949 the Federated Dutch Reformed Churches invited the *Hervormde Kerk* in a deputation to Malan to protest against ‘increasing Roman Catholic influences in South

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<sup>55</sup> LPL, G. Fisher V.131 Clayton to Fisher 9 March 1955.

<sup>56</sup> B. Clarke, ‘Confronting the Crisis: Church-State Relations’, in England, Frank, Paterson & Torquil (eds.), Bounty in Bondage: The Anglican Church in South Africa, pp. 142-7.

<sup>57</sup> W. Beinart, Twentieth-Century South Africa, (Oxford, 1994), p. 149.

<sup>58</sup> Prime Minister 1948-54.

<sup>59</sup> quoted in Abraham, The Catholic Church, p. 24.

Africa which are threatening to become a danger to the Protestant cause.<sup>60</sup> In the same year a provincial congress of the National Party proposed, unsuccessfully, to exclude Catholics from the right to hold office in the party, and a committee was established to investigate the position of Catholicism in South Africa. Its findings were published in *Die Kerkbode*<sup>61</sup> in 1953 and proposed that all Catholic schools, hospitals and other institutions should come under direct government control, while the further entry of Catholic religious teachers and immigrants into South Africa should be prevented. In addition, priests, teachers or lay persons of the Catholic Church who spoke out against the Protestant faith or apartheid should be banned. While such recommendations were never implemented they clearly demonstrated the depth of hostility to the Catholic Church after 1948. Not surprisingly Archbishop Hurley recently remarked of this period:

the Catholic Church still considered itself a kind of alien minority in South Africa, barely tolerated in some ways and looked upon as the *roomse gevaar* by the Dutch Reformed Church, we weren't a very positive, confident church.<sup>62</sup>

The Catholic Church was desperate to avoid accusations of disloyalty and consequently adopted a conciliatory approach to the government. Thus, Archbishop H.M. Lucas, the apostolic delegate to South Africa, assured Malan in 1954, 'we [the Catholic Church] would always act first by memoranda and consultation', and would not act in an 'underhand manner'.<sup>63</sup>

The deep conservatism of the Catholic Church is also demonstrated in its reaction to the Mixed Marriages Act and Defiance Campaign, and its first Statement on Race Relations made in 1952. The reaction of the Catholic Church to the Mixed Marriages Act followed that of the other churches in its timidity; the Bishops Conference discussed it privately but

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<sup>60</sup> Abrahams, The Catholic Church p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> The official organ of the Dutch Reformed Church.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with author, Durban 19 June 1998. *Roomse gevaar* is literally translated as Roman (i.e. Catholic) Danger.

<sup>63</sup> quoted in Abrahams, The Catholic Church, p. 26.

made no official statement. Fr Louis Stubbs, the editor of Southern Cross<sup>64</sup>, commenting on the Bishops' position, reminded his readers that 'the Church preaches good citizenship, and so strives to avoid open defiance of authority even when it considers that authority is overstepping its boundaries'.<sup>65</sup>

After a meeting of the Joint Council of Catholic Africans and Europeans in late 1952, a statement was released in early 1953 from the Council, condemning the Defiance Campaign, despite African opposition.<sup>66</sup> Only African organisation under white, and preferably Catholic, 'supervision' was acceptable to the church hierarchy. Its statement on race relations, issued by the Bishops Conference in 1952, was cautious and paternalistic. While it called for an end to discrimination based on colour, the responsibility was placed on 'non-Europeans' to earn this as a right:

Justice demands that non-Europeans be permitted to evolve gradually towards full participation in the political, economic and cultural life of the country. This evolution cannot come about without earnest endeavours on the part of non-Europeans to prepare themselves for the duties connected with the rights they hope to gain.

The Catholic Church did not call for action, other than in peoples hearts, and continued to express notions of trusteeship: 'Though the majority of non-Europeans are still underdeveloped, there are many of them well qualified to participate fully in the social, political and economic life of the country.'<sup>67</sup>

The term 'qualified' again implied that equality in South Africa was only for Christian, western-educated Africans. Segregation or apartheid was only wrong where it impinged

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<sup>64</sup> Southern Cross was founded in Cape Town in 1920 and was financed by the Catholic Publishing Group.

<sup>65</sup> quoted in Abrahams, The Catholic Church, p. 29.

<sup>66</sup> See Southern Cross 31 Dec. 1952, p. 1 and 18 Feb 1953, p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Statement reproduced in Prior (ed.), Catholics in Apartheid Society, Appendix: Bishops' Statements. The Statement concluded with the remark that 'what has been said remains in the realm of principle'.

upon the rights of 'civilised' Africans.

The conservatism of the Catholic Church was also promoted by the racism of its white church members. Fr. Stubbs noted in 1950 that no matter how 'many bitterly reproached the church for its 'silence'' even more would 'howl to high heaven if the church did give voice.'<sup>68</sup> Such was the depth of white opposition to the Catholic Church's making critical statements on race relations that in the Transvaal the South African Catholic Defence League was established to voice lay Catholic opposition to the supposed disloyalty of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (henceforth SACBC).<sup>69</sup> As with the Protestant Churches the day-to-day opinions and attitudes of its lay members limited the church's ability to maintain a public witness against apartheid.

### Ecumenical Links

The failure of the churches to offer an effective, practical and meaningful form of resistance to apartheid was replicated in their attempts at ecumenical organisation. The first attempt by the churches in South Africa to work together was the creation of a General Missionary Conference in 1936 which aimed primarily at eliminating missionary competition. This was replaced in 1954 by the Christian Council of South Africa, in an attempt to create a more united and inclusive Christian movement. Its early years were characterised by its conservatism as it tried to cement relations with the Dutch Reformed Churches. At the outset the Council included the Cape and Transvaal synods of the DRC but both withdrew in 1941, claiming that the Council favoured the English language and that it differed from them in its opinions on the 'native question'.<sup>70</sup> The Catholic Church had also been invited to join the Council but, given its international hostility to ecumenical action it declined.<sup>71</sup> As

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<sup>68</sup> quoted in Abrahams, The Catholic Church, p33.

<sup>69</sup> This organisation was based on the National Catholic Welfare Conference of the United States of America that had successfully coordinated the activities of the Church there.

<sup>70</sup> de Gruchy, 'Grappling...', p158.

<sup>71</sup> Archbishop Hurley commented on this matter 'We weren't a very ecumenical church in those days... We were unskilled in ecumenical approaches...not motivated enough in the matter of going to other churches and working with them'. Interview with author, 19 June 1998.

the leadership of the Council was drawn from that of its member churches it tended to be dominated by white opinion and gave no more concrete or effective resistance to apartheid than the churches individually. On 11-13 July 1949 the Council held a Conference at Rosettenville on the subject of 'The Christian in a Multi-Racial Society'. Its findings once again stressed the benefits of trusteeship and the dangers of denying individual rights to 'mature' Africans

At this stage in the affairs of our country we accept the principle of trusteeship. But we are emphatic that the policy should mean the preparation of the ward for the taking of his full share in the life of the community. When this maturity has been reached by any individual the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship should be granted.<sup>72</sup>

The similarity of this document to the Catholic statement of race relations of 1952 is marked, despite the absence of Catholics from the Council.

### Churches to 1953

In 1953 the churches were internally divided over the question of apartheid. Weakened<sup>73</sup> both by the victory of the Nationalists and the gradual loss of African support they did little more than flounder in the face of apartheid.

As most white church leaders in this period felt that the state in South Africa was legitimate, their creed determined that they could not challenge its authority and power, for it was not for the church to govern. This led to a situation where the churches could proclaim their opposition to unjust laws, but were unwilling to call Christians to act against them, even if such action were peaceful. The churches' reluctance to involve itself in secular political affairs was not, however, simply the result of religious doctrine. Had the churches been

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<sup>72</sup> School of Oriental and African Studies Library CBMS A/T.9/1 Southern Africa. Christian Council of South Africa, Minutes 1942-60, CMBS Papers, . The similarity of this document to the Catholic Statement on Race Relations of 1952 is marked.

<sup>73</sup> Alan Paton remarking on the position of the CPSA in the 1950s had argued that 'Clayton did not wish to anger the Government; it was not that he was personally afraid, but he was anxious not to expose the Church of the Province and its manifold works to any danger.' Paton, Apartheid and the Archbishop: The Life and Times of Geoffrey Clayton Archbishop of Cape Town, (Cape Town, 1973). pp. 248-9.



more democratically organised, with proportional African representation in their hierarchy, they may have supported action such as the ANC's Defiance Campaign, and refused to obey legislation like the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949. Unable and, more importantly, unwilling, to imagine a transformed society in South Africa, the churches could do little more than trust in the power of the individual conscience gradually to change society for the better. Given such internal contradictions and conservatism, it is no surprise that the Nationalist Government could dismiss church condemnation with ease, for the churches themselves, aside from a few ostracised members, practised racial discrimination in most spheres of their daily lives.

The tensions and contradictions inherent in the churches themselves were played out within their schools. The next chapter seeks to examine the nature and viability of missionary education in South Africa at the beginning of the apartheid era.

'Mealie Pap and Hope'<sup>1</sup>: Mission Schools Before Bantu Education

In 1977 Edgar Brookes remarked that the introduction of Bantu Education in 1953 saw mission education 'butchered to make an ideologist's holiday.'<sup>2</sup> This comment is representative of what Jon Hyslop has called the 'prevalent myth' of mission education which argues that a benevolent and successful education system was destroyed by the Nationalists in the 1950s for ideological reasons.<sup>3</sup> This 'prevalent myth' fails to appreciate the chronic state that mission education was in in the 1940s and early 1950s. Mission education was in a state of near collapse in the years before Bantu Education. It was financially starved, over burdened with students, and internally fragmenting due to growing student and teacher opposition to its nature and practice. By the end of the Second World War, mission education was, quite simply, ripe for reform.

This was not, however, true of mission schooling before this turbulent period. As we have seen, the arrival of western education was a significant moment in the bringing of modernity to Africa. South Africa has a long history of mission schooling and for many years mission schools self-confidently promoted 'civilizing values' to Africans. Many families made great financial sacrifices to send their children to these schools believing them to be essential for the future development of their children. In 1952 ZK Matthews wrote of the feelings instilled in him by attending Lovedale as a boy in 1916:

It is not easy now to try and convey what it meant to a young African boy ... to find himself at Lovedale Missionary Institution. Elsewhere one could go from the sixth standard to a limited kind of industrial or vocational training, or into teacher-training school ... only at Lovedale could an African begin to study the literature, language, history, mathematics, and science which Europeans studied on their way to university. Through Lovedale's gates one passed into the wonderland of

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<sup>1</sup> Killie Campbell Africana Library (henceforth KC) MS1279 Douglas Buchanan Mudie, File 1. 'Plea For Higher Salaries For African Teachers in the Province of the Transvaal', memorandum submitted to D. Reitz, Minister for Native Affairs. The document is not dated but its content indicates that it was written during the latter part of the Second World War.

<sup>2</sup> Brookes, A South African Pilgrimage, p. 56. Quoted from Hyslop, 'A Destruction...', p. 398. Brookes had been closely associated with mission education having been Head of Adams College in the late 1930s.

<sup>3</sup> See Hyslop, 'Food Authority and Politics...', and 'A Destruction...'

education ... here was the school from which some of the teachers whom I had regarded with awe had come ... here I was amongst boys and young men who had come from all parts of the country in search of the same treasure, an education that would move us ahead in the world.<sup>4</sup>

‘Lovedale’ he concluded, ‘performed a great service for Africans.’ People such as Steve Biko, Albert Luthuli, Jordan Ngubane, ZK Matthews, Joshua Nkomo, Nelson Mandela, Ellen Kuzwayo and Phyllis Ntantlala, to name but a few, attended mission schools and became significant political and community leaders.<sup>5</sup> Mandela, too, has described the Methodist institution of Healdtown, which he attended in 1937, as a ‘privileged academic oasis ... [where] we were taught - and believed - that the best ideas were English ideas, the best government was English government and the best men were Englishmen ... the educated Englishman was our model.’<sup>6</sup>

Jelico Njokweni, who taught at Healdtown in the 1920s and 1930s, remarked

they [the missionaries] brought the word of God to us ... we trusted the missionaries like anything, they brought education to us... we also accepted their plans and their advices to us. That is why I said those days were good days.<sup>7</sup>

These schools were only available to a relatively privileged class of Africans but this does not undermine the fact that for 150 years they successfully captured the hearts and minds of this class who saw them as the only means by which to create better opportunities for themselves in later life. As we shall see, the fact that missionary education was in a state of near collapse in the 1940s, was due in part to churches over stretching themselves financially in the face of every increasing African demands for education.

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<sup>4</sup> ZK Matthews & M. Wilson, Freedom for My People: The Autobiography of ZK Matthews: Southern Africa 1901-1968 (Cape Town, 1981), p. 33. He remembers how his family was ‘exultant’ about his going to Lovedale.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen Kuzwayo notes that ‘the long list of graduates [from Lovedale] bears witness to the high standard and quality of education achieved by blacks.’ Kuzwayo, Call me Women (London, 1985), p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> N. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom (London, 1994), pp. 43-44.

<sup>7</sup> Jelico Njokweni, interview with author, Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000.

## The Financial Crisis

Despite changes in the nature of funding, and a considerable increase in expenditure after World War Two, African education was grossly underfunded at the very time that African demands for education were growing. Spending on African education remained insignificant compared to white schooling. For example, in 1945 the state spent about £38 p.a. on each white student compared to £3.17.10 for each African.<sup>8</sup> This was despite an increase in African enrolment which rose from 284,250 in 1930 to 587,586 in 1945.<sup>9</sup> The combined effects of increased demand and inadequate funding were particularly felt by mission schools and institutions. Although mission schools were subsidised by the central government this did not include building costs, medical expenses, wages for non-teaching staff, compulsory cost of living allowances<sup>10</sup> for all staff and the costs of books for students.

In 1946 the Union Advisory Board for Native Education highlighted the urgent need for more central funds for African education

the demands for educational facilities for the Africans are increasing so rapidly that the increase of 15% provided for on the estimates of the year 1946/7 is quite inadequate to meet these demands....it is the urgent request of the Board that increases in future be calculated not on a percentage basis but on survey of the actual requirements in each Province.<sup>11</sup>

In desperation the Financial Committee of the Board called on the government to, at the very least, make loan funds available to mission schools 'to ensure that these bodies should

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<sup>8</sup> Christie & Collins, 'Bantu Education...' in Kallaway (ed.) Apartheid and Education, p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> M. Horrell, Bantu Education to 1968 (Johannesburg, 1968), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Imposed by all provincial administrators, and were payable to all teaching staff at mission institutions as they were to all teachers in all schools.

<sup>11</sup> State Archives Pretoria (hereafter SAB) BNE Box 1. Minutes of the Union Advisory Board on Native Education 1946-51. Minutes 11-12 March 1946, p. 2. It continued 'the amount allocated to the Transvaal was in no way based on the actual requirements of that province.'

carry on their good work'.<sup>12</sup> The situation was so grave that Dr. Kerr<sup>13</sup> told the Board that 'unless immediate assistance from the Government was forthcoming a large number [of mission schools] would either have to provide fewer schooling facilities or close down'.<sup>14</sup> Similar concerns were voiced by a Union-wide conference of the heads of mission institutions in 1949:

The financial problems of Institutions were felt to concern both capital development and normal maintenance...Information was exchanged regarding the annual shortfall and capital indebtedness of the Institutions represented... Conference was convinced that any lengthy continuance of present circumstances must result in the closing of institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Mission finances were so fragile that they were not only unable to extend their educational reach, they were in danger of being unable to maintain their current level of provision. This can be seen across a range of mission institutions. The Church of Scotland institution of Lovedale in the Eastern Cape, seen by many at the time as the premier educational institution for Africans, was £12,000 in debt in 1947.<sup>16</sup> Blythswood institution, also under the control of the Church of Scotland, experienced a similar crisis; its overdraft with the Standard Bank amounted to £11,992 in 1949 (in 1949 it also owed the Bantu Presbyterian Church £2250) and by 1952 the overdraft had risen to £14,713.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, St. Matthews, a Methodist institution also in the Eastern Cape was £11,617 in debt, having borrowed £800 over two years simply to 'carry on.' The foremost Methodist institution, Healdtown, received a letter in 1949 from the Standard Bank requesting a copy of its

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<sup>12</sup> SAB BNE 'Minutes...', p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> SAB BNE 'Minutes...', p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> William Cullen Library (henceforth WC) University of the Witwatersrand AB2089 St. Peter's School. File I3 Union Wide Conference of the Heads of Native Institutions, Bloemfontein, 1-2 June 1949, pp. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> National Library of Scotland (henceforth NLS) Edinburgh Church of Scotland Foreign Mission ACC7548 South Africa B381 Lovedale General Dec. 1938 - June 1956. Standard Bank to J. Beatie (Africa Secretary of the Church of Scotland) 6 Aug. 1947. The bank agreed to extend the institutions overdraft from £10,000 to £12,000.

<sup>17</sup> NLS ACC7548 B372 Blythswood Governing Council Minutes 1949-55. Minutes 31 Dec. 1949 and Statement of Accounts for 1952.

income and expenditure accounts, and expressing concern at its overdraft with the bank of £11,838.<sup>18</sup> A Methodist report into indebtedness at its schools noted that its institutions were 'carrying Trust Debts on buildings amounting to approximately £60,000, while in most Institutions there is a considerable shortfall on current accounts.'<sup>19</sup> It concluded

It is clear that our efforts to meet the growing demands of African higher education must of necessity be hampered if the task is left to the Institutions with no greater provision of financial help than is the case at present<sup>20</sup>

In 1951 the Khaiso institution in Pretoria, under the control of the CPSA, suggested the appointment of a bursar to control its financial affairs and to 'check expenditure'. This measure was rejected by the school's Governing Council, however, because it lacked funds!<sup>21</sup>

The financial starvation was exacerbated during and after the war as the cost of many essential commodities rose. In 1950 the Governing Council at Khaiso noted that 'costs have increased in catering and accommodation'<sup>22</sup>, while in 1951 its principal lamented the continued rise in the prices of mealies, milk, sugar, soap, bread and meat.<sup>23</sup> In 1951 Ida Grant wrote from Adams to her friends and family 'rising costs have meant that we have not been able to make ends meet.'<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Cory Library (henceforth CL) Rhodes University MS16598 Healdtown Institution Papers. File 5 Administrative Records 1923-76. Standard Bank to Rev. Grant (Headmaster), 16 July 1949.

<sup>19</sup> CL MS15388 Methodist Conferences 1946-58. 'Report on the Missionary Institutions Under the Control of the Methodist Church of South Africa', no date, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> CL MS15388 'Report on the Missionary Institutions...' p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> WC AB2365 Diocese of Pretoria, Box I4 Khaiso School I4.3 Minute Books 1934-56. Governing Council Minutes 17 Nov. 1951. The minutes of 5 June 1950 show that the school arranged a fair to raise funds.

<sup>22</sup> WC AB2365 Khaiso School I4.3 Governing Council Minutes, 3 Nov. 1950.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, Principal's Report 1951.

<sup>24</sup> End of school year letter from Ida Grant (the wife of the headmaster, Jack Grant), Nov 1951. Letter (and all subsequent letters from Ida Grant) shown to me by Shula Marks who was given them by Ida Grant. The financial difficulties that Adams College experienced in this period were exacerbated by a number of expensive capital projects that were undertaken at the school. In 1950, for example, the college was fully electrified for the first time at a cost of £8000, of which the Native Affairs Department contributed only £3890. Iso Lomuzi: The Adams College Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 29, Nov. 1950, p. 5.

The strained finances of mission institutions resulted in numerous difficulties for those within their walls. As the headmasters of institutions had made clear in 1949, the day-to-day maintenance and upkeep of institutions, let alone their expansion, became increasingly difficult. In 1951 the principal of Khaiso noted, for example, that there was 'never any money over for improvements to buildings which, although they are constantly being patched, become more slum-like.'<sup>25</sup>

Desperate to make ends meet, many institutions attempted to cut costs. For example, at St. Matthew's staff were made redundant to save £1200 per annum.<sup>26</sup> In 1951 at Khaiso, staff were forced to pay for their food and laundry for the first time, and by 1952 they were paying rent for lodgings and the use of electric fires and cookers.<sup>27</sup> At Healdtown the daily bread ration was 10oz per student before the war; rising prices halved this to 5oz during the war, and it remained at 5oz until at least 1953.<sup>28</sup> Missionary attempts to cut costs were matched by attempts to raise income, but the only effective way of doing so was to raise school fees, a measure they realised would be unpopular with Africans. Many parents were already making considerable sacrifices in order to educate their children.<sup>29</sup> As the headmaster of Lovedale remarked in 1953, 'It seems impossible in these days to run such a place as this without loss, unless we raise fees beyond a figure which many Africans might find difficult to pay.'<sup>30</sup> Similarly, in 1951 Ida Grant noted that at Adams

in the new year we shall have to raise our fees from £20 per annum to £24. This will make it harder than ever for many parents to send their children to us, and we are hoping to find the wherewithal to help a number by awarding £4 bursaries<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> WC AB2365 Khaiso School I4.3 Principal's Report, 1951.

<sup>26</sup> CL MS14831 St. Matthew's College, Minutes of Council 22 June 1950.

<sup>27</sup> WC AB2365 Khaiso School I4.3 Governing Council Minutes 7 June 1952.

<sup>28</sup> CL MS16598 File 5 ? to Garret, 30 April 1953. Healdtown and other Eastern Cape schools were particularly hit by a drought which ravaged the area after the end of the Second World War, raising the price of food.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, ZK Matthews Freedom for My People, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> NLS ACC7548 B379 Lovedale Principal 1947-56. R. Shepherd to J. Watt 23 Nov. 1953.

<sup>31</sup> Ida Grant, end of school year letter, Nov. 1951.

Despite these concerns, fees were raised. In 1951 the fee per student at Khaiso was £15 a year; only two years later, after two increases, it was £25 per annum.<sup>32</sup> By 1953 the parents of pupils at Healdtown were protesting, 'the institution has ceased to exercise patience with regard to school fees. Only the rich can send their children to Healdtown nowadays.'<sup>33</sup>

The weak economic position of mission institutions was exacerbated by the continued growth in demand for education. Committed to the expansion of their schools and eager to satisfy African desire, mission schools increased the intake of students, putting additional strain on their overstretched finances. As early as 1939 J.D. Reinallt Jones<sup>34</sup> remarked '...the increased demands which have to be faced are fast exhausting the resources of the missions....they will soon meet the limits of their service.'<sup>35</sup> The Commission of Inquiry into the 1946 Lovedale disturbances<sup>36</sup> argued that '...the number of students is too large for the Institution to handle effectively.'<sup>37</sup> At the start of the school year at Adams College in 1952 the institution admitted 500 students, over 50 more than it had ever admitted before.<sup>38</sup>

Into the 1950s mission schools were, at best, surviving by raising fees and cutting services

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<sup>32</sup> WC AB2365 Khaiso School I4.3 Minutes 25 Feb. 1953. The increase to £25 was necessary to cover a shortfall in the first six months of 1952 of £200. The minutes of 3 Nov. 1950 noted that the 'financial position was throughly unsatisfactory and the only solution was to increase fees substantially.'

<sup>33</sup> CL MS16598 File 5 Healdtown Institution Papers, Administrative Records. Memorandum Submitted to the Chairman of the Healdtown Governing Council by the Port Elizabeth Parents, 2 Nov. 1953.

<sup>34</sup> Rheinallt Jones was a leading 'liberal' and had been founding president of the South African Institute of Race Relations which was a liberal research body concerned with improving race relations.

<sup>35</sup> J.D. Reinallt Jones, 'The Crisis in Native Education in South Africa', International Review of Mission, April 1939, Vol. 18, No. 110, p.197. Note the title of the article which recognises a 'crisis' in mission education as early as 1939. R. Shepherd, the principal of Lovedale, argued that the 'chief' cause of student unrest was that the numbers attending institutions were too great 'for effective control in the present temper of African youth.' Star, 4 Dec. 1953.

<sup>36</sup> The schools disturbances or 'riots' will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> CL MS16453 Report of the Inquiry into the Causes of the Disturbances at Lovedale on 7<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1946, (30 Nov. 1946).

<sup>38</sup> Ida Grant, end of school year letter, Oct. 1952. In 1954 Healdtown received over 2000 applicants for the 300 available places. S. Pitts, 'Headtown Disturbance' in Umthunywa, March 13 1954, p. 1. Umthunywa was first published in 1937, by the 1950s it was under the control of the Bantu Press and presented a liberal outlook.



and privileges to students and staff.<sup>39</sup> However, the budgetary problems they faced were only one aspect of the crisis confronting mission education.

### The Hegemonic Crisis

The second crisis revolved around what Hyslop has called the '...breakdown of previously existing trust relations between students and missionaries.'<sup>40</sup> This 'breakdown' manifested itself throughout the 1940s and early 1950s in an unprecedented degree of student militancy directed specifically at missionary authority. Student action ranged from the stoning and burning of buildings (described at the time as student 'riots' or 'strikes') to the refusal to eat institutional food and attend church services.

The first recorded mission school disturbance took place at Lovedale in 1876 when students refused to eat the food offered to them,<sup>41</sup> and continued sporadically at different times and places thereafter.<sup>42</sup> After the end of the Second World War, however, the number of incidents at mission institutions increased rapidly. In 1947 the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR.) reported that there had been twenty disturbances in mission schools between 1945 and 1947,<sup>43</sup> whilst Hyslop has found evidence of a further eleven episodes of student unrest up to 1954,<sup>44</sup> and I have evidence of a further three disturbances

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<sup>39</sup> It should also be remembered that these 'riots' also drained mission finances because any repairs that were needed after trouble had to come directly from mission funds as insurance companies refused to pay for damage caused by 'riot'. The Lovedale Riot of 1946, for example, caused over £220 worth of damage.

<sup>40</sup> Hyslop, 'The Concepts of Reproduction...' p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> F. Molteno, 'The Historical Foundations of the Schooling of Black South Africans', in Kallaway (ed.) Apartheid and Education, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup> At Kilnerton Training Institution students went on a hunger strike in 1920 demanding more food, whilst in the same year between £3000 and £5000 worth of damage was done to Lovedale by students protesting against 'bad bread'. Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> Race Relations Survey 1947 (Johannesburg, 1947), p. 27. Referenced from Hyslop, 'Food, Authority', p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Hyslop, 'Food, Authority', p. 10.

during this period.<sup>45</sup>

Hyslop argues that students adopted a predictable and limited repertoire of actions - they set fire to or stoned buildings, boycotted classes, attacked prefects and teachers, refused food and engaged in petty acts of ill-discipline such as refusing to stand in church.<sup>46</sup> In the vast majority of cases, when questioned, they maintained they were protesting against the poor quality of food. The 1946 Lovedale 'riot', which saw 152 students arrested and charged, was allegedly concerned with the rationing of sugar, while a disturbance at Healdtown in the same year was blamed on a reduction in the bread ration.<sup>47</sup> Students did, however, 'strike' or 'riot' for other reasons. At Adams College in 1950, students refused to eat, would not sing in chapel and boycotted classes because the college authorities had refused the Zulu Society permission to stage a 'tribal dance' to celebrate Shaka Day.<sup>48</sup> Hyslop has convincingly argued that the upsurge in student militancy after the war focussed on 'nominal issues' around which 'wider and deeper political and social discontents condensed.'<sup>49</sup> He suggests that student insurgency reflected the mood of Africans in society more generally<sup>50</sup>, and that their actions were directly related to their understanding of and frustration with the ordering of society inside *and* outside of mission institutions.

The connection between disturbances in schools and the political situation in South Africa as a whole, was forcefully made by the government committee appointed to enquire into the

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<sup>45</sup> On 29 May 1949 a strike took place at Grace Dieu Training College over food, and students refused to eat, or enter classrooms. The police were called and three boys were expelled. Two years later a further four boys were expelled for 'trying to create trouble'. WC AB750 Grace Dieu Training College B1 Governing Body, Minutes 29 May 1949 & 31 May 1951. B. J. Jordan also recalls a strike at St. John's College in 1946 over food. See B.J. Jordan, We Will Be Heard: A South African Exile Remembers (Boston, 1986), pp.28-30. In 1953 the principal of Lovedale claimed that there had been 60 disturbances in mission schools since 1933. R. Shepherd, 'Bantu Education at Cross Roads', Star, 4 Dec. 1954.

<sup>46</sup> Hyslop, 'Food, Authority', p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Hyslop, 'Food, Authority' p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Ida Grant, end of school year letter, 8 Oct. 1950. See also, S. Marks (ed.), Not Either an Experimental Doll (London, 1987), p. 28.

<sup>49</sup> Hyslop, 'Food Authority', p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> See chapter two.

disturbances that reported in 1947. This was a liberal document that went far beyond most contemporary thinking undoubtedly because of the open-minded views of its authors. It was chaired by D. MckMalcolm, who had been Chief Inspector of Native education in Natal (later senior lecturer in Zulu at the University of Natal) whom Brookes described as having a 'progressive outlook.'<sup>51</sup> The other members were DDT Jabavu, RE Phillips and HR Storey. DDT Jabavu had been educated at Lovedale and Fort Hare and was president of the All African Convention (AAC)<sup>52</sup>; he had previously chaired the Non-European Unity Movement<sup>53</sup>, and was committed, through the use of non-violent action, to achieving full African rights. Storey was a Methodist minister and Phillips was an American Board missionary and social worker (he had been principal of the J H Hofmeyr School of Social Work for Africans) who was concerned to rouse whites to the problems that faced Africans, so as to deflect African radicalism.<sup>54</sup>

The report then linked the political turmoil outside of the schools and the trouble within, remarking on its opening page, '...the political situation within South Africa itself has had, and is still exercising, a profound influence upon African thought and reaction towards the European.'<sup>55</sup> Students, it noted,

heard their parents discussing heatedly and sometimes bitterly their small measure of representation in Parliament, the colour bar which seems to deny them economic opportunity, and the social disabilities in housing, education and leisure time

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<sup>51</sup> Brookes, A South African Pilgrimage, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> The AAC was an umbrella African political movement established in 1935 to try and halt the removal of African voters from the Cape franchise. It sought support by entering into alliances with sympathetic groups, African, Indian and Coloured. For a time it posed a challenge to the ANC but lacked cohesion and fell away as the ANC revived in the 1940s.

<sup>53</sup> The NEUM was created in 1943 by members of the AAC and the Anti -Coloured Affairs Department movement to offer a united voice to all the oppressed, and oppose the Africanist elements within the ANC. It looked to challenge the government through non-collaboration rather than through direct confrontation.

<sup>54</sup> T. Couzens, "Moralising Leisure Time": The Transatlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg 1918-36' in S. Marks & R. Rathbone (eds.) Industrialisation and Social Change: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness 1870-1930, p. 319.

<sup>55</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed to Enquire into Disturbances at Native Educational Institutions, Pietermaritzburg, 26 July 1947, p. 1.

activities, under which they live. They hear the European referred to as callous and oppressive and they are inclined.....to regard all the Europeans they meet as cold, calculating and unfriendly<sup>56</sup>

In similar vein DDT Jabavu told the Inquiry into the Lovedale disturbance in 1946 that

the real cause [of the disturbance] is that all present day students grow up in homes, rural and urban, where the principal staple of conversation is the colour bar, unjust wages, lack of faith in the white man generally, and the whole gamut of anti-Native legislation and ill-treatment by public officers<sup>57</sup>

That students viewed 'Europeans' in a poor light did not necessarily mean, however, that they would 'riot'. After all, missionaries prided themselves on providing Africans with an environment in which they would be educated into a common civilisation. Mission schools were supposed to be places where Africans were shown more respect than anywhere else, for the African students were, under missionary guidance, to be taken into the fold of 'European civilisation' to become the educated elite and transcend divisive human frailties such as tribalism and racism. The report into the disturbances itself noted that

The missionary and European member of an institution staff are looked upon by many students and parents as those who should be friendly; should treat the African kindly; should exemplify the Christian ideal of a common brotherhood of all men under One Father<sup>58</sup>

The fact that students did 'riot' and 'strike' however, suggests that mission institutions were not the havens of racial harmony and mutual respect that liberals and missionaries assumed them to be. In fact, in what can only be considered as a major critique of mission education, the report argued that there were enough 'disruptive influences at work within the schools

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<sup>56</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed, pp.3-4. It continued 'African students come to the institutions with a stereotyped picture of the European which makes them suspicious of the good intentions of any white man', p. 6. In 1947 the SAIRR noted that the 'riots' 'appear to be symptomatic of a general unrest among the African people throughout the country.' Race Relations Survey 1947, (Johannesburg, 1947), referenced from Hyslop, 'Food, Authority', p. 12.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted from C. Kros, 'They Wanted Dancing and Not Just the Lambeth Walk: A Reassessment of the 1940s School Disturbances with Particular Reference to Lovedale', African Studies Seminar Paper, No. 318, University of the Witwatersrand, 27 July 1992.

<sup>58</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed....., p. 7. (Original emphasis).

themselves to account for such disturbances.<sup>59</sup> Beyond such issues as the state's funding of African education and the salaries of teachers, the report squarely blamed the mission authorities themselves for being too authoritarian, unsympathetic to student and parental concerns, and discriminatory towards African teachers and students.

Despite this conclusion the report began by trying to assess the influence of political agitation on mission institutions. First, it dealt with the 'phenomenal development in the provision of newspapers and periodicals for Africans', before providing evidence that copies of the left-wing Guardian and Torch<sup>60</sup> were freely distributed to staff and students in a number of institutions. It also claimed that it had unearthed 'traces of propaganda emanating from outside the institutions' and that strike leaflets from the Witwatersrand had been found in a number of schools. Nevertheless, the Report concluded that the likelihood of 'strikes' or 'riots' being organised from outside the institutions was 'highly improbable.'<sup>61</sup> Hirson has categorically rejected the notion that organised political movements directly incited disturbances in mission educational institutions, arguing that until the early 1950s political movements would have rejected the idea of organising students, because

the aspirations of the political leadership during that period [pre-1950] would have made them unsympathetic to militant school action, and there was no likelihood that these elders would have deigned to 'talk politics' with 'children'<sup>62</sup>

Hirson is referring to the more conservative generation of African political leaders from the pre-1949 'Programme of Action' period. These leaders, such as Dr. Pixley ka I. Seme and Rev. Z.R. Mahabane both of the ANC, would undoubtedly have rejected the idea of politicising students directly and inciting them to violence, preferring to confront the problems that faced Africans through dialogue and debate. However, despite the

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<sup>59</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p.18.

<sup>60</sup> The Torch was founded by the NEUM and came under Trotskyite influence - it championed complete withdrawal from white society via non-collaboration. The Guardian was a socialist paper which supported the Communist Party and chronicled the anti-apartheid movement.

<sup>61</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed.... pp. 4-6 & pp. 17-18. The report noted that '...there does not seem to be any concerted drive by the Communists to organise students or to precipitate strikes', p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Hirson, Year of Fire Year of Ash, p. 29.

conservatism of its parent organisation there is some evidence that the ANCYL did influence students, especially those on the Rand, in the latter part of the 1940s, and, in particular, after its mass recruitment drive of 1948.<sup>63</sup> The activities of the ANCYL at Fort Hare<sup>64</sup> certainly influenced student opinion in neighbouring institutions. Fort Hare students had been politically active from the 1930s when a so-called 'Social Studies Society' was formed as a forum for political discussion. In the late 1930s Prof. DDT Jabavu, an academic at Fort Hare, further encouraged the discussion of political issues amongst students by leading the African opposition to the removal of Africans from the Cape voters' role.<sup>65</sup> An ANCYL group formed at Fort Hare in 1948, and in 1949 became involved in a strike at Victoria Hospital, on the Lovedale Campus. The influence of this group on the political awareness of the students at Lovedale is recalled by Bojana Vujisile Jordan who attended Lovedale from 1948 and remembers that

On the weekends, the leading members of the League regularly visited our dormitories to initiate us into the intricacies and complexities of African nationalism.... These were young men considered firebrands of nationalism not only at Fort Hare but throughout the nation.... We used to look forward to weekends, when we could learn about the national situation<sup>66</sup>

Another Lovedale student remembers meeting Fort Hare students at a river that ran between the two institutions, and being 'nursed' in politics by them.<sup>67</sup> A student, and later teacher, at Healdtown recalls how students from Lovedale, Fort Hare and St. Matthews gathered under the pretext of a Christian Movement, but were actually meeting to discuss politics.

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<sup>63</sup> See Clive Glasner, 'Students, *Tsotis* and the Congress Youth League: Youth Organisation on the Rand in the 1940s and 1950s', Perspectives in Education, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1988/9.

<sup>64</sup> Fort Hare was the first higher education college for Africans established in South Africa. It was opened as the South African Native College in 1916 on land adjacent to Lovedale, granted by the Church of Scotland.

<sup>65</sup> Karis & Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, Vol. 2, p. 99.

<sup>66</sup> Jordan, We Will Be Heard, pp. 53-54. Esk'ia Mphahlele (novelist and previously secretary of the Transvaal African Teachers Association) argues that in the 1940s 'Fort Hare University College featured in the events of the time', E. Mphahlele, Down Second Avenue, (London, 1959), p. 147. See also B. Pogrand Sobukwe and Apartheid, (New Jersey, 1991) pp. 27-43.

<sup>67</sup> Cecil Manona, interview with author, Grahamstown, 18 Jan. 2000.

He recalls that ANCYL activity was 'rife' at Healdtown.<sup>68</sup> There can be little doubt that in the latter part of the 1940s some African students were awakened politically by members of organisations such as the ANCYL, and the distribution of political leaflets and newspapers. However, this does not account for the student 'riots' in the mid 1940s and does not indicate that student disturbances were provoked by direct political interference. There was simply not the political will, nor the organisational capacity, to actively recruit students in this period and incite them to protest. While the wider political situation in South Africa featured in student actions, it seems that political movements played a minor part in shaping student attitudes to missionary authority and education. In the 1940s and 1950s those running mission institutions themselves provoked in Africans a degree of resentment that enabled them to link injustices outside of institutions to those that took place on a daily basis within them. Mission conservatism and authoritarianism provided a fertile breeding ground for student bitterness to boil over.

The most vocal criticism in the report examining student disturbances was the missionary failure to appreciate the nature of what it called the 'new African'. Indeed, the supposedly changed nature of African students becomes its central focus:

students in institutions today are rapidly passing from the docile, unquestioning, infantile stage into adolescence. They are becoming critical of all authority; irritating; delighting to shock conservative opinion; they are trying their wings, asserting their independence.

'In the old days', it continued, students 'accepted discipline without query, now they question it at every turn. This represents a complete change of attitude on the part of the African.' One unnamed headmaster remarked that 'present day students are a changed type. They are more critical and less inclined to take what is given them.' At the same time the report pointed out '...authority, as represented by the Heads of institutions, still clings in many cases to a belief in the efficiency of cold pontifical pronouncement, and shuts its eyes to the advent of the 'new African.'" This 'new African' was, according to the committee, urban, for as an African witness remarked:

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<sup>68</sup> Jelico Njokweni, interview with author, Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000. Njokweni recalls teachers having to sleep in the male dormitories to prevent students from Fort Hare arriving during the night.

Trouble may arise by reason of the fact that Heads do not know the type of student they are dealing with. They know the old type of student, but do not know the modern bumptious lad from the city.

Summing up the evidence it noted that 'it is frequently stated that boys from urban centres are less amenable to discipline than boys from rural areas,'<sup>69</sup> because of the breakdown in family life in the cities, but neglected to offer a more subtle connection. It failed, for example, to make the link between the general radicalisation of Africans in the cities, through actions such as bus boycotts and pass campaigns, and the effect this may have had on urban students.<sup>70</sup>

If missionary failure to understand the 'new African' was crucial the Committee was also '...continually impressed by the fact that the strikes and disturbances arise out of conditions which are considered by the students as repressive and frustrative [sic].'<sup>71</sup> One significant area of concern to African students was that of discipline. Kuzwayo vividly remembers the nuns at the Catholic school of Mariannhill which she attended in the 1930s

We lived with them, they taught us and supervised our manual work sessions....everywhere I moved I felt shadowed by a nun. I found them rigid, cold and strict, dominating and disciplinarian....The nun that lived with us in the residence was old and dogmatic about her Catholicism. For every small mistake a student made, she told us we would burn in hell and that the offender was Satan's child<sup>72</sup>

Esk'ia Mphahlele, who attended Adams College, remembers its 'ascetic American Board

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<sup>69</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed... pp. 50-1, 57-8. A teacher told the Committee 'present-day students will not stop a thing until they are convinced by reason. They will not stop because they are told "Don't do that"', p. 14. The Committee highlighted the need for 'the Heads of institutions to know the urban African to-day - the lad who has seen too many white men, of all sorts, to have any respect for white men.' p. 17.

<sup>70</sup> Many students at mission institutions in the 1940s would have had parents directly involved in political organisations and political campaigning. Segregation disillusioned many of the petit bourgeoisie from which some of the students parents came.

<sup>71</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Kuzwayo, Call Me Women p. 81. The motto of Mariannhill was 'Pray and Work.' She also attended Adams College where she noted that 'discipline was quite strict', p. 85.



atmosphere' comparing the college to a mine compound;<sup>73</sup> an entire boy's hostel might be punished by having to fast for a day.<sup>74</sup> At St. Angar's Michael Dingake recalls the 'rough justice' meted out to students at St. Angar's Institution.<sup>75</sup> A letter placed on a noticeboard at Lovedale in 1945 called it '...a place of oppression, of tyranny and dictatorship.'<sup>76</sup> In 1946 Torch, criticised the 'Nazi-like control' of the mission authorities over students.<sup>77</sup> It was not only the harsh discipline that students resented, but the excessive control exercised over their everyday lives. Jordan recalls how at St. John's College in Umtata students were forbidden from leaving the school campus during the week, and could only go shopping, and socialise with girls, once a week.<sup>78</sup> Phyllis Ntantala, who attended Healdtown in the 1940s maintains that

if there was anything the authorities at Healdtown feared, it was the free mixing of young people, boys and girls. To be seen talking to a boy, without the permission of the matron or the boarding master at the designated places, was an offence. Some children were expelled for infringing this regulation<sup>79</sup>

Control over students' lives also extended to attempts to limit what they thought. Committee members noted that there was 'a quite universal censorship by the authorities of debating questions and subjects for discussion. Questions of a political nature are rigidly excluded from the programmes.'<sup>80</sup> Such censorship was felt by the students to 'betray a weakness in the authorities' giving them the impression that the institution authorities were not being honest, and were attempting to deny, or at the very least downplay, the social and

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<sup>73</sup> E. Mphahlele, Down Second Avenue, p. 147 & 145.

<sup>74</sup> ibid, p.145.

<sup>75</sup> M. Dingake, My Fight Against Apartheid (London, 1987), p. 14.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Kros, 'They Wanted Dancing...', p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Hirson, Year of Fire Year of Ash, p. 32.

<sup>78</sup> Jordan, We Will Be Heard..., pp. 20-21.

<sup>79</sup> P. Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, (Berkeley, 1992), p. 66.

<sup>80</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed..., p. 15.

economic inequalities in society.<sup>81</sup> Mission authorities were clearly unwilling to allow students to engage in debates which challenged the position of whites in society, both inside and outside of institutions. There was certainly a prevailing fear over the radicalisation of students and its possible consequences for mission education. The extent of the control over student lives is demonstrated by Ntantala's comment on Healdtown. 'Healdtown!' she remarked, 'What a cultural desert! There was nothing to do but go to class and church, eat, sleep and play sport.'<sup>82</sup> In the autobiographies of Africans who attended mission schools in this period one is struck by the emphasis placed on sport by mission authorities.<sup>83</sup> This would appear to be another attempt to regulate student behaviour by defusing energy and frustration through muscular Christianity.

Students were not only frustrated by the control of their daily lives, they were also increasingly aware of white racism. The 1947 committee heard student complaints that head teachers and white staff members did not bother to learn their names, and simply called them 'boy', causing deep resentment. Students also resented 'the way African staff members are treated by the authorities like big babies'.<sup>84</sup> The empathy that African students had with African staff members may have shaped their opinion of missionary motives and authority. Jack Grant, the principal of Adams College during this period of turmoil, noted that when he arrived at Adams there were racially segregated dormitories for the staff. He decided against changing this, fearing that 'any such attempt would jeopardise still further the precarious existence of the College'.<sup>85</sup> Ntantala also comments on how racist Healdtown was in the late 1940s;

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<sup>81</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed....., p. 15. It continued, 'radical opinions and wild statements will more and more find their way into the institutions. They should be met by candid and frank examination and discussion, not by censorship and repression', p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, p. 66.

<sup>83</sup> In particular see Matthews & Wilson, Freedom for My People p. 41.

<sup>84</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed....., p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> J. Grant, The Jack Grant Story (London, 1980), p. 93. He does note, however, that he removed a dividing wall in the staff room which enabled mixed teacher gatherings and 'led to improved relations among the members of staff', p. 93.

...Outside our various departments there was no mixing between black and white teachers. At the girls' school, the two matrons - both white - ate alone in the dining-room, while the African women teachers ate with the students in the dining-hall. At the boys' school, the white unmarried teachers ate with the other staff in the Governor's living quarters, while the African staff ate with the boys in the boys' dining hall. Most of the staff played tennis but they never played together<sup>86</sup>

At Lovedale too, white and African staff members did not eat together, and did not eat the same food. In the dining hall, white staff members ate at the 'high' table, whilst African staff members sat with the students. Z.K. Matthews recalls that 'from their raised dias the white staff looked down every mealtime not only on the black students but on the black members of staff as well.'<sup>87</sup> The report noted that staff members were also discriminated against in such matters as seating in church, access to sports facilities, and the provision of common rooms; in addition, they were segregated at socials, reprimanded before students, and called by their first names in public. On top of this they were often housed in inadequate dwellings which were appallingly basic compared to those reserved for whites.<sup>88</sup> Members of the committee 'discovered in all institutions visited...a vital connection between the conditions of African staff housing and the attitude of students towards authority.'<sup>89</sup>

The committee revealed a long catalogue of practices and traditions in mission institutions that students deplored. Yet most principals 'appeared to be quite oblivious of the seething discontent at their very doors'.<sup>90</sup> It was sharply critical of the absence of communication between African staff and mission authorities, and lamented the failure of the authorities to listen to, let alone act upon, student grievances. It concluded

Sometimes....smouldering resentment at alleged unjust treatments bursts into flame, whereas, if the authorities had been able to feel the pulse of the institution with any

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<sup>86</sup> Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, p.67.

<sup>87</sup> Matthews & Wilson, Freedom for my People, p.32.

<sup>88</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p.13.

<sup>89</sup> ibid. p. 89.

<sup>90</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p.26.



sensitiveness, they would have detected the signs long before.<sup>91</sup>

Jordan recalls complaining about the food at St. John's College in Umtata. Students 'kept sending delegations to protest and recommend improvements. When the authorities, who were predominantly white, ignored our pleas, we decided to go on strike.'<sup>92</sup> The committee recommended that staff should become more aware of student concerns, and be less autocratic in their decision making, implying that to do so would defuse potentially explosive situations.

It was not only African pupils who were rejecting mission authority in the 1940s; African teachers were also becoming increasingly militant, as they began to question the nature of mission hegemony. African teachers had organised themselves into associations and unions from the turn of the century, but it was not until the 1940s that they became politically active. Before then they had been rather ineffectual, dedicated to polite lobbying, and more concerned with maintaining a professional aloofness from political issues. However, as Hyslop notes, 'during the 1940s the same social changes that were prompting a rise in African nationalism generated a new teacher radicalism.'<sup>93</sup> The roots of this radicalism can be traced back to the 1930s when African teachers' salaries were cut during the depression, and were never fully restored. Moreover, war-time inflation meant that real wages for African teachers fell again.

In 1941 the Transvaal African Teachers Association (TATA) launched a wage campaign, and followed this up in 1943 with the 'Blanket Campaign', which saw teachers attending school wrapped in blankets as a sign of their poverty. By 1944 TATA was ready for more assertive action, and a mass demonstration was held in Johannesburg. A mile-long crowd of teachers and parents walked into the city centre. The subsequent rally was addressed by Dr. Xuma, then president of the ANC, an indication of the teachers' willingness to be

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<sup>91</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p.48.

<sup>92</sup> Jordan, We Will Be Heard, p. 28.

<sup>93</sup> Hyslop, 'Teacher Resistance in African Education from the 1940s to the 1980s', in M. Nkomo, Pedagogy of Domination, p. 93.

associated with direct political campaigning for the first time. The Cape African Teachers Association (CATA) also became more radical in the 1940s and, at its 1944 conference, there were calls for its affiliation to the AAC. Those in favour argued that the time had come for boycott and non-collaboration, and, at the 1948 conference, CATA was officially affiliated to the AAC.<sup>94</sup> At the 1947 conference of the Orange Free State African Teachers Association (OFSATA), its president, L.K. Ntlabati signalled its turn towards a more militant outlook when he contended that the time had come to fight against the 'indefensible state of affairs' for African teachers.<sup>95</sup>

The growing radicalism of African teachers in the 1940s was undoubtedly a manifestation of the wider political turmoil of the period. It was also a reflection of the influence that graduates from Fort Hare had on the teaching profession. Ntantala recalls how new blood was infused into the CATA in the 1940s as many of its politicised graduates left Fort Hare and entered the teaching profession with political convictions they had formed at the institution. Many of the leading figures of African politics over the next generation graduated from Fort Hare in the 1940s.<sup>96</sup> These leaders powerfully influenced African political movements and their radicalisation, and many were, or had been, teachers.<sup>97</sup> As a result teacher organisations also changed, increasingly they rejected quiet appeals to the government and began to link their own suffering to that of all Africans. This new mood is exemplified in a CATA statement in 1948:

It is clear that our struggle is inextricably bound up with the struggle of the African labourer. Even our slogan 'Equal Pay For Equal Work' is an old trade union slogan ... In short, to seek equality between white teacher and black teacher is to seek full social, economic and political equality between White and Black in South Africa. Our slogan therefore implies that our struggle is the general political struggle for

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<sup>94</sup> R.L. Peteni, Towards Tomorrow: The Story of the African Teachers' Associations of South Africa, (Algonac, 1979), pp. 30-1.

<sup>95</sup> ibid. p. 74.

<sup>96</sup> These included Nelson Mandela (graduated in 1940), Oliver Tambo (1941), G.M. Pitje (1944) Tennyson Makiwane (1947), and Robert Sobukwe (1949).

<sup>97</sup> Most of the participants at the conference that founded the ANCYL were teachers.

the emancipation of the African. There can be no escape from this conclusion.<sup>98</sup>

For mission schools, teacher radicalism represented another threat to stability. As the principal of Lovedale wrote to his counterpart at Blythswood:

African teachers, particularly graduates, are claiming exactly the same treatment and to have the same customs as Europeans who are their fellow-teachers. If they see European teachers who are careless about church attendance and so on, they claim (inwardly if not vocally) that they cannot be blamed or dealt with differently from Europeans. African teachers feel that their salaries, as compared to European teachers doing the same work, are too low....A European teacher of ours was getting £360. Now an African fills his place and gets £117. These things cause trouble.<sup>99</sup>

We have already seen how teachers were discriminated against by mission authorities, and the 1947 enquiry noted that disharmony between white and African staff was a 'fundamental factor' in the disturbances.<sup>100</sup> It claimed that discriminatory practices and wage disparities meant that the loyalty of African staff could not be guaranteed if trouble were to flare up. The threat to the stability of educational institutions of teacher resentment was expressed by an unnamed principal who told the committee there would never be 'harmony in the schools so long as there is differentiation in salary and housing.'<sup>101</sup> Given the potential for the politicisation of students by teachers, it is surprising that the committee did not deal with this issue in any practical way, it is likely that disgruntled African teachers hoped to gain the sympathy and support of their African pupils. Jordan remembers the political influence that African teachers could have:

My favourite teachers were Mr. Knowledge Guzana....and Mr. Cadoc Mngweno ....These two would digress from the syllabus and introduce us to the politics of

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<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Ntantala, *A Life's Mosaic*, pp. 147-8.

<sup>99</sup> CL MS14714 Records of DHW Shepherd, 1899-1970 File A. Shepherd to Arnott 23 April 1945.

<sup>100</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p. 52. In addition to the grievances that students cited over the treatment of African teachers the report also noted that many African teachers did not feel that they were full staff members, often being excluded from decision-making forums. (p. 53) They also complained to the commission that they were not promoted like white teachers (p. 83), that they had inadequate, if any, pension rights (p.23), that their names were always put on the bottom of lists, their hands were not shaken and they were not greeted outside of the schools by white colleges, (pp. 8-9).

<sup>101</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p. 23.

South Africa. Both were involved in what was happening to the community outside the classroom<sup>102</sup>

In 1946, R. Feldman, a member of the Labour Party and the Transvaal Provincial Council, wrote to the then Minister of Education, J.H. Hofmeyr, remarking that

For the past three years I have pleaded the cause of the African teachers....I need hardly stress the state of frustration and despair in which African teachers find themselves. They have been extremely patient [yet] they are becoming desperate and engender a bitterness amongst their pupils which may in time have serious consequences<sup>103</sup>

While Feldman may well have been trying to push Hofmeyr into improving pay and conditions with this image, many whites feared that teachers would transmit radical political ideas and programmes to their students.

However, the actions and attitudes of individual African teachers during this period of turmoil in mission schools remain largely unknown. Although it is clear that they were mobilising to fight discrimination on a national scale during this period, the position of individual teachers at institutional level remains ambiguous. While they may have agreed with the more combative stance of provincial teachers' associations their fears over job security probably prevented their speaking out more publicly. This could explain why the committee seemed unconcerned about the role of teachers in the student disturbances. That teachers feared that political activity would lead to their dismissal is certain.<sup>104</sup> Ntantala remember that teachers at Fort Hare were

the most frightened people I have ever had the misfortune to meet. They were not happy about the discrimination there, but they spoke of it in whispers, for fear of losing their jobs. Racism was rampant<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Jordan, We Will Be Heard, p. 25.

<sup>103</sup> WC A804 R. Feldman Papers 1914-68. Feldman to Hofmeyr 8 Nov. 1946.

<sup>104</sup> See chapter ten.

<sup>105</sup> Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, p. 123.

What is remarkable about this observation is that it described teachers in the institution that produced the leaders of African nationalism after the war. But there is evidence to suggest that by the 1950s, if not before, some teachers at least were using their position to influence students. The following circular, which is worth quoting in full, was issued by the Transvaal Education Department in 1952 to all schools and was to be posted in school log books to be read and signed by all staff members

Cases of teachers taking part in political activity and movements are being brought more and more frequently to the notice of the Department....It has further been learned that there are teachers who use their position as teachers to further private or party political aims or ideologies to encourage disobedience or resistance to constituted authority or the laws of the State. The Department takes a very serious view on [sic] this matter and all parties concerned are hereby warned that

(a) any teacher found guilty of abusing his position as outlined above, will be struck off the role of teachers, and under no circumstances be re-employed by the Department or approved of for appointment in registered schools

(b) should it be found that any authority controlling a school is supporting such a teacher or passively permitting any such activity or generally fostering the propagation of subversive activities, then serious consideration will be given to the withdrawal of the financial assistance of the Government<sup>106</sup>

It was not only dissident African teachers who were undermining the viability of mission education. The period of unrest in the 1940s and the general political and social climate of South Africa saw a reduction in the number of white teachers seeking work in mission educational institutions. The warden of St. Matthews College noted in 1950 that 'it is very difficult to find the necessary men and women to carry on the work efficiently. No Europeans appear to wish to take up Native educational work.'<sup>107</sup> Adams College also had difficulty recruiting staff with Ida Grant lamenting in 1950 that it was 'one of Jack's chief concerns.'<sup>108</sup> The report of 1947 had similarly emphasized this problem and deplored the fact that many positions were being filled by whites who had been sacked from positions in white

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<sup>106</sup> WC AB750 Grace Dieu Training College 1906-69, A/2 Log Book. Circular No. 70 of the Transvaal Education Department, 1952. Given the nature of the threat the reluctance of some teachers to become involved in politics seems understandable.

<sup>107</sup> CL MS16598 File 5 Administration 1923-76. Warden's Report for 1950, p. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Ida Grant end of school year letter, Nov. 1950. The principal of Grace Dieu noted in 1951 that '....the great problem continued to be the shortage of teachers.' WC AB750 B1 Principal's Report 31 May 1951.



schools, and were now 'finding refuge' in African schools.<sup>109</sup> It seems likely that many teachers disliked the thought of teaching in African schools because of the threat of 'riots' and 'strikes', and because of their poverty.<sup>110</sup>

The nature of mission schooling also came under attack from students' parents. The organisation of parents principally took place in the Cape with the formation of the Cape African Parents Association (CAPA) in 1946. This was created in direct response to the disturbances of the 1940s and had two aims; to promote better understanding between students and authorities in institutions and to present the views of African parents on problems affecting their children's education.<sup>111</sup> CAPA was headed by the Rev. James Calata (Anglican Priest and President of the Cape Provincial branch of the ANC). From its inception it fought for the rights of students expelled by institutions after disturbances, and strongly opposed mission authorities' handling of disturbances. We have seen that students 'rioted' in a predictable fashion; and mission authorities responded to those 'rioting' in an equally predictable manner. Their repression of student dissent was very severe with a common willingness to call in the police and follow this up with the mass expulsion of students. The 'riot' at Lovedale in 1946 saw the arrest of 157 students (152 of whom were found guilty and charged) and the subsequent expulsion of 87. In the same year police were called to St. John's where their first act was to spray tear gas on the students and round up the entire school population on the playing field. The next morning those involved were marched by the police into Umtata and all were found guilty.<sup>112</sup>

These are just a few examples of the use of police made by mission authorities in response to student rebellion.<sup>113</sup> While CAPA was troubled at this willingness to involve the police, their major concern was the mission determination to expel all students active in the

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<sup>109</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed..., p. 88.

<sup>110</sup> The government insisted that white teachers in mission schools were paid the same as those in white schools.

<sup>111</sup> WC A1729 Calata Papers E5 Cape African Parents Association. Conference 13 Jan. 1951.

<sup>112</sup> Jordan, We Will Be Heard, pp. 28-30.

<sup>113</sup> For further examples see Hyslop, 'Food, Authority', p. 19.

disturbances. In a letter sent from CAPA to the Association of Heads of Native Institutions, it 'deplored the intervention of the police and the indiscriminate sending home of innocent children.'<sup>114</sup> CAPA was so concerned about the criminal charges brought against students that it set up a legal defence fund which, it argued, 'has proved advantageous in so far as a measure of justice was meted out to the students in that many who might have been put in gaol with innocent consciences were saved'.<sup>115</sup> The parents were particularly concerned about the mass expulsions as they effectively ended an individual's educational career. There were agreements between the major mission schools not to admit students expelled from another institution.<sup>116</sup> The seriousness of this for students was obvious, but it also had an enormously negative effect on parents who had often sacrificed much to send their children to mission institutions.<sup>117</sup> After a disturbance at Healdtown in 1953, which resulted in several expulsions, the Port Elizabeth Parents' Association wrote to the school's Governing Council:

Whoever is responsible for sending these students home has overlooked the fact that the parents are standing to lose the huge amount of money they have already spent over these children for five years. Thus any hopes of getting a career for some of these students have been frustrated and in some cases the careers have been destroyed for life<sup>118</sup>

Parents and students also resented the fact that students were in effect punished twice if the police became involved, for they were potentially subject to criminal prosecution as well as

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<sup>114</sup> CL MS16295 Association of Heads of Native Institutions, Minute Books 1926-55. Minutes 9 May 1950. After a disturbance at Healdtown in 1953 the Port Elizabeth Parents Association noted that 'To [sic] the opinion of the parents this incident was of a domestic nature. Therefore the calling of the police, which undoubtedly cast a slur on the good name of Healdtown, was unwarranted.' CL MS16598 File 5 'Memorandum Submitted...', p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> WC A1729 E5 Conference 13 Jan. 1951.

<sup>116</sup> See Ntantala, *A Life's Mosaic*, p. 127 and Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue*, p. 147.

<sup>117</sup> For a fascinating account of the lengths that students were prepared to go to in an attempt to get themselves readmitted see, J. Bolnick, 'Double-Cross: Potlako Leballo and the 1946 Riots at Lovedale Missionary Institution', African Studies Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, No. 265, Feb. 1990.

<sup>118</sup> CL MS16598 File 5 'Memorandum Submitted...' pp. 1-2.

dismissal from school.<sup>119</sup> In addition, parents were alarmed at the disciplining procedures, claiming that missionary authorities acted as accusers and judges at the same time.<sup>120</sup>

The 1947 committee also condemned the harsh actions of mission authorities. It recommended that the record of individual students be taken into account before action was taken, and suggested that students, rather than being expelled, should be readmitted on probation. In addition it condemned the practice of schools in refusing entry to students expelled from elsewhere.<sup>121</sup> After the publication of the 1947 report, the Governing Council of the Society for the Sacred Mission<sup>122</sup> appointed a committee of its own to consider the report which concluded

we are satisfied that if the matter is properly sorted out, there should be very few expulsions after a riot: perhaps none, but rather some apology might be due from the authorities to the students who [sic] last resort was to strike.<sup>123</sup>

Thus there were some mission authorities who were critical of the handling of students after disturbances, and felt students were not always dealt with fairly and justly. The principal of Adams College, J. Grant, expelled over 200 students in 1950 after a minor case of student disobedience. Looking back, he observed 'I was definitely wrong in my method...I make no claim to have handled the situation well. I was distressed that I had taken such drastic action.'<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> See Bolnick, 'Double-Cross', p. 6.

<sup>120</sup> CL MS16598 File 5 'Memorandum Submitted....', p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed.....p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> This Society was a religious order which had its roots in the Christian Socialist movement in Britain and was committed to alleviate poverty and suffering through social action.

<sup>123</sup> WC AB2049 Society of the Sacred Mission File M3 Native Education. Memorandum of meeting between the Governing Council of the Modderpoort Schools and the Administrative Committee of Schools, which met to discuss the findings of the Committee Appointed..... no date.

<sup>124</sup> Grant, The Jack Grant Story, pp. 93-4. In the college magazine for 1950 Grant concludes the principal's letter by remarking that 'my heart is very heavy', Iso Lomuzi: The Adams College Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 29, Nov. 1950, p. 7.

CAPA's criticism of mission handling of student disturbances was matched by their determination to offer advice to mission authorities on how to avoid the 'riots' altogether. They recommended that, where possible, all boarding masters, mistresses and wardens should be African; they demanded representation on school governing bodies; and, to avoid student rebellion they argued that 'students should have their own meetings or councils' in which they should 'be allowed to ventilate their grievances'.<sup>125</sup> This need for students to engage in effective dialogue with mission authorities was also stressed by Grant who, again reflecting on his handling of the 1950 disturbance, remarked

the whole episode gave me to think in terms of how best to prevent another such strike. One of the more obvious things to do was to keep in closer touch with my student leaders and to work for better communication between those in authority and those under authority.<sup>126</sup>

The radicalisation of parents with vested interests in mission education also eroded its credibility. The report into the disturbances recommended that parental opposition could, and should, be defused by the appointment of African parents onto school committees and councils.<sup>127</sup> However, four years later CAPA lamented the fact that only one school in the Cape had 'promised' to allow them representation on a governing council.<sup>128</sup> The incorporation of African into school committees became of vital importance in the Bantu Education Act of 1953. The Nationalists were quick to recognise the importance of giving parents the impression that their opinions were worthy of consideration.

### Conclusion

By the 1940s mission education was in a state of near collapse, and while this was partly due

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<sup>125</sup> CL MS16295 Association of Heads of Native Institutions, Minute Books 1926-55. Minutes 9 May 1950.

<sup>126</sup> Grant, The Jack Grant Story, p. 94.

<sup>127</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., noted 'There can be little doubt that African sympathy on the side of the institutions would be more heavily enlisted if African parents were represented on all the various councils and committees', p. 50.

<sup>128</sup> CL MS16295 Minutes 9 May 1950.

to grossly inadequate funding, its major crisis was its increasing inability to appeal to African students and parents. The essential failure of mission education was that, at a time when the majority of Africans, inside and outside of schools, were beginning to question and challenge white supremacy fundamentally, missionaries failed to divorce themselves from mainstream white opinion. The 1947 report into the disturbances remarked that the missionary of the day was 'succeeding or failing by the manner in which he stands up to the critical judgements of students who are on the watch to see how he will identify himself with them.'<sup>129</sup> In general, missionaries failed to stand up to the critical judgements of Africans, and consequently mission education failed with them.

Missionaries became increasingly out of touch with educated African youth, as they failed to accept the emergence of the 'new African.' As CAPA remarked, 'many Europeans who are working in African educational institutions do not understand the new mental outlook of the African child.'<sup>130</sup> The irony of this was that missionaries themselves were partly responsible for the emergence of this 'new mental outlook.' Their failure to recognise their vital role in giving many Africans the tools from which they could broaden their political and social awareness was not lost on the 1947 committee which noted

The churches which control African education are largely conservative in their outlook but the Committee suggests that they might, with benefit to themselves and the African, adopt a more liberal attitude towards the changes which are taking place and are largely inevitable as a result of this education for which they themselves have been responsible<sup>131</sup>

The reason why missionaries did not have a 'more liberal attitude towards the changes' was because of their continued belief in the power and agency of 'trusteeship' as a vehicle for the gradual integration of Africans into a superior 'civilized European world',<sup>132</sup> which missionaries hoped would gradually replace the inferior 'African world'. Mission education

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<sup>129</sup> CL MS16295 Minutes 9 May 1950, p. 9.

<sup>130</sup> WC A1729 E5 Conference Address 13 Jan. 1951, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed...., p. 51.

