

Ufric Ed Dep 3

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In 1951/2 Gov spent £43.88 per head
on white pupils (£21,858,316)
18.84 on Col + Incl pupils (£5,137,665)
+ 7.58 on Af pupils (£5,882,659)

ALAN
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A Survey of Relations
in S.A. 1952-53
Compiled by David
Hobrell, Mech Officer
SAIRR

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

"TWILIGHT OF EDUCATION"

by

DR. W.G. McCONKEY

former Director of Education, Natal,
member of the Council of the Institute
of Race Relations, chairman of the
Maritzburg Committee for Freedom
in Education.

(Reprint, by courtesy of The Natal Mercury,
of four special articles published on the
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(Reprint of four special articles by Dr. W.G. McConkey, former Director of Education, Natal, member of the Council of the Institute of Race Relations, chairman of the Maritzburg Committee for Freedom in Education, which were published in the Natal Mercury on the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th April, 1932).

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EDUCATION CRISIS FACES NATAL.

Most people value the traditional freedom of their Province to determine how its children shall be educated. Few of them realise that this freedom, over a large field, has already been taken away, and that what remains of it is scheduled for liquidation before Parliament rises in three months' time.

In 1954, responsibility for the education of the African majority of Natal's children was transferred to the Department of Native Affairs (now Bantu Education). This year, legislation is announced to transfer the education of our Coloured children to the Department of Coloured Affairs, and the education of our Indian children to the Department of Indian Affairs. If these threats are carried out, Natal will have completely lost control of the education of seven-eighths of its children.

The take-over of the remaining eighth has been planned with more consideration for "face" than was thought necessary in the case of the Non-Whites; but not less effectively. There is at present before Parliament a Bill for the establishment of a full-time National Education Advisory Council which is to advise the Minister, and the Minister alone, "generally in regard to the policy to be adopted in connection with the education of White persons".

So if, for yet a little while, the Natal Provincial Council is to be allowed to "manage" its schools for White children, it is to manage them on lines of policy laid down elsewhere.

OVERDUE

In these circumstances, a down-to-earth appreciation of the situation is overdue. Bantu Education has now been functioning for eight years. Its purposes and methods are on the record. Before we allow further groups of Natal children to fall into the same hands, let us see how our African children have fared after being "taken over".

African Education before 1946:

African education had developed under the joint direction of the Christian missions and the Provincial education departments. It was an inadequate and, in some ways, untidy system. It had been grossly under-financed, but in 1945 the Smuts-Hofmeyr Government had at last accepted its development as a legitimate charge on general revenue, and more generous support was given from then on.

But/....

But if Government support had long been grudging, our system of African schools had more than a century's experience behind it, and it was much in advance of education systems in the poorer and more recently established states further north.

It had a body of teachers of steadily improving quality. Education was more widespread and more efficient than elsewhere in Africa. More Africans had university degrees, more Africans had matriculated in the Union than in the rest of the continent. Fort Hare was fast becoming a national university, and gave promise of becoming more: it was attracting students from over our borders. With the open universities, it was helping to win for our country the cultural as well as the technical leadership of much of sub-Saharan Africa.

European teachers in our African training colleges and high schools were, predominantly, men and women who had chosen to serve in African schools because of goodwill to the African people, coupled, in many cases, with zeal for their evangelisation. They educated African children as they would have educated other children, fostering the growth of each to full individual stature.

UNDER FIRE

This system of education had long been under fire from the Party of baasskap-apartheid. It produced "synthetic Whites", said one M.P. It was "teaching Natives to compete with Europeans", said another. It "misled the Native by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze", said Dr. Verwoerd. "It was a danger for our Western civilisation", said Mr. M.D.C. de Wet Nel.

"The only sound policy", said an even more illustrious personage, was that "the Natives should be educated in their own manner, and should learn to be good Natives as tribal Natives, and should not be imitators of the White man".

"Their education", said Dr. Verwoerd, "should not clash with Government policy."

Now Government policy is that over seven-eighths of South Africa (the seven-eighths which contain 99 per cent. of the country's capital wealth) Africans are to have no place except as migrant, temporary labourers. To educate them for this destiny became the task of Dr. Verwoerd.

"REFORMATION"

"My Department's policy," he proclaimed, "is that Bantu education should stand with both feet in the Reserves What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is absurd"

"There is no place for the Native in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour" Therefore "it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community"

"When I have control of Native education I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them."

Before setting out how the "reformation" was effected, I draw attention in passing to the trick phrase "European community". Economically, there is no such thing in South Africa. There is a common economy built up by and depending on the labour of both White and Non-White. In Operation Apartheid the Nationalists promise to reserve the fruits of this economy exclusively and in perpetuity for voters on the common roll, now all White, and their children - the most colossal and immoral bribe ever offered to an electorate.

FINANCIAL CURB ON BANTU EDUCATION.

Financial starvation has been the master weapon by which the Government has compelled educationists in Bantu education to accept destructive economies, degrading conditions of service and steady deterioration in standards.

On the introduction of the system, the contribution to the cost of African education from general revenue was frozen at R13 million per annum. Thenceforward, all expansion of African education was to be financed from direct African taxation and contributions. The poorest group in our population was to lift itself up by its own shoestrings - or stay in the gutter.

So despite rising costs of materials, and despite a nearly doubled enrolment, the contribution from general revenue to Bantu Education has remained fixed since 1954.

South Africa's national income since 1954 has risen by more than 50 per cent. Personal incomes have risen steeply. Salaries of Ministers and Members of Parliament have rocketed. Following on rising costs, Government expenditure per child in European Government schools rose from R126.11 in 1954 to R158.15 in 1960. (Provincial Auditor's Reports, Natal).

But over the same years expenditure per child in Bantu Education was forced down from R17.08 in 1954 to R13.80 in 1960 (S.A. Information Fact Paper, No. 88, p.7). Indeed, if one included 102,000 children in unaided schools, mainly Roman Catholic (formerly aided), the total Government expenditure per child in African schools in that year would sink below R13. This year, putting together the announced enrolment figure of 1,750,000 and the estimated expenditure of R21,442,000, and allowing for tribal college costs (these mental isolation centres are actually a charge on African taxation), the figure for expenditure per African child at school is probably little above R11.

NO EXCUSE

In our expanding economy, rising enrolments are no excuse for deterioration in material conditions or educational standards. True, between 1948 and 1960 enrolments in African schools rose by 108 per cent. But during the same years, under the Natal Provincial Administration, enrolments in Indian schools increased by 170 per cent, with increasing expenditure per child, steadily rising standards of teacher training, improved conditions of service and increasing educational efficiency generally. And in the previous twelve years, from 1936 to 1948, African enrolments had risen, under the Hertzog and Smuts-Hofmeyr Governments, by 104 per cent. - also to the accompaniment of increasing provision per child and rising educational standards.

By international standards, South Africa should be spending five to six per cent. of its national income on the education of its children. (The De Villiers Commission, giving inadequate attention to Non-White education, recommended $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.). Actually, we are spending only about three per cent. But on the education of the African two-thirds of our children we are now spending from general revenue less than one-third of one per cent. of our national income. Cheap boasts about outspending poorer, less-developed territories cannot disguise the significance of this figure. It represents the world record - among developed nations - for wicked and wanton child neglect.

TEACHERS' PAY

Miserliness at the top compels degrading economies throughout the system. Since 1948, South Africa has gone through a period of steep inflation, including a currency devaluation. The general salary structure has risen accordingly. Alone among teachers, African teachers have no pension fund. Alone among teachers, they have had no general salary increase since 1948.

Heavier Teacher Loads:

The pupil load per teacher in Government and aided African schools rose from 42 in 1946 to 58 in 1960. In the lower primary schools it is probably more than 80. Sub-standard loads of 110 (double session) and single classes of up to 65 are officially authorised and are frequently exceeded.

For comparison, teacher loads in Natal Provincial schools in 1960 were: European 22, Coloured 28 and Indian 32.

Cost of Buildings:

Government schools are provided free for the children of the White electorate - but not for African children. Lower primary schools in African townships are erected/....

erected by the municipalities and the costs recovered in increased rents from African housing schemes. Higher primary and secondary schools are the responsibility of the local community. The parents raise half the cost as best they can, and apply to the Department for Rand for Rand grants.

MILK OR CLASSROOMS

Under the previous regime, a drink of milk, a chunk of bread or other food supplement was provided for children in African schools. In a community where death from malnutrition is frequent among the young and where gross malnutrition is widespread in all age groups, this inexpensive provision saved health and, in many instances, saved lives.

The Nationalist Government has preferred to save the cents.

Under Bantu Education, school feeding has practically disappeared. It "undermined the sense of parental responsibility," said smug Ministers whose own children had been educated from kindergarten to university entrance entirely at public expense.

The funds have been largely diverted. A poverty-stricken community, painfully scraping cent by cent together for an extra classroom, is told that if it cuts off the children's milk the $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per child saved will be credited towards the building cost! Besides, it is given to understand, if it is unco-operative there may be no money available when its Rand for Rand application comes up for consideration.