<sup>132</sup> The Committee of 1947 thanked the missionaries for 'holding aloft the torch of civilization', p. 1.

was to teach Africans how to think and act in a 'European' manner to allow for their integration into a wider common society.<sup>133</sup> The Africans who passed through mission institutions such as Lovedale and Adams College were, as far as the missionaries were concerned, the lucky few who would lead other Africans by example into the fold of 'European civilization.' Missionaries expected these Africans to be grateful for the opportunity that they were being offered. Es'kia Mphahlele, who attended Adams College recalled the 'grim-looking white missionaries who were always telling us at speech day how lucky we were to receive an education.'<sup>134</sup> In similar fashion, Z.K. Matthews remembers how students at mission schools 'were not supposed to allow any extraneous feelings of our own to get in the way of the essential emotion of gratitude'.<sup>135</sup>

For mission educators, student radicalism and acts of violence during 'riots' and 'strikes' fundamentally undermined what they were trying to achieve. There was a sense in which they felt betrayed by student militancy, for these were the very students who were supposed to be an example to the rest of South Africa. Ida Grant observed after the 1950 disturbance at Adams that the whole episode had 'been a heavy disappointment to us.'<sup>136</sup> If anything, missionaries hoped that educated Africans would be less prone to radicalism, having been educated in an environment that championed constructive thought over destructive action. That there was violence and conflict deeply disturbed mission educators because it indicated the failure of their belief in gradual, peaceful change under their guiding hand. That they came down hard on those involved in disturbances is thus not surprising, for not only were these students damaging property and threatening violence, they were also challenging the very basis of missionary endeavour. The alternative response would have been to liberalise schools and institutions and give Africans more influence in policy and authority.

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<sup>133</sup> Matthews argued that mission education's 'avowed purpose was to do things *for* Africans', Matthews & Wilson, Freedom for My People, p. 42. (Original emphasis).

<sup>134</sup> N. Chabani Manganyi, Exiles and Homecomings: A Biography of Es'kia Mphahlele (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 64. Despite being a biography much of Manganyi's book is written in the first person which I have assumed are transcripts of oral interviews conducted with Mphahlele. For this reason I have quoted Mphahlele directly from this text.

<sup>135</sup> Matthews & Wilson, Freedom for My People, p. 42.

<sup>136</sup> Ida Grant, End of School Year Letter, 8 Oct. 1950.

That missionaries chose not to do this is indicative of their unwillingness to give more responsibility to Africans, demonstrating their continued faith in trusteeship and their own often unconscious racism.

Missionaries were not trying to create politically aware students, and that they were in effect doing so was deeply worrying for them. The churches and mission societies which ran African education shied away from confrontational politics and actions in their day-to-day existence and they expected the same from students attending their schools. Missionaries chose not to recognise or acknowledge the 'new mental outlook' of African students as to do so would have subverted the purpose of mission education. They could not take responsibility for African radicalism, instead blaming the problems that swept through mission schools on the wider political situation. Ida Grant reflecting on the Adams 'riot' commented, 'we realise that it is the price we have to pay for living in a land where race relations are not happy.'<sup>137</sup> By failing to examine their role in producing student militancy, mission authorities failed to recognise the repressive and racist atmosphere that existed in most mission institutions. An unnamed witness to the 1947 commission observed, 'the institution is a microcosm identical to the world without. The student's agitated state of mind is not eased by the conditions within the institution.'<sup>138</sup>

Even when mission authorities identified racist practises they were reluctant to challenge them. Lavinia Scott, the principal of Inanda Seminary school wrote in 1951 'it seems quite wrong for our two staff groups to be so separate, but the practical difficulties in the way of closer fellowship are very real, and hard to overcome.'<sup>139</sup> Mission authorities were unwilling to take concrete steps to address the racism in their institutions and thus demonstrate to African staff and students a real commitment to racial equality. The inability of mission authorities to appreciate that conditions inside mission institutions in many ways reflected the racist society outside of them was demonstrated by Ida Grant's comment in 1952, that

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<sup>137</sup> Ida Grant, End of School Year Letter, 8 Oct. 1950.

<sup>138</sup> WC AD1760 Committee Appointed..., p. 7.

<sup>139</sup> KC MS52907 Inanda Seminary File 5b Misc. Correspondence. Lavinia Scott to John Reuling (African Secretary of the American Board Mission) 17 July 1951.

despite 'living in an explosive atmosphere in this country....Adams is still an oasis.'<sup>140</sup> It seems highly unlikely that African students and staff members would have agreed with that description of Adams. Missionaries themselves may <sup>not</sup> have been racist but the report of 1947 seems to indicate a serious level of institutional racism within many mission institutions. Despite the best intentions of individuals, striking reference is made time and again to racist customs and habits which white missionaries seemed oblivious to. Life for African staff and students was ruled by racist routines which undoubtedly did much to undermine the credibility of mission education.<sup>141</sup>

It is not surprising that by the 1940s there was an increasing tide of opinion, including among many missionaries,<sup>142</sup> that greater state intervention in mission education was essential. The Union Advisory Board on Native Education recorded its belief in 1948 that

a goodly number are beginning to despair at the trends in present missionary control...there is undoubtedly increased weight of opinion that all education, including High School and Teacher Training should be handed over to the Government<sup>143</sup>

By the 1940s mission education was desperately in need of change. It was riven with internal contradictions as missionaries preached notions of racial harmony from institutions plagued by racist practises. Africans were told to fight for what they believed in through dialogue rather than confrontation, yet were denied a voice within the institutions themselves. African teachers had more in common with African students than they did with other staff members,

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<sup>140</sup> Ida Grant, End of School Year Letter, Oct. 1952.

<sup>141</sup> In 1952 ZK Matthews remarked 'in essence, Lovedale has remained a mirror of the society of which it is part. It has provided advantages for Africans, but it has also reproduced all the circumstances against which Africans must contend.' Matthews, Freedom for My People, p. 43.

<sup>142</sup> R.H.W. Shepherd, noted as early as 1943 'For ourselves we would not mourn if the churches did less in the management of schools', R.H.W. Shepherd, 'The Churches and the Future of Native Education: An Individual Viewpoint (Lovedale, 1943), p. 7. In the same year he told the South African Outlook that 'the gradual shifting of education from the Church to the State is a natural development in all communities' Dec. 1943, p. 165. The South African Outlook was the official organ of the CCSA and its readership consisted of the liberal multi-racial elite. Huddleston argued that mission education in this period was 'hopelessly inadequate' a situation that 'least of all the Christian missionary, would have a wish to deny.' Huddleston, Naught for Your Comfort, p. 163.

<sup>143</sup> SAB BNE Box 1. Minutes, 22 Feb. 1948.



who shunned them because of the colour of their skin. And, in the face of the post-war emergence of African nationalist radicalism, most mission authorities, bereft of vision and courage, reaffirmed their belief in the respect for authority, and the agency of trusteeship for African advancement and gradualist integration - the very policies and principles that Africans were rejecting.

In 1948 the Nationalists came to power determined to reinvent African education to ensure that the radicalism that swept the schools in the 1940s did not repeat itself. How the government proposed to address this issue is examined in the following chapter.

Raising Schools to 'Mighty Instruments'<sup>1</sup> : The Commission on Native Education in the Union (Eiselen Report) and Apartheid

The Commission on Native Education in the Union made its Report available to the House of Assembly on the 11th February 1952. The Report, signed by all members of the Commission, covered 233 double columned folio pages and included the 'dissentient remarks relative to certain paragraphs of the Report' by Professor A. Murray.<sup>2</sup> The Report was the culmination of three years of investigation into the position of 'Native' education in the Union. It had involved 158 public hearings across the country, visits by commissioners outside the Union and the distribution of a questionnaire to all those who expressed an interest in African education.

W.W.M. Eiselen was Chair, and there were seven other members of the Commission: J. de Wet Keyter, Professor of Sociology and Social Work at the University of the Orange Free State; A. Murray, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town; P. Cook, Director of the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research; G. Gerdener, Professor of Theology at the Stellenbosch Seminary; M. C. de Wet Nel, a Nationalist Member of Parliament and later Minister of Bantu Affairs and Development; W. Hofmeyr from the Cape and J. Macleod, a former Chief Inspector of Native Education in Natal.<sup>3</sup> Six of the Commissioners were academics (which contrasted with the amateurism of the missions), six were members of the 'Dutch' churches and Afrikaans speakers and 'none....opposed the fundamental principles of apartheid'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 144

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* Murray's dissentient remarks ran to a not inconsiderable 16 pages but received no comment from the other commissioners or acknowledgment in the conclusion of the Report. However, as the South African Outlook noted, 'It must not be thought...that Professor Murray is greatly at variance with his colleagues on the main issues, and he is certainly not more liberal.' The South African Outlook, March 1st 1952, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Bram Fleisch, 'The Teachers' College Club: American Educational Discourse and the Origins of Bantu Education in South Africa 1914-51', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Columbia, 1994, p. 243-4.

<sup>4</sup> C. Kros, 'Economic, Political and Intellectual Origins of Bantu Education, 1926-51', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1997, p. 323. The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs journal commented, 'From its composition it is evident that the Commission was expected to study the problems connected with Bantu Education in a scientific and objective manner...the choice of members was

All the major statutes of apartheid have emerged from Commissions of Enquiry - the 1913 Natives Land Act, the 1936 Representation of Natives Act, the 1953 Bantu Education Act, and the 1959 Bantu Self-Government Act. These Commissions of Enquiry, 'symbolic rituals of the state', addressed the 'Native Question' in South Africa as a technical matter of administration requiring rational solution.<sup>5</sup> They were created as arenas where problems could be solved as workable policies were hammered out. Simultaneously, through public dialogue, they attempted, as Crain Soudain argues, 'to conjure up the appurtenances of neutrality and accountability.'<sup>6</sup> In keeping with this analysis, the parameters of the Eiselen Commission Report were defined by 'experts' who argued that social problems could be solved by rational, considered plans of action. The Report was an attempt to justify the need for a racially differentiated educational system necessary for the maintenance of white domination.

Although it is not my intention to give a detailed account of the origins of the Eiselen Report, it is necessary to locate it within the context of apartheid policy-making.<sup>7</sup> Deborah Posel has convincingly demonstrated that the National Party did not come to power in 1948 with a single 'grand plan' for the total separation of the races in South Africa: the idea of apartheid was fiercely contested and there was no clear agreement among members of the National Party as to what it actually meant in practice.<sup>8</sup> In 1948 apartheid promised the simultaneous pursuit of white supremacy and white economic prosperity, but there was no general agreement on how best this could be achieved. From 1948 some members of the Nationalist alliance, such as the Dutch Reformed Church and the South African Bureau of

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a sound one.' 'The Commission on Native Education (1949-51): Summary of Findings and Recommendations', The Journal of Racial Affairs April 1952, Vol. 3, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> This understanding of Commissions of Enquiry is taken from A. Ashforth, The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa (Oxford, 1990), pp. 1-21.

<sup>6</sup> Crain Soudain, 'Racial Discourse in the Commission on Native Education (Eiselen Commission), 1949-51: The Making of a "Bantu" Identity', unpublished paper.

<sup>7</sup> For an explanation of the legislative changes that the Eiselen Report generated via Bantu Education legislation see appendix.

<sup>8</sup> See D. Posel, The Making of Apartheid 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise (Oxford, 1997).

Racial Affairs (SABRA)<sup>9</sup>, called for the immediate introduction of vertical<sup>10</sup> apartheid, but this was rejected by National Party leaders. Prime Minister D.F. Malan argued in 1950

Total segregation is not the policy of our party and it is nowhere to be found in our official declarations of policy...I said it clearly on platforms, that total separation was impracticable under present circumstances in South Africa, where our whole economic structure is to a large extent based on Native labour.<sup>11</sup>

The reason for Malan's rejection of total separation was clear; the South African economy was far too reliant on cheap African labour to be able to function effectively without it. The apartheid policy of the Nationalists during their first term in office reflected their immediate pressures and priorities; capitalist interests in South Africa, including Afrikaner ones, needed an urban African population to serve the interests of white industry. During, and especially after, the Second World War a boom in manufacturing led to the modernization of machinery and a concomitant growth in the demand for semi-skilled labour, a demand that was increasingly filled by urban African workers. The first, and to some extent the second, periods of office for the National Party were characterised by a recognition that two 'types' of African labour were needed for the immediate future - the detribalised urban worker and the rural worker. Thus, party leaders bowed to what was practical and adopted a pragmatic policy towards apartheid, in what has become known as apartheid's first phase.<sup>12</sup> The Eiselen Report and Bantu Education represented an integral part of this policy.

However, the Eiselen Report and Bantu Education should also be considered within an international context.<sup>13</sup> Sue Krige has argued that

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<sup>9</sup> SABRA was established in 1948 as an academic institution attached to the University of Stellenbosch. Its main purpose was to act as a counterpose to the South African Institute of Race Relations. Despite its own claim to political neutrality Broederbond and National Party members were active within its ranks. For an analysis of SABRA's role in the creation of apartheid see, J. Lazar, 'Verwoerd Versus the "Visionaries": The South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) and Apartheid, 1948-61', in P. Bonner, P. Delius, D. Posel (eds.) *Apartheid's Genesis*, pp. 362-392.

<sup>10</sup> Vertical apartheid alluded to the total segregation of the races in South Africa, geographically as well as politically.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Posel, *The Making*, p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> It is important to remember that Verwoerd himself told the 1955 National Party congress that apartheid could take 300 years to complete. See Lazar, 'Verwoerd Versus the "Visionaries"', p. 371.

<sup>13</sup> The Commission visited Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Kenya, Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. Whilst in Kenya, Eiselen remarked that the problems facing Native Education in South Africa were shared across

worldwide trends in education away from education systems and ideologies based on private (often religious), community-based voluntarism, towards expert driven, secular state control and bureaucratization can be seen emerging in South Africa in the early twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

She contends that during the interwar period a scientific approach to educational planning began to develop in South Africa, driven essentially by ideas which originated in the southern states of America in the early twentieth century. Its early protagonists, such as Anna T Jeans and Booker T Washington, believed that education should be made more relevant to the everyday needs of black Americans, and that traditional education methods neglected to consider the environment in which children were growing up. They argued that education should be used to promote the general welfare of whole communities through an emphasis on practical skills. These ideas were expanded upon by the Columbia Teachers' College, New York and the Phelps Stokes Commissions (that visited Africa in 1921 and 1924) and saw the creation of a complete pedagogy based upon the idea of 'adapted' education.<sup>15</sup> This championed practical skills and an appreciation of the local environment, and rested upon five essential ingredients: sanitation and health; agriculture and simple industry; the decencies of the home; healthful recreation and religion. The school was seen as the instrument for the social transformation of whole communities by linking the syllabus to the home life of communities and the everyday problems of villagers. At the same time the state had to take a larger role in educational planning to enable it to undermine the

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most of the continent and that it was very helpful to 'swap notes.' Star, 22 July, 1950.

<sup>14</sup> S. Krige, 'Segregation, Science and the Commissions of Enquiry: Education and the Place of the 'Natives' in South African Society, 1930-36', paper presented to the Journal of Southern African Studies Twentieth Century Conference: Paradigms Lost, Paradigms Regained?, York, 1994, p. 4. See also, 'Should Education Lead or Follow the Social Order: The Welsh Report and the Policy of Segregation, 1935-40', South African Historical Journal, Vol. 28, 1993, and 'Secularisation and Segregation: Experts, Missions and African Education: A Re-Evaluation of the Work of Charles Loram in South Africa, 1920-30', paper presented to 'Challenging Orthodoxies: New Perspectives in Histories of Education', Toronto, 17-20 Oct. 1996.

<sup>15</sup> 'Adapted' education looked to make education more relevant to local needs. Proponents argued that an academic 'bookish' education did little to help support African communities in any practical way. Through 'adapted' education, teaching was to be far more practical as agricultural and technical skills were promoted at the cost of academic study. Pupils were 'taught' how to farm effectively, the importance of sanitation, and the use of the school as an instrument for wholesale community development. Those who supported the idea argued that only these methods would reduce African poverty and subsequently 'raise' Africans slowly towards European civilization.

academic elitism associated with mission education.<sup>16</sup> These basic ideas were adopted by several South African educationalists, chief amongst whom was C.T. Loram, who completed a Ph.D at Teachers' College, Columbia University, and was Chief Inspector of Native Education in Natal between 1918 and 1920. After the publication of his book The Education of the South African Native and his reform of education in Natal, Loram was 'regarded as the foremost expert on "Native Education" and exponent of "adapted education"' in South Africa.<sup>17</sup> A paternalist and segregationist, he not only believed that 'Native Education' needed to be 'adapted' to local conditions, but was also convinced that educational planning had to be systematic, efficient and centrally planned.<sup>18</sup>

Krige examines the conflict in the inter-war period between Loram and his supporters, and the mission churches over 'Native Education', and shows how the missions rejected the 'rise of science', the 'secularization of knowledge' and the emergence of the 'expert' in educational discourse as they sought to reinforce the primacy of religious education. Although Loram's ideas did not achieve nationwide institutional dominance in educational planning between the wars, due to missionary opposition, Fleisch has argued that they came to fruition in the Eiselen Report and Bantu Education.<sup>19</sup> He demonstrates how American educational discourses dominated the findings of the Commission with its emphasis on centralized governance, expert control, educational efficiency, social planning, and educational differentiation.<sup>20</sup> He comments,

rather than a bizarre and tragic exception to the general trend in educational thought in both the industrialized and the third world, Bantu Education was the logical extension of a commitment to efficiency, expertise and a social philosophy of

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<sup>16</sup> Krige, 'Secularisation and Segregation', pp. 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Krige, *ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Fleisch, 'Bantu Education and the Bureaucratisation of the African Schooling', p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Fleisch, 'The Teachers College Club', chap. 5 & 8.

<sup>20</sup> Fleisch, 'Bantu Education...', p. 1. Fleisch also emphasizes the importance of the roles of two other educationalists influenced by the American education discourse. They were E. G Malherbe, who had been Director of the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research and W. P. Cook, a member of the Eiselen Commission and Malherbe's successor at the National Bureau.

education.<sup>21</sup>

Kros also maintains that 'the [Eiselen] Report bears some testimony to the prevalent ideas of the time.'<sup>22</sup> Part of a wider modernist project which looked to maximise economic productivity and produce a stable political situation,<sup>23</sup> it promised 'supposedly unfettered development [and] the appeasement of a proscribed "Bantu" society.'<sup>24</sup> Both Kros and Fleisch see Bantu Education as part of an elaborate attempt by the apartheid state 'to sketch the foundation for a regulated and centrally controlled society'.<sup>25</sup>

The attraction of American educational philosophy to the framers of the Eiselen Report was that it assumed the continuation of white supremacy. It rested upon two basic premises: that whites would remain in power for many years as Africans were at a lower stage of development, and that Africans were a rural people whose future would, for many years to come, be in the countryside. The practice of 'adapted' education, it argued, would lead to more productive and content rural Africans, able to support themselves, and therefore not needing to work in the city. Thus, race antagonism, fuelled by competition for work in the cities, would be avoided as would the perceived moral decline of Africans in urban areas. Africans would help themselves within their own communities towards greater prosperity. A select few would be educated academically, but only to assume responsibility in their own affairs, to avoid the creation of disgruntled Africans who could not find a role in white society but were divorced from their own communities.<sup>26</sup> This philosophy was adopted by leading 'liberals' in South Africa, such as Loram, not only because it maintained white supremacy but also offered what they considered a 'better deal' to Africans: an education that acted to reinforce social cohesion, rather than erode it, that encouraged African agency

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<sup>21</sup> Fleisch, 'American Education...', p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Kros, 'Relocating and Reinterpreting the Eiselen Commission on Native Education', paper presented at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 12 Jan. 1995. p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> See R. Hunt Davis, 'Charles T Loram and the American Model for African Education', in Kallaway (ed.) Apartheid and Education, pp. 108-139.

(within 'African society') rather than thwarted it, and that diffused social conflict rather than incited it.

There is no doubt that, as Fleisch and Kros assert, the Eiselen Report adopted many ideas from America, but it also reflected many of the educational policies and objectives pursued in British African colonies, which were themselves heavily influenced by American educational thinking. In the 1950s there was a spate of reports in British Africa which looked to reform educational policy. The impetus for these came principally from the changed international political climate during and after the war. The British government had fought the war allegedly to uphold the principles of freedom and self-determination. The shift in power towards the United States and the Soviet Union after the war had left Britain, France and Portugal isolated as the only powers which maintained significant empires in Africa. Both the new 'superpowers', for differing ideological reasons, opposed the maintenance of these empires and used the United Nations to pressure colonial powers to abandon or at least transform their possessions.<sup>27</sup> The morality of colonial relationships were also challenged by African nationalists who were well aware of the justifications on which the war was fought and increasingly demanded a say in their future. This changed climate saw colonial powers introduce reforms, both economic and social.<sup>28</sup>

The Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945 saw £9m spent on educational reform in British African colonies.<sup>29</sup> These educational reforms were designed to prepare Africans gradually for participation in administration, until they gained self-government. In the 1940s and 1950s it was assumed that African countries would gain independence at different stages; some within fifty years, others only after a hundred.<sup>30</sup> However, such piecemeal reforms did little to undermine the dominance of white interests

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<sup>27</sup> M. Crowder argues that the United Nations was hostile to colonial powers which were 'subject to inspection and criticism of their administrations...they were thus held politically accountable for their stewardship in many ways.' M. Crowder, 'The Second World War: Prelude to Decolonisation in Africa', in M. Crowder (ed.), The Cambridge History of Africa Vol. 8 1940-75 (Cambridge, 1984), p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> The reforms also included ones which were purely economic and looked to get the colonies to maximise their value in an attempt to help reconstruct Britain after the war.

<sup>29</sup> Lord Hailey, An African Survey (Oxford, revised 1957 ed.), p. 1167.

<sup>30</sup> H. Wilson, African Decolonization, (London, 1990).



in colonies in east and southern Africa, where large settler populations were unwilling to give up their economic, social and political supremacy. It was in these colonies that reports on the education of Africans shared many similarities with the Eiselen Report.

Two education reports in particular can be compared to the Eiselen Report, primarily because both were the products of colonies with significant white settler communities: the 1951 Southern Rhodesia Native Education Commission (Kerr Report) and the 1949 African Education in Kenya Report (Beecher Report). The latter was undertaken to 'examine the scope, content, and methods of the African education system,'<sup>31</sup> the former to examine African education in relation to 'the present and probable future needs of the African' and the 'social and economic development.'<sup>32</sup> To a lesser extent the Binns Report (West Africa) and the Jeffrey Report (East and Central Africa) also shared similarities with the Eiselen Report and, where appropriate, will be drawn on for comparative purposes.<sup>33</sup>

#### The Eiselen Report as Critical Exercise

The Eiselen Report had five terms of reference which are worth reproducing in full:

1. The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under ever-changing social conditions are taken into consideration.
2. The extent to which the existing primary, secondary and vocational educational system for Natives and the training of teachers should be modified in respect of the contents and form of syllabus, in order to conform to the proposed principles and aims and to prepare Natives more effectively for their future occupations.

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<sup>31</sup> Beecher Report, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Kerr Report, 'Terms of Reference'.

<sup>33</sup> These two reports, Binns looking at education in East and Central Africa and Jeffrey in West Africa, were funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office. They were inspired by political changes taking place in Africa and the need to think education 'out afresh....[to] design and provide a system of education which will enable the emergent peoples of Africa to take their full place in the modern world.' African Education: A Study of Educational Policy and Practice in British Tropical Africa (Oxford, 1953), Introduction, p. 2. This publication printed both reports in full, and the proceedings of a conference in Cambridge which took place to discuss the reports.

3. The organisation and administration of the various branches of Native Education.
4. The basis on which such education should be financed.
5. Such other aspects of Native education as may be related to the preceding.<sup>34</sup>

These Terms of Reference were complemented by a questionnaire sent to all those who professed an interest in 'Native Education.' Its first six questions reproduced the attempt of the first term of reference, to consider 'Natives as an Independent Race'. They attempted to establish the 'independence', 'racial characteristics', 'special qualities', and 'aptitudes' of Africans as well as the 'changes at present taking place in the social conditions of the Natives' and how 'these factors should determine the principles and objectives of Native education.'<sup>35</sup> The terms of reference and questionnaire were deliberately designed to narrow the commission's focus and stressed the need to evaluate the education system of the 'Native' as a 'separate and independent race' as if this were a given fact. Consequently, there was no room for debate concerning the position of Africans in South Africa.

Given its terms of reference, the Eiselen Report's assumption that Africans had a different future to that of whites, was entirely predictable. Its recommendations concentrated on the belief that Africans were culturally different to whites and thus 'required' an education system more in line with 'their needs,' one that was, in other words, a form of 'adapted education.' The notion of culture, and cultural difference, was essential to the Report, as it was used to justify the need for racially differentiated education. The Commissioners clearly viewed culture as static and biologically determined. Immutable and innate, it meant that 'the Bantu' had a racially distinct culture requiring preservation. Christian National ideas concerning the sanctity of cultural difference, and the belief that all cultures should be preserved has a great deal of relevance in this instance. In fact much of the Report attempts to justify itself in terms of Afrikaner Nationalist ideology. Kros has convincingly argued that culture 'proved to be an effective foundation for the discourse of the Commission, since nearly every witness subscribed to its basic concepts in some measure', and this meant that

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<sup>34</sup> Central Archives (Pretoria), Union Education Department UOD E53/71 1384, Vol.1, 'Terms of Reference' (Pretoria, 1 April 1949).

<sup>35</sup> Eiselen Report, Annexure B. A copy of the questionnaire is reproduced in the appendix below.

at some stage most witnesses 'ended up admitting the need for differentiation'.<sup>36</sup>

The Report began with an attempt to locate 'the Bantu' in South Africa. A crude attempt to define the word 'Bantu' and distinguish 'the Bantu' from other African people is followed by an examination of the increasing failure of the reserves, indicating the absence of an effective peasantry, and a review of the decline of traditional forms of authority and the rise of the individual.<sup>37</sup> An extensive survey of educational establishments and other institutions involved in child care, such as nursery schools and reformatories is the prelude to a sustained attack on the state of African education. Four main areas of concern are emphasized:

- (a) Bantu education is not an integral part of a plan of socio-economic development;
- (b) Bantu education in itself has no organic unity: it is split into a bewildering number of different agencies and is not planned.
- (c) Bantu education is conducted without the active participation of the Bantu as a people or on a wider basis.
- (d) Bantu education is financed in such a way that it achieves a minimum of educational effect on the Bantu community and planning is made virtually impossible.

In addition, the Report criticised:

- (a) The inadequacy of the present system of inspection and supervision.
- (b) The failure to couple vocational education with economic development.
- (c) The inadequacy of the measures taken to combat the problem of early elimination from school.
- (d) The inadequate functioning of teachers in schemes of Bantu development.<sup>38</sup>

The brunt of the attack upon existing provision was that it lacked a clearly defined objective, and that there was no overall understanding of what 'Native education' was trying to achieve.<sup>39</sup> The Commissioners examined the role of 'the Bantu' in society and argued that

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<sup>36</sup> Kros, 'Economic, Political...', p. 380. Kros notes further, 'The cultural discourse of the Eiselen Commission, with its deep intellectual resonances, succeeded in closing off other ways of thinking and talking about mass based education.' p. 380.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>38</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 31.

<sup>39</sup> See in particular, *ibid.*, pp. 103-104, p. 122, p. 128.

a vagueness in education policy existed because of a failure throughout the educational system to understand and fully appreciate what this role was.<sup>40</sup> The result was that

Much of what is taught and learnt in Bantu schools is never applied in practise, because the economic incentives which should operate when children leave school are either absent or of such a nature as to undo the work of the schools<sup>41</sup>

This contention that the education system failed to appreciate the position of 'the Bantu' in society was the bedrock upon which the Report was written and its recommendations made. All its other criticisms were based around this fundamental point.

The Commissioners strongly objected to the dual control of education between the Union government and the provincial authorities,<sup>42</sup> arguing that the Union government had almost no direct administrative control over policy within the provinces. They also condemned the anomalies in control, financing and administration that existed between the provinces themselves, which thwarted a coherent educational strategy. Instead provincial control led to the 'harmful and frustrating severance of the schools from other agencies set up by the State, under the control of the Central Government, to develop the economic and social life of the Bantu'.<sup>43</sup>

They asserted further that the existing system of financing was 'unplanned' had 'no priorities', or 'clear objectives' and was characterised by a 'bewildering mass of uncorrelated activities and expenditure', so that it was allegedly impossible to know exactly how much money was spent on education from year to year.<sup>44</sup> The Commissioners concluded 'all the

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<sup>40</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 103.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.* p. 104.

<sup>42</sup> Under the existing system the provinces had direct control of the schools as far as syllabi, organisation and authority were concerned, whilst the Union government was charged with the entire expenditure on such schools. Other than its control of the purse strings the only other influence the central state had on provincial education policy making was via the Union Advisory Board for Native Education. An Advisory Board that was condemned by the Report for having no meaningful influence on provincial educationalists. *ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p. 159.

prerequisites for efficient administration are lacking.<sup>45</sup>

The role of mission churches in African education also came under fire. Commissions argued that the multiplicity of religious bodies involved contributed to thwarting any overall strategy for 'Bantu education'. It denounced their mutual rivalries, and their overlap in distribution and function, which had led to the wasteful duplication of services in many areas.<sup>46</sup> They were also condemned for not adequately involving Africans in the administration of education via institutions such as school boards and parent teacher groups.<sup>47</sup>

The schools themselves were targeted. Primary schools were failing their pupils because their syllabi suffered from being too 'general... what seems to be lacking is a series of detailed interpretations of the syllabi, each of which will be particularly adapted to the local conditions.'<sup>48</sup> They were said to overlook the needs of their pupils by not concentrating on the use of the vernacular as a means by which theoretical concepts could be better explained. School buildings were condemned for being of poor quality, and problems were exacerbated by a shortage of inspectors to maintain standards.<sup>49</sup> Secondary school education was described as being too 'bookish' and theoretical and, returning to its central theme, the Report noted that, 'one of the chief criticisms of the present secondary schools is that there is a confusion of purpose and function.'<sup>50</sup> The use of the same syllabi in African secondary schools as in white secondary schools, was deemed inappropriate as it led to 'unrealistic expectations' on the part of African students.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 159.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>47</sup> The Report argued that the position of Africans in education planning was 'ill-defined and variable', *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118-121. The Report suggested that Africans should be employed as school inspectors as soon as possible to address these shortcomings.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122. The Report also argued that schooling more generally was 'too academic', p. 163.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122.

The Commissioners argued for separate education by highlighting the inherent dangers of the existing system:

schools of a western type have been introduced, schools which are concerned primarily, not with reinforcing, or being reinforced by, the other social institutions of Bantu society but more largely with the transmission of ideas, attitudes and skills which have not been developed in Bantu society itself and are often not in harmony with its institutions<sup>52</sup>

In their view such schools had produced a

group of people who break away too rapidly from the views and habits of their own people and sometimes act against their own community. Such a stray minority is readily formed where two cultures are in close contact...he is an outcast among his own people and can find no anchorage with the people of the other culture<sup>53</sup>

The Report attempted to show how the 'staggering power and glitter of Western culture'<sup>54</sup> had an adverse effect upon the 'relatively simple social organisation of the South African Bantu.'<sup>55</sup>

The Commissioners reasoned that African education though well intended, was inappropriate given the nature of the relationship between Africans and whites in South Africa. Existing policy created Africans who were divorced from their milieu, but who found little opportunity elsewhere, because, as a culturally distinct race, 'the Bantu' could not be successfully assimilated into 'European culture.' The picture painted was one of impending doom; the country was seen to be facing social crisis as Africans were educated for an unattainable lifestyle which, they argued, could lead to social and political turmoil.

Although the Eiselen Report can be seen as part of a wider project the reports from British settler colonies condemned the existing state of African education in remarkably similar

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<sup>52</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 130.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 129.

terms. Thus, the Beecher Report referred to a 'general criticism of the school system because of its lack of identity with the true needs of the community.'<sup>56</sup> All the reports condemned the 'bookish' and unrealistic nature of African education, Binns arguing that 'enlightened teachers and administrators [must be] alive to the danger of a theoretical and bookish education.'<sup>57</sup> They also argued that existing education policy created Africans who were averse to manual labour and strove for white-collar jobs.<sup>58</sup> The Beecher Report noted that

African chiefs and responsible African leaders indicated in evidence that they are much exercised by this element in African society which, in their judgement, is capable of becoming a discontented and indeed subversive force<sup>59</sup>

The Kerr Report noted that this group of academically educated Africans was acquiring 'a deep sense of frustration and grievance - a state of mind capable of having an effect on an educated group similar to that which a detonator has on dynamite.'<sup>60</sup>

#### The Eiselen Report as Solution

Kros has argued that 'the foundations of 'Grand Apartheid' are clearly apparent in the Eiselen Report.'<sup>61</sup> The solution to the problems of African education, as it saw them, could

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<sup>56</sup> Beecher Report, p. 34.

<sup>57</sup> Binns Report, p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> See in particular, Beecher Report, p. 39. The Jeffrey Report noted that 'Contempt for manual work is certainly widespread', Jeffrey Report, p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> Beecher Report, p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> Kerr Report, p. 12.

<sup>61</sup> C. Kros, 'Economic, Political...', p. 325. She adds 'The Report should be read as a programmatic outline of apartheid', p. 324. On the one hand this seems to contradict Posel's assertion that there was no 'grand plan' for apartheid, however, it also supports her contention that there was considerable tension within the National Party as to what apartheid actually meant. Despite the fact that the Eiselen Report was a 'visionary' document this does not mean that it was not to be tempered in its early stages by a period of pragmatism (which would explain Hyslop's contention that Bantu Education was partly conceived to stabilise the African urban youth). As Lazar has remarked 'apartheid ideology was a complex, changing and often contradictory mix of both short-term pragmatism and general ideological thrust.' Lazar, 'Verweerd versus...', p. 362.

not be via simple piecemeal improvements. The Report emphasised a massive programme of social and political engineering that drew the central state, and all its constituent parts which dealt with 'Bantu affairs,' into a unified 'plan' to finally address the 'Native Question' in its entirety. Eiselen was committed by the late 1940s to the idea of complete territorial separation. In 1948 he told the Witwatersrand People's Forum that he understood the word apartheid to mean:

the separating of the heterogeneous, ... population of this country, into separate socio-economic units, inhabiting separate parts of the country, each enjoying in its own area full citizen rights<sup>62</sup>

It would appear the Commission was never solely concerned with education and greatly overstepped its initial purpose.<sup>63</sup> Rather, it was concerned with the role that education would play within an elaborate plan for the wholesale socio-economic development of 'Bantu Communities'. In a particularly revealing passage it argued:

Bantu development and Bantu education should be largely synonymous terms. Education is more than a matter of schooling...Education must be co-ordinated with a definite and carefully planned policy for the development of Bantu societies<sup>64</sup>

It continued, 'It has become essential for Bantu education and all other Bantu social services to be co-ordinated in a series of reforms.'<sup>65</sup> The phrase 'plan for Bantu development' occurs repeatedly throughout the Report. This emphasis on the need for a programmatic examination of all aspects of 'Bantu life' was, unsurprisingly, welcomed by the SABRA which commented

In our view the Commission has undoubtedly succeeded in carrying out its

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<sup>62</sup> Eiselen to the Witwatersrand People's Forum 8<sup>th</sup> August 1948. KCL H. Nicholls Collection, File 3 'Bantu Affairs.'

<sup>63</sup> The Commissioners even admitted as much, 'Your Commission is aware that the recommendations which follow are of a far-reaching nature and perhaps exceed the limits usually prescribed for an education Commission', Eiselen Report, p. 132.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p. 130. The Report continued 'we conceive education not as an end in itself but as a means to the general development of the Bantu', p. 163.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p. 104.



task...[T]he Commission has...endeavoured to approach the problems before it in the right way by not confining itself to the mere investigation of educational matters alone but by envisaging education generally as a part of Bantu development<sup>66</sup>

The Commission sought to lay the foundations for an education policy that would complement a wider scheme or 'plan' for the 'development' of Africans in South Africa. For this 'plan' to work, the rehabilitation of the Reserves was necessary and became something of a refrain from the Commissioners, so that it seems likely that the Eiselen Commission was conceived of as counterpart to the Tomlinson Commission. The Tomlinson Commission was appointed to investigate the position of the Reserves, and to ascertain whether they were in a viable position to accommodate a greatly increased number of South Africa's African population. Although the Tomlinson Commission did not report until 1956, work began from the beginning of 1951, during the writing up of the Eiselen Commission, and the man credited for its conception, M.D.C. de Wet Nel was also a member of the Eiselen Commission. The Eiselen Commissioners argued that it was 'not [their] purpose to enumerate or discuss problems in the social or economic field,'<sup>56</sup> but as far as the condition of the Reserves was concerned this is precisely what they did. Again, it is worth quoting the report at length

If the social aim of Bantu education is as important as your Commission believes it to be, it follows that the reserves [sic], being areas in which the Bantu culture functions most completely, have a special task to perform in the furtherance of the development of Bantu culture and schools....Nevertheless many educated Bantu feel that the Reserves are fast becoming economic and cultural slums; places to be avoided by the educated and the enterprising. **Your Commission feels that special steps should be taken in the Reserves to facilitate and encourage the evolution of a progressive, modern and self-respecting Bantu order of life...**if the Reserves are to play their part they must be developed<sup>57</sup>

The Commissioners were very aware of the poor conditions in the Reserves and saw them as a direct hindrance to the proposals they were making. The idea of a direct policy linkage between the Eiselen and Tomlinson Commissions is further supported by the 1951 Bantu

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<sup>66</sup> 'The Commission on Native Education (1949-51) Summary of Findings and Recommendations', Journal of Racial Affairs, April 1952 p. 23.

<sup>56</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 163.

<sup>57</sup> ibid., p. 131 (original emphasis).

Authorities Act which aimed at reinforcing the authority of local 'tribal' chiefs within the Reserves through the establishment of rural local authorities, an idea first mooted in the Eiselen Report.<sup>58</sup> Part of its recommendations cater for the development of an educated African 'elite' to staff the Bantu Authorities created in 1951.

There is little doubt that the Eiselen Report was part of a larger 'Bantu development plan.' The emphasis in the Eiselen Report on the rejuvenation of the Reserves prefigured the main thrust of the Tomlinson Commission. That Tomlinson's recommendations were largely rejected by Verwoerd in 1956<sup>59</sup> and did not reach their fruition does not undermine the notion that in the early 1950s the idea of a 'grand apartheid' scheme was very much alive within the Eiselen Commission.

However, such a conception of 'grand apartheid' was, in the context of the first phase of apartheid, not without its pragmatism. The Commissioners warned that while they envisaged that 'the conduct of schools' would be transferred to the Bantu Local and Regional Authorities this would take place 'over a period of time in which the Bantu Development Plan would crystallize...The process ... should be a gradual one.'<sup>60</sup>

The vagueness of the time scale envisaged by the Commissioners<sup>61</sup> suggests a degree of pragmatism within an ideological framework. In 1948 Eiselen remarked to the Witwatersrand People's Forum:

Separation...represents an aim which cannot be achieved without a constructive policy, a policy making people ready for separation...which requires careful planning...separation means an evolutionary and not a revolutionary process...Constructive separation will require many years of careful planning,

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<sup>58</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 133.

<sup>59</sup> The Commission called for a sum of £104,000,000 to be invested in the Reserves to allow for their development to support large African populations. This was rejected by Verwoerd on largely political grounds. See Lazar "Verwoerd Versus the 'Visionaries'", p. 374.

<sup>60</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 137 (original emphasis).

<sup>61</sup> What is also striking is the report's emphasis on the period of time in which the 'Bantu Development Plan would crystallise', rather than simply the plan for 'Bantu Education', which once again highlights the main thrust of the Commission.

preparation and purposeful action<sup>62</sup>

Eiselen appealed to the audience to realise that whites would have to make sacrifices to make apartheid work. Land would have to be given up by white farmers and cheap African labour would have to be gradually withdrawn from the economy.

On numerous occasions the Report acknowledged the poor social and economic conditions that prevailed amongst the majority of Africans remarking 'in the economic field the conditions in the Reserves and in the urban areas reveal both the poverty of the Bantu and their low productivity.'<sup>63</sup> They concluded that '**we firmly believe that the schools are not being used nearly as effectively as they ought to be in helping to solve the numerous and urgent problems with which we are faced.**'<sup>64</sup> In general the role of Bantu Education in rural areas has been well researched, but Hyslop has also drawn attention to its important urban dimension. He argues that

Although the Nationalists posited the creation of autonomous political entities for blacks and whites and the establishment of a purely migrant black work force in 'white' areas as their long term political-ideological goal, more immediate tasks confronted them<sup>65</sup>

One of the 'more immediate tasks' was to stabilise the African urban working class. In apartheid's 'first phase' African workers, urban and rural, were required. Hyslop suggests that the prevailing urban social, economic and political conditions threatened the very reproduction of the urban work force. The Commission drew attention 'to the very important aspect of the problem of discipline among Bantu youth' noting a 'serious lack of a sense of responsibility on the part of pupils.' They claimed that this was the product of 'confused moral values' and 'social disruption.'<sup>66</sup> As previously indicated, chronic poverty,

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<sup>62</sup> Eiselen to the Witwatersrand People's Forum, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1948. Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban. H. Nicholls Collection, File 3 'Bantu Affairs'.

<sup>63</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 163.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p. 163. (Original emphasis).

<sup>65</sup> Hyslop, 'State Education Policy...', p. 448.

<sup>66</sup> Eiselen Report, pp. 22-23. They noted that pupils were subject to 'foreign ideologies and doctrines' having to make a 'tremendous leap from his cultural level and background, from his former group

poor housing and high levels of crime in the 1940s had led to the growth of community movements, trade unions and African nationalist political campaigning.<sup>67</sup> Simultaneously mission education was finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the demands being placed on it in the cities. This meant that many thousands of African children received little or no education. In 1952, for example, school inspectors estimated that, of the children of school-going age on the Rand, only some 58,138 out of 116,276 were in school.<sup>68</sup> According to Hyslop not enough children were being educated to meet the demands of the growing secondary industrial sector, and those who were not in school posed a serious threat to the social order. This 'urban crisis' was addressed by Bantu Education which was established to assist 'in the state-directed reorganisation of the reproduction process of the working class.'<sup>69</sup> By drawing children off the streets and into schools it represented an attempt to fight the rising tide of crime and political militancy through incorporating children into the schooling system.<sup>70</sup>

To try and solve the problems of low attendance the Report sought to provide, by 1959, sufficient places in the first four years of primary schooling for all pupils between eight and eleven years old, which was 'roughly a doubling of the number of lower and higher primary pupils.'<sup>71</sup> The Commissioners also called for an increase in secondary education but argued that:

The Commission regards the lower primary school as being particularly important as it is at this stage of the educational process that the present very high wastage of pupils occurs and a low standard of work is found<sup>72</sup>

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subordination to a relatively, and sometimes advanced, individualistically orientated independence in outlook and action.' pp. 22-23.

<sup>67</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>68</sup> Hyslop, "'A Destruction...'" p. 396.

<sup>69</sup> Hyslop, 'State Education Policy...', p. 450.

<sup>70</sup> This argument was exactly what mission and liberal opinion was calling for itself, thus in a sense the Eiselen Report was making a reformist gesture.

<sup>71</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 162.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 164.

The increase in enrolment called for did actually take place. In 1953 there were 852,000 African pupils in primary schools, only two years later the figure had risen to 970,000 and by 1960 there were 1,452,000 Africans in primary school.<sup>73</sup> Once again the pragmatism of apartheid's first phase was demonstrated; the Commissioners advocated a rural future for Africans, but, until there was the political will and economic strength to make this a possibility, 'Bantu Education' would be used to stabilise a temporary African urban workforce.

Similar concerns over African discipline and morality, supposedly brought about by the erosion of 'traditional' tribal sanctions on behaviour, and most associated with urban living, also greatly exercised the authors of reports in British Africa. Binns and Beecher lamented the social problems caused by rapid urbanisation<sup>74</sup> while the Kerr Commissioners, for example, heard

complaints that Africans have lost their discipline and respect instilled by their former tribal sanctions and have not yet gained the sense of responsibility and of discipline that are so necessary<sup>75</sup>

### SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Eiselen Report's recommendations amounted to 35 double columned pages, and dealt with numerous diverse issues, from the overall control of education policy to the training of police. Here only those recommendations that directly affected mission and church schooling are relevant.<sup>76</sup> At its most basic level the Report recommended that the state take educational control from the Provinces, and that the 'Bantu community' should take local control from the missions.

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<sup>73</sup> E. Unterhalter, 'Changing Aspects of Reformism in Bantu Education 1953-89', in Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles (London, 1991), p. 37.

<sup>74</sup> Beecher Report, p. 55, Binns Report, p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> Kerr Report, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> This will be broadly inclusive, to include issues such as the position of teachers, parents and students within the new system.

We have seen that the Report suggested that education, as a social service, should be integrated organically with all other state institutions which planned for 'Bantu development.' A direct consequence of this was its suggestion that full control of African education should pass to the Native Affairs Department (NAD), under a Division of Bantu Affairs.<sup>77</sup> Within this Department a Development Authority was created to 'evolve comprehensive plans for the development of all aspects of Bantu life'.<sup>78</sup>

These recommendations also found their counterpart in the British Colonial reports. In Rhodesia the education of Africans had been under the control of a centralised Native Affairs Department since 1933 and Kerr noted:

African witnesses were unanimous in their desire to have the Native Education Department transferred to the Education Department (European)...This general policy has not been accepted by the Government, and we are not satisfied that any advantage would accrue [from its adoption]...on the other hand, the Native Education Department, as a section of Native Affairs, can be properly co-ordinated with all aspects of African development- a most desirable aim<sup>79</sup>

This statement could have come directly from the Eiselen Report. Although Kerr highlighted African opposition to a racially organised education structure, it still recommended the continuation of such differentiation and stressed the need to co-ordinate education policy with other aspects of development. The Beecher Report was equally sure that African education should remain separate from that given to other races

African education in relation to African society cannot be compared with education in European and Asian society....European and Asian education have a much longer history...The peculiar nature of African education, with its limited achievements, and long range objectives, is such that long-term planning alone, and consequently long-term financial provision are appropriate. We are only at the stage of establishing a means by which future results may be achieved; European and Asian education systems are

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<sup>77</sup> The Report argued that this change would '**raise the schools to a mighty instrument , not for the one-sided development of a small minority of isolated individuals but for the general development of the Bantu community**' , Eiselen Report, p. 144 (original emphasis).

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p. 135.

<sup>79</sup> Kerr Report, p. 54.

concerned with maintaining long and well established standards<sup>80</sup>

At a local level Eiselen recommended that control of schools should be handed over to Bantu Local Authorities.<sup>81</sup> No suggestions were made in the Report as to how, and indeed when, the transfer of schools should take place, other than being 'gradual.'<sup>82</sup> It simply stated that all those schools wishing to claim full state-aid would have to become Government schools. Those schools unwilling to be transferred would not be compelled to do so, but would not be entitled to full state aid, having instead to apply for subsidies from the Local or Regional Bantu Authority. No new schools could to be created without the permission of the Authority concerned and the approval of the Department.<sup>83</sup> While the Report was at pains to 'thank' the missions for the work that they had put into 'Bantu Education', it nonetheless argued that 'this guardianship now hampers the balanced development of the Bantu community and for that reason the guardian should stand aside if he desires to fulfill his mission.'<sup>84</sup>

Once school transfers were advanced the Commissioners recommended the establishment of school committees, with representatives from the Bantu Local Authority, parents and the 'religious body,' if present. These ideas were, however, left rather vague and undetermined in the Report, seeming to await the full elaboration of the 'plan for Bantu development'.

The continued promotion of 'Bantu' involvement in the control of schools displayed the

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<sup>80</sup> Beecher Report, p. 57. This is a spurious argument. The fact that African education was so underdeveloped was not a reason for it to be separate. If anything, the development experiences of 'European' and 'Asian' education would presumably have been of enormous benefit to fledgling African education provision.

<sup>81</sup> The Eiselen Report argues 'It should be emphasised...that what the Commission urges is not the abolition of local control by missions but rather the creation of a new and more effective system of local government which necessitates that local control of schools be taken over by Bantu Local Authorities', p. 135. In fact Bantu Local Authorities took over the running of Lower and Higher primary schools, whilst Bantu Regional Authorities were to take over High and Secondary schools.

<sup>82</sup> The Report stated its desire that 'the change from mission to community schools should be an orderly development and not a sudden and radical change', noting that any local authorities would have to pass the 'cash, competence and consent' test before taking control of schools. Eiselen Report, p. 145 & p. 137.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.* p. 145.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.* p. 145.

Commissioners' desire to commend their proposals to a cynical African audience. They argued that 'Bantu' control of schools and local government was 'required' because only through such control would these institutions 'reach their full social significance.'<sup>85</sup> Apparently, this phrase mean that only 'the Bantu' could fully understand the needs and desires of 'the Bantu' an idea that fitted neatly with the Report's stress on the need for an 'adapted' education. This emphasis on active participation by 'the Bantu' was also indicative of wider white concerns over the growing degree of African political activity in the Union. The National Party was well aware of this growing politicisation and acted to stem it through the incorporation of Africans into administrative structures at both local and regional levels within the Reserves and the cities, as Verwoerd made clear in 1952:

taking full cognisance of the growing African nationalism which is noticeable everywhere in the country today...we must allow space for the flowering of African nationalism. It is dangerous, if not fatal, to try to curb this development...some form of separate development would remove this sense of frustration that plagues the non-whites in South Africa, and would give them opportunities that were denied them before<sup>86</sup>

Once again, the Commissioners went well beyond the terms of references when arguing for the creation of Bantu Local Authorities. They even laid down a set of 'guiding rules' for these Authorities.<sup>87</sup> What the Report suggested was the creation of a blue-print for the political incorporation of Africans into the apartheid structure. Such incorporation was on the government's terms and extended right down to the individual school level. Once again, the reports from British settler colonies were in broad agreement with Eiselen in that they all stressed the need to encourage local African participation in education.<sup>88</sup>

While the Eiselen Report advocated the removal of mission control of schools, the Commissioners were at pains to stress that this did not mean the end of a 'religious

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<sup>85</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 133.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, p. 132.

<sup>87</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 133.

<sup>88</sup> Kerr Report, p. 55, Beecher Report, p. 95, Binns Report, p. 62.



atmosphere' in schools. Indeed education should have 'a definite Christian character'<sup>89</sup> and religious instruction should be a compulsory subject, with a definite time allotment and regular inspection. It also suggested that the mission bodies be asked to establish religious instruction curricula. In a passage clearly designed to reassure the mission bodies, the Commissioners remarked:

that the control of Bantu schools should gradually be transferred to Local Authorities does not imply a desire to see a reduction in the activities of religious bodies on behalf of the Bantu. On the contrary, it is the earnest desire of the Commission that this work should grow and expand, and that the religious bodies should do all in their power to support and promote work [sic] of the schools<sup>90</sup>

The emphasis on a Christian atmosphere within the schools could hardly have been ignored given the religious character of the majority of Commissioners and the wider influence that Christian National Education exerted on policy making.

In relation to the financing of 'Bantu education' the Commissioners looked at who should pay, and how that money could be correlated with wider 'Bantu development plans,' rather than trying to establish an equitable arrangement whereby Africans paid according to their means. Its major advice was that Africans should contribute more to their education via direct taxation. In a complicated and rather convoluted fashion, it demonstrated how expenditure on education benefited a community by raising its national income. By making Africans pay more for their education now, they would benefit in the future.<sup>91</sup>

The Report's recommendations in regard to syllabi and more general pedagogical matters are conspicuous by their brevity. 'The general approach of the Commission to problems of curricula', it declared, was 'that as soon as the general development plan has been satisfactorily drawn up the educational authorities will have a clear picture of the types of individuals they will be called upon to produce'.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Eiselen Report p. 130.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.* p. 155.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.* p164. The functionalist interpretation of the purpose of schools can be seen here.

The basis of our approach to Bantu education [it continued] ... is the conviction that the system of Bantu education should be closely integrated with a general development scheme, and that it should be proceeded with a clear formulation of such a scheme. For this reason our recommendations in connection with the more advanced stadia of education will be only tentative until such time as a formulation has been drawn up<sup>93</sup>

Consequently, only 'tentative' and somewhat general assertions were made concerning educational content. Lower Primary Schools were to be created, catering for the seven to ten-year age group. They were to concentrate on the three 'R's' to enable children to acquire the technical skills of reading, writing and numeracy. They were also to introduce one official language so that Africans could communicate with their potential 'European' employers.<sup>94</sup>

Higher Primary Schools, for the eleven to fourteen years olds were to follow a similar pattern for the first two years, after which they were to split into two streams, the one academic, the other vocational. High Schools were to cater for the fifteen to nineteen-year olds and would consist of a similarly streamed five year course, leading to a Junior Certificate after three years and matriculation after a further two years.

In line with its calls for 'adapted education' the Commission proposed that agriculture should feature more prominently within the school system. Lower Primary Schools were to promote 'an interest in the soil' while Higher Primary Schools were to give 'increased attention ... to the teaching of manipulative skills and (where possible) gardening and agriculture'.<sup>95</sup> While, the promotion of agriculture is unsurprising given the Report's stress on the need to develop the Reserves to enable complete separate development, this too was part of a wider educational pattern.<sup>96</sup> Reports from British settler Africa also stressed agricultural education as a core part of syllabus development. Beecher, for example, called for

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<sup>93</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 150.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.* p. 140.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.* p. 140, 147.

<sup>96</sup> The promotion of agriculture and 'adapted' education also promised to reinforce traditional rural bonds and social structures.

the restoration of a practical basis to education appropriate to the kind of life which the great majority of the products of this expanded programme will lead; we call for the inclusion of right attitudes to rural problems.<sup>97</sup>

This prioritising of agricultural training reflected the post-war drive for agricultural efficiency within British Africa.

Recommendations concerning hostels under the control of mission and church groups were vague: the management of such hostels should be the responsibility of the school principal, and 'the Bantu' should have more influence in hostel life. Details of how this was to be achieved were absent.

The Commissioners did, however, make detailed recommendations on the place of the vernacular and the official languages in education. They believed that 'the question of mother-tongue medium is vital to the whole system',<sup>98</sup> and attempted to use the idea of 'mother-tongue' education to create and perpetuate ethno-linguistic divisions within South African society, both between Africans and whites, and between Africans themselves.<sup>99</sup> The Report recommended that all education should be through the 'mother-tongue' for the first four years of study, with this principle being extended progressively throughout the next four years of study. Its use in secondary schools and teacher training colleges was also encouraged.<sup>100</sup>

The emphasis on the increased use of the vernacular was defended by the Commission in

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<sup>97</sup> Beecher Report, p. viii.

<sup>98</sup> Eiselen Report, p. 145. This is despite the fact that the report did not highlight mother-tongue education, or the lack of it, as a criticism of the present system.

<sup>99</sup> The use of the 'mother-tongue' was championed in the report as an inalienable right for the 'Bantu' peoples in much the same way that some Afrikaners themselves had 'fought' for Afrikaans. Language policy in the provinces differed. In the Cape teaching in the vernacular lasted for the first four years, after which all lessons were taught in one of the official languages. In the Transvaal teaching in the vernacular was used for four years but was extended in certain lessons, such as religious education and hygiene. In the Orange Free State teaching in the vernacular was compulsory for the first four years of schooling, after which it was to be replaced by an official language. There was no formal regulation in Natal, but instruction in Zulu was common for the first four years, after which English and Zulu were used in equal measure. *ibid.* p. 73.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.* p. 146.

terms of efficiency. As some 75.2 per cent of all pupils in South Africa were in the first four years of primary schools, it argued 'that not to use to the fullest the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction is to impose a very heavy burden on both pupil and teacher'.<sup>101</sup> However, the use of the 'mother-tongue' had inherent value to the architects of apartheid for a number of other reasons: language could help students define who they were, and, as importantly, who they were not. Through the 'mother-tongue' policy it was hoped Africans would perceive of themselves in a certain way, and understand that they were a 'separate people' with a certain destiny and expectation. The vernacular was to be used 'as a vehicle for the preservation of pride in national tradition.'<sup>102</sup> It was not only the 'division' between Africans and whites that was to be reinforced. Use of the vernacular would also separate Xhosa from Zulu, Zulu from Sotho, etc. Thus, Africans could be denied a collective identity, and language could assist a policy of divide and rule.<sup>103</sup> The Reserves and Bantu Authorities were vital to this plan as language differentiation would lead to the 'rationalisation of the "homogenous" groups which were to become the basis of new local administration.'<sup>104</sup>

From the 1930s the use of the vernacular in the first few years of a pupil's life had become the pedagogical recommendation. In 1930, for example, the London Institute of African Languages and Cultures stated that all education for the first three years should be in the vernacular.<sup>105</sup> The Kerr Report also believed that all instruction in schools should be through the vernacular for the first five years, arguing that this was a 'fundamental tenet of educational theory'.<sup>106</sup> In another statement that could have been from the Eiselen Report,

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<sup>101</sup> Eiselen Report p. 164.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.* p. 132.

<sup>103</sup> The ANC Congress Youth League struggled with the issue of 'mother-tongue' instruction. Whilst it was somewhat hostile to the use of English as its *lingua franca* it was anxious of promoting language rights for fear of dividing its members.

<sup>104</sup> C. Kros, 'Economic, Political...', p. 390. The Report emphasized the important role that 'mother-tongue' languages could make 'for their own use and for other institutions of Bantu life, e.g. Bantu Courts and Councils.' Eiselen Report, p131. The advancement of 'mother-tongue' education was perhaps also encouraged to support fledgling Afrikaner publishing houses which would benefit greatly from the much needed publication of textbooks in the vernaculars.

<sup>105</sup> S. Sivonon, White-Collar or Hoe Handle? African Education Under British Colonial Policy 1920-1945, (Helsinki, 1995), p. 125.

<sup>106</sup> Kerr Report, p. 21.

the Binns Report declared that 'to preserve the vernacular languages of Africa is to preserve the tribes which speak them and to strengthen the moral sanctions that bind them.'<sup>107</sup>

The promotion of 'mother-tongue' education also meant the demotion of English as a medium of instruction and communication. We have seen how the Commissions argued that mission education offered Africans a false perspective on their future roles in society.<sup>108</sup> While this was not openly stated, the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools was seen as a contributory factor. Africans saw English as the language of opportunity, as it was the gateway to better employment (usually as teachers and nurses) and was the language of politics. There seems little doubt that Afrikaner nationalists feared the use of English as a medium of instruction for political reasons, as competency in English opened Africans up to a liberal literature which opposed the principles by which the National Party ruled South Africa. By denying Africans English they denied them the chance to be influenced and inspired by this literature. Nevertheless, the Commission stated that 'economic considerations make it absolutely necessary that the Bantu child should obtain a knowledge of one or both of the official languages while he is at school.'<sup>109</sup> It suggested that these should be taught in the Lower Primary school so that 'the Bantu child will be able to find his way in European communities; to follow oral or written instructions; and to carry on a simple conversation with Europeans about his work'.<sup>110</sup>

In sum, the Report suggested an entirely new basis for African education. Its aim was to encourage the further separation of the races, by attempting to demonstrate how Africans had an entirely different cultural heritage to whites which, it was argued, meant that they had a different destiny. The Report insisted that cultural and racial 'differences' between

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<sup>107</sup> Binns Report, p. 80.

<sup>108</sup> In 1952 Verwoerd argued that mission education was the 'wrong education' for it led to 'frustrated persons [with] expectations beyond what life in South Africa could offer them' Hansard, House of Assembly Debates, 1953, cols 3834-5.

<sup>109</sup> Eiselen Report, p146.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* p. 146. This quote suggests the degree to which the Commission attempted to create an education system geared to the needs of the economy. Whilst aware of the fallacy of seeing the Report in singularly economically reductionist terms, the skills suggested in the above quote would seem to have a direct relevance to the increased need for semi-skilled as opposed to unskilled African labour. The Report continued 'in the teaching of the languages their utility should be concentrated on throughout', p. 146.

Africans and whites were permanent and that integration would only lead to disaster for both communities. It therefore recommended a form of 'adapted education' ostensibly designed to celebrate the 'cultural heritage' of Africans. Thus, education had to be 'Bantuised' so that at every level of administration 'Bantu' life and culture would imbue the education process. At every possible opportunity the Commissioner's static notion of a 'Bantu Culture' was to be celebrated and promoted to enable the effective severance of 'dangerous' liberal ideas which Africans were open to within mission schools. Mission education had to be removed from the equation because it was incompatible with the Commission's desire to reinforce racial and cultural differences which it hoped would close off avenues of political, cultural and economic expression within South Africa generally.

However, the Commissioners argued that they were opening up more 'authentic' avenues for African political, cultural and economic expression along 'Bantu lines', in 'Bantu areas'. This was opposed to the spurious wisdom of the liberal notion of assimilation which, as we have seen, was anathema to Afrikaner nationalists who argued that it was against God's will. Thus, the Eiselen Report could be justified in that it reflected God's will when He created separate nations, as opposed to the 'false' assimilation of the missions. Despite this rhetoric, however, Bantu Education was designed to disadvantage Africans by offering them an education system designed to limit their horizons.<sup>111</sup>

The key to the success of 'Bantu Education,' as far as the Commission was concerned, were the Reserves, the only place where 'Bantu life' as they understood it could be fulfilled. Thus, development planning went hand-in-hand with educational planning, as Bantu Education could only serve its ultimate purpose through development.<sup>112</sup> This could only come to fruition with the wholesale renovation of the Reserves, and when the South African economy was able to end its reliance on cheap African labour.

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<sup>111</sup> The Black Consciousness view maintains that missionary education and liberal universalism was a false aspiration. It argues that it actually destroyed African culture and was a form of colonial indoctrination.

<sup>112</sup> The Commissioners commented 'before a satisfactory plan for Bantu Education can be formulated, there must be a plan for Bantu development'. Eiselen Report, p. 132.

Many of the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission were in accord with mainstream opinion outside of South Africa. Indeed, in 1957 Lord Hailey remarked 'the Eiselen Report was studiously moderate in its expression and reasonable in its proposals.'<sup>113</sup> Norman Goodall, the secretary of the International Missionary Council, who visited South Africa in 1954 on a fact-finding mission also believed that Bantu Education was an expression of the 'positive intentions of the Government':

The avowed aim of the measure ... is the constructive working-out of an educational policy which will take greater account of Bantu history, culture and aptitudes than has so far been characteristic of schools which mainly reflect the European tradition. In principle, at any rate, there is something here which corresponds with laudable concern for educational reformers elsewhere.<sup>114</sup>

However, a note of caution needs to be sounded. There were fundamental differences in the long term objectives of African education between Eiselen and the other reports. Whereas Eiselen denied Africans any role in a multi-racial democratic South Africa<sup>115</sup>, education policy in British Africa did have as its final objective (at least theoretically) the assimilation of all citizens including Africans into a multi-racial society.<sup>116</sup> In the colonial reports, education was concerned with developing the personality and character of individuals who could take their place as competent citizens in an inclusive society. Eiselen looked instead to promote group identities; Africans were to be educated to take their place within their racial groups. While he hoped to 'uplift' Africans through education, this was to be done in a narrow and prescribed fashion, and not to enable them to take their place in any equitable integrated society.

The use of the English language clearly illustrates this. All the colonial reports stressed the need to increase the use of English at all levels, excluding the lower primary, because it was only through English that Africans could be successfully integrated into a non-racial society

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<sup>113</sup> Hailey, *An African Survey*, p. 1149.

<sup>114</sup> Lambeth Palace Library (henceforth LPL), London. Correspondence of Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury 1945-61. Vol. 131, f. 255-362 N. Goodall, 'Some Reflections of the Racial Situation in South Africa', p. 4.

<sup>115</sup> Of course apartheid denied the very possibility of a multi-racial state.

<sup>116</sup> Kerr Report, p. 10.

and be 'prepared' for eventual independence.<sup>117</sup> The Eiselen Report on the contrary, hoped to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools.<sup>118</sup> By doing this it was hoped to reinforce the use of the vernacular to encourage group identities and cultural and social homogeneity. In addition English was seen by Afrikaner nationalists as a language that transmitted 'liberal' values which they considered corrosive and dangerous.

Nevertheless, despite these significant differences, the overall similarity in many of the immediate policy objectives remains. In the context of the early 1950s, whatever the rhetoric, equality remained a very distant objective in most of colonial Africa. The Eiselen Report looked to diffuse opposition to the Colour Bar, and racial segregation. The colonial regimes in British Africa were dealing with very similar issues. Whereas the Kerr Report condemned the Colour Bar as a 'political' rather than educational 'problem' it did not recommend any policy which threatened its operation. As white settlers in these colonies were not prepared to give up their economic, political and social hegemony, there were severe constraints on what could be recommended in Rhodesia and Kenya.<sup>119</sup> At no stage did any of the reports challenge the fundamentally subordinate position of Africans in colonial society.<sup>120</sup> On the contrary, the reports recommended education policies that accommodated the prevailing colonial structures and the existing inequality, and reflected the racist norms of the societies from which they originated.

The work of Kros and Fleisch, who argue that the Eiselen Report was in line with much general education thinking outside of South Africa, is thus supported by this brief comparison of policy in British settler Africa. Many prevalent ostensibly 'liberal' educational

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<sup>117</sup> It was no doubt hoped that future interactions, political and economic, between Britain and Africa would be assisted by this move as language could be used to maintain and enhance British influence in these areas.

<sup>118</sup> English would still be taught, but only to allow Africans to be able to communicate with whites, not with each other.

<sup>119</sup> Indeed, many of the social ills described in these reports were the product of the settler regimes' unwillingness to offer Africans full and free access to labour markets.

<sup>120</sup> D. Mungazi remarked that the Kerr Report 'did not address the critically important issue of equality in society', D. Mungazi, Colonial Education for Africans: George Stark's Policy in Zimbabwe, (New York, 1991), p. 81.



ideas were expressed within the Eiselen Report, even if they were manipulated to serve the designs of the apartheid ideologues. Denominational church and mission links throughout Africa<sup>121</sup> meant that ideas about education percolated into South Africa, thus, in the same way that they influenced the Eiselen Report, they also shaped mission understandings of appropriate African education and their reactions to Eiselen. Missionary reactions in South Africa to the Eiselen Report, how they evaluated it and how they proposed to counter it, are dealt with in the following chapter.

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<sup>121</sup> Kerr, for example, was Honorary Secretary of the Church of Scotland Mission Council in South Africa, and a previous headmaster of Lovedale.

'The Emphasis is Clearly on "Bantu" and Not on Education': Mission Church Reactions  
to the Eiselen Report

From the evidence submitted to the Commission and from their analysis of the Report itself, church and mission organisations clearly viewed it as an attempt by the state to further the aims of apartheid through extensive social engineering. Fearful of growing African political militancy they adopted a somewhat contradictory attitude towards the findings of the Commission. While they rejected the total separation of the races implicit in the document, they nevertheless championed a form of segregation. Infused with the duty of trusteeship, and informed, to a certain extent, by 'adaptionist' educational theory, they chose to adopt the 'middle road.' In fact, they were unable to offer an alternative vision of how society should be organised, and what role education should play in any new conception of society.