On the whole, our baasskap Government has had a better press than Herod of Judaea. Getting the parents to sign the children's milk away was a cunning move.

Repairs of buildings and replacements of furniture have to be financed by the school. Supplies of equipment have been curtailed and are grossly inadequate. Replacements are on the Rand for Rand basis. With the exception of readers in the prescribed languages, pupils have to supply their own stationery and textbooks.

Double Shifts For Teachers:

A further economy was the introduction of the double-shift system for teachers of the sub-standards. As Dr. Verwoerd presented it, one wondered why such a brilliant rationalisation had not been introduced simultaneously into White schools, where the saving would be at least ten-fold. "In this way", said the Minister blandly, "both the teacher and the classroom will be able to serve two different groups of pupils every day. The same applies to the furniture, school requisites and class reading books."

Double use of classrooms is an emergency device which has been used by hard-pressed education authorities in South Africa, in Europe, and in America. Double use of reading books is an anti-educational device which effectively prevents reading practice outside the classroom. Double-shift use of teachers, as in Bantu education, is exploitation of underpaid and underqualified drudges. Exacting a double-shift day for single-shift pay is robbery.

SECURITY GOES

As Bantu Education came in, the teacher's traditional security of tenure went out. Outspoken members of teachers' organisations were sacked and permanently blacklisted. Teachers who fell foul of nominated stooges on school committees were dismissed. Other teachers, who had the support of their school committees, were got rid of departmentally simply by stopping the grant for their pay.

The policy was clearly to reduce the teaching staff to a state of cowed subservience. Instead, it has created a feeling of deep hostility, all the more bitter because it is temporarily frustrated.

LOW QUALIFICATIONS FOR BANTU TEACHERS.

Emphasis in Bantu teacher-training is kept on a low level of qualification. Apart from some quite unqualified teachers, practically all of the 13,000 teachers found in the lower primary schools hold as sole qualification the deplorably inadequate Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate.

This certificate represents two years of training after Form I. Form I (two years before J.C.) is roughly equivalent to the Standard VI examination passed by European children at the age of 13.

These lower primary classes - Sub-standard A to Standard II - account for 1,097,202 of Bantu Education's 1,513,571 pupils, or 72 per cent. of the total (June, 1960). Most African children get no further schooling.

SMALL PROFITS AND QUICK TURNOVER

Two rules provide for the rapid transit of the mass of African children - with or without educational benefit - through the lower primary school and out at the other end, freeing their places for fresh relays.

Promotion - to Standard II - is automatic. The educational deficits of mass instruction pile up for four years. Then at the end of Standard II an examination bars the entrance to further education. Failure means repetition. Failure twice means exclusion from all further schooling.

But four years of Bantu education are enough - or more than enough, for most children. Enrolments in 1958 were as follows :

Sub-standard A	361,440
Sub-standard B	247,822
Std. I	218,183
Std. II	163,775

From the beginning, the pattern is "wastage".

THE SYLLABUSES

Just as financial starvation compels the administrative officer to resort to unjustifiable "economies", so a few broad directives can pervert the entire teaching programme, despite attempts to draw up sound individual subject syllabuses.

Financial starvation has made Bantu Education education for inefficiency. Other directives have made it education for isolation.

Education "with both feet in the Reserves" has no positive content. It is merely a cloak to cover denial of the needed education for life in a modern economy. Sixty per cent. of the African population live outside the Reserves, on the farms and industrial centres where their present employment and future prospects lie. A considerable majority of those domiciled inside the Reserves depend for their livelihood outside. Education for tribalism is education for low adaptivity and low productive capacity in the general South African economy. It is education for personal and national poverty.

CONTACTS CUT.

It is also education for isolation from all contacts beyond the home tribe.

The Government has systematically broken off contacts between Africans and all Whites except public servants, police, and dedicated apartheiders. Policy statements, coupled with sackings, made it clear that a special outlook was required in European teachers in African high schools and colleges, and soon the supply of other kinds of teachers began to dry up. New appointments were almost exclusively Nationalist.

Seeking to break down normal human relationships, the Minister of Bantu Education, Mr. Maree, forbade European inspectors of schools to shake hands with the African school principals whose schools they visited. Police checked on mixed social/.....

social gatherings. African teachers learnt the lesson of outward conformity,

EXIT THE MISSIONARY

The missions had pioneered African education. Representing the major churches of Christendom, they had approached their task responsibly. But they had concerned themselves with the spiritual and mental growth of their pupils and not with conditioning them for servile status as required by the Christian-National heresy - that White African-Separatist creed which is South Africa's unofficial state religion.