The Commissioners

The Commission's composition was accepted by the churches with a remarkable degree of uniformity, despite the absence of mission church representation. The appointment of Eiselen as chairman seems to have satisfied missionary opinion as he was highly regarded by the church community. Rev. Z. Mahabane<sup>1</sup> of the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) commented on the 'highly talented man in the person of Professor W. W. M. Eiselen,'<sup>2</sup> whilst Kerr, expressed his 'complete confidence in the honesty of Dr. Eiselen.'<sup>3</sup> In even more complimentary terms, Rev. Fraser of the Church of Scotland argued

it is not possible that educationalists such like [sic] Dr. Eiselen, brought up a missionary's son, and much loved by the African teachers, may, in close proximity to the people and their problems, have thought out some better presentation of

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<sup>1</sup> A Methodist Minister who was twice President-General of the ANC, Vice President of the AAC, and President of the Interdenominational African Ministers Federation. This Federation was founded in 1945 and was committed to unifying the churches to coordinate their opposition to racist legislation.

<sup>2</sup> WCL AC623 Christian Council of South Africa, Rev. Z. Mahabane, 'Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> NLS ACC7548 B359 Kerr to J. Watt, 26 March 1955. Eiselen was the son of a missionary as were two other members of the Commission.

education to them.<sup>4</sup>

The reaction of the South African Outlook to the appointments was noncommittal; but it also complimented Eiselen, as 'an able and experienced chairman' a man with 'a reasonable and liberal mind motivated by a genuine concern for the welfare of the Native.'<sup>5</sup>

The questionnaire<sup>6</sup> produced by the Commission, and distributed to all those interested in African education, was also welcomed; the South African Outlook observed that it was

a good one, skilfully drafted, comprehensive and penetrating. We hope that everybody in Native Education will study it very carefully. It constitutes a searching examination paper which will do them a great deal of good if they will set down their own answers - whether for the enlightenment of the Commissioners or merely for their own private benefit.<sup>7</sup>

However, there were some within the mission community who criticised both its questionnaire and its terms of reference. The Education League remarked that the latter meant that the Commission was 'prejudiced' from the start.<sup>8</sup> Quintin Whyte, chair of the SAIRR, feared that there was

a premise latent in the term(s) of reference which will be liable to obfuscate the clear analysis of the situation...the terms of reference should merely have asked for the formulation of the principles and aims of Native education without prediction of any kind.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> NLS ACC7548 Annual Report of Rev. Fraser, Gooldville, 8 March 1955.

<sup>5</sup> South African Outlook, Editorial, 1 Feb. 1949, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Reproduced in appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> South African Outlook, May 2 1949, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> WCL AF1216 Education League Minute Book 1948-60, May 27 1952. The Education League was a Christian organisation committed to the integration of all education in South Africa. Initially campaigning was limited to ending single-medium schooling, and the outright rejection of C.N.E. but expanded into African education in the 1950s. It was particularly committed to establishing an inclusive South African parent teacher federation. Its membership was mainly drawn from English-speaking parents, teachers and university lecturers. Bloomburg, noted that the Education Leagues opposition to Christian National Education 'became a rallying point for a rare upsurge of English-speaking nationalism.' Bloomburg, Christian Nationalism p. 211

<sup>9</sup> WCL AD1715 Education Material 1933-60. Whyte to van Zyl, May 11 1949.

The Inter-denominational African Ministers' Federation (IAMF) put it bluntly: 'the Commissioners have largely been guided by the spirit of the Terms of Reference which are based upon the Government's policy of apartheid.'<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire was also fiercely criticised by the Board of Education of the Anglican Diocese of St. John's who claimed it contained 'vague and cloudy expressions, which, in the present context, may well defy definition, and may even be considered misleading and thus frustrate the whole value of the Questionnaire.' They regarded it

with mixed feelings of disappointment, in that, by reasons of its limitations, it will prevent that help being given to the Commission which all who have the welfare of South Africa and its people at heart would wish to give.<sup>11</sup>

The St. John's Education Board was in fact so angered by the questionnaire that it refused to answer it directly and instead submitted a memorandum which, it contended, 'may be a greater help to those whose responsibility it is to furnish a Report on Education, than *ad seriatim* answers to the questionnaire.'<sup>12</sup> The Education League was equally disappointed with the questionnaire and was 'surprised that these questions should be considered material for serious discussion.'<sup>13</sup>

These isolated criticisms, and a general silence in their archives concerning 'Native education' during 1949-51, suggest that mission and church bodies adopted a 'wait and see' approach to the Commission. They appeared satisfied with the appointment of the Commissioners and awaited the publication of the Report before entering into any critical dialogue.

The reaction to the Report itself was rather more mixed. As the previous chapter showed

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<sup>10</sup>WCL AC623 IAMF, 'Report of the Committee', p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> WCL AB1886 Diocese of St. John 1858-1982. B1 Bantu Education, 'Memorandum to be Placed Before the Commission set up to Take Evidence and Report on Native Education. Embodying the Views of the Sub-Committee Appointed by the Board of Education of the Diocese of St. John's (Transkei)', p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> WCL AD843 Education League, 'Evidence to be Submitted to the Commission on Native Education', p. 2.

the Eiselen Commission proposed an elaborate and detailed plan for the wholesale development of 'the Bantu' that went far beyond the recommendations expected from an education commission. This feature of the report was acknowledged by members of the mission church community. Pitts argued that 'some may feel that the Commission has gone beyond its terms of reference, at least it cannot be said to have considered education in a vacuum.'<sup>14</sup> Similarly a South African Outlook editorial noted

...the Commission has gone far beyond its mandate and worked out in some detail a separate system of administrative departments for Africans, thus duplicating existing ministries, creating numbers of new consultative bodies or administrative departments, with their officials and secretaries, not only for education, but also for what is pretentiously but cryptically called 'development', a term which seems to include the administration of justice, of lands, of agriculture, of local government, of health and of labour...it involves in fact a dual system of governments in the country.<sup>15</sup>

The Education League remarked that the Report's 'emphasis is clearly on "Bantu" and not on education.'<sup>16</sup> The developmental stress within the Report, according to the South African Outlook, 'smacks of *apartheid*, of the Nationalist brand, from beginning to end.'<sup>17</sup> The IAMF claimed that the Report was 'based upon the Government's policy of apartheid [and] marked another instalment in the Government's Master Plan to implement the policy of Apartheid.'<sup>18</sup>

However, such bold expressions from mission and church bodies categorising the Report as a statement on apartheid are not representative of the majority of responses which complimented it a valuable and much needed piece of research. A Committee established

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<sup>14</sup> South African Outlook 'Conference on the Eiselen Report', Aug. 1 1952, p. 116. Pitts was the Governor of Healdtown, the leading Methodist institution.

<sup>15</sup> South African Outlook, May 1 1952, pp. 72-75.

<sup>16</sup> WCL AD1158 SAIRR 1929-79 'The Background to the Bantu Education Bill and the Future of Bantu Education', paper published by the Education League, 18 Sept. 1953, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> South African Outlook, 'The Native Education Commission Report: Some Features' March 1 1952, pp. 36-39.

<sup>18</sup> WCL AC623 Inter Denominational African Ministers' Federation of South Africa, 'Report of Committee', pp. 1-4.

by the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, Bishop Reeves, thought it 'worthy of careful consideration.' It was 'grateful for the painstaking care that has gone into the collection of data' as was the Rev. S. Pitts, writing in the South African Outlook, who enthused 'no one engaged in Native Education can afford to neglect a Report of this nature...[T]his present Report is a thorough painstaking piece of work.'<sup>19</sup> The Transvaal Missionary Society was equally impressed with its 'sincere and painstaking attempt to reform the present conditions of the School Education of Native children.'<sup>20</sup> In similar fashion a South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR.) Conference wished

at the outset, to pay tribute to the most thorough and painstaking Report, and the welcome and careful analysis of facts which form a preamble to the Report, and the timely criticism of much of the present system which needs review and alteration.<sup>21</sup>

While the IAMF recognised the 'scholarly Report submitted by Professor Werner W. M. Eiselen and his highly talented [sic] colleagues.'<sup>22</sup> The Bantu World remarked that it was 'conceived in a spirit of benevolent responsibility.'<sup>23</sup> The terminology used in the praise of the Report is striking in its consistency: 'painstaking', 'thorough', 'sincere', 'timely' and 'careful'. The apparently scholarly and exhaustive nature of the Eiselen Commission clearly impressed a broad spectrum of missionary opinion. In general, the great majority of mission churches failed to evaluate or acknowledge the Report's overall plan, preferring instead to highlight and condemn only certain recommendations.

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<sup>19</sup> WCL AC623 Diocese of Johannesburg, 'Memorandum on the Report of the Commission on Native Education 1949-51', p. 1 and 'Conference on the Eiselen Report' South African Outlook, Aug. 1 1952, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup> WCL, AD843 South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) 'Memorandum of the Transvaal Missionary Society Concerning the Report of the Commission on Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> WCL AB191 Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) G. Clayton, correspondence with the SAIRR, 1951-55, 'Record of the Proceedings of the National Conference Convened by the Institute in July 1952, to Study the Report of the Native Education Commission', p. 2. Pitts was the Governor of Healdtown, the premier Methodist institution.

<sup>22</sup> WCL AC623 Inter Denominational African Ministers' Federation of South Africa. 'Report of Committee on Native Education', p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> 'Mr. Lekhela Analyses Education Report', Bantu World, July 12, 1952, p. 7.

## Culture and the Meaning of 'Interdependence'

If relatively few missionaries and churches criticised the overall plan of the Report, their response nevertheless rested upon a wholly different interpretation of the aims of education, an alternative conceptualisation of culture, and an insistence on the interdependence of all South African citizens. Their analysis was informed by a commitment to the liberal tenets of universalism and individual freedom.

Of course, the concept of universalism was, and is, problematic due to the contradiction inherent in the Enlightenment ideology of equality and the persistence of inequality in society, and between its ideals and its practice. While the Enlightenment did 'establish for the first time, in theory at least, the possibility of human emancipation' it did so 'in social circumstances that limited the expression of its emancipatory potential.'<sup>24</sup> Kenan Malik for example, argues that the persistence of social divisions (necessary for the success of capitalism) in a society which proclaimed its belief in equality, led to the development of the concept of 'race' which was used to account for social inequality in terms of the natural order of things. Thus, Post-Enlightenment thinkers argued that social divisions (inequality) was natural, and was the product of 'race'. Malik contends that this belief degraded the concept of universalism and led to a position where liberals could accept social inequality by arguing that it was due to 'natural' differences between races. In this understanding race became hierarchal, with the 'European race' placed at the pinnacle.<sup>25</sup>

Universalism thus became a philosophy based upon European concepts of what constituted 'civilization' and what any 'civilized universal' society should be like. From the perspective African societies were considered 'primitive' and thus relatively worthless. This in turn helped to explain the existence of inequality between Europeans and Africans and allowed Europeans to justify the destruction of African culture, in

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<sup>24</sup> K. Malik, The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society (McMillan, 1996), p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> Initially post-Enlightenment theorists argued that Europe was made up of different 'white races' which accounted for social inequality in Europe. However, over time such distinctions faded (due to imperial expansion and social stability in European states) and race became determined solely by skin colour.

favour of 'superior' European culture. This could only be achieved, however, if Africans accepted European 'civilisation.'<sup>26</sup>

These attitudes pervaded much of the missionary evidence to the Eiselen Commission as mission bodies concluded that Africans were 'primitive' compared to the 'advanced culture' of western nations, but could be 'improved' and become part of a wider universal society under God. This belief that Africans could be 'improved' was, however, very significant for whatever its limitations, universalism did hold out the possibility of advance, and offered Africans at least some wider opportunities which were completely denied to them under apartheid.

This meant that the Report's interpretation of culture was rejected by mission and church groups who argued that there was only one cultural heritage, that of 'humankind', although some cultures were more 'advanced' than others.<sup>27</sup> There was general consensus amongst respondents that 'Native' culture was 'backward', compared to the 'advanced' culture of western nations. For example, the memorandum submitted by the Diocese of Johannesburg suggested that 'native' culture was 'of a primitive type'<sup>28</sup>, whilst the Transvaal Missionary Association noted that 'Bantu culture is primitive.'<sup>29</sup> This 'backwardness' was, however, explained in terms of the differing environmental conditions that prevailed in Africa. As Brother True, a representative of the Anglican Society of the Sacred Mission made clear, 'Every race has perhaps special characteristics dependent on climate, environment... The characteristics he has are the result of his environment and fight for preservation.'<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> One of the main ways to achieve this was via education. The terms 'race' and 'culture' are contentious. In contemporary debates race is seen as a subjective socially defined categorisation and not an objective 'fact'. Most missionaries used 'race' as a legitimate tool of categorisation, highlighting 'unique' African racial characteristics. Most modern interpretations of 'culture' mirror the missionaries' interpretation of it as a common collection of social, psychological and historical behaviours. Some missionaries, however, used both terms interchangeably, demonstrating a blurring of the concepts and their definitions. What they all agreed however, was that as a 'race' or 'culture' Africans were inferior to whites.

<sup>27</sup> With differing degrees of complexity this notion of culture was adopted by the mission church community in its depositions to the Commission. It reflected the central Christian belief that all were created equal in the image of God.

<sup>28</sup> WCL AC623 Diocese of Johannesburg, 'Memorandum on the Report', p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> WCL AD843 'Memorandum from the Transvaal Missionary Association...', p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> WCL AB2049 Society of the Sacred Mission. M3 Native Education, 'Memorandum to the Commission on Native Education.' Brother Patrick True, Principal Modderpoort Schools, pp. 1-2. Through their insistence that environment and not innate differences caused cultural variety, missionaries were able



Similarly the CCSA argued that differential patterns of 'cultural behaviour' between 'natives' and 'Europeans', including those relating to landownership, familial organisation and divisions of labour, were solely due to environment and 'were not innate'.<sup>31</sup> As previously indicated, Kros suggests that the idea of culture proved to be an effective instrument for the Commission since all those questioned about it subscribed to the basic concept of cultural difference. While the missionaries acknowledged cultural difference, however, this did not imply their approval for the type of differentiated education that was proposed by the Commission. The evidence presented to the Commission by mission church groups shows that they did support a differentiated education policy, but it was one that ultimately had the same *aim* as that given to white students. As Rev. W.H. Kinsey of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa asserted:

The ultimate aim of Native Education, as of all education, should be to fit the coming generation for life, and for the attainment of full citizenship in the best and fullest sense. In the case of the Native this must be, in view of their background and slower adaptability, a gradual process and must be based on a system which will recognise that they are entitled to every opportunity which European civilization has to offer.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly the CCSA argued that the principles and aims of education were the same for all races, but argued that 'Native education' should concentrate fully on the need to improve 'native' literacy and technical skills.<sup>33</sup> The American Board Mission noted, for its part,

that the principles and aims of Native education should be the same as for European education. This does not, of course, rule out the teaching of Bantu

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to defend the educatability of the 'native.'

<sup>31</sup> WCL AC623 CCSA 'Answers of the Education Section to Questionnaire of Commission on Native Education', p. 1. The Potchefstroom Joint Council argued 'Characteristics, qualities, aptitudes are modified and develop by changes in the environment and are not in born and immutable,' AD1715 SAIRR Potchefstroom Joint Council, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> University of Cape Town - Manuscripts and Archives (henceforth UCTL), BC282 Native Education Commission (Eiselen Commission) A.18 Presbyterian Church of South Africa, Rev. W.H. Kinsey, 'Questionnaire on Native Education', p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> WCL AC623 CCSA, 'Answers of the Education...', pp. 1-2.

languages or other specific subjects in Native schools.<sup>34</sup>

The above quotations are a fraction of the material presented by church bodies which argued that the aim of education was the same for all children, but that cultural differences, in terms of the relative 'development' of African society, meant that education policy had to be appropriate to the specific needs of Africans. While this may appear in accord with the designs of the Eiselen Commission, ultimately it was not, because, critically, the mission church community at a certain level believed in the incorporation of all human beings into a single inclusive society under God. As a representative of the Church of Scotland observed:

it is for a mixed and comingled social environment that the education of the Native must be directed, and its guiding principle must surely be to fit him for competent, effective and rewarding membership of the community thus regarded.<sup>35</sup>

This belief led the church and mission groups to reject the Report's emphasis on 'the Bantu' as an 'independent race' vehemently. The report of the 1952 SAIRR conference which examined the Eiselen Report remarked, 'Africans are not culturally, economically or politically 'independent', they are an integral part of South African society.'<sup>36</sup> Missionaries regarded the universalism of humanity as the premise upon which their whole work rested. In regard to education this meant that its ultimate aim and purpose was the same for all, but variations in cultural 'development' could be taken into consideration when formulating policy. While Africans had the fundamental right to share in and benefit from a world culture, they would do so under the trusteeship of whites, who were the guardians of a 'superior' culture that would be slowly and gradually revealed to Africans. This was certainly not non-racial, as it took as given the superiority of white culture, but it differed drastically from the aims and principles of the Eiselen Report which looked to ensure the permanent separation of people and their cultures.

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<sup>34</sup> UCTL BC282 Native Education Commission, A1.11 'Government Commission on Native Education - Questionnaire: Reply by the American Board Mission', p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> WCL AB938 Rev. Arnott, 'Commission on Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> WCL AB191 'Record of Proceedings', p. 2.

## The Mission Alternative

The Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Africans saw the contradictions clearly<sup>37</sup>. It pointed out that mission education was 'imprisoned in a vicious circle,' for if it championed equality in education it was 'imprisoned' by the Colour Bar, yet if it advocated differentiated education to accommodate the Colour Bar, it was 'imprisoned' by being associated with segregation and apartheid.<sup>38</sup> The most obvious way for the churches to try and break this cycle was to preach and practice unlimited racial integration in all walks of life. However, as they were unwilling and incapable of championing such a democratic and non-racist society<sup>39</sup> they did little more than reaffirm their belief in trusteeship, wherein mission education would play a key socialising role. As Sue Krige has argued in relation to the 1935-6 Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education (Welsh Report) which was 'in direct opposition to segregationist thinking' and yet demonstrated 'the inability of the liberal-mission network to develop much of an alternative to the status-quo, and to challenge the ideology of segregation through the platform of African education.'<sup>40</sup>

The 'imprisoning' effect that segregationist and apartheid discourse had on mission educators is evident in their attempts to define the objectives of mission education. In the long term they sought the incorporation of all people into God's kingdom on earth; in the shorter term, however, their objectives appeared uncertain. This uncertainty was caused in part by the restrictions the pupils faced when they left mission schools. As the Transvaal Advisory Board on Native Education<sup>41</sup> remarked in terms similar to those used

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<sup>37</sup> The Joint Councils spread throughout South Africa from 1921 and were intended to improve dialogue between all races in South Africa on issues that affected them.

<sup>38</sup> WCL AD1433 Joint Council of Europeans and Africans, 1924-54 CJ2.1.1 Johannesburg Joint Council 'Evidence to be Submitted to the Commission on Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> The reasons for this will become apparent when individual church responses are examined.

<sup>40</sup> Krige, 'Should Education Lead...', pp. 151-176.

<sup>41</sup> The Transvaal Native Education Advisory Board was established as a forum where provincial policy-makers and mission educationalists could discuss the future direction of policy and any problems that were being encountered. Such Advisory Boards were scrapped after the introduction of Bantu

in the Eiselen Report itself:

The education of the African people suffers from uncertainty of aim...[T]his uncertainty is due to uncertain Native policy - political, economic and social, uncertainty as to the environment for which the Natives are to be educated.<sup>42</sup>

Missionaries knew what society they wanted their pupils educated for, but given the constraints of apartheid they acknowledged that mission education did not function effectively for the majority. For example, the Education Board of the Diocese of St. John's saw as an 'undoubted failure' of mission education the fact that a

minute minority have used it as a stepping stone to earning a livelihood in a pathetically small and inflexibly controlled employment market...it is something exotic to the essential life of the community.<sup>43</sup>

The Society of the Sacred Mission also realised that there was 'little or no correlation between courses and work available after students have left the schools.'<sup>44</sup> Other mission churches recognised equally well that existing mission education was not serving the best interests of the African community, because it was based on what was taught to 'European' children who had full access to political, social and economic opportunities in South Africa.<sup>45</sup> As the IAMF pointed out

while it has produced thousands of educated Africans ... it has failed to produce a class of people who find no difficulty in taking up their rightful place in [the] socio-economic or political-industrial set up of the country.<sup>46</sup>

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Education.

<sup>42</sup> WCL A394 Rheinallt Jones C44 (f) Transvaal Advisory Board on Native Education 1949. 'Replies to Questionnaire', p4. This statement is somewhat ironic given the very certain directive given to 'native policy' by the Eiselen Commission.

<sup>43</sup> WCL AD1886 Diocese of St. John's, 'Memorandum to be Placed...', p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> WCL AB2049 Society of the Sacred Mission, 'Memorandum to the...', p' 2.

<sup>45</sup> The Hermannsburg Mission noted the 'grave failure to relate education to reality.' UCTL BC282 A.17 Hermannsburg Mission 'Memorandum on Questions of Native Education Commission', p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> WCL AC623 IAMF, 'Report of Committee...', p. 4.

These concerns led missionaries to highlight, as did the Eiselen Commission, the frustration that Africans felt upon leaving mission schools and finding inadequate employment opportunities. The Transvaal Missionary Board, for example, argued that a combination of mission education and the Colour Bar led to 'the creation of resentment in the minds of those trained.'<sup>47</sup> What heightened these concerns further for the missionaries was their fear that this 'resentment' was no longer controlled and suppressed by 'traditional tribal sanctions'.

All mission church bodies pointed to the accelerated erosion of these 'tribal' constraints and their memoranda are littered with expressions of anxiety lamenting the destruction of customary controls over behaviour, because of the 'revolutionary effect' of 'western culture'<sup>48</sup> on the 'primitive' nature of indigenous culture. Moreover, rapid adoption of 'western culture' was not only leading to the destruction of traditional patterns of social discipline; it also led to the adoption of 'European' vices such as alcoholism, prostitution and gambling.

Thus, the Swiss Mission alluded to the 'breaking up of the tribal system without an adequate social order to replace it,'<sup>49</sup> while the Society of the Sacred Mission argued that 'detrribalisation has led to the breakdown in loyalty and obedience'<sup>50</sup>, and a St. Matthew's school memorandum referred to 'the break up of tribal authority and the emergence of the irresponsible individual freed from tribal sanctions.'<sup>51</sup> All agreed that the net result was an increase in criminal activity and a general breakdown in social stability.

The missions' own role in this was also considered. According to the Transvaal Missionary Society Christianity was 'one of the foremost agents in upsetting the original

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<sup>47</sup> WCL A394 Rheinallt Jones, 'Replies to Questionnaire...', p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> WCL AD843 'Memorandum From the Transvaal Missionary Association...', p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> WCL AC1084 Swiss Mission 'Questionnaire on Native Education...', p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> WCL AB2049 'Memorandum Submitted...', p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> WCL AB398 St. Matthew's 'Questionnaire...', p. 1.

culture.<sup>52</sup> What concerned the mission community was not simply that 'tribal sanctions' were being undermined, but that they were not being replaced by Christian morality. As the Church of Sweden noted

The breaking up of the old Native Society, individualism replacing collectivism, old Native laws losing [sic] their significance, the Christian principles having not yet become part and parcel of the Native society. A general confusion ensues. Christian Education needed.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly Rev. Kinsey of the Presbyterian Church commented on the 'decay of old tribal sanctions and the lack of any moral or disciplinary code to replace them.'<sup>54</sup> Nor were these concerns limited to white missionaries, they were even echoed by the African Natal Teachers' Society which pointed to

the rapid disintegration of tribal life and the consequent rapid deterioration in the power of tribal social sanctions. It was probably inevitable that this disintegration would occur; but the danger lies in the rapidity with which it is taking place in contrast with the much slower development of missionary and educational endeavours to substitute something better than tribal social sanctions.<sup>55</sup>

The mission churches recognised two dangers, the 'frustrated' educated 'native' and the 'detrilledised native' bereft of any social responsibility. Both of these 'dangers', they argued, were being created by the incompatibility of current education policy with apartheid. Thus, in effect, the churches admitted to the Commission that the situation as it stood was unsustainable, and did indeed threaten the continuation of white rule in South Africa.

Mission educators realised that African education failed to reflect the realities of the Colour Bar and other repressive legislation, but rather than challenge the structures that

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<sup>52</sup> WCL AD843 'Memorandum From the Transvaal Missionary Association...', p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> UCTL BC282 Native Education Commission A1.3.1 Church of Sweden, 'Reply to the Questionnaire Sent Out by the Government Commission on Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> UCTL BC282 A.18 Rev. W.H. Kinsey, 'Questionnaire on Native Education', p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> UCTL BC282 A1.4 'Opinion of the Natal Teachers' Association', p. 2.

thwarted the integration of Africans they opted to work within the stifling confines of segregation. This is illustrated by the Transvaal Advisory Board on Native Education which contended:

There are possibilities of 'careers' for Africans which will permit of their contributing to the national well-being without creatinf [sic] racial tension. These are in occupations dealing with the social life of their people, such as mental, nursing and teaching professions, trading etc. And as their people's needs expand the other opportunities for serving their own people will develop.<sup>56</sup>

The SAIRR Conference noted that 'there is a wide field of opportunity for Africans in commerce, especially in African townships and reserves' emphasising the role that Africans were to play within 'their own communities.'<sup>57</sup> The submission to the Commission from the Methodist St. Matthew's College, remarked 'They [the Africans] must be equipped to take their full share in the control and administration of their own affairs'<sup>58</sup> while the Bloemfontein Joint Council suggested that 'training should fit them for work at their trades in their own community.'<sup>59</sup> The CCSA remarked 'since Africans, whether in the Reserves or in the towns naturally tend to associate with their own people, they are in need of all the services which a society normally requires.'<sup>60</sup> All these statements assume the existence and continuation of racial segregation, indicating that mission educators struggled to find a position outside of the dominant segregationist discourse.

The paradoxical nature of the missions' position was well illustrated by Rev. Arnott of the Church of Scotland who remarked:

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<sup>56</sup> WCL A394 Rheinallt Jones, Transvaal Advisory Board on Native Education, 'Replies to Questionnaire', p10. Presumably the 'racial tensions' referred to were those created by the Colour Bar.

<sup>57</sup> AB191 'Record of the Proceedings..', p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> WCL AB938 St. Matthew's College, 'Questionnaire on Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> WCL AD1433 Bloemfontein Joint Council, 'Reply to Questionnaire...', p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> WCL AC623 CCSA, 'Answers to Education Section...', p. 2. The Council seems oblivious to the fact that the 'Africans' tendency to associate together would have been enforced legally in most cases.

Native education should have a double objective: (a) correction - to reduce, and so far as possible to remove, the incidence of damage to the structure of Native life: and (b) planned provision, in intimate balance and inter-relation of all aspects and grades, of training designed to render satisfying and effective the Native's membership of the South African community.<sup>61</sup>

Clearly, these objectives were incompatible and reflected the confusions in a mission education which produced students 'fit' for a society that did not exist. The CCSA argued, for example, that education as it stood 'neglect[ed] the pupils' life needs'<sup>62</sup> whilst the Education League lamented the 'dissociation of the work of the class-room from the life of the community.'<sup>63</sup> This contradiction was exactly what the Eiselen Report set out to address.

There were also numerous memoranda from the missions condemning the 'bookishness' and 'unreality' of mission education.<sup>64</sup> The solution for this was sought in a form of 'adapted' education. The Swiss Mission noted that education policy 'should bear in mind the background of the Native child is very different to that of the European'<sup>65</sup> while a CPSA committee remarked that

syllabuses should be adapted to different conditions...[and] be more practical in their content and less theoretical. Syllabuses should not be designed for the privileged few who go beyond the Primary or Secondary stage, but for the pupils who can spend at most five years at school.<sup>66</sup>

'Adapted' education provided the missions with a means by which they could remove, or at least alleviate, the 'frustration' resulting from an education that was incompatible

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<sup>61</sup> WCL AD968 Rev. Arnott, 'Commission on Native Education', p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> WCL AC623 Christian Council of South Africa, 'Report of Education Section', p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> WCL AD843 Education League 'Evidence to be Submitted', p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> See for example, WCL AB2049 Society of the Sacred Mission CCSA 'Answers of Education Section', p. 2. WCL AB938 Rev. Arnott 'Commission on Native Education', p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> WCL AC1084 Swiss Mission 'Questionnaire on Native Education', p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> UCTL BC282 A1.7 The Bishop of St. John's Committee, 'Answer to Questionnaire on Native Education', p. 3.



with segregation and apartheid. It promised, to a certain degree, to reestablish 'tribal sanctions' by focussing life on the more immediate community and its concerns. Missionaries did not, however, see in this policy any diminution of their influence, which was needed more than ever to instil Africans with Christian morality.

While the mission churches in South Africa categorically rejected the Eiselen Report's call for the permanent separation of the races, there was much in the Report which they agreed with. Unable to offer an alternative vision of society they conceded the continued existence of segregation, recognised the incompatibility of mission education with this, and sought a policy that would ameliorate the threat to white society that existing practice seemed to represent. This meant that most missionaries found themselves advocating changes which harmonised educational endeavour with segregation.

This position contrasted dramatically with the attitude adopted by African associations<sup>67</sup> before the Commission. In general, they repeated the concerns of missionary and church groups but did not appeal for further missionary trusteeship. The Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA)<sup>68</sup> rejected the 'pious hypocrisy of trusteeship'<sup>69</sup> while even the IAMF remarked that mission education had

produced thousands of educated Africans yet it has failed to produce a class of people who find no difficulty in taking up their rightful place in the socio-economic or political-industrial set up of the country.<sup>70</sup>

In general, the associations linked the plight of African education to apartheid which they saw as 'closely related and inter-linked'. As CATA remarked:

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<sup>67</sup> See UCTL BC282 A.17, A1.21, A1.3.1, A.18, A1.30.

<sup>68</sup> The TLSA was a militant 'coloured' teachers association which was affiliated to the NEUM. It encouraged all 'Non-Europeans' to resist apartheid by refusing to collaborate with it at any level.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.* p. 2. The TLSA stated that 'The Church cannot and should not be responsible for education. It is one of the functions of the state to educate its citizens', p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> WCL AC623 IAMF 'Report of Committee on Report of Commission on Native Education', p. 4.

segregation in education must be seen as an integral part of a whole political and social system designed to perpetuate the dominance of the European section on the one hand and economic enslavement of the Non-Europeans on the other.<sup>71</sup>

Africans thus condemned Bantu Education outright as an important part of apartheid. The TLSA observed, 'the system of "Native Education" and the lack of opportunity correlate with the denial of political rights and economic slavery into which the African has been forced.'<sup>72</sup>

The only solution was the state assumption of all education under one non-racial department, as TATA demanded: 'One nation, one education.'<sup>73</sup> Thus, many Africans did not simply reject Bantu Education, but mission education with it.

### Specific Recommendations

It is logical to assume that the most obvious point of contention between the mission and the Commission would be its recommendation that missionaries should be removed from the field of education. Yet their general response to this was surprisingly muted, perhaps because of their growing realisation that state control of education was much needed and somewhat inevitable. The Diocese of Johannesburg 'deplor[ed] the passing of control from the missions.'<sup>74</sup> The conference organised by the SAIRR argued that as some two-thirds of 'natives' of school-going age were not in school the government clearly still needed the missions.<sup>75</sup> Most mission opinion supported the view that they should work

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<sup>71</sup> UCTL BC282 A1.8 CATA 'Memorandum on "Native Education"', p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> UCTL BC282 A.17 'Memorandum on the Education of Africans Submitted by the Teachers' League of South Africa to the Commission on "Native Education"', p. 5. The TLSA claimed that Bantu Education was 'a calculated system of indoctrination whereby the African people may be kept in a state of subservience and docility.' p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> UCTL BC282 A1.21 TATA 'Memorandum on African Education Submitted to the Government Commission on Native Education.', p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> WCL AC623 Diocese of Johannesburg, 'Report of the Commission', p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> WCL AB191 'Record of Proceedings', p. 4.

in partnership with the state to help provide as much education as possible for Africans.

What concerned the mission church community far more than the actual call for the transfer of African education was the nature of the transfer itself, which, as we have seen, was left vague and uncertain. The Transvaal Missionary Association lamented

We may well ask what the mission are expected to do? Are they to continue to pioneer more schools in order to meet the needs of the school-less children, knowing that when they have done so, they will be asked to give up control<sup>76</sup>

Similarly the representatives of the Diocese of Johannesburg wrote:

We would submit it is unfair to ask religious bodies to maintain their keen interest in schools if they are to do so for an indefinite interim period...we are convinced that if the state is to take over the schools it must do so immediately and then plan the future policy<sup>77</sup>

For those running schools uncertainty presented numerous problems in terms of the appointment of staff, the construction of new schools and buildings, the collection of fees and the teaching of complete courses to pupils.

The issue of who should control Africa education, provincial or central government, occupied much of the Report and the responses to it. The reaction to the proposed transfer from the provinces to the NAD is best summed up by the Transvaal Missionary Society:

On the whole we agree with the criticism of the present system...knowing that there is much need for improvement. We would welcome a Union system of Education, but not under the Native Affairs Department<sup>78</sup>

Thus, the mission churches were generally reconciled to the idea of state control, and

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<sup>76</sup> WCL AD843 'Memorandum from the Transvaal Missionary Association', p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> WCL AC623 Diocese of Johannesburg, 'Report of the Commission', p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> WCL AD843 'Memorandum from', p. 1.

welcomed the acknowledgment of this in the Report.<sup>79</sup> However, they were, without exception, opposed to 'native' education becoming the sole responsibility of the NAD. The Diocese of Johannesburg warned that NAD control

would not be so constituted to ensure that education would be in the hands of those who had the interests of education most at heart, nor would this authority be acquainted with the problems of education<sup>80</sup>

Missions feared that under the NAD education policy would be directed by political concerns. Like most Africans, they rejected the differentiation implicit in having a separate department of education for Africans, and argued for the Union Department of Education to take control of African education in tandem with white education.

The recommendations by the Commission for the increased 'use' of 'the Bantu' in local administration were cautiously welcomed: given their rhetoric concerning the need for greater racial integration the missions could hardly be seen to oppose African involvement. The SAIRR endorsed 'the view of the Report that it is desirable that the African people should be accorded greater participation in directing the education of Africans,'<sup>81</sup> while the Johannesburg Joint Council commented 'there is much to be said for an effective committee working in harmony with the School Manager or School Board'<sup>82</sup> while a Church of Scotland representative indicated, 'there is every reason for persisting with their formation', although he added that they 'have not yet often proved successful.'<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> The CCSA remarked that 'it has become apparent that the task of educating the African so as to make him a more serviceable citizen within a reasonable time is beyond private enterprise and thus duty should be assumed by the state.' WCL AC623 CCSA 'Answers of the Education Section...' p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> WCL AC923 Diocese of Johannesburg, 'Memorandum on the Report', p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> WCL AB191 'Record of the Proceedings', p. 5. In this quote one can see the segregationist discourse informing the Conferences resolutions. They welcomed the involvement of 'Africans' in shaping the education policy of 'Africans.'

<sup>82</sup> WCL AD1433 Johannesburg Joint Council, 'Evidence to be Submitted', p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> WCL AB398 Rev. Arnott 'Commission on Native Education', p. 12.

However, the role that Africans were actually to play in the control of schools via their involvement in the Local and Regional Bantu Authorities was condemned. The Education League called the system 'very involved'<sup>84</sup>, while representatives of the Diocese of Johannesburg argued that 'the proposed elaborate structure...will offer less scope and less incentive for hitherto active participation.'<sup>85</sup>

The position of religion in the new structures was obviously of vital importance to the churches. As we have seen, Krige argues that during the interwar period mission educators fought against the encroachment of secular forces into the educational sphere.<sup>86</sup> While these concerns continued into the postwar period, it appears that the Eiselen Report's insistence on the central role that religious education should take under 'Bantu Education' mollified many missionaries. The SAIRR welcomed the emphasis in the Report on a Christian basis for education but warned that 'Christian education with the inspiration of a vital faith' was unlikely to be adequate 'under a system of education organised and controlled solely by government agencies'<sup>87</sup>, and the South African Outlook condemned the 'purely secular agency of the state'<sup>88</sup>

Missionaries reacted to the financial implications of the Report by indicating its failure to recommend any significant increase in the funding of African education. Despite the reforms suggested, the Education League asserted that 'the state has hardly begun to shoulder its responsibilities in regard to Native Education.'<sup>89</sup> Such comments prefaced the majority of missionary evaluations of its financial implications, with unanimous agreement that the state had a pressing responsibility to increase its budget for African education. The missions pointed to the dangers inherent in an inadequate education

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<sup>84</sup> WCL AF1216 Education League Minute Book, 1948-60. Minutes 19 June 1952.

<sup>85</sup> WCL AC623 Diocese of Johannesburg, 'Memorandum on the Report', p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>87</sup> WCL AB191 'Records of Proceedings', p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> South African Outlook, 1 May 1952, p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> WCL AD843 Education League, 'Evidence to be Submitted', p. 10.

system. The Education League's demand for increased spending was accompanied by concerns over the 'recent increase in juvenile delinquency and crime'; moreover a 'growing political awareness' was creating an 'explosive temper' amongst Africans.<sup>90</sup> Rev. Arnott of the Church of Scotland warned:

the existence of an illiterate and impressionable mass within the community...constitutes a potential danger both in itself and to the extent that it affords opportunity for unfriendly propaganda<sup>91</sup>

The political and social context of the Report once again shaped the missionary responses. By accentuating fears over social unrest, the missionaries not only demonstrated their own concerns but also suggests that they were attempting to manipulate the Commissioners themselves into paying attention to what they were saying. For the missionaries, education clearly had a role to play as an agent for social control, and they saw this as part of the value of education in a more general sense.

The emphasis on the use of the vernacular proposed by Eiselen caused great consternation amongst mission church bodies. Almost all were in agreement that the vernacular was only of use in the lower standards, and should then be gradually replaced by the official languages.<sup>92</sup> They were adamant that the use of the vernacular should not be extended further in the education system. The North Western Province Teachers' Union made its opposition to this clear, 'one can conceive of no method more effective for making African education sterile and narrow than the use of the Bantu languages.'<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> WCL AD843 Education League, 'Evidence to be Submitted', p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> WCL AB398 Rev. Arnott, 'Commission on Native Education', p. 14. One would assume that by 'unfriendly propaganda' Arnott meant communism. The argument advanced by Arnott is reminiscent of the opinions expressed calling for the introduction of mass education in nineteenth century industrial England.

<sup>92</sup> For example, the Cape Advisory Board for Native Education remarked 'the mother-tongue should be used in the lower standards, but as soon as possible an official language should be used to fit the student of modern conditions of life.' UCTL BC282 A1.15 Cape Advisory Board for Native Education, 'Government Commission on Native Education', p. 8.

<sup>93</sup> WCL. AD843 'Views of the North-Western Districts Teachers' Union: Report of the Commission on Native Education 1949-51', p. 4.

Opponents of the vernacular believed that proficiency in at least one of the official 'European' languages was essential to the progress of Africans within society. The SAIRR conference argued that 'they are regarded by the Africans as the "second mother tongues"<sup>94</sup>, while, in the words of the CCSA, the official languages were 'the gateway to the modern world of which the African is an integral part.'<sup>95</sup> The missionaries feared that the vernacular would be used to isolate Africans permanently from 'European culture and civilization'. By extending the vernacular into the higher reaches of education, the mission church community feared the Report would in effect condemn Africans to an immutable future as a 'separate and independent race.'

As opposed to the group identity and nationalism of the Eiselen Commission the mission churches stressed an education policy that was based upon universalism and the individual. They rejected the overall aim and intention of the Commission which they saw as a means to perpetuate racial divisions in South Africa. They realised, however, that the current education system could not be maintained, because they were aware that it exacerbated the frustrations that Africans felt about their political, economic and social position in society. Unable and unwilling to confront the wider issue of race relations in South Africa, the missionaries somewhat fatalistically resigned themselves to a form of differentiated education. This was to be a pragmatic practical policy which would exist only until the awaited demise of apartheid. They did so while advocating an educational ideal that would see the gradual incorporation of all Africans into a common society, a common society that, for the most part, they had neither the courage nor the wisdom to conceive in the period under examination. Instead, they reaffirmed their faith in the principles of trusteeship, and awaited the enlightenment of whites. As Rev. Arnott remarked

The status of his membership of this community thus regarded will remain a subordinate one, but it must not be one without hope - that way lies only a deepening frustration, which might issue an attitude antagonistic to, and a course

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<sup>94</sup> WCL AB191 'Record of Proceedings', p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> Wcl AC623 CCSA, 'Report of Education Section', p. 4.

of action destructive of, South African society.<sup>96</sup>

This broad examination of the missionaries' pedagogical and philosophical objections to the Eiselen Report provides us with an understanding of what the churches hoped to ultimately achieve through missionary education and how this contrasted with the designs of Eiselen and Verwoerd. The following four chapters seek to examine from a more practical point of view the reactions of individual denominations to Bantu Education. They examine the churches' priorities; their regional and local systems of governance; their abilities to sustain investment in education; and the wider difficulties they faced with the coming of Bantu Education.

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<sup>96</sup> CPSA AB938 Rev. Arnott, 'Commission on Native Education', p. 1.



'Liberation from the Burden of Maintaining Schools':  
The Church of Scotland and the Bantu Education Act

The next four chapters will examine in detail the response of specific denominations to Bantu Education, including, where possible, case studies of the major secondary institutions under their care.<sup>1</sup> I will begin with the Church of Scotland because of the historical importance of its school, Lovedale, which ZK Matthews called 'the greatest school for Africans in the country'<sup>2</sup>, to the education of Africans in South Africa.

The main educational efforts of the Church of Scotland centred on four main areas around existing mission stations. These were Lovedale, Blythswold and Emgwali in the Cape, and Pholela in Natal. At these mission stations schools had been established in the nineteenth century and, by the turn of the twentieth century, had flourished into major secondary educational institutions. In addition to these institutions the Church of Scotland also ran many primary schools that acted as feeders for the larger schools.<sup>3</sup> In general the Church of Scotland adopted a conciliatory approach to Bantu Education, trying to preserve what it could of its educational endeavours whilst striving to maintain a 'responsible' and non-confrontational relationship with the government.

During the negotiations that took place the Church of Scotland was organised at national and local level, and was under the nominal authority of its leadership in Edinburgh, Scotland. Locally each institution was controlled by a headmaster and Governing Council who were under the direct authority of the national Mission Council (hereafter MC). This MC, which met periodically, was itself subject to the controlling hand of the Foreign Mission Committee (hereafter FMC) of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. This chain of authority effectively gave Church leaders at all levels the chance to influence decision-

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<sup>1</sup> For an detailed explanation of the changes demanded by Bantu Education legislation see appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Matthews, Freedom for my People, p. 30. Kuzwayo remembers Lovedale's 'dignified atmosphere' and the 'fame' of the institution. Kuzwayo, Call me Women, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Whilst it has not been possible to establish the exact number of primary schools controlled by the Church in this period, it certainly ran into the hundreds.

making. Despite its dependence on the ultimate approval of the FMC, the Church of Scotland in South Africa generally composed and initiated its own response to Bantu Education.

No secondary institution was more important than Lovedale in the Eastern Cape in determining the Church of Scotland's response to Bantu Education. Founded in 1835, Lovedale had grown into a major institution providing primary and secondary tuition in addition to teacher training. By the time of the Bantu Education Act, it also included a Bible School, a press, and a hospital, and was considered the premier African secondary school in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>4</sup> Its influence on the formal education of Africans cannot be overestimated, and many of its former students had leading roles in Southern Africa.<sup>5</sup> MC and FMC minutes are disproportionately concerned with the fate of Lovedale and the attitudes of those Church leaders charged with responsibility for it.

In 1953 Lovedale was under the principalship of R.H.W. Shepherd, who served there between 1942-55. Shepherd had an 'austere and unforgiving personality' and was a firm believer in discipline and obedience.<sup>6</sup> He grew up in Scotland, in a poor and strictly Protestant family dominated by a strict disciplinarian patriarch. Through hard work during the day and study in the evenings, Shepherd won a scholarship to Dundee University College, and, after completing a Divinity degree at New College Edinburgh, decided to commit himself to missionary work in Africa. Arriving at Lovedale in 1918 he was made chaplain in 1926, and principal in 1942. He brought to Lovedale a 'stern moral self-righteousness',<sup>7</sup> a faith in the dignity of labour, and a belief in deference to authority,

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<sup>4</sup> Victor Murray described the institution as 'having a university feeling'. V. Murray, The School in the Bush: A Critical Study of the Theory and Practise of Native Education in Africa, (London, 1938), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> Ex-students included; J. T. Jabavu, the founder and editor of the first African weekly, Imvo Zabantsundu; Prof. D.D.T. Jabavu, the first African graduate of a British university; Prof. Z.K. Matthews the first African LL.B, and R. V. Selope Thema, editor of Bantu World. This is but a limited sample of the prestigious alumni.

<sup>6</sup> Joel Bolnick, 'Double-Cross: Potlako Leballo and the 1946 Riots at Lovedale Missionary Institution', Wits African Studies Institute Paper, No. 265, Feb. 1990, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> ibid, p. 7.

remarking in 1945, 'I personally don't want a God who is only full of "forgiveness, gentleness and tolerance" I want a moral Governor on the throne of the Universe.'<sup>8</sup>

A typical 'liberal paternalist', Shepherd devoted his life to the social reproduction of the values and ideas of such liberals<sup>9</sup> including a firm belief in the notion of trusteeship. Discussing the creation of a separate Presbyterian Church for Africans in South Africa, he observed:

I think we need to accept a certain amount of separateness at this stage, so as to give the African the opportunity to do things for himself and in his own environment. It may well be that when he has developed and is more on the European level in administrative and cultural experience the necessity for separateness will pass away.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Shepherd saw his task and indeed that of the Church of Scotland, as 'developing' Africans for their future roles. The church's duty was to 'civilize' Africans through education and hard work, thus allowing them to 'benefit' from European civilization.<sup>11</sup> He believed change would come through hard work and patience, not political radicalism or violence, and envisaged Europeans as the natural rulers of South Africa for the foreseeable future. For Shepherd the 'gift' of 'civilization' was not to be taken lightly and he expected, in return for his paternalism, loyalty and obedience from Africans. His regime at Lovedale was thus very authoritarian. Cecil Manona, who attended the college in the early 1950s remembers Shepherd's 'reign of terror' which was 'very autocratic and very very strict...everything had to be done properly'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted from Kros, "'They Wanted Dancing...'" p. 10. The details of Shepherd's life are taken from G. Ooterhuizen, Shepherd of Lovedale, (Johannesburg, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> Bolnick, 'Double-Cross...', p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> CL PR3682 RHW Shepherd Papers (1) Correspondence 1922-71. Shepherd to Haile, 12 Dec. 1949.

<sup>11</sup> Shepherd continually stressed this in the pages of the South African Outlook which he edited from 1952.

<sup>12</sup> Cecil Manona, interview with author, Grahamstown, 18 Jan. 2000.

Shepherd was a leading figure in the Church of Scotland in South Africa. As well as being the head of its most prestigious institution, he was also a prominent member of the MC and, as editor of the South African Outlook, influenced the Church's lay members. Before the passage of the Bantu Education Act Shepherd had already made his opinion known on the respective responsibilities of the church and state in African education. As early as 1943, he had argued that the responsibility for 'Native' education should be taken away from the provinces and handed over to the Union Education Department. The state should establish many new schools. Although mission schools should be maintained alongside these government schools as they were essential for the moral well being of the 'nation'. He suggested that the government take more responsibility for their administration, '[F]or ourselves' he remarked 'we would not mourn if the Churches did less in the management of schools, but did better what they undertook.'<sup>13</sup> It is unclear exactly what Shepherd meant by this, though he cannot have meant the loss of control that took place under the requirements of the Bantu Education Act.<sup>14</sup>

A second figure who influenced policy was Alexander Kerr, the Principal of Fort Hare. Kerr, who had trained as a teacher in Scotland, came to South Africa in 1915 to head the newly established 'native college', a position he held until 1948. Kerr, described as a 'characteristically cautious Scot.'<sup>15</sup> developed it from a fledging institution of eighteen to one that attracted 330 students in 1947. During the period of transition to Bantu Education, Kerr was a member of the Lovedale Governing Council, sat on the Christian Council's Education Section, and, until its dissolution under Bantu Education Act, was a member of the Union Advisory Board on Native Education.<sup>16</sup> Given his vast experience in African education it is unsurprising that he played a prominent role in shaping the Presbyterian response to Bantu Education. Like Shepherd, Kerr was a strong believer in liberal

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<sup>13</sup> Shepherd, 'The Churches...', p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> This quote hints at the demands that running mission schools placed on missionaries and churches more generally, both in terms of finance and time.

<sup>15</sup> 'His Work Part of Union's Story', Daily Dispatch, 11 May 1948.

<sup>16</sup> Kerr also chaired the education Commission in Rhodesia which reported in 1951, see chapter four.

trusteeship and observed in 1950 that:

If all the civilised people of all colours in South Africa were united in their attack upon ignorance, inefficiency, and conservatism of the uncivilized majority of the inhabitants, the raising of these would still be a formidable task to be accomplished within a measurable time<sup>17</sup>

Kerr, then honorary secretary of the MC was first to comment on the likely effects of the Act on the Church's educational programme in a letter addressed to J. Watt, the secretary of the FMC:

The Education Bill has been introduced into parliament but beyond transferring Native Education from the Provinces to the Union ... there is not much to indicate drastic change. The Government seems prepared to add to the small number of Government provided and maintained schools ... we shall require to await the issue of regulations before we know what support there will be for the schools other than government schools, and therefore more adequate maintenance of missionary institutions.<sup>18</sup>

Considering Kerr's long history of involvement in African education, this letter suggests a remarkable degree of ignorance of the Eiselen Report and the Bantu Education Bill then before parliament. He had not apparently read either the Report or the parliamentary debates on the bill which indicated that a drastic overhaul of mission education was proposed, with the potential removal of all missionary influence. The depth of Kerr's misunderstanding is underscored by his hope that mission education would receive a funding *increase*. His belief was, to some extent, shared by Shepherd who remarked at the end of 1953

In all fairness it must be acknowledged that since our Hospitals came more fully under the Provincial Council in the Cape and the Union Health Department, financial and other conditions have been much easier, while there has been no restrictions on the spiritual side of the work<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> CL PR4099 Kerr Addresses to Institutions 1922-66. Address to St. Andrews School, Grahamstown, 1950. He also remarked that the creation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was a 'voluntary and perfectly natural separation.'

<sup>18</sup> NLS ACC7548 B358 South Africa Secretary 1950-55, A. Kerr to Rev. JAR Watt 9 Sept. 1953.

<sup>19</sup> NLSA, Lovedale Principal's Reports, 1953, p. 4.

This opinion was encouraged by others within South Africa who argued that there did not appear to be any determination on the part of the Government for a 'sudden attack' upon the churches at this early stage.<sup>20</sup> This belief contrasted sharply with that of Watt in Edinburgh who wrote 'it doesn't look as if the Missions or Churches other than those in favour of apartheid would have very much influence on the future of education for the Bantu.'<sup>21</sup> At this time the Secretary of the FMC was writing to leading Church of Scotland figures urging them to 'hold onto education as long as we can.'<sup>22</sup>

Kerr and Shepherd's initial hopes of increased funding were dashed in early 1954 when Kerr 'heard some suggestions, which in our opinion would make the running of them [the schools] by the Church impossible, including inter alia, a reduction instead of an increase in grants!'<sup>23</sup> Only a few days later W. Arnott, the head of Blythswood, told Watt that he had confidential information that

It seems almost certain that the degree of financial assistance permitted to Churches desirous of continuing their institution work will be so meagre that transfer to the Native Affairs Department will be the only feasible course; it also seems likely that the date of assumption of active control will be much sooner than we had expected<sup>24</sup>

Within a month the position had changed drastically, from hopes of increased funding and delayed transfer to fears that grants were to be reduced and transfers brought forward. Watt responded

What you say about Government intentions as to the future of the institutions is most disturbing. One thing is clear. FMC cannot add to its financial responsibilities in South Africa; some people are drawing attention to the fact that FMC is spending

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<sup>20</sup> NLS B374 Rev. W. Arnott (Principal of Blythswood Institution) to Watt 15 Sept. 1953 & 21 Dec. 1953.

<sup>21</sup> NLS ACC7548 B374 Blythswood Principal March 1950 - May 1956. Watt to Arnott 5 Oct. 1953.

<sup>22</sup> NLS ACC7548 A77 Letter Books of Rev. JAR Watt June 1953 - May 1954, Watt to Kerr 20 Oct. 1953 & ACC7548 B374 Watt to Arnott, 5 Oct. 1953.

<sup>23</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 27 Jan. 1954. Original emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> NLS B374 Arnott to Watt 30 Jan. 1954.

over £15,000 in South Africa.<sup>25</sup>

Watt's comment effectively closed off an option as running any of their schools privately on reduced subsidies was impossible.<sup>26</sup> Thus they were left with the choice of either closing their schools down or leasing / selling them to the government.

### Primary Schools

Once the FMC made it known that no new money would be available for African education, the MC immediately made plans for the transfer of all its primary schools to the state. As early as February 1954 the MC recognised 'the need for the rapid expansion of primary schools' and therefore recommended

that all possible assistance should be given to the Department in establishing a sound system of popular control of such schools and that any missionaries or ministers who have served as managers or grantees should continue to act on local boards if invited or elected to do so<sup>27</sup>

By September the Bantu Presbyterian Church (BPC), which effectively controlled all Presbyterian primary schools with the assistance of local missionaries, was advising its members to give the government all the assistance they could in making the transfer of schools as smooth as possible.<sup>28</sup> A statement by the Lovedale Governing Council recognised 'as inevitable the introduction of a system of public education for primary schools. This indeed is a necessity, and is long overdue, and approves of the scheme put forward by the

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<sup>25</sup> NLS B374 Watt to Arnott 11 Feb. 1954, Rev Dr. J. Dougall (Associate Secretary of the FMC) remarked to Kerr 'One thing is more or less certain, namely, that we cannot offer to replace public funds by grants from the Foreign Mission Committee.' ACC7548 A56 Letter Books of Rev. Dr. J Dougall. Dougall to Kerr 2. Feb. 1954.

<sup>26</sup> The FMC declared in 1954 that it was 'unable for financial reasons to run even one of its institutions as a private school.' NLS ACC7458 B370 Bantu Education Act Statement of the FMC 8 Nov. 1954. The Church estimated that it would cost £250,000 a year to run all schools privately, 'Church of Scotland and Bantu Education Act', British Weekly, 25 Nov. 1954.

<sup>27</sup> NLS B370 Minutes of the MC 22 Feb. 1954.

<sup>28</sup> 'Bantu Presbyterian Church General Assembly Resolutions', South African Outlook, Nov. 1, 1954, p. 164.

Division.<sup>29</sup> The FMC agreed with the need to transfer the primary schools, with Watt arguing that to do any different would be 'folly'.<sup>30</sup>

There were a number of reasons why the Church was keen to transfer its primary schools. Chief of these was the burden in time and money that they represented. Although they were nominally under BPC control much of the necessary administrative work was undertaken by missionaries. One such missionary from the Rainy Mission in Umtata 'deliberately' said 'nothing about the Act because it had not'

really affected any of my schools yet, and the work of school manager has gone on as usual, taking a disproportionate amount of my time, and involving me in dealing with just on 400 letters in the course of the year. I have had the usual trouble of misbehaving teachers, teachers defaulting in the payment of school requisitions, appointment of teachers, supervision of requisitions...So the Bantu Education Act will not be a loss to the Missionary.<sup>31</sup>

Another missionary noted 'there is no doubt that control of teaching posts by ministers has sometimes led ministers into sin. I think that a purer Church will emerge from this purging'<sup>32</sup> The work load associated with primary schooling was not the only missionary grievance. A missionary in Gooldville complained of feeling

a continual inferiority complex when visiting the schools under the wing of the Church of Scotland missions in this province, seeing the tumble-down hovels and shanties, or often the whole schools [sic] which consisted of a few stones in rows under a tree.... This kind of thing depressed all concerned, and teachers felt that it would be better for the state to manage things....we cannot vie with their efforts.<sup>33</sup>

Watt confessed that education given in BPC primary schools was often 'pretty poor and

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<sup>29</sup> CL MS17782 Lovedale Governing Council. Statement (no date) 'The Bantu Education Act' published by the Lovedale Governing Council.

<sup>30</sup> NLS ACC7548 B394 Africa Sub-Committee 1954-61. Watt to Rev. WS McColm 16 Oct. 1954.

<sup>31</sup> NLS ACC7548 C13 Foreign Mission Committee Annual Reports 1954. Rev. G. Lowson, Rainy Mission, Umtata, 22 Jan. 1955.

<sup>32</sup> NLS ACC7548 B375 Blythswood General Dec. 1938 - Aug. 1956. Rev JS Drummond to Watt 15 Aug. 1953.

<sup>33</sup> NLS C13 1954 Annual Report Goodville Mission, 8 March 1955.



many of the Ministers just don't manage'.<sup>34</sup> The picture that emerges is of inadequately funded primary schools administered by overworked and unmotivated missionaries. Kerr acknowledged that 'the expansion of primary education has outgrown the capacity of the churches to administer it effectively'.<sup>35</sup> The strength of opinion in favour of giving up the responsibility for primary schools was such that Watt remarked

In the period of transfer there will of course be great difficulty but the work of the primary schools...will go on almost as before and in a good many schools the situation will be improved....Some of our ministers think that for that reason the Bantu Education Act is a good thing<sup>36</sup>

The somewhat damning appraisal of Church of Scotland primary schools should be considered in light of the Church's secondary institutions which were of a high standard and well respected as educational facilities. Given the scarce resources available it is unsurprising that the church decided to quickly wash its hands of primary schools in favour of these institutions.

### The Secondary Institutions

Kerr remarked in early 1954

The gist of the Presbyterian position here is that we should do everything in our power to assist the government to set up effective local boards for the oversight of primary schools but that they should leave the institutions under the Councils as they are, with the promise of full support.<sup>37</sup>

As we have seen, Kerr was aware that this was not a realistic expectation, at least financially, and consequently discussions quickly turned to how best the Church could preserve its secondary institutions. At Lovedale the Governing Council met in April and

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<sup>34</sup> NLS B394 Watt to Rev. S McColm 16 Oct. 1954.

<sup>35</sup> NLS B370 Kerr to Watt 13 Dec. 1954.

<sup>36</sup> NLS B370 Watt to Rev. R. Davidson, 7 Dec. 1954.

<sup>37</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 4 March 1954.

debated Bantu Education at length. It was agreed that a committee of Council members should approach the government to request that institutions such as Lovedale be allowed to continue under missionary control within the new system where they could 'co-operate with the Government, and continue to offer our expert knowledge and advice.' The Council then appealed for special consideration to be given to Lovedale:

It is not the intention of the Lovedale Governing Council [to argue] that all Institutions are alike in efficiency, but it is submitted that there is special claim for consideration from the Division for long-established and efficiently managed Institutions. The Council does not suggest that an Institution like Lovedale should seek to stand out and maintain itself...but the Governing Council contends that not only what Lovedale has stood for but its very structure are worth preserving, as far as possible. Intimation has come from the Division that Institutions will require individual consideration, and we trust that in such consideration the facts mentioned will be given due weight<sup>38</sup>

This statement caused consternation within the Church of Scotland. Watt wrote to Kerr 'Is there a danger that Lovedale, the mother of them all, should forget her children?'<sup>39</sup>

By May 1954, the Church had settled on a general policy: they would hand over all their primary schools and would make a strong plea for the retention of the secondary institutions under their control. A proposal was put to the government offering the Bantu Education Department direct representation on the Governing Councils of these institutions, thus, hopefully, avoiding the need for wholesale reorganisation.<sup>40</sup> In addition, if transfer were forced on the Church, the schools should be leased rather than sold.<sup>41</sup> This decision was influenced by members of the Church who believed the government had overreached itself with Bantu Education, and the whole system was doomed to failure.<sup>42</sup> There was certainly

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<sup>38</sup> NLS B370 Lovedale Governing Council Minutes 8 April 1954.

<sup>39</sup> NLS B370 Watt to Kerr 11 May 1954.

<sup>40</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 15 April 1954.

<sup>41</sup> Watt cautioned against the idea of leasing the institutions, noting that the debts at Blythwood and Lovedale would probably necessitate their sale. NLS B370 Watt to Kerr 11 May 1954.

<sup>42</sup> NLS ACC7548 B379 Lovedale Principal 1947 - 56. Shepherd to Watt 21 May 1954. Shepherd noted 'this whole experiment might fail, many believe that Government has taken on a bigger business than it realises.'

a strong perception among Church of Scotland leaders in South Africa that the government was agonizing over how to execute the transfer of the larger institutions.<sup>43</sup>

This policy remained intact until the arrival of the government circulars in August setting out the registration conditions. Immediately concern was expressed at the speed with which transfer was to take place.<sup>44</sup> Seeking clarification of the options in the circulars, the Lovedale Governing Council met inspectors W. Jensen and M. Prozesky to discuss the institution's future. The inspectors contended that it was the government's intention to take over all secondary institutions with minimum disruption, and that the best way to do so would be for the church to hand over the school buildings but continue to run the hostels.<sup>45</sup> A new Advisory Board would be established at Lovedale and, if the church agreed to run the hostels, a hostel committee would be created; one of its members would have a seat on the Advisory Board. The inspectors urged the church to run the hostels for a trial period of three years, claiming that they had nothing to fear as the department would not appoint a head at Lovedale who was unsympathetic to missionary work.<sup>46</sup>

After this meeting a long debate on the merits, or otherwise, of the Church's retaining control of the hostels followed; an issue which remained unresolved until 1956. One unnamed Council member argued that running the hostels would be 'disastrous', because divided control between the mission in the hostels and the government in the schools would make student discipline impossible.<sup>47</sup> A few days later Kerr also cast doubt on the proposal by observing that the Church's poor financial position and the government's probable unwillingness to guarantee the church against losses in the hostels, would lead to inadequate

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<sup>43</sup> According to Kerr 'the mind of the Department is obviously far from being made up.' NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 24 May 1954.

<sup>44</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 20 Aug. 1954.

<sup>45</sup> This policy was in line with the August circulars. Members of the Native Affairs Commission who visited Lovedale in November 1954 were said to be 'very anxious that the Church should maintain control of the hostels.' NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 9 Nov. 1954.

<sup>46</sup> WCL AC623 CCSA 13.3 Government Legislation Bantu Education Act Lovedale Governing Council Minutes 15 Sept. 1954.

<sup>47</sup> NLS ACC7548 B377 Lovedale Governing Council Minutes March 1949 - Nov. 1955. 15 Sept. 1954.

conditions. This was 'bound to lead to discontent among the students, as has been amply proved in almost every institution over the last thirty years'.<sup>48</sup> Kerr recognised that hostel conditions had been the focus of previous student disturbances, and was concerned about further disruption. Watt was also to note, 'our doubts about the wisdom of undertaking the control of the hostels were the obvious ones, that in the past the hostels had been the focus of trouble in the institutions.'<sup>49</sup>

The fact that the government wished missionaries to retain control of hostels suggests that they, too, were well aware that they were the main focus of students antagonism. Assuming missionaries retained control, any disturbances would primarily be their concern rather than the government's. In addition, by encouraging the missions to maintain the hostels the government hoped to project an image of continuity within the institutions. This was important on two levels; first students could be reassured that dramatic changes were not taking place; secondly, the maintenance of a missionary presence would lend much-needed legitimacy to the government's changes.

At the beginning of November 1954, the Committee appointed by the Lovedale Governing Council to consider the Act met. Here a 'tentative minute' from the FMC, which called for all of Lovedale, excluding the press, the Bible school and a house for a chaplain, be leased to the government, was discussed.<sup>50</sup> The Committee reluctantly agreed to these proposals and agreed that as long as the present system of control could be maintained,<sup>51</sup> and they were protected from financial loss, they would consider running the hostels after all. They insisted, however, on worthwhile representation on any new advisory board, and the ability

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<sup>48</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 18 Sept. 1954.

<sup>49</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Kerr 29 Dec. 1954.

<sup>50</sup> Clearly by now the FMC had decided that no institutions could be supported without financial aid from government sources.

<sup>51</sup> i.e. a single principal, advised by a governing council. This principal had ultimate authority for all constitute parts of the institution, thereby avoiding conflicts between the separate heads of the schools in the college. The Committee appointed to advise on the Bantu Education Act remarked that they should only run the hostels 'if there can be co-ordination of control for schools and hostels' WCL AC623 13.3 Minutes 2 Nov. 1954.

to influence decisions concerning the institution as well as the hostels.<sup>52</sup> Several members emphasised, however, that this was 'not because the Government's scheme was felt to be right, but because it was the best that could be done in the circumstances.'<sup>53</sup> On 11 November the Governing Council agreed to maintain the hostels if their conditions could be met. The Committee was aware that if it agreed to run the hostels it was openly associating itself with Bantu Education. Although some members were uncomfortable with this association, Kerr was not among them. A few days earlier, after a visit from the Native Affairs Commission, he had remarked that running the hostels while the Government ran the schools would amount to 'a continuation of the partnership between the Church and the State which has existed all along in Native Education.'<sup>54</sup> A few weeks later Kerr confidently remarked that the MC was 'settling down to the lesser of the two evils [which was] the plan of leasing the schools and retaining the hostels.'<sup>55</sup> This also had the benefit of allowing some avenues for evangelical work to remain open; for Kerr hostels were 'as much a means of true education as tuition in the classroom.'<sup>56</sup>

Given the government's determination to wrest African education out of the hands of missionary bodies, the conditions imposed by the Lovedale Governing Council seem somewhat naive. Essentially the Council asked the government to grant the Church of Scotland authority over Lovedale even after its transfer suggesting that members still thought the power and prestige of Lovedale would influence government thinking.<sup>57</sup> As Arnott noted

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<sup>52</sup> Kerr remarked that those running the hostels would have to have a 'determining voice in the admission and dismissal of students from the hostel with the power to fix fees.' CL MS17782 A. Kerr, 'Should the Hostels be Retained?' 5 Nov. 1954

<sup>53</sup> WCL AC623 13.3 Minutes 2 Nov. 1954.

<sup>54</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 9 Nov. 1954.

<sup>55</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 2 Dec. 1954.

<sup>56</sup> CL MS17782 Kerr, 'Should...' He wrote 'Our view has come that wherever possible we should retain a base of operations in the hostels from which the Christian mission might still work amongst the youth.' NLS B370 Kerr to Watt 13 Dec. 1954.

<sup>57</sup> This suggests that the Council felt that public opinion was with them. Shepherd certainly used the South African Outlook to champion the cause of Lovedale.

the optimism of the Lovedale Governing Council in even hoping, far less believing, that the Division would accept the 'unified set-up' that Council is seeking, rather astonishes me...it cuts right against the attitude the State has consistently held.<sup>58</sup>

Watt commented 'we are, like you, surprised at the hopefulness of the Lovedale Council that their plan to carry on much as before would be accepted by the Division.'<sup>59</sup> Unsurprisingly, the conditions were rejected by Eiselen and the Council decided not to pursue the matter further, to give up the hostels, but actively seek to influence who was appointed to run them.<sup>60</sup> Shepherd contended that all was not lost; the Lovedale chaplain could offer spiritual help to the students, without having the responsibility 'for catering and discipline'.<sup>61</sup> By the end of March 1955, agreement had been reached to lease the schools and hostel at Lovedale to the government and, by October, a lease had been drawn up ensuring the Church of Scotland an income of some £5750 a year.<sup>62</sup>

The situation at other institutions was different. Because of the size of its debt, Blythswood was sold in late 1955 to the South African Native Trust for £35,000. Why the Church was keen to sell Blythswood, when Lovedale was equally indebted, is unclear,<sup>63</sup> but may have been because it was in a designated 'African' area, where the government could have forced its sale under Group Areas legislation. Records are extremely limited for Pholela and Emgwali; both were leased to the government while the Church retained control of their 'small' and 'uncomplicated' hostels for a three-year trial period.<sup>64</sup>

From the start those running Pholela had made it clear that they desired to 'co-operate with

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<sup>58</sup> NLS B374 Arnott to Watt 9. Jan 1955.

<sup>59</sup> NLS B374 Watt to Arnott 29 Jan. 1955.

<sup>60</sup> CL MS17782 10 March 1955.

<sup>61</sup> NLS B379 Shepherd to Watt 12 March 1955. Once again the hostels were recognised as the focal point of previous school disturbances

<sup>62</sup> NLS ACC7548 B359 South Africa - Minutes. Kerr to Watt 221 Oct. 1955.

<sup>63</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that money raised from its sale was to be used to support other institutions such as Lovedale.

<sup>64</sup> NLS B370 Kerr & Shepherd to Watt 8 July 1955.

the Bantu Education Authority as far as possible provided that the religious functions of this Institution are safeguarded.’<sup>65</sup> In his 1955 annual report, the superintendent of the hostels at Pholela noted that he had a seat on the institution’s Advisory Board which he believed gave the Church ‘an opportunity to use its influence in securing the choice of suitable members of staff.’ He was sure

that the Mission work here at Pholela can be maintained under the changed conditions, at least while the Church retains control of the Hostel. Almost all the religious activities in the Institution relate to the Hostel...there is ample scope for the missionary work of our Church....[W]e do not think that the Church is served by saying we have only a Hostel Committee left to us, we have more than that<sup>66</sup>

This represented a somewhat narrow description of mission work, and it is clear that <sup>this</sup> school was administered under the system of divided control rejected by the Lovedale Governing Council.<sup>67</sup>

The Lovedale Council may have refused this form of control because of its particular history and status. I have not found any reference to school disturbances at either Pholela or Emgwali, which contrasts starkly with the severe school ‘riots’ that took place at Lovedale throughout the 1940s. Given its history of turmoil it seems that Lovedale Council members were not prepared to risk an administrative structure that might precipitate student radicalism.

### Pressure from Great Britain

Before the Church of Scotland began to address the Bantu Education Act seriously Watt remarked to Kerr:

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<sup>65</sup> NLS ACC7548 B384 Pholela Institution Governing Council Minutes 1942 - 1956. Minutes 27 Feb. 1954.

<sup>66</sup> NLS ACC7548 B386 Pholela General Feb. 1945 - April 1956. Annual Report 1955.

<sup>67</sup> In 1962 the superintendent, A. Moir, remarked ‘On the home front I get the impression that we are identified with the Government and Bantu Education’, NLS ACC 7548 C29 Annual Reports. Annual Report Pholela 20. Dec. 1962. Thus the concern expressed by some members of the Lovedale Governing Council that to run the hostels was to indicate approval of government actions, was founded.

I am afraid that one of the troubles is that the Press in this country [Britain] is largely interested in South Africa as a source of horror stories about race relations.....South Africa is treated as a sort of lay figure for the exercise of moral indignation.<sup>68</sup>

This comment was to have wider significance in the struggles over Bantu Education. From the middle of 1954 the Church of Scotland, both in Scotland and South Africa, experienced a barrage of public pressure ignited by a series of editorials and articles which appeared in the British and South African press, written by leading Anglicans such as Father Huddleston, Bishop Reeves and Canon John Collins. These articles had two effects upon the Church's deliberations: firstly, they were deeply resented by Presbyterians within South Africa, and secondly they divided the FMC in Scotland.

Rev. Fraser of Gooldville Mission reported in July 1954, 'Canon Collins has managed to annoy many people here by simply saying things and leaving us to it....Long range attacks of this kind don't register.'<sup>69</sup> These words perfectly capture the attitude of missionaries in South Africa who greatly resented what they considered mis-informed outside interference. But it was not only those outside of South Africa who were condemned by the presbyterian hierarchy in South Africa. Reeves had written in April 1954 on the approaching 'destruction' of mission education in South Africa. Days later, in an extraordinary letter, Shepherd reprimanded Reeves:

May I say that, with thirty-five years of missionary experience in this land behind me, I believe also that a factor in the destruction if it comes will be your uninformed, inexperienced and one-sided pronouncements<sup>70</sup>

Shepherd and Kerr rejected calls from figures such as Reeves, and those outside South Africa, and repudiated those who condemned the Bantu Education Act openly and politically. While disagreeing with some aspects of the Act he refused to be party to what

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<sup>68</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Kerr 30 Dec. 1953.

<sup>69</sup> NLS ACC7548 B364 South Africa Minutes. Fraser to Watt 27 July 1954. Later he was to write 'Most people not in South Africa seem to be terribly shaken up with the Bantu Education Act, with the exception of all else. On the spot there is not so much to concern and stimulate, that we may be pardoned for impatience with some overseas reactions.' ACC7548 C13 Annual Report of the Gooldville Mission, 8 March 1955.

<sup>70</sup> CL MS14719 Shepherd to Reeves 1 May 1954.



he considered were false claims which would only serve to fuel African radicalism.<sup>71</sup> When a number of African teachers' associations refused an invitation to join the SAIRR's conference on Bantu Education, Shepherd accused them of 'rank irresponsibility'.<sup>72</sup> The refusal to accept overseas criticism on the assumption that it was 'uninformed' demonstrates how much leading figures in the Presbyterian Church in South Africa had become part of white South Africa, unable and perhaps unwilling to see the extent of the injustices of apartheid. Throughout the debates that surrounded Bantu Education, there is little evidence of any linkage being made between the Act and the wider apartheid project, apart from a single limited comment by Shepherd.<sup>73</sup> It was considered more an administrative and financial issue than a political or moral one.<sup>74</sup> The refusal of the Church hierarchy in South Africa to address the Act in these terms contrasted greatly with the attitude of some in the FMC. In mid-October 1954 Watt wrote to Arnott lamenting articles in the British Weekly, which called the churches of the world to stand together and fight Bantu Education. He noted that some members of the FMC would 'take Herron's<sup>75</sup> line', and to avoid any 'foolish decision' he argued that 'some agreement about tactics should be reached.'<sup>76</sup> A few days later Watt observed:

Our Foreign Mission Committee meets today and we expect some fireworks on the Bantu Education Act palaver. There are one or two back-benchers who are disciples of Shaun Herron and Father Huddleston, or at least read the British Weekly or the

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<sup>71</sup> Oosterhuizen remarked 'Bloody revolution or violence was never in Shepherd's programme for the improvement of the race problem', Oosterhuizen, Shepherd, p. 157. Recves, was not, of course, calling for either Shepherd's antagonism towards Recves demonstrates the wide divergence of opinion amongst liberals.

<sup>72</sup> Shepherd, African World, June 1953.

<sup>73</sup> In the annual report for Lovedale in 1955 he noted that given the impending transfer it appeared that 'political and not educational considerations rule.' NLSA Lovedale Institution Report 1954, 12 Jan. 1955.

<sup>74</sup> Biko remarked in 1972 that 'Bureaucracy and institutionalisation tends to make the Church removed from important priorities and to concentrate on secondary and tertiary functions like structure and finance.' Biko, I Write, p. 57.

<sup>75</sup> Shaun Herron edited the British Weekly a Non-Conformist periodical first published in 1886 which promoted the spread of Christian democracy and became increasingly political in the twentieth century.

<sup>76</sup> NLS B375 Watt to Arnott 15 Oct. 1954. Watt remarked to Rev. McColm 'one's judgement of this case is not much altered by Shaun Herron's fire works but there will certainly be some people in the Committee who will raise the issue.' NLS ACC7548 B394 Watt to McColm 16 Oct. 1954.

Sunday Observer and we are expecting that they will want some vigorous action taken<sup>77</sup>

The pressure on the FMC led its Africa Committee to demand the release of a statement on Bantu Education, an indication that it was concerned with public opinion. Writing to Kerr, Watt noted:

If only people in South Africa had to be considered we have no doubt that the Foreign Mission Committee would agree to say nothing, but people in this country are agitated about the Bantu Education Act and, moreover, people in other parts of Africa, Africans and missionaries, are watching what is happening<sup>78</sup>

The MC opposed the release of any statement, arguing that it would jeopardise negotiations with the government and pandered to 'extreme expressions which may be variously motivated.'<sup>79</sup> The pressure on the FMC continued to mount, however, with a 'fringe element' arguing that the Church should have nothing to do with Bantu Education; the Presbytery of Ayr called on the FMC not to hand over any schools by lease or sale.<sup>80</sup> At this juncture Watt thanked Kerr for keeping him informed of opinion within South Africa, because if he had not done so 'there would have been a grave danger of divergence of thinking between you in South Africa and us in this country'.<sup>81</sup> Yet only a day before this letter was written the FMC had released a press statement, a copy of which was sent to Eiselen, clearly indicating that there was indeed a very distinct divergence of opinion between the FMC and the MC.

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<sup>77</sup> NLS B370 Watt to R. K. Orchard 19 Oct. 1954. Orchard was the Africa Secretary of the London Missionary Society. Orchard wrote back 'we are feeling some pressure from people who have been reading the British Weekly and the Sunday Observer, and I quite expect we shall have to justify our line of policy at some length at our board meeting.' 27 Oct. 1954.

<sup>78</sup> NLS B370 Watt to Kerr 1 Dec. 1954. Watt's sympathy with Kerr and Shepherd may simply have been because he was convinced by their arguments. However, Watt's personal position regarding race relations in South Africa may have been the key; in 1954 he remarked that total apartheid could be 'morally justified'.

<sup>79</sup> NLS B370 Kerr to Watt 13 Dec. 1954.

<sup>80</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Kerr 13 Dec. 1954.

<sup>81</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Kerr 29 Dec. 1954.

Unlike the MC they directly linked to Bantu Education and the policy of apartheid. They stressed the state's duty to provide education for its citizens, and welcomed the increasing enlistment of Africans in the management of schools, but opposed the 'eviction' of mission schools from the new system. It also rejected 'the racial policy on which the Act is based', declaring that apartheid was 'contrary to the law of God.'<sup>82</sup>

According to Watt

We don't imagine that a statement made to the South African Government about the schools will really make any difference to their policy but we feel that we can't just hand over our educational work without formally disassociating ourselves from the educational policy of the Union Government, and, so to speak, entering our discontent. It may be that in some time in the future it will be useful to have it on record.<sup>83</sup>

Watt's comments suggest that there was a public perception that the Church was handing over its schools willingly, or at least without complaint. There seems to be little doubt that it was public pressure that pushed the FMC towards the release of the statement. Yet it did little to extinguish this pressure, which continued to mount. As Watt wrote to Kerr

There is considerable feeling in Scotland that the Foreign Mission Committee has been rather weak in its handling of the Bantu Education Act matter. The attitude of the Bishop of Johannesburg in closing the schools and the Adams College appeal for funds to keep the institution going with reduced grant-in-aid is much more attractive to certain firebrands.

He appealed to Kerr for 'any ammunition with which to repel the attacks of the hot-heads.'<sup>84</sup> There was undoubtedly consternation amongst Church of Scotland supporters that, unlike Reeves and the American Board Mission, the church had decided to hand over its institutions with little, if any, complaint. By June 1955 the pressure forced Watt to appeal directly to Shepherd to reverse the decision not to run the hostels at Lovedale. Despite the

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<sup>82</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Eiselen 28 Dec. 1954. The statement ended by appealing to the BPC to use its influence to ensure that Africans used what education would be available to their best advantage.

<sup>83</sup> NLS B370 Watt to Orchard 19 Oct. 1954.

<sup>84</sup> NLS ACC7548 A79 Letter Books. Watt to Kerr 7 March 1955.

difficulties, running them, was perhaps 'what God is calling us to do' and would certainly go some way towards 'satisfying the Foreign Mission Committee'.<sup>85</sup> This is somewhat ironic given that previously there had been concern that to run the hostels was to identify the Church with Bantu Education. It appears that opinions changed within the FMC who increasingly saw the retention of hostels as a sign they were maintaining their Christian witness against apartheid, rather than a compromise with apartheid.

In response to this, Kerr and Shepherd sent a joint letter to the FMC. They rejected Reeves's stand on the grounds that he was closing primary schools, the very schools that the MC in South Africa was pleased to be handing over to the government, nor did they 'object to the control of secondary schools by them [the government] where there is the likelihood of the formation of school committees sufficiently informed to be able to manage them'. Where they disagreed with the Government was over its handling of the larger missionary institutions 'which might well, with advantage to the Native people and the cause of education generally, have been maintained alongside any provision they [the government] cared to make.'<sup>86</sup> Once again the justification for their actions was divorced from politics, the letter focussing purely on financial and administrative issues. Evidently, neither Kerr nor Shepherd had any intention of bowing to the pressure of the FMC which they considered was being manipulated by uninformed and irresponsible figures from outside the Presbyterian Church.

Notwithstanding FMC pressure, there was no change in policy by church leaders in South Africa. Despite the publication of its statement, the FMC did not reverse any decisions made by the MC, who thus alone decided the fate of the Presbyterian mission schools.<sup>87</sup>

### United Church Action

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<sup>85</sup> NLS B379 Watt to Kerr 30 June 1955.

<sup>86</sup> NLS B370 Kerr & Shepherd to Watt 8 July 1955.

<sup>87</sup> There is no doubt that the support of Watt as the South Africa secretary of the FMC helped the MC in South Africa.

Another issue that occupied the FMC in Scotland and impinged upon its relationship with the MC was the hope of its members that the churches in South Africa would stand together over Bantu Education. As early as December 1953 Watt remarked 'I hope that there is real cooperation between the various denominations in this matter, for the future of Bantu Education looks ominous.'<sup>88</sup> In early 1954 Watt was urging Kerr to make sure that the Church of Scotland was at the forefront of any discussions concerning joint church action.<sup>89</sup> Watt wrote to Orchard of the London Missionary Society (LMS) asking him to consider ways in which church bodies could stand together in negotiations with the Department of Native Affairs.<sup>90</sup> A month later Watt informed Kerr that the FMC wanted 'all denominations to stand together' but admitted that he 'did not see how the solidarity suggested is to operate.'<sup>91</sup>

Watt's doubts about a unified stand was based upon a damning personal appraisal of the churches in South Africa:

I feel what is happening in South Africa is in a way a judgement on our Churches and Missions there. If there had been a greater measure of co-operation, less denominationalism, more willingness to come forward in incorporating union, our Mission education in South Africa would have been so good and so strong that even Dr. Malan would not have cared or dared touch it. Our divisions have meant that our Christian service in education and otherwise has been very weak and so through Dr. Malan, the judgement of God has fallen on it.... We have been thinking along denominational lines, been [too] anxious to keep our beloved Institutions and Mission Stations going.<sup>92</sup>

Until the government took control of all the Presbyterian schools Watt lamented the lack of co-ordinated church action. In particular he expressed his disappointment with the inability of the CCSA to agree to run an institution as a witness for the mission churches.

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<sup>88</sup> NLS B374 Watt to Arnott 24 Dec.

<sup>89</sup> Watt commented on the larger institutions 'if they all stood together, Government might be daunted at the prospect of having to take over all the institutions immediately.' NLS A77 Watt to Kerr 16. Feb. 1954.

<sup>90</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Orchard 13 April 1954.

<sup>91</sup> NLS B370 Watt to Kerr 11 May 1954.

<sup>92</sup> NLS A77 Watt to Greaves 17 May 1954.

Kerr, himself a member of the Council's Education Section, despaired over the organisation remarking 'the Christian Council is such a motley body that it is really hopeless to expect any united point of view.'<sup>93</sup> The Presbyterian Church itself, however, made no particular efforts to bring the churches together itself beyond some limited correspondence between Watt and Orchard and its membership of the Christian Council. Within the Church itself, no uniform policy was followed and its institutions did not present a united front, given that the Lovedale Governing Council looked for favoured treatment.

An ex-Lovedale student has remarked 'it seems that Dr. Shepherd's great weaknesses were his autocratic nature and his tendency to disregard black opinion.'<sup>94</sup> At the beginning of 1954, the MC passed a resolution which recognised 'the prime interest of the African people in this matter the heads recommend that every opportunity of consulting them should be taken'.<sup>95</sup> But this desire was inherently difficult to fulfill in a church whose leadership was predominantly white and within which African influence was insignificant,<sup>96</sup> as Watt's observed:

In some quarters it has been urged that Africans should be consulted before any decision is made. That is a sound line, but it is difficult to see who you would consult ... Could the BPC say anything? It is not accustomed to discuss the institutions is it? Are there wise African individuals whose council you could take?<sup>97</sup>

The BPC could have been a vehicle for the articulation of African opinions but its leadership was dominated by whites well into the 1950s, and it was only concerned with primary schools.<sup>98</sup> In September 1954 it stated rather tamely ' that the government

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<sup>93</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 11 Sept. 1954.

<sup>94</sup> C. Manona 'Lovedale Institution 1841-1991' paper presented at Lovedale's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary day, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>95</sup> NLS ACC7548 B356 Mission Council Minutes 16 Feb. 1954.

<sup>96</sup> In April 1955 of the 31 members of the Lovedale Governing Council seven were Africans, none of whom were ex officio.

<sup>97</sup> NLS B370 Watt to Kerr 11 May 1954.

<sup>98</sup> In this period the moderator of the BPC was a Rev. D. Matheson and its leadership included both Kerr and Shepherd. The BPC actually appointed a committee to review the impact of the Bantu Education Act which was chaired by Shepherd.

should have established more schools to run alongside existing mission schools, rather than transfer the latter to government control. The guiding hand of white liberalism was evident appeal to Africans to offer all the support they could to the new schools boards and committees,<sup>99</sup> a position endorsed by the FMC which called on BPC members to serve on the new boards and committees in the best interests of the church, while reminding them of the 'necessity of loyal obedience to the law of the land in which they dwell.'<sup>100</sup>

In this period there was no representation for parents either<sup>101</sup>, yet Shepherd assured Watt that 'Africans are being brought into consultation at all levels.'<sup>102</sup> In response to the pressures exerted on the FMC from within Britain, Watt reassured fellow Presbyterians in Scotland that 'the leading Bantu with whom our missionaries are in touch are quite certain that to refuse to cooperate at this stage would be to desert the Africans'.<sup>103</sup> This particular line was maintained throughout by both the MC and the FMC, with African opinion apparently deciding that to close schools was to force children onto the streets.<sup>104</sup> One missionary wrote

I am glad you did not instruct us to shut the schools, or I should have been unable to look any of my African people in the face again. I cannot see what good has been done by it, but I see vats [sic] harm, and much heart-break<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> 'Bantu Presbyterian Church General Assembly Resolutions', South African Outlook, Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 1954, p. 164.

<sup>100</sup> NLS B370 Statement from the FMC to the BPC (draft) 19 Oct. 1954.

<sup>101</sup> Manona remarked 'there was no involvement of people and parents at all.' Interview with author, Grahamstown, 18 Jan. 2000.

<sup>102</sup> NLS B379 Shepherd to Watt 21 May 1954.

<sup>103</sup> NLS B370 Watt to R. Davidson (Orkney Presbytery) 7 Dec. 1954.

<sup>104</sup> In addition Africans were said to have encouraged the Church hierarchy to lease rather than sell in the hope that the institutions would revert back to the missions at some future date. See B379 Shepherd to Watt 20 Sept. 1954. The FMC committee appointed to examine the Bantu Education Act reported that it 'does not believe that the best interests of the African people will be served by closing its schools as one mission has done.' NLS B370 Statement of Committee 8 Nov. 1954. This again demonstrates the pressure that Reeves' decision placed upon the Church of Scotland. As will be shown (see chapter 9), many Africans did not want schools closed for exactly the reasons given by the MC and the FMC.

<sup>105</sup> NLS B364 Fraser to Dougall 5 April 1955.

Rev. Fraser, who attended the establishment of the local school board at Gooldville, noted that 'Africans were given to understand that we held them in thrall for our own proselytising ends, and that the Government had set them free.' It appears that either the local inspector of Bantu Education or a representative of the Native Affairs Department was present and sanctioned the transfer to nominal African control. Fraser concluded that by the end of the day 'many Africans were going all out to praise all what the Government is doing.'<sup>106</sup> We have seen how the government sought to use the School Boards and Committees to put in place a co-opted African elite who would be sympathetic to its plans in exchange for increased local status and power. Thus, it is important to remember that the views of those appointed to these committees did not necessarily reflect the views of the local population.

The Church's efforts to seek African opinion were undoubtedly limited. The only fora for serious debate were Governing Councils where African influence was limited and regulated. This was because they were always in a significant minority (and thus unable to dictate any policy) and because of the hierarchical relationships between Africans and whites in positions of responsibility. In any case most of the Africans on Governing Council were themselves mission educated and sympathetic to their gradualist liberal ideas. Monona, for example, remembers how ZK Matthews was 'extremely supportive' of Shepherd's regime.<sup>107</sup>

The limited engagement of Africans in the decision-making process was equally true of teachers. I found only one instance where teachers were directly asked for their opinions on the changes occurring. In September of 1954 Shepherd called a meeting of staff at Lovedale to make their feelings known to the Governing Council on how best to move forward. He reported that this 'largely attended meeting' agreed unanimously with the Council's decision

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<sup>106</sup> NLS ACC7548 C15 Annual Report Fraser, Gooldville, 1955. He noted 'My old evangelist, once the staunchest friend, has become secretive, somewhat distant, since he was appointed to be chairman of the school committee.'

<sup>107</sup> Manona, interview with author, Grahamstown, 18 Jan. 2000. He argued that Africans given positions of responsibility at Lovedale were there to 'rubber stamp' the decisions of the whites.



to lease the school.<sup>108</sup> This solitary effort to engage wider opinions was symptomatic of the nature of institutional administrations. They were run by powerful principals with the guidance of Governing Councils, and there was little scope for the opinions of those outside of these forums being taken into account.

Concern over teachers during this period of transition was not over their opinions, but their scarcity. As early as May 1954 Kerr was bemoaning the fact that the 'prevailing uncertainty' meant that staffing within schools was 'deteriorating.'<sup>109</sup> Watt replied that he could not offer any teachers from Scotland as the situation was 'so murky'.<sup>110</sup> This situation worsened as time passed, and white members of staff were particularly 'restless', many hoping to find 'shelter in European schools.'<sup>111</sup> This was obviously not an option open to African staff and many more chose to stay on, rather than to leave.<sup>112</sup> Because Church of Scotland schools were transferred to the government, African teachers did not lose their experience-related pay as they did when they agreed to stay on at schools such as Adams College.

### Conclusion

The Church of Scotland opposed the Bantu Education Act because it denied them a role in the education and evangelisation of African children through the withdrawal of subsidies. Inexplicably the Church had initially been optimistic about the government's intentions, speculating that increased funds would be directed towards the missionaries to maintain and expand their education system alongside a burgeoning state system. The Church was already approaching a point where it could no longer run either its institutions or primary schools,

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<sup>108</sup> NLS B379 Shepherd to Watt 20 Sept. 1954. Shepherd argued that 'it has been my constant endeavour to keep staff fully informed of developments.' NLSA Lovedale Principal's Report 1954, p. 5. Keeping staff members informed of events did not imply that staff opinions mattered.

<sup>109</sup> NLS B358 Kerr to Watt 24 May 1954.

<sup>110</sup> NLS ACC7548 A78 Letter Books Watt to Kerr 20 July 1954.

<sup>111</sup> NLS B359 Kerr to Watt 4 June 1955. Kerr noted that four senior male teachers were leaving Lovedale.

<sup>112</sup> NLSA Lovedale Principal's Report 1955, pp. 6-7. As African teachers had no opportunities outside government schools (excluding Catholic schools) it makes perfect sense that they decided to remain where they were.

without further financial assistance. When it became clear that funds would be withdrawn it attempted to negotiate with the government in the naive hope that, at the very least, Lovedale could be spared this subsidy withdrawal.<sup>113</sup> As a rather disillusioned Lovedale Governing Council minuted in April 1955; 'It had been hoped that the Government would be more liberal than its pronouncements indicated, but such hopes were dashed.'<sup>114</sup> Thereafter, the FMC and MC quickly and decisively came to the conclusion that they would not seek to maintain any of their schools.

In March 1955 Watt spoke enthusiastically about money being released from the institutions and being put into the BPC and wider Church of Scotland initiatives in South Africa.<sup>115</sup> Some like Arnott, saw the loss of mission institutions as 'liberation from the burden of maintaining schools and boarding departments.'<sup>116</sup> But financial insecurity was not the only reason the Church rejected running its schools as private institutions. Mission authority in schools was breaking down across the Union, with Lovedale in particular the site of serious student disturbances. Unquestionably the Presbyterian Church feared the disintegration of relations between students and staff that was taking place at its mission schools. In 1955 the Lovedale Governing Council noted that 'discourtesy and lack of co-operation were the rule among the majority of male students...It was pointed out that this type of behaviour was rife everywhere.'<sup>117</sup> A few weeks earlier Shepherd had written to Watt describing 'these difficult days, when undisciplined youth continue to make riots in institution after institution.'<sup>118</sup> There is a definite sense in which the Church viewed these institutions as liabilities, it could not run its schools with less money, given that disturbances were triggered, at least nominally, by poor standards and poor food.

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<sup>113</sup> Dougall wrote to Kerr 'it is no good telling mission or church bodies to claim their rights if they can only do so at the expense of Government grants.' NLS ACC7548 A56 Dougall to Kerr 2 Feb. 1954.

<sup>114</sup> CL MS17782 Lovedale Governing Council 14 April 1955. Herron argued that in agreeing to lease their schools the English-speaking churches believed in the 'doctrine that the bark of the Nationalist Government is worse than its bite.' Herron, 'Questions', British Weekly, 18 Nov. 1954, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> NLS A79 Watt to Kerr 7 March 1955.

<sup>116</sup> NLS ACC7548 C19 Lovedale Mission Report for 1957.

<sup>117</sup> CL MS17782 Lovedale Governing Council 10 March 1955.

<sup>118</sup> NLS B379 Shepherd to Watt 17 Feb. 1955.

If the Church was unwilling to run the schools privately why did it not close them? Shepherd and Kerr argued that in principle the Church of Scotland could not reject the acknowledgement of state responsibility for African education that was inherent in the Act, as there was no grounds in the tradition of the Presbyterian Church for doing so.<sup>119</sup> The Church defended its decision not to close schools because of the effect this would have on Africans. As Shepherd remarked, 'we took the view that it was better to hand it over...so as not to deprive the African people of the various forms of education at Lovedale.'<sup>120</sup> Another missionary contended that it was impossible to 'justify refusing to lease school buildings and turn thousands of children on to the streets where they will learn no good.'<sup>121</sup> While many Africans probably rejected school closure, this was not the main reason why the Church refused to close them. It seems more likely they refrained from such a provocative act for fear of inciting African political agitation, as Shepherd's letter to Reeves makes clear. The Church leadership was cautious in dealing with the Act, asserting that change would come through slow weight of changing opinion rather than through public acts of defiance..

Their refusal to acknowledge the wider moral and political implications of Bantu Education suggests the extent to which Kerr and Shepherd accepted white ruling class norms in South Africa. Their failure to engage adequately with African opinion meant that these issues could be effectively avoided by church leaders and they could deal with the Act as a purely administrative and financial issue. This clearly angered Church members in Britain who saw the decision to lease the schools as little more than acquiescence in the government's demands.

The internal strife in the Church of Scotland was to be replicated within the Anglican Church. However, in the Anglican Church, those who opposed its general policy towards Bantu Education were publically active within South Africa, not easily silenced, and caused its leadership much embarrassment. These divisions that plagued the Church leadership are

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<sup>119</sup> NLS B370 Shepherd & Kerr to Watt 8 July 1955.

<sup>120</sup> Shepherd, 'The Bantu Education Act: The Future of Lovedale', South African Outlook, 1 Sept. 1955, pp. 132-4.

<sup>121</sup> NLS B364 Matheson to Watt 22 Dec. 1954.

examined in the following chapter.

Wearing 'African Spectacles': The Anglican Church and the Bantu Education Act<sup>1</sup>

No single piece of government legislation has had as profound an impact on the Church of the Province in South Africa (CPSA) as the Bantu Education Act. It precipitated a dramatic cleavage of opinion within the church, both amongst its leaders and followers, and its response to Bantu Education was fractured and controversial. The majority of the church's leaders adopted a passive approach, opting for what they saw as the lesser of two evils, the leasing of its schools to the government. However, a minority, led by passionate charismatic churchmen, opted to defy the government by closing down the schools that fell under their control.

In contrast to the protracted debates in other denominations, the leaders of the Anglican Church determined their reaction to Bantu Education quickly and decisively. The CPSA archive contains substantial material relating to Bantu Education, but it largely describes the period after the decision to lease schools was made. This is because the decision was made exclusively by the Bishops, with minimal input from those outside the Synod. Excluding some attempts by Ambrose Reeves, the Bishop of Johannesburg, and Eric Trapp, the Bishop of Zululand, there is little evidence to suggest that the opinions' of teachers, the clergy or other Africans with an interest in education were sought by the leadership.

The period from the passage of the Bantu Education Act to the circulars of August 1954 was dominated by meetings in individual dioceses. As early as October 1953 the Board of Management of Mission Schools in the Johannesburg diocese had decided to halt all investment in schooling until the situation became clearer.<sup>2</sup> A few months later Trapp reported that in his diocese there were 'many conflicting views': some school managers insisted they should not rent any schools, while others claimed this would 'result in the closure of schools and much acrimony'. He appealed to other Anglican bishops to make

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<sup>1</sup> WCL CPSA AB388 Bishop Reeves, File ii. J. Calata to Reeves, 23 Nov. 1954.

<sup>2</sup> WCL, CPSA AB2013 Diocese of Johannesburg 1802-1987, L2 Minutes Board of Management of Mission Schools, 9 Oct. 1953.

their opinions known to him.<sup>3</sup> In reply the Bishop of Bloemfontein, C. Alderson, wrote 'all I can say is that the general opinion seems to be that our only alternative is to let the schools.'<sup>4</sup> It is not clear whose general opinion was represented, but this view was also favoured by the Archbishop of Cape Town, Geoffrey Clayton:

I do not think myself that it is possible to avoid all co-operation with the Government [he commented] ... I think we should be doing a very ill service to our Natives if we left the field wholly clear to the Government....I think we seize any opportunity we can get of bringing such influence as we can upon those who are being trained to be teachers and on the schools

According to Clayton at a recent meeting, African schools managers in Zululand were in 'unanimous' agreement that the Church should try and maximise its influence within the new educational system.<sup>5</sup> In Johannesburg, Reeves called a general meeting of all teachers from the diocese to find out 'the current opinion of teachers', although the results of this meeting were not recorded.<sup>6</sup> Reeves believed that schools should be sold rather than leased, with the sales revenue funding a small number of private schools. By keeping some schools the Church could retain 'a stake in African education,' although this would only be worthwhile if such schools 'had a greater measure of control than at present.'<sup>7</sup>

From this limited evidence it appears the majority of Anglican leaders were prepared to work with the government, and lease their schools. After the arrival of the August circulars, matters moved quickly, as decisions had to be made before the end of 1954. The first church

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<sup>3</sup> WCL, CPSA AB1124 Diocese of Bloemfontein, Bantu Education. Trapp to Bishops of the CPSA, 21 April 1954.

<sup>4</sup> WCL AB1124 Alderson to Trapp, May 5 1954.

<sup>5</sup> WCL CPSA AB191 Clayton, Political Correspondence 1949-57. Clayton to Duncan, 2 June 1954. Note Clayton's paternalist reference to 'our Natives.' This claim that there was 'unanimous' agreement in the Zululand Diocese somewhat contradicts Trapp's earlier contention that there were 'many conflicting views.'

<sup>6</sup> WCL CPSA AB623 Diocese of Johannesburg Secretary 1949-62. T Bishop (Superintendent of the Board of Management of Mission Schools to All Teachers, 16 June 1954. Canon John Collins was invited to speak at this meeting. Collins, a Canon at St. Paul's Cathedral, had visited South Africa, meeting many African leaders and white liberals. This experience resulted in him becoming a life-long opponent of apartheid.

<sup>7</sup> Reeves to ? 6 May 1954, from J. Pear-Binns, Ambrose Reeves, (London, 1973), p. 118.

leader to come reach a decision was Fr. Trevor Huddleston, who wrote to Eiselen only ten days after the arrival of the circulars. Managers at the Community of the Resurrection school, St. Peter's, had decided to close it down, because they could not afford to run it on reduced subsidy. Moreover he recognised that 'as this school is situated in a European urban area, your Department would not be willing indefinitely to allow us to continue even if we desired to do so.'<sup>8</sup>

The Executive of the Provincial Board of Missions (PBM) met in October to discuss the circulars and there was 'protracted debate' about the church's responsibility to Africans, and the consequences of non-cooperation. Eventually a unanimous report noted that whilst the leadership 'deplored the ideology upon which the Act is based ... the Church should nevertheless continue to participate in various ways in the education of Africans, even though this may mean the disposal of property to the Government.'<sup>9</sup> One unnamed Board member suggested that every effort should be made to run a single private school. This suggestion was rejected however; Church leaders argued that such a school would have to follow 'the new educational system' and would suffer staffing difficulties and uncertainty among its pupils.<sup>10</sup> It was agreed that all Anglican schools would be rented at a nominal rate except where a significant <sup>amount</sup> had been spent amount on school property, in which case an economic rent would be charged. Further, the clergy should become members of schools boards; fullest use of the right of entry for religious instruction be made; and hostels be given up, because of problems of divided control. Finally, they asserted that the Church Executive should seek ways to improve its evangelistic work among children via Sunday Schools and the training of extra catechists.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> WCL CPSA AB2089 St. Peter's School 1932-67. Huddleston to Eiselen 12 Aug. 1954. Section 6Ciii of the August Circular had stated that any school situated on 'European' land would be subject to the provisions of the Group Areas Act. Huddleston requested that the school should be allowed to remain open until the end of 1956 to allow all current students to end their courses.

<sup>9</sup> WCL CPSA AB785 Provincial Board of Mission Executive Minutes, 6 Oct. 1954.

<sup>10</sup> The Bishop of Bloemfontein had already rejected this idea remarking 'It might even be a disadvantage to children to have been known to have been in private Bantu schools.' AB1124 Alderson to Rector of the House of the Sacred Mission (England) 28 Aug. 1954.

<sup>11</sup> WCL CPSA AB785 Minutes 6 Oct. 1954.

After this meeting Clayton hoped there would be unanimity at the full provincial meeting in November and at the following Synod, and remarked to Bishop Roberts of the SPG 'the fact that the Report is unanimous is a relief to me as it suggests there is not likely to be much difference of opinion'.<sup>12</sup> However, when the PBM met there was not the unity that Clayton had hoped for. After 'much discussion' the report was agreed by the executive, with one dissident. This was most probably Reeves who, as will become clear, changed his mind on how best to approach Bantu Education.

At the following <sup>Synod</sup> the Bishops voted to lease their schools, after which Reeves asked Clayton if it was binding. After a night's deliberation, Clayton declared that it was not. Following the Synod, the Bishops released a statement in which they 'deplored' the intentions of the Act, and were 'of the opinion that the Church should not make itself responsible for taking part in such an educational system.' All they were 'prepared to do' was lease their schools to the government:

The majority of us think that in many cases it would be wrong to refuse to do so. Such a refusal would throw many teachers out of employment and leave many children without the opportunity of any kind of instruction. It is incompatible with our duty to the African people to take action which might lead to such results<sup>13</sup>

The assertion that the Anglican Church was only 'prepared' to lease schools implies that there were other options which they were not willing to consider because they refused to make concessions. The only other alternatives open were either to run the schools privately, a plan which Clayton had rejected as 'impossibly expensive'<sup>14</sup>, or to close all the schools down in defiance. In effect, the Bishops were making a spurious distinction in that they did

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<sup>12</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Roberts (Bishop D Roberts was the Secretary of the SPG) 25 Oct. 1954. Trapp has already cast his doubts on this when he wrote '[T]he several dioceses concerned, may, of course, adopt very different attitudes, and it may not be possible to submit a memorandum which can truly claim to be the definitive voice of the CPSA as a whole.' WCL CPSA AB1124 Trapp to Bishops of the CPSA, 21 April 1954.

<sup>13</sup> WCL AB191 File Bantu Education, 'Statement by the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa on the Bantu Education Act', Nov. 1954. Only Reeves opposed this decision, suggesting that the Bishops spoke with one voice on this issue.

<sup>14</sup> WCL CPSA AB1095 Corr. between Clayton and G. Fisher (Archbishop of Canterbury). Clayton to Fisher 27 Oct. 1954.



exactly what the government wanted them to do, they leased their schools.<sup>15</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Reeves received a resolution from the 'African Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Johannesburg' which noted that they were 'deeply disturbed' that the Bishops of the Province were planning to lease school properties to the government. They urged him 'to close every school within his jurisdiction'.<sup>16</sup> Later in the day Reeves attended an extraordinary meeting of the Diocesan Board of Management of Mission Schools and informed them he was closing all 23 schools under their control from 1 April 1956.<sup>17</sup> He explained he had reached this 'painful decision' because the Church

has no alternative but to refuse to co-operate in any way in furthering an education policy which violates the principles from which all true education is sought, for it proposes to train the great majority of African children for a status in life which has been assigned to them<sup>18</sup>

In justifying his action to Clayton, Reeves maintained that Bantu Education was 'morally indefensible' and argued that 'the church has no right to assist the authorities in carrying out their plans.'<sup>19</sup> This was a clear attack on the Bishops' decision, and implied that the Anglican Church had compromised itself with apartheid. A few days later Reeves released a statement which claimed 'any kind of co-operation would be a violation of conscience.'<sup>20</sup>

Nor were Reeves and Huddleston the only Anglicans to decide to close down their schools. At the end of October, the Provincial of the Society of the Sacred Mission in Modderpoort, Orange Free State, announced that he was closing a number of schools under the Society's

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<sup>15</sup> Only their refusal to run hostels ran counter to the desires of the Native Affairs Department.

<sup>16</sup> AB388 Papers of Ambrose Reeves File 1 Resolution Passed by the African Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Johannesburg, 15 Nov. 1954.

<sup>17</sup> WCL CPSA AB623 'Report on Mission Schools' In 1954 there were 12,862 pupils and 264 teachers in Anglican schools in the Diocese of Johannesburg.

<sup>18</sup> Reeves, Forum, Dec. 1954, from Paton, Apartheid, p. 236.

<sup>19</sup> AB388 Reeves to Clayton 15 Nov. 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Press Release, 22 Nov. 1954, quoted in Peart-Binns, Ambrose Reeves, p. 122.

control, convinced as he was 'that the true welfare of the African people is being denied by virtue of a political theory and educational principles which we affirm to be contrary to the Will of God.'<sup>21</sup>

How it was possible for there to be such divergent opinions within a single church needs further exploration. Before examining the forces that motivated Reeves and Huddleston, however, it is necessary to examine the role played by Clayton in determining to lease schools.

### Clayton

There are numerous reasons why Clayton acted as he did.<sup>22</sup> At one level, the decision to lease was the best financial option available to the Church. Like other mission churches the CPSA struggled with the financial burden of mission education. In the Johannesburg diocese, considered the 'richest', an internal report in 1954 estimated that £6,500 needed to be spent on schools to satisfy existing court orders lodged against the Church to improve sanitary conditions. It suggested it was 'highly likely' that further court orders would be served; the only solution was to concentrate on larger urban schools and withdraw all funding from rural schools.<sup>23</sup> The PBM meeting which considered Bantu Education also noted there was a 'substantial measure of doubt' within the Church regarding the long term viability of a significant number of its schools. Leasing the schools to the state would free the Church from 'the routine tasks at present connected with [their] management',<sup>24</sup> and

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<sup>21</sup> WCL CPSA AB2409 Society of the Sacred Mission. 'Notice of Closure', pamphlet by R. Roseveare. Oct. 1954. The Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman noted that while he recommended that all his diocesan schools be closed 'I do not feel that I can override the conscience of boards of managers who feel unable to do so.' 'SPG Appeal to help S. Africa Tops £5000', British Weekly, 17 Dec. 1954, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Undoubtedly, Clayton carried the opinion of the Bishops (excluding Reeves) with him, both because they agreed with him and because of his dominant personality. Huddleston remarked that Clayton 'was a very difficult bloke, he was such a strong person that most people became "yes men". He was too frightening.' WCL CPSA AB2261 Interview Worsnip and Huddleston, London, 24 May 1984.

<sup>23</sup> WCL AB623 'Report on Mission Schools' Board of Management of Mission Schools in the Diocese of Johannesburg, 1 Jan. 1954.

<sup>24</sup> WCL CPSA AB785 Minutes 6 Oct. 1954. There is evidence to suggest that student disturbances continued in Anglican schools. The Principal of Khaiso school in Pretoria noted in his report for May 1954

would actually generate income for the church. While the loss of evangelical opportunities was regrettable, the change provided for 'a vigorous use of new opportunities [which would] enable the Church to discharge her evangelistic and pastoral duties towards Africans more effectively in the days to come'.<sup>25</sup> The loss of schools was apparently not as significant to their evangelical mission as it had been for the Catholics. As the Bishop of Pretoria remarked:

it is difficult to assess the value of the work done by the schools in our diocese. In the early days these proved the most important means of evangelistic contact with our people, but latterly, the evangelistic importance of many of our schools has fallen away. The change which has been brought about by the Bantu Education Act may not, therefore, be altogether an ill wind.<sup>26</sup>

Clayton, who believed somewhat prophetically that the 'new system' would 'break down', had already rejected selling the schools, lest it leave the Church with no buildings to take up their work again.<sup>27</sup> Leasing was thus the only option because of the effect of closure on African children. For his part, Reeves was aware of the anguish his decision would cause realising that '...it means depriving African children of benefits we would gladly continue to give. But there is no other way.'<sup>28</sup> For Clayton the reality of thousands of children being forced out of school was unthinkable:

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'the girls are ill disciplined and difficult.' WCL CPSA AB2365 Diocese of Pretoria I4 Khaiso School, Principal's Report May 1954. At the Society of the Sacred Mission institution at Modderpoort the principal noted in November 1954 that 'The discipline of the boys house has given cause for concern from April onwards. The High School deteriorated so badly that it shut down in May....there were no attempts at strikes, but there were continued threats of violence and making of coshes.' He blamed the trouble on an attempt to establish a branch of the Society of Young Africans at the school as well as its impending closure. WCL AB2049 H2 Principles Report. Nov. 1954.

<sup>25</sup> WCL AB1095 Clayton to Fisher 12 Nov. 1954. Clayton noted 'we have to devise other means to work among African children.' To this end a committee under Trapp was established to examine the extension of Sunday School services throughout the Union. In December the Bishop of Pretoria created a diocesan Director of Religious Education to organise and promote Sunday Schooling. WCL CPSA AB2365 Diocese of Pretoria, File D Bishop's Senate Minutes 1951-58, 9 Dec. 1954.

<sup>26</sup> Rhodes House Library (henceforth RHL) Oxford. USPG D504 1939-57 Bishop of Pretoria, Report Jan. 1955 - Dec. 1955.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Paton, Apartheid, p. 235.

<sup>28</sup> Press Release 22 Nov. 1954, quoted in Peart-Binns, Ambrose Reeves, p. 121.

I am haunted by the fear that if the number of school buildings available is greatly reduced by refusal of the missions to lease any of their buildings, the result will be the throwing of large numbers of children onto the streets....Even a rotten system of education is better than that which young children pick up in the streets.<sup>29</sup>

The complete closure of Anglican mission schools would mean that thousands of children would have been reliant upon their parents . But as Clayton noted 'their fathers and mothers have to go to work and cannot supervise them.'<sup>30</sup> The question that he probably asked himself was could an archbishop be directly responsible for exposing children to these 'dangers'? Was it not the church's duty to do the exact opposite, to save children from those threats? The decision to close or not was both difficult and complex and needed wisdom and courage whatever was decided.

To close schools would have been a very political act which would have openly defied government policy and poured thousands of children onto the streets in an explosive political atmosphere.<sup>31</sup>

Clayton's decision to lease was also dictated by his theological convictions. He believed that the Church was most effective by simply being 'the Church'. It was the Church's duty 'to state clearly the moral problem and leave men to form their own personal decisions.'<sup>32</sup> For Clayton, the Church was a separate entity independent of worldly influences and affairs, its function to proclaim 'the principles laid down once and for all by the Head of the Church' which were 'eternally right'.<sup>33</sup> Its primary role was the saving of souls and the salvation of the individual, not exerting conspicuous political pressure on governments and individuals

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<sup>29</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton Charge to the Cape Town Diocese, 1954.

<sup>30</sup> ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Clayton was also president of the CCSA and would have been aware of the attitudes of other churches, thus closing Anglican schools would have been an isolated act, at variance with the decisions made by the other denominations. This undoubtedly gave him further reason not to close the schools.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Worsnip, Between, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> Clayton, 'The Church and the Present Situation', address Cape Town City Hall, 10 June 1955. WCL CPSA AB811 Clayton, 'The Critical Years', p. 154.

in the hope of changing policies.<sup>34</sup> Neither should it involve itself in political campaigns and align itself to any political party, as 'a party is an ephemeral thing and the Church continues'.<sup>35</sup> The Church's duty was to proclaim and teach principles, leaving it upon those whom it taught to change earthly society. As Worsnip remarked, 'In this there is a sense in which the Church assumes the role of commentator, not entirely immersed in the warp and weft of politics. The Church remains somewhat aloof from the political affairs of society.'<sup>36</sup> For Clayton teaching the Bible was the most effective witness the Church could offer.<sup>37</sup>

This interpretation meant that 'Clayton appeared quite prepared to live in a situation in which the state, no matter how brutal or oppressive its legislation, continued to safeguard the right of the Church "to be the Church."<sup>38</sup> Despite restrictions placed on Africans by apartheid, Clayton believed that the state's actions did not, as yet, restrict the activities of the Church. As he remarked to Bishop Roberts of the SPG in 1953 'I do not think that at the present time it is really true to say the Church has been muzzled.'<sup>39</sup> He made it abundantly clear that the Church could only defy secular authority when it denied the Church the right to be 'the Church'. At his enthronement in 1949 he said 'the collapse of civilization only matters in so far as it is likely to involve the ruin of human souls.'<sup>40</sup>

Clearly, the archbishop did not believe that Bantu Education threatened the real work of the Church. In May 1954 he wrote to Malan emphasizing those issues which he considered

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<sup>34</sup> Clayton often stressed that people were citizens of two worlds and that the principle role of the Church was to prepare individuals for their heavenly salvation.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Worsnip, Between, p. 28. He believed the Church had its own proven method of creating change, through the timeless wisdom of God's word. This was similar to the attitude adopted by the Catholic Church.

<sup>36</sup> Worsnip, Between, p. 36.

<sup>37</sup> Alan Paton wrote that for Clayton the Church 'meant the attempt to promote the study of and investigation of the problem of evangelising, and the establishing of Christian social order.' A. Paton, Apartheid, p. 234.

<sup>38</sup> Worsnip, Between, p. 142.

<sup>39</sup> WCL CPSA AB707 South African Church Institute. Letter Clayton to Roberts 1 Aug. 1953.

<sup>40</sup> Quotes in Worsnip, Between, p. 34. Thus as long as human souls could be saved through the actions of an unmolested Church, society could descend into tyranny.

'jeopardised [the] liberty for all men to worship in accordance with their religious beliefs and to learn and teach religion,' such as the Suppression of Communism Act, and its associated banning orders which prevented individuals from attending religious services. He also criticised 'certain aspects of the implementation of the Bantu Education Act.'<sup>41</sup> Malan passed the letter to Verwoerd, who subsequently met with Clayton. While the exact 'aspects' of the implementation of Bantu Education Clayton opposed are unclear, he remarked that he

had a long talk about the Bantu Education Act. I told him our lawyers interpreted the Act to mean that Sunday Schools and theological colleges would have to be registered. He said his lawyers said they wouldn't. At certain periods during schools hours in Government schools the right of entry will be granted to any denominations which have a certain number of pupils. But it would have to be exercised by somebody either black or white who could give instruction in the mother tongue.<sup>42</sup>

While Clayton deplored the whole Bantu Education Act, he only opposed those parts which impinged religious freedom and was only prepared to challenge the government when he felt that religious liberty was at stake.

Clayton may also have opposed the closure of schools and adopted a more conciliatory approach because of his position as Archbishop of the Anglican Church in South Africa. In 1952 he wrote

I am in what seems to be a difficult position, as Chief Bishop in a Church which includes people of all races, and in which it is fairly obvious that a large proportion of our European laymen do not agree with the teaching of the Church on racial matters<sup>43</sup>

The Church's membership may have been broad and racially mixed<sup>44</sup>, but its leadership was overwhelmingly white and it relied predominantly upon money from its white adherents. As

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<sup>41</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Malan 26 May 1954.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Worsnip, Between, p. 128.

<sup>43</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Duncan 22 Oct. 1952.

<sup>44</sup> The Anglican Church had more African members than white members. See Paton, Apartheid, p. 46.

Paton remarked

The Church of the Province was a South African church and carried within itself all the tensions and all the corruptions.....It being of South Africa, the colour bar entered into every part of its life<sup>45</sup>

It was not until 1966 that an African Bishop was appointed<sup>46</sup>, and well into the 1970s no African in the Church ever supervised white workers. In 1982 there was still only one African Bishop in South Africa. When in 1984, Desmond Tutu was appointed Bishop of Johannesburg this was 'bitterly opposed by many white parishes in the diocese'.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, thirty years after the struggle over Bantu Education, many white Anglicans refused to accept the principle of non-racialism. Throughout the twentieth century synodical statements and resolutions did not reflect the attitudes and opinions of the vast majority of white Anglicans. Huddleston noted in 1957, 'In the Church, as outside it, it is prejudice and fear and racialism itself which operate to confound the principles and ideas of episcopal pronouncements.'<sup>48</sup> He continued

I think it would be true to say that in outspokenness; in the utterances of her Archbishops and Bishops; in the published resolutions of her synods - the Church has been outstanding. But, over the past twelve years at any rate, this witness has been totally ineffective in its influence on the mass of White South Africa.<sup>49</sup>

In 1955 Clayton reflected:

we are in a minority among white people ... it has been said lately, with a good deal of truth, that we do not carry our laymen with us. I think that is

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<sup>45</sup> Paton, Apartheid, p. 46.

<sup>46</sup> Bishop Alpheus Zulu of Zululand.

<sup>47</sup> Worsnip, Between, pp. 156-7, fn. 31.

<sup>48</sup> T. Huddleston, Naught for Your Comfort, p. 76.

<sup>49</sup> Huddleston, Naught, p. 70.

true of many of the rank and file.<sup>50</sup>

The wholesale closing of schools seemed threatening to white South Africa, signalling open defiance of government policy and raising the spectre of thousands of African youths roaming the streets. It would have been difficult for Clayton to defy opinion that originated from the socially and economically dominant white group in 'his' Church, a group to which he also had a pastoral responsibility. Huddleston put the situation bluntly when he observed that the Anglican church was 'conniving at a policy which openly proclaims itself one of racial discrimination...because it fears that an effective and determined opposition will lose it the allegiance of its white members'.<sup>51</sup> Clayton lived in a white middle-class ecclesiastical world, far removed from the realities of life in South Africa for the majority of Anglicans. French-Breytagh, Anglican priest and Clayton's close associate, remarked

He only ever spoke about the 'fundamental issues' and 'apartheid being wrong' and all that. But he never came across individuals who were suffering and he was an unpersonable kind of person.<sup>52</sup>

In other words, Clayton understood suffering intellectually as an abstract notion, but never came directly in contact with it on a regular basis. Huddleston argued that for the white leadership of the Anglican Church poverty and suffering 'was something they had no contact with. They simply didn't understand it at all.'<sup>53</sup>

### Trevor Huddleston

Undoubtedly, Huddleston's public and vocal opposition to Bantu Education and apartheid was partly inspired by his daily association with Africans in Sophiatown. Huddleston had become priest-in-charge of the Community of the Resurrection in 1943. The Community,

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<sup>50</sup> LPL Fisher V. 163 Clayton address to SPG 26 April 1955.

<sup>51</sup> Huddleston, Naught, p. 157. Paton argues that Clayton thought that Huddleston always overlooked the responsibility that Clayton had to white church members. Paton, Apartheid, p. 253.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Worsnip, Between, p. 83.

<sup>53</sup> WCL CPSA AB2261. Worsnip said of Clayton 'His own position suffered from the deficiency of not having been informed by black opinion.' Worsnip, Between, p. 117.



committed to making 'a deep and sacramental connection between individual sanctity and the needs of the world'<sup>54</sup>, had come to South Africa in 1903 and, before Huddleston's arrival, had firmly established itself in Sophiatown.<sup>55</sup> The previous priest-in-charge, Raymond Raynes, had also actively championed social causes during his tenure in Sophiatown. During his six years he oversaw the construction of three churches, seven schools, three nursery schools, and the expansion of the hospital. He supported campaigns for improved water, lighting and sanitation and, according to Paton, 'fought for the poor and the persecuted'.<sup>56</sup> Huddleston came into a situation where much was expected of him and where the Community of the Resurrection had already become politicised. The effect that living in Sophiatown was to have on his life is best expressed in his own words

I was working in those days in a slum area of the city, which no longer exists....But in my day Sophiatown, one of the oldest African areas in the city, was very much alive. And my whole experience of poverty - my experience of what is meant by the word urbanization in the African context....one's understanding of racial conflict actually in the heart of where it hit hardest - all this I learned within the context of this slum parish in Sophiatown. This was of course a very wonderful experience and one which I suppose more than anything else shaped all my views and my thinking, not merely about sociological problems, but about religion itself - it changed my views certainly, and gave me a completely new approach to life<sup>57</sup>

It was this experience which led Huddleston to identify himself with African opinion, and oppose the policies that caused the suffering he observed. Having described Sophiatown as 'one of the most vital places on earth',<sup>58</sup> in early 1955 he witnessed its 'forced removal.' For him, and many others, Sophiatown was of huge symbolic significance and its destruction greatly hardened his attitude not only towards the government, but also towards the

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<sup>54</sup> R. Denniston, Trevor Huddleston: A Life, (London, 1999), p. xvi. The Community of the Resurrection was a religious order which had its roots in the Christian Socialist movement in Britain. All members adopted a 'socialist' lifestyle under a vow of poverty and dedicated themselves to 'applied Christianity' where Christianity had real social implications. See A. Egan, 'Douglas Thompson: Christian Socialist, Radical Democrat: A Political Biography', PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1999, pp. 46-54.

<sup>55</sup> Clayton has asked the community to take over the Parish in 1934.

<sup>56</sup> Paton, Apartheid, p. 125.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Denniston, Trevor, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Huddleston, Naught, p. 26.

churches which failed to challenge its demolition.

Through these experiences Huddleston was better able to empathise with Africans and see the inherent evil of apartheid.<sup>59</sup> He had a 'consistent and passionate belief that basic human rights lay at the heart of the Christian gospel.'<sup>60</sup> Thus, it was the Church's duty to 'proclaim fearlessly, in season and out of season, the truth of the Gospel: and to recognise that this truth is revolutionary, and that it is the most powerful solvent for traditional social ideas.'<sup>61</sup> He argued the 'Christian cannot escape the daily responsibility of choice',<sup>62</sup> meaning that in an oppressive situation 'the Christian is always, if he be true to his calling, an agitator.'<sup>63</sup> This meant opposing the state politically, for 'when government degenerates into tyranny... laws cease to be binding upon its subjects'.<sup>64</sup> Unlike Clayton, Huddleston believed that the church was a political entity, with a permanent obligation to oppose unchristian practises directly and in a worldly manner. Because he found apartheid irredeemably evil, 'a blasphemy against God'<sup>65</sup> he argued that it was the duty of every Christians to do everything in his or her power to exorcise such blasphemy.

Clayton's concern that the Church should remain true to itself was matched by Huddleston's conviction that it was not doing so. He believed that the Church, through its compromise and inactivity, was threatening its very existence, and feared Africans would permanently

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<sup>59</sup> In 1956 Anthony Sampson, editor of Drum, wrote 'Huddleston was so inextricably part of black South Africa, so much the fixed star against which all other liberal activities were judged.' A. Sampson, Drum: A Venture into New Africa (London, 1956), p. 133.

<sup>60</sup> Denniston, Trevor, p. xvi.

<sup>61</sup> Huddleston, Naught, p. 252.

<sup>62</sup> ibid, p. 59

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Sampson, Drum, p. 168.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Rand Daily Mail, 16 Feb. 1953.

<sup>65</sup> Huddleston, Naught, p. 180. He noted 'I believe that, because God became man, therefore human nature in itself has a dignity and value which is infinite. I believe that this conception necessarily carries with it the idea that the State exists for the individual, not the individual for the State. Any doctrine based on racial or colour prejudice and enforced by the State is therefore an affront to human dignity and 'ipso facto' an insult to God himself... There is no room for fence-sitting over a question such a racial ideology', p. 18.

desert it if it continued on its present course. In 1953 he contended 'It is not only possible, but on a natural level probable, that the Christian Church may be facing her last opportunity of retaining the love and loyalty of her African people - for the gulf widens every day.'<sup>66</sup>

Given these beliefs it is unsurprising that Huddleston closed down the schools within his control, a decision which he claimed was not 'a flamboyant gesture but the upholding of a principle against wrong racial ideology'.<sup>67</sup> He argued that Bantu Education 'emptied of all meaning all that was understood by the word education.'<sup>68</sup> For him there could be no compromise with such a fundamentally flawed piece of legislation.

It was easier for Huddleston to <sup>reach</sup> such a decision than for Clayton. Significantly, Huddleston did not have a white laity to concern himself with, as he was a parish priest in a African area. He was not the leader of a national church with differing communities to which he was responsible, rather he represented a brotherhood which was committed to alleviating social deprivation and its causes in its immediate vicinity. Huddleston identified apartheid as the cause of suffering and, within the Community of the Resurrection, strove through every means possible to seek its demise. From this point, the action taken by Ambrose Reeves, required even greater courage for Reeves did have a large and substantially white laity to consider and a significant national public role to fulfil.

### Ambrose Reeves

Reeves was consecrated Bishop of Johannesburg in 1949, following Clayton's appointment as archbishop of Cape Town. Before coming to South Africa he had been a priest in the Liverpool area, where he worked with trade unions, playing a prominent role in the 1945 Liverpool dockers' strike. Thus, even before his arrival in South Africa it is clear that he was not afraid to extend the Christian Gospel into the political arena. In his very first charge

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<sup>66</sup> Huddleston, 'For God's Sake Wake Up!', The Observer, 30 Aug. 1953.

<sup>67</sup> WCL, CPSA AB2013 Clergy Synod Minutes. 21 Oct. 1954.

<sup>68</sup> The Star 25 March 1955.

to the Johannesburg diocese, Reeves appeared to attack the CPSA indirectly,

it is all too easy for any body such as a Synod to pass resolutions and to go away with a comfortable feeling that something has been accomplished. All that has been done is to decide on a certain policy. It is the carrying out of that policy which is all important<sup>69</sup>

Three years later his charge was more forthright:

While on the one hand it is our duty to create good citizenship and loyalty to authority, on the other hand we must criticise and challenge tyranny and injustice wherever we meet it. We ought to be deeply ashamed if we acquiesce dumbly in things as they are<sup>70</sup>

Reeves evidently believed that 'tyranny and injustice' were already part of South African society, and that it was the Church's challenge to face up to this reality. He aimed to do this by uniting political groups to oppose apartheid, believing that the Church could not complete its overthrow alone. In 1950 and 1951 he successfully brought together a 'strange assortment', which included trade unions, the SAIRR, the African and Indian Congresses, the white Congress of Democrats and the Liberal Party to try and coordinate opposition to apartheid. Paton argues that Reeves did so 'with a measure of success that was surprising'.<sup>71</sup> While this alienated many Anglicans in the diocese 'and aroused amongst the extreme-right wing whites a dangerous anger',<sup>72</sup> it showed that Reeves was not prepared to pay lip service to the white majority view in his diocese.

We have seen how Reeves, like Huddleston and Clayton, opposed the policy of Bantu Education because it 'violated' the 'true principles' of education and was designed to train Africans for permanent subservient status. While clear that no Anglican schools should be used to run government schools, he initially suggested selling the majority to fund a number

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<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Worsnip, Between, p. 122.

<sup>70</sup> WCL CPSA AB1979 Diocese of Johannesburg. Reeves charge, 1953.

<sup>71</sup> Paton, Apartheid, p. 204.

<sup>72</sup> ibid.

of private schools. Thus, at first, Reeves was willing to entertain the idea of teaching Bantu Education in Anglican schools, but by November 1954 he had changed his mind. This may have been due to the influence of Huddleston with whom he had an excellent working relationship,<sup>73</sup> but seems more the result of the application of double-sessions<sup>74</sup> in Anglican schools before the stated date for the assumption of control of mission education.

In early May 1954, Reeves was 'greatly dismayed' at the introduction of double-sessions in 'his' schools, arguing that by allowing it, the Church was 'aiding and abetting' a system to which it was opposed'.<sup>75</sup> He wrote to de Villiers insisting the double-sessions end, noting that the government appeared to be implementing its schools policy before the churches had made any decisions about their future. De Villiers responded that if the churches wanted to receive government subsidies, they would have to abide by government regulations.<sup>76</sup> Angered by this rebuttal Reeves wrote back that if the government wanted to implement Bantu Education in church schools they would have to take them over at the end of the school year 'because the Church cannot allow itself to be used as the instrument of carrying out policy with which it so profoundly disagrees'.<sup>77</sup> It seems that the NAD attitude hardened Reeves's resolve and contributed to his closing the schools under his authority.

Despite the fact that, unlike Huddleston, Reeves did not have daily contact with Africans, his determination to form an alliance of peoples against apartheid meant that he mixed with individuals who *were* aware of what was happening in South Africa, and was in part informed by their knowledge and experience. Luthuli, for example, said of him 'I was deeply impressed by his stature as a man of God, by his insight into the true nature of what

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<sup>73</sup> See Worsnip, Between, p. 122

<sup>74</sup> The school day was split into 2 sessions. This allowed more children to receive some schooling but significantly reduced the time that students were actually in school.

<sup>75</sup> WCL AB388 Reeves iv Transvaal Native Education Advisory Board correspondence 1952-54. Reeves to R. Pretor, May 6 1954.

<sup>76</sup> See Peart-Binns, Ambrose, p. 119.

<sup>77</sup> WCL AB388 Reeves to de Villiers, 12 July 1954.

is happening in South Africa, and by his courage.<sup>78</sup> Fr. Shand, whom Reeves appointed Director of Religious Education in the diocese in May 1954, also observed:

His concern with justice was never a bloodlessly intellectual appreciation of justice as a desirable thing, but [was] always as something that here and now affected the daily lives of men and women...Ambrose was highly sensitive to the emotional needs of the African.<sup>79</sup>

This contrasts sharply with Clayton, who, as we have seen, was a more distant observer of suffering. Shand also noted that Reeves made great efforts to get to know as many lay people in his diocese as possible, so that to him, African needs were 'more immediate and clamant'.<sup>80</sup>

But Reeves, like Huddleston, also lived in Johannesburg in the late 1940s and 1950s where 'the struggle between Government and Church was most intense and most publicised and most spectacular.'<sup>81</sup> Johannesburg was the focal point of most African political activity; it was arguably where they suffered most from the deprivations of apartheid, and where opposition to those deprivations was most vocal. By contrast, Clayton was in Cape Town and believed 'the diocese of Cape Town is not, of course, affected. We are only very slightly concerned in the Bantu Education Act.'<sup>82</sup> Clayton's opportunities to come into contact with African parents and those directly concerned with African education were fewer in Cape Town., but they did exist had he sought it.

It may be relevant that Reeves and Huddleston were also relatively new to South Africa compared to Clayton. By 1953 Huddleston had been in the country ten years, and Reeves only four, compared to Clayton's nineteen. Huddleston observed in 1957

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<sup>78</sup> Luthuli, Let My People Go, p. 151.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Peart-Binns, Ambrose, p. 127. Shand observed 'His interest was never merely ecclesiastical.'

<sup>80</sup> ibid, p. 127

<sup>81</sup> Paton, Apartheid, p. 237.