DENIGRATION

Denigration of the missionary and a studied non-recognition of his role as South Africa's major civilising force has been a permanent feature of "National" polemics. Bantu Education was designed to get rid of the missionary once and for all.

The Act gave the churches the choice of handing over their schools to the local communities for further use as community schools (in which case the former missionary manager-grantee would not even be allowed a seat in the new committee of management), or of continuing to run their schools - teaching only the Government syllabuses - without any Government grant whatever.

Only the Roman Catholic church was prepared to shoulder the financial burden of keeping its schools generally. The influence of the other churches was practically eliminated at a stroke.

Thus was broken (but for their management of certain high school and training college hostels) the great and beneficent influence of the Protestant churches in the education of Natal's African children - and by a Government which never tires of vaunting its Protestantism.

The churches mostly affected were the Anglican, the German, Scandinavian and American Lutheran, the Methodist, the joint American Mission Board, and the Presbyterian. Their record of service extended back, in several cases, for over a century.

Various attempts have been made to break the Roman Catholic schools. They were forbidden to admit any non-Catholic child whose parents had not approved of his instruction in the Roman Catholic faith. When this proved ineffective a stricter formula was found. As from this year, children are to be admitted to Roman Catholic schools only if they have at least one Roman Catholic parent. This rule is calculated to reduce enrolments by approximately half.

But the calculation may be wrong. "Paris is worth a Mass", said the worldly Henry of Navarre; and, as may appear when we discuss examination results, education in a Roman Catholic school today may well strike an intelligent African father as a prize justifying drastic parental action.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Until Bantu Education, the principal medium of instruction up to about Std. IV, had been the African vernacular; from Std. V on, the principal medium became English. There was general agreement among Africans that this should be so. The African languages lacked scientific vocabulary - a matter which could be remedied, though not in a hurry.

They also lack, and must continue to lack, for any immediately foreseeable future, the resources in general, scientific and technological literature which are necessary for higher education and which are available in only four or five of the major languages of the world.

LESS ENGLISH

English opened the door to university education in South Africa and overseas. It was a means of communication with Africans of other tribes and countries. It was

incomparably/....

incomparably the best key to the Twentieth Century civilisation which was changing the face of Africa and of the rest of the globe.

But if those were reasons why the Africans should want English, they were reasons why the isolationists should want them to have less of it.

In spite of African protests, and in the absence of vernacular text books, instruction through the vernacular has been extended to Standard VI. Ultimately, it is to be extended throughout the secondary school and, indeed, throughout the university course.

That, at least, is the present official story.

Circular 31 of December 29, 1959, lays down that, apart from non-examination subjects and the languages, instruction in the secondary school is to be half in English and half in Afrikaans. The worst-educated children in South Africa, if they survive to reach the secondary school, are thus to be further handicapped by receiving their daily instruction through three different languages.

THE CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION.

The Government was well aware of the nature of the handicaps inflicted. One recalls eloquent Nationalist denunciations of attempts under the Smuts Government to teach through two languages in the White schools of Transvaal. That departure from the principle of "mother-tongue instruction only" was damned as a major educational crime.

FALLING STANDARDS

How, one may ask, is education possible in such conditions ?

The answer would seem to be that it is becoming more and more impossible.

African teachers speak sombrely of fallen standards at every level. But African teachers may not be quoted. The steep decline in the number of passes gained by African pupils in the matriculation examinations is a national scandal which has on several occasions been the subject of sharp debate in Parliament.

Apart from normal fluctuations from year to year, the general trend in the Bantu Education schools has been swiftly downwards. The total percentage passes in 1953 was 47.3 and in 1954 was 44.7. Over the past three years it has not averaged half of that. In 1960 it was 17.9.

English has suffered the most spectacular decline. But soon English Higher is no longer to be a requirement for matriculation. When that takes place, the African student will be effectively debarred from study at any university, at home or abroad, except his own particular tribal college.

IRONICAL

Amid this decay, the much-harried Roman Catholic schools persist stubbornly in good work. It is, indeed, an ironical situation that, without the Roman Catholic schools, the tribal colleges could hardly exist.

In December, 1961, only 35 African students in Natal and Zululand gained matriculation exemption. This is the total African student potential for the first-year courses of the Natal University Medical School and the University College of Zululand. Of the 35, nine came from the official Government and Aided system, two from that rare survival from better days, a Protestant mission school, Inanda, and 24 from two Catholic mission schools, Mariannhill and Inkamana.