<sup>82</sup> WCL CPSA AB1429 Canon C. Wood 1903-1980 A5.3 Corr. with Clayton. Clayton to Wood, 4 Jan. 1955.

one of the terrible things that happens, after a while, to all of us in South Africa is the acceptance, unwilling or otherwise, of a situation that cannot be justified on any moral principle, but which is so universal, so much part of the whole way of life, that the struggle against it seems too great an effort<sup>83</sup>

Whether Clayton had become tolerant of the racial situation in South Africa is unknown but he was somewhat complacent about both segregation and apartheid. Writing to Bishop Roberts of the SPG he remarked in 1953

Of course it is true that racial discrimination is the policy of the government, and has always been the policy of every government of the Union. It has been intensified by the present government, but it was in operation before.<sup>84</sup>

This may suggest that he had become somewhat desensitised towards racial discrimination in South Africa, contrasting starkly with the attitudes of Reeves and Huddleston.<sup>85</sup>

Reeves remarked in 1962 'I did ask, somewhat insistently, on more than one occasion, that other church leaders should declare the point at which they were going to make their stand'.<sup>86</sup> For him Bantu Education was the point at which he decided to make his stand against apartheid. In a letter to Clayton he elaborated

For some time passed I have been deeply disturbed by the tendency of the secular authorities in South Africa to exercise even greater control over the lives of our citizens. It has become increasingly clear to me that the point has been reached when the Church will have to make it plain beyond all doubt that it will no longer acquiesce in this continued and persistent encroachment on human life and liberty. I believe that in the way in which this act is being implemented shows that this point has now been reached, and that the Church must let its members, the African people, the Government, and the whole civilized world know where the Church

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<sup>83</sup> Huddleston, Naught, p. 34.

<sup>84</sup> AB707 Clayton to Roberts, 1 Aug. 1953.

<sup>85</sup> In 1955 Clayton remarked 'we must make the best of the conditions in which we have to work, regarding those conditions as given, as part of the problem we are facing, and go on with out pastoral and missionary work as long as we are allowed and as well as we are allowed'. Address to SPG 26 April 1955. LPL Fisher V. 163 f. 79.

<sup>86</sup> Reeves, The Challenge to Christians, (London, 1962), p. 125.

stands in this matter. Hence my decision to close the schools<sup>87</sup>

Reeves understood the significance of Bantu Education, and the role it was to play in the apartheid scheme, and his 'stand against the Act was a kind of declaration of war.'<sup>88</sup> As he saw it, the time had come to state the Church's position on apartheid categorically, and move from opposing apartheid in principle to actually confronting it head on.

### The Reaction

There is little evidence that CPSA leaders engaged African opinion over Bantu Education and equally little indicating how their decisions were received by the communities they affected. The only comment alluding to the attitudes of church members or members of the public to the decision to lease Anglican schools to the State seems to be Clayton's remark that 'African opinion is very divided'.<sup>89</sup> Reeves's decision, generated much comment however. Within days of schools closing Reeves received a number of letters congratulating him. James Calata, an Anglican Priest, President of the Cape African Parents Association and ex-President of the Cape ANC, wrote

Please allow me to give you my personal appreciation of the stand you have taken and the lead you have given to the Diocese of Johannesburg against the Bantu Education Act...this outlook has been the means of preserving the little confidence there still is in the leadership of the white man<sup>90</sup>

He added that Reeves had viewed the whole situation wearing 'African spectacles'. Peart-Binns maintains that 'Africans supported Reeves enthusiastically, emotionally and

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<sup>87</sup> AB388 Reeves to Clayton, 15 Nov. 1954.

<sup>88</sup> Peart-Binns, Ambrose, p. 135.

<sup>89</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Sulston, 7 Feb. 1955.

<sup>90</sup> WCL AB388 Calata to Reeves, 23 Nov. 1954. In an unpublished letter to the Rand Daily Mail Feldman, who was a member of the Transvaal Provincial Council (1943-54) and the South African Labour Party wrote 'Every generation in each community has its good men and saints. In present day Transvaal one such person is the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg...few, if any, in South Africa every [sic] faced with so grave a decision...Bishop Reeves is saving the soul of White South Africa by his truly courageous stand.' WCL A804 Feldman. Feldman to Rand Daily Mail, 23 Nov. 1954.



unreservedly.<sup>91</sup> While there is evidence to suggest many Africans supported Reeves' decision, there is also evidence to the contrary from Reeves himself. Speaking in 1958, he remarked 'at the outset numbers of Africans welcomed the transfer of the control of the schools from churches and missionary bodies to schools committees and boards'.<sup>92</sup> Two year later he observed 'At the time when we closed our mission schools some African parents resented this decision, as it meant that the children were denied the use of buildings in which they had previously gone to school.'<sup>93</sup>

These statements indicate the lack of unanimity in African responses to Reeves's decision, and the same can probably be said of Huddleston's decision. While both acted partly because of their familiarity with African opinion, it is not safe to assume that such opinion represented all or even the majority of Africans. Their opposition to government policy mean that Reeves and Huddleston often came into contact with politically active Africans, who courted their attentions as part of the anti-apartheid struggle. There is little evidence to suggest that these activists had the full support of the teachers, parents and students.<sup>94</sup>

Reeves received a letter from Quintin Whyte the Director of the South African Institute of Race Relations who wrote

This is just a personal note, and not written as the Director of the Institute, to congratulate you on the decision you have made to refuse to co-operate with the Government...some demonstration must be made at some point in time in opposition to the Government, and I think you have done this<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Peart-Binns, Ambrose, p. 122.

<sup>92</sup> RHL, African Bureau Papers, South Africa MSS Afr.S.1681 Box 190 South Africa Churchmen. Statement by Reeves on the Johannesburg Riots, 20 Feb. 1958.

<sup>93</sup> Reeves, The Challenge, p. 128.

<sup>94</sup> The relative failure of the ANC's call for a boycott of Bantu Education suggests as much. Clayton who we have seen was less in touch with African opinion remarked in his charge to the Cape Town Diocese in 1954 that 'more vocal and politically minded Africans' opposed leasing 'but that is not the view of most of those who are themselves more intimately concerned with the matter.' Quoted in 'South African Church Schools Policy', Church Times, 3 Dec. 1954, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> WCL AB388 Whyte to Reeves, 24 Nov. 1954.

Peart-Binns argues that in general the 'white clergy and laity had mixed feelings about the wisdom of Reeves' decision'.<sup>96</sup> This was certainly true of Rev. C. Theyrise, priest-in-charge of St. Mary's Mission in Roodepoort, <sup>who</sup> explained that although he agreed with the decision he had his reservations:

With the closure of our school I foresee a great deal of backsliding, an increase in delinquency and an increase in lax morals. Many parents have told me that they will sent [sic] their children to no other school and have no money to send them to schools away from their homes. What is going to happen to these kids?<sup>97</sup>

This was indeed the problem that the leaders of the CPSA grappled with, and the concern expressed in this letter was the very one that Clayton looked to avoid.

While publically Clayton maintained that Reeves's decision 'commanded respect'<sup>98</sup> privately he was dismayed:

he is incapable of acting as a member of a team and that he insists on doing everything entirely on his own. His refusal to lease schools is his own personal decision...he is determined to go his own way and is not prepared to act in unison with his brethren<sup>99</sup>

Writing privately a few weeks later to Cullen, the Bishop of Grahamstown, Clayton accused Reeves of being 'an alarmist and by nature something of a fanatic'.<sup>100</sup> To Clayton, both Reeves and Huddleston were activists who took the Church into the political realm where it did not belong. Paton maintains that Clayton never approved of Reeves<sup>101</sup> and Huddleston

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<sup>96</sup> Peart-Binns, Ambrose, p. 122. The Vicar-General of the Johannesburg Diocese did not support Reeves at all. WCL AB191 Clayton to Wood, 18 Dec. 1954.

<sup>97</sup> WCL AB1979 Theyrise to Reeves, 8 Dec. 1954.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Paton, Apartheid, p. 235.

<sup>99</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Wood, 18 Dec. 1954. Clayton noted that Reeves had not consulted any committee within the diocese to ascertain their opinion. This is not correct as Reeves had consulted the teachers of the diocese. There is no evidence that, aside from Reeves and Trapp, any other Bishop sought the opinion of diocesan committees.

<sup>100</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Cullen 4 Jan. 1955.

<sup>101</sup> Paton, Apartheid, p. 204.

believed that Clayton was instrumental in his being sent back to England in 1956.<sup>102</sup> Clayton was not alone in his disapproval of Reeves; in January 1955 Trapp, the Bishop of Zululand, remarked 'the independent action of the Bishop of Johannesburg is deplorable on many accounts.'<sup>103</sup>

One constituency, however, was wholeheartedly behind Reeves and Huddleston and that was liberal opinion in Britain. In mid-1953, Wood, the Director of the South African Church Institute and Provincial Commissary to Clayton, wrote that 'the popular opinion throughout England, very widely held but of course quite erroneous, is that the Church of the Province is "observing a prudent silence in so awkward a situation"'.<sup>104</sup> Clayton responded in a rather literal interpretation of Wood's letter that 'nothing has happened lately which it seems necessary for the Church of the Province as a whole to speak out about.'<sup>105</sup> In the same month Clayton also exchanged letters with Bishop Roberts of the SPG about the role that English churches could play in opposing apartheid. In common with leaders of other churches, he warned that 'outside' criticism would 'hinder' rather than 'help' by causing the government to stiffen its resolve against the CPSA.<sup>106</sup> Some months later the SPG released a statement to its members acknowledging the 'vigorous and forthright' assessment Huddleston had made of the South African situation, as well as the sincerity of his appeal to British Christians.<sup>107</sup> However, it concluded that, acting on Clayton's advice, it had

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<sup>102</sup> WCL AB2261. Interview...

<sup>103</sup> WCL AB191 Trapp to Clayton 25 Jan. 1955. Paton suggest that some members of the Community of the Resurrection doubted the wisdom of Huddleston's decision. Paton, Apartheid, p. 242.

<sup>104</sup> WCL AB707 Wood to Clayton, 31 July 1953..

<sup>105</sup> WCL AB707 Clayton to Wood, 3 Aug. 1953. This comment from Clayton would seem to lend more evidence to the fact that Clayton had begun to accept the idea that racial discrimination was an inevitable part of South African life.

<sup>106</sup> WCL AB707 Clayton to Roberts, 1 Aug. 1953. In this letter Clayton noted that one of the great failures of the CPSA was that none of its bishops were South African by birth, he argued that this meant that 'we tend therefore to be regarded as exotic, as foreign missionaries rather than an indigenous Church. Appeals to England made by us seem to substantiate this idea.' This quote indicates an insecurity much like that of the Catholic Church and helps to explain further Clayton's reluctance to defy the government.

<sup>107</sup> This alludes to Huddleston article 'For God's Sake Wake Up!' which appeared in The Observer on the 30 Aug. 1953. In this article Huddleston called upon all Christians to realise that it was every Christian's duty, no matter where they lived, to fight apartheid. This was followed by another article

decided to cease protesting publically against apartheid, fearing that this made the CPSA's task in South Africa 'more difficult'.<sup>108</sup> Rather, the SPG could best serve South Africa by sending out grants and people to assist the CPSA in its work.<sup>109</sup> This statement illustrates Huddleston's influence on British public opinion, and the feeling that the churches were not effectively opposing apartheid.

After the arrival of the August circulars, Roberts wrote to Clayton regarding the 'anxiety and agitation' in Britain 'over the situation in South Africa', and especially the implementation of the Bantu Education Act.<sup>110</sup> Roberts stressed the need for the CPSA to respond to the Act in a practical way. In November Christian Action joined with the African Bureau to launch an appeal to raise money to fund a private school in South Africa.<sup>111</sup> In the same month the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to Clayton observing that the SPG also wanted to launch an appeal but were not prepared to do so until the CPSA and the Church of England agreed what it would be for.<sup>112</sup> Fearful of losing funds to the Africa Bureau appeal<sup>113</sup>, and without Clayton's approval the SPG launched its South Africa Emergency Fund appeal at the end of November. At the same time Reeves made it known that he proposed to open what he called 'Church Family Centres' in schools which had been

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'The Church Sleeps On', 19 Oct. 1954.

<sup>108</sup> Woodfield (Principal of Grace Dieu) remarked 'Outside or ill-informed criticism has not helped us on the spot for the Government has been roused still further against us', WCL AB370 Annual Report Grace Dieu. 1954.

<sup>109</sup> WCL CPSA AB1289 USPG 1953-54 'Race Relations in Africa' 12 Jan. 1954. This statement also rejected passive resistance as a means of opposing apartheid.

<sup>110</sup> WCL AB191 Roberts to Clayton 20 Oct. 1954. Sulston wrote in early 1955 'it was the glaring results of the Bantu Education Act which had come home specially to the hearts of the people in this country.' WCL AB191 Sulston to Trapp, 14 Jan. 1955. The actual loss of schools was a very tangible and obvious effect of apartheid which seemed to ignite public concern in Britain.

<sup>111</sup> The Africa Bureau was created in 1952 by Michael Scott and sought to raise awareness in Britain of the conditions that prevailed in southern Africa. It sought to 'educate' the British public and lobby parliament to seek educational and political reform in British colonies. It also acted to heighten awareness of the effects of apartheid. Christian Action was created by Canon Collins and sought to bring Christian insights and direct action into everyday life in South Africa. It campaigned throughout the period to raise awareness of the plight of those opposing apartheid.

<sup>112</sup> WCL AB1095 Fisher to Clayton, 19 Nov. 1954.

<sup>113</sup> To raise funds for any private schools which may be registered.

closed.<sup>114</sup> This was exactly what people in Britain were crying out for,<sup>115</sup> and Roberts warned that it could lead to a diversion of funds towards the Africa Bureau/Christian Action Appeal<sup>116</sup> because the SPG feared that their appeal would be linked to the actions of the CPSA more generally, ie. the leasing of schools to the state. Boys, the Bishop of Kimberly thought that

Between ourselves, I have the impression that the SPG staff are in quite an unreasonable agitation about the whole South Africa position. They feel Collins and company may appeal strongly to the popular mind, and may permanently damage the SPG's publicity for their support of the Province [CPSA]<sup>117</sup>

Clayton remarked 'the whole of this appeal business seems to me a nightmare.'<sup>118</sup> To confuse matters further Reeves, who was leaving for England on six month's leave at the beginning of December, announced that he was launching a £50,000 appeal for the Church Family Centres. Clayton once again lamented Reeves' apparent inability to work with other Bishops, noting that he and 'the other Bishops' were 'very angry about it.'<sup>119</sup> Cullen, the Bishop of Grahamstown, raged that Reeves was 'taking advantage of his presence in England to start a stampede.'<sup>120</sup> The problem for Clayton and the SPG was that 'their' appeal was floundering because the CPSA had not made any definite proposals as to what they would do with any money. All that it had suggested was that money would be used to

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<sup>114</sup> These Centres aimed to provide religious instruction, music, drama, recitation, handwork and recreation to those children who were being forced out of schools.

<sup>115</sup> Sulston remarked 'the people in England have seen in the results of the Bantu Education Act a real crisis and they are expecting crisis action.' WCL AB191 Sulston to Trapp, 14 Jan. 1955.

<sup>116</sup> WCL AB191 Roberts to Clayton, 29 Nov. 1954. The African Bureau publically declared its support for Reeves in a statement which read 'We applaud the decision of various Mission authorities in South Africa to close their schools rather than compromise with a system that is avowedly designed to limit Africans to an inferior status.' RHL MSS Afr.S 1981 Statement by the African Bureau 11 Dec. 1954.

<sup>117</sup> WCL AB191 Boys to Clayton, 26 Dec. 1954. Clayton wanted the South African Bishops to establish a unified scheme to present to the SPG. Collins became involved through his work with Christian Action and through his relationship with Huddleston.

<sup>118</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Wood 4 Jan. 1955.

<sup>119</sup> WCL AB1420 Clayton to Wood 4 Jan. 1954.

<sup>120</sup> WCL AB191 Cullen to Clayton 29 Dec. 1954

provide more catechists and Sunday Schools places. Sulston, lamented the poor results of the SPG appeal, because its 'plans which were tentatively proposed were not of the kind to evoke active sympathy and support' in contrast to Reeves' 'very striking scheme'.<sup>121</sup> This was the result of Clayton's caution lest a 'hurried scheme' would prove 'unworkable'<sup>122</sup> so that Reeves captured the imagination of the English public with his Church Family Centres. Clayton was well aware of the danger that this represented and remarked resentfully to Cullen

the Bishop [Reeves] has brought it about that he is regarded by large circles in England as the one person in South Africa who has had the courage to stand up for Christian principles, and the rest of us, especially myself, are regarded as weak-kneed traitors to the Christian cause<sup>123</sup>

Trapp was also concerned that 'the Bishop is likely to gain credit as the only realist among us, the only one prepared to take the 'crisis action' which Sulston says the English churchmen are expecting.'<sup>124</sup> These anxieties lasted well into 1956 and only appear to have eased when Reeves associated himself with the SPG appeal from which he also hoped to receive money.<sup>125</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the success or failure of the appeals and of Reeves' Church Family Centres. It can be seen, however, from the debates that surrounded the appeal, that public opinion in Britain was very much behind Reeves. This lends further support to the view that Clayton and his supporters had become desensitised to racist

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<sup>121</sup> WCL AB191 Sulston to Trapp 14 Jan. 1955. A memorandum from the SPG prepared in early January noted that 'the SPG is anxious to be associated with Johannesburg's appeal.' WCL AB707 'Memorandum Prepared by the Chairman of African Sub-Committee', 7 Jan. 1955.

<sup>122</sup> WCL AB1420 Clayton to Wood, 4 Jan. 1955.

<sup>123</sup> WCL AB191 Clayton to Cullen, 4 Jan. 1955. Cullen replied 'The activities of Johannesburg are likely to drive a few nails into our coffin unnecessarily.' WCL AB191 Cullen to Clayton, 6 Jan. 1955.

<sup>124</sup> WCL AB191 Trapp to Clayton, 25 Jan. 1955.

<sup>125</sup> Wood commented that there was still a 'real danger [of] a split being made by the general public between "the Bishop of Johannesburg's defiance" and the rest of the CPSA.' WCL AB945 Wood to Clayton, 29 Dec. 1955. See also WCL AB707 Jeffery (replaced Wood as the Director of the South African Church Institute) to Agar-Hamilton (diocesan office, Pretoria) 29 Feb. 1956.

policies, and were out of touch with the moral outrage that many people felt towards apartheid. His refusal to bow to this pressure also signified his continued belief in the ability of the Church to function in South Africa for the eventual good of all, without having to take a political stance. Clayton was undoubtedly exasperated that Reeves and Huddleston were viewed in Britain as the 'legitimate' voice of the CPSA as opposed to Clayton and his bishops who were seen as weak and ineffectual. Given Clayton's views on theology this probably angered him greatly as he believed Huddleston and Reeves were endangering the Church by drawing it away from its mission by directly involving it in politics.

The difficulties that Huddleston and Reeves caused for the Anglican Church also surfaced within the Methodist Church. In early 1954, the Board of African Education of the Methodist Church had agreed to lease all its schools to the government on the grounds that they could not afford to retain any schools, and even if they could they would be hindered by staff shortages and insecurity of tenure.<sup>126</sup> This decision was confirmed at a Conference a few months later which, in a statement, made known its 'emphatic opposition to the policy underlying the Bantu Education Act.'<sup>127</sup> In general agreement with Clayton's position, the Methodist leadership argued that schools had to be leased 'to provide for the immediate educational needs of the African people.'<sup>128</sup> By early 1955, however, the General Committee of the Methodist Missionary Society in Britain was split over the decision with some members describing it as a 'compromise' using the word in a 'derogatory sense.'<sup>129</sup> Beetham, the Societies secretary, remarked that the actions of Reeves and Huddleston was 'regarded as the shining example of the line Christian opposition to the Government should take.'<sup>130</sup> Some months later he noted the 'increased pressure' that the Church was under to 'speak out publically in condemning the present South African Government's policy'

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<sup>126</sup> See Rundle, 'Compliance or Confrontation...', p. 10.

<sup>127</sup> CL MS15388 Methodist Conferences 1 Oct. 1954 Statement on Bantu Education.

<sup>128</sup> ibid.

<sup>129</sup> SOAS MMS Methodist Missionary Society South Africa 1947-55 Bantu Education, Beetham (Africa Secretary of the MMS) to Webb 6 Jan. 1955.

<sup>130</sup> SOAS MMS Beetham to Webb, 25 Jan. 1955.

because of Huddleston's letters published in the Observer.<sup>131</sup> Webb wrote back to him noting, in common with other denominations, that Huddleston's public condemnation of Bantu Education and apartheid, had caused the church many 'difficulties.'<sup>132</sup> What this episode reveals is that the actions of Reeves and Huddleston caused division and anxiety within other denominations, illustrating the enormous impact that the two men had made on public opinion within Britain. Even outside of their church their action was seen by many as the only legitimate response to Bantu Education.

### Conclusion

In November 1954, responding to pressure from England which clamoured for him to keep the schools in his diocese open as private institutions, Reeves observed 'I believe it would be a waste of money as we should have to follow the syllabus laid down by the government.'<sup>133</sup> So strong was Reeves' and Huddleston's opposition to the Bantu Education Act that they would not even countenance running private schools. Yet, less than four months later, just over a month after all the schools had closed down, both men agreed to run a private school 'because the anguish of parents had been insupportable'.<sup>134</sup> This school, previously the Community of the Resurrection school, St. Cyprians, was renamed Christ the King and was located in Sophiatown; by December 1955 it had over 550 students whose parents were paying ten shillings a month in fees.<sup>135</sup> In March 1956 Reeves noted that five more applications had been made to the Minister for Bantu Affairs for private schools to open, remarking 'if we can obtain sufficient financial support we should be rendering a

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<sup>131</sup> SOAS MMS Beetham Webb to 16 Sept. 1955.

<sup>132</sup> SOAS MMS Webb to Beetham 26 Sept. 1955.

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in Peart-Binns, Ambrose, p. 122.

<sup>134</sup> Paton, Apartheid, p. 257.

<sup>135</sup> RHL MSS Afr.S. 1681 G. Sidebotham (priest-in-charge) to Benson, ? Dec. 1955. Sidebotham was hoping to increase the staff to fifteen and the enrolment to 600 pupils. In 1955 Reeves noted that he had only closed schools in his Diocese because there were other schools that could absorb dismissed pupils, he said that to close schools in rural areas with few schools would have been a 'terrible decision.' 'Special Interview with Bishop of Johannesburg', Church Times, 14 Jan. 1955, p. 1.



valuable service to the African people by establishing a number of private schools.<sup>136</sup> This change of heart signifies the 'grievous choice of evils' that faced the CPSA with the introduction of Bantu Education.

The leaders of the Anglican Church were torn between two options, neither of which was acceptable. Clayton was a conservative man, whose principle concern was ensuring that the Church could function unhindered in South Africa.<sup>137</sup> He believed that in time the Church would reveal 'the truth' to all South Africans, leading to a more democratic and Christian society. He was not prepared to defy the state openly over Bantu Education as he did not share the concerns of a minority of Anglican leaders over its implementation. However, in 1957, he did openly defy the government over the Native Laws Amendment Act which made it almost obligatory for church buildings to be segregated and, in some instances, an offence to admit Africans into 'white' churches. Clayton, after consultation with his Bishops, wrote to Verwoerd noting that no Christian could be bound by such a law, recording that he had instructed his clergy to ignore it. Clayton was only prepared to act in defiance of the state when he felt that the right of the church to be 'the church' was violated.

For Reeves and Huddleston the situation was precipitous, as they both felt that Bantu Education was the most pernicious piece of legislation instituted by the Nationalists and both understood its <sup>importance</sup> to apartheid. More importantly, both had a better understanding of African political opinion and the suffering that Africans endured under apartheid.<sup>138</sup> Driven by a more activist interpretation of the church's role in society, they concluded that 'the only

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<sup>136</sup> RHL MSS Afr.S. 1681 Reeves statement to parents of Christ the King, Feb. 9 1956, and letter Reeves to Benson, 13 March 1956. In the Diocese of Pretoria, Grace Dieu was maintained as a private school until its closure at the end of 1957 due to 'blank cheque conditions' that had been placed on its registration by the Bantu Education Division. WCL AB370 Grace Dieu Minutes Governing Council 11 Nov. 1957. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the subsequent failure of these schools which Verwoerd personally ensured would not be registered.

<sup>137</sup> Paton stated 'Clayton did not wish to anger the Government; it was not that he was personally afraid, but he was anxious not to expose the Church of the Province and its manifold works to any danger'. Paton, Apartheid, pp. 248-9.

<sup>138</sup> In 1953 Huddleston remarked 'I know well the kind of attitude taken by young Africans.' AB707 Huddleston to Wood, 12 Feb. 1953.

possible choice for Christians is *identification* with the African people'.<sup>139</sup>

The divisions that characterised the Anglican response were not to be mirrored by the American Board Mission. This was because, as we shall see in the next chapter, the ABM leadership did not have to pander to a white congregation, was more democratically organised and was able to draw on financial resources which enabled it to try and maintain a stake in African education.

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<sup>139</sup> Huddleston, 'For God's Sake Wake Up', The Observer, 30 Aug. 1953 (original emphasis).

'There is no Place in Bantu Education for any Institution which does not bow its knee to the Apartheid Idol'<sup>1</sup>: The American Board Mission and the Bantu Education Act

On the eve of the passage of the Bantu Education Act the American Board Mission controlled two major educational institutions and just over one hundred primary schools, all of which were located in Natal. The American Board adopted a somewhat contradictory approach to the legislation confronting it. While it wholeheartedly rejected the Government's attempts to remove missionaries from the educational sphere, it was prepared to work within the Bantu Education system at the high school level, as long as its schools remained under private control.

Although it ran primary schools, the main focus of the American Board's educational effort in South Africa was focussed on its two secondary education institutions, Adams College and Inanda Seminary. Adams, founded in 1853 as the Amanzimtoti Institute, consisted of a high school, teacher training college and industrial school, and by 1950 was attended by some 500 boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> Inanda Seminary was a smaller venture, comprising a primary school and high school, with 241 female students enrolled in 1950.<sup>3</sup> Educationally, both Adams, and to a greater extent, Inanda were influenced by the educational ideas and principles of American educationalists,<sup>4</sup> and while these educational ideas were perhaps less fashionable in the 1940s<sup>5</sup>, their impact on the relationship between schools and local communities greatly affected the outcome of the struggle between the ABM and the government.

Until 1940 Adams College had been under the direct control of the American Board

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Grant, 'Principal's Letter', Iso Lomuzi, Vol. 20. No. 34 'Final Number', Nov. 1956. Iso Lomuzi was the Adams College Magazine.

<sup>2</sup> Marks, Not Either, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, Shine Where, p. 133. Inanda began as a refuge for young women who had fled from arranged marriages. A role that continued well into the twentieth century.

<sup>4</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding, of course, for the framers of the Bantu Education Act.

Mission, with its headquarters in Boston, but in that year management of the school was handed to a local Board of Governors with the creation of Adams College Incorporated (commonly referred to as the Adams Association). G. Grant, or 'Jack' Grant as he was known, the principal of Adams College from 1949 to 1956, explained that 'the time had come for handing over more and more responsibility for the management of the college to the men and women whose home was South Africa.'<sup>6</sup> The association was legally bound to maintain the college's 'distinctly religious foundation and character,'<sup>7</sup> according to its constitution it had to remain a 'Christian Educational institution for the Bantu People in perpetuity'.<sup>8</sup> To attract students from all churches it was also to remain non-denominational. Adams was committed to providing an education that would enable men and women to enter society as 'responsible citizens', securely grounded in Christian morality. Its pupils were encouraged to enter life as 'model Africans' who would serve their community and, through their Christian upbringing, facilitate greater understanding and tolerance between races. Institutions such as Adams, looked to produce Africans who could become leaders in their communities, as doctors, teachers and lawyers, citizens who, it was hoped, would lead the mass of the African people towards the 'accepted' standards of 'European civilization'.<sup>9</sup>

Jack Grant, and his wife, Ida, were to play a significant role in the last years of Adams College. Both had been born into wealthy families, Jack in the West Indies and Ida in England. Both were educated at Cambridge and were committed Christians who chose teaching as a means by which to spread the Gospel. Before their arrival at Adams both had led unconventional lives. Jack Grant had been a headmaster in Rhodesia, as well as playing for the West Indies cricket team. He claims that his experiences in Grenada, where he lived much of his early life as part of a small white minority, meant that his attitudes to race were

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<sup>6</sup> J. Grant, Adams College 1853-1951, pamphlet published by the Natal Witness, no date, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> ibid, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in ibid, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> The ABM policy was to 'make them competent people, to take their full share in our multi-racial society.' WCL AC623 CCSA 'American Board Mission: Policy and Aims for Education of Africans', Jan. 1954, unsigned, p. 1.

uncommon: life in Grenada meant that he 'saw people as people rather than as people of different colours'.<sup>10</sup> Ida Grant also taught in Rhodesia after studying at Cambridge and the University of Cape Town. In Cape Town, Loram 'played a seminal role in opening Ida's eyes to racial issues' and, according to Jack, she shared his 'advanced' views on race relations.<sup>11</sup> The unconventional nature of Ida's life continued after Jack was appointed an officer of the British Colonial Education Service in Zanzibar in 1944. Here she became the first woman appointed to the Zanzibar Town Management Board, in addition to acting as local reporter for two regional newspapers.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Grants had led varied and challenging lives before they arrived at Adams, and presumably held views that differed from the majority of white South Africans; a factor which influenced the way in which they approached Bantu Education.

Adams College was, in Grant's words, 'a pioneer in a number of far-reaching ways'.<sup>13</sup> In 1909 it became the first African college in South Africa to become co-educational, and in a bold step in 1925, it appointed Z. K. Matthews as head of its high school.<sup>14</sup> In this position Matthews had direct control over a number of white staff at the college. Its progressive image was also founded on a comparatively relaxed attitude towards discipline, which was far more 'co-operative' than 'authoritarian'.<sup>15</sup> The ethos of the school was that students would learn from experience, and such experience could only be gained by allowing them a fair degree of freedom. An Adams student remarked in 1951 that there was a total lack of what she called 'real discipline',<sup>16</sup> while Freda Matthews, the wife of Z. K., noted that

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<sup>10</sup> Grant, Jack Grant's Story, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> Grant, Jack Grant's Story p. 56. Interestingly Ida Grant refused to allow the word 'obey' to be in her marriage vows.

<sup>12</sup> ibid, p. 79. She was also a sports reporter.

<sup>13</sup> Grant, Adams College, p. 7. Marks has commented on the 'more democratic and open Adams tradition.' Marks, Not Either, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Z.K. Matthews was followed by two more African high schools heads, Mr. D. G. S. Mtimkulu (1937-47) and Mr. B. C. Mtshali.

<sup>15</sup> Grant, Adams College, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Lily Moya, quoted in Marks, Not Either, p. 158.

Adams 'seemed friendlier and more open.'<sup>17</sup> Es'kia Mphahlele, who had previously attended St. Peter's Anglican school, commented when he arrived at Adams

the first thing that hit me was, my word, I seemed to have come to a jungle in comparison with St. Peter's. There was order in the dorms at St. Peter's. There were standards of cleanliness, standards of hygiene. Not at Adams ... there you really had to survive.<sup>18</sup>

As evident in chapter two Adams College reflected South African society in that it had racially segregated hostels and staff common rooms.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it is equally true to say that in the 1940s and 1950s the college authorities were aware of the role that the college could play in fostering racial harmony and mutual understanding, and they attempted to broaden the horizons of pupils through open days with white schools. Throughout this period students from private white schools, such as Michaelhouse and Maritzburg College, visited Adams and engaged in sporting and social activities with its pupils. In addition, mixed staff teams competed against local church teams, and Indian teams from Durban.<sup>20</sup> Endeavours were also made to include African staff and community members in the day-to-day running of the college through the Council of Governors. This body effectively ran the school, and was elected by the members of the Adams Association. The latter was open to all ex-pupils of the school over 21 years and who could pay an annual fee of 2s 6d; members and ex-members of staff who had taught at Adams for at least two years; those who had paid not less than £10 to the Association; members of the American Board resident in South Africa; and ex-members of the Council of Governors.

These rules enabled, at least in principle, African representation on the Council of Governors. The Council argued that this system was 'extremely flexible', making it 'possible

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in D. Burchell, 'Adams College, Natal, c. 1920-1956: A Critical Assessment', Journal of the University of Durban-Westville, p. 153.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Marks, Not Either, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>20</sup> See Grant, Adams College, p. 8 and Burchell, 'Adams College', pp 154-5.

for the Bantu to take an increasing part in the control of the College.<sup>21</sup> The college authorities attempted to create an environment for positive racial mixing, both among students and staff. This is not to say that they achieved this; on the contrary, segregated staff rooms and student riots were evidence that they failed. However, the image of Adams as an oasis of racial harmony, was significant for those controlling the school when faced with Bantu Education, for it helped to shape their actions.

Thus, the response of Adams College and Inanda Seminary to Bantu Education differed from that of other churches and missions. At Adams and Inanda, there were no local church authorities to negotiate with the government on the school's behalf; the principles of the two schools, Lavinia Scott and Grant, together with the Adams Governing Council and the ABM Executive Committee, had to do so. Thus, the personalities of those directly involved with the colleges often influenced critical decisions about the institutions.

Although Adams and Inanda were the only ABM secondary schools in South Africa, and were close geographically they seem to have made little effort to unite in opposition to Bantu Education. While members of the Adams Governing Council were also members of the Executive Committee of the ABM, and visa-versa, there was no attempt to combine the appeals of the colleges. In part this was because the Adams Association was a distinct entity with no real connection to Inanda. In addition, the prevailing attitude seemed to dismiss the idea of cooperative action. There is no evidence of its being considered, let alone implemented. Their reaction to the Bantu Education Act is thus best looked at individually.

Firstly, however, it is necessary to briefly survey the plight of the ABM primary schools. In 1952 the ABM had 104 primary schools under its control, supplying Adams and Inanda with some 20-40 per cent of their students,<sup>22</sup> but was unable to run these schools without subsidy.<sup>23</sup> By 1954, the idea of running any primary schools was rejected by the Executive

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<sup>21</sup> Grant, Adams College, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Wood, Shine Where, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> KCL Inanda Seminary Records File 6, Scott to Reuling, 21 May 1952.

Committee of the ABM, on the grounds that it would cost some £2000 a year to do so.<sup>24</sup> It then resolved to hand over the schools to the government, seeking suitable compensation.<sup>25</sup> Wood has argued that the subsequent transfer of ABM schools to the government was 'comparatively easy',<sup>26</sup> perhaps because the ABM had already begun to hand over control and responsibility for primary schools to the communities they served. By the time the Bantu Education Act was passed most were already under local African Boards of Control which had been approved by the Native Affairs Department (NAD) and received full government subsidy, but remained private. This was no doubt a cost-cutting exercise by the mission, but also suggests a willingness to hand over administrative control of schools to Africans.

### Adams College

From the passage of the Bantu Education Act, Grant made his strong opposition to it public. Ida Grant remarked in 1953, '[W]e have fought it hard. We have spoken against it and written against it.... We seek to arouse public opinion by speaking or writing, through the churches and other organisations.'<sup>27</sup> In September 1954 Grant remarked to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa

The Act is not an agreement between two parties who have co-operated amicably over the years. Rather, it is an Act of Aggression on the part of the State, which proposes to diminish, if not dispense with, the services of the Church...it is determined not so much by educational ideals as by political ideals...we cannot give the Act our blessing - we dare not approve in principle the transfer of our Mission

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<sup>24</sup> KCL Inanda File 23 ABM Executive Committee Minutes, 28 June-5 July 1954.

<sup>25</sup> ibid It was also noted that primary school children would 'continue to receive the Christian guidance of their homes and churches, in the communities where they live'.

<sup>26</sup> Wood, Shine Where, p. 127.

<sup>27</sup> Ida Grant to Friends of Adams College, 2 Nov. 1953. This letter, and all subsequent correspondence who from Ida Grant, shown to me by Shula Marks who was given them by Ida Grant. Brookes remarked that Ida Grant's efforts were 'heroic' throughout the fight to keep Adams open. Brookes, A South African Pilgrimage, p. 68.



The Grants' very public opposition to the Act stemmed from their political profile during this period. As early as 1951 Ida Grant was to write to a friend, 'Jack and I find ourselves drawn more and more into outside interests, such as attending various meetings and gatherings in Durban.'<sup>29</sup> A year later she wrote

amongst other things we have been drawn into politics. Being very concerned about the condition of things in this country, we attended a political meeting early this year. The upshot was that we were drawn in to serve on the local committee of the United Party.<sup>30</sup>

In 1952 they both attended the SAIRR conference on Bantu Education held in Johannesburg, and Ida Grant represented their branch of the United Party at district and Provincial Congress level. In 1953, she became a regional committee member of the SAIRR and changed political allegiance, leaving the United Party to become a foundation member of the Liberal Party which was committed to a conditional universal franchise. Also in 1953 the SAIRR asked Adams College Governing Council if they would be prepared to host a multi-racial conference to discuss race relations. They accepted and throughout August African delegates debated with leading white liberals on how best to address racial problems. Ida Grant recalled that during the conference detectives 'were very interested in our doings, and haunted the premises all the time they [the delegates] were with us.'<sup>31</sup>

The Grant's involvement in politics clearly reflected upon Adams College, as Ida's role within the SAIRR led to its hosting of the conference. This meant that Adams College was

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<sup>28</sup> Grant quoted in Grant, The Liquidation of Adams College, no date, for private circulation. He continued 'the Government is holding a veritable pistol at our heads ... the Bantu Education Act is not an isolated phenomenon. It is but one of a series of enactments emanating from a Government which believes in, and practises, apartheid ... if we can endorse such a policy why be members of the Christian Church?' 'Presbyterians Lay it on the Line for South African Government', British Weekly, 7 Oct. 1954 p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> I. Grant to M. Palmer, 1 Nov. 1951.

<sup>30</sup> I. Grant to Friends of Adams College, Oct. 1952.

<sup>31</sup> I. Grant to Friends of Adams College, 2 Nov. 1952.

not simply identified as an educational institution<sup>32</sup>, but also provided sanctuary for those South Africans committed to changing race relations in the country. The attention of the police indicates the seriousness with which the government viewed the conference. Police interest intensified in January 1954 when the CID descended on Adams College with a search warrant. During a visit which lasted a number of hours they searched Grant's office and home. Ida Grant remarked, 'We knew we were under a cloud, and that the Government viewed us with suspicion...it was under that sort of intimidation that we began the College year.'<sup>33</sup> Thus, Adams faced Bantu Education as an institution with a distinct reputation. It had seen major student upheavals in the 1940s, hosted political meetings, and was run by a politically active headmaster, who was married to a woman who held political office in the Liberal Party.<sup>34</sup>

Grant's public hostility to Bantu Education contrasts sharply with the attitude of the major religious denominations which all sought to avoid public confrontation with the government. In contrast, the ABM gave Grant the license to act in what he saw was the best interests of the college. In January 1954, a private policy statement to ABM members stated that

Where and when the State seeks or insists that our enterprises serve a lesser purpose we must be ready to protest; for, as servants of God, we cannot be mere servants of the State. If controversial issues arise we should as persuasively and as firmly as possible make our position clear to the Powers-that-be<sup>35</sup>

This statement was conceived with Bantu Education in mind, and empowered Grant and Scott to resist it according to their Christian conscience, and there is no record that Grant was criticised by the American Board for his open opposition to the Bantu Education. The

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<sup>32</sup> Adams College was also closely identified during this period with the then leader of the ANC, Albert Luthuli, who, although banned, visited the College during its centenary celebrations in 1951. Luthuli had been a student and a teacher at Adams and in the early 1940s had sat on the Governing Council.

<sup>33</sup> I. Grant to Friends of Adams College, Nov. 1954.

<sup>34</sup> Ida Grant was invited to stand by the Liberal Party in 1954 as a provincial candidate, but was persuaded to withdraw by the Adams College Council which felt that her candidacy might threaten the chances of the College being granted private school status. After the closure of the College she was elected to the National Executive of the SAIRR in 1956.

<sup>35</sup> WCL AC623 'American Board...', p. 1.

nature of his opposition to the Act had a great impact on the future of Adams College.

The first organised response to the Act took place in June 1954, with a special meeting of the Adams College Governing Council. Here it was agreed that the views of the American Board should be sought, and a committee established 'to sound African opinion and ascertain African reactions to the Government's proposals'.<sup>36</sup> In October the Adams College Association met to discuss the Act.<sup>37</sup> This body was more representative of the wider Adams community than the college's Governing Council, and the meeting was attended by 'a large number of African members'.<sup>38</sup> At this meeting the Governing Council indicated to the Association that they had provisionally decided to close down the training college, and keep the high school open as a private school.<sup>39</sup> It appears that members of the Association were not prepared for this announcement and agreed to reconvene at a later date. In the mean time Grant decided that Association members could, if they wished, draw up memoranda to be heard at the Governing Council.

In late October Grant wrote to members of the Governing Council acknowledging 'with regret that my staff, as a whole, do not see eye to eye with me'.<sup>40</sup> He warned that the training school staff in particular were opposed to the closure of their school. He continued 'in these stirring times we have to think deeply and act decisively' reminding the members of the Council that they had a 'Christian purpose' which they could not abandon. While

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<sup>36</sup> KCL Adams College MS57 Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Governors and Adams College Inc. Board of Governors, 1940-58, 15 June 1954. There is no further record of any such committee being established.

<sup>37</sup> This meeting was not of great importance because Adams had now received the August circulars from the department. Ida Grant remarked that these circulars 'plunged all of us into a whirl of doubt and uncertainty about the future'. I. Grant to Friends of Adams College, Nov. 1954.

<sup>38</sup> KCL MS57 Minutes of Adams College Inc. 12 Oct. 1954.

<sup>39</sup> I was unable to find the Governing Council minutes which included this decision. There can be little doubt that the Governing Council would have rejected the idea of keeping the high school open whilst handing the training school over to the government, for this would have meant dual control of a single campus.

<sup>40</sup> In 1954 there were 36 staff members at the school of whom fourteen were African, by 1956 there were seven African members out of a staff of seventeen. *Iso Lomuzi* Vol. 19, No. 32 Nov. 1954 & Vol. 20. No. 34. Nov. 1956.

there was much they could be proud of, he warned, 'we still conform too much to the standards of our day and generation': they had accepted differential wages, practised social exclusiveness and failed to learn African languages. He maintained that they could not 'go on in our familiar ways.' It was pointless simply continuing to prevent the government from taking over; rather 'we have to make better use of what we have'. Adams had to continue 'if we are to be loyal to the faith that we hold'. Given the decision to remain open, he contended that the training school would have to close as a lion and a lamb could not lie in the same pasture. Nor could they accept a reduced subsidy from the Government as this would tie them to the state.<sup>41</sup> Grant apparently recognised, albeit belatedly, the hypocrisy of life at Adams. When confronted with its potential closure he saw the weaknesses within it, and within those who were running it.<sup>42</sup> The letter also revealed his belief that Adams had to remain open.

On 28 October the threatened training school teachers presented a memorandum to the Governing Council meeting which began:

We feel that the Governing Council, through having in its number no single member of the Teaching Staff at Adams College, has been seriously out of touch with staff opinion. The Staff have lived with the problem, and reached something near to unanimity after long debate and heart-searching. Staff opinion is that our buildings should be leased to the Government.<sup>43</sup>

They proceeded to explain why the training and high schools should be leased. As teachers at Adams were devoted to the African people and did not have any 'preconceived ideas about their status in society' they would not subscribe to the political implications of Bantu Education. Whilst they agreed 'fervently that a liberal education is to be sought for and fought for' they saw no alternative to government high school and training school education, because the government would not allow private training colleges and the ABM could not afford to run Adams as a private institution. 'Government education is vastly better than

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<sup>41</sup> KCL MS57 Grant to Adams Governing Council, 22 Oct. 1954.

<sup>42</sup> He remarked in 1954 that Bantu Education created 'a time of crisis and challenge - a time of deep spiritual crisis to the individual Christian.' 'Presbyterians Lay', p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> KCL MS57 'Memorandum on the Adams Training College', unsigned, 25 Oct. 1954.

nothing',<sup>44</sup> they concluded.

Attacking the position adopted by Grant and the Governing Council, they argued that the decision to close the training school and run the high school privately was 'contemplated for the chief purpose of waging an ideological war against the Department.'<sup>45</sup> The memorandum claimed that the teachers in both schools

feel that the mission as a body is now powerless to play a useful part in what has become a matter between the Government and the African community. They believe that Mission intervention will be to the detriment of the children themselves who are our chief concern. They further believe that such a school would not meet with the approval of the local community, and could therefore be closed down on that pretext alone.<sup>46</sup>

The teachers maintained that it was illogical to reject government control by arguing that they could not count on the goodwill of the government, and then to hope for it to continue when Adams became a private institution. They called on the ABM to hand over the school, by sale or lease, to the government, in line with other churches in South Africa, and thus to meet 'the wishes of the Staff and African community'.<sup>47</sup>

This statement gives us a significant insight into the wishes and concerns of staff at Adams. Undoubtedly some members of the African community within and outside of the school felt that the time for mission-based African education had passed. There is a sense in which the teachers were arguing that Africans could fight for their education without the 'assistance' of missionary paternalism claiming the right to control their own destiny. However, teachers and community members also voiced more practical concerns. If the teacher training college were to close, its staff would lose their jobs while those remaining feared the financial

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<sup>44</sup> KCL MS57 'Memorandum on the Adams Training College', p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> KCL MS57 'Memorandum on the Adams Training College', p. 4. The memorandum argued rather sarcastically that issues of divided control on the campus could be overcome, especially by Christian missionaries.

implications of keeping the high school open unaided. They realised that this could mean wage cuts and a fall in living standards. In addition some community members and teachers were unwilling to defy the government lest the school be closed down entirely: 'we believe that the issues at stake are too precious to justify a desperate gamble and incalculable risk to the interests of the African children themselves.'<sup>48</sup>

The Governing Council did not debate this memorandum at all, instead discussion focussed on a \$10,000 grant offered by the ABM to keep Adams open. It resolved to close the training college,<sup>49</sup> accept the money from the ABM and go ahead with registration. Members argued that they had no choice but to continue to run the school, on the grounds that its constitution forbade it from doing otherwise. It did, however, agree, to accept government subsidies despite Grants's earlier concerns. Notwithstanding a clear assertion in the preamble of the resolutions that the Governing Council 'consists of both Europeans and Africans,' at this particular meeting there were twenty members, of whom only two were African.<sup>50</sup>

These resolutions were presented to the Adams Association in late November. Immediately an amendment was raised by Mr. Malcolm, a white teacher, who suggested that the College, excluding the hostels, should be handed over to the Government, because of his concern about what would happen to the African people if the school were forced to close.<sup>51</sup> After a protracted debate this motion was lost 'by a large majority'; while the Council's resolutions were passed by a majority of 48 to ten.<sup>52</sup> This result contradicted the claims of

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<sup>48</sup> KCL MS57 'Memorandum on the Adams Training College', p. 4. School closure not only meant the loss of teaching jobs and school facilities; other employment opportunities would have ceased for African labourers, such as cleaners, gardeners and mechanics. Some teachers also saw opportunity in Bantu Education - see chapter ten.

<sup>49</sup> It offered to continue training teachers until such time as the government had established alternative training facilities in the area.

<sup>50</sup> They were Rev. H. M. Nawa and the head of the high school, Mr. B. C. Mtshali.

<sup>51</sup> KCL Adams College MS62A/13 Documents Concerning the Closure of Adams College, 'Minutes of the Adjourned Special Meeting of Adams College (Incorporated), 27 Nov. 1954.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.* Ida Grant recorded 'four long and hard hours' of debate. I. Grant to Friends of Adams College, Nov. 1954.

the memorandum from the training school teachers and suggests that support for the transfer of the school amongst teachers and members of the Association was limited. Although Association membership cannot be considered representative of the wider Adams community, the training school teachers apparently underestimated support for the Council's decisions.

Two days later the Council wrote to the training school teachers calling on them to support the college and principal 'loyally', and to 'refrain from writing any more memoranda' as the contents of their letter were apparently 'already known to some close to the Government'.<sup>53</sup> The Council's concern that the memoranda had been leaked to government was matched by Grant's growing unease at the divisions among the staff. In his annual 'Principal's Letter' to the college magazine, Iso Lomuzi, Grant observed 'dark clouds hanging over our heads', continuing

it is most distressing to see the sharp cleavage that has arisen between those who think that this dark cloud will bring showers of blessing and those who think that it will bring showers of blasting. Indeed, to me the cleavage between colleagues who formerly thought alike and worked in harmony is one of the most distressing features of this dark cloud.<sup>54</sup>

The early months of 1955 were taken up with proposals to launch an appeal for funds to help the school remain open, and in dealing with government's plans for registration. At the end of 1954 the Adams Council informed the government of its intention to remain open as a private institution and, in February 1955, Grant received a letter from Eiselen which crassly warned the college of the consequences of this decision. Eiselen argued that Adams should become a government school, as this was 'a course which will have to be followed sooner or later'.<sup>55</sup> This threat did little to extinguish Council's determination to push ahead with an appeal for funds, 'not to oppose the B.E.A., but ... to stand for what we have

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<sup>53</sup> KCL Adams College MS62A/12 Governing Council to Adams Training College Staff, 29 Nov. 1954.

<sup>54</sup> Grant, 'Principal's Letter', in Iso Lomuzi, Nov. 1954, Vol. 19, No. 32, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> KCL MS62A/10 Minutes of Staff Meetings, Eiselen to Grant, 3 Feb. 1954.

ourselves always stood for: A Christian and Liberal Education'.<sup>56</sup> Grant and the Council of Governors worked continually to disassociate the appeal from any broader political opposition to the Act. Grant was particularly anxious that the Adams appeal should not be associated with the African Bureau appeal which opposed the Bantu Education Act. As they wrote to a member of the British Council of Churches, 'our approach, as you know, is different. We are attempting to work through the Act.'<sup>57</sup> The appeal aimed to address the predicted shortfall of £10,000 a year<sup>58</sup> and was organised by an 'appeal professional' who focussed on individual donations and longer-term commitments from commerce and industry.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile members of the Council were preoccupied with their lack of support from the African community. At a General Purposes Committee meeting in March a member noted that more African members should be appointed to the Council, a 'concern shared by all those present'.<sup>60</sup> The following month Grant wrote

What support do we have? For instance, are the African people behind us? Are the Churches with us? Sad to say, the African community is not solidly behind us. Some do not favour the stand we have taken, while a large number remain silent for fear of the consequences. It is only a minority that have dared to be vocal in our support.<sup>61</sup>

Grant's concern that he did not have support from the African community may have prompted him to question whether registration would be approved at all. He was also

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<sup>56</sup> KCL NS62A/10 General Purposes Committee, 7 Feb. 1955.

<sup>57</sup> SOAS Library, Conference of British Missionary Societies (hereafter CBMS). A (Africa) Box A/T.9/3 Southern Africa, Box 296, Adams College, Natal 1954-56. Grant to Greaves, 8 Feb. 1955. D. McDonald, the Chair of the Governing Council remarked to Greaves 'My board has no desire to participate in what is, in effect, a political crusade. We are far too concerned with the immediate problem of how to continue to exist', *ibid.* McDonald to Greaves, 21 Feb. 1955.

<sup>58</sup> KCL 71 Meetings of the Advisory Board, General Purposes Committee and the Finance Committee. D. Rubenstein 'The Future of Adams College'. Rubenstein, vice-principal of the college, argued that fees could not be raised too much for fear of 'driving students away.'

<sup>59</sup> SOAS CBMS, E. Henochsburg (Chair of the Governing Council) to Greaves, 1 April 1955.

<sup>60</sup> KCL MS62A/10 General Purposes Committee 28 March 1955.

<sup>61</sup> SOAS CBMS, Grant to Greaves, Good Friday 1955.



disappointed with the CCSA which, he argued, had given them nothing but 'good wishes in rather tame language'.<sup>62</sup>

These fears were confirmed in May 1955 when he received Eiselen's response to the Council's decisions. Eiselen opened by asking whether the Council was aware 'that its proposals ... [did] not reflect the desires of the Bantu residents of the Umlazi district?' According to Eiselen, at a meeting between chiefs and headmen of the Umlazi Magistracy a 'unanimous' resolution was passed 'condemning the action of Adams Council in closing down the Adams Training College', because much of the money that had gone into the college was donated by Africans and could not be used as the Council saw fit: 'The Native people should have been fully consulted ... the attitude adopted by this meeting of Bantu leaders appears to be entirely reasonable and cannot be ignored.' Given the wishes of the Chiefs, the Minister of Native Affairs had decided that if Adams applied for registration it would not be granted even a reduced subsidy, because of the 'desire of the Department to use this institution for teacher-training'.<sup>63</sup>

This refusal was contrary to the legislation, and demonstrated that Verwoerd was prepared to use the arbitrary powers granted him under the Bantu Education Act. Once again, the African community was more divided than most of the literature suggests, and the support of the chiefs for the government gave Verwoerd his opening. This prefigured the situation after the successful implementation of School Boards, in which African chiefs, who were often uneducated and illiterate, had a major influence on education policy.

This meeting of chiefs had taken place without any representation from the college and the Council responded by investigating the possibility of appointing a public relations officer as

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<sup>62</sup> SOAS CBMS, Grant to Greaves, 15 March 1955.

<sup>63</sup> KCL MS62A/13 Eiselen to Grant, 26 May 1955. There is no indication as to who organised the meeting of the chiefs. It is possible that the Bantu Education Department (or the NAD) may have organised the meeting in response to the leaked memorandum from the training college teachers, which included their contention that the Council did not have the support of the local community.

a 'goodwill gesture to the African community'.<sup>64</sup> This once again highlighted the Council's concern that it did not have the full support of Africans who lived and worked around Adams. To Eiselen it protested that its decision had been made not to 'challenge Government policy but because they believed they could better contribute to the 'benefit of the Bantu people' by remaining open as a private institution. Moreover, the Department had overlooked the College's 'peculiar position', in that it was bound by its constitution to continue in its present form. Responding to Eiselen's accusation that it had not engaged African opinion, Council emphasized the composition of the Adams Association, noting that decisions had been taken at 'general meetings' and that they consulted 'all Bantu people interested in the College.'<sup>65</sup>

Grant's continued concern with African opinion was eased somewhat in the middle of 1955 when staff attitudes changed perceptibly. According to Grant,

What is most cheering is that the members of staff are now much more with us than they were last year when we made our decision. There are many reasons for this happy change, not least of which is that one of our chief opponents is now in Government employ.<sup>66</sup>

Ida Grant also recorded that three senior African staff members resigned their positions and moved to government schools. She remarked

a feeling of uneasiness and discontent followed their going. Several students left, discipline was difficult for those who stepped in...we feel that the opposition was not uninspired by those who were disaffected, and it was not at all easy to overcome.<sup>67</sup>

However, she also described how a senior African teacher, Mr. Moerane, joined the staff

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<sup>64</sup> KCL Adams College MS62A/12 Minutes of Governing Council 11 June 1955. Nothing appears to have come from this suggestion.

<sup>65</sup> SOAS CBMS, Adams College Council to Eiselen, 21 June 1955.

<sup>66</sup> SOAS CBMS, Grant to Greaves, 27 June 1955. It has proven impossible to ascertain who this member of staff was, but it would appear that a teacher, who opposed the Council, left Adams thus easing internal opposition to the Council.

<sup>67</sup> Ida Grant to Friends of Adams College, 7 Nov. 1955.

from a government school 'in order to throw in his lot with us because he believed in our stand.' After his appointment their 'shaky morale' improved and a 'better spirit' prevailed.<sup>68</sup> It is clear that the divided loyalty of the staff had quite an effect upon Adams. These divisions were, it appears, replicated amongst the students suggesting that staff members discussed the future of the college with them, perhaps leading to the disciplinary problems Ida Grant mentioned.

In June, Adams began what was to become a labourious process of applying for private registration. An application made in early June was 'lost' by the NAD, as was a second application handed to the Regional Director of Bantu Education to be forwarded to the department. A third application was sent and the school was told that it would have an answer from the authorities by the end of September 1955.<sup>69</sup> At the end of September Grant noted

The delay in the Government attending to and answering our request is embarrassing us...first of all, what are we to do next year? Are we to tell our present students who do not complete their courses this year that we can or cannot have them back next year?...what are we to do with our staff?.....There is no need to labour the point that the longer the Government delays its answer the more it will embarrass us. No school can flourish on such insecurity. At times, I confess, I have been restless to the point of losing patience.<sup>70</sup>

It is impossible to know whether or not the NAD deliberately delayed the Adams application. What can be said with certainty, is that it made running Adams very difficult. Given the problems with staffing and student discipline that the school had already experienced this delay could only have made a difficult situation worse.

Adams was eventually informed on 3 October that, due to the delay caused by the loss of registration forms, and in order not to penalise the college, registration was approved until

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<sup>68</sup> Ida Grant to Friends of Adams College, 7 Nov. 1955. Ida Grant concluded that they could now rely on the 'staunch loyalty' of the staff.

<sup>69</sup> Durban Chancery Records (henceforth DCR), Durban Cathedral, Hurley Papers Bantu Education Act (BEA) 1953-56. Grant to Hurley, 30 Sept. 1955.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

the end of 1956 with a 75 per cent subsidy<sup>71</sup> and that members of the Native Affairs Commission would visit the school before a final decision about its future was made. This decision was greeted cautiously by Grant who remarked that it gave the college 'a breathing space' that would make them harder to dislodge.<sup>72</sup>

During these developments the Adams appeal gathered momentum. However, Council feared that public promotion of the appeal would damage the College's chances of being granted private status. It was therefore decided that it would be launched only after that had been achieved,<sup>73</sup> although, Grant questioned the wisdom of this policy pointing out the 'success of the R.C. appeal and ... the continued delaying tactics of the Government'.<sup>74</sup> However, pressure from church figures in England was also to cause him concern. Shaun Herron, editor of the Anglican Church publication British Weekly, had been anxious to promote the plight of Adams College and had specifically singled it out as the only Protestant institution in South Africa attempting to continue. Through a series of articles and editorials he had publicised the attack on mission schools to British readers.<sup>75</sup> For Grant this proved most unwelcome, he wrote that Herron's

... desire to help often embarrasses us...we are not likely to receive registration if Shaun Herron and others go criticising the Government and holding us up as knights in shining armour ... we want to stress a positive approach rather than an anti-approach ... when we get permission to continue then, and only then, would we want a militant appeal launched overseas<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> This registration contradicted the letter from Eiselen that said even if registration was approved no subsidies would be paid.

<sup>72</sup> DCR BEA Grant to Hurley, 7 Oct. 1955.

<sup>73</sup> Ida Grant noted 'We have launched our appeal, but have not yet been able to press it as we still await word from the Minister', I. Grant to Friends of Adams College, 7 Nov. 1955. In fact, a grant of £500 was paid to the school appeal by the British Council of Churches. This money had actually been raised by the African Bureau, but Grant had refused to accept it directly from the Bureau and it was routed to Adams via the British Council of Churches. SOAS CBMS Greaves to Mary Benson, 20 Oct. 1955.

<sup>74</sup> SOAS CBMS, Grant to Greaves, 24 Jan. 1956.

<sup>75</sup> See British Weekly Oct. 1954 to Jan. 1955.

<sup>76</sup> SOAS CBMS, Grant to ? (probably Greaves), 30 Jan. 1956.

Adams was in an awkward position. It needed financial support but was reluctant to accept overseas assistance for fear of antagonising the government. The College administrators were aware of the Nationalists' sensitivity to external criticism and were keen to avoid any association with it. This, however, played directly into the hands of the government, for, by trying to silence the voices of those appealing on its behalf (before registration), the Adams Council jeopardised its interest and support from British Churches in the future. In addition, by stifling debate in Britain, foreign pressure on the government was diminished.

Matters continued in this unsatisfactory way until Grant took action to try and resolve the college's future, apparently prompted by a meeting between the CCSA and Eiselen. At this meeting Eiselen informed members of the Christian Council that no purely secondary school would be encouraged to register as a private institution unless it had private primary schools to provide its students. Referring to Adams, he reiterated that the local community did not support its determination to remain open.<sup>77</sup> On the same day, Grant wrote

Unless we receive an answer soon we shall not be able to keep our staff, much less strengthen it. And what is school without a staff? Many of our teachers are restless and want to know, as best they can, what the future has in store for them. They want a larger measure of security than the present silent uncertainty affords. If we cannot give them, and give them soon, some reasonable answer they will leave what ... appears to them to be a sinking ship.<sup>78</sup>

For Grant the policy of waiting was ushering in a spirit of 'lethargy, if not fatalism' and he wanted to confront the government to force a decision. The College was being slowly strangled by the government's inaction, as staffing became more difficult and the daily running of the institution more problematic.<sup>79</sup> As he wrote, 'Our chief hope lies in attack.....if we are prevented from what we desire to do, the sooner we know this the

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<sup>77</sup> KCL MS62A/13 Notes of Meeting Between Christian Council of South Africa (Action Committee) with Eiselen, 27 March 1956.

<sup>78</sup> KCL MS71, Grant to A. Hopewell, 27 March 1956.

<sup>79</sup> Ida Grant noted that during this time 'It was difficult to carry on and to find adequate staff'. I. Grant to Friends of Adams, Oct. 1956.

better.<sup>80</sup>

Members of the College Council, however, did not agree. At a General Purposes Committee meeting in April, D. Rubenstein, the vice-principal of Adams, lamented that there was no general agreement as to what the 'next step' should be. There were still conflicting views amongst the Adams staff and management over what the 'motives and purposes' of the Department really were.<sup>81</sup>

These debates, however, were never to be resolved because the Department refused Adams' application on educational grounds. It maintained that Adams was needed to train teachers, and therefore the training college had to be re-opened. It also argued that Africans had to have more say in the running of 'their' schools, and that Adams was planning to charge fees which was against government policy.<sup>82</sup>

Four days later the Adams Association agreed to hand the college back to the ABM. For Grant the reasons offered by the Government were 'puerile and dishonest'.<sup>83</sup> After all, the college had offered to continue to run the training school until such time as the government could make alternative provision, but this offer had been rejected. He also dismissed the notion that Africans would have more influence under government control, arguing that under the Adams Association the 'responsibility we offer is real'.<sup>84</sup>

Matters drew quickly to a close. On 15 September the Association agreed to close the school at the end of the term, sell all movable property and wind up Adams College

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<sup>80</sup> KCL MS62A/10, Grant to the Adams Finance Committee, 7 April 1956.

<sup>81</sup> KCL MS7, Rubenstein to members of the General Purposes Committee, 18 April 1956.

<sup>82</sup> WCL AC623, Eiselen to J. Hosken (Secretary of the Adams Governing Council) 12 July 1956.

<sup>83</sup> KCL MS62A/13, Grant to Tim and Janet (?) 23 July 1956.

<sup>84</sup> CL PR4093 Kerr Papers, Grant to Friends of Adams College, 20 Aug. 1956. Grant also noted that the government had rejected the second application for private status, indicating that the department had not lost the second application.

Incorporated.<sup>85</sup> It was agreed to ensure that the new institution would not carry the name of Adams.<sup>86</sup> That same day the ABM, acting through John Reuling<sup>87</sup>, then African Secretary of the ABM, agreed to sell its property to the government. The ABM argued that it could not run another institution, for example a Conference Centre, on the site of Adams, as Africans 'strongly favoured allowing the Government to conduct a school at Adams, since no one else could legally do so.' Despite calls for it to be leased in the hope of it returning as Adams College in the future, it was decided to sell the property because the government had made it clear that it intended erecting a major new building on the site.<sup>88</sup>

### Inanda

Inanda Seminary was a girls-only institution, which aimed to provide girls with the skills necessary for them to become 'good Christians and home-makers.'<sup>89</sup> It promoted healthy Christian living and aptitudes that it believed would be useful to women in married life and in work. It was the first all-female boarding high school in the country created for the daughters of African converts. Heather Hughes has argued that the education offered by Inanda was 'always gender-specific, stressing subjects that would equip students for a life of domesticity or the female professions (teaching and nursing)'.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, it did not educate women for a life of subservience as domestic workers, but provided an education that was deemed suitable for the daughters of the African petty bourgeoisie.

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<sup>85</sup> KCL MS57 Extraordinary Meeting of Adams College Incorporated, 15 Sept. 1956.

<sup>86</sup> Grant suggested the college should become the 'Verwoerd Institute.' KCL MS62A/13 Grant to Tim and Janet 23 July 1956.

<sup>87</sup> Reuling was later Secretary of the United Board of World Missions. He had previously been Dean of Men and Training School Head Teachers at Adams. Brookes remarked 'I never knew a more hard-working man.' Brookes, A South African Pilgrimage, p. 60.

<sup>88</sup> KCL MS56/11 1953-57 Documents Concerning the Liquidation and Closure of Adams College, 'Statement to Adams College', S. Kaetzel (Secretary of the ABM Council, South Africa), 26 Sept. 1956. The school was eventually sold in August 1957 to the South African Native Trust for £151,354. KCL FCM71 General Purposes Committee, 8 Aug. 1957.

<sup>89</sup> Wood, Shine Where, back cover.

<sup>90</sup> H. Hughes, "'A Lighthouse for African Womanhood': Inanda Seminary, 1869-1945', in C. Walker, Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945 (London, 1991), p. 197.

Inanda was more closely associated with the American Board Mission than Adams, as matters relating to its running were dealt with by the Executive Committee of the South African Mission of the ABM. Through this committee the school liaised with the American Board, via John Reuling. While this arrangement gave the American Board some control over the daily running of the seminary, in practise it interfered very little in Inanda's affairs, preferring to defer to the experience and advice of those in charge.<sup>91</sup> It had established an African Advisory Board in 1935 'for the purpose of bringing Inanda Seminary closer to the Church and the Christian community in general, and to give opportunity for discussion to everyone's mutual benefit.'<sup>92</sup> According to Agnes Wood, a teacher there from 1929 to 1965, it was 'a real help in keeping the administration in touch with African public opinion.'<sup>93</sup> Significantly, ten of the twelve members on the Advisory Board in 1936, were African.

Whereas Adams forged links with white colleges and Indian communities, Inanda worked to establish closer relations with its immediate community. From the 1910s Sunday Schools were started around Inanda, and, by the end of the 1920s, were thriving throughout the district. Such was the success of the Sunday School system that from 1932 an annual meeting was held at the seminary for all those who taught at and attended them. The following year six associations of ex-Inanda students in the district were organised into self-help groups, sharing skills they had learned at the seminary with the local community.<sup>94</sup> In addition, agricultural shows were held at the seminary every year from 1925.

These community links gradually decreased during the latter part of the 1940s and 1950s. This was partly due to a transformation of educational principles which saw 'adapted' educational ideas go out of fashion. Inanda gradually moved away from its emphasis on practical home craft skills towards a more academic course structure, promising women careers as well as successful marriages. From 1936 a specialised nurses' training course was

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<sup>91</sup> The head of Inanda Seminary, Lavinia Scott (who was head from 1937-69), was also secretary of the Executive Committee of the American Board Mission in South Africa.

<sup>92</sup> Wood, Shine Where, p. 108.

<sup>93</sup> ibid., p. 150..

<sup>94</sup> ibid., pp. 84-89, p. 98.



started and girls were encouraged to move on to Adams to train as teachers.<sup>95</sup> In 1944 a full academic matriculation class was introduced, the first in South Africa at an African girls school.

By the 1950s Inanda had become the premier educational institution for African girls interested in an academic as well as a practical education. Despite these changes, however, it maintained strong links with the community in comparison to Adams.<sup>96</sup> One student who attended in 1951/2 remarked 'You know Inanda Seminary taught us more than just the academic, it went outside. One was community outreach, we were very interested in what was happening in the community.'<sup>97</sup> Rev. Bekisipo Dlodla who became pastor of Inanda Church in 1958 and served on the Inanda Seminary Governing Council commented

You see having lived there myself for six years you would find missionaries at Inanda Seminary who were both teachers and part of the community, going out into the villages with some of the students to spread the Gospel among the people... That made a lot of difference because it made Inanda Seminary a community, part of the large community of Inanda. They didn't see themselves isolated from the community, they found themselves being part of the community.<sup>98</sup>

These close links were to have a powerful effect on how it faced the introduction of Bantu Education. From the outset, the school's principal, Lavinia Scott, made an effort to keep herself informed of developments, and by March 1954 she was advising that they should 'hold on just as long as we can, to real control of our institutions... I believe that in all our decisions we should have the fullest possible consultation with the people of our churches and the teachers in our schools.'<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Both these careers were still very much in the mould of what was deemed acceptable for young Christian women.

<sup>96</sup> Numerous comments from those associated with Inanda stressed its continued relationship with the community.

<sup>97</sup> D. Dhlomo, interview with author, Durban, 12 June 1998.

<sup>98</sup> Rev. Bekisipo Dlodla, interview with author, Durban, 16 June 1998. Mable Christofersen, who taught at the school from 1945 to 1978, recalls 'we realised that we needed to be more a part of the community.' Interview with author, Durban, 3 June 1998.

<sup>99</sup> KCL M52295 'The New...', p. 6. (original emphasis)

Scott had arrived from America in 1936 and within a year had become Inanda principal, only retiring in 1969. She was a committed and tenacious character who steered the seminary through the difficult war years without any problems. She had a progressive attitude to girls education; while she agreed that Inanda existed to strengthen the church she insisted that it had an important role to play in the 'inspiring and training of leaders'.<sup>100</sup> In her view the school was not simply there to create homemakers but to help women assume full and responsible roles in society. In July 1954 she remarked

We are in a safer position than Adams, also, because we have only girls. The Government preaches separate education of the sexes, and ... is not likely to be so concerned about the teaching of girls as of boys....I think it quite likely that we will be ignored.<sup>101</sup>

Her words suggest that Scott believed that Inanda was safe because it was a girls school: the government would not consider it a threat because it did not consider that women would, or could, become political actors. She was clearly prepared to use the government's prejudice to Inanda's advantage.

After the arrival of the government circulars in August a period of intense debate followed. The ABM was resolved to run the school as a private institution as it 'believed that there was a continuing need for distinctly Christian education for the girls who were to be teachers and nurses.'<sup>102</sup> Like Adams, Inanda was prepared to teach Bantu Education, but Scott argued 'if the nurses and teachers and homemakers of the years to come are to have any strong Christian influence....we will have to keep some definitely Christian schools alive.'<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Wood, Shine, p. 128.

<sup>101</sup> KCL Inanda file 6 Scott to Reuling, 15 July 1954. A teacher who was at Inanda during the transfer recently remarked 'we weren't such a threat being a girls school.' M. Christofersen, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

<sup>102</sup> Wood, Shine Where, p. 126. Note 'teachers and nurses', not leaders.

<sup>103</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Scott to Reuling, 31 Aug. 1954. The ABM certainly did not accept that Bantu Education was to provide the Christian basis to education that they sought.

Records relating to the role the African Advisory Board at Inanda are scarce, but, by August of 1954, Scott was able to note that her 'entire staff' were behind the idea of the school applying for private status; in addition there was 'fairly unanimous support' for the decision from those interested in the school.<sup>104</sup> However, Scott did not think her staff would accept a 25 per cent wage cut. On the other hand, 'both the staff and a fairly large number of students that I have consulted feel that parents would be prepared to pay somewhat increased fees.'<sup>105</sup> This in turn suggests that parents of Inanda students also supported the school's decision to apply for private registration despite the costs involved. Inanda was offered additional funding from the ABM amounting to £4000 per year which allowed teachers' salaries to be maintained at their previous level.<sup>106</sup>

Until its application to run privately was submitted in September 1956 the seminary continued to run as before, but with a reduced subsidy.<sup>107</sup> By mid-1956 it appears that Scott was not so confident of African community support as she had been. While the Pastors 'wholeheartedly' backed the school many of the chiefs did not, and, as she noted, in the new dispensation, 'they are the ones who are said to speak for the people'.<sup>108</sup> It may be that the government was manipulating Inanda chiefs into opposing private registration as they had successfully done at Adams.

Wood records that the application for registration was made with the blessing of the circuit inspector, Mr. R. Hawksley, and the Regional Director of Bantu Education, Mr. S. Dent.<sup>109</sup> This seems highly unlikely given the government's determination to control mission

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<sup>104</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Scott to Reuling, 31 Aug. 1954.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.* She suggested raising them from £20 a year to £24 a year.

<sup>106</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Reuling to Rev. S. Kaetzel (Secretary of the American Board Mission, Mphumulo), 28 Oct. 1955.

<sup>107</sup> Wood noted that teachers were made to sign a new contract on the 1 April 1955 where they promised not to work against the government, suggesting that it came under Native Affairs Department control. Wood, *Shine Where*, p. 126.

<sup>108</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Scott to Reuling, 17 May 1956.

<sup>109</sup> Wood, *Shine Where*, p. 127.

education, and is confirmed by a letter from Scott which noted:

You will be interested to know that Mr. Dent came to see me on the 21<sup>st</sup> September, to urge us to reconsider our decision to apply for registration as a private school - because he thinks we are in grave danger of being refused.<sup>110</sup>

Dent may have feared that, because of the attitude of local Chiefs, Inanda's application would be rejected, as Adams' had been. Shortly after learning this the ABM decided to divert £10,000 originally intended for Adams to Inanda.<sup>111</sup> In December 1957 the school was granted private status subject to a list of 'puzzling' conditions<sup>112</sup> making Inanda the only non-Catholic African private school in South Africa.<sup>113</sup>

### Conclusion

The Governing Council of Adams College decided to try and run the college as a private school because in part its constitution prevented them from doing otherwise: the college was incorporated to exist in perpetuity as a Christian institution dedicated to the education of Africans, a binding commitment that could not be broken. As the secretary of the Governing Council remarked to Eiselen 'I am requested to ask you exactly what the Department requires of Adams College Incorporated bearing in mind its legal inability to hand over its schools.'<sup>114</sup> It is also clear, however, that those in charge became increasingly committed to the idea of maintaining it as a symbol of their rejection of Bantu Education and apartheid. The Grants were the driving force behind this and both underwent a political and social

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<sup>110</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Scott to Reuling, 13 Oct 1956.

<sup>111</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Reuling to Kaetzel, 31 Oct. 1956.

<sup>112</sup> KCL Inanda, file 6, Scott to Reuling, 4 Dec. 1957. These conditions were not noted.

<sup>113</sup> In fact a very small number of Seventh-Day Adventist Church schools were granted private status. This was because they had never accepted government subsidies and 'were never involved in opposition to its [the government] policies ... moreover the white leadership of the South African Union Conference promised the Government that African Seventh-Day Adventist schools would never engage in negative activities against the Government.' A. Makapela, The Problem of Africanity in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (Lampeter, 1996), p. 277.

<sup>114</sup> SOAS CBMS, Secretary of the Adams College Council to Eiselen, 21 June 1955.

awakening during their time at the College. Grant's correspondence shows a growing determination to do what he thought was right, both from a Christian and from a moral political perspective. In this he seems to have carried with him the majority of the Council, even if he could not achieve the same in the Association.<sup>115</sup> In 1956 he wrote 'For our part, we have, I verily believe, fought a good fight...we know that we have acted in obedience to our vision of Christian discipleship.'<sup>116</sup>

In 1957 Ida Grant reflected that 'except for a few understanding friends, Adams had to face the struggle misunderstood and almost alone.'<sup>117</sup> During the period that Adams battled on, it never carried with it the total support that its governors expected. Amongst the teachers, there is a good deal of contradictory evidence. Clearly some felt that they had not been adequately involved in the discussions over the college's future. Although teachers were engaged in the debate via the Adams Association, this engagement was limited and somewhat superficial. Mass meetings were not the ideal fora for deliberations, nor were 'real' decisions taken by the Association.<sup>118</sup> It was an advisory body, there to guide the Adams Council, but not to make decisions. African staff members felt insufficiently represented on the Council itself, a problem which the Council recognised but failed to remedy. Thus, ultimately, it was predominantly whites who determined the course of action at Adams College.<sup>119</sup> For all their liberalism, the school authorities reflected the norms of South African society: decisions were essentially made for Africans rather than with Africans.

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<sup>115</sup> What becomes clear during the debates is that there was also a determination to try and hold onto Adams College because of its history, and because of the time and effort that had been expended to make it what it was. There was a feeling that it could not be simply handed over, and that it stood for something (a 'liberal' education) that was worth fighting for.

<sup>116</sup> Grant, 'Principal's Letter', *Iso Lomuzi*, Vol. 20, No. 34 'Final Number', Nov. 1956, p. 5. The CID's raid on his office and home in 1954 was a very real and personal intrusion by the state and may have gone some way towards reinforcing his determination to fight for Adams College.

<sup>117</sup> Ida Grant to Friends of Adams College, May 1957.

<sup>118</sup> A teacher at Adams from 1954-56 remembers that the issues at stake were often only debated in staff meetings. Nora Moerane, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

<sup>119</sup> A teacher at the time remarked, 'you see the Church was ruled by whites, just like everything else, so they ran the school.' M. Christofersen, interview with author, Durban, 3 June 1998.

The wider African community around Adams also had an impact upon its future and it is clear that the Council failed to gain its support. Explaining why Adams was refused registration M. Christofersen remarked 'they hadn't been enough part of the community, least we felt that'.<sup>120</sup> The Rev. Dlodla commenting on Inanda noted 'they didn't see themselves isolated from the community, they found themselves being part of the community, whereas at Adams it was different.'<sup>121</sup> It is not clear why Adams made little effort to engage its local community, as it was active in promoting relationships with white schools. It may simply have been down to the personal preferences of those who ran the school or because it increasingly saw itself as an elite school. It was a far more academic institution than Inanda, taking older students who concentrated on academic study. Adams looked to train an 'elite' group of Africans who would enter professional careers in the 'modern' economy, distinct from 'traditional', rural lifestyles. Adams may have remained deliberately aloof from the rural community around it in an attempt to isolate its pupils from its influences and help them on the path towards a 'modern' and 'civilised' existence in a multi-racial South Africa. Like Fort Hare, it also accepted many students from Southern Africa, so that many of its pupils had no relationship with the local communities. The move away from the ABM that took place at Adams in 1940 may also have weakened the influence of American educational ideas which stressed the need to develop a strong relationship between school and community.

Whatever the reason for Adams' distance from the community, this played directly into the hands of the government. The NAD sensed that its Council did not have the support that it hoped for and undermined its efforts. As Ida Grant remarked:

The Government sought means of discrediting the College in the eyes of the public, particularly the African public. Actions of the College authorities were misrepresented in such a way as to place on the College the blame for the closing of the Training College and non-cooperation of the Government.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> M. Christofersen, interview with author, Durban, 3 June 1998.

<sup>121</sup> Rev. Dlodla, interview with author, Durban, 16 June 1998.

<sup>122</sup> KCL MS62A/9 I. Grant 'Adams vs Apartheid', May 1957, p. 3. Nationalist MP, Mr. W. Maree, a member of the Native Affairs Commission, told the Natal Mercury on 22 June 1955 'The College had

It is impossible to know whether the meeting of the African chiefs which condemned the Council was genuine or staged by the government.<sup>123</sup> What is certain, however, is that it damaged the credibility of those who said that they acted with the support of the African community. The government alleged that the Council was acting against its Bantu Education policy when, in fact, by applying for private status, it was acting within the regulations. Despite the NAD's stress on the wishes of the African people, it showed little respect for them. Rather, by manipulating African opinion against the Adams Council, it undermined the Council's determination to continue its fight, whilst presenting itself and the African people as victims of the 'Council's intransigence'.

Crucially, it appears the government was successful in convincing a significant number of Africans that the Council's actions threatened the very existence of Adams, given that the government had the power to close schools presumed to be acting against it.<sup>124</sup> This was of pivotal importance and explains why some Africans did not support the Councils' course of action. By suggesting that it was the Adams Council, and not they, who were working against the interests of the people, the government gave Africans the impression that the school was jeopardising its long term future by making a private application. This obviously had serious consequences for Adams pupils, their parents and future generations. As one teacher remarked 'we can't be too dogmatic about the whole thing, the parents wanted their children to study.'<sup>125</sup> In the end the decision of the ABM to hand over the school, rather than close it was due to African pressure to keep the school open, no matter who ran it.

The government's determination to run Adams College was motivated by both political and

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refused to cooperate with the Government in applying the Bantu Education Act and as a consequence was closing down.' Maree appears to be referring to the closure of the training school, not the whole college.

<sup>123</sup> However, one teacher at Adams has remarked 'the chiefs around Adams College were very much influenced by the Government and they didn't stand by it at all, and that's how it was that we had to close up.' Joyce Evans, interview with author, Durban, 17 June 1998. Financial constraints prohibited consultation of government archives in Pretoria which may have shed more light on this matter.

<sup>124</sup> The College's failure to become involved with the local community obviously damaged its chances of trying to convince Africans otherwise.

<sup>125</sup> Rev. Dlodla, interview with author, Durban, 16 June 1998.

practical concerns. The political nature of the college, through the Grants, and its relationship with African leaders and the SAIRR, was seen as a disruptive and dangerous influence in Natal. Scott, who attended a meeting with de Villiers in March 1954, remarked 'Mr. De V. mentioned at Pretoria that one Principal who was undermining respect for the Government among his students is endangering the future of his institution without knowing it.'<sup>126</sup> Scott later confirmed that she took this as a direct reference to Grant.<sup>127</sup> The government was simply not prepared to have a single school, governed by unsympathetic persons, undermine Bantu Education. Given the state's determination to remove 'liberal' missionary influences, it is unsurprising that they would not allow perhaps the most 'liberal' of all institutions, whose leaders had publically condemned the Act, to remain open in defiance of their wishes. However, it is also apparent that the training college at Adams had to remain open to maintain an adequate supply of teachers to ensure the success of the Bantu Education project.<sup>128</sup>

The decision to deny Adams College its private registration had been made at an early stage. This is clear from the comments Eiselen and de Villiers made in early 1954 concerning both private registration and Grant. The delays in processing the application indicate the government's unwillingness to take over Adams between 1954 and 1956, perhaps signifying difficulties in organising the administrative structures and staff necessary to run the institution.

Asked why he thought Inanda was granted private status the then Pastor of Inanda Seminary Church, remarked

because we felt that it has a unique position in that it provided education for African girls and no male students, so we thought that Inanda was playing a very vital role in preparing young African women for future responsibilities in the land...it's the

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<sup>126</sup> KCL M52295 'The New Bantu Education Act - Report by Lavinia Scott to the American Board and Mission', p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> KCL Inanda file 6, Scott to Reuling, 25 March 1954.

<sup>128</sup> This was especially true given that Catholic training colleges were only producing teachers for Catholic schools.



women who make the home<sup>129</sup>

That Inanda was a girls school was vital to its registration being granted. The government had made clear its intention of replacing male teachers with women in the lower classes and it is fair to assume that Inanda was providing the ideal students to enter the near-by teacher training college at Adams. It may also have been granted private status simply as a matter of finance; if the government were happy with the 'products' of Inanda seminary they had little to gain from the expense of taking it over. Teachers I have spoken to are convinced that it was due to the support and approval of the African community around it. One teacher commented 'when it came to 1956 when the Government was making a mess of all the education the local people stood by Inanda, the chiefs stood by them.'<sup>130</sup> Another recalls 'we realised we needed to be part of the community...the community couldn't fight with Adams College, they couldn't back them up with "we need this, and this is ours"'<sup>131</sup> The problem with this argument is that it assumes that the government cared about what Africans wanted. Nevertheless, having the support of the local community meant that the government could not attack those who looked to continue Inanda as a private school on the grounds that they did not carry African support.

The fact that Adams was refused registration and Inanda granted it, illustrates the fears of the government, its prejudices and the purpose of Bantu Education. Adams had a history of student disturbances, was the venue for political gatherings and was creating a male intellectual elite that the government feared. Inanda had a history of student loyalty and cooperation<sup>132</sup> and, as far as the government was concerned, was creating apolitical homemakers and nurses. Adams was exactly the type of institution that Bantu Education set out to destroy.

The government's refusal to register Adams but accept Inanda within the Bantu Education

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<sup>129</sup> Rev. Dlodla, interview with author, Durban, 16 June 1998.

<sup>130</sup> Joyce Evans, interview with author, Durban, 17 June 1998.

<sup>131</sup> M. Christofersen, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

<sup>132</sup> Wood, Shine Where, p. 116.

system was based upon a assessment of risk - an assessment which, as is demonstrated in next chapter, was to turn out favourably for the Catholic Church which had also applied for the private registration of its schools. Unable to compromise on the issue of religious education, but capable of raising the necessary finances for private control, the Catholic Church was able, after pledging its loyalty to the government, to fashion for itself a unique position within Bantu Education.

'Only History Will Tell Us How Tragic This Has Been':  
The Catholic Church and the Bantu Education Act<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Church in South Africa considered Bantu Education an attack upon religious freedom and, after debate from its strictly white hierarchy, refused to surrender control of its institutions. Driven by its adherence to stringent dogma, the Church was torn between its refusal to compromise on matters which it considered of vital religious importance, and its unwillingness to antagonise the Government.

After the end of the Second World War, the Catholic Church attempted to establish itself as a more South African-based denomination. In 1947 it founded the SACBC and in 1951 the South African hierarchy was created through the appointment of an Apostolic Delegate. This replaced the control of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome. In this period it also began to make piecemeal attempts to introduce African representation into its leadership with the appointment of B. Dlamini as Bishop of Umzimkulu. These changes, however, remained limited with the Archbishop of Cape Town, Owen MacCann, informing the Catholic weekly, Southern Cross<sup>2</sup> that it would be 'dangerous and wrong to force the pace' when it came to appointing Africans.<sup>3</sup>

It is essential to stress the importance of schooling to the Catholic faith. Archbishop Hurley<sup>4</sup> has recently written that schools were the Church's 'most precious institutional jewels and its main centres of evangelism'.<sup>5</sup> For Catholics, schools were the most potent guarantee of the preservation and cultivation of the faith. This was especially true in non-Catholic

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<sup>1</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (henceforth SACBC) Archives, Pretoria. AV1 Administrative Board Minutes, 1948-63. Minutes, 26-7 Aug. 1958.

<sup>2</sup> The Southern Cross was financed by the SACBC. It had a circulation of 12,000 in 1953.

<sup>3</sup> Southern Cross, 28 July 1954, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Eugene Hurley was the Archbishop of Durban throughout the transition to Bantu Education and served as 'Chairman' of the SACBC and as 'Chairman' of the SACBC African Affairs Department from October 1954.

<sup>5</sup> Hurley, 'The Mission Church and the Bantu Education Act', draft chapter of forthcoming publication given to me by the author., p. 1.

countries where they were viewed as institutions where children could be 'immunised' and 'protected' against other religions, most obviously Protestantism.<sup>6</sup> In South Africa there was, in Hurley's words, 'a certain degree of anti-Protestant and anti-public school attitude in the enthusiasm....for Catholic mission schools.'<sup>7</sup> Catholic schools were where children formed characters 'pleasing to God,'<sup>8</sup> and this could only take place in a school that was not merely Catholic in name, but imbued all things with a 'Catholic atmosphere'. As an editorial in the Catholic African Teachers Federation publication, Lumen, made clear;

to us the *Catholic atmosphere is vital*. Religion is not simply a subject to be imparted at certain hours; it is something to be lived at every moment, something to engage every faculty of mind and body, something that is as vital to the well-being of the soul as the air we breathe is to the well-being of the body; it is something which must in every truth be the foundation and crown of a child's entire training<sup>9</sup>

Without this Catholic atmosphere the salvation of children would be at risk.<sup>10</sup> Education was fundamentally necessary for every child and the absolute responsibility of Catholic parents who had the inalienable right to insist on a Catholic education. The Church's role was to assist parents in their obligation to God by providing a Catholic education in distinctly Catholic schools.

For Catholics the rights of the state in this matter were very different. The state's role in the

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<sup>6</sup> This can be traced back to the period after the Act of Emancipation in England when Catholics felt that ordinary schools exposed their children to essentially anti-Catholic views. Hurley, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Hurley 'The Mission Church', p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Southern Cross, 7 Nov. 1954, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Lumen, Dec. 1955, p. 23. Original emphasis.

<sup>10</sup> The Southern Cross remarked, 'There is no choice in the matter...you can choose which school that your child will attend, but it must be a Catholic school', 14 Jan. 1948, p. 4. Pope Pius XI had remarked 'Catholic education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created....Parents have, by nature, the right to instruct their children...Their rights cannot be surrendered. They are prior to any right of civil society or of the State.' SACBC, A2 African Mission Schools, AA11 Bantu Education Act 'Pastoral Letter of the South African Hierarchy to the Clergy and Faithful of the Country on the Future of Our Mission Schools', p. 2.

development of education included setting standards, determining syllabi and inspecting schools, obligations that it was committed to fulfil as it was publically funded. It was not, however, competent to offer a school with the correct Catholic atmosphere, only the Church could do this. This was the will of God, and was not negotiable and could not be compromised in any way.

The Catholic Church's memorandum to the Eiselen Commission gave a direct indication of what it considered to be the rights and obligations of the Church, family and state in the field of education. The state's obligation was to foster peace and security and raise monies, thereby providing the conditions for the Church to educate its followers, 'to protect in its legislation the prior rights of the family as regards the Christian education of its offspring, and consequently also to respect the supernatural rights of the Church in this same realm of Christian education'.<sup>11</sup>

The question of religious instruction for Catholic children was, however, 'completely and exclusively within the competence of the Catholic Church' which provided 'maternal care' to protect children from 'all kinds of doctrinal and moral evil.'<sup>12</sup> This duty crossed all racial and cultural 'boundaries', as Christ had commanded 'Teach ye all nations.'<sup>13</sup>

The memorandum was conceived as a pre-emptive measure to impress upon the government the seriousness of the Catholic claim to the right to control and run their own schools in the face of the threat that Commission represented to existing educational arrangements. Hurley recalls that the hierarchy was 'very anxious', realising that 'things were going to change dramatically and rather substantially', and mission schools 'would no-longer exist as such'.<sup>14</sup> In October 1949, the Native Affairs Department of the SACBC initiated a campaign

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<sup>11</sup> UCTL BC282 A1.3.1 'Memorandum Presented on Behalf of the Catholic Bishops of S.A. on the Questionnaire on Native Education', p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 2 & 6.

<sup>13</sup> The memorandum did, however, suggest that for 'practical reasons' there should be, temporarily, separate schools for whites and Africans, *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Hurley, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

to collect signatures from its teachers to present to the Commission as a statement of their support for the Catholic school system. An accompanying letter of support from teachers in Cape Town noted:

Catholic parents and many non-Catholic parents with children at our Catholic Mission Schools not only approve of these schools, but together with us will oppose any attempt to secularise them....<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, the Commission and its implications for African education were not discussed at Plenary or Administrative Board level. Nor did the Catholic press debate the issue until after the publication of the Eiselen Report in early 1952. In June 1952 Lumen pondered the Report and, while welcoming its 'national scope', warned that there were 'also great dangers lurking'. It advised its readers to 'wait and see, and meanwhile prepare for the battle of the Catholic school in South Africa'.<sup>16</sup> The Bishops' silence was finally broken after the first parliamentary reading of the Bantu Education Bill, when W. Whelan, the Bishop of Johannesburg, publically expressed his 'grave misgivings' about it.<sup>17</sup> A month later he declared that the Act's intention to force children to attend non-denominational religious education classes would be a 'tyranny and an usurpation' of parental rights.<sup>18</sup>

Following the passage of the Act, the hierarchy sought clarification on the government's intentions and the first of many meetings between the SACBC and the government took place in October 1953. At this meeting Verwoerd stressed the government's intention to pursue the Act's objectives vigorously. Hurley's impression was that despite Verwoerd's determination

it would take a considerable time before the Government would be able to put the provisions of the Bill into effect. So the Church had a breathing space in which to

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<sup>15</sup> SACBC Box M1 African Affairs Department - General Education. Catholic Teachers of the Cape Town Vicariate to Eiselen, Oct 1949. The Native Affairs Department of the SACBC dealt with all matters relating to African affairs in which the Church was involved.

<sup>16</sup> 'Where Are We Going With Bantu Education?', Lumen, June 1952, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Southern Cross, 26 Aug. 1953, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Southern Cross, 30 Sept. 1953, p. 10.

prepare itself. Moreover, the Minister was still ready to hold discussions, so it would be unwise to launch an attack on the Bill and antagonise the Government<sup>19</sup>

This interpretation contrasts markedly with Rev. Fr. D. St. George's<sup>20</sup> conclusions after he met with de Villiers in March 1954.<sup>21</sup> St. George, the Catholic representative to the Natal Native Education Advisory Board, realised that the government sought to push on 'energetically', to complete its task by the end of 1954 or early 1955 at the latest,<sup>22</sup> and that the Church had 'very little "breathing space."' <sup>23</sup> Shortly after this meeting de Villiers met another deputation from the Church where he revealed what official policy would be, pre-empting much of Verwoerd's statement to the Senate on 7 June. For their part Church representatives stressed their wish to appoint all teachers in Catholic schools and reaffirmed their commitment to 'fight' against Communism, teaching 'at all times respect for law and order.'<sup>24</sup> This was typical of the Church's dealings with the government; they outlined their concerns, asserted what they considered their rights, and then attempted to placate the government with promises of loyalty and support.

Fr. J. Ochs<sup>25</sup>, who attended the meeting, expressed his concern over the proposed establishment of school committees and boards, whose members would be largely drawn from local African communities and did not have to be Catholic: 'subjecting our schools to such a system can, to say the least, only fill us with mis-giving.' As he saw it, the Church

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<sup>19</sup> Hurley, 'The Mission...', p. 3. The unwillingness of the Catholic Church to antagonise the government was a consistent theme in its deliberations, both publically and privately

<sup>20</sup> Fr. St. George was a cleric in the archdiocese of Durban who was particularly interested in African education, he was appointed Secretary to Native Schools in the Archdiocese of Durban in 1950.

<sup>21</sup> Hurley described the periods of time between meetings with the government as filled with 'uncertainty, enquiry and research', interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

<sup>22</sup> SACBC PS1 Plenary Sessions 1952-63. Notes on the meeting of the Natal Native Education Advisory Board with de Villiers, 3 March 1954, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> DCR Hurley Papers Bantu Education Act (BEA) 1953-56. St. George to Hurley 15 March 1954.

<sup>24</sup> SACBC A2, 'Report of an Interview with Mr. de Villiers in which the New Proposals for the Bantu Education Act Were Discussed', p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Ochs, the General Secretary of the SACBC, remarked of de Villiers 'I might say off hand that we were not impressed by the said gentleman', DCR BEA Ochs to Hurley 26 March 1954.

would have to 'drive a hard bargain for substantial safeguards. The right to veto the appointment of any teacher is one point; another is the question of the school principal.'<sup>26</sup> The Church should not oppose the 'active participation of the Bantu' but rather 'certain Bantu'<sup>27</sup>; clearly it could not appear to oppose greater African responsibility.

Ochs also found the position regarding government funding 'very unsatisfactory and vague except that full state aid would not be forthcoming' and argued that

The subtlety of the whole plan seems to have been of diabolical origin. If we accept full state-aid we stand in the greatest danger of saying good-bye for ever to the Catholic character of Native education. If we accept the reduced subsidy we are quite likely to struggle on miserably for a few years just to lay ourselves open to easy extermination in the end.<sup>28</sup>

The Church faced a dilemma in fighting against the Act from either a religious or educational standpoint. If it opposed it as persecution against Catholics the government could protest that all denominations were being treated the same, while to fight against it in the name of education would 'take up the government on their much vaunted (but largely suspect) claim that they are genuinely concerned for the welfare of the Bantu'.<sup>29</sup> Ochs did not suggest fighting the legislation as a product of apartheid, perhaps because this would have meant direct confrontation with the government. After another meeting with de Villiers, Bishop Whelan wrote to Hurley:

I stressed very strongly that the Catholic Church, while not allowing itself to be made a party to press and propaganda, cannot surrender its rights in the sphere of education. Our attitude is to co-operate with the State in every way possible and to seek every possible means of arriving at an amicable agreement with the State. Our whole history gives clear example of our good faith and our honourable co-operation.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> SACBC A2, 'Report of.....', p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> DCR BEA Ochs to Hurley, 26 March 1954, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> DCR BEA, Whelan to Hurley, 12 April 1954.



Whelan noted, however, that de Villiers had 'suggested how unfortunate it is that the State must deal with missionary schools as a whole.'<sup>31</sup> He saw this as a sign that the Catholic Church could expect some form of preferential treatment from the government, so that '[T]he door has not yet been closed to us. It may be possible to approach the NAD with suggestions for a modus vivendi.'<sup>32</sup> This was the climate in which the Catholic hierarchy attended an extraordinary plenary session in April 1954 to discuss Bantu Education.

The plenary session was opened by Archbishop C. Damiano, the Apostolic Delegate, who reminded the bishops of the 'prudent manner' in which the Church had so far managed its relations with the Government.<sup>33</sup> Hurley indicated that the Church could follow either compliant or vigorous policies. The compliant option would be to surrender at the first refusal of their requests, the vigorous one to make a 'clear and forceful presentation to the state', to consult non-Catholic bodies, and to make a strong appeal to the public. He wanted the Church to reject the community system, having 'no great hopes for the success of negotiations' fearing the inevitability of a public appeal. He maintained that

it would mean a clash with the Government, but that was bound to come sooner or later. We could not avoid it. If the clash did not come over the Education issue it would come over some other application of apartheid. Apartheid had been elevated to a formal doctrine. As such we could not compromise with it, it was opposed to justice, charity, the unity of the human race and the unity of the Mystical body...the sooner we clash the better. It would be better to fight while our moral position was strong, instead of weakening ourselves with compromise.<sup>34</sup>

For Hurley, apartheid was 'doomed; one day a policy would arise to take its place' and 'only those who fought it would have the right to speak later'. He concluded, 'if fighting meant suffering we should be prepared for that.'<sup>35</sup> This forceful address made the obvious link

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<sup>31</sup> DCR BEA, Whelan to Hurley, 12 April 1954

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> SACBC, PS1 29 April 1954, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6. Hurley remarked recently that 'I appear to have gone to this session in a somewhat prophetic and provocative mood, seeing the Bantu Education Policy in the setting of the worst possible interpretation of apartheid', Hurley, 'The Mission...', p. 7.

between Bantu Education and apartheid, and pushed the Bishops to reveal their attitudes towards what was actually at stake. For Hurley, who became the leader of a small 'radical' faction within the Conference, the Church should not compromise, even if this would bring the Church into direct conflict with the government. Hurley, however, was no radical; he saw entry into the community system as unthinkable, but not the teaching of Bantu Education. He was not prepared to defy the government in the way that Grant or some of the Anglicans did, but he was ready to break the church's silence and state publically that it did not agree with the state's policy.

He found support from Bishop Boyle of Port Elizabeth, Bishop van Velsen of Kroonstad and Rev. Lamont, the Prefect Apostolic of Umtali, who argued that the Act was 'immoral' and 'should be opposed without compromise.'<sup>36</sup> For Hurley, Boyle and Lamont, what was 'immoral' and 'should be opposed without compromise' was the secularization of education, and not Bantu Education per se. Their voices were, however, in the minority as most Conference members rejected any confrontation with the government. Bishop McBride of Kokstad argued for a cautious policy that ensured they were not identified with other denominations.<sup>37</sup> Bishop Whelan observed that the former Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Lucas, had reached a cordial understanding with Malan which should not be jeopardised. He rejected Hurley's attack upon apartheid arguing that

We must not become involved in politics. Apartheid was practised in South Africa long before the present government came to power. Openly opposing it would not help us much. The Holy Father had indicated how, without surrendering our principles, we must be tolerant towards others and take into account the situation in which we find ourselves. We must think very seriously before opposing authority.<sup>38</sup>

The Conference's prevailing attitude was summed up by Bishop Bilgeri of Eshowe: 'We are not concerned with the policy behind the Act; what we want to safeguard is our right

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<sup>36</sup> SACBC, PS1 29 April 1954, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* p. 8. Whelan warned of the 'dangers' of mixing with non-Catholics, as to do so would draw the Church into politics.

to teach.<sup>39</sup> They agreed to present a memorandum to the government and undertake further negotiations to allow them to continue running their schools on full subsidies. If these failed, they arranged to hold another plenary session to reconsider their position. Furthermore, they rejected the renting of schools as it allowed the government too much control, and passed a resolution calling on the Church to maintain 'full control' of its schools. Finally, they released a statement indicating 'serious concern over the manner in which it appears that the Bantu Education Act will be applied' but also stating the Church's hope 'to negotiate with the Government with a view to reaching a solution acceptable to both parties'.<sup>40</sup> While the Bishops agreed that they could not forfeit the right to maintain Catholic schools, they were divided over how to deal with the government: should they follow the established route of private negotiation and diplomacy, or condemn the policy as a denial of religious freedom?

The SACBC memorandum was presented to the government in August. It was a dozen-page treatise on how the Catholic Church in South Africa had, in close co-operation with the government, helped to 'civilise' Africans through Christianity, thereby reducing the 'dangers' of Communism and nationalism. It pointed to the 'Church's unvarying spirit of friendliness and positive co-operation with the State', claiming that its 'record of opposition to Communism and extremism requires no commendation here'.<sup>41</sup> It argued that it was the 'common desire of all right-minded people to further the civilization of the Bantu. It is generally agreed that spreading the Christian religion among them is the best, and indeed, the only way to achieve this objective.'<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the work of Christianizing and civilizing the 'Bantu' was 'nowhere near completion'; 'should the Christian element be abolished in Bantu schools', it would remove 'the one element that works for moderation',

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<sup>39</sup> SACBC, PS1 29 April 1954, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> SACBC, PS1 29 April 1954 p. 10. Bishop Boyle wanted the statement to include the Church's belief that Bantu Education was not in the interests of the Bantu, but this amendment failed to gain the two-thirds majority required.

<sup>41</sup> SACBC, A2 AA11 'Memorandum Concerning the Implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953', pp. 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

and leave 'the field free for the rapid and violent growth of national extremism'.<sup>43</sup>

The Catholic Church also objected to the non-denominational character of the religious education to be given under Bantu Education, asserting that it could only be successfully taught if it was

imparted as a way of life...No child can be impressed with the value of religion if it is relegated in school to a secondary position in the curriculum, if it does not in some way permeate the atmosphere of the school.<sup>44</sup>

To justify their continued existence in African schooling, Catholics tried to appeal to white fears of African radicalism and nationalism. They highlighted the growth of what they called 'African sects' which were giving 'very grave cause for uneasiness', contending that these dangers could only be avoided through partnership with mission educators.<sup>45</sup> In addition if whites were withdrawn from African education

it would be easy for the propagandists of Bantu nationalism to operate under cover ... If a universal and exclusive community school system were imposed upon the Bantu ... we gravely fear that a ready field would be provided for the propagation of Bantu nationalism wrapped up in the jargon of Marxist dialectics.<sup>46</sup>

In conclusion, the memorandum proposed that they be allowed to keep their schools, as owners and managers, with a 100 per cent grant; their only concession was to suggest the establishment of special Catholic School Boards, consisting of nominees from the Church, Bantu Education Department and Regional Bantu Authority, and elected 'Bantu Representatives'. These proposals, it suggested, were 'in harmony with the policy which aims at encouraging initiative and responsibility in an as yet immature people, while safeguarding the direct beneficent influence of Church and State in the sphere of

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<sup>43</sup> SACBC, A2 AA11 'Memorandum Concerning ...', p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* p. 7.

education.<sup>47</sup>

The Catholic Church was effectively demanding the government reverse its policy, as Verwoerd was aware:

He [Verwoerd] wishes to emphasise that it must be quite clear that the proposals with which your memorandum concludes, contain the direct negation of the Bantu Education Act... These proposals suggest that fundamentally the Government revert to the policy and practise of the past which it deemed necessary to wholly reform<sup>48</sup>

Despite this rejection a further deputation met Verwoerd in September. Verwoerd expressed his appreciation at the manner in which the Catholic Bishops had dealt with Bantu Education for they had not 'indulged in irresponsible press publicity, but had come to put their case in a reasonable manner.'<sup>49</sup> While, he declined their demands he 'admitted that the Catholic schools and institutions had a very good record of discipline and sound achievement', and he 'regretted that he could make no exceptions.' He conceded that it was a 'pity the Catholic Church had to suffer; but he could not risk the success of the whole system by making exceptions in the case of the Catholics'.<sup>50</sup> These comments suggest that the Nationalist Government did not share the concerns of some within its ranks, or those of the Dutch Reformed Church, that the Catholics were the *Roomse gevaar*.<sup>51</sup> On the contrary, the Nationalists seemed to see the Catholics as the most accommodating of all the 'English-speaking' churches at this stage.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> SACBC, A2 AA11 'Memorandum Concerning ...', p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> DCR BEA, 'Interview of SACBC Delegation with Dr. Verwoerd', Verwoerd's Private Secretary to Hurley, 26 Aug. 1954.

<sup>49</sup> DCR BEA, 'Interview...', p. 1. Verwoerd was no doubt alluding to the press campaign instigated by the Anglican Priest Huddleston.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> An Afrikaans term meaning 'Roman danger' - the threat that the Catholics supposedly represented to the Protestant Afrikaner people.

<sup>52</sup> The Church's tradition of cordial and non-confrontational relations with the government undoubtedly promoted an atmosphere wherein the Church felt it could negotiate with the government. However, it is equally clear that it was in the interests of the Nationalists to allow the cultivation of a *Roomse gevaar* mentality among its supporters because this had a powerful effect upon the confidence of the Catholic Church within South Africa. However, after 1948 Afrikaner nationalists needed to maintain

Verwoerd told the deputation that the gradual withdrawal of subsidies was inevitable, and was designed to 'soften the blow'; he could not promise permanent reduced subsidy arrangements.<sup>53</sup> This, he noted, was not an infringement of rights but the withdrawal of a privilege. The deputation attempted to impress on Verwoerd the necessity of maintaining a 'Catholic atmosphere' in schools. Verwoerd replied that they were perfectly entitled to run their schools as private institutions but could not then expect any subsidy. Eiselen, who was also present interjected asking the Bishops 'How can a school receiving a 100% State subsidy be justified for instance in asking the children to pray for the defeat of Dr. Malan's party?'<sup>54</sup> This seems incongruous given the otherwise cordial atmosphere of the meeting and suggests an underlying frustration and mistrust of Catholic intentions.<sup>55</sup> Hurley recalls that he had the impression 'that here was a decision that had been taken and no change was going to be made'.<sup>56</sup>

As had been agreed another extraordinary plenary session met in late September. Hurley opened it warning the Bishops that the government would not retreat 'one step'.<sup>57</sup> It soon became apparent that the divisions of the first session were to surface again as the session split between those who wanted to criticise the government's intentions publically, and those who sought yet further negotiation.

Closing all their schools in defiance was debated, and quickly rejected. As McCann pointed out such a move would not influence the government's decision, indeed it

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a white *laager* against African nationalism meaning that white Catholics were increasingly welcome within their fold.

<sup>53</sup> DCR BEA, 'Interview of SACBC...', pp. 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3. Eiselen remarked that the Bishops should be pleased because, by breaking the denominational hold on schools, all children were now open to Catholic influence.

<sup>55</sup> It could also indicate that Eiselen did not share Verwoerd's view and failed to make any distinction between the Catholics and other English-speaking churches.

<sup>56</sup> Hurely, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

<sup>57</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 1.

would not even embarrass them.<sup>58</sup> J. Gotthardt, the Vicar Apostolic of Kimberley, maintained that closing the schools would be a betrayal of the students who would be thrown onto the streets, while the Rev. Fr. A. Hartjes, representing Kimberley, claimed that such an act of defiance would see the expulsion of many foreign Catholics working for the Church in South Africa.<sup>59</sup>

The debate then turned to whether they should enter the proposed community schools system.<sup>60</sup> In support, a faction led by St. George, argued that this was the only option, as the Church could not afford to run the schools on reduced or non-existent subsidies. He thought that the system might fail due to African hostility and encouraged the Bishops to enter the community system on short-term leases so that the Church could reclaim its schools when the system collapsed. He claimed that entering the system did not mean a complete loss of Catholic atmosphere and would give the Church 'breathing space' one of the things they 'needed most.'<sup>61</sup> In support the Bishop of Kimberley, J. Bokenfohr, argued that they had to save what they could from a bad situation, rather than lose everything.

Provocatively, Hurley asked those who argued for assimilation into the community network, 'What advantages would there be in collaborating?'<sup>62</sup> He asserted that to enter the system meant the 'Church was collaborating in the "Apartheid" policy designed to perpetuate the

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<sup>58</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954 p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* p. 11. Bishop McBride noted that 'closing down would deprive the Africans of education and teachers of their livelihood', p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> The plenary session appointed a committee to decide whether entering the community system was an evil act or not. This committee reported that cooperation was participation in an evil act; however when the cooperator was forced to comply and did not do anything evil itself then it could be permissible. It should be noted that the Bishops were not debating whether to comply with apartheid was evil, rather they asking whether it was evil to comply with a course of action which could 'jeopardise the propagation and consolidation of the Faith', see *ibid.* pp. 12, 18-19.

<sup>61</sup> SACBC A2 'Memorandum Respectfully....', p. 10. It is not clear what St. George thought the Church needed more time for; they had to make a decision which would have been binding.

<sup>62</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 8. Hurley argued that to give schools over to the community system was 'positive collaboration', p. 9.

serfdom of the Africans'.<sup>63</sup> This was the first time African opinion was considered. What, he asked, 'would be the reaction of the people?'<sup>64</sup> Hurley argued that to stand against apartheid on principle would have a tremendous moral effect on Africans, and be an example to all non-Catholics. As before, Hurley stood alone in making the connection between government policy and the Bishops' decision.

Hurley did, however, receive support for his stand from those who rejected the community system not because it compromised with apartheid, but because it denied the Church's right to maintain its own schools. McCann argued that entering the system would mean their cooperation 'in diffusing Protestant doctrine'. For him the Act's most serious consequence was the secularization of schools which they had to 'counteract' in order to 'carry on the Christian Education of children and the conversion of people.'<sup>65</sup> This indeed reflected the majority view of those present.<sup>66</sup>

During the debates other issues surfaced. St. George asked if rejecting government policy and then accepting a 75 per cent subsidy from the same government was morally acceptable, for as Hurley remarked it appeared to be 'refusing and accepting the government at the same time'.<sup>67</sup> Despite this, it was decided to accept subsidies on the grounds that they were earned by Africans who would want the Catholics to use them.

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<sup>63</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954 p. 9. He argued that 'If we went into the community system, then we would be proclaiming the system and would be encouraging our people to accept it', p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p. 9. Other than Hurley only Bishop Whelan reflected upon the attitude of Africans to the decisions. He told the Conference that 'Africans would look upon their decision to give up schools as a betrayal', p. 19.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p. 2. McCann's attitude to apartheid was demonstrated during the debate on whether schools could be rented to the government. Here he noted that 'renting was not a direct co-operation with apartheid. For that situation already existed and they would be merely accepting a 'de facto' situation', p. 3. This sentence appears to imply that McCann had already accepted apartheid as a permanent feature of South African life.

<sup>66</sup> Bishop J. des Rosiers of Maseru noted that the Church had to keep its schools for a 'point of apostolate was under attack.', whilst Bishop Dlamini argued that 'they must be a Catholic people and determine to keep their schools', *ibid.* pp. 6 and 7.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.* p. 19.



Another issue of future significance was that of teachers' salaries. The Bishops recognised that dwindling subsidies would precipitate salary reductions. They argued that teachers would have to accept wages cuts to match the 75 per cent subsidy cutback. A. Streit, the Bishop of Mariannhill, noted that this news had already been communicated to the priests and sisters in his diocese, all of whom agreed to continue at the reduced rate; he was confident 'many African teachers' would also accept a wage reductions.<sup>68</sup> Fr. Muldoon from Johannesburg argued that the situation ought to be very carefully explained to teachers who should 'accept the challenge.'<sup>69</sup> The attitude of the majority of the Bishops<sup>70</sup> was bluntly put by Bishop van Velsen

The teachers do not know the issues at stake , they did not appreciate the Catholic character of the struggle, they complained about Nationalism and not about religion. Let the teachers and people have a lean time; let them realise through persecution their faith; let them be laid open to persecution to strengthen them.<sup>71</sup>

This unsympathetic approach was echoed by Whelan:

The teachers' attitude has been that they have looked upon themselves as Government employees and the priest has been simply the agent to transmit their wages. The teachers have not become integrated in the Catholic life.<sup>72</sup>

As the loyalty of teachers had been, at best, mixed, the Bishops maintained that a reduction in wages would reveal the true Catholics amongst them to the greater benefit of the Church. A decision to go private would be a test for teachers, revealing to them the importance of Catholic teachings. According to Fr. Hartjes a 25 per cent reduction would not have a great impact upon teachers 'as their standard of living was already higher than the ordinary

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<sup>68</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 5. The only African Bishop, Dlamini of Umzimkulu claimed that his teachers 'were in favour of carrying on no matter what the wages were', p. 25. Significantly the Catholic Church could rely upon the loyalty of monks and sisters to work in schools for little or no wages, a luxury that was denied other churches.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>70</sup> There was general agreement with van Velsen's remarks.

<sup>71</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954 p. 19. Van Velsen continued by remarking that teachers 'must be made to realise that they must make sacrifices', p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.* p. 20.

people.<sup>73</sup> Bishop Bilgeri was the only one to object to Hartje's remarks, stating 'they had talked about the teachers making sacrifices, what about the Bishops sacrificing?'. This comment was dismissed as Bishops argued that they could not afford to make any more financial sacrifices in their already overburdened dioceses.<sup>74</sup>

An unofficial consensus was reached that the schools would become private institutions and the Church would apply for the 75 per cent subsidy. Now the Bishops discussed yet another appeal to the government to change its policy. Bishop Boyle argued that he felt 'sure that something could be achieved', noting that 'they should keep the door open and keep trying... The Government should be given the chance to try and do something. The worst they could do was refuse'.<sup>75</sup> Bishop Hippel of Oudtshoorn, suggested that they should try and see the Prime Minister, all other avenues having been blocked.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, Hurley believed that it was hopeless to expect the government to change its mind at this stage, and Bilgeri agreed, noting that Malan was behind his Ministers and 'had taken no steps to give them a different direction'.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless the Bishops agreed to send a letter to Malan seeking an interview.

The Catholic Church in South African had come to the decision to maintain its schools as private institutions, not because of the crushing weight of African opinion, and not because of any political or moral objection to apartheid. Their decision was based upon the dictates of Catholicism which demanded that the Church reject government policy that threatened Catholic convictions. What is perhaps most striking in the plenary debates is the complete lack of any intellectual or moral input from Africans, the very people directly affected by Bantu Education. In two days of debate only two bishops, Hurley and Whelan, addressed

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<sup>73</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 15 and 36.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> SACBC, PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, pp. 4-5. Whelan remarked that 'Doctor Malan might be kind but he was not the Government', whilst van Velsen lamented that 'outside of a miracle the government would not change its mind', pp. 20 & 27.

the attitude of Africans.<sup>78</sup> In 39 pages of typed proceedings, the only African in the Conference, Bishop Dlamini, is credited with only a single comment.<sup>79</sup> During debates concerning the reduction of teachers salaries, not a single teacher or representative of the Catholic African Teachers Federation was present to voice an opinion. It is also highly unlikely that any of the Bishops went to the conference having seriously consulted African clergy or congregations.

Hurley recalls a meeting he organised in his archdiocese to debate the implications of the Act and to develop strategies for the Church. It was attended by 45 priests and sisters, all of whom were white. With the benefit of hindsight, he recognises that this meeting spoke 'volumes concerning the mentality of the time'.<sup>80</sup> The unwillingness of the Bishops to engage African opinion meant that there was little room for dissenting voices in the Conference. Hurley and Whelan were the two members who represented the most African Catholics - Whelan as Bishop of Johannesburg and Hurley as Archbishop of the Durban Diocese, and it is possible that they were therefore more in touch with African opinion.<sup>81</sup> Why Hurley was the only Conference member to make the direct connection between the actions of the church and the dangers of compromising with apartheid is difficult to assess. He was certainly younger than most of the other Bishops, but he may also have been influenced by the reaction of the meeting in his diocese. Here a resolution was passed against surrendering schools to the government for that would be 'compromising on principle' with apartheid.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> St. George claimed they 'could not see the African mind, for the African mind was different from theirs.' SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 26.

<sup>79</sup> This may well indicate that Dlamini's appointment as a Bishop was to enable the Church to avoid accusations of racism in its hierarchy. It could also indicate that Dlamini felt disempowered within the Conference as a lone African among influential and respected white Bishops. There was also one African 'consultor' at the session, a Rev. Fr. F. Ngobese; it appears that he did not engage in the debate at all.

<sup>80</sup> Hurley, 'The Mission Church....', p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> The great majority of African Catholics were in Natal and the major urban centres in the Transvaal. The Catholic presence in Natal was historically very strong and, as African urbanization increased, so Catholic ministering in urban areas, the Rand in particular, expanded.

<sup>82</sup> DCR BEA 'Report on the Meeting of Clergy and Sisters Held in St. Mary's Hall, Pietermaritzburg, on Tuesday, March 30 1954, to Discuss the Implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953', p 3.

The unwillingness of the Catholic Bishops' to seek out African opinion was certainly a product of their position in South African society, but it was also a product of their continuing fear of 'radical' opinion. The Church dreaded action that might incite Africans to break the law. As Bishop Whelan put it, they

must call on the African people for co-operation, but subject to lawful authority. They must stand by authority. They could not defy the Government....They should tell the people to stand firm and calm, not to let resentment eat their hearts....The people should not be caught up in subversive action.<sup>83</sup>

At the meeting organised by Hurley some priests and sisters 'pointed out the danger of conducting a campaign which might upset the Africans and give the Government justification for accusing the Church of agitating'.<sup>84</sup> However, it was not only their identification with radical African opinion that concerned the Bishops. They also debated whether they should contact other denominations. In his memorandum to the plenary session, St. George argued that this was unlikely to help the Catholic cause as the Protestant Churches 'have not got a leg to stand on' because 'they accept in principle the eventual taking over of education by the state'.<sup>85</sup> Archbishop Gotthardt felt they could not seek the help of other denominations because they did not agree with their teachings.<sup>86</sup> Fr. Ketterle, representing the Bishop of Umtata, noted that Huddleston had invited the Catholics to meet Malan in association with the Anglican Church. For Bishop Boyle this was unthinkable, as Huddleston 'was one of the men that the Prime Minister would not see' and they could only co-operate with 'good non-Catholic people'.<sup>87</sup> Clearly, the Church feared being associated

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<sup>83</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 21.

<sup>84</sup> DCR BEA 'Report of the Meeting...', p.3. At the same meeting a priest objected to the word 'campaign' being used in the context of an approach being made to the government. He asserted that there should not be 'any sort of agitation', rather it 'came down to negotiating with the Government on the basis of an appeal', p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> SACBC A2 'Memorandum Respectfully...', p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid* 1954, p. 5. Seemingly against the wishes of the SACBC, Hurley wrote to the Anglican Bishop of Zululand, Eric Trapp, asking him if the Anglicans would be interested in joining a deputation to see Malan. Trapp wrote back complaining that it was 'nearly a year since I myself urged Bishop Bilgeri to confer with Your Grace as to the possibility of combined action, and I have more than once mentioned the matter to him since that occasion. I fear that it may now be too late.' DCR BEA Hurley to Trapp 20 Oct

with any opinion which opposed the government lest it undermine the harmonious relationship that they had cultivated with Nationalist leaders.

At the September plenary much debate centred on the precise wording of resolutions and the effect they would have on government opinion. Archbishop McCann appealed for a stronger condemnation of the community school system, but this was rejected.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, McCann and Bokenfohr had wanted the first resolution to read 'No Catholic school shall be handed over unless we are forced', but this was rejected in favour of the more neutral phrase 'that we retain our Catholic school buildings for our own purpose.'<sup>89</sup> On a number of occasions Bishops expressed their reluctance to antagonise the government and, in the letter to be sent to Malan, it was agreed that they should again stress their determination to 'obey the state and fight Communism.'<sup>90</sup> This continued reluctance to confront the government stemmed from a persistent belief that they could extract concessions from the Nationalists.

The letter to Malan thus followed the established pattern. Once again the Church spoke of its 'friendly co-operation', tentatively suggesting that it did 'not look for special favours or for exceptions beyond the ambit of the Act', for its sole concern was 'a reasonable and friendly implementation of the Act in favour of our Christian work which we could not abandon without betraying the demands of our conscience'.<sup>91</sup> And, once again, Malan rejected the letter, claiming, as before, that far from decreasing the opportunities for Christian endeavour the government was 'opening up huge fields for spreading Christian influence'.<sup>92</sup> During this correspondence the pastoral letter that was released was typically

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1954 & Trapp to Hurley, 25 Oct 1954.

<sup>88</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24. Whelan had previously warned the Conference to think 'very seriously before appearing to oppose authority', SACBC PS1 29 April 1954, p. 8.

<sup>91</sup> SACBC A2 Whelan to Malan, 7 Oct. 1954. The letter included a copy of the memorandum the Church had sent to Verwoerd on 6 Aug. 1954.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, Malan to Whelan, 19 Oct. 1954.

irenic, noting that the Church had

with calm serenity and untiring charity, striven by every possible means to reach a conclusion which would be satisfactory to the Church, to the State and to the parents of our Bantu children.<sup>93</sup>

The letter unwittingly highlighted the paradoxical situation that the Church found itself in:

We may never allow ourselves to be less than Catholic ... we may never descend to hatred or recrimination or to any course of conduct which is not in accord with the spirit of Christ. That very spirit, which urges charity and forbearance upon us, forbids us, nevertheless, to yield on principle. The Catholic Church in South Africa, therefore, maintains its right to continue helping parents in the education of their children.<sup>94</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the developments in Catholic education that occurred after the Church's decision to run its schools privately. The period from this commitment to 1960 and beyond was one of huge difficulty as the Church faced continual crisis over staff and finances, leading to ever-increasing challenges to the feasibility of running a privately funded African school network. However, one key issue during this period does shed more light on <sup>the</sup> Church's priorities and helps explain its reaction to Bantu Education.

By December 1954 most Catholic schools had been registered as private institutions and had agreed to the conditions imposed by the Division of Bantu Education, one of which was to teach the prescribed religious education syllabus of the department.<sup>95</sup> In part-subsidised Catholic private schools the situation remained as it was before; the Church created its own religious syllabus, subject to departmental approval. However, in early 1956 the department introduced its religious syllabus into all community and farm schools which was intended to be non-denominational to cater for adherents of all major churches.

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<sup>93</sup> SACBC A2 'Pastoral Letter...', p. 1. The ordering of the priorities of this sentence speak volumes for the attitude of the Church.

<sup>94</sup> SACBC A2 'Pastoral Letter...', p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> DCR BEA, Eiselen to Hurley, 4 Dec. 1954.

After the implementation of Bantu Education, and despite the continued existence of Catholic schools, a number of Catholic children were forced into these non-denominational community schools as a result of the Group Areas Act and the closure of some smaller Catholic primary schools which were not viable on reduced subsidies. In addition, in a somewhat surprising decision, the government also resolved to eliminate all missionary influence from farm and mine schools.<sup>96</sup> Previously these schools, which were state funded and usually built by churches on privately owned land, had been under the control of church bodies. A circular in November 1954 forced landowners to decide whether to hand them over to the community school system or run them privately without church support.<sup>97</sup> The decision<sup>was</sup> reversed in February 1955, when the department decided that farm and mine schools could retain their religious managers and principals if the land owner so wished.<sup>98</sup> The schools would, nevertheless, have to become community schools and would gradually lose their white missionary staff as and when suitable African staff became available.<sup>99</sup>

The significance of this for the Church was that 88<sup>100</sup> Catholic schools became non-denominational community schools despite the wishes of the Church. For Bishop Riegler, Bishop of Lydenburg and Director of the Catholic African Affairs Department this meant

that the time has come for us to take a firm stand and to lodge a most vigorous protest with the Minister of Native Affairs. We owe this to all the Catholic children that have hitherto attended mission schools ... and who will be deprived of their God given right to receive Catholic education.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> It is unclear why this decision was taken although it may have been that as the vast majority of these schools were rural they would have provided an impetus for the creation of local school committees and boards.

<sup>97</sup> SACBC A2 J. Riegler to Damiano, 27 Dec. 1954. Riegler remarked that the circular had come 'as a great shock to us all'.

<sup>98</sup> In Jan. 1956 the Department required all farm school managers to sign their allegiance to the Bantu Education Act and to the departments non-denominational religious syllabus. The SACBC decided that in conscience priests could sign, SACBC AV1 Administrative Board Minutes, 27-28 Feb. 1956, p. 4. This change may have been precipitated due to protest from the DRC.

<sup>99</sup> SACBC A3 Bantu Education Act 'Riegler Circular to Bishops', 8 Feb. 1955.

<sup>100</sup> B. Collins, Catholic Bantu Education, (Pretoria, 1957), p. 23.

<sup>101</sup> SACBC, A2 Riegler to Damiano, 27 Dec. 1954.

Again the motivation for opposing the effects of Bantu Education rested on the issue of religious freedom. The issue of Catholic children being forced to learn the department's religious syllabus exploded into a 'serious crisis'<sup>102</sup> for the Church over the next two years, and led to a significant confrontation with the government. Despite its supposed non-denominational character the Catholics thought that 'certain sections were definitely Protestant', giving a Protestant definition of faith and 'an entirely erroneous interpretation of what is necessary for salvation.'<sup>103</sup>

This syllabus could not be accepted as a matter of religious principle, for the same reason that they refused to hand over their schools to the community system. In April 1956 Hurley wrote to de Villiers pointing out that in European schools a 'conscience clause' allowed Catholic children to opt out of religious instruction.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, in June a circular was sent out by all Regional Directors of Bantu Education stating that the department's syllabus had to be taught in community schools without exception. As a concession Catholic priests were allowed into community schools for two sessions a week (out of four) to teach Catholic doctrine, although all children would have to take departmental exams.<sup>105</sup> In response the SACBC Administrative Board released another memorandum setting out their opposition and resolved yet again to meet government representatives.<sup>106</sup>

In the memorandum they protested

against the measure of compulsion which is now operative in regard to Catholic children at Bantu Government and Community Schools in respect of religious instruction and examination therein. This objection and protest is made on the basis of freedom of conscience. The Catholic Church maintains that it alone is charged with the obligation of the teaching of religious knowledge to its members, and that

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<sup>102</sup> Hurley, 'Fund-Raising...', p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> SACBC AV1 Ad. Board Min. 27-28 Feb. 1956, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> SACBC AV1 Ad. Board Min. 29-30 May 1956. In addition, under Provincial control Catholic Africans who found themselves in non-Catholic schools had this right also.

<sup>105</sup> SACBC A2 1 Regional Director of Bantu Education (Transkei) to Bantu School Managers, 8 June 1956.

<sup>106</sup> SACBC AV1 Ad. Board Min. 28-29 Aug. 1956, p. 6.



it cannot surrender that obligation and right to any other body.....In view of the foregoing it is asked that the right in conscience of Bantu parents in the matter of religious instruction be recognised, and adequate provision be made for them to fulfill such rights and obligations.<sup>107</sup>

Following this senior Catholics met with Verwoerd, Eiselen and de Villiers. The meeting opened with an unrestrained attack on the Catholic position by Verwoerd, who said that he considered the memorandum to be 'an accusation against the Bantu Education Department.' He claimed that the Department had been 'more than fair' to the Catholics by giving them right of entry into all schools, and that there was more religious tolerance in South African than in many countries. If all churches sought special treatment it would be impossible for the government to implement the Act. Accusing the Catholics of hypocrisy he maintained that when in the majority they tried to restrict the liberty of minorities,<sup>108</sup> and when in the minority they demanded liberties of conscience which they denied to others. Finally he asserted that if Catholics withdrew from the religious instruction examinations it would 'bring about a complete collapse of the whole scheme. Therefore all requests had to be refused.'<sup>109</sup>

Archbishop Whelan spoke for the Catholics. He acknowledged that all churches could not receive special conditions, but observed that all other churches were Protestant, 'holding essentially the same beliefs', and that the Catholic position was unique when it came to religious instruction. Whelan then told Verwoerd, in unusually sharp terms, 'that the Government was exceeding its powers when it presumed to tell us what Scripture we had to accept'. The meeting ended with his warning the government that the 'Church could not let this matter rest and held herself free to pursue this matter in any way she so desired.'<sup>110</sup>

The confrontational stance adopted by the Catholics is striking. At no stage during the

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<sup>107</sup> SACBC A2 'Memorandum AA/14b/56.'

<sup>108</sup> This was clearly a reference to Catholic private schools where all pupils had to follow Catholic religious syllabus whether they were Catholic or not.

<sup>109</sup> SACBC A2 'Notes on Interview with Verwoerd, 30 Nov. 1956', p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* pp. 1-4.

negotiations over Bantu Education had they opposed government policy with such vigour and passion. Hurley summed up the attitude of the Church at this moment

Archbishop Whelan may have been tolerant and conciliatory in previous encounters with the promoters of apartheid. He was anything but in this encounter. Here the purity and integrity of the Catholic Faith was at stake so it was a case of no-holds-barred.<sup>111</sup>

After the meeting with Verwoerd, the Catholics decided to seek legal advice to see if the department was breaking any laws by denying freedom of religious conscience. At the Administrative Board meeting of the SACBC in March 1957, Advocate H. Vieyra argued that the actions of the Minister were a 'contrary to the custom of the whole country' and a 'gratuitous interference with the ordinary wishes of the parents' who, he argued 'had a right to object on grounds of conscience'.<sup>112</sup> On his advice the Board agreed to initiate legal proceedings against the government in the hope that a successful court case would 'undermine the whole edifice of the newly-established system of Bantu Education.'<sup>113</sup> Over the next year there is a silence in the records until the Administrative Board Minutes of August 1958 note that all Catholic children in community schools were to be withdrawn from general religious instruction and placed in Catholic instruction classes. The Catholics had evidently scored a victory over the department in this matter, without having to resort to legal action.<sup>114</sup>

The reaction of the Catholic Church during this whole episode suggests they prioritised their need to protect their religious beliefs. Hurley has remarked that

Quite clearly the stand taken by the Bishops in regard to schools was not a stand against apartheid. It was a stand against legislation that made it extremely difficult

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<sup>111</sup> Hurley 'Fund-Raising...', p. 5.

<sup>112</sup> Clearly this was a reference to the situation that prevailed in white schools. SACBC AV1 Ad. Board Min. 19-21 March 1954.

<sup>113</sup> SACBC PS1 2-6 July 1957, p. 17.

<sup>114</sup> Hurley, conversation with author, 23 Jan 2000.

for the Catholic Church to maintain its own schools for Catholic children<sup>115</sup>

In 1955 the Dutch Reformed Church periodical Die Kerkbode 'revealed' that the Catholic Church merely pretended to support African education, charging that they only cared about fighting for Catholic education. In response, Fr. Stubbs, the editor of the Southern Cross remarked that this was 'precisely what we ourselves have been proclaiming from the housetops'.<sup>116</sup>

Undoubtedly some Africans did see the Catholic's decision as an act of defiance, for according to Hurley

... we did a good thing and it is often appreciated by African people saying that 'you fought the government on that', but we weren't really fighting the government on that, we were trying to keep our schools, but they saw it as an endeavour to oppose the government, which they appreciated<sup>117</sup>

This misinterpretation is ironic given the Church's deeply conservative actions based upon narrow and inflexible religious beliefs. However, the reactions of the Catholic Church cannot be explained simply in terms of adherence to dogma. Its decisions were also the product of a white clergy who were, for the most part, totally divorced from the realities of daily life as experienced by Africans. The Church was still essentially a mission church, despite its somewhat piecemeal attempts to increase African representation in its decision-making forums. As a mission church it acted in paternalistic fashion, interpreting the best course of action as it saw it, rather than engaging with African opinion. As far as the Church was concerned, dangers lurked in associating with Africans. It was clear by the 1950s that South Africa was entering a turbulent phase politically, both in terms of the nature of repression exercised against Africans and their reaction to it. The moral persuasion of the inter-war ANC had given way to increasingly confrontational politics, and many Catholics found this discomfiting. They were, however, accustomed to interpreting what was in the 'best

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<sup>115</sup> Hurley, 'Fund-Raising...', p. 9.

<sup>116</sup> Quoted in Abrahams, The Catholic Church and Apartheid, p. 78.

<sup>117</sup> Hurley, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

interests' of Africans and acting for them, because they feared the consequences of allowing Africans to actually think for themselves.

The Catholic Church seemed to view the problems it confronted over education within the context of the wider history of the Church's struggle for religious freedom in Protestant countries. During the plenary session debate of September 1954 Whelan remarked that 'the Church is older than legislation'.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, the editor of Lumen asserted in June 1954 'The Church had overcome innumerable difficulties during the past centuries and will certainly overcome the present ones.'<sup>119</sup> This sense of a timeless struggle tended to imbue Bishops with a wider and less immediate perspective on the struggles of the Church in South Africa; ironically this partly divorced them from the harsh realities of the situation. The Bishops considered that their principles had 'stood the test of 200 years' while 'other principles were recent and will soon disappear.'<sup>120</sup>

The desire of the Church to maintain Catholic influence in African education led it to adopt conflicting attitudes and policies towards the government. Its drive to maintain its apostolic interests compromised its moral position, because it did not respond to Bantu Education as a part of apartheid legislation, but simply as a threat to its religious mission in South Africa. For the leaders of the Catholic Church Bantu Education constituted religious, not racial, persecution. Religious dogma meant that they could not deny Catholic children a Catholic education by closing down their schools, or by entering a non-denominational system. In the end they took the only option they could, to run their schools as private Catholic institutions. As the editor of Lumen remarked in late 1954 'to us, since the details of the Bantu Education Act were known, the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Act was a foregone conclusion.'<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> SACBC PS1 29-30 Sept. 1954, p. 21.