THE FUTURE

From this factual assessment of the working of the Broederbond's tribal colonialism (alias baasskap) in the field of African education, let us turn to the future of our Coloured and Indian children, now marked for take-over by the central Government. What is likely to happen to them if taken over ?

SAME/.....

SAME LAWS

In Natal, Coloured children are subject to the same compulsory education laws as European children. There are excellent Aided schools, but free Government schools are provided where necessary. There is a normal school distribution over the years 7-15, though for economic reasons there is a sharp fall-away after compulsory attendance requirements are satisfied.

In the other Provinces there is either no effective compulsion, or no compulsion at all. In the Cape Province, for example, 65 per cent. of Coloured school-children are in the four lowest classes, Sub A to Standard II, and the vast majority of the schools are aided.

Whatever centralisation under the present Government might have in store for Cape Coloured education (and the Cape teachers expect nothing good), it seems clear that Coloured education in Natal must anticipate an even more distressing setback.

INDIAN EDUCATION

There can be no justification on educational grounds for the proposed transfer of Indian education. Natal Indians are, by law, confined to Natal. They must find their livelihood in Natal. Obviously, their education should be planned in Natal.

The Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Maree, has often spoken in the most callous and threatening terms of the Indian community and its future. The suggestion that its schools should fall under his care is a particularly ominous one.

White Education:

As the National Education Advisory Council Bill is now before a Select Committee, detailed reference to its provisions is not made at this stage.

It is abundantly clear that the educational machinery of South Africa is being completely perverted to serve Nationalist baasskap, as planned by the Broederbond's educational panel, the Institute for Christian-National Education.

THE PATTERN

The general pattern is (a) Separation between White and Non-White, between White and White, and between Black and Black on a tribal basis; (b) "Trusteeship" over the Non-White by Broederbond-controlled authorities, acting for "die Boerenasie", the "senior White trustee"; (c) Isolationist "Christian-National" education for all; (d) Coloured education "not to be financed at the expense of White education"; (e) African education "not to be financed at the expense of White education".

One is impressed, in spite of oneself, by principle (e). As an example of masterly understatement it has hardly its equal in the history of education.

WHAT SOUTH AFRICA NEEDS

Bantu Education illustrates the baasskap pattern in education in some detail. A pattern more directly opposed to the interests of South Africa can hardly be conceived.

South Africa is a country of limited agricultural potential, but of practically unlimited mineral wealth and industrial potential. It is common cause among the informed that its economic salvation lies in the movement of its millions of under-employed and poverty-stricken people from unprofitable subsistence on the land to productive employment in the natural industrial centres. The Government's senior economic adviser, Dr. H.J. van Eck, was Chairman of the Agricultural and Industrial Requirements Commission, set up under General Hertzog, which said so unambiguously.

That policy cleaned up in twenty years the Poor White problem which had plagued South Africa for generations, and which had only been confused by pathetic "Back to the Land" propaganda. It can create a prosperous South Africa for all South Africans. Under our soil there are in abundance the material resources for a great and prosperous industrial civilisation, the natural leader of the African continent.

All we need is an educated, adaptable, skilled population, trained in co-operation, bound together by common achievement, and strong in common loyalty to South Africa.

But between us and that goal stands the barren and preposterous tribal colonialism of the Government supported by the fears and prejudices of the White electorate, English as well as Afrikaans speaking - fears and prejudices deliberately inflamed by the Nationalists and their fellow-travellers and exploited by them for their political profit.

South Africa, like some other African states, is at present ruled on the dangerous political principle "Top-dog takes it all". The more deeply this principle becomes entrenched as the South African political pattern, the more certain, and the more deadly, in the long run, the injury to all minority groups and to the best hopes of all South Africans, White, Brown or Black.

WORK TOGETHER

The pattern must be broken. It cannot be broken by individual groups fighting individually and selfishly for their own group interests. The situation demands that South Africans of all groups should give thought to the rights and to the welfare of all. In education, it demands that we work together for the rights and for the welfare of all South African children.

South Africans of all groups - for all are equally concerned - should take such vigorous common action as will ensure:

(a) that the financial starvation and general educational abortionism of Bantu Education be speedily ended, and

(b) that there shall be no further transfer of Provincial functions in respect of any group, except at the express request of that group.

By such action we could break the habit of submission to evil, and bring fresh hope of racial peace to a deeply troubled land.

(By kind permission of The Natal Mercury).