<sup>119</sup> Lumen, June 1954, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Bishop Damiano address to the CATF 4 Jan. 1955. Quoted in Lumen, June 1955, p. 12.

<sup>121</sup> Lumen, Dec. 1954, p. 14.

The preceding chapters have illustrated how four major denominations confronted Bantu Education, and clearly show that Africans, in general, had little influence on the decisions of church leaders. The remaining chapter seeks to directly address African concerns and aspirations by examining the responses of those most intimately affected - the African teachers, pupils and parents themselves.

'Awakening to the issues at stake'<sup>1</sup>: African Responses to Bantu Education

The majority of missionary organisations involved in African education failed to engage Africans in any meaningful fashion when dealing with Bantu Education. Within most churches only the few Africans who sat on institutional Governing Councils had any influence on decision-making. The opinions of African teachers, those most intimately involved in African education, were mostly assumed rather than listened to. There is also little evidence that the concerns of parents and pupils were sought, either systematically or even casually. In this chapter I explore the reaction of teachers, parents and pupils to the process of transfer to Bantu Education and examine African responses to the opportunities (or otherwise) offered to them under the new dispensation.

African Teachers and Bantu Education

As we have seen, apart from isolated meetings between teachers and institution leaders at a small number of institutions, the concerns and perspectives of African teachers were ignored by church and missionary leaders. Still imbued with notions of trusteeship, church leaders felt that they understood 'the African' and consequently knew what was best for them. This meant that African teachers had little, if any, say in the daily running of mission schools, where whites occupied almost all positions of authority. As this was the situation before Bantu Education, it is hardly surprising that African teachers continued to be overlooked throughout the transfer.

In the 1940s, some African teachers had begun to reject mission paternalism and control.<sup>2</sup> Their growing resentment was the product of several factors, all stemming essentially from the practices of segregation and apartheid. Previously, teachers had been somewhat aloof from the rest of African society enjoying a relatively high social status. However, this status

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<sup>1</sup> H. Dhlomo, quoted in T. Couzens, The New African: A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo (Johannesburg, 1985), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter three. See also appendix 3 for a letter from a teacher which illustrates the frustrations that teachers were experiencing.

was riddled with ambiguity, as Herbert Dhlomo, the African playwright and poet observed in 1945

He is neither wholly African nor fully Europeanised ....Timidly and gropingly nationalistic in outlook and thought, he lacks a bold universal national philosophy. He has lost the spirit and habits of tribal communism and is individualistic, yet finds that individualism in a country where his race group as a whole is discriminated against, does not pay, and that therefore as an individual he cannot go far. His destiny lies solely with his group...he admires the new and tries to be capitalistic and Christian, cultured and progressive...He accepts the authority and standards of Europeans in almost everything. He believes in and is friendly to the liberal, the missionary, the philanthropist, the good master, the benevolent administrator, the paternal ruler...Official propoganda and a missionary (religious) training and background, persuade him to believe in plausible stereotypes such as 'We must win the confidence and goodwill of our rulers if we would be free'; 'We cannot gain liberty and a higher social status till all our people are educated'<sup>3</sup>

According to Dhlomo these characteristics were being broken down by the emergence of what he called the 'New African'. 'New Africans' were

awakening to the issues at stake and to the power of organised intellectually-led mass action and of progressive African intellectuals and leaders. The new African knows where he belongs and what belongs to him; where he is going and how; what he wants and the methods to obtain it...he wants a new social order where every South African will be free to express himself and his personality fully, live and breathe freely, and have a part in shaping the destiny of the country.<sup>4</sup>

While Dhlomo's analysis was not targeted specifically at teachers it is relevant to changes that took place in some teachers' attitudes and actions in the 1940s and 1950s. In this period, teachers began to realise that their predicament was inextricably linked to the plight of all Africans living in South Africa. Their frustrations, poor wages and limited employment prospects, were now seen to be the consequence of racist practices. In the past, many teachers had had faith in the intentions of white South Africans who had espoused trusteeship and believed in the gradual assimilation of educated Africans. Increasingly however, African teachers became aware that such promises were not being fulfilled and, with the victory of the Nationalists in 1948, were never likely to be. An editorial in CATA's

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Couzens, The New African, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> ibid., pp. 33-34.

journal, Teachers' Vision, which discussed their 1953 conference noted:

There was a noticeable absence of those elements, who, in the past, had used Conference as a festive occasion and would slip in and out of the conference-hall with those convenient attache cases, on pleasure bent. There was an absence, also, of those teachers from whose Black mouths issued forth the White voice of the herrenvolk. This is not a new CATA. It is the same CATA that decided a few years ago to embark on the New Road of Struggle, but in the process of implementing its New Policy it had sloughed off all those elements that consciously tried to turn the Teachers' Organisation into an instrument of oppression. What remains is a body of earnest men and women ... taking their place alongside their people in a determined struggle against oppression.<sup>5</sup>

This radicalised group, which became increasingly influential in a number of teachers' organisations, did not, however, carry with it a number of teachers who rejected their radicalism and confrontational political style. This division between radicals and conservatives was to play a significant role in shaping teaching reactions to Bantu Education.

The 'New Africans' in the teaching profession were strongly represented in CATA and TATA. Both organisations had been at the forefront of the campaigning that had taken place in the 1940s for equal pay and conditions. CATA had worked throughout the 1940s and early 1950s to forge links with teachers in rural areas of the Cape, encouraging them to take an active interest in rural struggles, such as those surrounding the Bantu Authorities Act. From the publication of the Eiselen Report, CATA set out to discredit Bantu Education policy, claiming that it was designed to

increase the power of the *'herrenvolk'* by producing ignorant, docile CHEAP LABOUR, CHEAP TEACHERS, CHEAP GOVERNMENT of the oppressed people divided into suicidal factions and feuds amongst themselves.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 'Editorial', Teachers' Vision, July - Sept. 1953, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> CATA Executive Report, Teachers' Vision, Oct.-Dec. 1954, Vol. XX, No. 1, p. 15. Original emphasis. CATA president J.L. Mkentane noted in 1954 that the Bantu Education Act promised 'perpetual mental enslavement', Teachers' Vision, Jan.-March 1954, Vol. XIX, No. 2, p. 4.



CATA's political opposition led the Cape Education Department to withdraw its recognition of the Association in 1951. The then Chief Inspector of Native Education in the Cape, F. J. de Villiers, explained to members that he had done so as CATA 'aimed to upset the present policy of the government.'<sup>7</sup> The withdrawal of recognition and the political stance that CATA adopted led to growing tensions within the organisation resulting in a split and the creation of the Cape African Teachers Union (CATU) in 1953. CATU, which immediately received Departmental recognition, was opposed to political campaigning and looked to foster harmonious relations with the Education Department. The 1950s were characterised by 'a considerable struggle between CATU and CATA for control of the Cape Teachers'.<sup>8</sup>

CATA was affiliated to the AAC and the NEUM which had a major influence on the way that it interacted with other teaching organisations and with the ANC. After a failed compromise agreement in 1943 the AAC and the ANC drew apart, with the AAC opposing the strikes and law breaking urged by what it saw as an overly Africanist ANC. This antipathy to the ANC was also prevalent in the NEUM whose members were mostly teachers who refused to condone violence or run the risk of imprisonment, but were equally determined to oppose the 'colour bar'. They proposed to oppose discrimination via a policy of non-collaboration and boycott, but in most instances this simply led to a situation of mere passivity, as the organisation looked to avoid direct conflict with state authority. This apathy was matched by a virulent sectarianism towards other political groups including the ANC, which meant that the NEUM was never able to create mass support.<sup>9</sup>

In the Transvaal, after a period of political campaigning in the early 1940s, TATA came under the control of a more conservative leadership in the middle years of the decade. It now retracted from an active political role, preferring instead to travel the well worn path of quiet diplomacy. Angered by this reversal of policy, a number of radical urban teachers

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Hyslop, 'Teacher Resistance...' p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>9</sup> See Hyslop, *The Classroom*, pp. 30-32.

revolted at the Association's conference in 1949. Within a year this group had managed to wrest control of the Association from more conservative rural members who left TATA and formed the Transvaal African Teachers Union (TATU).<sup>10</sup> Es'Kia Mphahlele, who became secretary of TATA, observed that after the split TATA represented a 'hard core who believed in the African and took no instructions from the TED [Transvaal Education Department].'<sup>11</sup> Under its new leadership, TATA launched a campaign against Bantu Education. It organised a speaking tour, with TATA leaders entering villages and towns during school vacations, attempting to educate Africans about the dangers of the Eiselen Report.<sup>12</sup> However, by 1953 TATA had once again swung to the right, coming under the control of conservative elements who forced the removal of radical leaders. The politically active teachers could not rely on ANC support at this time, as the Defiance Campaign was underway.<sup>13</sup> According to Mphahlele, 'it took the ANC a long time to digest the message of our campaign of 1951 and 1952.'<sup>14</sup> The change in TATA's leadership did not signal an end to the Association's attempts to combat the implementation of Bantu Education, but it did mean that by the mid-1950s CATA was 'the sole remaining bastion of African teacher militancy'.<sup>15</sup>

After the passage of the Bantu Education Act in late 1953 teaching organisations immediately began to address the issue of how they could oppose it. For CATA the key lay in informing Africans of the dangers inherent in Bantu Education. The editor of Teachers

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<sup>10</sup> TATU did not welcome the Bantu Education Act. At its annual conference in 1952 its president, S. Lekhele, remarked that there was no such thing as 'native education' but he argued that all teachers could do was to be 'constructively dissatisfied.' 'Dissatisfied with Education Policy', Star, 3 July 1952.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Manganyi, Exiles, p. 155.

<sup>12</sup> See Mphahlele, Down Second Avenue, p. 168. TATA also organised two conferences which condemned the Eiselen Report, see Hyslop 'Teacher Resistance...', p. 98.

<sup>13</sup> The radical leadership was also undermined because of a failed boycott campaign against the sacking of a number of teachers in an Orlando school. See Hyslop, 'Teacher Resistance...' pp. 99-100.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Manganyi, Exiles, p. 145. It appears that some TATA members were keen to join with TATU. In 1952 Eiselen made the first of his threats against teachers who opposed the new legislation. See L. Sihlali, 'Bantu Education and the African Teacher', Africa South, Oct.-Dec. 1956, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 47-48. Sihlali was dismissed from Queenstown Bantu High School in 1953 for alleged participation in politics.

<sup>15</sup> Hyslop, 'Social Conflicts...' p. 294.

Vision remarked in 1953,

For generations now the teachers have fallen into the grievous error of making education the private concern of themselves...Now the time has come for the teachers to go out to the People and tell them what are the aims of 'Bantu Education'<sup>16</sup>

At a union-wide conference organised by CATA in December 1953 it was resolved that it was 'the special duty of the teachers to enlighten the people who alone could render oppressive laws unworkable'.<sup>17</sup> A few months later, at a joint conference of CATA and the Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA)<sup>18</sup> a delegate remarked

We are agreed on the question that we cannot fight for such an educational system [free and compulsory] without being compelled to fight for a democratic society...Parents and teachers must realise that restrictions on an individual are those of the whole group. The formation of Parent-Teacher Associations is a crying need at the moment<sup>19</sup>

This call from CATA was mirrored by TATA which, between 1952-55, despite its political swings, endeavoured to establish Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) to popularize the struggle against Bantu Education.<sup>20</sup> In Natal even the Catholic African Teachers Federation (CATF) reflected on the

... wide gap between parents and teachers....Many of our teachers are guilty of neglect in this matter...If teachers are to a certain extent ignorant of what is taking

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<sup>16</sup> 'Editorial: A Challenge', Teachers' Vision, Oct.-Dec. 1953, Vol. XIX, No. 1, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> 'Union-Wide Conference', Teachers' Vision, Jan.-March 1954, p. 6. This conference was only attended by 200 teachers, whom the Teachers' Vision admitted were mostly CATA members. In the same issue the General Secretary noted 'the source of our greater strength is THE PEOPLE', p. 14 (original emphasis).

<sup>18</sup> The TLSA was an equally political teachers association made up of 'coloured' teachers. Coloured schools were not directly affected by Bantu Education, but in 1963 the Coloured Persons' Education Act (no. 47) transferred control of schools for coloured pupils from the provinces to a Division of Education within the Department for Coloured Affairs.

<sup>19</sup> NLSA AP326:37CA 'Education for Citizenship' Conference of CATA and TLSA East London 25-26 June 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Lodge, 'The Parents'...', p. 273.

place, all the more so are the majority of parents....A law has been enacted called the Bantu Education Act. What do the majority of people know about it and its effect on African education? Very little. They must be educated and that is why I urge now, more than ever, the formation of the Associations<sup>21</sup>

The attempt by teacher associations to educate parents presented them with various obstacles. Many teachers had a relatively high social status and little experience of reaching out to the African population, as they themselves acknowledged. To expect them to engage in dialogue with African communities meant the transformation of long standing social barriers. On the other hand, teachers were, on the whole, respected members of communities and it can be assumed that many parents would have attended meetings called by them. Organisationally it was an ambitious task, with the expectation that teachers throughout the country would volunteer their time to arrange and attend meetings with parents. Despite concerted efforts, only a limited section of parents came into contact with teachers through PTAs in the short time available before the implementation of the Act.<sup>22</sup>

PTAs were not the only mechanism teachers used to oppose Bantu Education. CATA, appealed for a boycott of school boards, calling on 'teachers and people not to operate the machinery of their own enslavement.'<sup>23</sup> The Union-Wide conference urged 'all the oppressed people to pursue and co-ordinate the struggle.'<sup>24</sup> This same rhetoric emanated from CATA until its demise at the end of the decade, but at no stage did it, or any other teaching body, call for support for the ANC boycott of schools which began in 1955. This lack of support was to be expected from CATA, given the state of relations between the NEUM and the ANC<sup>25</sup>, but this was not the case for other teaching groups, and suggests that there were other reasons why teachers' organisations failed to support the ANC schools boycott.

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<sup>21</sup> M. Sono 'Parent Teacher Associations', Lumen Dec. 1954, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> The creation of PTAs even in Johannesburg was disappointing. See Lodge, 'The Parents' ...', p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> 'Union-Wide Conference', Teachers' Vision, Jan.-March 1954, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> ibid., p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> The AAC called the boycott 'adventurist'. Lodge suggests that factional rivalry between the AAC / NEUM and the ANC prevented them and CATA from supporting the ANC boycott. Lodge 'The Parents' ...', p. 282.

The ANC leadership was slow to respond to Bantu Education. It was not until December 1954 that a decision was taken at its Durban conference to organise a schools boycott in opposition to its implementation. Here it was agreed that an indefinite boycott would take place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1955, with local control delegated to the ANCYL. After some delay boycotts began in mid-April but from this date until the end of the boycott in 1956, no more than sporadic protests took place in Johannesburg and the Eastern Cape. At no time did more than 8,000 children boycott schools and, as Hyslop notes, 'outside a few areas of particular militancy, the vast bulk of the black school-going population stayed inside the school system.'<sup>26</sup> Reasons for the failure of the boycotts were many and included (in brief), the ANCYL's difficulty in effectively mobilising African youth; inadequate preparations for offering alternative educational facilities; a lack of clear objectives within the ANC; state intimidation of teachers and pupils, and an unwillingness amongst teachers and pupils to get involved.

Aside from the ideological barrier that separated CATA from the ANC, teaching associations did not support the ANC boycott because it threatened their members long-term employment prospects and because, by 1955, they were pre-occupied with the new regulations thrust upon them by the Bantu Education Division. By the time of the boycott most African teachers had resigned themselves to working within the new system. It had become clear that, apart from the Catholic Church, mission and church bodies had neither the will nor the resources to run private schools outside of Bantu Education. Teachers could thus either stay on in Bantu Education schools or seek employment outside the education sector. Job reservation, however, meant that the labour market offered few opportunities for educated Africans. Economically, teachers were trapped within their profession. The example of Nora Moerane, a teacher at Adams College, demonstrates this. She left Adams after the introduction of Bantu Education, asking 'what was the point of us keeping on teaching this type of stuff to students?' However, within months she had re-entered the teaching profession at the Ohlange Institute. She remarked 'now you get to Ohlange, and apart from a situation whereby we don't like this thing, your situation is that you need a job.

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<sup>26</sup> Hyslop, 'Let Us...', p. 5.

You do it reluctantly. You needed a job.<sup>27</sup>

This difficult situation was worsened by the teaching regulations published by the Division of Bantu Education in 1955. In June 1954 Verwoerd had informed the Senate that salary scales for newly-appointed teachers would be 'less favourable' than those existing. Teachers voluntarily breaking their contracts would, upon re-application, be subject to the lower scales whatever their previous salary had been.<sup>28</sup> These conditions were confirmed in January 1955.<sup>29</sup>

The regulation was designed to discourage acts of defiance by teachers but was only part of a raft of regulations. These ensured that teachers could be penalised for encouraging disobedience to the laws of the state; joining a political party or 'actively participat[ing] in political affairs'; contributing any article to any publication; or acting 'in a manner which in the opinion of the Secretary is deleterious to his position as a teacher.'<sup>30</sup> CATA commented that these regulations were 'enslaving rules for people engaged in slave education', making it 'impossible for teachers to continue their fight for a democratic system of education within a democratic society.'<sup>31</sup> Undoubtedly this is exactly what the regulations set out to achieve, as they were created to silence criticism of Bantu Education.<sup>32</sup>

TATA refused to become involved in the ANC's schools boycott, arguing that children should not be used in the struggle against the legislation, claiming that even Bantu

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<sup>27</sup> Nora Moerane, interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Verwoerd, Bantu Education: Policy for the Immediate Future (Pretoria, 1954), p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> 'The NAD's Model Regulations for African Teachers', Teachers' Vision, Vol. XX, No. 2, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> 'Regulations Governing the Conditions of Appointment, Service, and Discipline of Bantu Teachers in Government Bantu Schools', Bantu Education Journal, May 1955, pp. 156-167.

<sup>31</sup> 'The NAD's....' p. 13. TATA remarked that they 'make us virtually silent. They are full of don'ts.' University of South Africa (UNISA) Documents Centre ASS212 CATU 10.2 Corr. with other bodies. TATA Annual Conference 21-23 June 1955, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> As Jelico Njokweni remarked, 'when Bantu Education was dominating we would not voice our opinion, if you voice your opinion you would be labelled that you were against the Government of the day. It was terrible.' Jelico Njokweni, interview with author, Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000.

Education was better than no education.<sup>33</sup> For Hyslop this 'Right-Wing Backlash' demonstrated TATA's retreat from political action.<sup>34</sup> The question that needs to be asked, however, is what were teachers supposed to do? If we are to assume that they should have joined the ANC's boycott, then certain conditions would have had to have been met. Firstly, they would have needed the support of parents, which, as will be seen, they did not have. Secondly, teachers who resigned their posts would have required alternative sources of income via an alternative education system capable of accommodating not only pupils but also teachers.<sup>35</sup> The education system operated by the ANC during the boycott did not get remotely close to this.<sup>36</sup> CATA, the most radical African teaching group, also failed to support the ANC boycott. A statement from its executive shows the impossible position teachers were put in

to enter into a new contract of employment with the Government under the Bantu Education Act will be a negation of all educational principles; a violation of the CATA and a betrayal of the principles of the Association....to refuse to sign the contracts would be an act of capitulation. If we voluntarily relinquish our posts we shall denude the educational front of our fighters....In this jungle that is South Africa, we are the custodians of the true educational values accepted the world over....The Executive wishes to emphasise that the signing of the contract with the employer does not place any moral obligation to join the government sponsored conspiracy against education and our children....we urge our members to take up the fight in the classroom with the fight for full democratic rights for all.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> R. Peteni, Towards Tomorrow: The Story of the African Teachers Association of South Africa, (Morges, 1978), p. 59. In 1949 TATA had rejected an ANC call to boycott the Eiselen Commission. J. Nhlapo from TATA argued 'Everyone knows that the government will do what it wants with our education in spite of our boycott ... let us put this boycott steak in the ice-chest and tell the government what we want and what we do not want.' 'Should Education Enquiry Commission be Boycotted?', Bantu World, 14 May 1949.

<sup>34</sup> Hyslop, 'Teacher Resistance...', p. 102. At TATA's 1955 conference the Presidential address noted that 'teachers and politicians had the same struggle but the method of approach had to be different.' UNISA AAS212 TATA Annual Conference 1955.

<sup>35</sup> June Dhale who taught at Adams from 1937-57 noted 'most blacks had to stay on because they didn't have quite the opportunities.' Interview with author, Durban, 14 June 1998.

<sup>36</sup> A small number of 'schools' were opened by the African Education Movement, which was supported by Huddleston, and, as we have seen, Reeves opened 'Church Family Centres' to adsorb pupils involved in the boycott. In total no more than a handful of such 'schools' functioned during the boycott.

<sup>37</sup> 'On Them Must Rest the Onus: Statement of the Executive Committee on the Signing of Service Contracts', Teachers' Vision, Jan.-March 1955, Vol. XX, No. 2, p. 15. This was also typical Unity Movement 'double-speak'; pretending that to do nothing was in some way radical.

Despite its rhetoric, CATA appealed to its members to enter the Bantu Education system even though it 'violated CATA' and was a 'betrayal' of its principles.<sup>38</sup> It argued there was no realistic alternative for teachers but to remain in their posts. In the Transvaal 116 teachers were dismissed in 1955 because of boycotts in their schools. The President of TATA received letters from district offices, particularly those on the East Rand (where the boycott was strongest), 'pleading that the teachers affected be given jobs by the Department.' In response to these letters, Executive Committee members negotiated with the Department and with its 'help' found new posts for all but seven of the dismissed teachers.<sup>39</sup>

At TATA's 1955 conference, its Witwatersrand branch denounced the boycott claiming it was 'unrealistic and detrimental'<sup>40</sup>, in May of that year the weekly newspaper New Age remarked that 'teachers have become so scared about how this step [the boycott] is likely to affect their positions that they are doing propaganda against the campaign and against the ANC.'<sup>41</sup>

There is little documentary evidence of how teachers felt about the way the mission churches responded to Bantu Education.

In itself this silence may be revealing as it may suggest that teachers had already decided that the time had come for the state to assume responsibility for education. Much African teachers' agitation in the 1940s had been aimed at improving their employment status - ensuring that they had civil service contracts, would receive a pension and would be remunerated directly from the state rather than via subsidies paid to

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<sup>38</sup> This was despite a call from CATA in 1954 which exhorted 'parents, teachers and the African people generally not to operate the machinery of their own servile position.' Umthunywa, 27 Feb. 1954.

<sup>39</sup> UNISA AAS212 CATU 10.2 TATA Annual Conference 21-23 June 1955, p. 2. Clearly, the government viewed these teachers as innocent victims of the boycott and did not consider that they had engaged in any political activity, for if it had done so these teachers would not have been re-employed in government schools.

<sup>40</sup> ibid., p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted from T. Karis & G. Gerhart (eds.), From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964, Vol. 3 Challenge and Violence 1953-64, (Stanford, 1977), p. 32.



missionary schools. These issues, and the institutional racism inherent in larger mission schools, had already turned many teachers against missionary education. Thus, they may not have lamented the demise of mission education, although, of course, this does not mean they welcomed Bantu Education.<sup>42</sup>

In late 1954 CATA condemned the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches for handing over their schools 'without even making the pretence of consulting the people whose objection of [sic] the Act they know only too well.'<sup>43</sup> One senior African teacher at the Methodist school, Healdtown, remembers arriving at the schools one morning to be told by white staff that the school was to be leased. He recalls, 'it was terrible, we were not informed... we were not informed about the situation, everything just happened quickly.' The President of CATA, N. Hlonono, launched a scathing attack upon the decisions of the mission churches, castigating their racism<sup>44</sup> and condemning their 'lip-service to the idea of equality of all men.' He criticised missionary-trained African intellectuals who represented the churches, claiming that their presence 'comforted the whites.... [enabling] them to say that African opinion was substantially represented'. Hlonono noted the churches' failure to stand together, which, he claimed, had led to a dissipation of their energy and their 'ignominious defeat'; had they united 'the Government scheme would have been crippled.'<sup>45</sup> An anonymous letter to Teachers' Vision echoed these sentiments by arguing that the Churches 'while ostensibly rejecting Bantu Education have agreed to operate the Bantu Education Act!'<sup>46</sup> Although CATA condemned the racism of institutions and the denominationalism

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<sup>42</sup> Of course the paucity of material also confirms that teachers voices were not heard in these debates.

<sup>43</sup> 'The Churches Collaborate', Teachers' Vision, Oct.-Dec. 1954, Vol. XX, No. 1, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Hlonono mentioned the 'missionary institution ghettos where non-white teachers reside in poor dwellings in keeping with the general pattern of the country.' 'Presidential Address', Teachers' Vision, July-Sept. 1955, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> 'Presidential Address', Teachers' Vision, July-Sept. 1955, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 8-9. p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> 'What Can be Done?', Teachers' Vision, Oct.-Dec. 1954, Vol. XX, No. 1, p. 16. CATA was particularly concerned with the churches' refusal to support their ban on joining school committees. One anonymous author condemned the 'jackal-black clergy rushing in on the corpse of African education to see what scraps of offal they could get for themselves. So we find them serving on the NAD's Committees and Boards.' Pedagogue, 'The Role Being Played by the Churches', Teachers' Vision, April-June 1955, Vol. XX, No. 3, p. 13.

of the churches, it is unclear what they expected the churches to do. Hlonono implies that if the churches had refused the government access to their schools, presumably by closing them down, Bantu Education would have been defeated.<sup>47</sup> However, such an act would have led to the large-scale unemployment of teachers.<sup>48</sup> As we have seen, it cannot be assumed that teachers would have supported the churches if they had closed down their schools.

The only other documentary evidence uncovered comes from the African teachers working in Catholic private schools. As previously shown, teachers who remained in private Catholic schools had to survive on 75 per cent of their previous salaries. According to Frank Pakose, a teacher in Durban, this

... had wide repercussions among the teachers, because if a teacher does not want the 75 per cent, he will have to leave. In that case, he will be guilty of a break of service, and liable to the lower salary scales [in state schools] ... Hence he can neither take the one decision nor the other without serious financial consequences to himself. Consequently the teacher is being placed in a dilemma by his two masters - the Church and the State. I find it very difficult to reconcile my sentiments with this state of affairs when I take into consideration the increased cost of maintenance and living<sup>49</sup>

The reduction in wages was obviously a serious financial issue and over the following years many African teachers did leave Catholic schools to work in government institutions.<sup>50</sup> The decision to leave, however, was not an easy one as the government tried to discourage African teachers from leaving private Catholic schools by warning them in popular newspapers that the Department could not 'create posts to accommodate all the teachers

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<sup>47</sup> Even though he labelled Reeves' closure of schools as 'useless.'

<sup>48</sup> The government would have ended the payment of grants for teacher's wages the moment schools were closed.

<sup>49</sup> Hurley BEA 1953-6 Frank Pakose (teacher at Mazenod High School, Durban) to Hurley 23 March 1955.

<sup>50</sup> Sr. Josefila, who taught at Mariannhill from 1941 to 1996 told me that most African teachers with higher diplomas and qualifications left between 1955-59. She remembers that more nuns were required to teach as African teachers were not attracted to private Catholic schools. Interview with author, Mariannhill, 2 June 1998.

who wish to resign from employment in church schools.<sup>51</sup> It was not only economic issues that concerned African teachers in Catholic schools, however. At the 1956 CATF conference a Johannesburg delegate observed 'whilst we pledge our support to the hierarchy, we would appreciate information as to why they have accepted the Bantu Education Act and all it stands for?' A delegate from Pretoria noted that 'it would have been more effective if the Church had taken a sterner decision of closing down all schools.'<sup>52</sup> Neither of these comments received any attention in the minutes of the Conference, but do suggest that some African teachers in Catholic schools were unhappy with the decision to keep the schools open.

Other teachers lamented the demise of mission schooling in this period. A teacher at Mariannhill, when asked why he did not move to a government school after Bantu Education, declared

Well I was so much attached to the school that I felt that I was part of the family ... another point was that we got a lot of things free like food, accommodation which I think they were trying to make up for the lack of wages.<sup>53</sup>

The divisions that became apparent within teaching associations, between those who supported direct political action and those who did not, and between those who condemned mission authorities and those who lamented the destruction of mission education reflected in many ways the generational gap within the teaching profession. This mirrored wider conflicts that were taking place within other African organisations at this time, such as in the ANC where younger, more radical members had begun to turn the Congress into a more activist body.<sup>54</sup> Njokweni remembers debates with younger university-trained teachers in

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<sup>51</sup> 'Government Subsidy and the Roman Catholic Schools', appeared in Bantu World, 2 April 1954 and Illange Lase, 16 April 1954.

<sup>52</sup> 'Catholic African Teachers Conference, Newcastle, 31 Dec.-Jan. 4 1955', Lumen, June 1955, p. 15. The Johannesburg delegate called on Bishops to make more effort to consult with the CATF.

<sup>53</sup> E. Nxumalo, interview with author, Mariannhill, 27 June 1998. A similar opinion was expressed by J. Njokweni, interview with author Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000.

<sup>54</sup> The debate within the ANC as to the merits or otherwise of a schools boycott reflected this generational divide.

the early 1950s over the issue of who should control African education

they would talk about that [state control] in our meetings... 'The missionaries are doing good work but some of us are not quite satisfied, we feel that we should get this and this and this and this'.... They saw state control after the church control, they respected church control, but they saw that if the state would take over then some things would be improved.... they saw things differently.<sup>55</sup>

These divisions weakened the teachers' position, not only because it split their organisations but also because it forced teachers themselves into contradictory positions. Younger teachers looking for change found some of their demands met by Bantu Education, at the same time as it imposed an education system that they could not approve of.<sup>56</sup> Other African teachers lamented the removal of missionaries from the educational sphere, but unwilling to bring political matters into the schools, were reluctant to actively oppose the changes. The teachers' resolve was also weakened by state victimisation during the first few years of Bantu Education. Teachers wages were paid directly to School Boards which could dismiss them without disciplinary proceedings and with no right of appeal. Members of the School Boards were often unsympathetic to teachers creating an atmosphere of trepidation in many schools. Margaret Ballinger, for example, received a letter from the National Council of Women of South Africa which asserted that

Every teacher lives in fear and trembling of doing something wrong, in case they should offend in some way. They have no security because once they loose their jobs in this way they will never get back another with the Department<sup>57</sup>

As a result of the withdrawal of subsidy from School Boards, 28 teachers, most of whom were CATA members, had already been dismissed in the Cape alone. Given the limited opportunities open to teachers it is unsurprising that such intimidation undermined their

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<sup>55</sup> Njokweni, interview with author, Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000. By university he presumably meant Fort Hare.

<sup>56</sup> R. Baloyi the Secretary of TATA wrote to M. Ballinger 'We fail to see why the Minister was so keen to take us away from the Missionary Societies only to still hide behind the same policy of saying we are not Civil Servants.' WCL A410 Ballinger B2.14.5 Baloyi to Ballinger, 13 May 1955.

<sup>57</sup> WCL AB410 T. Snitcher (Convener of the African Affairs Committee - National Council of Women of South Africa) to Ballinger, 23 April 1956.

determination to oppose Bantu Education. Teachers were also harassed more directly by the state through police raids. In 1954 CATA was bemoaning the continual police raids on its leading members.<sup>58</sup>

Another issue that weakened the determination of teachers was the Government's insistence on reducing the number of male teachers. An editorial in Teachers' Vision in 1954 noted that 'to say their [male teachers] employment has become insecure is perhaps an understatement.'<sup>59</sup> A threatened decline in the quota of male teachers per school inevitably made male teachers unwilling to do anything that could be interpreted as politically motivated. Speculating on the decision to increase female teacher numbers, a member of the CATA executive remarked, 'the reasons for this are not far to seek. It is cheaper to employ female teachers than men....It is far easier to dominate women than men.'<sup>60</sup>

Despite the many negative aspects of Bantu Education there were minor benefits which appealed to some teachers. Notwithstanding the introduction of double sessions<sup>61</sup>, the expansion of schooling ensured an overall increase in the demand for teachers. Bantu Education also promised the Africanisation of the schools inspectorate, allowing Africans access to positions previously closed to them.<sup>62</sup> Similarly the gradual removal of white teachers from mission schooling opened up senior positions for Africans. At Adams, Ida Grant noted in 1955 that three 'senior' African teachers had left for government schools which they felt 'offered greater security and better prospects'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> 'Police Raids and Intimidation' Teachers' Vision, Oct.-Dec. 1954, Vol. XX, No. 1, p. 13. In Jan. 1955 the government banned the publication of Teachers' Vision.

<sup>59</sup> 'Editorial', ibid., p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> 'The Ramifications of the 'Bantu' Education Act', unnamed CATA Executive member, Teachers' Vision, Oct-Dec. 1954, p. 24. This quote demonstrates the patriarchal nature of the teaching profession.

<sup>61</sup> Double-sessions had already become commonplace in some parts of Johannesburg and the Eastern Cape before the passing of the Bantu Education Act. East Province Herald, 12 April 1950.

<sup>62</sup> This same process occurred within the nursing profession. See S. Marks, Divided Sisterhood (Basingstoke, 1994).

<sup>63</sup> Ida Grant, end of year letter, Nov. 7 1955.

In conclusion, two distinct phases can be seen in teachers' responses to Bantu Education. From the publication of the Eiselen Report to the gradual introduction of Bantu Education (1952-54) teachers were generally vocal in their opposition to the legislation. After the capitulation of the missions, however, and the failure of any political group, including teaching associations, to prevent the imposition of Bantu Education, teachers began to make the best of a bad situation. For all the fiery rhetoric from CATA, teachers' opposition to Bantu Education was weak and ineffective. This was because of the nature of the labour market, the divisions amongst teachers themselves and crucially, because there was little support amongst African parents for radical action against Bantu Education.

### Parents and Bantu Education

Early on in the battle against Bantu Education teachers realised that parents had never been engaged in any meaningful way in relation to the education of their children. PTAs were, on the whole, non-existent and African parents had little if any influence on the decisions that affected their children.

However, it was not only teachers who neglected parents. Cecil Manona, a Lovedale student during the transition, remembers

mission leaders were not even knowing that there were people around. There were no advisory councils, none, there was no involvement of people and parents at all, at all....The whites did whatever they wanted to do.<sup>64</sup>

There were logistical difficulties in establishing PTAs in the larger institutions due to the distance which many parents lived from the schools. In urban areas this was not necessarily the case, but migratory working conditions and long working hours hampered the introduction of these associations. Despite these difficulties the lack of effort in seeking parents' opinions was symptomatic of the missionaries' general failure to engage with African opinion. While it is therefore difficult to evaluate parents' reactions to Bantu

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<sup>64</sup> Cecil Manona, interview with author, Grahamstown, 18 Jan. 2000. Nora Moerane who was at Inanda in this period remarked 'very little was known of PTA's.' Interview with author, Durban, 19 June 1998.

Education, it is illuminating to examine the reaction of parents to the ANC schools boycott.

Lodge has shown how a breakdown in relations between the ANC and parents occurred as a 'result of worries over the quality of alternative educational options offered by the ANC.'<sup>65</sup> For any mass boycott action to be sustained long-term educational facilities had to be provided, and this the ANC was unable to do. This was acknowledged by African parents who also realised that students would need qualifications to enter the existing labour market; they feared that alternative schools could not provide the necessary certification and would thus permanently damage their children's future employment opportunities.<sup>66</sup>

The hostility to the boycott from many African parents was extreme. The Brakpan district of TATA recorded in 1955 'teachers in the affected schools suffered a great deal from the public. Some were threatened, kidnapped and intimidated. Attempts were made to burn houses of certain principals.'<sup>67</sup> Phyllis Ntantala recalls driving around Orlando in April 1955 seeing fathers with 'big sticks' protecting their children who were going to school 'daring anybody to stop them'.<sup>68</sup> Proponents of the boycott failed to recognise 'the vicious circle that makes it imperative for working parents to leave their children in the care of a school during the day.'<sup>69</sup> For the vast majority of African parents schooling was a form of child care which kept children off the streets. They also saw education as a means of providing a better future for their children. Hyslop has argued that these two factors made Bantu Education Schools 'sufficiently attractive for the large majority of black parents to consider it worthwhile sending their children to attend.'<sup>70</sup> It was not only the parents of students who

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<sup>65</sup> Lodge, 'The Parents' ...', p. 280. ZK Matthews argued that it failed 'principally because of the difficulty of organising an alternative programme for the children.' Matthews, Freedom for My People, p. 180.

<sup>66</sup> Hyslop, 'Let Us...', p. 20.

<sup>67</sup> UNISA AAS212 TATA Annual Conference 1955.

<sup>68</sup> Ntantala, A Life's, p. 161. In Port Elizabeth an anti-boycott movement was established by parents, see Feit, African Opposition, p. 173.

<sup>69</sup> Mphahlele, 'Down...', p. 192.

<sup>70</sup> Hyslop, 'Social Conflicts...', p. 240.

rejected the boycott, for Bantu Education greatly increased the number of pupils receiving primary schooling. In 1955 just over 1 million African children were at school, while by 1960 the number had risen to over 1.5 million.<sup>71</sup> Thus, more parents could, for the first time, send their children to school. Ntantala recalls a meeting of Langa residents that took place to discuss the boycott. One parent, Winnie Siqwana remarked

I am amazed the ANC, an organisation of the African people, who should know, ... that education is the only hope the African people have, through which they hope to liberate themselves some day, could ever come up with such a resolution...there is not a single African parent who does not wish to see his or her child educated, to be in a better position than the parent. How then, can the ANC, an organisation of all these people, call upon them to do what they know the people will never do?<sup>72</sup>

Another mother commented 'The fight is for us, not for our children...we want our children educated.'<sup>73</sup> The meeting resolved to send children to school and encourage teachers to ignore the boycott while doing all they could to counter Bantu Education. African parents desperately wanted their children to be educated and the state was able to tap into this desire and ensure the acquiescence of most parents.<sup>74</sup> The state also severely punished those children who had been withdrawn during the boycott by permanently expelling them from schools. By April 1955 some 7000 pupils had been expelled.<sup>75</sup> The NAD was given the power either to withdraw all funding from boycotted schools or to invite new pupils to permanently fill the vacated places. This had the effect of offering education to some children who had previously had no schooling at all,<sup>76</sup> and, no doubt, causing division

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<sup>71</sup> Horrell, Bantu Education to 1968, p. 52.

<sup>72</sup> Ntantala, A Life's, p. 156. In a memorandum the ANC recognised this danger when it stressed 'it is not the ANC which is asking them [parents] to sacrifice their children...the ANC has not robbed them of anything.' Memorandum on Bantu Education prepared at the ANC's 42 Annual Conference, quoted in Feit, African Opposition, p. 160.

<sup>73</sup> ibid. p. 156. The Society of Young Africans (the youth wing of the AAC) condemned the boycott for shifting 'the burden of the struggle on to the backs of our children.' Quoted from Karis & Gerhart, From Protest, p. 34.

<sup>74</sup> During the course of the boycott 25 ANC members in the Cape had their membership suspended for sending their children to school.

<sup>75</sup> Hyslop, 'Let Us...', p. 16. Most of these students were readmitted after the boycott ended.

<sup>76</sup> Feit, African Opposition, p. 174.



amongst parents.

Many parents also accepted Bantu Education because they were essentially ignorant of its implications. Mphahlele maintained that 'several months were needed to prepare the minds of parents about what Bantu Education means in the classroom.'<sup>77</sup> These difficulties were highlighted in a letter that appeared in Teachers' Vision

To base our hopes of the people fighting the Bantu Education Act on its effects is dangerous nonsense. Not until the people have been taught to oppose their OWN ideas to those of the *herrenvolk* can they ever hope to change the situation. This is the immediate task of intellectuals...unless agitational and educational work begins NOW the people cannot be expected, nor will they in the future be able to see the need, to get out of the rut which they shall have been thrown into.<sup>78</sup>

Although patronizing in its implication that uneducated Africans were incapable of articulating effective opposition to apartheid, it nonetheless indicates the difficulties teachers faced when attempting to promote their concerns about Bantu Education. Honono, President of CATA lamented the parents 'cancerous ignorance.... [who were] ignorant of the fact that they have certain rights to which they are entitled as human beings.'<sup>79</sup>

The governments creation of School Boards may also have been attractive to some parents. While offering to bring parents and teachers together in the interests of the child, they in fact drove a wedge between them. The Boards 'offered real incentives for participation: on the one hand the control which parents could attain over teachers; on the other, opportunities to engage in the patronage politics of bribery and corruption.'<sup>80</sup> Members were rewarded

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<sup>77</sup> Mphahlele, Down, p. 192.

<sup>78</sup> Anonymous letter to Teachers' Vision, Jan.-March 1954, Vol. XIX, No. 2, p. 18. (Original emphasis).

<sup>79</sup> Honono, 'Presidential Address', Teachers' Vision, July-Sept. 1955, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 16-17. Nora Moerane remarked in an interview in 1998, 'you know the parents are just getting their child to go to school and as for what their opinions were at the time....I think most of these parents were not as educated as many parents are now. So whatever the teachers did or whatever the government did at the time we would go ahead, as long as we can have the money to pay for that child to go to school', Nora Moerane, interview with author, Durban 19 June 1998.

<sup>80</sup> Hyslop 'Social...', p. 324.

by increased influence within communities, especially over teachers, who had previously been the leading figures in the community. Despite the limited success of the campaign to boycott these Boards, by 1956 some 300 had been created, controlling approximately 4000 school committees.<sup>81</sup>

Given that most African parents were against the ANC boycott, they probably also opposed the wholesale closure of mission schools. A successful boycott or closure would have resulted in the same thing; the denial of education to children. Ntantala, who toured areas in Johannesburg during the boycott, recalls seeing parents on the streets of Germiston, Benoni, Brakpan and Springs seeking admission to government schools for children who had been thrown out of schools closed by the Anglican Church. She recalls one principal, Mr. Ntombela of Albert Street School, remarking 'I have more children than I can take. The Anglican parents are clamouring for room for their children because Reeves has closed all his big schools.'<sup>82</sup>

The essential objective for African parents was to ensure that their children had an education, for as Father Huddleston remarked in 1956, 'the truth is that the parents have no choice.'<sup>83</sup> Parents may have been disappointed that the missions could not afford to run schools privately, but in general they would not have supported the nation-wide closure of mission schools.

### Students and Bantu Education

There was no organised or spontaneous student resistance to the introduction of Bantu Education. During this period students were not as politicised as they were to become in the 1970s. Hyslop argues that in urban areas African youths tended to be largely a-political

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<sup>81</sup> Hyslop 'Social...', p. 227.

<sup>82</sup> Ntantala, A Life's, p. 162.

<sup>83</sup> Huddleston, Naught for Your Comfort, p. 174.

because of the predominance of an 'individualistic, gangsterised'<sup>84</sup> street sub-culture.' He suggests that African youths in urban areas lacked a sense of shared experience, divided as they were into those who received education (and looked to protect this opportunity) and those surviving on the streets.<sup>85</sup> He contends that it was not until the 1970s when the majority of African youths were in school that they began to identify with each others' struggles and oppose Bantu Education. Amongst those who attended school in the 1950s parental authority was more intact than it was in the 1970s, and this 'tended to inhibit the emergence of self-organised school student movements.'<sup>86</sup> In addition, most school children were at the primary level, and were relatively unpoliticised.<sup>87</sup>

The nature of mission education also affected student politicisation. A teacher at Adams College remembers that an 'overall religious education' made students 'submissive and very receptive.'<sup>88</sup> Another teacher recalls that in the 1950s students 'didn't know what was happening around' but that by the 1970s 'they knew everything that was going on.'<sup>89</sup> As we have seen, mission authorities tried to prevent the radicalisation of students, through the regulation or prevention of political discussions, and the banning of 'political' publications. However, despite these restrictions some students, particularly those from secondary institutions, became politically conscious in this period. In November 1954 a 'considerable body of students' were arrested at Healdtown for attacking the headmaster's home.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Hyslop argues that an 'anarchic spirit prevailed' within *tsotsi* gangs. 'Let Us...', p. 251.

<sup>85</sup> Hyslop, 'Let Us...', pp. 5-8 and Hyslop, 'Social...', pp. 282-313.

<sup>86</sup> Hyslop, 'Social...', p. 251.

<sup>87</sup> It should be remembered, however, that many primary school pupils were in their teens with a significant number between 15 and 20 years old.

<sup>88</sup> She continued 'everybody was involved in uplifting each other socially and spiritually...there were morals and values and priorities and things like that the youth of the day was interested in.' Nora Moerane, interview with author, Durban 19 June 1998. A pupil of Inanda remembers that in the 1950s 'students were not politically motivated...the missionary influence which was predominantly religious, although educational as well, it did not imbue the sense of political approach to human situations.' Rev. B. K. Dlodla, interview with author, Durban 16 June 1998.

<sup>89</sup> Mable Christofersen, interview with author, Durban 17 June 1998. Christofersen taught at Inanda from 1945-78.

<sup>90</sup> CL MS16595/5 Healdtown Annual Report, 1954.

Writing a few days later the president of the Methodist Conference in South Africa wrote to its headmaster:

I am very sorry to hear of the further trouble that has occurred at Healdtown...there is much resentment in the hearts of the students under the surface over our attitude to the Bantu Education Act.<sup>91</sup>

Like teachers, however, politically aware students were placed in a contradictory position by Bantu Education. Much as they may have opposed the ideology behind it, it did remove irksome missionary authority, and there was no credible alternative to it. Students in general made the decision to remain within the system as they still saw it as the best means of increasing their chances of gaining professional employment in adult life. As Jelico Njokweni at Healdtown noted ““Instead of not learning we will take what is given to us”, that was the attitude of the students, but they were not satisfied, not satisfied at all.”<sup>92</sup>

### Conclusion

The majority of Africans probably wanted a free, compulsory and non-racial education system in a fully democratic country. Consequently they wanted neither mission nor Bantu Education. Most Africans rejected Bantu Education wholeheartedly, yet by the end of the 1950s teacher opposition had been subdued, Schools Boards were fully functioning and greatly increased numbers of pupils were attending Bantu Education schools. Clearly most Africans felt they had little real choice other than to acquiesce with the system, no matter how much they loathed it.<sup>93</sup>

Undoubtedly most politically aware Africans would have welcomed the overthrow of Bantu Education, but few believed that this could realistically be achieved. The defeat of Bantu Education would have taken massive coordinated action against the state in South Africa.

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<sup>91</sup> CL MS16598/8 Webb to Pitts, 22 Nov. 1954.

<sup>92</sup> Jelico Njokweni, interview with author Healdtown 18 Jan. 2000.

<sup>93</sup> Feit argues that too many Africans had a ‘vested interest in the working of the Government’s system.’ Feit, African Opposition, p. 175.

It would have needed pupils, teachers, parents, and missionaries to come together in alliance and openly defy the apartheid government. Even if Africans had believed this was possible, certain conditions needed to have been met. African parents needed assurances that a credible alternative education system could be offered, teachers that their wages would be maintained and opportunities created for them and students that neither their education nor future prospects would suffer. Missionaries would not only have had to conquer the mutual mistrust that had developed between themselves and Africans; they would also have needed to find the vision and courage to join with Africans in opposition to the government. The ANC, or any other movement which challenged Bantu Education, did not have the resources to block Bantu Education, and the missionaries had neither the conviction nor the desire to act with them. Thus politically motivated Africans, especially teachers, were not convinced that it was possible to openly challenge the hegemony of the state in the field of education. For all CATA's rhetoric, its leaders had realised by 1955 that it did not have the support of the majority of parents, teachers or missionaries, and advised its members to enter Bantu Education schools and teach Bantu Education. Thus, on the whole, politically aware Africans acquiesced in Bantu Education as there was no alternative. Parents sent their children to Bantu Education schools rather than let them drift on the streets, and teachers taught in Bantu Education schools rather than not teach at all.<sup>94</sup>

Educated parents and teachers as a whole seem to have been disappointed that the mission authorities had not engaged them more in the decision-making process. In addition, those associated with the larger mission schools mourned the financial constraints that prevented the churches from maintaining at least a few flagship schools as private institutions.<sup>95</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that teachers or parents were in favour of the missions actually closing their schools down. They would probably have rejected such action for the same

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<sup>94</sup> R. van der Ross argues that despite the stress the NEUM and its affiliated groups gave to non-collaboration in many areas (teaching, police, railway workers, postal workers etc.) 'these departments in life were regarded *by the people* to be so vital to the promotion of their everyday living, that they, the people, would not have countenanced any interference with their lives in these matters.' R. van der Ross, The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: A Study of the Political Movements among the Coloured People of South Africa 1880-1985, (Cape Town, 1986), (original emphasis) p. 241.

<sup>95</sup> A teacher from Healdtown remembers 'we were told about the decision of the Church, that they are not going to two the line and take their advice from us and make it a private school.' Jelico Njokweni, interview with author, Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000.

reasons that they rejected the ANC boycott. What is perhaps most striking about the evidence is the lack of African discussion on the missionary reactions to Bantu Education. By the 1950s many educated Africans had come to the conclusion that mission education was something of an anachronism and should be replaced by a state-controlled system. The removal of missionary influence was seen as inevitable and, while they may not have approved of Bantu Education, few were left lamenting the demise of missionary education. Those who did were associated with large missionary institutions, not with the dilapidated primary schools, which the missionaries themselves were pleased to be rid of.

For many Africans who were not politically aware, Bantu Education created the illusion of opportunity. The capacity of the state to expand educational provision, and the creation of school boards drew many Africans into the system. Some parents were able to send their children to school for the first time, whilst others found their power and influence in local communities augmented by serving on School Boards. For Africans who believed in education for education's sake, and who struggled economically every day, Bantu Education, for all its limitations, appeared to provide improved prospects for their children. This is why it was successfully implemented - for it met the demand of many Africans for education. It is highly unlikely that these Africans would have supported any mass closure of missionary schools when they craved for educational provision. For the mass of Africans it did not matter if it was missionary or Bantu Education; they were grateful for any education.

If a person who has the money says this is the type of food I can offer you, either you accept it or you reject it and remain without anything to live by. Naturally you have to accept what is being offered because you have no other means. You have no choice and that was the situation...black people had no choice.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Rev. Dlodla, interview with author, Durban, 16 June 1998.

### Conclusion

Despite their rhetoric to the contrary, the majority of church and mission leaders in South Africa would have taught Bantu Education in their schools. The educational crisis that the missions faced was not induced by an ideological or moral refusal to teach Bantu Education, but was the result of the state's refusal to grant them the subsidies required to keep their schools open.

The depression of the 1930s and the Second World War had precipitated a crisis for missionary endeavour throughout Africa. Both seriously damaged the churches' ability to raise funds at a time when they found the demands of shattered European societies claimant on their resources. Consequently, less money was available for all aspects of missionary enterprise, seriously undermining the ability of churches throughout Africa to maintain, let alone expand, their existing activities. The war also created a recruitment crisis as human resources were thrown into the war effort, denying mission churches desperately needed personnel.<sup>1</sup> The effects of these pressures were felt in South Africa in the 1950s manifesting themselves in staff shortages and, more significantly, in the churches' willingness to give up their primary schools in an attempt to ease their financial woes.

Mission endeavour was also being undermined by the emergence of the state as the primary instrument of human welfare. The development of the 'welfare state' in Britain had shown how the state could divert massive resources into health and education, far exceeding what had previously been possible through church voluntarism. This change created what Andrew Porter has described as a 'radical review of missionary work' as churches realised they could not reverse the trend towards the assumption of social provision by the secular state.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that it was not only external pressures that were undermining missionary

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of the Province estimated in 1955 that it would need another five years to 'overcome its clergy shortage' caused by the War. 'Africa', British Weekly, 17 Feb. 1955, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> A. Porter, 'War, Colonialism and the British Empire: The Redefinition of Christian Missionary Policy 1938-52', ICS paper, 14 Jan. 1992, p. 9.

undertakings. In the 1940s and 1950s internal pressure from Africans, who questioned the right of churches to control social services that they experienced, and rejected the churches' paternalistic assumptions, challenged the very legitimacy of missionary endeavour.

In 1953 weak and hesitant mission churches, starved of finances and striving to maintain the support of Africans, faced Bantu Education. Generally, the churches in South Africa recognised the right, and indeed need, of the state to assume control of 'Native education'. In 1955 Goodhall acknowledged the expanding role of the state

this is ... the context in which the Bantu Education Act has to be seen. As a step in the educational process and in the shift between Government and private enterprise, many of its features belong to a familiar course.<sup>3</sup>

Recognising this change, however, did not mean the churches were willing to abdicate all responsibility for health and education which were, after all, prime areas of evangelisation. The mission churches in South Africa, informed by accepted practice beyond the Union, felt they had a right to run some private, state-funded schools imbued with a suitably Christian atmosphere, and aimed at furthering missionary endeavour. After all, the parents who chose to send their children to missionary schools had as much right to state resources as other parents.

The willingness to abandon their primary schools is evidence that the churches considered them a burden for which the state should assume responsibility. However, they were determined to maintain their large 'flagship' institutions, such as Lovedale and Adams, which had flourished through a great deal of missionary sacrifice, both in terms of money and effort. The churches hoped that even after the state's full assumption of responsibility for 'Native' education these institutions would remain to 'protect the identification of Christian service with high standards and provide examples which others would wish to emulate'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Goodhall, 'Christian Action in Africa - Another Approach', British Weekly, 9 June 1955, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Porter, 'War, Colonialism' p. 11.



If the implementation of Bantu Education had simply meant state control of primary schools and a new syllabus at all levels, effectively leaving 'flagship' institutions under church control, there would have been little comment from the churches.<sup>5</sup> In effect, apart from the gradual withdrawal of subsidy, this is exactly what occurred in Catholic schools and at Inanda. Despite protestations at the nature of Bantu Education, if other churches had had the financial resources to do so, they would have followed the Catholic example and registered their schools as private institutions, teaching Bantu Education.<sup>6</sup> It was the state's withdrawal of subsidy that they resented, and which challenged them to either confront the government or acquiesce in its demands.

Had they wished to oppose Bantu Education and its criticisms of mission education effectively, the churches would have had to follow the actions of Reeves and Huddleston and actually close their schools down. However, for this to have happened a number of conditions would have to have been met. Firstly, it required a degree of church unity that was simply unattainable. Even *within* denominations, divergent actions were taken in response to Bantu Education, and ecumenical relations in South Africa were too limited to allow for coordinated action. Secondly, it would have meant political confrontation with the government which would have been at variance with majority white opinion, and would have associated the churches with radical African opinion. Given the creed of the Christian churches in South Africa such an act was unthinkable as two members of the British Council of Churches who visited South Africa in 1954 pointed out.<sup>7</sup> Closing schools would also have needed the support of African teachers, parents and pupils who were generally not in favour of such action. Indeed, if teachers had been sufficiently militant and organised, they could have independently scuppered Bantu Education by refusing to teach it. The churches also

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to imply that they would not have raised pedagogical objections to Bantu Education. Such criticism, however, would not have prevented them from maintaining their role in African education.

<sup>6</sup> Missionaries may have believed that they could have subverted the 'purpose' of Bantu Education despite having to follow its syllabus.

<sup>7</sup> NLS ACC7548 Report of BCC visit to South Africa 18 Nov. - 9 Dec. 1954, p. 2. The actions of the Catholic Church were deeply conservative gestures motivated entirely by a determination to maintain religious freedom, it had little to do with any wider interpretation of the freedoms that Africans so justly demanded.

rejected school closure on the grounds that it would throw thousands of children onto the streets 'where they would learn no good. In the schools at least they will be taught to read and write.'<sup>8</sup> Lastly, the churches feared government reprisals, threatening the withdrawal of government subsidies for other services they provided such as hospitals and orphanages.<sup>9</sup>

The decision to lease schools was thus almost inevitable and, despite the churches' inadequate attempts to engage African opinion, was ironically probably what the majority of Africans wanted. Most Africans certainly despised Bantu Education but did not have the luxury of choice; it was Bantu Education or nothing.<sup>10</sup> However, was the decision to lease morally justifiable? Herron argued that 'to condemn the purpose of the Act but leave a loophole by which the Act may achieve its purpose seems to be compromise at its most elastic.'<sup>11</sup> The churches finely calculated the consequences of closing or leasing their schools, often in moral terms, but Bantu Education, like apartheid more generally, was undoubtedly amoral and a violation of Christian teaching. The closure of schools was the only option that did not compromise with Bantu Education and apartheid, as Huddleston and Reeves argued passionately. Nevertheless, in the end, even they were forced to retract in the face of African pleas for private schools, and attempted to establish schools which would have taught Bantu Education.

In 1941 the CPSA Church and Nation report called for the gradual removal of the colour-bar, rather than its immediate abolition. Adrian Hastings has observed that this position raises an important question: 'does the church lose its moral authority if it tempers its public teaching to what is judged pragmatically possible within an evil situation?'<sup>12</sup> This exact

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<sup>8</sup> NLS ACC7548 Matheson to Watt 22 Dec. 1954.

<sup>9</sup> Clayton commented in 1955 'I don't think that it would be practicable to carry our opposition to Government policy to the point of refusing any kind of cooperation. That would mean our work among non-Europeans would come to an end.' LPL Fisher V. 163 f79 Clayton address to SPG 26 April 1955.

<sup>10</sup> Webb the President of Methodist Conference in South Africa remarked that although Africans 'hated' Bantu Education like 'poison, they still feel that a wreck is better than nothing at all.' WC AC623 BEA Webb to Blaxall 8 Nov. 1954.

<sup>11</sup> Herron, 'Editorial', British Weekly, 7 Oct. 1954, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> A. Hastings, A History of African Christianity 1950-75 (Cambridge, 1979), p. 23.

question could be asked of the decision by the majority of churches in South Africa to lease their schools to the state. While it was morally admirable for Reeves and Huddleston to close schools, was it necessarily the right thing to do? Writing in 1976, Huddleston applauded the fact that at least one Anglican communion stood firm on principle against Bantu Education, but he recognised, in very different language from that which he used at the time, that it was 'an appalling choice' that had been made 'reluctantly'.<sup>13</sup> This is not to suggest that Reeves and Huddleston were wrong, but rather illustrates again what a complex and difficult position the churches were put in morally as well as educationally by the Bantu Education Act. As one senior African teacher remarked:

you know, thinking of Healdtown being closed would really have been so final, so we decided to take what we were given instead of the school being closed. Because we would be answerable to the world outside, because many people were so attached to this school...because better some education instead of nothing.<sup>14</sup>

This thesis illustrates the difficulty that radicalised individuals and political pressure groups face when trying to translate a just policy into action amongst an oppressed people who have little means by which to determine their own destiny. Reeves's and Huddleston's closure of schools and the ANC boycott were legitimate responses to Bantu Education, which, if supported nationally, may have destabilised the apartheid regime. However, they failed essentially because of the deprivation and poverty which segregation and apartheid had engendered.

A 1955 ANC document concerning the boycott remarked 'it is essential to realise that we must not forget that we are politicians and not sentimental individuals full of this non-political nonsense talk of the "poor children"'.<sup>15</sup> This statement, which now seems insensitive and naive, demonstrates the chasm between the intellectual reaction to Bantu Education, and the practical concerns of the population. For all the principled talk of

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<sup>13</sup> T. Huddleston, 'The Birth of a Struggle', in I. Henderson (ed.), Man of Christian Action: Canon John Collins - the Man and His Work, (London, 1976), p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> Jelico Njokweni, interview with author, Healdtown, 18 Jan. 2000.

<sup>15</sup> 'Suggested Boycott Programme, 1955' quoted in Feit, African, p. 163.

boycott and closure, Africans teachers, parents and students were concerned with the immediate need to educate and be educated in the absence of any credible alternative to Bantu Education.

African acquiescence was thus partly due to the 'success' of apartheid. For Africans to support school boycotts and closures they had to believe that an alternative ordering of society would follow such a sacrifice, a conviction that the vast majority of Africans did not have in 1955. Given this, they were not prepared to risk a child's chance of education and perhaps a better life, even if it meant Bantu Education.

Despite the failure of the churches to oppose Bantu Education, this thesis has also illustrated how different political and moral discourses can challenge dominant convictions, even if not immediately challenging established norms. Rival moral and political discourses emerged from within the churches through the actions of men such as Reeves and Huddleston. Such 'radicals' engendered much debate in the churches<sup>16</sup> but ultimately failed because they alone could not ensure the dissemination of their convictions into mainstream church thinking.

Their failure highlights the depth of the churches' complicity with apartheid and illustrates the difficulty in establishing a new 'radical' interpretation of the churches' mission. In general, the churches essentially reflected the views of, and were restrained by, white South Africans both within (leaders and laity) and outside of their congregations. Their political and moral discourses were shaped by what was of paramount interest to the churches - the continuation of white supremacy in South Africa. Church leaders were not prepared to engage in meaningful and 'revolutionary' discussions with Africans, to actually address the fundamental inequalities in society. By not doing so, they were able to avoid both acknowledging the immediate and pressing legitimacy of African claims, and the need to actually undertake unprecedented action (which would, inevitably, undermine white supremacy) to alleviate African suffering. Only through the democratisation of their own institutions, via the Africanisation of their leadership structures, would the churches have

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<sup>16</sup> Especially in the way in which they internationalised the issue of Bantu Education which brought pressure to bare on the churches from overseas.

been able to align themselves with African opponents of Bantu Education and apartheid. As they were unwilling to do this, faced with Bantu Education and apartheid, the churches unimaginatively reaffirmed their belief in trusteeship, the very policy that Africans increasingly rejected.

In addition, this thesis illustrates the manifest contradictions of missionary practice in South Africa. The Comaroffs argue that for missionaries 'schools were the most condensed loci of their efforts to change hearts and minds' but were 'sites of strident struggle' and 'portals of promise and places of dispossession.'<sup>17</sup> In South Africa mission education was clearly a 'site of strident struggle', between those educating and those being educated, and this thesis demonstrates the contradictions in the missionaries' educational activities.

Missionaries gave a limited number of Africans insights into the wider world, both inside and outside of South Africa, and in so doing created an educated African elite which had the tools by which to evaluate the society within which it existed. This had the effect of radicalising many Africans who recognised the racism and injustices of the society within which they lived. This led to the creation of western type political parties and organisations such as the ANC, using the tools and skills learnt at mission schools to challenge and undermine white supremacy. As the majority of white missionaries were reluctant to champion wholesale societal reform they found themselves increasingly at odds with those whom they had educated. This growing conflict manifested itself dramatically in student disturbances and in a growing African intellectual unease with the nature and objective of mission education.

The missionaries' efforts were thwarted by the segregationist nature of society in South Africa as their modernising project could never reach its natural conclusion, the full incorporation of the 'modern citizen' into a European model of civil society. This led missionaries to lament the demise of 'tribal sanctions' (ironically the very 'sanctions' which they themselves had been so keen to erode during the previous century) and reaffirm their faith in trusteeship. This was an unimaginative response which did not, and could not, satiate

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<sup>17</sup> J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution, pp. 412-413.

African demands, and it was left to Verwoerd and Eiselen to fashion 'Bantu Education', an educational system that they hoped would defuse African political aspirations.

However, as Clayton recognised, it was a system "doomed to fail" and rather than defuse African political aspirations it would become a rallying point for them: and, after twenty years of simmering discontent, a new generation of students, forced to endure the ever mutating Bantu Education system, rose up against it Soweto in 1976. The ensuing encounter between children and police, and the bloodshed which accompanied it, permanently shattered any illusion of the legitimacy or credibility of either Bantu Education or the State who imposed it.

## Appendix I

G.P.-S.13200-1948-0-300.

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON NATIVE EDUCATION.

1. What do you consider should be the guiding principles and aims of Native education ?
2. Is it correct to regard the Native as a separate and independent race ?
3. What do you understand by the " racial characteristics " of the Native ?
4. What are the special qualities and aptitudes of the Native ?
5. In what way has the social heritage of the Native been determined by the characteristics referred to above ?
6. What do you consider the most important changes at present taking place in the social conditions of the Native ?
7. In terms of your answers to questions 1-6, please give seriatim, your views on the manner in which these factors should determine the principles and objectives of Native education.
8. Referring to item 2 of the terms of reference, what do you understand by the " future careers " of the Native in South Africa ?
9. (1) What do you consider the chief defects of the present system of—
  - (a) primary schools ;
  - (b) secondary schools ;
  - (c) industrial schools ;
  - (d) teacher training colleges ; and
  - (e) university training.
- (2) What measures do you suggest for effecting the necessary changes with special reference to the content and form of the syllabuses ?
- (3) To what extent do these measures agree with the general principles you have recommended in answers to questions 1-7 above ?
10. What, in your opinion, should be the place and nature of religious education in the curriculum ?
11. What, in your opinion, should be the place and nature of manual training in Native schools, especially with regard to—
  - (1) the use the Native, after leaving school, makes of his manual training ; and
  - (2) the transfer of skills acquired in school to the Native community ?
12. Do you regard the organization of the present—
  - (1) primary schools ;
  - (2) secondary schools ;
  - (3) industrial schools ;
  - (4) teacher training colleges ;
  - (5) university trainingas satisfactory, considered from the viewpoint of—
  - (a) selection and admission of pupils ;
  - (b) co-ordination of schools ;
  - (c) duration of complete school courses ;
  - (d) the role which these courses are called upon to play in the life of the Native ;
  - (e) school attendance ;
  - (f) the school calendar ;
  - (g) examinations ;
  - (h) qualifications, race and sex of teachers ;
  - (i) methods ;
  - (j) inspection ;
  - (k) boarding facilities.
13. Is the administration of the present—
  - (1) primary schools ;
  - (2) secondary schools ;
  - (3) industrial schools ;
  - (4) teacher training colleges ; and
  - (5) university training ;satisfactory considered from the viewpoint of—
  - (a) the establishment of schools ;
  - (b) the effective distribution of schools ;
  - (c) local control of schools ;
  - (d) control of teachers (conditions of service and discipline) ;
  - (e) provision of school requisites ;
  - (f) buildings ;
  - (g) fees ;
  - (h) procedure for the payment of teachers.

14. What is your opinion concerning the control of schools by the provincial education departments, bearing in mind—
- (1) the desirability or otherwise of uniformity of practice, regulations and syllabuses ;
  - (2) the geographic and ethnic distribution of the Native peoples ;
  - (3) differences between the provinces in respect of pensions, leave privileges, school requisites, etc.
15. What are your views as to the basis on which Native education should be financed, having regard to the share which the Administration (Union and Provincial), the churches or missionary societies, and the Native himself should have therein ?
16. What are your views concerning the following points which may have been dealt with incidentally under previous headings, but which seem to merit specific attention :—
- (1) Adult education.
  - (2) The desirability of differentiating between the education given in different areas (Native reserves, rural areas and urban areas).
  - (3) The education and preparation of chiefs and leaders.
  - (4) Continuation study facilities for teachers, including libraries.
  - (5) The desirability of Government, community, tribal and church schools in regard to subsidies.
  - (6) Compulsory education in general or in specific areas.
  - (7) The training of Natives to occupy responsible positions in their own communities.
  - (8) The co-ordination of work of an educational nature carried out by State departments (e.g. Health, Native Affairs, Social Welfare, Justice).
  - (9) The education of leaders and the task of the university in this respect.
  - (10) The use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction.
  - (11) The future role of Native languages in education and in the community.
  - (12) The possible grouping or amalgamation of Native languages.
  - (13) The place of the official languages in the Native school curriculum.
  - (14) The relapse into illiteracy—its incidence and prevention.
17. Any other matters you wish to raise.



## Appendix 2A: The Legislative Requirements of the Bantu Education Act

The Bantu Education Act itself was not a long piece of legislation, containing little more than the mechanics of the transfer of control from the provinces to the NAD; the powers to be vested in the Minister; and the types of schools to be in existence under Bantu Education. Its purpose was 'to provide for the transfer of the administration and control of Native education from the several provincial administrations to the Government of the Union, and for matters incidental thereto.'<sup>1</sup> It was divided into eighteen sections, the first five of which dealt with the transfer of educational responsibility from the provinces to the NAD. Sections six to eight dealt with the creation and funding of the various schools. Section six referred to 'Bantu community schools', the name given to any 'Bantu school established or maintained by any Bantu authority, or any Native Council, tribe or community'<sup>2</sup> and noted that they were to be subject to the authority of the Minister of Bantu Affairs, who could at any time suspend or withdraw their subsidies. Section seven was concerned with 'Government schools' established by the NAD which were also subject to the Minister's approval, while section eight covered 'State-aided native schools', which were schools provided by any group other than the Government or the Bantu Authorities, essentially mission schools. These would be granted financial support as long as they did not

retard, or render impracticable, or ... preclude, retard, or render impracticable, the establishment of a Bantu community school or a Government Bantu school for the area concerned.<sup>3</sup>

In their case also the Minister could 'at his discretion, at any time suspend, reduce, or withdraw any grant made under this section or revoke his approval of any native school.'<sup>4</sup> All 'community' and 'State-aided' schools had to be registered with the NAD; failure to comply led to a £50 fine or six months imprisonment. This section also provided that

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<sup>1</sup> Union of South Africa Parliament, Bantu Education Act, No. 47 1953, (henceforth BEA) p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p. 6.

The registration of any such school shall be refused or cancelled if the Minister, acting on the advice and recommendation of the Native Affairs Commission...given after due enquiry of the said Commission is of the opinion that its establishment or continued existence is not in the interests of the Bantu people or any section of such people or is likely to be detrimental to the physical, mental or moral welfare of the pupils or students attending or likely to attend such schools.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1956, this section was amended to allow the Minister to determine the conditions for the registration of any school.<sup>6</sup> The amendment seriously concerned missionaries as it meant not only that schools could be closed for almost any reason, but that they could in fact be refused registration from the very start, at the whim of the Minister.

Sections ten and eleven of the 1953 Act formalised the transfer of teachers from provincial employ to that of the central state. The remaining sections dealt mostly with the running and administration of 'Government Bantu Schools' although section 15 (m) gave the Minister the power to prescribe the conditions under which grants-in-aid were to be made.<sup>7</sup>

It was only after Verwoerd's (Minister of Native Affairs) statement to the Senate on the 7 June 1954, that the policy to be adopted became clear, although changes in mission education did take place before this date. From January 1954 various circulars were issued by the NAD, the most notable of which stipulated that every teacher in training was to learn Afrikaans. To allow for this to take place all training colleges were instructed to drop 'without delay the teaching of geography and history'.<sup>8</sup> Other changes included the establishment of a unified control mechanism in Pretoria and the appointment of F.J. de Villiers as Under-Secretary for Bantu Education. In addition, many administrative posts in the provincial Departments of Education were taken over by the N.A.D.

In his address Verwoerd outlined the situation that was to prevail in Bantu Education. He

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<sup>5</sup> BEA, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Union of South Africa Parliament, Bantu Education Amendment Act, No. 36 1956. p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> BEA, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> WCL AD1158 SAIRR, GD2 Circular CM 31/1954 3 April 1954. Two other circulars removed the right of schools to receive equipment grants and forced school principals to introduce book fees.

confirmed the eventual transfer of mission schools to 'Bantu community schools', but divided them into two classes. He differentiated between major missionary institutions, such as Lovedale, and the large number of primary schools in rural and urban areas which were under the supervision of mission societies. He predicted that 'the transformation of an ordinary primary school into a community school will take place easily and naturally, and that the churches can raise no serious objection'. As soon as possible such schools would be handed over to local Bantu Boards under the supervision of the NAD. Recognising the investment that churches had made in large institutions, however he noted that 'the transfer of educational institutions is a much more involved undertaking.' This was because the churches would attempt to minimise their losses, and would also be losing 'an organisation for controlling and expanding mission work.'

Nonetheless Verwoerd appealed to the mission schools to make the transfer as smooth as possible, claiming that 'the Bantu' would not be victims of change;

The State is taking over from the churches to prosecute the same work more efficiently. Assets which have been created by the Churches for the Bantu will be retained for the Bantu. Under these circumstances it ought not to be difficult to reach a fair agreement with the churches on the conditions of transfer.

He was also at pains to point out to the missions that religious instruction would continue in the schools, and that at set times they would be given access to pupils belonging to their denominations.

In spite of these assurances, missions were given the opportunity to apply for registration as state-aided institutions, although it was made clear that this would only be granted for deserving cases, and would be limited by available funds; any support granted would be limited to 75 per cent of 'the salaries of the approved teaching staff'.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, state-aided schools would lose their existing provincial grants for furniture, books and other requisites. The reduction of the subsidy to 75 per cent of approved teachers

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<sup>9</sup> Verwoerd, Bantu Education pp. 11-12.

wages was designed to send a clear message to those running mission schools. It indicated the Department's longer-term plans for the complete withdrawal of mission education, challenging mission bodies to debate the economic viability of their position. Nevertheless, Verwoerd was still vague concerning the time-scale for the final transfer of education, observing that 'innovations will have to be made gradually ... in the meantime the machine will function very much as before.'<sup>10</sup> The registration of schools as state-aided institutions would only be 'a provisional arrangement' and would be terminated 'when the Department is convinced that the transfer of control to the Bantu community is desirable'.<sup>11</sup>

All teacher-training colleges were to be handed over to the government or closed as there was, at that stage, no provision for their registration as state-aided private schools. Churches were, however, given the opportunity to remain in charge of their hostels, an arrangement which could be discontinued if 'it is apparent that full co-ordination of education in the classroom on the one hand and in the hostel on the other cannot be reached under such a system'.<sup>12</sup> Verwoerd also indicated to the Senate that under Bantu Education double-sessions would to be introduced in primary schools, whereas previously all pupils were in primary schools for four and a half hours per day; as soon as was practicable, primary schools were to accept children in two three-hour shifts. Verwoerd claimed that this would address the problem of low attendance, and go some way towards alleviating the problem of unschooled children roaming the streets, although it can be argued that, if anything, there would be more children on the streets, although possibly for shorter periods.<sup>13</sup>

Verwoerd's speech indicated to those involved in mission education the outline of the transfer process, but it was not until 2 August 1954 that the grantees, superintendents and managers of state-aided schools received circulars from the NAD explaining in transfer in exact detail. The circular sent to state-aided schools gave those in control until the 31

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<sup>10</sup> Verwoerd, Bantu Education p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> ibid. p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> ibid. p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> ibid. pp. 15-6.

December 1954 to choose between two options. Firstly, they could maintain control as unaided private institutions, or as state-aided institutions with a 75 per cent subsidy, or school managers could relinquish control of their schools by renting or selling them to the NAD. It stated that the NAD preferred schools to be relinquished and hired to the Department, which would be liable for maintenance; this way the churches could keep the buildings for use after school hours. Moreover it continued:

Since the funds available for the purchase or hiring of Native schools will be derived at least in part from Native taxation it will be appreciated that the interests of the Native taxpayer will have to be born in mind.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the somewhat bizarre situation was reached whereby mission bodies were requested to undervalue their properties for rent or purchase, so as not to drain limited resources allocated to Bantu education. As many mission schools<sup>15</sup> had been established through equal financial contributions from Africans and mission organisations, in effect African communities were being asked to pay for the purchase or rent of properties that they had partly paid for in the first place.

The actual process of transfer or registration differed according to the scheduling of land under the Group Areas Act of 1950. On land scheduled as 'native areas or urban locations' school managers could apply for registration and if successful would receive a subsidy of 75 per cent, from the 1 April 1955. However, if registration were refused the school's subsidy would remain at its previous level (100 per cent) until such time as a transfer agreement could be reached. If no agreement for sale or rent could be agreed, the government reserved the right to withdraw its subsidy and look for alternative educational facilities. If, however, the church concerned wanted to hand its schools over to the 'Bantu community', it was to be paid a full subsidy until the 'Bantu community' was able to assume control. In this instance, the NAD reserved the right to request the mission or church body remain in control at a 100 per cent subsidy, until a suitable 'Bantu community' organisation could take over. In addition, the NAD reserved the right to withdraw any subsidy to any

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<sup>14</sup> Verwoerd. Bantu Education p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> In particular small rural primary schools.

school after two months notice, and, all agreements made were 'subject to revision at the discretion of the Minister of Native Affairs.'<sup>16</sup> In accordance with the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission school committees and boards were to be established, with church representation.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of schools on 'European' land the situation differed only slightly in that any registration granted at 75 per cent subsidy would be 'provisional',<sup>18</sup> all other conditions were the same. Schools, on 'European land' designated as farm or factory schools were to remain under the control of the land or factory owner and were not to be transferred to 'the Bantu community'. They were, however, to admit only the children of employees.

On 2 August 1954 a second circular was sent to all teacher-training institutions which made it absolutely clear that all training colleges would have to be transferred to the NAD. Those running the schools <sup>we</sup> given three choices: they could agree to the transfer of the entire institution to the department, by way of either rent or purchase; they could transfer only those buildings necessary for teaching, while retaining control of hostels (the preferred option); or they could close the institution and apply for registration as a private school with a 75 per cent subsidy. The Department wanted all training schools to be transferred by 1 July 1955, training schools which did not reach an agreement by that date would have their subsidies completely withdrawn on 1 January 1956, 'and alternative arrangements for the training of teachers would be sought.'<sup>19</sup>

Finally, the circular noted that if churches were to 'donate' their assets, 'concessions' would

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<sup>16</sup> WCL AB653, Circular 252/302(a), p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3. This is a somewhat ambiguous position as the circular makes a clear distinction in its provisions for schools on 'African' and 'European' land. However, the provisions do not differ at all apart from the word 'provisional' being placed in the text when dealing with 'European' land.

<sup>19</sup> WCL AB1124 Diocese of Bloemfontein - Bantu Education, circular 252/302(b) Eiselen to Managers, Superintendents and grantees of training colleges, 2 Aug. 1954.

be made.<sup>20</sup> These included allowing the donating body to suggest names for the transferred institution, the placing of a memorial plaque on the site detailing the donation, and the right to nominate one or two members to the schools advisory committee. This committee was to be chaired by the local Inspector of Bantu Schools and was to contain two representatives of the local 'tribal' authority, one parent, two representatives of religious interests, two representatives of the Department and, if the missions agreed to run the hostels, the hostel manager. Such arrangements would, however, be adjusted once the control of training schools was transferred to regional Bantu authorities. In addition, the NAD indicated that it was not keen to rent or buy training schools in designated 'European' areas, and would only do so 'if [they were] considered essential for teacher training.'<sup>21</sup> As before, the circular was keen to emphasise the role that religion would play in the training schools, granting church bodies access for pastoral work.

By August of 1954 those in control of mission schools were finally aware of the government's intentions regarding education. After a number of years of speculation the NAD's designs on African education were clarified.

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<sup>20</sup> It is not clear what was meant by 'donate'. It seems that the NAD was suggesting that for the greater benefit of Africans, churches should simply hand over their training schools for a nominal rent or purchase.

<sup>21</sup> WCL AB1124 Circular 252/302 (b), p. 1.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

ARCHIVES  
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE  
PRETORIA

ACT

TO

Provide for the transfer of the administration and control of native education from the several provincial administrations to the Government of the Union, and for matters incidental thereto.

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UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

WET

OM

Voorsiening te maak vir die oorpasing van die administrasie van en beheer oor natuurlike-onderwys van die onderskeie provinsiale administrasies na die Unie-regering, en vir daarmee in verband staande aangeleenthede.

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No. 47, 1953.



# ACT

To provide for the transfer of the administration and control of native education from the several provincial administrations to the Government of the Union, and for matters incidental thereto.

(English text signed by the Governor-General.)  
(Assented to 5th October, 1953.)

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate and the House of Assembly of the Union of South Africa, as follows:—

## Definitions.

1. In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates—
  - (i) "Bantu" shall be synonymous with "native"; (ii)
  - (ii) "Department" means the Department of Native Affairs; (iii)
  - (iii) "education" means education other than "higher education" within the meaning of section *seventeen* of the Financial Relations Consolidation and Amendment Act, 1945 (Act No. 38 of 1945); (viii)
  - (iv) "Minister" means the Minister of Native Affairs; (v)
  - (v) "native" means any person who is or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa; (vi)
  - (vi) "native school" or "Bantu school" means any school, class, college, or institution for the education of Bantu children or persons, or for the instruction and training of Bantu persons who desire to become teachers or to improve their qualifications as teachers; (vii)
  - (vii) "officer" means an officer on the fixed establishment of the public service; (i)
  - (viii) "prescribed" means prescribed by regulation; (xi)
  - (ix) "regulation" means any regulation made under this Act; (ix)
  - (x) "Secretary" means the Secretary for Native Affairs and includes any Under-Secretary of the Department; (x)
  - (xi) "this Act" includes any regulation. (iv)

## Transfer of control of native education from the provincial administrations to the Union Government.

2. As from the date of commencement of this Act—
  - (a) the control of native education shall vest in the Government of the Union subject to the provisions of this Act;
  - (b) there shall cease to be vested in the executive committee of a province any powers, authorities and functions, and the provincial council of a province shall cease to be competent to make ordinances, in relation to native education:Provided that, subject to the provisions of section *eleven*—
  - (i) a provincial administration shall continue to administer any pension, retirement or provident fund established or conducted by such administration in connection with native education;
  - (ii) a provincial council shall continue to be competent to make ordinances for the proper administration of any such fund.

## Administration.

3. (1) It shall be the function of the Department under the direction and control of the Minister, to perform all the work necessary for or incidental to the general administration of native education.
- (2) The Minister may, subject to the laws governing the public service, from time to time appoint such officers and employees as he may deem necessary for the proper performance by the Department of its functions under this Act.

Transfer of officers employed by a province in connection with native education to the service of the Union Government.

4. Every officer who, on or after the first day of July, 1953, was serving under a provincial administration mainly in connection with native education, and who on the date of promulgation of this Act is still serving under a provincial administration, shall, as from the date of commencement of this Act, be transferred to the Department, unless any such officer, at the request or with the approval of the Minister, acting in consultation with the Administrator of the province concerned, is transferred to another post in the public service or is in like manner excluded from the operation of this section.

Transfer of certain employees of a province to the service of the Union Government.

5. (1) Every person, other than an officer or a teacher, who immediately prior to the date of commencement of this Act, was employed by a provincial administration mainly in connection with native education, shall, as from that date, become an employee of the Department, unless the Minister, acting in consultation with the Administrator of the province concerned, decides otherwise.

(2) The continuous employment by a provincial administration immediately prior to the commencement of this Act, of any person who becomes an employee of the Department in terms of sub-section (1), shall, except as hereinafter provided, be deemed to have been employment in the service of the Department.

(3) Notwithstanding any limitation in respect of age or educational qualifications prescribed by or under the Public Service Act, 1923 (Act No. 27 of 1923), any person who becomes an employee of the Department in terms of sub-section (1), who is a South African citizen and who has not attained the prescribed age of retirement, may, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission, be appointed, on probation or otherwise, to a post in the public service.

(4) Any person appointed to the public service in terms of sub-section (3) shall be adjusted to the scale of salary applicable to the post to which he is appointed at such notch on that scale as may be recommended by the Public Service Commission: Provided that, except with his own consent or in accordance with the provisions of any law, the salary or the scale of salary at or in accordance with which any such person was remunerated immediately prior to the commencement of this Act, shall not be reduced.

(5) (a) Any person who becomes an employee of the Department in terms of sub-section (1) and who, immediately prior to the date of commencement of this Act, was subject to a law relating to pensions administered by a provincial administration, shall retain his rights and obligations under any such pensions law and shall continue to contribute to the pension, retirement, or provident fund to which he contributed prior to such date; and there shall be contributed to the said fund, out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, in respect of every such person, an amount equal to the amount which the provincial administration would have contributed to that fund in respect of every such person if he had remained in its service.

(b) The provisions of section *forty-seven* of the Pension Laws Amendment Act, 1943 (Act No. 33 of 1943), shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to any person referred to in paragraph (a) or any dependant of any such person who becomes entitled to a pension under this sub-section.

Financial assistance to Bantu community schools.

6. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Minister may, on such special conditions as he may stipulate and in accordance with such general principles as he may determine in consultation with the Minister of Finance, out of moneys appropriated or set aside by Parliament for native education—

(a) subsidize any Bantu school established or maintained by any Bantu authority, or any native council, tribe or community (hereinafter called a Bantu community school); or

(b) assist in the establishment or maintenance of any such school.

(2) The Minister may, in his discretion, at any time suspend, reduce, or withdraw any subsidy or assistance granted to any such school under this section.

Establishment of Government Bantu schools.

7. (1) The Minister may, out of moneys appropriated or set aside by Parliament for native education—

- (a) establish and maintain Bantu schools which shall be known as Government Bantu schools;
- (b) establish and maintain any hostel, teachers' quarters, school clinic, or any other accessory to a Government Bantu school.

(2) Every native school or accessory thereto which was established and maintained by a provincial administration and which is in existence on the date of commencement of this Act, shall, as from that date, be deemed to have been established in terms of sub-section (1) as a Government Bantu School or as an accessory to a Government Bantu School.

(3) The Minister may at any time, whenever he considers it expedient to do so, close or disestablish any such Government Bantu school, hostel, teachers' quarters, school clinic or other accessory to a Government Bantu school.

Grants-in-aid to State-aided native schools.

8. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Minister may, on such special conditions as he may stipulate and in accordance with such general principles as he may determine in consultation with the Minister of Finance, out of moneys appropriated or set aside by Parliament for native education, make grants-in-aid to any native school approved by him for the purposes of this section: Provided that before approving any such school the Minister may consider—

- (a) in respect of any native school situate in a scheduled native area or a released area referred to in the Native Trust and Land Act, 1936 (Act No. 18 of 1936), after consultation with the Bantu authority, or the native council, tribe, or community concerned; or
- (b) in respect of any native school situate outside a scheduled native area and a released area, with due regard to the interests of the Bantu people,

whether the establishment or existence of any such native school precludes, retards, or renders impracticable, or is likely to preclude, retard, or render impracticable, the establishment of a Bantu community school or a Government Bantu school for the area concerned.

(2) The Minister may, in his discretion, at any time suspend, reduce, or withdraw any grant made under this section or revoke his approval of any native school for the purposes of this section: Provided that before so exercising his discretion the Minister may cause an inquiry to be held at which the person or committee or other body in charge of the said school shall be entitled to be heard.

Registration of Bantu or native schools.

9. (1) As from a date to be fixed by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*, no person shall establish, conduct, or maintain any Bantu or native school, other than a Government Bantu school, unless it is registered as prescribed.

(2) The registration of any such school shall be refused or cancelled if the Minister, acting on the advice and recommendation of the Native Affairs Commission constituted under the Native Affairs Act, 1920 (Act No. 23 of 1920), given after due enquiry by the said Commission is of opinion that its establishment or continued existence is not in the interests of the Bantu people or any section of such people or is likely to be detrimental to the physical, mental or moral welfare of the pupils or students attending or likely to attend such school.

(3) Any person who, after the date fixed under sub-section (1), admits any Bantu child or person to, or establishes, conducts or maintains, any Bantu or native school which is not registered in terms of this Act, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds, or, in default of payment, to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

Appointment, conditions of service and retirement benefits of teachers in Government Bantu schools.

10. (1) The teaching establishment at any Government Bantu school shall be determined by the Minister on a basis to be laid down from time to time in consultation with the Minister of Finance and on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission.

(2) (a) The power of appointment, promotion, transfer, or discharge of teachers in Government Bantu schools shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, vest in the Minister, who may delegate any or all of the said powers to the Secretary.

(b) In respect of any post designated by the Minister, he may delegate the power of appointment or discharge of any teacher to any officer of the Department.

(3) Every person who immediately prior to the date of commencement of this Act was employed by a provincial administration as a teacher on the establishment of a native school referred to in sub-section (2) of section *seven*, shall, as from that date, be transferred to the service of the Department.

(4) Unless and until the Minister prescribes otherwise, the conditions of service, including the emoluments and leave privileges, of any teacher referred to in sub-section (3), shall continue in force as if the said teacher had remained in the service of the provincial administration.

(5) Unless and until the Minister prescribes otherwise—

(a) the retirement or pension benefits of any teacher referred to in sub-section (3) shall continue in force as if such teacher had remained in the service of the provincial administration by which he was employed immediately prior to the coming into operation of this Act and the provisions of section *forty-seven* of the Pension Laws Amendment Act, 1943 (Act No. 33 of 1943), shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to any such teacher or any dependant of any such teacher who becomes entitled to a pension under this paragraph;

(b) every such teacher shall continue to contribute to the pension, retirement, or provident fund which is administered by the provincial administration concerned and to which he contributed prior to the commencement of this Act, as if he had not been transferred to the service of the Department, and there shall be contributed to the said fund, out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, in respect of every such teacher, an amount which the provincial administration concerned would have contributed to that fund in respect of every such teacher: Provided that, in the case of the pension fund established under Act No. 43 of 1887 (Cape), there may each year be contributed out of moneys similarly appropriated, towards pension benefits payable to retired native teachers, an amount determined by the Minister in consultation with the Minister of Finance.

(6) Subject to the foregoing provisions of this section, the conditions of service, including the scales of salary, leave privileges, and retirement or pension benefits, of teachers in Government Bantu schools, shall be prescribed by the Minister in consultation with the Minister of Finance and on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission.

(7) Any disciplinary proceedings in respect of misconduct committed by any teacher referred to in sub-section (3) before the date of commencement of this Act, may be continued or instituted by the Department as if such misconduct had been committed after the said date.

Transfer of  
administration  
of Natal non-  
European  
Teachers'  
Provident Fund.

11. The Minister may, after consultation with the Minister of Finance and the Administrator of the Province of Natal, by notice in the *Gazette*, direct that subject to such conditions as he may determine, the moneys of the Natal non-European Teachers' Provident Fund, constituted by Ordinance No. 10 of 1930 (Natal), shall in respect of native teachers vest in and be administered *mutatis mutandis* by the Commissioner of Pensions in accordance with the provisions of the said Ordinance or as prescribed and thereafter, as from the date of the said notice, all contributions payable to the said Fund in terms of the said Ordinance or this Act by or in respect of native teachers shall be paid to the Commissioner of Pensions, who shall be responsible for the payment out of the said moneys and contributions of all liabilities of the said Fund arising, or which have arisen, in terms of the said Ordinance or this Act, in respect of native teachers.

Management  
of Government  
Bantu schools.

12. (1) The Minister may, with due regard to the principle of providing for active participation by the Bantu people in the control and management of Government Bantu schools, establish such regional, local, and domestic councils, boards, or other bodies as he may deem expedient, or may for this purpose entrust the control and management of any Government Bantu school to any Bantu authority or native council established by or under any other law.

(2) The constitution, duties, powers, privileges, and functions of any such council, board, or body, or the duties, powers, privileges, and functions of any Bantu authority or native council to whom the control and management of any Government Bantu school is entrusted, shall be as prescribed.

Certain assets  
and liabilities  
transferred to  
Union  
Government.

13. As from the date of commencement of this Act—

(a) all the property, movable or immovable, which immediately prior to the said date was used or had been acquired by a provincial administration solely for the purposes of or in connection with native education, shall vest in the Government of the Union, subject to any conditions or obligations upon or under which such property was held immediately prior to the said date in so far as such conditions or obligations do not lapse by merger as a result of this vesting;

(b) all the liabilities lawfully incurred by a provincial administration for the purposes of or in connection with native education and existing immediately prior to the said date, including any liability to pay a bonus or allowance to any retired teacher or employee or any dependant of any such teacher or employee in supplementation of any pension payable to any such person, shall become the liabilities of the Government of the Union, subject to the provisions of this Act and to the conditions under which those liabilities were incurred:

Provided that, save as is provided in section *eleven*, the provisions of this section shall not be deemed to include any asset acquired or liability incurred in connection with any pension, retirement or provident fund administered by a provincial administration.

Power to  
expropriate land  
for native  
education  
purposes.

14. The Minister may expropriate any land required for the purposes of a Government Bantu school or any accessory thereto, and the Expropriation of Lands and Arbitration Clauses Proclamation, 1902 (Proclamation No. 5 of 1902), of the Transvaal, shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to any such expropriation in any part of the Union.

Regulations.

15. (1) The Minister may from time to time make regulations—

(a) prescribing, subject to the laws governing the public service, the powers and duties of the Secretary and any other officer or employee of the Department in connection with the administration of native education;

(b) prescribing the conditions of appointment and service, including the rights, duties and privileges, of teachers in Government Bantu schools;

(c) prescribing a code of discipline for teachers in Government Bantu schools, the punishments which may be imposed for, and the procedure to be followed in connection with, any contravention of or failure to comply with the provisions of such code, and the circumstances in which the services of any such teacher may be terminated;

(d) prescribing courses of training or instruction in Government Bantu schools and the fees, if any, payable in respect of such courses or any examination held by or under the supervision or control of the Department;

(e) prescribing the medium of instruction in Government Bantu schools;

(f) prescribing the conditions governing the establishment, control and maintenance of any hostel, school clinic, or other accessory to a Government Bantu school;

- (g) relating to the admission of pupils or students to, the control, and treatment of pupils or students at, and the discharge of pupils or students from, any Government Bantu school;
  - (h) providing for the medical examination of teachers, pupils or students in Government Bantu schools, including the particulars to be contained in medical certificates;
  - (i) providing for the control of funds collected for any Government Bantu school;
  - (j) providing for religious instruction in Government Bantu schools;
  - (k) prescribing the circumstances in which the suspension or expulsion of any pupil or student from any Government Bantu school may take place or any other punishment may be administered or imposed;
  - (l) prescribing the conditions under which Bantu community schools may be subsidized or assisted under section *six*;
  - (m) providing for the approval of State-aided native schools, under section *eight*, and prescribing the conditions under which grants-in-aid may be made;
  - (n) providing for the registration of Bantu community schools or other native schools;
  - (o) providing for the award of bursaries to Bantu pupils or students and prescribing the conditions under which such bursaries may be awarded;
  - (p) providing for the establishment of an advisory board or advisory boards on Bantu education for the Union and prescribing the constitution, duties, powers, privileges and functions of such a board and the fees and allowances, if any, payable to any member of a board who is not in the full-time employment of the State;
  - (q) providing for the constitution, duties, powers, privileges and functions of regional, local and domestic councils, boards or other bodies or the duties, powers, privileges and functions of any Bantu authority or native council to whom the control and management of a Government Bantu school is entrusted and prescribing the fees and allowances, if any, payable to any members thereof who are not in the full-time employment of the State;
  - (r) providing, subject to the approval of the Minister of Finance, for the establishment and management of a pension or provident fund or scheme for teachers in Government Bantu schools to be administered by the Commissioner of Pensions and prescribing the contributions to be made to such fund or scheme out of moneys appropriated by Parliament and by teachers;
  - (s) providing generally for any other matter relating to the establishment, maintenance, management and control of Government Bantu schools or which the Minister may deem necessary or expedient to prescribe for achieving the purposes of this Act, the generality of the powers conferred by this paragraph not being limited by the provisions of the preceding paragraphs.
- (2) Different regulations may be made in respect of different teachers, groups, classes or races of teachers, or different schools or areas.
- (3) The regulations may provide penalties for any contravention thereof or failure to comply therewith not exceeding a fine of fifty pounds or, in default of payment, imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.
- (4) Until the Minister makes regulations, the laws in force in the respective provinces immediately prior to the date of commencement of this Act, other than the law repealed by section *seventeen*, shall, in so far as they relate to native education and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, continue to apply *mutatis mutandis* in respect of native education: Provided that in any such law, any reference to the

"Governor" or the "Administrator" shall be construed as a reference to the Minister, and any reference to the "Superintendent-General", "Superintendent" or "Director" as a reference to the Secretary, and any reference to the "Department" as a reference to the Department, and any reference to the "Controller" as a reference to the Principal Accountant of the Department.

(5) Whenever the Minister makes regulations with regard to any of the matters referred to in sub-section (1), that part of the laws referred to in sub-section (4) relating to any matter dealt with in the regulations, shall then cease to apply to native education.

Amendment of section 85 of the South Africa Act, 1909.

16. Section *eighty-five* of the South Africa Act, 1909, is hereby amended by the insertion in paragraph (iii) after the words "higher education" of the words "and native education".

Repeal of Act 29 of 1945.

17. The Native Education Finance Act, 1945 (Act No. 29 of 1945), is hereby repealed.

Short title and date of commencement.

18. This Act shall be called the Bantu Education Act, 1953, and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor-General by proclamation in the *Gazette*.

No. 44, 1954.]

ARCHIVES  
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE  
PRETORIA

# ACT

To amend the Bantu Education Act, 1953.

(Afrikaans text signed by the Governor-General.)  
(Goedgekeur op 18 Junie 1954.)

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, the Senate and the House of Assembly of the Union of South Africa, as follows:—

1. The following new section is hereby substituted for section *twelve* of the Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953) (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act):

“Manage-  
ment of  
Government  
Bantu  
schools  
and Bantu  
community  
schools.”

12. (1) The Minister may, with due regard to the principle of providing for active participation by the Bantu people in the control and management of Government Bantu schools and Bantu community schools, establish such regional, local or domestic councils, boards or other bodies as he may deem expedient and entrust the control and management of any one or more of such schools to any such council, board or body for such period as he may from time to time determine or he may in like manner entrust the control and management of any one or more of such schools to any Bantu authority or native council established by or under any other law.

(2) The constitution, duties, powers, privileges and functions of any such council, board or body, and the duties, powers, privileges and functions of any Bantu authority or native council to which the control and management of any Government Bantu school or Bantu community school has been entrusted, shall be as prescribed.

(3) The Minister may at any time, whenever he considers it expedient to do so, disestablish any such regional, local or domestic council, board or other body or withdraw the control and management of any Government Bantu school or Bantu community school from any Bantu authority or native council to which such control and management has been entrusted in terms of sub-section (1): Provided that, before exercising his discretion under this paragraph, the Minister shall cause an inquiry to be held at which the council, board or body concerned shall be entitled to be heard.”

2. Section *fifteen* of the principal Act is hereby amended—

(a) by the insertion in paragraph (g) of sub-section (1) after the words “Government Bantu school” of the words “or a Bantu community school”; and

(b) by the insertion in paragraph (s) of the said sub-section after the words “Government Bantu schools” of the words “or Bantu community schools”.

3. This Act shall be called the Bantu Education Amendment Act, 1954.



UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

File No. 252/302.

Department of Native Affairs,  
Division of Bantu Education,  
Private Bag 212,  
P R E T O R I A.

2nd August, 1954.

Sir,

The Transfer of control of State-aided schools to  
Bantu Community organizations, except in  
the case of teacher training schools.

1. In accordance with the policy speech of the Minister of Native Affairs, the Honourable Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, delivered before the Senate on the 7th of June, 1954, this circular is addressed to all grantees, superintendents or managers of state-aided schools in order to set out the policy of the Department and to seek the co-operation of all churches and missionary bodies concerned.

2. It should be emphasized that the transfer of control from the missions to Bantu communities is part of a wider scheme of social development, designed to assist in the progress of the Native people in the form of self-sufficient and responsible communities in all directions. The purpose is not therefore the removal of religious influence from the life of the Bantu - an influence which the Department realizes has been and will continue to be a most valuable contribution to Bantu development - but the enlistment of the energies of the Bantu in the development of a healthy social and economic life of their own.

3. It is the intention of the Department to offer reasonable compensation where necessary to the churches or missionary bodies from whom school buildings are taken over. In most cases state aid is granted in the interest of either the churches or the communities that the buildings should be sold (e.g. because the churches may want to retain control of buildings outside school hours for church services or other church activities) buildings will be hired rather than purchased. The negotiations will of necessity have to be on an individual basis, since in a great many instances buildings have been erected with funds from different sources (the community, the church and the state). Where rent is to be paid on buildings the Department will be responsible for maintenance. Since the funds available for the purchase or hiring of Native schools will be derived at least in part from Native taxation it will be appreciated that the interests of the Native taxpayer will have to be borne in mind.

4. Grantees, superintendents, or managers of all state-aided schools are requested, after due consultation with their own church authorities, to inform the Secretary for Native Affairs, Private Bag 212, Pretoria, as soon as possible (but in any case not later than 31st December, 1954) in the case of every state-aided school under their care, except teacher training and farm, mine or factory schools, whether they wish -

(a) to /.....

ALL GRANTEES, SUPERINTENDENTS, OR  
MANAGERS OF STATE-AIDED BANTU SCHOOLS.

- (a) to retain control of existing state-aided schools and hostels either as private unaided institutions, or as aided institutions with the subsidy for teachers' salaries fixed at seventy-five per cent. of both the salary scale and cost of living allowance applicable to each teacher employed with the approval of the Department. (In the case of hostels see paragraph 8); or
- (b) to relinquish control of these schools and hostels to Bantu community organizations.

Negotiations in connection with transfer will be initiated as soon as possible, where necessary.

5. Since the procedure will vary somewhat according to the type of school and its situation a more detailed setting out of the procedure is given below.

6. The procedure of transfer will be as follows :-

(a) in the case of primary and post-primary schools (including industrial schools) in Native areas or in urban locations:-

- (i) if the controlling church or mission desires to retain control with a subsidy for teachers' salaries and all allowances as set out in 4(a) above and the Department is able to comply with such a request, the subsidy will become effective as from the 1st April, 1955;
- (ii) if the Department is unable to comply with such a request the subsidy will continue to be paid on the present basis until control of the school is assumed by a Bantu community organization or until the negotiations in connection with transfer have been ended by the Department. Where negotiations in connection with financial or other matters break down the Department reserves the right to withdraw subsidies and to provide alternative educational facilities. Control of mission schools will not be assumed before the necessary community organization has been created. In any case, control will not be transferred before the 1st April, 1955 (see also (v) below), unless a request from the grantee, superintendent or manager of the school concerned is received and approved;
- (iii) where a church or missionary body is agreeable to the transfer of control, the subsidy will continue to be paid on the present basis to the grantee, superintendent or manager of any such school until control is assumed by a Bantu community organization or negotiations concerning compensation have been ended by the Department;
- (iv) Under certain conditions the Department may request the grantee, superintendent or manager of a school to continue for a certain period his superintendency of a school, the transfer of which has either been agreed upon or concerning which for the time being no decision has been taken. The subsidies calculated on the present basis will continue to be paid during such a period;
- (v) if, /.....

(v) if, after the 1st April, 1955, the Department decides that it is desirable that the control of a school which has remained under the superintendency of a church or missionary body, either at the request of that body or of the Department, should be transferred to a Bantu community organization, notice of at least two school quarters will be given of the intention of the Department so that teachers may be informed and staffing arrangements made without prejudice to the school or its teachers. Negotiations will then be opened to decide on what terms the transfer may be effected;

(vi) arrangements arrived at under the provision of 6(a) (i) above will be subject to revision at the discretion of the Minister of Native Affairs. Notice of at least two full school quarters will be given of any revision of subsidy.

(b) in the case of farm, mine or factory schools situated on land in European areas:

These schools will in future limit their enrolment, except with the permission of the Department, to the children of bona fide Bantu employees, or, in the case of farm schools, children of approved residents in the vicinity of the school. The Department will approach these schools informing them of their status and of the changes which will be necessary in order to conform with the new regulations. Control of these schools will not be transferred to Bantu community organizations but will be vested in the owner of the land or his authorised representative who may be a missionary. A circular setting out in full the Department's policy concerning farm, mine and factory schools will be issued at an early date. Subsidies will continue on the same basis as hitherto.

(c) in the case of primary and post-primary schools situated on land in European areas which are not recognised as bona fide farm, mine or factory schools:

These schools are situated on European-owned land and are intended as general educational institutions for Bantu children, not merely to serve the children of Bantu employees of the owner of the land;

(i) if a church or missionary organization desires to retain control of this type of school with a fixed subsidy equivalent to 75% of the salaries of approved teachers (as set out in 4(a) above); and the Department is able to agree to the provisional retention of control by the present grantee, superintendent or manager the new subsidy will become effective as from the 1st April, 1955;

(ii) where a church or missionary organization indicates its willingness to hand over control of a school, the present rate of subsidy will be maintained until the transfer of control has been effected or negotiations have been ended by the Department;

(iii) any/.....

(iii) any arrangements made by the Department in respect of this type of school will be subject to the provisions of the Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950), as amended, and also to the general policy of the Department;

(iv) the provisions of 6(a)(iii), (iv) and (v) above will also apply.

7. Training Schools.

It is the policy of the Department that the training of all teachers for state and state-aided schools should be conducted in Departmental schools. Negotiations with the bodies controlling state-aided teacher training institutions will be initiated immediately by the Department. Owing to the variety of conditions under which these institutions have been financed it will be necessary to consider each case on its merits. The control of hostels serving teacher training schools may be retained. (See paragraph 8).

8. Hostels.

The Department is willing that hostels should remain under mission control, and is prepared to negotiate with the present grantees, superintendents, or managers in order to achieve mutually satisfactory terms in the case of those hostels whose continued existence is considered essential. Such arrangements will, however, be subject to revision by the Department especially if the system is found to cause difficulty in the control of schools which have been transferred to the Department.

9. School Committees.

In constituting school committees care will be taken that at least one Bantu member will be appointed to represent church interests.

10. School Boards and Bantu Authorities.

Care will be taken by the Department to see that certain members, able and willing to represent church interests are included in these bodies.

11. Religious Education.

The curricula of all schools under the control of the Department including those under Bantu community organizations, will provide religious instruction. Churches recognised by the Department will be allowed to provide special religious instruction for the children of their adherents at set times, provided such instruction is given in the mother tongue. Where churches do not exercise this privilege the Departmental syllabus will be taught by class teachers. The inspectorate will be instructed to see that religious instruction is thoroughly taught and that the time set aside for this purpose is not used for so-called examination subjects.

1. General/.....

12. General.

A separate circular has been drawn up setting out the basis on which negotiations for the transfer of control of teacher training schools and hostels will be conducted. This circular will be sent out to the heads of training schools and other interested parties. Copies may be obtained from the Department.

13. In the foregoing paragraphs emphasis has been placed mainly on the rôle which the Bantu Community must play in Bantu Education. The possibility that the European community, by virtue of its experience in the past, will be able to make an important contribution to Bantu education in the future is not being neglected. The possible use in an advisory capacity of European experts, including church leaders, is being considered.

14. Grantees, superintendents or managers of state-aided schools who may wish to raise questions in connection with any matters referred to in this circular are invited to send their queries as soon as possible (but in any case not later than 15th September, 1954) to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Private Bag 212, Pretoria, who will deal with such queries in a further circular or by letter as soon as possible after the closing date.

Yours faithfully,

(sgd) W.W.M. Eiselen.

SECRETARY FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE AFFAIRS,  
(DIVISION OF BANTU EDUCATION),  
PRIVATE BAG 212,  
P R E T O R I A.

2nd August, 1954.

FILE NO. 252/302.

Sir,

The transfer of control of teacher training  
schools to the State.

1. In terms of the recent declaration of policy by the Minister of Native Affairs, the Honourable Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, before the Senate on the 7th of June, 1954, this circular is addressed to grantees, superintendents or managers of all state-aided teacher training schools for Bantu students.

2. It is the policy of the Department that the training of all teachers for state or state-aided schools should be conducted in Departmental teacher training schools only.

3. The choice of action which is open to grantees, superintendents and managers of the present teacher training institutions who are desirous that their institutions should continue to serve the Bantu (leaving out of account private non-subsidised schools) may be summarised as follows :-

- (a) to agree to the transfer of control of an existing institution (school and hostels) and to negotiate an equitable settlement, either by way of rental or purchase;
- (b) to agree to the transfer of control of the school buildings necessary for a teacher training school on terms to be negotiated while retaining hostels on a subsidised basis agreeable to both parties;
- (c) to decide to close the existing teacher training school after an agreed period and to conduct instead a private primary or secondary school, or to apply for such a primary or secondary school on the basis of seventy-five per cent. of the salary scale and cost of living allowance applicable to teachers employed with Departmental approval.

4. In general the Department does not desire to purchase land and buildings outside scheduled Native areas, but will be willing to hire land and buildings in European areas if considered essential for teacher training. Where the owners, however, desire to offer their properties in these areas for sale, the Department may be approached with such propositions. In the case of mission-owned farms in or adjoining Native areas the Department is prepared to hire such areas thereof as may be necessary for the purpose of conducting a teacher training school or it may offer to buy the whole property if the owners are willing to sell.

TO :  
ALL GRANTEES, SUPERINTENDENTS OR  
MANAGERS OF STATE-AIDED TEACHER  
TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR BANTU STUDENTS.

5. Where /...

5. Where the the Department hires buildings, hostels, etc., the Department will undertake the maintenance of such properties, and the hire paid will be calculated to reimburse over a period of years actual costs incurred by the owner of the buildings in respect thereof. Owing to the various conditions under which buildings have been financed it will be necessary to negotiate a settlement of each case on its merits.

6. The present rates of subsidy for both teachers and hostels will continue in force until at least two full school quarters after the conclusion of negotiations, unless at the request of the institution concerned other arrangements are agreed to. It is the desire of the Department that control of training schools should be transferred not later than 1st July, 1955.

7. If no agreement can be reached in the case of any particular school by the 1st June, 1955, subsidies will be withdrawn as from 1st January, 1956, and alternative arrangements for the training of students will be made.

8. In the belief that many churches and missionary institutions which have hitherto conducted teacher training schools will retain their interest in Bantu education and will be anxious that the assets and facilities built up by them through the years should continue to be available to the Bantu, the Department is prepared to consider the following particular concessions to churches and missionary institutions which make a substantial donation of assets :-

- (a) all donations will be received in trust and if property is not used as agreed upon it will revert to the donor;
- (b) the institution or school will be given a name agreed upon by both parties in order to commemorate the generosity of the body or church concerned;
- (c) a memorial plaque will be erected on the building setting out the details of the donation;
- (d) the donors will be given the right to nominate one or two members of the advisory committee attached to each teacher training school (for functions see below); and
- (e) where buildings are placed at the disposal of the Department without charge the responsibility for maintenance will be assumed by the Department.

9. The Department is prepared to consider suggestions in connection with the matters raised in paragraph 8.

10. It is proposed to institute an advisory committee at each Departmental teacher training school. The composition of the advisory committee may differ in details from place to place but will in general be subject to the following guiding principles :-

- (a) since the advisory committee will by definition be advisory and not executive, the chairman will be an Inspector of Bantu Schools. (If at a later stage the control of teacher training schools is entrusted to a regional or territorial authority the committee will necessarily be reconstituted).

(b) an/.....

- (b) an advisory committee may include :-
- (i) two representatives of the territorial, regional, or tribal authority in whose area the school falls, preference being given to the body with the widest jurisdiction;
  - (ii) one representative of parents of students;
  - (iii) two representatives of religious interests;
  - (iv) two representatives of the Department;
  - (v) where hostels are conducted by a religious body formerly in control of the teacher training institution the head of the hostel will be a member of the committee. If the hostels are conducted by the Department no separate representation will be necessary;
- (c) the Native Commissioner will ex officio be a member of the committee;
- (d) the principal or head teacher will attend meetings on invitation in an advisory capacity.

11. The functions of the advisory committee will be :-

- (a) to advise the Department and the principal on the following matters :-
- (i) the appointment of staff;
  - (ii) the maintenance of discipline and good order among the students;
  - (iii) the selection and admission of students;
  - (iv) the representations of student bodies and of parents;
  - (v) the maintenance of buildings and grounds;
  - (vi) the hostels;
  - (vii) public relations; and
  - (viii) generally, all matters affecting the well-being of the school.
- (b) The advisory committee will meet once a quarter and copies of minutes of meetings will be sent regularly to Head Office, Pretoria, and the office of the Regional Director.

12. The Department is desirous that Christian influences should be strongly felt in Departmental training schools and calls upon the churches to assist by :-

- (a) retaining control of hostels wherever possible; and
- (b) making arrangements at Departmental teacher training schools for pastoral work among adherents not only on Sundays but also during the week when at set times the adherents of each church will be available to its pastor for religious instruction.

It may be added that all teacher training curricula will contain biblical instruction and religious exercises of a non-sectarian nature.

13. All/.....



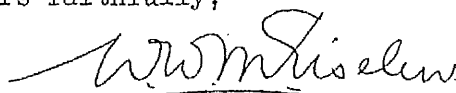
13. All European teachers at present in employment in aided teacher training institutions will be eligible to become Departmental teachers with conditions of service similar to those enjoyed by teachers employed in schools under the Department of Education, Arts and Science. Teachers who were in the employment of Provincial Education Departments and whose transfer to the employment of the Native Affairs Department was a necessary consequence of the Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953) will retain the advantages of their previous conditions of service. Teachers who were not direct employees of the Provincial Education Departments will have to satisfy the new conditions of service (e.g. as to qualifications and bilingualism) before they can be appointed permanently. Reasonable time will be given to unilingual teachers to obtain the necessary qualifications while holding conditional appointments.

14. Until negotiations between the Department and the managers of state-aided teacher training schools have been completed the salaries and allowances of all teachers at present paid by the Department will continue to be paid. As soon as negotiations have been completed the Department will advise all teachers that as from a given date they will be given two full school quarters in which to apply to become members of the Departmental teaching staff or to make such other arrangements as they may desire. The Department appreciates the good work done by loyal and interested teachers and is anxious to retain their services where possible.

15. All Bantu teachers at present teaching in aided teacher training schools will be eligible to become Departmental teachers under conditions of service now being framed. The procedure for the transfer of these teachers will be as set out above in paragraph 14.

16. The Department desires to open negotiations for the transfer of teacher training schools as soon as possible and commencing early in August 1954 Departmental officials will visit all teacher training institutions for that purpose. Negotiations will be greatly facilitated and expedited if grantees, superintendents or managers will communicate as soon as possible with the Secretary for Native Affairs, Private Bag 212, Pretoria, informing him of any decisions they may have reached or asking for any further information they may require.

Yours faithfully,



SECRETARY FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS.

Appendix 3

12 Lakhani Chambers,  
2 Saville Street,  
Durban,  
20th March, 1953.

Dear Father,

It is quite a considerable length of time since Father heard from me and perhaps heard of me.

For as long as the period during which I was quiet; I have not been without a strong feeling that I should write Father and inform him about this and that which although unpleasing perhaps would be of interest to him.

I am no more at Umlazi, neither am I still in the Teaching Profession. But,..... Let me say this before I proceed. I have thought it wiser for me to write a letter so that I can put on paper everything I want to say, because a personal talk has its own advantages and disadvantages. It shall follow later on.

On the 8th of November, 1952 I submitted my resignation letter to our Grantee, Father Mdhlaqha, after considering this line of action as from March, 1952. I resigned from the Teaching Profession because I wanted to be a Trade Unionist, and thereby join the 'mighty few' who have made it their duty to bring about economic relief to the African in general and to the African Working class in particular. May I admit here that my action cannot be divorced from political ideas.

This wish was strengthened when in the 'Advances' I read a notice to the effect that a Trade Union Movement course was to be opened in Johannesburg as from the beginning of January, 1953. Towards the end of the year I applied for admission, and was accepted.

In the middle of January, 1953 I went to Johannesburg for training. But owing to the fact that the Sponsors of this course, who belong to the Joint Planning Council of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress, could not release their lecturers because of the pressure of work owing to the two Bills that were then being piloted through Parliament, the course could not be begun until the beginning of March.

It then happened that in February Chief Lutuli went to Bloemfontein to address a Meeting of the African National Congress. In Bloemfontein he met a Member of the National Executive, Mr Tloome, who was also to address the meeting. Chief Lutuli then asked Mr Tloome if he knew where I was because the Natal Executive of the A.N.C. only knew that I was in Johannesburg, but could not get a line on me. On finding that Mr Tloome was in a position to supply all information about me, Chief then asked Mr Tloome to contact me immediately on arrival in Johannesburg and ask me to come and take over the Office Administration of Congress Affairs in Natal. He went on to say if I was reluctant he should put the matter before the National Executive to persuade me to come back to Natal. Although the matter did come before the National Executive, informally though, it was not because I was unwilling but rather for other reasons.

So I agreed to come back to Natal, and did so not without regrets for I was to abandon my plans for the time being. However, there was some consolation because we agreed that the Natal Executive would release me from their services after two months to go back for training. So I shall be here until the end of April that is if things are still normal in South Africa, but should the Government, should they win this election, become aggressive and wild towards our Leaders; then I think it will be advisable for me to remain here and just dip the bucket where I am. However, I prefer to leave this in the hands of fate.

Now, I suppose Father is itching to come to grips with the reason why I resigned from the Teaching Profession. Let me proceed.

First and foremost let me point out that I have joined the company of Politicians because I was a Teacher. I am still convinced that if I had not been a Teacher I would probably be apathetic towards present political developments that directly affect the Africans. Or most certainly I would still be in whatever occupation I was in.

I am a Teacher by profession, and most probably a Politician by virtue and perhaps a Humanitarian by endowment. And as to the latter I do firmly believe that man's duty is limited to right doing towards others and an interest in their public welfare, with specific reference to the under dog—those who cannot help themselves, and in South Africa, in the welfare of those who denied the right and even the privilege of helping themselves, and I shall always take a firm stand by it.

Perhaps if I was not a Teacher for these past two years the other two potential talents would have remained unexploited in me. But as fate or luck would have it I did become a Teacher. And so having ~~these~~ this privilege plus the two elements mixed in me, I began to appreciate the conditions under which a Black school child lives. The inevitable happened. I began to appreciate the unspeakably dreadful conditions to which the parents of these children I taught were and are subjected by the South African order of things. This and only this marked the beginning of the end of my profession as a Teacher.

Here was the beginning of something new in my life. My feelings of sympathy went all out at logger heads with my sense of reason. My sympathy for the unfortunate masses spurred me into action. My sense of reason reminded me of 'Safety First'. Mental gymnastics I began to experience. There was no peace in me. But my sympathy still overpowered my sense of reason—hence the hatching out of this wild idea. I knew that sooner or later I would have to make a decision. And I made it. May I claim Father that when I made it it was in the absence of all emotional inspiration.

By virtue of my profession I was in close contact with school children, and these children were fairly representative of the less fortunate ones that roamed all over like sheep without a shepherd, and like some flowers under unfavourable climatic conditions to lie and rot before they came to bloom, dying a most untimely death in slow life areas where squalor is a luxury—abhorable as it is.

No. 1. Those children spelt politics. Our South African politics—the science of how to govern the non-Europeans in general and the Africans in particular—reflect something basically wrong in their application. The after-effects as I perceive them and still perceive them on our children are signatures of a master hand of an evil-ridden politician. They are morally indefensible; although white South Africa would find ample political defence against this apparent accusation. But who cannot read through the deeds of man.

The fact is: Our children are systematically retarded, mentally and physically. Their intelligence, reasoning powers and common sense lowered and made blunt by the absence of healthy surroundings at their homes. In Hygiene lessons Teachers always emphasise the importance of that gas, an indispensable gas, called Oxygen. Yet at their homes the Housing Board has provided another gas, called Carbon Dioxide, which the Teacher has also emphasised as deadly to their growth and general health. And why this contradiction in theory and actual practise!

I hope I am not boring you Father with platitudes as you already know more about this than I do. <sup>and</sup> I would be very prepared to learn more from you. But I am giving the answer to the question 'WHY'. I am presenting the conflicts which I had which culminated in my tendering my resignation. Therefore please read on.

The reason is; this is the result of the existing order of things- an old order of things dating back from the days the African was forced into urban life. Successive governments and successive City Councils, and even the N.A.D. responsible as they are for providing the detribalised Africans with houses, have all proved to be competing for a 'Maxxing 'No-Housing-Scheme' for Natives. If any houses at all; the procedure seems to be 'As few houses and as small as possible'. Or they take refuge to a very simple method. They become conscious of their difficulties in providing houses. Meanwhile the housing plans lie in their shelves for 3½ years, and we the suffering masses sleep on the wet cold floors with cardboards and sack-cloth above our heads. Is this not systematic procedure, schemes and plans engineered or neglected by our own South African Statesmen and Prime Ministers !

Then we the out-witted and hypnotised sleeping dogs expect genius from our so-called/ cream. We expect our own future Macaulays, Byrons and Shakespeares and Churchills. Men with Miltonic and Lincolnic fire in them. But if I continue to expect these from our dubious cream; then I live in a Fob's Paradise because I know well what is afoot.

No 2. These school children spell economic instability, the direct result of our South African politics.

And so more often than not, I and my fellow teachers were confronted with starving children whom we were supposed to teach. I had interviewed certain children at random, and came across cases where children told me that they had missed their previous day's supper and that the subsequent breakfast consisted of one slice of bread and three oranges. It might be argued that this sort of thing does not happen daily; or with every child. But should it happen at all? The sad part of it is that this is but one of innumerable such cases. Worse things than this happen, but I am only dealing here with conditions which were in my immediate circle as a Teacher. I could tell you more Father about this economic problem- a Bull dozer 'owned' by  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the entire African Population.

I had a child in my class who absented herself from school for thirteen days. And I was boiling about this because of the then approaching examinations. She turned up on the fourteenth day; but it was only to break my heart. She was quite fearless to tell me that her mother- a Widow (perhaps because malnutrition lessened the natural resistance of her husband against diseases) had no money for the daughter's trainfare. The very fact that she attended school, at Umlazi and not in one of the Durban schools where she stayed shows the result of Education facilities for Native children. Tear-bedewed I turned away from her imagining the horrors of this economic strangulation. It could do nothing else but rapture my heart. What really hurt me was that that case was but one of innumerable such cases. At last I could not stand it any longer. I could no longer ~~remain~~ remain indifferent to such passion-stirring incidents. Who would not be moved!

To me such things were and are a challenge to those who are aware of them. They call for immediate action. And perhaps this was emotional anger, but I did sincerely believe that if one was not going to act or help in some other way, then one had no right to give us illuminating speeches on how to solve our Social and Economic problems. As for myself; to be a mere sympathiser would be torture myself. There were the conflicts which I was no longer prepared to allow to take place indefinitely. I longed to be among those who tried to improve the situation. And like an inspired missionary I decided to 'go forward.'

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I decided to bid good bye to the minor blessings of the Teaching Profession, I decided to go and receive my share of suffering with the suffering. I was angry, but I was convinced and I am convinced that it was and is righteous anger since it has in it grief not on account of what is happening to me but because on account of what is happening to others. May I point out that I shall not make impossibilities possible. I have joined the company of those who are conscious of the fact that they shall not do or achieve anything except that which is humanly possible. What I know is that we are not dealing with super-natural oppressors.

No 3. Those school children spelt Moral degradation.

It is not urban life which ruins these children. No. It is conditions which obtain in these places. What South Africa does is to cry over milk which it has helped to spill. What our so-called 'guardians' do is to condemn seedlings knowing full well that they come from seedlings which were only fit to end up in the fowl run. They condemn fruits as unfit for human consumption but they refuse to examine the ground from which the fruits are drawn. And when they cry about 'Native Criminals' we have only one conclusion to make. They are caught in the toils of their own selfishness. Small wonder things are what they are.

After studying our problems thoroughly in their true perspective I literally cried for the broken morality of the innocent children, who without parental choice are left to their own raw resources for twelve hours everyday, to guide their own canoes by trial and error method. Is this not equivalent to letting a student pilot to teach himself? The canon of the matter is that the innocent child is left a defenceless victim of all mischief inclinations prevalent among all children. But, alas! These take root in an African child for his mother is away 12hrs every day to nurse the hand that destroys her and her innocent child. And the child brought up in a society of wrong-doers, his little playmates, regards wrong-doing as an accepted moral standard of living. Criminal tendencies intensify themselves as the child grows up. Anything but honest living is his ambition. To him regular street-fighters, self-styled Cowboys and tough knife-users are heroes to be worshipped by everybody. It might be argued that it is natural for all children to be so. Grant that. But even when our African children have reached manhood their ambitions do not reflect any specialized aims and purposes.

What incentive, what chances and what guarantees have our children got to grow up law-abiding citizens when the dice are so heavily loaded against them?

Then comes the most heart-breaking thing. From these children we expect our future Teachers. Worse than this; we expect future Mothers and Fathers. And worst still; we expect future Priests. Let us not ignore either that soft persistent cry of "Why do we not have African Bishops?" In short; from the growing generation we expect all the enviable qualities that are excellent in men. And so if our people who, more often than not, are morally sound, produce Teachers who are drunkards and moral weaklings, to me it is only an already anticipated outcome, strictly governed by a sequence of events strewn all over the victim's childhood which took place without the parent's knowledge and or in spite of the parent.

Shall we not, in a hundred years to come, totally degenerate as race if we submit to the present order of things? It is already taking place, and more tragic things than these hang imminently by thin threads over our heads. This is but one of the many gathering clouds which are on the verge of ~~their~~ their dew point and ready to release their downpour of "blessings" bestowed upon us by our white 'saviours' who declare that they are here to stay, that they do this and that in order to

ameliorate conditions which prevail among Africans and that they came to South Africa in order to plant culture in the land of the barbarous natives.

True, in the past this work was done, but now it is being undone. And in the not-distant-future the work of the undoers shall have been completed. And the future shall be lucky to find an African child with an Intelligence Quotient of a 100. In fact there is ample evidence of retarded mental growth in our school children.

And so I was no longer prepared to watch this destruction and do nothing about it. Because I was conscious of it I felt an overpowering sense of guilt of evading the issue. There were and there are many more who feel like I do. But one thing I failed to do was to live with a 'divided self'. I was moved and spurred into action. The result was that even when I was still in the Teaching Profession I was an active supporter of Congress. I signed on as a Volunteer on the 6th April, 1952 although I knew that I was playing with fire. But then I was a Financial Supporter in the Campaign—hence I said in the beginning my actions cannot be divorced from political ideas. After all it is not a commendable thing to live by reason and intelligence if these are to be applied only where they are comfortably suitable. So to end the conflict that was in me I decided to resign, and when I did so I was greatly relieved of the long dreadful experience of having to make a final decision.

I do not think what I did was a wonderful thing. In fact I would be quite disappointed with myself if I could come to regard it as wonderful. It could be done by anyone in my position.

I did this with the full appreciation of the seriousness of the step I was taking. It is a step which cannot be divorced from hardships and even disappointments. It was a wild step to take. It was a desperate enterprise. But in the interests of those who could not help themselves it had to be done.

From the foregoing it might be assumed that I think I will free the people from their oppression. No, that would be like living under an illusion. I only came to join and thereby assist those whom History has destined to right the wrongs of the past three centuries. I was moved to be there as they fought and fell.

Having tried to explain what dangers I saw which threatened our people, whether potential, imaginary or real I shall now proceed to explain why I ignored the fact that I am an orphan and that I am shouldering quite a lot of responsibility, and that I could put right our own family on a sound financial footing before I could even think of helping other people.

... Well here is the reason. From the day I was able to read and learn with understanding any good book I fell in love with History.

I dug out the bones of the great men of the past. I literally exhumed the bodies of the intellectual giants of the Greek and Elizabethan periods. I read of allegedly ambitious men like Julius Caesar, and of ambitious men like Cassius who graced the Roman period; and of Socrates of the Greek period. I read about figures who feature outstandingly in the history of America, men like Abraham Lincoln. I plunged into the realm of Poetry, learned of sages and geniuses like Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Milton. I unearthed men like Samuel Taylor Coleridge who spent most of their lives imagining the most horrible things about 'Ancient Mariners' etc. I read about apparently mad men like the 'Brothers Wright' who wanted to fly like birds by flying machines and did so. I read about other great inventors and scholars of the Renaissance Period. Inventors whose lives prospered, business flourished but who finally died very poor and neglected. I also read about Thomas Alva Edison; the 'mad youngster' who spent solitary hours listening to the hum of the falling waters, an apparently useless pastime. And yet he created and fashioned the age in which we live—the age of speed and electricity.

I turned over the new pages of our history which is dominated by Statesmen. I read of the 'Men of the Moment' who were flung into power by trends, emotions and opportunities that existed at their times, and also of 'Men of the Future' who <sup>were</sup> endowed with prophetic qualities that created the next age, men like the Carpenter's Son, Our Lord and also Paul, whose one and only one ideology was "Love thine neighbour/enemy". And it is a tragic commentary that our Statesmen and Politicians have completely ignored their ideologies.

I read of explorers who looked at the angry seas not as the boundaries of the world but as boundaries of their own countries only, who imagined there were large tracts of land somewhere far and beyond these roaring seas. Thereupon, they sailed across the seas, not knowing what they would discover, not knowing what hardships they would suffer and not even caring to know about these. Their minds hatched out wild ideas, <sup>they,</sup> took to the seas and just followed their noses. I am not forgetting the first batch of inspired Missionaries like Owen, Gardiner and Livingstone.

One thing which struck me in these men, especially the Inventors, was their wealth of "Wild and Crude Ideas". They explored the unknown avenues in life and did so by exploiting their wild ideas. To-day our History is incomplete without them. They were not ambitious. They just yielded to their crude minds.

All these men exercised their irresistible influence on me. Their wild ideas and defiant actions inspired me. I bowed down to their yokes. I submitted.

And then came my turn as their pupil to do as they did. I was perfectly aware of the part I was playing in my late Parents' family, but I just decided to defy such stumbling blocks. I knew I was a Teacher, thought of the not-so-bad-cheque I was getting, remembered that what was expected of me was to get ~~married~~ married, knew I was expected to improve the little Estate which our beloved Father left us. I felt strongly about the inescapable duty entangled around the noble Teaching Profession.

Yet I felt that if I would not resign just because I was a Teacher and because I was conscious of the Teachers' duty, that would be to imply that Education has an end in itself, and that its end is the Teacher Profession, and that Teaching is the end and be all of Education. Whereas History would refute this.

As to the other stumbling blocks which also contributed a somewhat restraining influence on my decision; it is a fact that not all, if any, successful and ~~xxx~~ prosperous African men were Teachers prior to their materialistic prosperity. Besides, I have no strong wish to become rich just now or in the near future. This makes for ~~xxxxxxx~~ insincere leadership, and although not all rich leaders were and are insincere in liberatory struggles this sort of thing I am referring to is not without its own parallel cases. And as our liberatory struggle is for the poor; I am persuaded that the rising masses must find in their ranks men and women who, although far from being rich materially, are rich in ideas.

About marriage I have this to say. I feel strongly the need of getting married. And this is one feeling which I gave totally failed to ignore or defy. But since I envisage for myself a life like that of the Gypsies or to refer to our own contemporary educated and civilised Gypsy; like that of the Rev. Michael Scott, who is prepared to live a nomadic life for the sake of the underdogs, I do not know if it would be fair to my wife to put her in such a position as to live an almost deserted life.

However, since the gripping idea of marriage is actually strangling my mind I shall come and discuss this question with Father to get his advice. I am bold enough to do so because of the fatherly invitation which Father extended to me in his letter he wrote ~~xxxxxx~~ 2 years and 1 day ago, a letter which Father wrote on the 23rd January, 1951.

My preparedness to resign would not have been fully uncovered if I did not mention another great man whose message incited and inspired me. He is our Archbishop of Capetown, Father Clayton. He was delivering an address at Michaelhouse on the 3rd November, 1952. He declared, "Safety First as a Rule is wotten", and for my part I was prepared to believe him although he was referring this to another great man, Mr Snell, the then Principal who was leaving for Rhodesia to found a school on similar lines like Michaelhouse's.

Perhaps to you Father, what I have said might appear to be like a story told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. But after giving these detailed reasons for resignation I humbly free Father to pass judgment on my actions. Hence I was not very keen to meet Father before I wrote this letter.

I do not know just how Father will feel. It is not my habit to judge at face value and therefore I our meeting (may I call it a collision) yesterday provided me with no pointer as to Father's decided views as against the happy mood perhaps imposed on the spur of the moment calculated to make me feel comfortable.

Lastly may I admit, I might have wronged you Father by my short comings. I might have disappointed you Father by failing to live up to expectations. I might have surprised you Father by revealing the absence of those not-so-ignorable-qualities which were so manifest in my late beloved Father. But I ask that all these, my ugly reminders, may not only be forgotten but also forgiven although I am out to behave like the Prodigal Son.

As I type out the last sentences of this letter, a petition and plea for understanding in actual fact, I feel the weight of unwillingness to meet you diminish and sink to nothingness like a relieved Neurotic whose spell has just been expelled from within him. And from now onwards, I make bold to say, I shall not keep secret any of my future plans from you, any of my Father's and Mother's friends, my relatives and well-wishers, <sup>such plans</sup> whether they would cause you a year's nightmare or they would readily command your full approval.

I remain,

Your Son,

*J. Selborne Maponya.*



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